

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES ELEMENT

5.5.1 INTRODUCTION

- This plan element presents a description of the municipal services and Town facilities provided by Foster and/or serving its residents, and a general analysis of their effectiveness; noting deficiencies in meeting the current and projected needs of the community. A program is included in the Implementation Program (Section 6), which schedules actions targeted to eliminate current deficiencies through improvements, or the expansion of existing services/facilities; the initiation of new types of services/facilities; and alternative solutions to accommodate existing and forecasted needs. This Plan Element addresses issues regarding the following services and facilities and provides an approach; goals and policies for action, to meet these needs:
- Protective Services - Fire, Ambulance, Police, Animal Control
Utilities - Water Supply, Wastewater and Solid Waste Disposal
- Public Works Facilities/Services
- Municipal Offices/Buildings
- Schools
- Libraries
- Recreation
- Human Services

5.5.2 INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Protective Services

Fire

Volunteer fire departments serve the town of Foster. The town is divided into three (3) fire districts, each with a fire station -- South Foster #1, Moosup Valley #2, and Foster Center #3. Since the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, the South Foster Fire Station has been relocated to the intersection of Rt. 94 & 6.

The major problem with the fire departments is the maintenance of a volunteer force. Many of the volunteers have served the department for over ten years, and it has become difficult to add new members to the force without providing some type of compensation for their services. The Department is also concerned about keeping member of the force adequately trained.

The present number of apparatus/trucks appears to be adequate to serve the Town. The Capital Budget provides for new apparatus/trucks to meet the basic needs of the Town. Present stations accommodate the equipment but have no room for additional trucks, if needed in the future. (Planner to check with Fire Chief especially for Hazmat and other specialty equipment).

Ambulance

The ambulance corps is made up largely of volunteers supplemented by paid staff. At present, volunteers are certified emergency medical technicians (EMT) or advanced life saving certified (ALS).

Presently, there are eleven volunteer Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). Of these six are ALS providers (EMT-P or EMT-C level), and five are Basic Life Support (BLS) providers (EMT-B level). Nearly all calls are responded with an ALS crew, consisting of at least one ALS-level EMT and at least one BLS-level EMT.

Two State-licensed rescue vehicles are garaged at the "ambulance barn" located on Mt. Hygeia Road (Route 94), approximately one mile north of Route 6. This is an advantageous location to respond to automobile accidents along Route 6, which comprise most of the rescue calls. Also, both rescues can be called and respond quickly to multiple victim automobile accidents. A disadvantage in garaging both rescue vehicles at this location is that response time is longer to southern areas of the Town.

Since the nearest hospital is at least 30 minutes away by rescue, emergency medical treatment performed by Foster EMTs is critical. It should also be noted that all three fire departments now have AEDs (Automated External Defibrillator) and can respond to cardiac arrest victims with this vital piece of equipment. Depending on where the call is, and the availability and location of responding personnel, the fire department personnel may be on scene first, and thus can begin to provide some care while awaiting the arrival of EMS. The biggest challenge facing Foster, in terms of public safety and EMS, is how to maintain a largely volunteer department and continue providing quality prehospital care in Foster. At this writing, the average FAC volunteer is on duty 24 hours weekly.

In terms of public safety and emergency medical services, the biggest challenge facing Foster is how to maintain a largely volunteer department and continue providing quality prehospital care in Foster. Presently, the average volunteer is on duty 24 hours weekly. Burnout is a great concern, and it is increasingly difficult to attract and retain licensed EMS providers.

Since the EMTs are volunteers and most work outside of Foster during the day, this requirement is difficult to fulfill. To assist with this the Town implemented a paid incentive program in the winter of 2002.

Police

The Police Department now occupies the entire historic Aylsworth House located in Foster Center, and security has been increased.

A number of responsibilities have been added to the Police Department following the 911 tragedy. Concerns for protecting against terrorist activities, related to protecting the State water supply - specifically Barden Reservoir, crime prevention, and public education has required more of the Department's time. The Police Department has also been active with emergency planning with the Director of Civil Preparedness, Ambulance Corps and Fire Department. Based upon the opinion of Police Chief Kettelle and police reports, it appears that Foster's seven (7) patrolmen adequately meet the immediate needs of the Town. The Police Department has sought overtime funding through grants from the Department of Justice and will work to obtain funds to support additional staffing if needed.

Emergency Management

An Emergency Operations Plan is being updated now and will be ready by year's end. Based on a recent hazards analysis, Foster is subject to emergency situations due to hurricanes, winter storms, power failures, transportation accidents, droughts and wildfires. Because of its proximity to the Scituate Reservoir, it is especially vulnerable to hazardous material spills within its watershed. The Town has adopted the Scituate Reservoir Hazardous Material Spill Contingency Plan, which addresses prevention, mitigation and response for such emergencies and provides the procedure for State coordination. In addition, the Foster Management Plan comprises the four phases of Emergency Management for all hazards identified in the analysis; i.e., (1) Mitigation; (2) Preparedness; (3) Response; and, (4) Recovery.

The government of Foster has the capability and resources to minimize or eliminate personal injury, loss of life and damage to property in the event of such an emergency or disaster.

Under the direction of the Emergency Management Director, the Town's emergency response and Management Plan was updated in June 1995 to comply with the State of Rhode Island's Emergency Operations Plan. Copies were distributed to each of the Town's three Fire Departments, the Police Department, Public Works Department and to the School Department. A copy is also kept on file in the Town Clerk's Office.

The head of Emergency Government is the Town Council President. In case of a disaster or emergency, Town Officials and supporting agencies are organized into seven damage assessment teams based on their area of expertise with Department Directors serving as the team leaders.

The Foster Police Station is designated as the Command Post during an emergency unless the nature of the incident dictates a more appropriate field office. The three Fire Departments can provide a management system to effectively manage incidents involving firefighting, hazardous and

environmental emergencies.

The Town has three active emergency shelters, one at each of the Town fire stations. Each facility has electric generators, cooking facilities and showers. The Isaac Paine School has the potential to serve as a fourth shelter, but is presently lacking shower facilities and a backup generator. The Emergency Management Plan will be reviewed and exercised annually and revised as needed.

Animal Control

The Foster Community Survey received mixed public concerns for the need of an animal shelter located within Foster. Approximately 30.1 percent of the 2003 survey respondents believed a town owned shelter to be very (7.8%) or somewhat (22.3%) important while over 55.5 percent found one to be somewhat unimportant (19%) or not important (36.5%). Over 73 percent of the survey respondents would not support the use of tax revenue to support an animal shelter. Currently, the Foster Dog Officer brings stray animals to the Scituate and Coventry animal pounds. This arrangement is acceptable to the operators of the two facilities and saves Foster the expense of constructing/operating a Town animal shelter. Should these towns fail to provide these services it would place an additional burden on the town particularly financially and also a public health concern. However, residents may be inconvenienced in looking for animals in both outside facilities. On occasion, Foster animals place a burden on space in the Scituate facility. Any new facility location would need to be compatible with zoning requirements and adjacent land uses, convenient for public access and secure from vandalism.

The feasibility of an *animal control* law should be explored by the Town.

Dog control is of concern in Foster due to the interest in retaining a rural agricultural way of life in which the keeping of farm animals such as sheep and chickens is impossible without dog control.

Utilities

Water Supply

Regulatory Standards for public water supplies along Rte.6 may make commercial development difficult, nodal zoning may help to elevate this problem.

Current users rely on individual or community wells for potable water supply, as there is no municipal water service. Existing development appears to be adequately served by wells. Well water known to be contaminated or of questionable quality is being substituted with bottled water. The offices located on the former Fogarty Elementary School site are currently using bottled water.

If current minimum 4.59-acre lot zoning requirement is maintained, future residential development could most likely be serviced by individual lot wells, barring any groundwater contamination encountered or incurred at a later date. Wells installed for new homes must meet minimum distance requirements from the proposed leaching field (100 feet) and neighboring

existing septic systems (200 feet) as established by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) to protect wells from septic effluent pollution. Rhode Island DEM provides a list of contaminated sites for each community, water quality standards for private wells with a list of contaminants and licensed water quality testers.

Future high water demands of certain commercial and industrial development, or concentrated residential sites, may not be met by low groundwater yields of certain geologic substratum. Also, if any widespread groundwater contamination should occur, users dependent upon their wells have no short- or long-term alternatives for potable water except to rely upon bottled supplies.

Wastewater Disposal

Existing developments within the Town rely upon on-site subsurface disposal of wastewater (septic systems). New developments require a permit from the RIDEM for the installation of an individual sewage disposal system (ISDS) and identification of well location to assure proper setbacks. The State continues to increase construction and inspection standards for individual septic systems and provide funding for municipalities to develop local waste water management plans all in an effort to maintain the ground and surface water quality.

Through a grant awarded in the Fall of 2001, Foster and Scituate have been working with a consulting firm to develop septic system operation and maintenance ordinances and guidance. Foster will focus on providing educational seminars and printed information about the proper use and maintenance of a septic system. Enforcement will remain at the State level. The DEM will enact an ISDS inspection program that the cities and towns will implement and enforce. At this time, it is Foster's intent to initiate a community awareness and workshop program to address operation and maintenance of septic systems. Efforts will be made to target population areas where septic system failure is a problem. The Town will not adopt septic system specific regulations, nor will it recommend a Town run ISDS inspection program. The Town will rely on the Department of Environmental Management to continue their regulation of individual septic disposal systems.

The greatest benefit of Foster's zoning is that the lot size needed for construction provide sufficient area for wastewater to be treated by subsurface treatment systems. The increased setbacks that the Town zoning ordinance requires for development adjacent to surface waters and wetlands add to the natural treatment of waste water treatment. These setbacks help to maintain water quality thereby protecting public health.

Solid Waste Disposal

The Town dump located on Salisbury Road has been closed and the Town is served by public roadside trash pick-up. The Department of Environmental Management has instituted programs to assess, remediate and close solid

waste landfills. Although the Salisbury Road landfill has not been used since 1978, it has not been characterized to determine if environmental threats exist. The property remains in private ownership.

In 1998, Foster initiated a recycling program. The program provides free recycling containers to residents of Foster and provides for collection of recycled materials on a bi-weekly in conjunction with traditional waste collection services. The Town provides educational literature and calendars to homeowners to promote appropriate recycling activities. The Town receives reimbursement from the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation for recycled materials that are diverted from the waste stream and generate revenue for the Corporation's recycling facility. Further benefits to the Town comes from reduction in tipping fees for solid waste disposal.

The Planning Department in conjunction with the Conservation Commission has an ongoing program to facilitate the sale and distribute compost bins to Foster residents. Bins are made available through the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation and are distributed during Old Home Day sponsored by the town each summer.

Public Works Facilities and Services

In 1999, a group of volunteers within the town constructed a new public works facility. Funding for the facility came from the Town's capital budget. The new structure was constructed adjacent to the old facility. The building includes four bays for vehicles and a paint shop. The lunchroom and bathroom facilities remain in the old portion of the public works structure. Both are in need of renovation.

Petroleum Storage Facilities. Two underground storage tanks (USTs) remain in active operation within the Town. One UST is located directly in back of the Eddy building and contains heating oil; the other is located at the Nike Tower Site, adjacent to Building B and is used also for heating oil. There are two other UST's located on the Nike Tower Site that are no longer active. Buildings A and C each have one tank adjacent to each of them. The Townhouse has two fill pipes located in the left rear corner of the building, with underground piping running into a 275 gal. heating oil tank located in the basement of the Townhouse, this is currently still in use.

Two Above Ground Storage Tanks (ASTs) have been installed in Foster Center adjacent to the Police Station. The two three thousand gallon tanks hold gasoline and diesel fuel. They are triple walled tanks consisting of two layers of steel and one layer of concrete. They have check valves, automatic shut-off valves and are constructed within containment basins.

Gravel Roads. Under forty percent (approx. 40 miles) of the roads in Foster are gravel. Once paved, bituminous roads are less expensive to maintain than gravel roads. Gravel roads are repaired with re-applications of gravel. Currently, two local commercial sand/gravel

banks provide the Town with gravel at a very reasonable cost.

Aged Equipment. The equipment is currently adequate provided that replacement is ongoing as scheduled in the five-year replacement plan developed by the DPW director and the Planning Board is part of the Capital Budget Plan.

The Foster DPW is reestablishing a five-year road plan that includes the replacement of Town bridges as necessary. The five-year road plan does not allow for the paving of gravel roads at this time. Under the bridge replacement plan bridge improvements are designed to comply with all relevant state requirements.

The Town also adheres to a reduced salt policy in roadway de-icing practices in order to decrease concentrations of sodium chloride in roadway runoff, as an environmental protection measure.

Municipal Offices and Buildings

The Town has recognized the need and made several improvements to provide adequate office space and facilities to relieve overcrowding, and address special requirements. The overall goal has been to retain the municipal offices within Foster Center, to maintain a central community area, and provide convenience to the public. A new municipal office building was constructed (1990) near the Town House and the Eddy Building which housed the Town Clerk's office has been rehabilitated as a meeting space where Town meetings are currently held.

The Town House, a historic structure within the Foster Center Historic District, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is an important community landmark. The building is the oldest meeting facility in the state. The town has recognized a number of maintenance and repairs that need to be completed, and the Planning and Public Works Departments are in the process of arranging for the completion of these repairs. In 1998, the outside of the building was painted. Much of that paint has cracked and pealed. The paint needs to be reapplied following the installation of wall vents and adequate preparation of the historic clapboards.

In 1999 the roof repairs were completed. This was followed by improving the drainage around the building foundation to channel rain and storm water away from the building. The basement of the Town House is now used as the Human Services Office. In Spring of 2002, the interior ceilings were painted. Funds for this repair were made available from a Senate Legislative Grant program. The ground floor was upgraded to be accessible to the physically handicapped. The Town Council meets in the Town House from late Spring through October. Other community functions are periodically held within the Town House. It is recommended that a schedule of maintenance for all town buildings be developed and followed.

Schools

The following information is excerpted from the 2003 Growth Management Report prepared by Teitz and Shamoon. Additional school population data was provided from the Foster Gloucester Regional School Department in December of 2003.

In 1980 there were 1,132 housing units in Foster. By 1990, the figure grew to 1,529 housing units. In 2000, there were an estimated 1,578 housing units in the Town, a growth of about 3%. (Source: US Census, Community Profile.) However, as was shown in this report, the Census Bureau may have undercounted the Town's housing stock. If the number of permits were added to the 1990 housing stock, the Town's number would be over 1,700 dwelling units. The Town of Foster shares a regional school district with the Town of Gloucester at the middle and senior high school levels. The regional school district had 1,699 pupils for school year 2002/03. (Source: Kenneth J. Grew, PhD, Superintendent of Schools, October 8, 2002.) Foster pupils comprised 526 of the regional school system while Gloucester included 1,171 pupils. The Foster school district had 385 pupils for school year 2002.

While there are 911 pupils in the town in 2002, the last housing unit count available is for 2000. In that year, the town's school-age population was also 911 (500 in the middle and high schools and 411 in Paine Elementary). So the town-wide ratio is 0.5330 pupils per unit. This figure is on the low side when compared with national averages. The ULI study showed that the Northeast states yielded 0.8738 pupils for 4-bedroom units, 0.6445 pupils for 5-bedroom units and 0.7119 pupils for a blended (all bedrooms) units. (Source: Burchell, Listokin and Dolphin, et al *Development Impact Assessment handbook*, 1997, Urban Land Institute, page 296.)

Foster's overall ratio of 0.5330 appears low and may not reflect an accurate picture of school-age children per single family dwelling unit. Since this study is concerned primarily with municipal impacts of growth on public schools, the ratio of 0.5330 will be used in the growth management formula at the end of this report.

B. School Enrollments and Capacity

The Town of Foster shares a regional school district with the Town of Gloucester at the middle and senior high school levels. The regional school district had 1,699 pupils for school year 2002-2003. Foster students comprise between 30% and 31% of the student body for a total of 524 pupils.

The following tables provide the number of pupils by grade.

Table 5
Foster-Glocester School District Ponaganset High School Enrollment

Year	Grade 9		Grade 10		Grade 11		Grade 12		TOTAL	TOTAL
	Foster	Glocester	Foster	Glocester	Foster	Glocester	Foster	Glocester		
1989	43	115	45	132	52	103	42	113	645	182

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1990	42	113	44	133	51	100	42	110	635	179
1991	59	149	52	88	38	99	47	127	659	196
1992	60	149	50	88	38	101	44	125	655	192
1993	56	137	49	118	56	141	47	84	688	208
1994	58	127	52	129	49	120	52	139	726	211
1995	58	162	56	134	48	128	50	129	765	212
1996	63	154	59	156	52	132	46	129	791	220
1997	62	146	58	151	52	125	43	127	764	215
1998	68	159	69	160	58	143	56	151	864	251
1999	73	174	66	157	70	150	62	142	894	271
2000	61	161	75	169	65	141	70	145	887	271
2001	66	177	60	147	70	165	63	133	881	259
2002	67	176	61	148	69	161	60	128	870	257
2003	75	162	79	154	72	174	65	144	925	291

Source: Ponaganset Regional School Department, December, 2003.

Table 6
Foster-Glocester School District Ponaganset Middle School Enrollment

Year	Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8		TOTAL	TOTAL
	Foster	Glocester	Foster	Glocester	Foster	Glocester		
1989	59	113	48	142	52	94	508	159
1990	62	112	49	144	50	94	511	161
1991	64	124	57	131	54	71	501	175
1992	64	124	55	127	53	117	540	172
1993	58	138	59	157	58	128	598	175
1994	64	149	55	137	57	156	618	176
1995	60	135	60	151	60	142	608	180
1996	66	152	54	142	59	149	622	179
1997	66	160	60	146	61	153	646	187
1998	52	176	57	155	70	165	675	179
1999	82	158	64	171	58	167	700	204
2000	67	154	78	161	65	178	703	210
2001	84	181	69	161	84	159	738	237
2002	87	171	69	163	86	159	735	242
2003	80	142	90	176	91	176	755	261

Source: Ponaganset Regional School Department, December, 2003.

Table 7

Foster School District Paine Elementary School Enrollment							
Year	Total	K	Gr 1	Gr 2	Gr 3	Gr 4	Gr 5
1983	264	46	54	49	35	35	45
1984	263	38	53	49	45	39	39
1985	279	50	46	52	46	48	37
1986	317	58	61	47	57	45	49
1987	339	50	76	61	47	64	41
1988	368	60	72	63	63	48	62
1989	358	51	77	62	56	62	50
1990	374	71	61	63	61	54	64
1991	355	52	73	54	62	59	55
1992	375	65	61	62	63	67	57
1993	388	66	69	60	63	62	68
1994	384	48	85	55	65	67	64
1995	385	58	67	71	57	61	71
1996	386	62	71	61	72	61	59
1997	400	63	70	72	63	72	60
1998	399	54	66	74	70	63	72
1999	408	55	61	72	83	75	62
2000	411	46	59	63	78	82	83
2001	402	57	51	63	68	80	83
2002	386	51	64	50	70	70	81

Source: Aharonian & Associates, Conceptual Design Options, Building Feasibility Study for the Foster-Glocester Regional School System

The combined systems saw an average growth rate of about 1.5% to 1.6% annually. In a report released on August 5, 2003, the following observation was made with respect to enrollment. "From 1983-1988 the total enrollment of Foster Elementary School was 264, 263 279, 317, 339, and 368 respectively. These enrollment figures show that the total enrollment jumped 39% for this period of time. Unlike the previous years the enrollment for 1988 to 2002 show enrollment up only 10%. In ten of the years kindergarten enrollment was higher than the birth cohort. Only two of 14 [years] (1989 and 1991) was the birth cohort significantly higher than the kindergarten rate. The enrollment between kindergarten and grade 1 increased an average 8.5% as a result of enrollment from non-public kindergarten and children moving into the community." (Source: Aharonian & Associates, *Conceptual Design Options, Building Feasibility Study for the Foster-Glocester Regional School System*, August 5, 2003, pages 3-16.)

The total number of Foster students in the regional system and the local elementary school numbers 910 students. In terms of capacity, the Paine School is almost at capacity with 400 available seats serving 386 students. The Foster-Glocester is presently over capacity. With a capacity of 735 seats, the middle school is already at 766, a deficit of 31 seats. The matter is more serious at the high school, where 800 seat capacity has to accommodate 933 students. The overall deficit in all

three schools is at about 150 seats. The table below notes the capacity situation.

Table 8
Foster Public Schools Capacity

	Capacity	2002-2003	Difference
Paine Elementary	400	386	14
Foster-Glocester Ponaganset High	800	933	-133
Foster-Glocester Ponaganset Middle	735	766	-31
Total	1,935	2,084	-150

Source: Aharonian & Associates, *Conceptual Design Options, Building Feasibility Study for the Foster-Glocester Regional School System*

If capacity is not increased at all levels, the situation gets worse over time. In a study for the Foster-Glocester Regional School System prepared by Aharonian & Associates, Inc., dated August 5, 2003, the high school will see an enrollment increase to 1,115 in ten years, 1,334 in twenty years and 1,459 in twenty-five years. Likewise, the middle school will see an enrollment increase to 890 in ten years, 1,034 in twenty years and 1,114 in twenty-five years. (Source: Aharonian & Associates, *Conceptual Design Options, Building Feasibility Study for the Foster-Glocester Regional School System*, August 5, 2003, pages 3-13 to 3-17.)

With a similar growth rate at the Paine Elementary school, the two school systems will likely see a ten year enrollment increase of 470 students.

For the purposes of this study, the deficit of 150 seats does not apply to Foster alone; it includes the regional district. Based on the approximate 70-30 split between Glocester and Foster, the actual deficit will be 30% of the High and Middle School deficit, (or $-133 + -31 = -164 \times 30\% = -49$ seat deficit). Combined with the elementary school surplus of 14, the working deficit that this study addresses is -35.

The deficit will continue to mount in the next ten years as the high school population rises to 1,115 and the middle school to 890 students. Using the same analysis, the high school will have a deficit of 315 seats; and the middle school will be short 155 seats. The combined 470 seat deficit will cause Foster to be short 141 seats, assuming the 30% split will remain through the next ten years. For a relatively small school system, the shortfall will be at about 30% of current capacity. In other words, the school system will have to expand its capacity by 30% in ten years to even keep pace with the apparent slow population growth.

The real unknown is what might happen if there is a large growth spurt as the region and country emerge out of the current recession.

Kindergarten through 5th grade students attend Foster's elementary school, Isaac Paine. The school program also includes Pre-K and a special needs classroom. There are two morning and one afternoon kindergarten classes and on average there are classes for each grade, 1st through 5th. Classroom enrollments do not exceed 25 students per teacher, per classroom in accordance with teacher contracts.

Enrollment numbers approaching or exceeding 75 for any grade indicate a need to consider increasing the number of classrooms in order to maintain the 25 students per teacher, per classroom ratio. (The exception is kindergarten where an additional afternoon session could be programmed without adding another classroom.)

Isaac Paine Elementary School facilities were upgraded in 1991 and the school expanded with the construction of an addition to accommodate the recent consolidation of elementary grades by the transfer of students from the Fogarty School location. There is additional space on Isaac Paine property to construct future additions if necessary to accommodate some increase in enrollment; however, the School Department first would consider other alternatives. Minor enrollment increases can be accommodated within the existing number of classes, as the student - teacher ratio has been below 25:1. (Special education student - teacher ratio is not to exceed 10:1.) It also may be possible in some school years to keep the same number of classrooms but redistribute the number of classrooms per grade as required. It should be noted that the R.I. Department of Education recommends that elementary schools should not be planned to serve more than four classes per grade.

According to the Foster School Department, there are nine home-to -school buses and one late bus. There is also one spare bus. The Town contracts with Laidlaw. The ten buses currently in operation to bring students to Isaac Paine are adequate in terms of passenger capacity and routing/scheduling, and no need is foreseen in the near future to increase the number of buses. School buses with routes passing day care facilities will stop to discharge or pick up children, providing a coincidental service to parents.

Foster and Glocester students enrolled in grades 6-12 attend the Foster - Glocester Regional School -- Ponaganset Middle (grades 6-8), and High School (grades 9-12). In 2003 Foster students comprised approximately one-third of the school year enrollment for each grade. These schools meet the R.I. Department of Education guidelines for minimum and maximum enrollments (middle schools, 400 - 1200 pupils; and high schools, 500 - 2000 pupils).

Libraries

The Foster Public Library and the Tyler Free Library are independent public libraries, supported by federal, state and local funds as well as funds raised by each library through fines, fees and fundraising. The libraries are separate corporations, each governed by its own Board

of Trustees. The Foster Public Library is centrally located in Foster Center while the Tyler Free Library attracts patrons from the Moosup Valley area and Western Coventry. The libraries work in cooperation with each other on many fundraising projects. The libraries share a professional librarian who manages the day-to-day operations. Each library pays one half of the salary and benefits of the Director.

In 2003, a Strategic Planning Committee has been established. The Committee is comprised of the library Director, members of each Board of Trustees, library staff members and interested members of the public. The purpose of this committee is to assess the current and future library needs of the town and to make a recommendation to the library boards on how to improve library service to the community of Foster. Special attention is being paid to improving or adding additions to current library facilities and creating additional services that will benefit the community.

Recreational Facilities

The Woody Lowden Recreation Center serves as both a Senior Citizens and Youth Center. The facility has a kitchen. A walking track was constructed at the Center. Playing fields maintained by the Town are used by youth athletic leagues. The Town leases and maintains Dunbar Field as a ball field in Moosup Valley.

Grants have been solicited for repairs to the building, resurfacing the tracks, basketball court and reseeding of the playing fields. Town funding was provided for playground equipment.

Human Services:

Grant Funding has been sought to move Human Services to a Handicapped assessable space in the Town Hall. The Human Services Department functions in a number of areas. The Department operates as an outreach and intervention center for both the elderly and youth populations. The Department receives much of its funding from State programs. The Department presently maintains the Foster Food Bank and accepts and distributes clothes and other goods to needed residents acting as a branch of the Salvation Army. It also administers the Special Needs Fund, Teen Fund and the Good Neighbors Energy Fund. The Public Welfare Director who operates the Department is on call seven days a week and provides twenty-four hour emergency service.

The Department provides transportation to residents without access to private transportation. The majority of the transportation service is for medical appointments and the Department coordinates services when available. The transportation need is much greater than the available opportunities. As such, the greatest need of the Department is a vehicle and operator to provide these services.

Hot lunch programs that were started received minimal participation and were subsequently halted. The Department facilitates the meals on

wheels program provided through the Cranston Senior Center.

5.5.3 **APPROACH**

The providing of extensive community facilities and services is not in accord with the rural values of self-reliance that Foster residents espouse. There are, however, essential services which the Town and other quasi-government agencies provide. These services and facilities are part of community life and will be programmed in the Plan for the future. Essentially, Foster will strive to keep the roll of Town Government within the context of rural society and its needs. Growth management and Yankee ingenuity will play a significant role in the provision of services. A strong *Capital Improvement Budgeting Process* will assist in implementation of the following goals and policies for action:

GOALS

- Assure that current and future growth is served with economically planned and well maintained services and facilities, which reflect a rural economy of scale, and a lifestyle based upon self-reliance.
- Promoting education of the Town's youth through excellence in elementary and high school education.

POLICIES

Protective Services

- Continue to provide dry hydrants at surface water supplies for fire protection pumping.
- Review and exercise Emergency Management Plan on an annual basis and revise, as needed, to ensure the protection of the Town's residents in cases of disaster or emergencies; provide training of all emergency and support personnel on a regular basis.
- Maintain a current alert list at the Foster Police Station.
- Explore providing animal shelter requirements within the Scituate Animal Pound. Consider an animal control ordinance.
- Continue to support incentive program for Emergency Services.
- Maintain capital replacement schedule for Emergency equipment.
- Monitor adequacy of Police staff relative to population growth.

Utilities

- Identify potential well fields on Town-owned or acquired land within high yield aquifers for an emergency source of adequate water quality for public use.
- Cooperate with the States aquifer/wellhead protection zoning to protect existing and future community-type wells. Such protection could be combined with a Farmland - Rural Conservation Overlay zoning District.
- Develop and adopt a Town-wide ISDS maintenance educational program to encourage proper usage, maintenance and timely repairs of Individual Sewage Disposal Systems (ISDS). Consider in the future a Wastewater Management District, which would require routine inspection and maintenance of septic systems.
- Minimize the effect of drought on public health and safety, economic activity, and environmental resources.
- Preserve the water supply of the State.
- The long-term drought goal is to reduce Rhode Island's vulnerability to periods of low precipitation (or long-term drought).

Public Works

- Adhere to the Equipment Rotation-Replacement Plan.
- Reactivate and adhere to the Five-Year Road Improvement Program.
- Adhere to the Bridge Replacement Plan.
- Continue the practice of reduced roadway salt application.
- Obtain grant funding for the construction of a salt-storage shed.

Municipal Offices/Buildings

- All buildings owned by the Town and used by the public should meet standard building code requirements and be made accessible to the physically handicapped.
- Monitor and evaluate the need for additional municipal office/building space.
- Develop and adhere to the Town building maintenance Plan.

Schools

- Maintain the existing school district structures. Foster School District should include the elementary school. The Middle and High Schools should remain regionalized with Glocester, in the Foster-Glocester School District.
- Continue to share costs for supplies with regional school district at the elementary level.
- Encourage the Foster School Administration to monitor annually, elementary school enrollment projections and development activity, which may affect enrollments. Continue a school facility master planning process.

Libraries

- Encourage continued coordination of policies and staff between Foster's two libraries.
- Recognize the need to expand library services and user population.
- Support the libraries in future planning.

Human Services

- Conduct a survey of the need for public transportation (van) for senior citizens, and how many people would be serviced. Investigate costs associated with the operation of the program and maintenance of the van. Implement the program if demand demonstrates a viable operation.
- Move Human Services to handicapped assessable location.

Facility Improvements

Develop a strong five-year Capital facility improvement plan for municipal buildings, equipment, and infrastructure.