TOWN OF DENMARK

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

AMENDED
MARCH 1999
GOALS AND POLICIES FOR THE FUTURE OF DENMARK

STATE GOAL: ORDERLY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT WHILE PROTECTING RURAL CHARACTER AND PREVENTING SPRAWL

STATE GUIDELINES: DESIGNATE “GROWTH” AND “RURAL” AREAS
CREATE GREENBELTS, PUBLIC PARKS, CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF ISSUES:

While at first blush the issues of orderly growth and prevention of sprawl may not seem appropriate topics for small rural towns such as Denmark, they may actually be of more importance here than in larger urban municipalities. It is after all the pattern of development which defines and place and creates its “character.” Of nine choices, the town’s “rural character” was the item most appreciated about Denmark by respondents to the 1991 survey. The overwhelming majority of respondents indicated they live in Denmark because of the attractiveness of the area.

The visual patterns of the landscape are usually the most important feature which defines the character of an area. An area need not have a number of farms or sawmills to appear rural. It may not necessarily be the lack of development which cause a place to appear rural or “attractive.” In many cases it is the perception of lack of development. If housing developments are not in view from the street, or if lakeside cottages are screened from the pond, a landscape will retain its rural character.

Orderly development deals not only with the location of new construction in terms of its relationship with other development or scenic views, but also with its proximity to public facilities and services. An increase in the number of residences on poorly constructed and unsurfaced roads will lead to a demand for costly improvements. Development activity far from existing facilities may increase the need for additional school buses or a fire department substation. The construction of new roads for lots with wide frontages leads to increases in cost for plowing and repaving.

Promoting orderly development and preventing sprawl are also dependent on the choices the town makes regarding its natural resources. If a community values wetlands or wildlife habitat, provision can be made to harmonize the development of the town with these natural features. In areas such as Denmark which have an economic dependence on second homes and tourism. New development can be guided to protect water quality and the scenic beauty of the town which attracts summer residents and visitors.

A future land use plan is an attempt by the town to articulate the direction in which it would like to develop. The issues may include the separation of various land uses from one another, the encouragement or discouragement of residential development in parts of a town, the support for an economic base, or the avoidance of conflict between traditional rural land uses such as forestry and agriculture and residential or commercial uses which may not be compatible neighbors.

The vast majority of Denmark is covered by forest and is actively managed for forest resources. Housing is concentrated around lakes and ponds on relatively small lots. A scattered network of roads crisscrosses the town.

In 1960, there were 278 housing units in Denmark. The 1990 Census counted 945, and increase of 667 or a 240% increase. Between 1960 and 1981, 37 subdivision developments had been approved by the town, containing a total of 1,012 lots. Eight additional subdivisions have been approved adding 48 lots. The majority of the early subdivisions were around the town’s ponds. Later subdivisions have been scattered. Lots within subdivisions make up two thirds of the lots in town.
Denmark enacted a zoning ordinance in 1974. This ordinance put in place a 40,000 square foot minimum lot size requirement for new lots and established three zoning districts: Resource Protection, Shoreland and General Purpose. In 1998, a fourth zoning district was created to protect the town’s high yield sand and gravel aquifers.

The resource protection and shoreland districts were changed in March, 1991. The 100 year floodplain and within 250 feet of wetlands are in the resource protection district. The shoreland district covers the area within 250 feet of great ponds and 75 feet of streams.

1565 parcels examined in the assessors’ records totaled 27,680 acres. Eight hundred and twenty four or 53% had a residential use reported, accounting for 5945 acres or 21% of the land area of the town. Counting only the first five acres of a lot results in 1,498 acres, or 5.5% of the town, and counting only the first two acres results in 920 acres or only 3.3%. Of this latter amount 322 acres were in 411 lots with shore frontage. Half of the residential lots have shore frontage.

Five lots are larger than 1,000 acres, 30 lots between 100 and 500 acres. Nearly half the town’s land area is in 36 parcels. Decisions by the owners of these large lots will have major impacts on the future land use patterns in the town. Major forest products companies in New England have been divesting their real estate holdings. As large parcels are divided, access for hunting, fishing and hiking may be restricted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distribution of Lot Sizes in Denmark</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Lots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger than 1,000 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 - 1,000 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 - 500 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 100 acres</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 - 50 acres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than 5 acres</td>
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</table>

The 1,084 lots smaller than 5 acres in size account for only 5% of the town and are concentrated around the town’s ponds and in Denmark Village. Of the 642 lots smaller than two acres in size, 383 are vacant. These make up half of the total of 741 vacant lots in town. Assuming conditions are adequate for sewage disposal there is a substantial supply of vacant “house lots” without new subdivisions being approved. At the average building rate of the 1980’s, over 15 years could pass prior to needing additional house lots.

Other than shorefront development, Denmark Village is the only area of concentrated settlement. The village is the site of town office facilities, the post office, a convenience store/gas station, restaurant, oil and propane dealer, electric motor rewinding shop, printer, real estate offices and home businesses. Most of the businesses in town are located in or near the village, as well as a number of residences on relatively small lots.

Considering the village to be the area within a half mile radius of the town monument, roughly 140 lots comprise 580 acres, for an average lot size of about four acres. Included are two lots larger than 80 acres. If these lots are not included the average lot size in the village is less than three acres. Of the 140 lots, 81 are in residential use, the town owns ten and thirteen have a commercial use, leaving about thirty vacant lots in addition to the church, library and cemetery.

While there are no significant reports of drinking water quality problems in the village, there have been surface water problems from domestic sewage; high bacteria counts have occasionally led to closure of the town beach. If suitable sewage treatment practices can be established, there is ample vacant land within the village area to provide for additional growth.

A number of other businesses are spread about the town, mostly home occupation type operations. Two summer camps occupy large parcels of land with shore frontage.

The predominant land use in Denmark is forest. Over half the land area in the town has been registered in the Tree Growth tax program. With over 16,000 acres enrolled, the importance of commercial forestry activities in the town
is obvious. The Sebago Lakes Region Labor Market Area, of which Denmark is a part, provided an average of 470 jobs in the lumber and wood products industry during 1990.

Agriculture is important perhaps more for its visual impact than its extent or economic value. The 1981 comprehensive plan noted three full time commercial farms and 52 farmsteads comprising 545 acres of cleared land. A 1982 U.S.D.A. study counted 504 acres of grassland or crop land in the portion of Denmark within the Saco River watershed. The Saco River watershed accounts for about 85% of the town. Agricultural land accounts for less than 2% of the land area of the town. Seven agricultural operations were identified in 1991 including a berry farm, Christmas tree nursery and an equestrian center.

The state Bureau of Parks and Recreation owns a 640 acre parcel which is part of a larger tract of land extending into Hiram and Sebago. Though there are no definite plans at this date, the Bureau’s long range plans are for development of this parcel into a state park. The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife owns approximately 170 acres in West Denmark along the Saco River. This parcel is part of the Department’s Brownfield Bog Wildlife Management Area. The state also owns several of the islands in Hancock and Moose Ponds.

The town’s land holdings are fairly modest, comprising fifteen parcels of land totaling just over 20 acres. The town owns several lots within the village, including the town office, the public works department, fire station and a fire pond. The school district owns a fifteen acre parcel on Route 160 adjacent to the Saco River. It is the site of the new Denmark Elementary School. The town owns five parcels used for access to ponds.

The major land use changes in the past fifteen to twenty years has been the conversion of forest land or vacant land to residential uses. The number of housing units increased from 515 in 1970 to 945 in 1990. Active agricultural land has declined in Denmark as it has throughout the southern part of the state. There has been little change in the level of commercial activity, and none is foreseen in the future. Due to its size, seasonal population fluctuations, location between larger towns with a commercial base (Fryeburg and Bridgton) and proximity to regional commercial centers (North Conway and Windham), Denmark will likely see only small scale commercial development, if any. Retail uses will likely be limited to neighborhood and convenience uses, and those directly related to tourism, or boating.

Denmark currently requires a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet. This restriction does not seem to have been the guiding force in the decision making of land subdividers in the past decade. Of the subdivisions approved since 1980, the average lot size in all but one has been over two acres, and exceeded five acres in two.

Hydrogeologists have recommended that areas with individual water supplies and individual sewage disposal be developed at densities less than one unit per acre. Septic systems can be sources of microbial contamination and excess nitrates in ground water. Microbial contamination is prevented by separation of wells and septic systems to allow the death of pathogens. Nitrate contamination is prevented through the control of density, to allow adequate dilution.

Studies in Maine have made recommendations on residential density based on soil type to allow adequate dilution of nitrates. One method, based on overall soils types and simplified calculations, has suggested lot sizes range from as small as 15,000 square feet in sand and gravel soils to as large as four acres in thin soils or clay soils. Most of Denmark’s developable soils are till, in which lot sizes of one to three acres have been suggested based on this simplified method.

Aside from the issue of nitrate dilution, much of the town is covered by soils which have severe constraints for development. Steep slopes and shallow depth to bedrock soils cover an extensive part of the Pleasant Mountain area and the areas in the southwest part of town around Allen Mountain and along Routes 117 and 160, Mountain Road and West Denmark Road.

The 1991 survey asked about respondents’ perceptions and desires regarding future land use patterns in the town. When asked if the town’s zoning ordinance should define areas in town in which different types of development may take place, 78% of all respondents answered affirmatively. A higher percentage of seasonal residents agreed than year round residents. Seventy-one percent of the year round residents answered “yes” compared to 86% of the seasonal residents. One fifth of the year-round respondents answered “no”. A slim majority (52%) of the year-
round residents indicated that areas should be set aside for only commercial and/or industrial facilities. Over two thirds of the seasonal residents thought so.

By less of a majority, respondents felt that there should be a differentiation of lot sizes within the town. Two-thirds of the year-round respondents indicated there should be areas of town where lot sizes should be larger or smaller than other areas of town. Just under one quarter responded negatively. When looking at the total responses, 72% favored differing lot sizes and 17% opposed.

The questionnaire went on to ask if perhaps the existing village should be the location of different density growth than the remainder of town. There was less agreement on this question. Only 51% of the year-round respondents felt so, while 39% disagreed. The question did not specify whether the difference in density would be higher or lower. There was more of a difference between year-round and seasonal residents on this question. Three quarters of the seasonal residents indicated that the village should grow at a different density.

The most solid agreement came on the question regarding relationship between lot sizes and the ability of the soil to accommodate waste water. Eight of ten year-round respondents felt there should be a relationship between lot size and soils type. Only 12% disagreed. There was little difference of opinion between year-round and seasonal respondents on this question, with 86% of the seasonal respondents favoring a connection and 7% opposed.

The survey yielded some interesting responses regarding other issues involving future growth and land use change within the town. A majority of respondents, both year-round and seasonal, felt the town should discourage multi-family housing and mobile homes. Mobile home parks were liked significantly less well than mobile homes in individual lots. Year-round residents were more sympathetic to multi-family dwellings and mobile homes than seasonal residents.

New developments which preserve open space were favored by approximately two thirds of the respondents. However by equal percentages cluster developments, which do just that, should be discouraged in the respondents’ opinions.

When asked about the types of commercial development that should occur in Denmark, amusement and concessions were the least popular, followed by shopping centers, fast food and drive in restaurants and heavy industry. The respondents most strongly favored sit down restaurants, light industry and individual retail stores.

**TOWN GOALS:**

- **Maintain the rural, quiet nature of the town**
  
  Development located on lots which are of a size to provide for adequate water supply and waste disposal while avoiding development on sensitive areas and protecting surface and ground water quality.

- **Maintain the beautiful natural surroundings of the town.**

**RECOMMENDATION:** The planning board should continue taking responsibility for reviewing the zoning ordinance from time to time, and recommend any changes or additions it considers appropriate and consistent with the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan.

**Denmark’s Future Land Use Plan**

The intent of the Future Land Use Plan is to provide a framework for the future development of the town. The Future Land Use Plan recognizes the existing development patterns in the town, the town’s heavy reliance on seasonal property on financing its public services and facilities, the importance of maintaining scenic beauty and
a pastoral atmosphere to both the residents and visitors of the town, and the role Denmark plays in the regional economy.

Denmark’s economy is based on tourism and employment in the western Maine region. As such, the maintenance of the characteristics of the town which attracts visitors, and residents alike, is a high priority. At the same time the Town recognizes there will be continued growth. The aim of the Future Land Use Plan is to have this future growth be compatible with the town’s goals and policies.

The Future Land Use Plan suggests several changes from the existing land use regulations in Denmark. The creation of a new zoning district, the Village District, is suggested. The main intent of this district is to protect existing residences in the more densely developed part of town from the adverse impacts frequently associated with various types of commercial development, while continuing to allow controlled commercial development elsewhere in town. This should both maintain residential property values in the village and provide opportunity for new businesses to provide jobs for Denmark’s residents.

The proposed new Village District will surround the existing village center of Denmark. The new district will roughly be a rectangular area approximately one mile long along Routes 160 and 117 and one half to two thirds mile wide. The Village district will extend between Pickett Hill on Route 160, where the speed limit currently decreases to 30 miles an hour to the Library on Route 117. It will extend as far north up the Lake Road to its intersection with Holiday Shores Road and as far south as the Town Garage and the oil/gas dealer on South Road (Route 117 south).

The Village district will be one of more compact development than the rest of the town. Within the Village District lot size and residential density requirements will remain at one dwelling unit per acre. All residential uses will be permitted in the Village District. Small-scale retail, office and other commercial uses which can compatibly mix with residential uses will be permitted. The zoning ordinance will establish a maximum floor area requirement for new commercial construction and for commercial uses in order to protect village residents from the adverse impacts of larger commercial development and to preserve the character of the existing development in the village. The zoning ordinance should also contain basic architectural controls to require new commercial and multifamily structures to retain compatibility to the neighboring structures in order to avoid conflicts in appearance.

The General Purpose District, now to be known as the Rural District, will include the remainder of the town not included in the Village District. All uses permitted in the Village District will be permitted in the Rural District, and the Rural District will permit a wider variety of commercial uses. The minimum lot size in the Rural will be increased to 80,000 square feet. In addition the requirement that minimum lot size be based on a “net acreage” calculation, subtracting portions of a lot not suitable for development due to the presence of steep slopes, wetlands or other soil conditions, will be expanded from only applying to lots in subdivisions to apply to all new lots in the Rural District.

Many individuals in Denmark have recently been concerned about the potential for development on mountaintops and ridgelines within the town. Such construction has the potential for causing soil erosion and for resulting in undesirable visual impacts on the scenic character of the town. In order to minimize the potential for both of these adverse impacts the Zoning Ordinance should contain restrictions on development activity on steep slopes. The current prohibition on structures in the shoreland zone being located on sites with a 25% slope should be expanded to include the entire town and to include other development activity such as roads and other earth moving on areas larger than two acres. In addition, structures should be prohibited at elevations greater than 1,700 feet above sea level.

POLICY 1: Protect areas with existing denser development (shoreland and village) from incompatible commercial uses.

Strategy 1: Establish new district in the village area with restrictions on commercial uses.

Responsible Party: Planning Board
Time Frame: 1999
Strategy 2: Continue existing shoreland zoning.
   Responsible Party: Planning Board
   Time Frame: 1999

Policy 2: Provide adequate location for new commercial uses.

Strategy 1: Continue to allow commercial uses throughout the Rural District after conditional use review.
   Responsible Party: Planning Board
   Time Frame: 1999

Policy 3: Maintain lot sizes adequate to protect drinking water supplies.

Strategy 1: Continue existing aquifer protection district
   Responsible Party: Planning Board
   Time Frame: 1999

Strategy 2: Continue existing 40,000 square foot minimum lot size in the new village district.
   Responsible Party: Planning Board
   Time Frame: 1999

Strategy 3: Require 80,000 square foot minimum lot size in the Rural District
   Responsible Party: Planning Board
   Time Frame: 1999

Strategy 4: Require a “net acreage” calculation for all new lots in the Rural District, in which land which is not suitable for development because of slope, existence of wetlands, soil conditions or other reasons is not included in the determination of the lot area.
   Responsible Party: Planning Board
   Time Frame: 1999

Policy 4: Protect Scenic Beauty

Strategy 1: Restrict development from slopes of 25% or more
   Responsible Party: Planning Board
   Time Frame: 1999

Strategy 2: Restrict development from elevations above 1,700 feet
   Responsible Party: Planning Board
   Time Frame: 1999

Policy 5: Establish more thorough review procedure and standards for commercial development outside of the “commercial” district

Strategy 1: Improve the conditional use process and standards.
   Responsible Party: Planning Board
   Time Frame: 1999

Strategy 2: Establish buffer requirements between commercial and residential uses
   Responsible Party: Planning Board
   Time Frame: 1999
STATE GOAL: EFFICIENT SYSTEM OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

STATE GUIDELINE: DEVELOP A PLAN FOR FINANCING NECESSARY PUBLIC SERVICES

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF ISSUES:

General Government

Denmark is governed by a three member Board of Selectmen-Town Meeting form of government. In March, 1992 the town enacted a charter which formalized the roles of each of the many boards and commissions in the town. The town is a member of the seven town School Administrative District 72, with two elected members on its board of directors. The Planning Board, responsible for reviewing developments and preparation of land use regulations is made up of seven elected members. The Board of Appeals is authorized to provide relief from the terms of the Zoning Ordinance where applicants can show that enforcement of the ordinance results in hardship and decide whether the Code Enforcement Officer has made a proper decision. A six member Budget Committee is responsible for making recommendations concerning the budget to the annual town meeting.

In addition to the above, town staff includes a Code Enforcement Officer, Plumbing Inspector, Health Officer, Public Works Director, Director of Civil Defense and Constable. The Town Clerk, an appointed position, serves as Treasurer, Tax Collector and Administrative Assistant. The town office is located in the former Denmark Village School. The building was renovated in 1989.

The 1991 questionnaire asked opinions of many aspects of local government. A strong majority (81%) of the year-round respondents felt that the general services of the town offices were “good” or “excellent”. The opinion of the selectmen’s performance was fairly mixed. Approximately one third each indicated the Board’s performance was “fair” or “good”, with a few more indicating “poor” than “excellent.” One out of seven year-round respondents had no opinion.

The Planning Board, Appeals Board and Code Enforcement Officer all received similar approval ratings. The Planning Board received the highest rating, with 45% of the respondents indicating the Board was doing a “good” or “excellent” job, and one quarter indicating a “fair” job. The collective opinion regarding the Appeals Board resulted in 35% indicating the Board was doing a “good” or “excellent” job. The Code Enforcement Office received a similar percentage of “good” or “excellent” opinions, but with more responses indicating a “poor” job.

With the exception of the town office services, all of these boards or positions received a substantial number of responses with “no opinion,” even from year-round residents. This may result from lack of experience in dealing with the officials, or may be from lack of knowledge about the boards’ or officials’ activities. The only major difference in opinion between year-round and seasonal residents was substantially more seasonal residents had “no opinion”, as could be expected.

The questionnaire also asked about opinions regarding whether support from property taxes should be changed. Regarding these services, a majority felt that tax support should be kept the same. Very similar percentages felt that tax support should be increased (2% for the three boards, 4% for town office services and 6% for code enforcement). The percentage indicating support should be decreased ranged only from 8% for town services to 16% for the Board of Selectmen.

Public Safety

Public safety includes police, fire protection and emergency medical or rescue services. Police protection is provided by an annually elected Constable in association with the County Sheriff Office and the State Police. The Constable is on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, generally consuming 40 hours per month of on-duty time for compensation of $4,500 per year, covering equipment, uniform, and police lights. The constable must provide his own car and gun. The number of complaints handled by the Constable has remained steady between 125 and 130 per year during the past three years. The Constable complies with the training requirements in
Order to carry a firearm and have the power of arrest. The Town Constable and the two other enforcement agencies have an effective working relationship.

In addition to the complaints handled by the Constable, the Sheriff’s Office is involved in a bout a dozen criminal investigations each year in Denmark. Of these 75% are “cleared,” meaning either a suspect was identified, the case was dropped or some other resolution was reached which meant the investigation ended.

With a 1990 population of 855, Denmark required 211 calls for police services per 1,000 population. The unavailability of complete information from surrounding towns makes comparison difficult. Comparing the activities of the Sheriff’s Office only, Denmark has a substantially higher involvement rate than Brownfield or Hiram.

Law enforcement services were generally rated “good” by respondents to the questionnaire. An equal number of year-round respondents indicated law enforcement services were either “excellent” or “poor,” 9% each. Forty-three percent of the respondents felt the service is “good” and 22% responded “fair”. The difference between year-round and seasonal respondents is that twice as many seasonal respondents had no opinion, presumably not having had the need for service.

Denmark’s fire department is organized with thirty-five active volunteers and an elected Chief. The department operates out of a station on South Road. Denmark is part of a “mutual aid” arrangement with 12 other towns in the area. Ambulance services are provided by a private company in Bridgton. Additional equipment owned by the town includes 6 airpacks, a smoke machine and ‘smokehouse’ for training purposes.

The Chief has recommended an addition to the present fire station to provide additional space for housing the town’s six vehicles. Other improvements under consideration are: expansion of the 911 emergency telephone service to include Denmark, a rescue ambulance to be owned outright by Denmark or shared with a neighboring town, additional airpacks, and more volunteer firefighters. Expensive additions such as the purchase of an ambulance must be weighed carefully in comparison to its benefits and competing needs for scarce town dollars.

A new engine was purchased in 1989, borrowing $70,000 in a five year note. Two of the fire department vehicles are expected to need replacement in the next ten years. They are a 1965 Ford tanker and a 1953 Dodge four wheel drive pick-up, costing an estimated $65,000 and $30,000 to replace respectively. The town currently does not have a reserve fund for these purchases.

Fire protection services received “good” or “excellent” ratings form 83% of the year-round respondents to the questionnaire. Over 40% of the seasonal respondents had no opinion, otherwise there was slightly less favorable opinion of the fire services.

The town is without any locally adopted fire safety regulations.

TOWN GOALS: MINIMIZE THE LOSS OF LIFE AND PROPERTY FROM FIRE

POLICY 1: Maintain a level of fire protection services appropriate for the growth of the town.

Strategy 1: Continue the existing mutual aid agreements with nearby municipalities.

Responsible Party: Fire Chief, Board of Selectmen
Time Frame: ongoing

POLICY 2: Reduce risk of structural fires.

Strategy 1: Adopt and enforce the widely accepted National Fire Protection Association’s code, NFPA 211, which specifies safety standards for future construction or installation of chimneys, fireplaces, vents and solid fuel burning appliances.

Responsible Party: Fire Chief, Board of Selectmen
Time Frame: March, 1993 town meeting
POLICY 3: Reduce need for additional types of equipment.

   Strategy 1: Maintain the building height limitation of 35 feet.

Roads

Municipal spending on highways and bridges is the second largest category of spending. Denmark has approximately 53 miles of public roads, of which 12 miles (23%) are state aid highways. There are also 18 miles of private roads in the town. The remainder are town ways. State aid roads are maintained by the state, but snow plowing is the town’s responsibility.

Roads in Denmark have been classified according to their function. The numbered state highways are major arterial streets, moving traffic from one place to another, carrying high volumes of traffic. Lake Road and Sebago Road have been classified as collectors which conduct and distribute traffic between local access roads and arterials. All other roads are local access road providing access to adjacent uses, carrying low volumes of traffic. It is difficult to carry high volumes of through traffic at the same time as providing access to adjacent land uses. The functional classification of a road should control its design and can be used by the town to provide a framework for prioritizing maintenance and snow removal.

In the spring of 1991 a survey of road conditions was conducted looking at type of pavement, pavement conditions, shoulder condition, and drainage structures such as culverts. The results of this survey show that 28% of the road mileage was considered in “good” condition and 60% is in “fair” condition. This leaves 12%, or 5 miles in “poor” condition.

The exact location and right-of-way width of many of the town roads is not known. Many of the older streets are lined with stone walls which serve as a reminder of Denmark’s past as an agricultural community and lend a sense of character to the landscape.

Traffic data for Denmark have been collected historically by the state at six locations. Projections of traffic levels at these locations indicate that satisfactory levels of service will continue through the next twenty years. Road maintenance and improvement will be the most pressing factor for Denmark’s transportation planning. There are no “high accident locations” in Denmark.

The Comprehensive Plan Committee has recommended that the Public Works Director and the Selectmen together prepare a road improvement plan, which would include a recommendation regarding which town roads should be given priority for improvement.

The questionnaire circulated by the Planning Committee asked about respondents’ perceptions of the level of service given to roads. Only 46% of the respondents indicated that winter maintenance was “good” or “excellent.” Seasonal residents have a better opinion of winter road maintenance than year-round residents. Only 37% of year-round residents rated winter road maintenance “good” or “excellent”, while 56% of seasonal residents thought so. Summer maintenance was rated better, as 58% of seasonal residents felt that summer maintenance was “good” or “excellent.” However, more than 50% of the year-round residents indicated that summer maintenance was “poor” or “fair.”

When asked if local tax support for road maintenance should be changed, most respondents said “no.” There was more support for increasing the amount spent on winter road maintenance, with 24% of the year-round residents thinking so, compared to 9% thinking support should decrease. Seasonal residents were more likely to not have opinions on winter road maintenance, presumably because they are in Denmark only for the summer. Two thirds of the year-round residents thought that spending on summer road maintenance should remain the same. Similar numbers, but less, favored increased spending (11%) than decreasing spending (16%).

The town’s public works department is responsible for the maintenance of the streets throughout the town. This responsibility includes both snow removal and summer maintenance of pavement and drainage. In March 1992, the town began a new Department of Public Works, with its director appointed by the Board of Selectmen, replacing an elected road commissioner. The Director has the responsibility of overseeing the
maintenance and snow removal of all town facilities, including the fire station, town garage, municipal building, transfer station, cemeteries, beach, ball field and dam.

The public works department currently employs three full time employees, including the Director, and operates out of the town garage, which is located on the South Road. The town garage building is a 60’ x 48’ steel building built in 1988. Also, the town recently completed construction of a salt shed at the town maintenance lot.

The major equipment and vehicles expected to need replacement in the next ten years are listed below. The costs of maintaining and improving the existing town roads is a major financial burden for the town. Accepting additional roads as public ways will increase this burden and also make it more difficult to maintain the quality of current public ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vehicle/ Equipment</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Year Purchased</th>
<th>Expected Replacement</th>
<th>Replacement Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International 4 x 4 dump; plowing</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1985</td>
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<td>1999</td>
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<td>John Deere Backhoe/Loader ditch work</td>
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<td>1995</td>
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<td>T-500 Galion Road Grader road grading</td>
<td>1973</td>
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<td>Tailgate Sander sanding</td>
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<td>Frink One-Way Plow plowing</td>
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<td>Double Wing Plow plowing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hopper Sanders (2) sanding</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>(each) $5,000</td>
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TOWN GOAL: IMPROVE AND MAINTAIN THE TOWN’S ROAD SYSTEM TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE TRAVELING CAPACITY AND COMFORT YEAR ROUND.

POLICY 1: Develop a road improvement plan for the next ten years.

Responsible Party: Public Works Director and Selectmen
Time Frame: for presentation to March, 1994 town meeting

POLICY 2: No new town roads should be accepted until all current town roads are improved to satisfactory condition.


Responsible Party: Public Works Director and Board of Selectmen
Time Frame: By summer, 1993

Recreation Facilities and Programs

The town maintains a public beach on Moose Pond near the dam and provides summer swimming lessons at Camp Walden. The beach has a swimming dock, float, picnic tables, toilet facilities with parking nearby to accommodate 15 to 20 cars. There are only a few days during the summer when it gets crowded. Approximately $2,000 is allocated by the town each year for expenses relating to the public beach. This money is used for beach upkeep and swimming lessons for children. Testing of the water is done at regular intervals during the summer months to insure that it is safe for swimming. Bacterial contamination has forced the town beach to be closed in the past.

Denmark sports active baseball teams, joining in a Little League with teams from six neighboring towns. The program is managed by volunteers, and serves approximately 50 children each year. Home games are played on
the field next to the town office and the church. This field is not owned by the town but is available for recreational use as long as the municipal building is used for municipal purposes.

The town maintains boat launching areas on three ponds: Hancock, Sand and Granger.

The Denmark Draggers, a snowmobile club, maintains a network of trails with financial support partially from the money refunded by the state from the proceeds of snowmobile registration.

The state owns parcels of property on Hancock Pond and Moose Pond. The parcels total 1853 acres, of which approximately 170 are in Denmark. The Bureau of Parks and Recreations has no plans for their development at this time, though they may be utilized in the future as a state park. The 2,700 acre Brownfield Game Management Area, a state owned nature conservation area, is situated partly within the boundaries of Denmark.

The 1991 expenditures for the recreation program were $2,100, used to meet expenses relating to upkeep of the ball field and beach, and for the swimming instructor.

The 1991 survey asked about people’s opinions of the town’s recreation facilities and programs. As can be expected, a large number of seasonal residents had no opinion. Sixty-one percent of the year-round residents rated both the town’s recreation facilities and programs as “fair” or “poor”, while only 21% rated the facilities as “good” or “excellent.” The town’s recreation programs were rated “good” or “excellent” by only 15% of the year-round residents. While apparently unhappy with the facilities, year-round residents do not seem willing to pay for improvements. When asked if local tax support should be changed, 45% of the year round residents said “no”, 25% said “increased” and 12% said “decreased”. The percentages are very similar for the recreational programs. Fifty-eight percent of the year-round respondents indicated the town should “encourage” the development of land for recreational purposes, while 31% thought it should be “permitted.” Eighty-one percent, split evenly between “permit” and “encourage”, supported additional public swimming areas.

**TOWN GOAL: SUFFICIENT PUBLIC RECREATION AREAS**

**POLICY 1:** Expand existing public recreation facilities in the town as soon as it is financially feasible to do so.

**Strategy 1:** Additional facilities recommended for consideration are: tennis courts, indoor swimming pool, new public swimming beach.

**Responsible Party:** Board of Selectmen  
**Time Frame:** Dependent upon town’s financial situation

**Utilities**

Electric service is provided by Central Maine Power Company, which reports having adequate capacity to service additional residential and light commercial growth throughout the town. Three-phase power is available from the Denmark CMP substation west through town along Route 160. The availability of three-phase service is one consideration in the designation of future areas for industrial development within the town.

Local and in-state telephone service is provided by the Standish Telephone Company which maintains a fully digital switching station connected by a fiber optic system that allows a wide range of telecommunications services.

Cable television came to Denmark in January 1990 offering a choice of 22 channels. Expansion of the area of the town served by cable TV is possible, but has been postponed due to the financial problems of the franchise holder.

**Solid Waste**

In 1947 the town voted to designate a five acres site near the intersection of Route 117 and Sebago Road as the town dump, with an additional 4.9 acres added in 1975. This site served as the town dump until 1990, when the
decision was made to convert it into a transfer station and the town has entered into a 20 year contract with the Maine Energy Recovery Company in Biddeford. A private contractor hauls the waste to Biddeford. The town now has a license for operating a transfer station, which it has been doing since 1990.

State law now prohibits towns and cities from dumping their solid waste in open landfills. Denmark’s is “grandfathered” because of its age, and is therefore allowed more time to comply with the law. However, there is a deadline of January, 1993, to close and seal it in an appropriate manner, in order to prevent ground water contamination. How a particular town goes about closing and sealing its landfill depends upon considerations such as population, location, and the presence of any hazardous materials. Denmark is currently waiting for its landfill to be classified. As soon as it is classified, the town will hire an engineer to draw up a closure plan. When this is ready, probably by the end of 1992, the work of closing and sealing the dump will begin.

The enactment in 1990 of a state law making it mandatory for towns and cities to introduce programs for recycling solid waste has spurred the town into taking appropriate action on this matter. At the March 1991 town meeting residents voted to form a recycling committee. The town is now a member of the Oxford County Regional Waste Commission and has a joint contract, along with eleven other towns, for the collection of glass, paper, cardboard, plastics, aluminum and metal cans. Various services are provided by the Commission, including special bins for recyclable materials, instructions for dump attendants and presentations on recycling for school children. The new recycling program was launched in June, 1992. Although it is a voluntary program, it is hoped that the state’s target of 25% of solid waste recycled will be achieved.

The survey indicated that more than half the year-round respondents felt that the town’s solid waste disposal services were “fair” or “poor”, and one third felt they were “good.” Taken prior to the town joining the regional waste commission, the survey revealed over half the year-round respondents indicated the town’s recycling program was “poor”. Solid waste disposal is the town service respondents were most likely to favor supporting with increased local tax expenditures. Increased spending was supported by 22% of all respondents and 25% of year-round respondents. The survey also revealed strong support for recycling. Even prior to the initiation of a recycling program by the town, over half the respondents indicated they recycled some of their solid waste (other than deposit beverage containers). Nine of ten respondents favored the town offering stronger incentives to recycle and eight of ten favored mandatory recycling.

State law requires each municipality to make provision for the disposal of the septage generated within the community. Septage is the solid material which needs to be pumped from septic tanks on a regular basis. Currently Denmark has an agreement with the Portland Water District for the disposal of septage. The private contractors who pump residential septic tanks transport the septage to their wastewater treatment plant in Portland.

**TOWN GOAL: PROVIDE SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL SERVICES WHICH MINIMIZE OVERALL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

**POLICY 1:** The town should take the necessary actions to prevent the spread of ground water contamination from the landfill.

**Strategy 1:** The Selectmen should cooperate with the DEP to develop a plan for the formal closing of the landfill.

**Responsible Party:** Board of Selectmen  
**Time Frame:** ongoing

**POLICY 2:** Assure long term availability of a septage disposal for Denmark property owners.

**Strategy 1:** Continue an agreement with a licensed facility for the disposal of septage.

**Responsible Party:** Board of Selectmen  
**Time Frame:** upon adoption of plan
The town’s budget has increased 63% from $825,944 in 1987 to $1,345,879 in 1991, an average of 16% per year. If the 1987 budget had been adjusted for inflation to express the same amount of money in “1991 dollars”, the real increase would have been 36%. The effects of the 1990-92 recession caused the town to reduce its spending in 1991.

Since 1987 the three categories with the fastest growth have been health and sanitation, general assistance (included in other accounts) and the county tax. Increased spending for health and sanitation reflect increases in solid waste disposal costs. The tough economic times caused the town’s general assistance spending to jump dramatically, more than doubling between 1990 and 1991 alone.

There has been a shift in the percentage of total expenditures for education and non-school expenditures. In 1987, 48% of the total municipal budget was for education. In 1990, educational spending had decreased to 43% of total expenditures, indicating that non-school expenditures have been increasing faster than the town’s assessment from the school district. In 1991, the school assessment increased while non-school spending decreased, resulting in education accounting for 51% of the town’s expenditures.

There are three reasons why Denmark’s total expenditures have been increasing: inflation, rising population, and increased responsibility upon local government. Prices have risen approximately 18% during the time frame analyzed. According to estimates, during this time period the population which needed to be served had increased from 770 in 1987, to 900 in 1991, a 17% increase. Based on these population estimates, as well as others for the years between, Denmark’s total expenditures per person can be calculated. Per capita spending increased from $1,073 in 1987 to $1,495 in 1991. This represents a 39% increase. When the difference is adjusted for inflation, the real increase in per capita expenditures is 16%.

Increased responsibility has been placed upon the town from two directions. The state and federal governments have produced new mandates, such as educational reform and environmental protection while cutting back on their financial support. Also residents have increased expectations of the type and quality of services provided by the town. Individual departmental spending in Denmark illustrates these two points. Almost all of the expenditures under health and sanitation are for solid waste disposal. As new regulations have been placed on the operation of landfills, Denmark has constructed a transfer station, is preparing to close its landfill and spending has increased 258% in the five year period. Spending for police and fire service has increased by 68% during the past four years as the town has improved its equipment and training for the personnel, purchasing a new fire truck in 1990.

Denmark has three sources of revenue: property taxes, intergovernmental revenues, and fees for services. Property taxes and intergovernmental revenue account for 98% of all revenue. Total revenue increased by just over half between 1987 and 1991. Taxes, the largest single category, grew by the same percentage. The town’s revenue from other levels of government increased the fastest of other source of revenue. There have been wide fluctuations in revenue placed in the other categories. Though intergovernmental revenue increased steadily between 1987 and 1991, the state’s budget crisis in 1991 resulted in a loss of one fifth of that source of revenue for the town and signals less intergovernmental revenue coming to the town in the future. Between 1990 and 1991 the amount of revenue from taxes stayed virtually the same, while all other sources decreased, resulting in the percentage of total revenue raised through taxes increasing to its highest level.

Adjusted for inflation, the change in total revenues between 1987 and 1991 was 28%. Adjusted for inflation, per capita tax collection increased only 9% during the period.

Property taxes are levied on real estate, the personal property of businesses and on automobiles. The tax on automobiles is collected as the “excise tax.” The value on which the tax is levied is the manufacturer’s list price plus options, and therefore the total collection depends on the number of vehicles registered and the value of the vehicles. The amount of excise tax collected also depends on how well the collection clerks determine the value of the vehicle, by asking about options. Excise tax collection in Denmark has increased from $71,103 in 1987 only to $78,408 in 1991. In 1987 excise tax collections accounted for 8% of total revenues. By 1990, they had decreased to less than 6%. Under Maine law, all businesses are required to pay a tax on their personal property such as machinery, equipment, furniture and fixtures. The remainder of the taxes collected by the town are real estate taxes.
Intergovernmental revenue is revenue the town receives from the state or federal government. In 1991 the town received a total of $109,113 in state funds. The state reimbursed the town for $7,850 or 60% of its general assistance costs and $10,684 for revenue lost due to enrollment of property in the Tree Growth Tax program.

Until there is a dramatic improvement in the New England economy the town can expect to see revenue from sources other than real estate and personal property taxes remain constant or decrease.

FISCAL CAPACITY

“Fiscal capacity” is a community’s ability to raise money. Differences between communities result in differences in the “ease” with which funds can be raised from town to town. The primary factors which cause differences are the total valuation of the municipality compared to the population and the percentage of the valuation which is residential property. The percentage of seasonal residences or other property owned by non-residents and the income of tax payers also play a role.

In comparing valuations from town to town the assessors’ valuation cannot be used due to varying pricing methodologies and assessment rates. Therefore the state valuation is used to provide a common methodology and ratio. The state annually produces a valuation of each community, which is used, among other purposes, for determining the amount of state aid to education. Since 1985, Denmark’s state valuation has increased 179%. The 1985 state valuation was $36,200,000, compared to $101,000,000 in 1991. The state valuation for Denmark and five other municipalities were compared. The percentage increase in three of the six municipalities during the time period has been roughly the same, with Hiram’s valuation increasing slower. Remembering that a municipality’s total valuation is one indicator of its ability to raise money through taxation, the table above clearly shows that, though of similar population, the six municipalities may have very different fiscal capacities. In order to raise the same amount of money through property taxes, Denmark must have a tax rate nearly one and a half times that of Sebago or Lovell.

Another useful concept is that Denmark’s state valuation increased at a faster rate than some of the other municipalities. Whereas state aid to education is based on a formula comparing enrollment to valuation, assuming similar changes in enrollment, Denmark’s state aid would decrease. Also, its share of the county tax will increase.

By dividing the total population of a municipality into the total valuation, the per capita valuation can be determined. This may give a better indication of the “taxing power” of the municipality. A municipality with a high per capita valuation may be able to raise more funds through the property tax without as much of an impact on its residents than a town with a low per capita valuation. Per capita valuations based on the 1991 state valuation and the 1990 population have also been compared with neighboring towns. Denmark’s was almost three times that in Hiram’s and larger than all the towns but Lovell.

While the state valuation may provide a convenient method to compare towns because they are produced by a consistent methodology for all municipalities, it is the local valuation that is the figure from which the actual property taxes are determined and in which most citizens are interested. The growth in the total valuation was not able to keep up with inflation until 1987 when it took a large jump. The total valuation took another large jump again two years later. Even if no new services were provided, the tax rate during that time would have had to increase solely for the town’s budget to keep pace with the increased costs of doing business.

Between 1981 and 1991, the local valuation increased 215%. It has increased 54% since 1987, an average of 14% per year. Per capita valuation increased 37%. However it has been decreasing since the 1989 revaluation, resulting in a higher “per person tax” to raise an equivalent amount of money.

Per capita valuation may merely indicate that property in a given municipality is very expensive and ignores who pays the bills. An additional comparison is the percentage of the total municipal valuation which is residential property. This indicates the percentage of the assessment in each town paid by owners of residential property compared to commercial, industrial or undeveloped property. The state provides a breakdown of a municipality’s valuation by several categories. Denmark, Lovell and Sebago, all with little industrial or commercial development have similar high percentages of their valuation in residential property. The other towns, with the exception of Baldwin, have a residential property make-up seven to ten percent less. Baldwin,
with the Hiram Station Hydroelectric facility making up 25% of the town’s total valuation, has a substantially lower percentage of property value in residential use.

The mix of seasonal and year-round residences in a town varies widely, limiting the use of this indicator. A municipality with a large number of seasonal residences, such as Denmark, will be able to raise money without as much of an impact on its residents. The data do not differentiate between seasonal and year round residences. The percentages of total dwelling units classified as seasonal in the 1990 Census range from a low of 21% in Fryeburg to a high of 65% in Denmark. Comparing the percentage of total valuation in residential property and the percentage of seasonal housing can give a rough indication of the impact of seasonal residences on the tax base. The range for the eight selected towns is from 58% in Denmark to 6% in Baldwin.

In combining all three indicators of a municipality’s fiscal capacity, Denmark appears to be as well off as the surrounding municipalities, if not better. Denmark is among the higher towns in total valuation but has grown faster, possibly resulting in the loss of state school aid. The town’s per capita valuation is higher than many of the nearby towns. Although the percentage of the total valuation in residential property is relatively high, Denmark has the highest percentage of seasonal dwellings.

One other indicator show’s Denmark’s valuation may not be able to expand as much as other municipalities. Denmark has a very high percentage of its land area placed under special taxation programs. These programs include the Tree Growth Tax Law and the Farm and Open Space Tax Law. Over half the land area of the town is registered under one of these two programs. The value of land in these programs makes up 1.4% of the total state valuation, almost double the percentage of neighboring towns. While the reduction in valuations means the mill rate must increase to raise a given sum of money, farm land and wood land demand virtually no public services, provide opportunity for outdoor recreation and have aesthetic value to the town. Most analyses show that development of vacant land results in a municipality spending more on services than the taxes generated.

Despite the favorable position compared to nearby towns, further analysis shows that Denmark is in a precarious position. While a high percentage of the total valuation is seasonal property, the increase in state valuation puts the town at risk of losing state education funds. The fiscal resource available to the town appears to be non-resident property owners. The lack of commercial and industrial property means increases in municipal spending will have a more direct and harder impact on its residential property owners.

Planning and Budgeting for Future Expenditures

There are new facilities or replacement equipment identified as needed to maintain the level of services provided, or improve services where they have been identified as deficient. The above analysis lays the framework for figuring how the town can meet those needs within the budgetary constraints. The town can forecast its financial future based on a set of assumptions; use predicted growth in its operating costs, the growth of the total valuation and desired changes in the tax rate to predict the availability of funds. Expenditures have been increasing at an annual rate of 16%. The tax assessment increased at an annual rate 14.5%. Residential property makes up 89% of the town’s property valuation but Denmark has a number of seasonal residences. The per capita income of residents grew at an annual average rate of only 6.3% between 1979 and 1989, and fell between the 1987 estimate and the 1989 estimate.

By further analysis of the town budget, and assuming certain changes in the future, the availability of funds to meet the needs for the replacement or improvement of municipal equipment and facilities can be projected. The key factors used in these projections are presented below.

The figures below are of past change and are used as indicators of future change. However because of the economic climate in the past three years, we can no longer assume the future will continue the trends of the past. The committee has made some projections about how these figures will change. Of course these are only estimates. However, this exercise is an important illustration of the type of analysis that can help the town chart its financial future. In addition to using the data below, recent town budgets have been analyzed to distinguish capital expenditures from operating expenditures.
Key Factors for Financial Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Total Growth</th>
<th>Average Annual Growth</th>
<th>Per Capita Growth</th>
<th>Per Capita Avg. Annual Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenditures</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Revenues</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-tax revenues</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Valuation</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Income</td>
<td>-7%*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 1987-1989 change

Because the tables project expenditures or revenues at a particular amount is not a prediction or certainty that it will come to pass. The town has the ability to control the amount of money available for spending by setting the tax rate. The higher the mill rate, the more money will brought in by these taxes with a theoretically unlimited source of funds. The political process determines the spending priorities and amounts, which in turn determine the mill rate. The tables below present three different scenarios depending on permitted changes in the mill rate. The tables present actual data for 1988 and 1990. For 1992 forward the figures are projections based on the assumptions built into formulas.

Revenue from sources other than property taxes increased 6% per year between 1987 and 1991. Whereas there was a decrease between 1990 and 1991, and revenues from the state can be expected to remain steady or decrease for the near term, the projected increase over the next ten years is 2% per year.

The town’s valuation has increased during the past ten years, but values being dependent on economic activity, the total valuation has fallen since 1989. The total valuation increased an annual average of 14% between 1987 and 1991. However, between 1989 and 1991 it dropped an average of 4% per year. It is projected that the change in the total valuation during the next ten years is likely to be similar to that of the early 1980’s when New England was recovering from the last recession 2% per year.

Available property taxes are a function of the valuation and the mill rate. If the mill rate is kept constant, as in the first table, available taxes increase only as the valuation increases. In the other tables, the available taxes increase at a greater pace, depending on the allowed increase in the tax rate.

The operating and maintenance budget is total expenditures minus the identified capital improvements. Because total expenditures includes the town’s assessment to the school district, it may also include capital expenditures by the district. The growth in the calculated operating and maintenance budget between 1987 and 1991 was 69%, or an average of 17% per year. With the arrival of a recessionary economy, and the lack of growth in the town’s total valuation, the operating and maintenance budget was reduced 1.5% from 1990 to 1991. Inflationary pressures alone will mean that continued decline or a steady budget will soon result in a noticeable loss of services. It has been assumed that the operating and maintenance budget will grow at an average rate of 5% per year, slightly ahead of inflation.

The table below presents an analysis with a constant tax rate. Should the town make a decision that the tax rate should remain at the 1991 level, $12.20 per $1,000 of assessed value, the town will not be able to raise enough revenue to meet a 5% increase in non-capital spending. Under the assumptions stated above, available revenues will rise only 2% per year. The town will not be able to make capital investments and improvements and will need to reduce services currently provided to balance its budget or increase the mill rate to avoid cutting services. This statement does not mean that a mill rate increase is absolutely necessary. There may be services that town is willing to cut, or ways to provide those services more efficiently. However there will be the need to replace or improve capital items in the next ten years, and funds to finance these will be necessary. In addition, the projected growth in the town’s population may increase the demand for services.
Future Budget Scenarios with No Change in the Mill Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Non-Tax Revenue</th>
<th>Total Valuation</th>
<th>Mill Rate</th>
<th>Available Property Taxes</th>
<th>Total Revenue Available</th>
<th>Operating and Maint. Expenses Available for Cap. Impr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>$312,669</td>
<td>$59,093,550</td>
<td>0.0134</td>
<td>$791,772</td>
<td>$1,104,441</td>
<td>937,994 ($166,447)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>$273,952</td>
<td>$99,007,000</td>
<td>0.0112</td>
<td>$1,127,210</td>
<td>$1,401,162</td>
<td>1,355,682 ($45,480)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>$247,190</td>
<td>$92,451,525</td>
<td>0.0122</td>
<td>$1,127,909</td>
<td>$1,375,099</td>
<td>1,401,330 ($26,231)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>$257,177</td>
<td>$96,186,567</td>
<td>0.0122</td>
<td>$1,173,476</td>
<td>$1,430,653</td>
<td>1,544,966 ($114,314)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>$267,567</td>
<td>$100,072,504</td>
<td>0.0122</td>
<td>$1,220,885</td>
<td>$1,548,585</td>
<td>1,703,325 ($214,874)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>$278,376</td>
<td>$104,115,433</td>
<td>0.0122</td>
<td>$1,321,525</td>
<td>$1,611,147</td>
<td>2,070,403 ($459,255)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$289,623</td>
<td>$108,321,697</td>
<td>0.0122</td>
<td>$1,374,914</td>
<td>$1,676,238</td>
<td>2,282,619 ($606,381)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second table is identical to the above table, except the mill rate has been allowed to increase 3% each year. Allowing this increase in the tax rate, revenues will not be able to keep up with the assumed growth in the operating budget.

Future Budget Scenarios with 3% Annual Growth in the Mill Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Non-Tax Revenue</th>
<th>Total Valuation</th>
<th>Mill Rate</th>
<th>Available Property Taxes</th>
<th>Total Revenue Available</th>
<th>Operating and Maint. Expenses Available for Cap. Impr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>$312,669</td>
<td>$59,093,550</td>
<td>0.0134</td>
<td>$791,772</td>
<td>$1,104,441</td>
<td>937,994 ($166,447)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>$273,952</td>
<td>$99,007,000</td>
<td>0.0112</td>
<td>$1,127,210</td>
<td>$1,401,162</td>
<td>1,355,682 ($45,480)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>$308,578</td>
<td>$92,451,525</td>
<td>0.0119</td>
<td>$1,098,516</td>
<td>$1,407,094</td>
<td>1,401,330 ($5,764)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>$321,044</td>
<td>$96,186,567</td>
<td>0.0126</td>
<td>$1,212,499</td>
<td>$1,533,543</td>
<td>1,544,966 ($11,423)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>$334,015</td>
<td>$100,072,504</td>
<td>0.0134</td>
<td>$1,338,308</td>
<td>$1,672,323</td>
<td>1,703,325 ($31,003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>$347,509</td>
<td>$104,115,433</td>
<td>0.0142</td>
<td>$1,477,172</td>
<td>$1,824,680</td>
<td>1,877,916 ($53,236)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$361,548</td>
<td>$108,321,697</td>
<td>0.0151</td>
<td>$1,630,443</td>
<td>$1,991,992</td>
<td>2,070,403 ($78,411)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>$376,155</td>
<td>$112,697,893</td>
<td>0.0160</td>
<td>$1,799,619</td>
<td>$2,175,774</td>
<td>2,282,619 ($106,845)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The third table presents a scenario with a 4% annual increase in the tax rate. This scenario does provide enough revenue to meet the assumed growth in the operating budget and meet some project capital needs. However, the amount available for capital needs is less than the town spent annually between 1987 and 1990.

Future Budget Scenarios with 4% Annual Growth in the Mill Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Non-Tax Revenue</th>
<th>Total Valuation</th>
<th>Mill Rate</th>
<th>Available Property Taxes</th>
<th>Total Revenue Available</th>
<th>Operating and Maint. Expenses Available for Cap. Impr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>$312,669</td>
<td>$59,093,550</td>
<td>0.0134</td>
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<td>937,994 ($166,447)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>$273,952</td>
<td>$99,007,000</td>
<td>0.0112</td>
<td>$1,127,210</td>
<td>$1,401,162</td>
<td>1,355,682 ($45,480)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>$298,223</td>
<td>$92,451,525</td>
<td>0.0119</td>
<td>$1,098,516</td>
<td>$1,407,094</td>
<td>1,401,330 ($5,764)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>$310,272</td>
<td>$96,186,567</td>
<td>0.0131</td>
<td>$1,260,276</td>
<td>$1,570,548</td>
<td>1,544,966 ($16,884)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>$322,807</td>
<td>$100,072,504</td>
<td>0.0142</td>
<td>$1,418,185</td>
<td>$1,740,991</td>
<td>1,703,325 ($37,666)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>$335,848</td>
<td>$104,115,433</td>
<td>0.0153</td>
<td>$1,595,879</td>
<td>$1,931,727</td>
<td>1,877,916 ($53,810)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$349,416</td>
<td>$108,321,697</td>
<td>0.0166</td>
<td>$1,795,837</td>
<td>$2,145,253</td>
<td>2,070,403 ($74,850)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>$363,533</td>
<td>$112,697,893</td>
<td>0.0179</td>
<td>$2,020,849</td>
<td>$2,384,382</td>
<td>2,282,619 ($101,763)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These three tables illustrate the financial difficulties the town may be facing in meeting the needs of the community during the coming decade. Of course the analyses are based on a set of assumptions which may be as sturdy as a house of cards. However the tables point out the need for ongoing analysis of the town’s financial situation and future. The uncertainty of future intergovernmental revenues and the future of real estate values place an even more important stress on the need for sound financial planning.

Financial planning is not simply budget restrictions, but analysis of the needs of the community and how best to meet these needs. Reconstructing and annually updating tables similar to those above will allow the town to plan for the right time to make the needed improvements in its capital assets, and to avoid large jumps and drops in its budget and the tax rate.
The following table lists capital investments identified in the inventory as necessary in the coming ten years. Although a number of public roads were identified as being in need of improvement, the ongoing nature of road improvements and the unspecific description of the improvement needed results in their omission from the table. An estimate cost for each item is listed, in today’s dollars.

Capital Investment Needs for which Cost Estimates are Available

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Expected Year of Purchase or Improvement</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4x4 Dump/plow</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road Grader</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailgate Sander</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopper Sanders (2)</td>
<td>1995 (each)</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backhoe/Loader</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dump/plow</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Dept. Tanker</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>65,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dump/plow</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Dept. 4x4 Pickup</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Dept. Tanker 2-Ton 4x4</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Costs for the landfill closure are still unknown at this time. Therefore these costs have not been included in the table. Excluding the improvements for which cost estimates were not available, the town is facing capital investment needs of over a half million dollars. The magnitude of the landfill closure costs are likely large enough to be funded by a long term note, increasing the total cost with interest payments.

Using an assumption of an annual 4% increase in the mill rate, the total available funds for capital improvements is just barely adequate for the financing of the investments with costs shown above. An annual average of approximately $54,000 is projected to be needed over the next ten years. Clearly the town faces some serious decisions about the level of service it wishes to provide and its willingness to pay for that service.

Based on the discussion above the committee feels the current practice of approving capital expenditures item-by-item as the perceived need arises leaves much to be desired. This practice may cost the town more because purchasing vehicles and other costly capital equipment usually necessitates taking out a loan. It is preferable to replace this with a system that is based on knowing in advance what equipment or other capital purchases will be required – and when – so that funds are available when the time comes.

**TOWN GOAL:** PROVIDE FOR THE FUTURE NEEDS OF THE TOWN IN AN EFFICIENT AND COST EFFECTIVE MANNER

**POLICY 1:** Major investments in town facilities and improvements in services by the town should be identified in advance to allow for proper discussion of need and exploration of alternative financing strategies.

**Strategy 1:** The municipal budget and bookkeeping procedures should distinguish between recurring or operating costs and capital costs, capital costs being defined as purchases or expenditures on physical property or nonrecurring costs for services of $5,000 or more.

**Responsible Party:** Board of Selectmen, Budget Committee

**Time Frame:** Bookkeeping, 1993, budget, 1994
Strategy 2: A capital investment plan which projects all major purchase or construction needs in the next five years should be prepared. SMRPC may be contracted to help set up such a plan for the town.

Responsible Party: Board of Selectmen, Budget Committee
Time Frame: Annually starting 1994

Strategy 3: Alternative sources of funding other than property taxation should be explored for each item.

Responsible Party: Board of Selectmen, Budget Committee, Department Heads
Time Frame: Annually

POLICY 2: The town should take advantage of opportunities for cost reduction and avoiding duplication by cooperation with neighboring municipalities.

Strategy 1: Continue the mutual aid agreements for fire protection with the twelve neighboring towns.

Responsible Party: Board of Selectmen, Fire Chief
Time Frame: Ongoing

Strategy 2: Approach neighboring towns about the feasibility of establishing a policy regarding sharing infrequently used expensive equipment to reduce the financial costs for each town.

Responsible Party: Board of Selectmen, Public Works Director
Time Frame: Ongoing

STATE GOAL: INCREASE JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND ECONOMIC WELL BEING

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF ISSUES:

While only one-third or less of Denmark’s workers are employed within the town, the vast majority of the remainder work within a relatively short distance. Thirty-six percent of the workers reporting their place of work in the 1980 Census worked in Denmark; 26% worked in Bridgton and 20% worked in Conway. Over 90% worked within a two town radius of Denmark. Consistent with this information, the census reports that half of the work force spent less than 20 minutes traveling to work, and that only 25% traveled greater than 30 minutes on a daily basis.

The 1991 questionnaire indicated that 23% of the respondents work in Denmark, 14% work in Bridgton, 6% work in Fryeburg, 17% work in Conway and 4% work in the Windham area. In addition there are now 4% of the work force who commutes to the Portland area, whereas in 1980 there were none. More Denmark residents are traveling further to get to work compared to 1980. The 1990 Census reports the mean travel time to work as almost 24 minutes, up only slightly from less than 22 minutes in 1980.

Denmark’s unemployment rate has been similar to that of the surrounding area. The average monthly labor force statistics for Denmark in 1990 reveal a total labor force of 491 people. With a 1990 population of 955, nearly 60% of the population is in the work force. Between 1980 and 1990 the estimate of the size of the labor force in Denmark increased 122%, while population increased by only 27%. Changing economic times, changing social expectations and an increasing percentage of the population in the working age range all contribute to this difference in growth rates.
The 1980 Census reported employment by occupation and employment by industry. In 1980, 79% of the employed people in Denmark were private wage and salary workers; 10% were self employed; and 10% worked for the government. A comparison of the industries in which residents of Denmark and surrounding communities worked in 1980 was made. Denmark had a substantially higher proportion of residents employed in the finances, insurance and real estate industry, the transportation and communications industry and, to a lesser extent, the construction industry. Employment in manufacturing was much lower in Denmark than the subregion.

Comparing the distribution of the work force by occupation for Denmark and the surrounding communities for 1980, there was a fairly even division between “white collar” workers in managerial, technical, and sales jobs (49%) and “blue collar” workers in production, fabrication, or laborer occupations (44%). Compared to the neighboring municipalities, Denmark had a higher percentage of white collar workers.

Denmark is part of the Sebago Lakes Region Labor Market Area. Close to 80% of Denmark workers were employed with the area in 1980. Changes in employment opportunities in the LMA therefore have an impact on Denmark residents. A comparison of employment by industry from 1980 and 1987 illustrates that construction, transportation/communications and the finance, insurance and real estate sectors all shrank as a percentage of the workplace. These were the industries with high employment by Denmark residents. Service and government employment, on the other hand, both expanded dramatically. Over the nine year period 1980-1989, service sector employment increased over 8%, while government employment increased by an even greater 11.4%.

The 1980 census gave us very complete data regarding income distribution and sources. The only data on a municipal basis available since that time is an estimate of per capita income prepared every other year by the Census Bureau, the most recent available is 1987. Denmark’s per capita income is reported to have increased 75.4% between 1979 and 1987. This was in the middle of the growth in per capita income in surrounding towns, and higher than Oxford County’s.

The distribution of 1979 income among Denmark households shows significantly more families on the lower end of the spectrum. The 1979 median household income in Denmark was $12,473. The median household income for Oxford County was $13,029, or slightly more than Denmark’s. The 1979 mean household income in Denmark was $16,911, or 36% higher than the median. This indicates that there were more households in the lower income levels, and a few with very high incomes to raise the mean.

Of the towns in the subregion, the per capita income in Denmark was the highest in 1979. Between 1979 and 1987, the per capita income in Denmark grew at the second slowest rate in the sub-region, 75%, yet remained the highest.

Most of the businesses located in Denmark are associated either with the construction industry, natural resources, or the tourism industry, though there are plenty of exceptions. The Comprehensive Plan Committee identified approximately eighty businesses or people in business in the town.

The 1990 – 1991 Maine Manufacturing Directory lists three manufacturing firms located in the town: Buck Meadow Farm, manufacturer of pancake mix, Cardinal Printing Co., and Curtis-Stebbins, manufacturer of sporting goods and camping equipment. None of the companies are what would be typically thought of as “factories” and, according to the directory, their total combined employment is seven. An additional company, most likely Denmark’s largest employer, and one most people are more likely to identify as manufacturing, though not included in the directory, is the Moir Co. The Moir Co. rewinds electric motors, and employs approximately 30 people.

No respondents to the survey identified employment opportunities as something to be appreciated about living in Denmark. Eleven percent of the year-round respondents identified lack of employment opportunities as the thing not liked about Denmark. Only 8% identified the distance needed to commute to work and 5% identified lack of shopping opportunities as things disliked. Commercial uses with the most support for future development include light industry, sit down restaurants and professional offices. Business conducted as home occupations also received strong support.
TOWN GOAL: PROVIDE ADEQUATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESS CREATION

POLICY 1: Continue the current zoning to allow business uses throughout the town, except resource protection areas, with proper safeguards.

Strategy 1: Allow small scale businesses such as home occupations without review.

Strategy 2: Require other businesses to be reviewed by the Planning board as a conditional use to protect Natural resources and neighboring property.

STATE GOAL: ENCOURAGE AND PROMOTE AFFORDABLE DECENT HOUSING

STATE GUIDELINE: ENCOURAGE AFFORDABLE HOUSING: SEEK A MINIMUM OF 10% OF NEW HOUSING AS AFFORDABLE

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF ISSUES:

The 1990 Census reported a total of 945 housing units in Denmark. Of these, 614 were classified as seasonal. Three hundred and seventeen of the 331 year-round units were occupied. There were only 45 housing units occupied by renters. Eighty-four percent of the housing units were owner-occupied. This is a similar percentage as in Brownfield and Hiram, but higher than the other surrounding towns and Oxford County.

Comparisons of the 1990 and 1980 Censuses result in questioning the validity of one set of data. According to the Census reports, the growth in total housing stock in Denmark between 1980 and 1990 was 250 units. The growth in units classified as year-round was only seven.

The vast majority of housing units in Denmark are single family dwellings. According to the 1990 Census figures, only 15 housing units were located in duplexes or multi-family buildings. Only 43 units, or 5% of the total, are mobile homes, though they appear to have made up 14% of the new units. The Census figures indicate there was a loss of 38 multi-family dwelling units during the decade. The census indicates an addition of 55 more units than town records indicate were authorized by the issuance of a building permit.

Denmark’s mix of housing types shows a higher percentage of single family structures than neighboring towns. Denmark has the lowest percentage of manufactured housing of any in the subregion.

The 1980 Census reported the distribution of the year-round houses in Denmark by the number of bedrooms. This information is not yet available from the 1990 Census. Sixty-four percent of the housing units had two or three bedrooms. Although there were 64 one person households and 84 two person households, there were only 31 one bedroom housing units. This indicates a potentially large demand for smaller homes by small households. There were 81 housing units with four or more bedrooms, yet only 23 homes occupied by five or more persons.

An examination of the distribution of types of new housing in the 1970s and the 1980s reveals a shift in the priorities of the market. In the 1970s, 87% of new units were single family homes, 9% were multifamily homes and 4% were mobile homes; in the 1980s manufactured housing took a far greater percentage of the market.

The year-round housing stock increased by 36% between 1970 and 1980. Since that time it is estimated to have increased an additional 30% for a total increase of approximately 80% since 1970. The 1980 Census reports 132 year-round units in structures more than 50 years old, 110 are in structures built between 1940 and 1969 and 100 units built during the seventies. If we assume that half of the new units during the eighties are year-round, an additional 120 units were added. This assumption results in 220 units in structures built in the past
twenty years, or 50% of the total. Due to its comparatively new construction, Denmark’s housing should exhibit relatively little structural problems.

The median value of 120 owner occupied “specified” single family houses in 1980 was $41,400. The Census Bureau uses the term “specified” unit to mean single family homes which are not mobile homes, are located on ten acres of land or less, and contain no business use. The 1990 Census reports the median value of 167 homes to be $95,800, a 131% increase. In addition to the median, the 1990 Census reports on the distribution of units by price. One quarter of the specified units were valued at $78,900 or less and one quarter at $139,500 or more.

Between April 1, 1990 and May 30, 1991 there were only 8 arm’s-length sales of single family houses on non-shorefront lots smaller than 10 acres in size. The mean sales price of a single family house was $72,111, the median $71,500.

The median monthly rent for “specified unit paying cash rent” was $331 according to the 1990 Census. There are no housing developments in Denmark constructed with government subsidized funding.

According to the 1990 Census, there were 855 people living in 317 households. The average household size has risen to 2.70 from 2.56 in 1980. The 1990 Census reports 65 people living by themselves, 20% of all households. Between 1970 and 1980 2-person households decreased as a percentage of the total by 11%. Other than single person households, no data on household size is available yet from the 1990 Census. The Committee’s survey asked about size of household. Two person households made up 41% of the responses. The percentage of 3 and 4 person households increased from the 1980 Census to the 1991 survey. The percentage of households larger than four persons decreased.

Trends in changing household size are important because of the implications they have for housing needs and impacts on government services from additional housing construction. If population growth rates remain constant and average household size increases, fewer housing units will be required to house the population. Conversely, if housing construction is assumed to remain constant, each unit of housing will have more of an impact on community services with an increasing average household size.

Issues of housing affordability deal with a comparison of the distribution of housing costs to the distribution of income, with a goal of providing all citizens safe, sanitary and decent housing. Housing experts in both the private and public sectors have set a target of households spending no more than 25% to 33% of income on housing.

Rules adopted by the state indicate that an owner-occupied housing unit is considered affordable if the selling price is one that can result in monthly costs (mortgage, insurance, taxes and utilities) of no more than 2*% of the household’s gross monthly income. A rental unit is considered affordable if the unit’s monthly costs (rent and utilities) is no more than 30% of the household’s gross monthly income.

“Affordable housing” is defined as housing units which are affordable to low income and moderate income households. Low income households are those with an income which does not exceed 80% of the county median. Moderate income households are those with an income which is between 80% and 150% of the county median. There are no current data available on household income levels in Denmark which can be used for determining housing affordability. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development publishes the median household income for areas on annual basis. The 1991 median household income for Oxford County is $30,200.

The 1980 Census is the latest available source of information on the distribution of income in the town. The 1979 median household income in Denmark was $12,473. By definition, fifty percent of the households made more than or less than the median. If the assumption is made that the distribution of income in Denmark had not changed substantially over the past decade, using the definitions above, 68% of the households qualify as low or moderate income families. The town must make an effort to assure that more than 10% of the new housing units in the town are priced to be affordable by as much as 68% of the population. If the town chooses a target income of 80% of median, there may still be 32% of the households which could not afford the “affordable units.”
The committee survey asked about household income. Thirty-four percent of the respondents reported incomes not exceeding 80% of the median income. The results of the survey represent similar percentage to 1980 at or below the median income, but high percentages of household between 100% and 150%. This may result from a better response rate among higher income ranges, not solely a change in the distribution of income.

The comprehensive plan focuses on that portion of the population with an income of 80% of the median income or lower. The term “affordable housing” shall mean a unit which can be purchased with only 28% of the household’s monthly income going to mortgage payments, insurance and taxes, or rented with 30% of the household’s income used to pay rent.

There are several components of affordable housing supply. An analysis of housing affordability in Denmark is complicated by the impacts the seasonal market has on the town. Manufactured homes are generally more affordable housing than site-built homes. Since 1970, manufactured housing has made up only 10% of the new housing in the town. The town currently places no restrictions on the placement of manufactured housing units on individual lots, nor on the location of mobile home parks. Despite the lack of municipal controls, there are no mobile home parks within the town. Higher land values are most likely responsible for the low percentage of manufactured housing.

Assuming a 10% down payment, a 30-year mortgage at 10% interest and an estimated 1991 median household income of $31,300, the maximum price of an affordable housing unit is $52,886. The above data indicate a severe lack of affordable home ownership opportunities in Denmark. The mean price of vacant building lots in Denmark appears to be approximately $17,000. Assuming $50 per square foot building cost, this leaves only 720 square feet of floor space for the house. The guidelines for affordability allow up to $600 per month; therefore nearly 90% of the rental units in the town are affordable. However rental units make up only 5% of the housing stock.

During the past ten years an average of 25 new dwelling units were added to the town’s housing stock per year. If we assume half of these were seasonal and that this trend will continue, Denmark will need to provide no less than two new “affordable” units per year to meet the statutory guideline and four per year to more realistically begin to meet the demand. Many of the options for promoting affordable housing are not appropriate or realistic in Denmark. The town has no vacant town land which could be donated to provide housing. The town does not have a building code to be relaxed. The continued increase in manufactured housing will provide increased affordability.

TOWN GOALS: ENCOURAGE A VARIETY OF HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL INCOME LEVELS

POLICY 1: A variety of housing types should be available.

Strategy 1: Continue to allow manufactured housing and mobile home parks wherever residential uses are permitted.

Responsible Party: Planning Board
Time Frame: 1993 town meeting

STATE GOAL: PROTECT WATER RESOURCES

STATE GUIDELINE: PROTECT QUALITY OF EACH WATER BODY

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF ISSUES:

Denmark is divided into two major watersheds, the Saco River and the Presumpscot River. A small portion of the eastern edge of the town drains into Long Lake, then Sebago Lake and eventually the Presumpscot River. The remainder flows into the Saco River. Both the Saco and Sebago Lake are sources for major public drinking water systems.
The Saco is one of Maine’s most valuable natural resources, attracting thousands of recreational visitors each year, providing power to generate electricity and serving as a source of drinking water for much of eastern York County. The upper end of the Saco has been identified as a river with natural and recreational resource values of significance beyond the state. The stretch of river between Swans Falls in Fryeburg and Great Falls in Hiram drops only 21 feet and therefore attracts canoeists and float trips by the thousands each summer.

The segment of the Saco in Denmark is a Class AA waterbody. This is the highest classification established in Maine. Rivers which have been classified AA have outstanding water quality and serve other resource functions as well. Discharges are not permitted into AA water bodies. While classification as AA is an indication of outstanding current water quality, it is also an indication of the desire to maintain that quality and not allow its degradation. There are currently no licensed discharges of waste water from Denmark into the Saco River.

Moose Pond Brook is the Saco’s largest tributary in Denmark, traveling approximately eight miles from Moose Pond to its mouth. The entire length of the brook has been rated by Inland Fisheries and Wildlife as having moderate to high habitat value. In addition to the wet areas immediately adjoining the brook there are at least four substantial wetlands associated with the tributary.

There are numerous other smaller streams and brooks within the town. There is no information on their number or water quality. The town has taken steps to protect their water quality by enacting the state’s minimum requirements.

Water bodies make up approximately 11% of the surface area of Denmark. The great ponds are both vital natural and economic resources for the town. The state defines a “great pond” as a natural water body of ten acres or more or an artificially formed or raised water body of thirty acres or more. There are twelve great ponds identified within the town. There is published data regarding only the three largest of the ponds in Denmark.

Moose Pond, the largest contiguous waterbody in Denmark with a total surface area of 1,694 acres, runs diagonally through Denmark on a north-south axis. The pond is comprised of the North Basin, most of which lies outside of Denmark, and the Mid-south Basin, which is entirely within Denmark. Moose Pond has a maximum depth of 70 feet and an average depth of 20 feet. Moose Pond is a major local recreational area. The pond is managed for togue, salmon, smallmouth bass, perch and pickerel. Overcrowding on the lake has been identified by the planning committee as an issue of concern. The pond has a very slow flushing rate. The “flushing rate” is the time it takes for the entire volume of water in the lake to move through the body of the lake. The flushing rate for Moose Pond is 0.1 flushes per year; therefore it takes ten years for water to circulate entirely through the lake’s system. Water quality indicators had declined but improved during the mid-1980’s.

Hancock Pond, located in the southeastern corner of Denmark, has a surface area of 858 acres, of which approximately two-thirds is located in Denmark. The pond has a maximum depth of 59 feet, and an average depth of 18 feet. Hancock Pond has high water quality. The flushing rate is very slow, 0.8 flushes per year, and the total area is small, so the pond is very susceptible to changes in the watershed that could lead to nutrient loading. The pond is managed for bass and brown trout. The lake is unsuitable for lake trout or salmon.

Sand Pond is connected to, and sits upstream of Hancock Pond. It has a maximum depth of 44 feet and an average depth of 15.5 feet. The pond has good water quality which appears to be stable and less susceptible to nutrient loading than its downstream neighbor. Sand Pond is stocked annually with brown trout and has excellent smallmouth and largemouth bass habitat. An oxygen deficiency below 35 feet precludes cold water fisheries.

Denmark’s great ponds play many vital roles: wildlife habitat, recreational resources, scenic beauty, and perhaps most importantly, valuable economic assets. In Denmark, as in many towns, lake shore properties and second homes are a significant portion of the tax base. Business activities associated with recreational users of the lakes and seasonal residents are an important part of Denmark’s economic base.

Development activity, agricultural practices, and other activities seriously threaten the water quality of our lakes. Every drainage basin in Maine has been affected by “non-point source pollution”, from construction sites, farms, logging operations, roads and parking lots, and lawn fertilizers. When it rains, the run-off may contain toxics, sediments, and microorganisms. Frequently surface water runoff may contain nutrients, either dissolved in the
water or attached to small particles of soil, which feed algae. Excess algal growth lowers the quality of lake water, results in a loss of clarity to the water and a depletion of oxygen levels.

Activity throughout the entire watershed impacts lake water quality, not just shoreline development. Secondly, lake biologists have identified phosphorus as the nutrient with the most impact on lake water quality and algal growth. When the phosphorus content of the water is increased, algae can grow very rapidly, resulting in “algae blooms” which thicken and discolor the water.

In recent years, the DEP has developed a system by which the vulnerability of differing lakes and ponds to phosphorus impacts can be predicted. With this information, activities which increase phosphorus runoff into lakes and their tributaries can be controlled to protect water quality.

The key element of this program is a “per acre allocation of phosphorus” for each watershed. By taking into account the present water quality, the DEP’s assessment of the vulnerability of the lake to increases in phosphorus and a level of protection chosen for each lake by the community, an acceptable discharge of phosphorus can be calculated. This discharge is measured in pounds, and represents an increase in phosphorus from new sources that will produce a noticeable change in water quality.

For each great pond, the town needs to decide upon a level of protection to provide. Typically, characteristics taken into consideration in choosing the level of protection include the current water quality, the level of public recreational use, the presence of a quality cold water fishery, and whether the pond is a public drinking water supply. These assessments should be reviewed every five years to adjust for changes in the water quality and the predicted levels of growth. In order to do so, continued monitoring and accurate record keeping of development activity is necessary.

The levels of protection chosen are those which will result in limiting the increase in the concentration of phosphorus to 1 parts per billion (ppb) except in Moose Pond, Sand Pond and Hancock Pond, where a target increase of .75 ppb has been chosen. Choosing other levels of protection can provide either greater or lesser degrees of protection.

The second step is to allocate the acceptable increase in phosphorus for each lake across its watershed. The result is a maximum permissible amount of phosphorus per acre. This is calculated based on the size of the direct drainage area, the amount of the drainage area which is available for development and an assumption about the levels of development in the watershed which are likely to occur in the next fifty years.

The acreage suitable or available for development results form subtracting steep slopes, wetlands, already developed areas and any permanently protected open space from the direct drainage area. In the table below, it is assumed that within the next fifty years only 35% of the developable land in all watersheds will be developed. Whereas accurate allocations of phosphorus must be based on more detailed analysis of each pond and its watershed, these allocations are only presented as interim figures to be used until more research and planning is done. The plan calls for the establishment of a town committee to conduct water quality testing and watershed inventories to more accurately estimate the future area to be developed in each watershed.

Moose Pond, Hancock Pond and Pleasant Pond lie in more than one municipality. In order for one town’s water quality management goals to be met the other town’s goals must be similar. In addition to the lakes within Denmark’s borders, portions of Denmark are within the watersheds of the lakes in neighboring communities. Similar figures have been developed for the allowable per acre phosphorus export for Denmark’s portions of these watersheds.

Phosphorus controls are typically achieved by design elements in developing property. The two major guiding principles behind the phosphorus control program are to limit increases in surface water runoff and to limit the amount of sediment contained in the runoff which leaves a site. In addition to rigorous erosion and sedimentation control during construction activities, this is achieved by using buffer strips to allow runoff to infiltrate into the ground and lose its sediment, limiting the removal of forest vegetation and conversion to lawns, and occasionally using structures such as ponds to detain runoff. Another important element of phosphorus control is the control of runoff and erosion from existing roads.
The results of the survey indicate that preservation of lake water quality is an issue on the minds of Denmark residents and property owners. Sixty-five percent of all the respondents indicated they felt water quality had declined during the recent past. Year-round residents were more likely to notice a decline in water quality (76%) compared to seasonal residents (58%). Nearly half (44%) of the year round residents indicated that Moose Pond is most threatened, while 38% of seasonal residents thought that all ponds are equally threatened. Three quarters of the respondents felt that priority should not be given to any pond for protection, as all were equally important to protect. Moose Pond garnered one fifth of the responses. Recognizing the importance of protecting lake water quality, 79% of the respondents were willing to support additional land use controls on the development or improvement of their own property to achieve that objective. There were slightly more seasonal residents (82%) than year-round residents (76%) indicating such a willingness. Eighty-six percent of the respondents favored restrictions on deeded access to the shore by non-shorefront property owners.

TOWN GOAL: MAINTAIN THE WATER QUALITY OF DENMARK’S SURFACE WATERS BY PREVENTING ANY FURTHER DEGRADATION

POLICY 1: Develop a watershed-based water quality protection plan for each of Denmark’s great ponds.

Strategy 1: Appoint a Lake Protection Committee to develop individual water quality management plans for each lake watershed which reflect the differing characteristics of the ponds and their watersheds. These plans will be based on water quality information to be gathered, and individual watershed inventories. To the extent possible representatives from lake associations will be appointed to the committee.

Responsible party: Board of Selectmen
Time frame: Appoint Committee within 60 days of Comprehensive Plan adoption

Strategy 2: Protection plans may include some or all of the following: a watershed inventory, a water quality management program, an educational and informational program, sanitary surveys, and land use standards controlling significant sources of phosphorus.

Responsible party: Lake Protection Committee
Time frame: Within two years of plan adoption for Moose Pond, Sand Pond, and Hancock Pond and within five years for all other great ponds.

POLICY 2: Use the methods outlined in the manual *Phosphorus Control in Lake Watersheds* (Maine Department of Environmental Protection, 1989 and revisions) to protect surface water quality from increases in phosphorus concentrations.

Strategy 1: Adopt, for the present, an assumed future rate of development (F.A.D.) of 35% for all lake watersheds and a level of protection of 1 part per billion for Denmark’s great ponds except for Moose Pond, Sand Pond, and Hancock Pond which shall have a protection level of .75 parts per billion of phosphorus.

Responsible party: Planning Board, assisted by Lake Protection Committee
Time frame: Upon adoption of this Plan
Strategy 2: Work with neighboring towns to persuade them to: 1) make their comprehensive plans and development controls reflect the levels of protection for ponds in Denmark; 2) agree upon a level of protection for ponds shared so that Denmark’s policies and controls can reflect levels of protection chosen by other towns for ponds with portions of their watersheds in Denmark.

Responsible Party: Planning Board, assisted by Lake Protection Committee
Time Frame: Upon adoption of this Plan

POLICY 3: Strengthen existing land use controls designed to protect water quality.

Strategy 1: Modify the current zoning requirement to strengthen the 100-foot buffer along all shorelines and prohibit all cleared openings within that buffer.

Responsible Party: Planning Board assisted by the Lake Protection Committee
Time Frame: by 1994 town meeting

Strategy 2: Modify the current zoning requirement to require a 100-foot setback from perennial water bodies for septic and pump tanks. For lots unable to meet these requirements, setbacks need only be the maximum physically possible on the lot.

Responsible Party: Planning Board assisted by the Lake Protection Committee
Time Frame: by 1994 town meeting

Strategy 3: Require loam liners or other approved methods, for all subsurface waste disposal systems within the shoreland zone on hydrologic group A and B soils, which are porous soils that transport significant amounts of phosphorus from septic systems through the ground water.

Responsible Party: Planning Board assisted by the Lake Protection Committee
Time Frame: by 1994 town meeting

Strategy 4: Modify the standards for shorefront common areas to regulate shorefront lots which grant access to owners of non-shorefront property. Such areas should have a minimum of 200 feet of shoreline frontage and 50 additional feet for each right-of-use granted or conveyed, whether in a subdivision or not.

Responsible Party: Planning Board assisted by Lake Protection Committee
Time Frame: by 1994 town meeting
STATE GOAL: PROTECT WETLANDS, WILDLIFE HABITAT, SCENIC VISTAS, SHORELANDS AND NATURAL AREAS

STATE GUIDELINES: DEVELOP POLICIES AND ORDINANCES CONSISTENT WITH STATE LAW PROTECTING CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCES

CREATE GREENBELTS, PUBLIC PARKS, CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

PROTECT UNDEVELOPED SHORELINES

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF ISSUES:

The town of Denmark is situated in the foothills of the White Mountain Range and encompasses some spectacular natural resources: the Saco River, a number of great ponds, Pleasant Mountain and other lesser peaks. The town contains a land area of 30,376 acres, or 47.5 square miles, a relatively large geographic area compared to the other thirty six organized towns in the county. The great ponds within the town have a combined surface area of approximately 3,250 acres, or 11% of the town.

The ground is almost entirely hilly, and many areas have slopes at a grade which presents obstacles for development. This means that the siting of possible development areas will be somewhat restricted. The random pattern of Denmark’s soils groups do not offer any clear-cut implications for potential land-use policies.

From the top of Pleasant Mountain one can see Mount Washington to the northwest and the Atlantic Ocean off Portland to the southeast. Also visible are the White Mountains, the Boston Hills, the mountains of Bridgton, Sweden and Bethel and the peaks of the Mahoosuc Range to the north. Many ponds, lakes, farms, and wooded areas can also be seen from Denmark’s heights, including two of Maine’s most popular waterways, the Saco River and Sebago Lake.

There is one area in Denmark which is registered as a Critical Area by the Maine State Planning Office. This is a wild sassafras stand near Indian Point Road. In addition the oak/pine transitional forest, the kettle hole bog, and an area of Ram’s Head Lady Slipper are listed in the Natural Heritage Data Base maintained by the Maine Dept. of Economic and Community Development.

There are seventeen areas in Denmark identified by the Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife as Deer Wintering Area. Three are on Pleasant Mountain, two just south of Fessenden Hill, several clustered around the Boston Hills, and the rest spread out roughly in the western section of town. While new development is generally not compatible with the maintenance of deer wintering areas, timber harvesting is important to their maintenance.

No formal assessment of the fisheries habitat of Denmark’s great ponds has been made. Several of the great ponds in the town are stocked to provide an active sport fishery. Large mouth and small mouth bass can be found in all ponds. The middle basin of Moose Pond will yield salmon. Brown trout use the inlets to Pickerel Pond and Hancock Pond in the fall for spawning. In addition all perennial streams without a lake or pond within them have a native brook trout fishery. Bass have overrun the trout in those streams with direct access to ponds.

Aquatic habitats are some of the most sensitive and vulnerable to degradation. Land use activities that directly affect water quality can significantly alter or destroy the value of the areas for fish, particularly along smaller streams and brooks. Changes in the adjacent upland habitat, or “riparian zone” can also degrade a fishery. The Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has published recommendations for maintaining fisheries habitat. Denmark’s current Zoning Ordinance maintains a 75 foot wide buffer area around all perennial water bodies.

Many species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fishes and invertebrates spend a part or all of their life cycles in or about wetlands. Wetlands have been identified and rated by IF&W for their value as feeding,
nesting, or shelter habitat for ducks and geese. IF&W recommendations concerning wetlands are similar to those for fisheries. In addition, filling of wetlands should be considered unacceptable.

Wetlands also server many different valuable functions. Some of these are extremely important economically, other functions have non-economic values. Wetlands are natural flood storage areas, holding water during periods of heavy rain and snow melt and slowly releasing it during drier times. Wetlands act as a filter in protecting water quality. Plants in a wetland absorb various inorganic substances found in the water and then transform these materials into organic substances which are stored in the plants. By this process, nutrient levels in the water are controlled. These same plants also slow the flow of the water, allowing a settling of silty materials transported by the water. In Maine, wetlands usually act as ground water discharge areas, gradually releasing ground water to streams, lakes and rivers. Wetlands often serve as indicators of springs and other discharge areas.

Wetlands can be destroyed either by physical alteration or by disruption of their natural processes. The most common form of physical alteration is filling. This activity destroys the wetland’s ability to perform most of its vital functions. Alteration of a wetland’s natural processes poses an equal threat, resulting from speeding up of natural processes by excessive siltation or nutrient loads, excessive loading of nutrients in upstream runoff. An important concept in protection of wetlands is the “critical edge” or the transition zone between upland areas and the wetland. Damage in these areas, through clearing of vegetation and construction can have a serious impact on the functions of a wetland. Conversion of land use around a wetland can also alter or destroy the natural values or integrity of a wetland.

Two thirds of the respondents to the survey indicated they lived in Denmark because of the attractiveness of the area. This attractiveness is surely the result of the town’s natural resources and scenic beauty. Protection of land for wildlife habitat was a high priority for respondents with 87% of the respondents indicating the town should encourage it. Only 3% felt it should be discouraged. Preservation of undeveloped areas also was a priority, with its encouragement or permit being favored by 94% of the respondents. Sixty-three percent of the respondents felt there were particular features of the town that should be protected from development.

The committee recommends the town concentrate on private property owners, and do everything possible to encourage them to take appropriate steps to protect areas which have been identified as valuable from a natural resource conservation perspective. Increased participation in the Farm and Open Space Tax law and the Tree Growth Tax law will decrease the monetary pressures for larger land owners to sell or develop their property due to the costs of property taxes. Over 50% of the land area of the town is currently enrolled in these programs, but there is unenrolled acreage which is eligible. The town’s zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations should contain provisions encouraging development design which protects identified high and moderate value areas.

**TOWN GOALS:** PROTECTION OF VALUABLE NATURAL RESOURCES FROM DEPOLIATION BY POOR MANAGEMENT OR CONVERSION OF LAND USE

MAINTENANCE OF PRIVATE OWNERSHIP RATHER THAN PUBLIC PURCHASE OF IMPORTANT NATURAL RESOURCES

REGULATIONS BASED ON SITE SPECIFIC INFORMATION TO THE EXTENT FEASIBLE

**POLICY 1:** Encourage participation in the available property tax reduction programs in order to reduce the carrying costs of owning undeveloped property.

**Strategy 1:** Publicize availability and eligibility requirements for the Farm and Open Space Tax Law and the Tree Growth Tax Law in the annual report.

**Responsible Party:** Board of Selectmen

**Time Frame:** Annually
POLICY 2: Be ready and willing to take appropriate action regarding the identification, management and protection of areas identified as containing valuable natural resources.

Strategy 1: Appoint a Conservation Commission (minimum five members) to oversee the town’s natural resource conservation policies and efforts. The duties of the commission would include: 1) an inventory of natural resource features of the town; 2) developing a plan for protecting those natural resources; 3) contacting outside organizations to take advantage of the technical and financial assistance available to the town; 4) assisting in review of development proposals by the Planning Board; and 5) making recommendations to the Selectmen regarding tax-acquired property which has natural resource value.

Responsible Party: Board of Selectmen
Time Frame: within sixty days of adoption of Comprehensive Plan

Strategy 2: Establish a trust fund, to be governed by the Conservation Commission to receive donations, grants and other funds for the purposes of purchasing land and conservation easements concerning lands which contain areas designated as high to moderate value wildlife habitat or are valuable for open space or recreation.

Responsible Party: Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission
Time Frame: within six months of adoption of plan

STATE GOAL: SAFEGUARD AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST RESOURCES

STATE GUIDELINE: PROTECT AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST RESOURCES

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF ISSUES:

There is a relatively small amount of level land suitable for agriculture. There is a band of suitable agricultural soils that runs roughly diagonally through the town, beginning to the south of Evans Ledge and running south under Moose Pond, past Granger Pond and ending in the floodplain soils inland of the Saco River. There is also one large area straddling Route 160 at the Brownfield line. Over one hundred years ago there was extensive agricultural activity throughout Denmark. As the lesser quality farmland was abandoned, it reverted to forest. Today, the remaining fields are concentrated along Hio Ridge Road and Sebago Road. There is also a cluster of fields along Route 117 south.

Agricultural operations are not a significant part of Denmark’s economy. The committee identified eight farming or farm related businesses in the town, including nurseries and greenhouses, berry farms, equestrian center and Christmas tree plantations. The 1980 census tabulated only 11 people employed in forestry and farming occupations.

The major forest types in Denmark are the maple, beech and birch forest and the aspen and birch forest. There is also an abundance of pine, balsam, and hemlock. Nearly 16,000 acres, 52% of the town are registered in the “Tree Growth” tax program, which places a low valuation on woodlots larger than 10 acres if there is a forest management plan. An approximation from aerial photography results in over 95% of Denmark being forested.

Commercial forestry plays a significant role in the town’s economy. There are five logging contractors in the town, employing between 10 and 15 seasonally. The S.D. Warren Co. owns several parcels of land in Denmark, totaling a bit over 1,400 acres. Other commercial forest holders include the Hastings family and Western Maine Forestry Company. Diamond Occidental (formerly Diamond International) recently liquidated ownership in its southwestern Maine timberlands, including approximately 1,500 acres on Pleasant Mountain. Harvesting has accelerated and long term ownership and management may be questionable. S.D. Warren’s
Westbrook paper mill is for sale, with potentially important implications for the company’s holdings in Denmark. In recent months harvesting operations on these lands have also accelerated.

85% of the town is currently available for management as woodland. Over three quarters of this acreage is currently being managed for commercial production. There are 36 parcels in the town larger than 100 acres. Of these, 5 lots are larger than 1,000 acres in size for a combined area of 7,765 acres.

The 1991 survey requested opinions regarding the desirability of agriculture and forestry. Additional agricultural development received overwhelming support with 95% of the respondents indicating it should be encouraged or permitted. However, 37% of the respondents indicated that commercial forestry should be discouraged.

**TOWN GOAL:** MAINTENANCE OF THE PRESENT PROPORTION OF WOODLAND AND AGRICULTURAL LAND

**POLICY 1:** Take advantage of programs designed to protect and preserve woodlands.

Strategy 1: Encourage all property owners who are eligible to register in the Tree Growth Property Tax Program

  Responsible Party: Selectmen
  Time Frame: ongoing

**STATE GOAL:** PRESERVE HISTORIC AND ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

**STATE GUIDELINE:** PROTECT HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

**SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF ISSUES:**

With an 1850 population of 1,200, Denmark has a rich history, but the town’s historical resources have not been comprehensively cataloged. An historical accounting of the town has been published, but there is no comprehensive listing of buildings or sites considered historic. There is no information at all on prehistoric or archeological resources.

The most obvious example of Denmark’s past are the stone walls lining many of the town’s roads. These are reminders of the time when today’s forests were fields, and act as markers of historic right-of-way lines.

**TOWN GOAL:** RECOGNITION AND PROTECTION OF IMPORTANT EXAMPLES OF THE TOWN'S PAST

**POLICY 1:** Inventory items of potential historic significance in the town.

Strategy 1: Historic buildings and sites should be cataloged.

  Responsible Party: Denmark Historical Society
  Time Frame: 1994
POLICY 2: Protect existing roadside stonewalls from destruction.

   Strategy 1: Work by the Public Works Department should not disturb stone walls unless determined unavoidable.

   Responsible Party: Public Works Director
   Time Frame: from adoption of plan

STATE GOAL: PROTECT AVAILABILITY OF OUTDOOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

STATE GUIDELINE: ENCOURAGE ACCESS TO OUTDOOR RECREATION

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF ISSUES:

The Denmark Draggers snowmobile club maintains a network of trails in the woods and hills surrounding the town. The club gets its financial support from a combination of sources including the entire amount of the money refunded by the state from the proceeds of snowmobile registrations issued by the town, fund-raising efforts by the club and reimbursements from the state for costs incurred in grooming and maintaining the network of snowmobile trails.

Denmark is blessed with a variety of public and private recreation areas which offer a wide array of outdoor activities. Access to private property has not been severely restricted. So far, only a few landowners have posted their property. Therefore, a generous amount of woodland and open space is available for hikers and hunters. There are several marked hiking trails ascending Pleasant Mountain. All trails are open to the public, though traversing privately owned land.

The State of Maine owns parcels of property on Hancock Pond and Moose Pond. The parcels total 1,853 acres, of which approximately 170 are in Denmark. They are held by the Bureau of Parks and Recreations which at this time has no plans for their development, though they may be utilized at some time in the distant future as a state park or similar recreation area. The Brownfield Game Management Area is situated partly within the boundaries of Denmark. It is one of Maine’s most picturesque and popular waterfowl hunting areas, and is also a favorite among deer hunters.

Motorboats are not allowed on Boston Pond and Horseshoe Pond. Boats with motors exceeding 6 horsepower are prohibited on Little Pond, Long Pond and Perley’s Pond. Concern has been raised in the past regarding overcrowding of boating activities and suggestions made for a limit on horsepower on other ponds.

As long as Denmark maintains its “small town” atmosphere, there will be ample opportunity for out-of-doors recreation on a four-season basis. However, the availability of access to private property cannot be guaranteed into the future without formal agreements. As Denmark grows and as larger land parcels are divided, it is likely that public access to traditional hunting, snowmobiling, fishing or hiking may be threatened.

In 1959 a Right of Way to Ponds Committee was formed to deal with the matter of public access to ponds. This committee’s efforts resulted in acquisition of town owned access to Hancock, Granger, Sand, Moose and Long Ponds. These sites have received varying degrees of improvements since their acquisition. It seems only logical and proper to follow through on the action and decision that was taken by the town years ago, and see that the land the town acquired for public access to a number of ponds is in a satisfactory condition, and does in fact, provide convenient public access to the ponds in question.

Four fifths of the respondents to the survey favored either encouraging or permitting public boat launching facilities. Fifty-two percent of the year-round respondents favored the town acquiring additional access to ponds in the town. Fifty-six percent of the seasonal residents were opposed to such action.

The plan recognizes that there are financial constraints of bringing all five public access locations up to the standards, for instance, of the Hancock Pond site. However, it is possible to make modest improvements which
would not cost the town significant funds but which would make the boat launch sites more convenient to use and more accessible. In addition, there are federal grant programs available to assist in financing public outdoor recreation facilities. The need for one low cost improvement was recognized in the 1987 Plan: signs identifying the sites. In addition simple low cost actions such as brush clearing and tree trimming will facilitate ease of launching boats. Some of the town owned sites may not be practical for trailer-launching and perhaps should be developed only as “carry-on” only sites, in order to save improvement expenses.

As with many public access issues, there is an inherent dilemma built into the issue of the amount of public access to great ponds and the availability of boat launching sites. On the one hand we all agree that free and convenient access by the general public to all great ponds is a good thing. Tourism and second homes are major sectors of Denmark’s economy and these uses are, to a certain extent, dependent on access to the ponds. On the other hand, boat traffic has been increasing steadily year by year, with a frequent result being the diminution of enjoyment of the ponds by shore-side residents and possible degradation of water quality and other resources. Public access to a resource must be balanced with the need to protect the resource which attracts the public to begin with. Proper management of both the access sites and boating habits is needed.

**TOWN GOAL: PROVIDE ADEQUATE OPPORTUNITY FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION FOR DENMARK RESIDENTS AND VISITORS**

**POLICY 1:** Maintain and improve current town owned boat access sites to great ponds.

- **Strategy 1:** Place responsibility for public access to ponds with the Public Works Director
  
  **Responsible Party:** Board of Selectmen  
  **Time Frame:** upon passage of plan

- **Strategy 2:** Post signs along public roads identifying existence of current public access sites to ponds
  
  **Responsible Party:** Public Works Director  
  **Time Frame:** 1993

- **Strategy 3:** Develop a plan for improvements to the town owned access sites to provide for better boat launching, parking and sanitary facilities. This plan should consider providing “carry-on” launching only at those sites where it is appropriate.
  
  **Responsible Party:** Board of Selectmen and Public Works Director  
  **Time Frame:** 1993

**POLICY 2:** Assure continued opportunities for public swimming.

- **Strategy 1:** The town continue to search for a suitable site for a public swimming area.
  
  **Responsible Party:** Board of Selectmen  
  **Time Frame:** Ongoing

- **Strategy 2:** Continue monitoring water quality near the existing town beach on Moose Pond
  
  **Responsible Party:** Board of Selectmen  
  **Time Frame:** Continuing