

## **VIII. PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

### **8.1 Educational Facilities and Services**

For the past 45 years there have not been enough school-age children in Sandgate to warrant operation of a local school. Consequently, children from Sandgate must attend classes in other towns. This situation is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. If a local school does need to be built at some future time, it would be ideal for the town to own a parcel of land where the facility could be built. The town should take advantage of any opportunities to acquire an appropriately sited parcel of land where a school and/or other public facilities could be located.

Sandgate (along with Arlington) belongs to the Batten Kill Valley Supervisory Union. Most Sandgate students attend the nearby Arlington schools, although some students are enrolled in schools in Cambridge, N.Y. and Bennington. The Arlington elementary and secondary schools have been designated "primary" schools for Sandgate; the local school district will pay full tuition for students attending public schools and up to the state average tuition for students for students attending private schools.

The town also benefits from the presence of the Arlington Area Childcare, Inc., a nonprofit publicly supported organization dedicated to quality, affordable childcare for the Arlington, Sandgate, and Sunderland area. This organization offers a playschool for children three to five years of age and an afterschool program for older children. Both of these programs are very important to Sandgate residents and should continue to receive support from the town.

### **8.2 Town Buildings and Land**

The Town of Sandgate owns very little real property. The town offices have recently been improved to provide an adequate vault and to meet federal accessibility requirements. The town office building and the small lot that it sits on and the 17-acre parcel that includes the town garage are the town's only real estate assets. Additional publicly owned land could provide space for a recreation facility, community center, or a future school. Ideally, land for such facilities would be located near the existing town offices, in the vicinity of the intersection of Sandgate Road and West Sandgate Road.

### **8.3 Emergency Services and Law Enforcement**

Sandgate is served by the Arlington Volunteer Fire Department and the Arlington Rescue Squad. A fire station, located near the intersection of Berwal Road and Route 313, serves the West Arlington and Sandgate areas. The town should continue its financial support of the fire department. Service by the Arlington Fire Department in Sandgate has generally been excellent, although it would be wise for the town to discuss the adequacy of narrow roads and weight-restricted bridges with the Department and determine if any improvements should be planned. One other issue of note is the fact that residents of West Sandgate must pay higher insurance premiums because of their remoteness from a fire station, although the situation has certainly improved with the establishment of the fire station in West Arlington.

The Arlington Rescue Squad responds to a number of emergency calls every year in the Town of Sandgate. The Rescue Squad is funded entirely by private donations; Sandgate residents should recognize the importance and economy of this service and support it with their time and/or financial contributions.

The Emergency 911 system in Sandgate has been established and contributes significantly to improved public safety. Residents should be sure to follow guidelines for posting their address numbers along the roadway.

A town constable provides local law enforcement and patrol services. The constable also communicates with the State Police and game wardens. The town budgets a small amount of money each year to support the services of the constable. Sandgate is fortunate that, for at least the next several years, current law enforcement services will suffice.

The land use policies of this plan discourage scattered development; one good reason for these policies is the significant costs associated with expanding emergency services that would be necessitated if development were allowed to spread to remote areas.

#### 8.4 Electricity and Telecommunications

Sandgate receives its electrical service via transmission lines owned by the Central Vermont Public Service Corporation. These transmission lines have recently been upgraded from 2400V to 7200V, and improvements to poles and utility rights-of-way are ongoing in the town. Telephone service is provided by New England Telephone. Both electric and telephone services are adequate to meet existing demands and to accommodate reasonable future growth.

The planning commission should formulate rules and regulations pertaining to the siting of telecommunication towers and related facilities. These structures shall not be permitted in sensitive areas, scenic vistas, and water resource areas.

#### 8.5 Cemeteries

Two cemeteries are overseen by an elected three-member cemetery commission. In addition to regular maintenance activities, the cemetery commission has initiated a restoration program that has already greatly improved the appearance of the cemeteries and individual gravestones. The town should continue to appropriate funds to continue this program. At some time in the future additional land will be needed for burials. The several historical cemeteries in Sandgate located on private land are also important to the town and should be protected.

#### 8.6 Library

Financial support is provided to the Martha Canfield Library in Arlington, a facility used by many Sandgate residents. The library contains a good selection of books and videos and also offers a number of informative programs throughout the year. The town should continue to support this facility with annual appropriations.

#### 8.7 Solid Waste

Disposal of solid waste has become a difficult and costly problem throughout the country, and the situation in Sandgate reflects this national trend. Sandgate cooperates with four other Northshire towns -- Arlington, Sunderland, Manchester, and Dorset -- in the area of solid waste management. At present all solid waste from Sandgate is delivered, by individuals or private haulers, to a transfer station in Sunderland. The trash is then trucked to an out-of-state disposal site or incinerator. The high cost (including transportation costs and tipping fees) and uncertainty of the future availability of this disposal option make it incumbent upon local and regional officials to explore alternative solutions.

Individual households can contribute to this solution, and save a considerable amount of money, through waste reduction, recycling, and composting. Individuals should take advantage of the free (town subsidized) recycling center at the transfer station; paper, cardboard, glass, and several types of metal and plastic can be recycled. Consumers should also be careful to purchase products which are packaged in recyclable materials whenever possible. Finally, backyard composting of certain organic wastes can help reduce the volume of waste which must be landfilled or incinerated.

#### 8.8 Water Supply and Wastewater Disposal

There is no area in Sandgate with sufficient population density to warrant construction of any type of a public wastewater disposal facility. Town residents will continue to rely on individual on-site septic systems. Likewise, there will be no central public water supply system in Sandgate in the foreseeable future. The presence of individual wells and septic systems in residential areas makes it imperative that the town's sewage disposal regulations are strictly enforced.

#### 8.9 Policies and Recommendations

1. Sandgate residents should continue to have the ability to choose the school that their children will attend.
2. The town should continue its support for important emergency service providers and public facilities that are used by Sandgate residents.
3. Careful and coordinated financial planning for public facilities is very important. The town should consider developing a capital budget and program for any facilities that will be funded using Sandgate tax dollars.
4. Public investments in utilities, facilities, and services should support development in areas designated for growth, and not in outlying areas.