

TOWN OF AURORA 1992 Comprehensive Plan

**Final Draft: April, 1992
for Submittal to the State Office of Comprehensive Planning**

**Prepared by the Town of Aurora Comprehensive Planning Committee
and Jim Haskell & Associates, Community Planners**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
TOWN OF AURORA
1992 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

A. PURPOSE OF EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this Executive Summary is to outline the major findings of each section of the proposed Aurora 1991 Comprehensive Plan and to present the Comprehensive Planning Committee's recommendations. The entire proposed Comprehensive Plan is available at the Town Office.

B. PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The proposed Aurora Comprehensive Plan was developed between June 1990 and March 1991. It was prepared under the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act of 1988 (MRSA Title 30, Section 4311 et. seq.). The Plan was researched and developed by the Comprehensive Planning Advisory Committee, which consisted of nine residents of Aurora. The Committee gathered public input for this plan in numerous ways, including an Opinion Survey, and two public information meetings. The Committee was assisted by the Town's Planning Consultant, Jim Haskell & Associates.

The purpose of the proposed Plan is to guide management of the town's growth in the next ten years. The Plan will be updated in 1996. While the Plan does not directly change specific town policies, it does make recommendations for changes in current ordinances and programs, as well as additional funding for recommended capital projects. The Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act requires that towns submit Land Use Ordinances to the State within twelve months of the date when the Comprehensive Plan is submitted. Therefore, the Town of Aurora will have to submit ordinances which are consistent with this plan by March 1993.

C. PLAN ORGANIZATION

The proposed Plan is organized into the following sections:

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION provides a general introduction to the Plan.

SECTION II: INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS is further organized into the following twelve sub-sections:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| A. Population | G. Water Resources |
| B. Economy | H. Critical Natural Resource |
| C. Housing | I. Agricultural and Forest Resources |
| D. Transportation | J. Historic and Archaeologic Resources |
| E. Public Facilities and Services | K. Land Use |
| F. Recreation | L. Fiscal Capacity |

Each of these sub-sections deals with a particular resource or aspect of the town. The Inventory and Analysis consists of facts about the resource and summarizes the growth management implications of this information. Out of each sub-section, the Committee developed a town policy and several recommendations for town action.

SECTION III: GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES
summarizes the recommended policies from each Inventory and Analysis Sub-section and summarizes all the recommendations of each previous section of the plan. In addition, it provides an approximate cost, date and agent (person or organization responsible) for each proposed action.

SECTION IV: REGIONAL COORDINATION PLAN discusses those issues identified in the Inventory and Analysis Sub-sections which have regional implications.

SECTION V: CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN discusses the recommendations of Inventory and Analysis Sub-sections which would require a capital outlay of over \$5,000. It also provides the basis for a five-year Capital Improvement Program to be developed in 1993.

SECTION VI: PROPOSED LAND USE PLAN describes proposed Growth and Rural Areas as well as other recommendations to be incorporated into Aurora's revised Land Use Guidance Ordinance.

This Executive Summary gives a brief overview of the substance of each section and presents the recommendations made in each.

D. SUMMARY OF INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS SUBSECTIONS

1. POPULATION

Based on the 1970 population of 72 people, the 1980 population of 110 and the 1990 population of 81, the projected population for the year 2000 is 87 people. A change in just several more or fewer families could make a big difference in this projection. The Committee counted about 102 residents in Aurora in 1991.

Population Policy

"It is the policy of the Town of Aurora to monitor actively the size and distributions of its year-round and seasonal populations and to integrate this information with all relevant decisions made by the municipality, including, but not limited to, periodic revision of the Comprehensive Plan."

To implement the Population Policy stated above, it is recommended that the Town of Aurora:

1. All available population estimates and population characteristics from federal, state and regional agencies, will be collected, maintained in appropriate files, and made available for day to day policy and planning decisions and used for future revisions of this plan.

2. ECONOMY, AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY

In 1989 the Department of Labor counted 70 people in Aurora's labor force. This figure may be exaggerated but indicates that there are a lot of households in town with two workers.

For a town of Aurora's size there are a lot of employers in town: about 6 storefronts and about as many farms and forestry operations.

A majority of opinion survey respondents favored promoting or allowing convenience stores, hotels, motels and bed and breakfast inns, restaurants, light manufacturing, professional offices, home industry, and nursing home facilities. Also, a majority favored discouraging or forbidding shopping malls, fast food drive ins, industrial parks and heavy industry. The only industrial development favored by respondents was a recycling/transfer station and sand and gravel extraction.

Based on this the Committee recommends that the town provide opportunity for economic growth through land use ordinances which allow commercial growth which is compatible with the desires of the town and also encourage new economic development which brings year-round jobs that pay more than minimum wage and offer some other benefits to employees.

Aurora's tax records list 2,597 acres of farm land in town which are used primarily for blueberry and hay production. This is 10% of the town's total area. 41% of survey respondents felt that agricultural land use in town should be promoted. But Committee discussions also brought up the problems associated with the application of insecticides

and herbicides on blueberry ground; the health risks for adjacent land owners and the affect on the ground water. The town may consider not permitting the application of harmful chemicals without the farmer first demonstrating that they are needed. The burden this would place on the farmer could be off set by establishing a grower's association that could collectively monitor crop pests and growth. A grower's association could also collectively purchase ground spraying equipment which results in more efficient application of chemicals than air spraying. Another use a growers' association might have would be to collectively market the member farmers' produce. In the long run these practices could save farmers money, protect the water quality in town, and decrease residents' exposure to harmful chemicals.

16,878 acres, 75% of the town's total area, are registered under the State Tree Growth Tax Law Program. This acreage is held by 14 owners and two of these owners, Diamond Occidental Forestry, Inc. and Champion International, own more than 50% of the town's total area. This land contributes very little to the town's tax base because the State assesses this land at reduced rates per acre under the Tree Growth Tax Law Program.

50% of survey respondents felt that clear cutting of wood lots should be forbidden in Aurora and 21% felt that it should be discouraged. It may be that survey respondents are most concerned with the appearance of the clear cut land. Another Forest Resource concern of the survey respondents is that the town's forest land be managed productively. Management of the town's forest lands should benefit the land owner in the long run and sustain a part of the town's economy for many years.

Economic, Agriculture, and Forestry Development Policy:

"The Town of Aurora will promote economic development through local and regional economic development efforts which are consistent with the rural character of the town and do not sacrifice air and water quality."

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"The Town of Aurora will encourage the improvement of existing employment opportunities and new job opportunities which offer conventional benefits to workers including unemployment insurance and workers compensation."

"The Town of Aurora will safeguard its forest resources by encouraging forest management techniques which maintains appropriate stocking or which results in appropriate reforestation."

"The Town of Aurora will safeguard its agricultural resources from development by encouraging participation in the Farm Registration Program."

To implement the Economic Development, Agriculture and Forestry Policies stated above, it is recommended that the Town of Aurora:

1. Participate in regional economic development efforts which benefit the town's economy, yet do not negatively affect its environment and rural character. A good new business would be a day care because it would make two income families more feasible.

2. Provide opportunity for economic growth through land use ordinances which allow commercial growth which is compatible with the desires of the Town.

→ 3. Encourage new economic development which brings jobs that pay more than minimum wage and offer some other benefits to employees. How?

4. Develop a local Forest Practices Ordinance which encourages best management practices, and which restricts clear cutting in town (eg: no clearcuts larger than 5 acres without first the landowner submitting a harvesting plan and obtaining a permit from the Planning Board). The goal of this action would be to encourage the sustained management of land designated as forest land.

5. Encourage appropriate forestry and agricultural activities in respective resource protection and shoreland zones, especially with regard to pesticide and herbicide use, erosion control and phosphorus loading, by making information on these issues available in the town offices. The Maine Forest Service's June 1991 Erosion & Sediment Control Handbook for Maine Timber Harvesting Operations Best Management Practices should be used as a starting point for this work.

How? 6. Encourage adjacent towns to adopt sustainable forest practices.

7. Encourage owners of agricultural land to participate in the Farmland Registration Program by notifying property owners about this program.

How? 8. Encourage the organization of collective marketing efforts for locally produced commodities like pulp wood and blueberries.

How? → 9. Organize a Growers' Association of town farmers and forest landowners.

10. The Planning Board should become familiar with State standards for outdoor pesticide application.

11. Require a copy of the State's new Intent to Harvest form for forestry harvesting activities be filed with the Town when it is filed with the State.

3. HOUSING

The 1990 Census recorded an 18% loss in number of year-round occupied housing units in the last 10 years: a drop from 50 to 41 units. This change seems to be the result of migration of older residents to warmer climates and death. The town is collecting taxes on about 10 mobile homes in town: about 25% of the year-round occupied housing stock. The rest are single family houses. There are about 60 seasonal housing units in town, most of which are on ponds.

The 1980 Census (the most current information available) found 24% of Aurora's housing stock did not have complete plumbing facilities for exclusive use. The Committee estimates that this figure is still pretty accurate and therefore recommends that the Town apply for a State grant to improve housing for Aurora's low income residents.

42% of respondents thought the town should discourage the development of mobile home parks and 42% thought they should be forbidden. It would not be legal for the town to forbid the development of mobile home parks in Aurora but the town can regulate where mobile home parks can be developed. The Committee will work on identifying the best area in town for mobile home park development in later phases of this Plan.

To improve housing opportunities in town the Committee recommends that the town revise the procedure for obtaining a building permit in order to clarify the process. Also, a Committee might be appointed to study the feasibility and desirability of developing elderly housing in town and the applicability of the H.U.D. Elderly Housing Program.

Housing Policy:

"It is the policy of the Town of Aurora to encourage and promote affordable, appropriate, and adequate housing for its residents."

To implement the Housing Policy stated above, it is recommended that the Town of Aurora:

1. The Planning Board will study the issues related to manufactured housing and parks and prepare recommendations for how the issues should be handled in Aurora.
2. Apply for a Community Development Block Grant, part of which would be used to improve existing low-income housing in Aurora.
3. Reduce the environmental impact of growth of waterfront homes through water quality and land use regulations discussed in the Water Resources and Land Use sections of this plan.
4. The Selectmen will appoint a Committee to study the feasibility and desirability of developing elderly housing in town. Study will include evaluating the applicability of the H.U.D. Elderly Housing Program.
5. The Planning Board will revise the permit procedure to clarify the process of obtaining a building permit in town. Revisions to be considered include:
 - a. Developing a brief handbook to advise applicants of the requirements of the permitting process for different types of development projects;
 - b. Adding a question to permit applications on where water is available in the case of a fire at a new home site;
 - c. A form letter with information on what activities the town regulates and a list of existing ordinances to individuals named in Transfer Tax Declaration Forms.
 - d. Requiring stiffer penalties when a construction project begins without the proper permits.
6. Develop wood stove/furnace installation and electrical standards for new construction in Town.
7. Requesting the Union River Electric Company to adopt a policy that requires evidence of a building permit prior to hooking up power to any new construction.

8. Revise the definition of structure in existing ordinances to include tents or temporary structures for habitation and establish occupancy limits for temporary housing.

4. TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

77% of survey respondents were satisfied with the existing provisions for regular trash pickup but 77% also said that provisions for disposal of white goods, construction debris, etc. needed improvement. The Selectmen might create a committee to research waste management options including recycling in conjunction with other towns. The town also needs to plan on covering the old landfill.

A lot of discussion has centered around the condition of the Town Hall and the Old Brick Schoolhouse. It is hoped that the State will partially fund a project to fix the foundation of the Schoolhouse and if this application goes through the Committee hopes that the Town will want to come up with the matching funds needed to collect the grant. Improvements and repairs needed in the Town Hall are not as extensive and probably should be done as soon as possible before they become unmanageable.

In 1990-91 43% of the town's expenditures went to road maintenance and snow removal. The regular road maintenance and paving program of the past has been adequate but might be improved by developing a long term Road Maintenance Program. The Town should also plan on replacing one of its snow plows in 3 years and a second in 5 years.

The Aurora Volunteer Fire Department is working on improving the service it provides to the town by improving its existing equipment, obtaining new fire fighting equipment. It has already invested in a relay system which notifies fire fighters by radio in case of an emergency. It is hoped that the town will increase its support of this group as the Department improves the services it offers the Town.

Given the population projections, the Town's enrollment figures are not likely to increase substantially and the Airline Community School is not likely to become over crowded in the next 10 years.

Transportation and Public Facility Policy:

"It is the policy of the Town of Aurora to plan for and provide adequate public facilities and services for current and future populations."

"It is the policy of the Town of Aurora to plan for the optimum use, construction, maintenance, and repair of roads and municipal buildings in conjunction and cooperation with neighboring towns, given available resources."

To implement the policies stated above, it is recommended that the Town of Aurora:

1. Request the Board of Selectmen create a committee in March 1992 to conduct a feasibility study of waste management options, including possibilities for recycling for the town;
2. Continue with the regular municipal maintenance and paving program;

3. Develop a long-term Road Maintenance Program;
4. Plan for replacement of two snow plows in 3 and 5 years;
5. Plan for building a salt shed within 10 years (est. \$20,000).
6. Plan to cover the old town landfill.
7. Retrieve the town water cooler from the Fire Station. Put up a permanent sign warning people not to drink the water at the town hall.
8. Prepare a C.D.B. Grant project for repairing the Brick School House and support the project if it is funded by contributing the matching funds.
9. Apply for wind break planting funds through Soil and Water Conservation for site improvements at the Airline School.

5. RECREATION

The Airline Community School is used by students and for adult programs including aerobics and basketball. The playing field at the School needs to be improved with the addition of a layer of top soil and grass seed for it to be useful.

There are a number of boat launching sites in town and most residents use the Dow Pines Recreation Area for swimming and picnicking. This area is now owned by the Air Force but they have plans to relinquish ownership. If the State does not take over this property the town should be prepared to join with neighboring towns to acquire and maintain it.

The hunters' breakfast and dinner, sponsored by the Aurora V.F.D. and the Amherst/Aurora Congregational Church and the Aurora V.F.D. Chicken Barbecue are popular community events which are unusual assets for a town of Aurora's size. The Town could contribute to community activities by supporting the Union River Valley 4-H Club, perhaps encouraging them to build window boxes for the Town Hall or to help maintain the area around the Old Brick Schoolhouse.

Recreation Policy:

"It is the policy of the Town of Aurora to expand the recreation opportunities and surface water access provided to its citizens."

To implement the recreation policy stated above, it is recommended that the Town of Aurora:

1. Work with the neighboring towns of Osborn, Great Pond and Amherst to form a regional Recreation Committee. This Committee could try to secure the Dow Pines Recreation Area once the Air Force stops using it.

2. The Town should support recreation programs for the town's youth including improving the Airline ballfield and supporting the Union River 4-H Club so that they can afford to undertake more community minded activities (such as building window boxes for the town hall or planting flowers at the school or library).

6. WATER AND CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCES

In Aurora there are 5 ponds, 14 brooks and rivers, 37 freshwater wetlands, 6 significant waterfowl and wading bird habitats and 2 aquifers. One of the aquifers is very large and extremely productive. The Town should be aware of these water resources and protect their quality.

One measure the town should plan for is building sheds over the sand and salt piles which are located on aquifers. This would prevent salt in these piles from entering the water table. The town should also proceed with covering the old landfill which is also located on an aquifer. The potential water supply available to the town in its aquifers is a very valuable resource.

The Town is a member of the River Union, a non-profit group which is working to develop a watershed management plan for the Union River. This effort should be supported by the town.

The Whalesback and Slisby Plain Eskers are registered with the State Critical Natural Areas Program because they are naturally occurring phenomenon of statewide significance. The Committee also made an inventory of scenic areas and views in town for inclusion in the Plan. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife has mapped two deer wintering areas in town.

Water Resource Policy:

"The Town of Aurora will preserve and protect the surface water, wetlands, and groundwater resources, through municipal ordinances and enforcement of State laws."

"The Town of Aurora will participate actively in regional programs to preserve and protect the area's water resources and other natural resources."

"The Town of Aurora will further prohibit incompatible development in or adjacent to locally and state identified Critical Natural Areas."

In order to implement these policies Aurora should take the following actions:

1. Encourage the further mapping and study of Aurora's water resources, particularly the value of wetlands, location of flood hazard zones and water quality in ponds. Encourage the identification, mapping, and registry of any and all sites which may be eligible for the State Critical Areas and/or Natural Heritage Programs, and encourage the continued inventory of fish and wildlife resources by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.
2. Cooperate with the State to build Sand and Salt Storage Sheds over the existing piles.

3. Cooperate with the State to cover the Town's old landfill site.
4. Protect surface waters from non-point runoff from new development and timber harvesting by continuing to work with the River Union for the development of a management plan for the Union River watershed and for the preservation of the Union River watershed. The River Union membership includes the Towns of Aurora, Amherst, Clifton, Ellsworth, Great Pond, Osborn, Waltham, and Townships 8 and 28.
5. Prevent the destruction and contamination of aquifers by prohibiting all incompatible development in and within 250 feet of aquifers. The town may ultimately identify drinking water sources which are of community significance.
6. Prohibit all further incompatible development in designated flood hazard areas.
7. Undertake mapping existing and future wells to monitor their location, depth and productivity.
8. Regulate incompatible development in significant Critical Areas, through Resource Protection zoning as outlined in Section VI: Land Use Plan.
9. Encourage public and private educational activities which enhance the understanding of and the aesthetic appreciation of Aurora's identified critical natural resources.

7. HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

By 1852 all virgin pine had been cut in Aurora and the town's population peaked at 277 in 1860. The population declined to a low of 72 in 1970 and has since grown back to around 100. Blueberries have been the dominant agricultural crop in town since the early 1900's.

The oldest standing public brick building in Hancock County is Aurora's Brick School House which was built in 1827 and is now used as the town library. The Committee recommends that a grant be obtained to fund this building's preservation. One effort to obtain a grant is now in progress and if successful, the town should contribute matching funds needed to collect the State money. If repairs are not made to this building soon it will be lost to decay.

Historic and Archaeological Resource Policy:

"The Town of Aurora will encourage and promote the identification and protection of the Town's historic and archaeological resources."

To implement the Resource Management Policy stated above, it is recommended that the Town of Aurora:

1. Encourage the further mapping and quantitative and qualitative analysis of Aurora's historic and archaeological resources through the efforts of its citizens;

2. Encourage public and private educational activities which enhance the understanding of and the aesthetic appreciation of the Town's identified historic and archaeological resources;
3. Continue to support the Cemetery Association which maintains the Aurora Cemetery.
4. Establish an reserved account for funding improvements to the old brick school house, whether or not C.D.B.G. funds are obtained (see Public Facilities & Transportation strategies).

8. LAND USE

85% of the town's total area of about 36 square miles is either used for forestry or agriculture and most of the rest is either open water or swamp. In 1990 the Census counted 41 year-round housing units in Aurora and 60 seasonal units. Most of the residential and commercial areas in Aurora are located on Routes 9 and 179 and the Great Pond Road. There are no mobile home parks in town at this time. A subdivision has been approved at Giles Pond on Route 179. Champion International leases 37 seasonal lots (22 on Upper Middle Branch Pond) and Diamond Occidental Forestry, Inc. leases two.

Land Use Management Policy:

"The Town of Aurora will adopt and periodically update an official Land Use Map which designates areas for future growth and development, areas where the rural character of the community will be protected and enhanced, and which protects vulnerable natural resources from the adverse impact of development, as part of the Town's adopted Comprehensive Plan."

"The Town of Aurora will adopt and enforce Land Use Regulations which direct future growth and development in areas identified as suitable and appropriate for such growth, and restrict future growth and development in areas where such activities have the potential of adversely affecting identified vulnerable natural resources, as recommended in the Town's adopted Comprehensive Plan."

In order to implement its Local Land Use Policies, Aurora will take the following actions:

1. Prepare and maintain an official Land Use Map designating the recommended areas contained in this Section of the Comprehensive Plan.
2. The Town will revise its Land Use Ordinance to implement the dimensional, location, and performance recommendations contained in the Proposed Land Use Plan. Performance standards will include preparing a Lighting section of the ordinance in order to protect the darkness of the night sky: a resource which is now only available in rural areas. The Subdivision section of the ordinance will be revised to include subdivisions which only include 40 acre plus lots.

9. FISCAL CAPACITY

The Town currently has very little long-term debt: the Airline School construction loan is paid off. Through very conservative fiscal practices the Town has managed to put aside some funds for future needs and has some accounts which are set aside for road improvements, education and cemetery maintenance. Combined, these accounts earn around \$7,000 per year in interest.

Fiscal Capacity Policy:

"The Town of Aurora will develop and enhance its capacity to provide the most efficient and cost effective financing and operation of existing and future public facilities and services."

"The Town of Aurora will prepare, maintain, and annually update a 5 year Capital Improvement Program."

In order to implement Local Fiscal Capacity Policies, Aurora will take the following actions:

1. Develop a five year Capital Improvement Program prioritizing the projects listed in the Proposed Capital Investment Plan.
2. Develop and adopt an ordinance for assessing exactions on developers consistent with State law.
3. Leave funds appropriated in town meeting for a particular project in a fund for that purpose instead of letting the dollars lapse back into general savings if the project is not undertaken during the fiscal year.

E. GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The policies developed from the Inventory and Analysis are listed under specific Inventory sections. They are in accordance with the State Goals and Policies listed in the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act and with the proposed regional Goals and Policies.

The implementation strategies were developed as recommendations out of each Inventory and Analysis section, as listed above. For each recommendation, an approximate cost, estimated schedule and agent or responsible party is listed. Because these recommendations are listed as "actions" for each section described above they are not repeated here.

F. REGIONAL COORDINATION PLAN

Many issues facing a town either have interlocal (between several towns) effects or are effected by the actions of several towns. The purpose of this section is to identify those issues which have significance beyond the Town of Aurora's borders and to recommend action strategies.

Regional Coordination Policy:

"It is the policy of the Town of Aurora to cooperate and communicate with other communities in order to efficiently address issues of interlocal significance."

Regional Coordination Actions

To implement the Regional Coordination Policy stated above, it is recommended that the Town of Aurora:

1. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:**
Participate in regional economic development efforts which benefit the town's economy, yet do not negatively affect its environment and rural character.
2. **FOREST AND PRACTICES REGULATION:**
Encourage adjacent towns to adopt sustainable forest practices.
3. **COLLECTIVE MARKETING:**
Encourage the organization of collective marketing efforts for locally produced commodities like pulp wood and blueberries.
4. **REGIONAL RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:**
Work with the neighboring Towns of Osborn, Great Pond and Amherst to form a regional Recreation Committee. This Committee could try to secure the Dow Pines Recreation Area once the Air Force stops using it.
5. **UNION RIVER WATERSHED:**
Protect surface waters from non-point runoff from new development and timber harvesting by continuing to work with the River Union for the development of a management plan for the Union River watershed and for the preservation of the Union River watershed. The River Union membership includes the Towns of Aurora, Amherst, Great Pond, Osborn, Elsworth, Clifton, Waltham, Townships 8 & 28.

G. CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN

The purpose of this plan is to identify all the major capital improvement recommended by this Plan over the next ten years. These projects should be explored further and prioritized as the Town develops a Capital Improvement Program to guide its expenditures for capital improvements over the next five years.

Capital Investment Policy:

"It is the policy of the Town of Aurora to anticipate major expenditures and plan for the efficient use of the town's fiscal resources."

Capital Investment Actions

To implement the Capital Investment Policy stated above, it is recommended that the Town of Aurora:

1. Develop a Capital Improvement Program; and
2. In accordance with this Program, assess impact fees of developers to help finance capital improvements directly attributable to their developments.

H. PROPOSED LAND USE PLAN

The purpose of this plan is to propose guidelines for the growth expected in Aurora over the next ten years. Although there is limited residential growth projected, the Plan sets forth proposed Growth Areas, where development should be encouraged, and Rural Areas where incompatible development should be discouraged. These areas were chosen by first identifying those parts of town which the Committee felt are unsuitable for development because of physical restrictions (flood plain, poor soil, steep slopes), environmentally sensitive resources (wetlands, resource protection zones, aquifers, deeryards), or socio-economic characteristics (farms and tree growth areas). Using these areas as a guide, the Committee tried to site areas to accommodate future growth in the more suitable areas.

The proposed Growth Area is shown on the Proposed Land Use Map. The Town can anticipate a need for about 3 new housing units in the 10 year planning period. Although, this residential Growth is realistically expected to occur in a number of areas in town, it was decided to locate the Proposed Growth Area near the center of Town, on both sides of Route 9. It was felt that development in this area could be easily serviced by the Town's existing school bus routes and would not adversely affect the Town's many identified natural resources. Residential development in this area would add to the support of the small businesses established just east of this site.

Land Use Plan Policy

"Adopt and periodically update an official Land Use Map which designates areas for future growth and development and protects vulnerable natural resources from the adverse affects of development, as part of the Town's adopted Comprehensive Plan."

"Adopt and enforce Land Use Regulations which direct future growth and development in areas identified as suitable and appropriate for such growth, and restrict future growth and development in areas where such activities have the potential of adversely affecting identified vulnerable natural resources, as recommended in the Town's adopted Comprehensive Plan."

In order to achieve these policies it is recommended that the Town of Aurora:

1. Prepare and maintain an Official Zoning Map designating the recommended Growth, Rural and Special Areas contained in this Section of the Comprehensive Plan,
2. Revise its Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to implement the dimensional, location, and performance recommendations contained in this Section of the Comprehensive Plan, and
3. Recalculate the anticipated growth at regular 5 year intervals.

1 page more needed in case of extension in Comp. Plan. X

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TOWN OF AURORA

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This index indicates where the proposed plan addresses the requirements of the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act (30-A M.R.S.A Section 4326).

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AURORA 1992 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

TOWN OFFICIALS

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Donald Jordan, 1st Selectman
Peter Larson, 2nd Selectman
Greg Palman, 3rd Selectman

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Jane Walsh, Chairman
John Tulloss, Chairman
Bill Butler
Terry Cheverie
Dianne Faloon
Donald Jordan
Peter Kenyon
Greg Palman
PATRICK LARSON

PLANNING CONSULTANTS

Jim Haskell & Associates
Community Planners * Landscape Architects * Land Use Consultants

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I

INTRODUCTION

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

This Comprehensive Plan is the result of hard work by the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee of the Town of Aurora.

B. STATUTORY BASIS

This Comprehensive Plan was developed pursuant to the statutory requirements of the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act of 1988 (Title 30, Section 4961, of the Maine Revised Statutes).

C. AUTHORIZATION

The preparation of this Comprehensive Plan was authorized by the voters of Aurora at the annual Town Meeting of 1990.

D. FUNDING

The preparation of this Comprehensive Plan was funded with \$3,750.00 appropriated, as their local match, by the voters of Aurora and a grant of \$11,250.00 from the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, Office of Comprehensive Planning.

E. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to provide the factual basis and policy framework for future planning, regulatory, and community development decision making, in both the public and private sectors in the Town of Aurora, Maine.

F. SCOPE

This Comprehensive Plan examines the available information regarding the following components of Aurora's land, government, and people in the following Inventory and Analysis Sections:

1. Population
2. Economy
3. Housing
4. Public Facilities & Transportation
5. Recreation
6. Water Resources
7. Critical Natural Resources
8. Agricultural and Forest Resources
9. Historic and Archaeological Resources
10. Existing Land Use
11. Fiscal Capacity

In addition, this Comprehensive Plan contains within it the following sub-plans:

1. An official Land Use Plan;
2. A Capital Investment Plan;
3. A Regional Coordination Plan; and
4. Implementation Strategies implementing identified Growth Management Policies.

Included as Appendix A of this plan is a summary of the findings of the Growth Management Opinion Survey conducted in March of 1991.

G. APPROACH

Information regarding each of the above components was analyzed and synthesized, and is presented according to the following format:

1. A discussion of existing conditions or existing situation;
2. A discussion of inherent planning implications; and
3. Recommended policies and proposed actions considered necessary and/or desirable to implement these policies.

H. LIMITATIONS

This Comprehensive Plan has been assembled and compiled with the genuine intention that all of the data and information contained herein is reasonably accurate and correct. The information contained in this Plan was gathered from the sources cited. Some of the sources were found to be more detailed and more recent than others. Where appropriate, future application of the information contained in this Plan should be preceded by a check of the sources to see if additional or revised information is available.

Most of the information contained in this Plan is considered current enough and of sufficient detail to support the conclusions and recommendations offered. Note that while this information is suitable for general planning, it may not be appropriate for site specific decisions.



INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

II.A

POPULATION

SECTION II.A: POPULATION

1. INTRODUCTION

A basic concern of this Comprehensive Plan is the Town of Aurora's population and how the population may change in the future.

The purpose of this section is:

- a. to profile the town's and region's population in terms of population and household characteristics most significant in describing the town's character and in influencing future demands for housing, land, and community facilities and services;
- b. to identify and understand important changes in those characteristics and how they might affect the characteristics of future populations;
- c. to identify and understand how the town's population characteristics and changes in population relate to those of the region; and
- d. to identify and understand the size and characteristics of the town's and the region's population ten years into the future.

2. YEAR-ROUND POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Figures II.A.1 and II.A.2 show the historic, current, and projected population levels of Aurora and Hancock County, along with rates of change and projected rates of change. The 1990 Census counted 81 people in Aurora. The Committee estimates that in 1991 there were 102 residents. This may not discount the Census figure, but demonstrates how the addition of several medium size families can change the demographics in a town as small as Aurora. The interaction of population levels with municipal services, housing, and economy will be discussed in more detail in other sections of this Plan, as will the local and regional affects of the population.

3. AGE CHARACTERISTICS

Figure II.A.3 shows the age distribution of the populations in Aurora and Hancock County as a whole. In as late as July 1989 the State estimated Aurora's population would be 127 in 1990 with continued growth through 2000 when the population would reach 140 people. The actual census count of 1990 shows a very different trend. A net increase of 10 people between 1970 and 1990 gives a projected population of 87 in the year 2000. Of particular note from these figures is that the Census showed the school age population in Aurora recently decreased from 28 in 1980 to 20 in 1990. Aurora's school enrollments are now projected to stay fairly level, minimizing any affect on the school system. The greatest growth in the 10 year planning period is projected in the 18-44 year age group in Aurora. This sector of the population does not generally make special demands of public facilities. Hancock County statistics project the greatest increase in the 45-64 year age group. By the year 2000 39% of Hancock County's population as a whole will be over 45 compared with only 26% of Aurora's population. Whether or not these projections become reality will depend largely on the availability of land in town: if any of the town's major land owners broke up their property all these projections would be bound to change.

4. HOUSEHOLD SIZE CHARACTERISTICS

Figure II.A.4 shows the number of households in Aurora and Hancock County from 1970 to 1990 with projections for the year 2000. Figure II.A.5 shows the median household sizes for Aurora and Hancock County from 1970 to 2000. The number and size of households directly

affects the demand for housing as discussed in Section II.C: Housing. An increase of 1 housing unit as projected for the year 2000 does not constitute a period of particular growth for the town of Aurora. This growth rate of + 3% in Aurora coincides with a projected growth rate of + 19% in Hancock County as a whole. In a town as small as Aurora the addition or loss of several households could make a huge difference in statistical data. Therefore, although useful for planning purposes, this information should not be relied upon too literally.

The Town should be aware of changes in household size and use this information in forming its policies and implementation strategies, especially those regarding housing.

During the planning period Aurora's household size is projected to increase from 2.56 to 2.64 while the household size in Hancock County as a whole decreases from 2.47 to 2.23. This data makes sense given the relatively younger Aurora population projections.

5. **HOUSEHOLD INCOME CHARACTERISTICS**

Figures II.A.6 and II.A.7 show that the median household, per capita and mean household income levels of Aurora are all lower, have been lower, and will probably continue to remain lower than those for the County as a whole. Given Aurora's younger population and larger household size these statistics are not surprising. Figure II.A.7 also shows the income distribution of households in Aurora and the entire County for 1979, 1990 and 1995. The number of Aurora households at particular income levels are consistently slightly lower than the County's for incomes less than the mean, and the numbers fall off substantially from the County's as the income levels exceed \$40,000 per year. The exception to this trend is in the \$30,000 to \$34,499 bracket: 10.3% of Aurora's households are in this bracket compared with 8.3% in the County as a whole.

Household income levels are of concern to a community because they reflect citizens' ability to pay for personal services and taxes. Low incomes may correspond with a high demand for subsidized housing or school lunch programs. Low incomes are also an indicator of the economic vitality of an area. The lower household income levels in town may be a result of fewer two income households. There might be more two income households in town if it weren't for a lack of day care in the area. The National Planning Data Corp. estimated 1990 data used in Figure II.A.6 does not reflect the actual slower growth rates of the late 80's and early 90's. The 1995 projections should therefore also be discounted. It is still worth noting that this source projected the greatest growth in the \$25,000 to \$29,999 household income bracket, and decreases in most both higher and lower brackets.

6. **PEAK SEASONAL POPULATION**

Most of the seasonal change in population coincides with the summer months when people leave camps from the paper companies and with the blueberry harvest when people migrate to the town to help rake berries. There are no figures available for this population swing however there is data on the number of seasonal housing units in the Housing Section of this Plan.

FIGURE II.A.1
POPULATION LEVELS: RECENT, CURRENT, AND PROJECTED
AURORA AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1970-2000

	1970 census	1980 census	1990 census	2000 projected
Aurora	72	110	81	87
Hancock County	34,590	41,781	46,948	53,111

Sources: 1970 Census, 1980 Census, 1990 Census,
Department of Human Services.

FIGURE II.A.2
POPULATION CHANGE: RECENT, CURRENT, AND PROJECTIONS
AURORA AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1970-2000

	1970-80 census no., percentage	1980-90 census no., percentage	1990-2000 projected number, percentage
Aurora	+38, +52.8%	-28, -25%	+5, +6%
Hancock County	+7,191, +21%	+5,167, +12%	+6,179, +13%

Sources: Derived from Figure II.A.2

**FIGURE II.A.3
AGE DISTRIBUTION: HISTORIC, CURRENT, AND PROJECTED
AURORA AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1970-2000**

Aurora		1970	1980	1990	2000
		census no., percentage	census no., percentage	projected no., percentage	projected no., percentage
	0-4 years	1, 1%	6, 5.5%	4, 5%	6, 7%
	5-17 years	17, 24%	28, 25.5%	20, 24%	21, 24%
	18-44 years	13, 18%	34, 31%	29, 35%	37, 43%
	45-64 years	25, 35%	23, 21%	18, 22%	15, 17%
	65 years & up	16, 22%	19, 17%	11, 14%	8, 9%
	Totals	72, 100%	110, 100%	82, 100%	87, 100%
Hancock County	0-4 years	2,652, 7.7%	2,610, 6.2%	3,205, 7.0%	3,461, 6.5%
	5-17 years	8,491, 24.5%	9,801,* 23.5%	8,130, 17.0%	8,786, 16.5%
	18-44 years	10,912, 31.5%	14,476,** 34.6%	19,057, 41.0%	20,182, 38.0%
	45-64 years	7,596, 22.0%	8,465, 20.3%	9,311, 20.0%	12,132, 22.8%
	65 years & up	4,939, 14.3%	6,429, 15.4%	7,155, 15.0%	8,550, 16.2%
	Totals	34,590, 100%	41,781, 100%	46,948, 100%	53,111, 100%

Sources: 1970, 1980, 1990 Census

* 5-19 years.

** 20-44 years.

FIGURE II.A.4
NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS: HISTORIC, CURRENT, AND PROJECTED
AURORA AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1970-2000

	1970 census	1980 census	1990 census	2000 projected
Aurora	30	41	32	33
Hancock County	11,334	15,442	18,342	21,846

Sources: 1970, 1980 & 1990 Census

Note: Projection used for 2000 extrapolated from 1970, 1980 and 1990 data.

FIGURE II.A.5
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD SIZE: HISTORIC, CURRENT, AND PROJECTED
AURORA AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1970-2000

	1970 census	1980 census	1990 census	2000 projected
Aurora	2.40	2.68	2.56	2.64
Hancock County	2.96	2.62	2.47	2.23

Sources: 1970, 1980 & 1990 Census

Note: Projection used for 2000 derived by extrapolating 1970, 1980 and 1990 data.

FIGURE II.A.6
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD AND AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOMES
AURORA AND HANCOCK COUNTY: 1969, 1979, 1990, 1995

	Median Household Income			Average Per Capita Income		
	1979 census	1990 estimated	1995 projected	1979 census	1990 estimated	1995 projected
Aurora	\$9,306	\$18,500	\$21,875	\$4,353	\$9,783	\$12,602
Hancock County	\$12,163	\$24,541	\$32,470	\$5,411	\$12,017	\$16,433

Source: National Planning Data Corporation

**FIGURE II.A.7
HOUSEHOLD INCOMES DISTRIBUTION
AURORA AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1979-1995**

Income Level	Aurora			Hancock County		
	1979 census number, percent	1990 estimated number, percent	1995 projected number, percent	1979 census number, percent	1990 estimated number, percent	1995 projected number, percent
\$ 0 - \$7,499	14, 34.1%	7, 14%	6, 10.7%	4,285, 27.8%	1,922, 10.2%	1,126, 5.4%
\$7,500-\$9,999	9, 22%	5, 10%	6, 10.7%	1,882, 12.2%	1,083, 5.7%	1,074, 5.1%
\$10,000-\$14,999	9, 22%	7, 14%	7, 12.5%	3,204, 20.8%	2,259, 12%	1,885, 8.9%
\$15,000-\$19,999	3, 7.3%	9, 18%	6, 10.7%	2,460, 15.9%	2,255, 11.9%	1,839, 8.7%
\$20,000-\$24,999	2, 4.9%	11, 22%	10, 17.9%	1,629, 10.5%	2,125, 11.2%	1,967, 9.3%
\$25,000-\$29,999	2, 4.9%	2, 4%	11, 19.6%	756, 4.9%	1,721, 9.1%	1,789, 8.5%
\$30,000-\$34,499	0, 0%	0, 0%	3, 5.4%	537, 3.5%	1,572, 8.3%	1,725, 8.2%
\$35,000-\$39,999	0, 0%	2, 4%	0, 0%	291, 1.9%	1,290, 6.8%	1,263, 6%
\$40,000-\$49,999	2, 4.9%	3, 6%	2, 3.6%	226, 1.5%	1,976, 10.5%	2,631, 12.5%
\$50,000-\$74,999	0, 0%	3, 6%	4, 7.1%	143, 0.9%	1,958, 10.3%	3,484, 16.6%
\$75,000-\$99,999	0, 0%	1, 2%	1, 1.8%	21, 0.1%	517, 2.7%	1,518, 7.2%
\$100,000-\$149,999	0, 0%	0, 0%	0, 0%	7 0%	202, 1.1%	600, 2.8%
\$150,000 +	0, 0%	0, 0%	0, 0%	1, 0%	39, 0.2%	163, 0.8%
Totals	41 100%	50, 100%	56, 100%	15,442, 100%	18,919, 100%	21,064 100%
Mean Household Inc.	\$13,140	\$22,575	\$23,973	\$14,445	\$29,558	\$38,804

Source: National Planning Data Corporation

II.B

ECONOMY

SECTION II.B: ECONOMY

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is:

- a. to profile the economy of Aurora and Hancock County, particularly significant employment characteristics and commercial and industrial activity;
- b. to identify and understand important changes in those characteristics and how they might affect future economic conditions;
- c. to identify and understand Aurora's relationship with the regional economy in terms of employment and economic vitality; and
- d. to identify those businesses and sectors of the economy most important to the economic vitality of Aurora, and to describe the outlook for their growth or decline over the next ten years.

2. LABOR FORCE

a. Labor Force Size

The labor force is defined as all persons who are either working or looking for work. A change in the size of the labor force may result from an immigration or emigration of individuals in the area. Also, labor force size will change because of an increasing or decreasing tendency for existing residents to either work or look for work.

Because Aurora is a small town, there are few statistics available about the town itself. Figure II.B.1 shows the 1980 and 1989 labor force sizes for Aurora and Hancock County. The labor force of Hancock County grew by 18% from 1980 to 1989. Generally, as there are more jobs available at better rates of pay, more people are likely to look for and accept jobs and thus increase the size of the work force. Aurora's labor force grew by 12 people (21%), and its entire population decreased by 29 people between 1980 and 1990. The growth in Aurora's labor force may reflect the number of people becoming of working age and the increase in the number of double income households.

b. Occupation Types

Figure II.B.2 compares occupation types of Aurora to the County in 1980. Figure II.B.3 describes the distribution of labor force by industry in Hancock County in 1980. In Aurora, relatively few people were employed in managerial/professional and service positions and more were employed in precision production and as operators/fabricators. The Census may underestimate the number of the residents who are self employed, working as farmers, woods people, contractors, or in small cottage industries. Figure II.B.3 should account for all of Aurora's employed persons over 16 in 1980 and yet lists no persons working in either farming or forestry. This calls to doubt the credibility of this data. It should be noted that these figures are ten years old.

c. Distribution of Labor Force by Location of Employment

The 1980 Census does not provide adequate information on the location of employment of Aurora residents. Because there are only very small employers in Town, nearly all workers in Aurora are either self employed or travel to neighboring towns for employment. Aurora is about the same distance from both Bangor and Elsworth. Figure II.B.4 shows that in 1980 78% of those who did not work at home travelled less than 30 minutes to work and 22% travelled 45 minutes to an hour. This indirectly shows that 37% of the labor force worked at home: a very high percentage.

d. Unemployment

Figure II.B.5 shows the unemployment rates for Aurora and Hancock County. The boom years of the 1980's reversed the traditionally high unemployment rates of many communities in Hancock County. But Aurora's 1989 employment rate was higher than in 1979 and the highest in Hancock County. The next 3 highest unemployment rates were in Gouldsboro, Franklin and Ellsworth: 8.5%, 7.2% and 6.8% respectively. But in Aurora, while the total population shrank by 29 during this period the number of employed people in town actually increased by 20. The unemployment rate should therefore not be taken at face value.

3. MAJOR EMPLOYERS AND BUSINESSES

The storefronts in Aurora include Mace's Store, Union River Telephone Co., Union River Electric Co-op, Aurora Farms, Aurora Post Office and Jordan's snowmobile repair. Some of the farms in town are A.R. Mace, Inc., Featherfoot Farm, Slisby's Farm, Aurora Farm, Jordan's Farm, and Butler's Farm. Some other businesses in town are in the fields of forestry, carpentry and planning/cartography. This is a substantial number of employers for a town as small as Aurora. There are also seasonal forestry operations which complement the seasonal agricultural work.

A majority of opinion survey respondents favored promoting or allowing convenience stores, hotels, motels and bed and breakfast inns, restaurants, light manufacturing, professional offices, home industry, and nursing home facilities. Also, a majority favored discouraging or forbidding shopping malls, fast food drive ins, industrial parks and heavy industry. The only industrial development favored by respondents were recycling/transfer stations and sand and gravel extraction. A majority favored discouraging or forbidding businesses using toxic chemicals, junk cars, removal of top soil for sale or use, and toxic and radioactive waste sites.

The major large employers in the region are Champion Paper Company in Bucksport and the many service and commercial establishments in Ellsworth, Bangor and coastal communities. The economy of Hancock County is primarily based on tourism, services, agriculture, and forestry, all of which tend to have seasonal fluctuations in employment.

4. TAXABLE SALES

The State does not release any tax information for Aurora but Figure II.B.6 shows taxable consumer sales for Hancock County broken down by retail sector for the last five years. The "Ellsworth Economic Summary Area" includes Ellsworth and surrounding towns. This information shows that nearly two-thirds of Hancock County's economy is concentrated in the Ellsworth area. Ellsworth and the rest of the County have grown rapidly in the last five years, especially in the areas of building supply, restaurants and lodging. Retail stores have also done well. Hancock County's economy changes significantly from quarter to quarter: nearly 40% of all sales are in the third (summer) quarter.

The sales activity in Bangor, the Ellsworth area and Hancock County affects Aurora when linked to employment opportunities. Data in this section demonstrates that the growth of the area has been largely based on building supplies and the tourist trade, areas that are highly susceptible to recession. Furthermore, the large changes in sales from season to season affect the incomes and opportunities of the people of Aurora from month to month. Economic development strategies and concerns of the town and region must consider the type of business activity on which growth and expectations are based.

5. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

The low per-capita and household incomes in both Aurora and Hancock County (see Section II.A: Population) are addressable through improved employment opportunities. The problem may not be one so much of job creation as it is improving the return to the worker or to the landowner. For a community to prosper, peoples' jobs should be steady, not intermittent. And besides wages, employment should bring the benefits of unemployment insurance, workers' compensation and even medical and retirement benefits.

FIGURE II.B.1
SIZE OF LABOR FORCE: NUMBER OF EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED OVER AGE 16
AURORA AND HANCOCK COUNTY: 1980, 1989

	1980	1989
Aurora	47	70
Hancock County	17,286	25,285

Source: 1980 Census, Maine Department of Labor

FIGURE II.B.2
1980 OCCUPATION TYPES: EMPLOYED PERSONS 16 YEARS AND OVER
AURORA AND HANCOCK COUNTY

Type of Occupation	Aurora		Hancock County	
	number	percent	number	percent
Managerial & Professional	5	12%	3,116	20%
Technical/Sales/Administration	9	21%	3,627	24%
Service	3	7%	2,414	16%
Farm/Forest/Fishing	5	12%	1,460	9%
Precision Production	12	28%	2,552	17%
Operators/Fabricators	9	21%	2,217	14%
Totals	43	100%	15,386	100%

Source: 1980 Census

**FIGURE II.B.3
DISTRIBUTION OF LABOR FORCE BY INDUSTRY
AURORA & HANCOCK COUNTY, 1980**

Industry Category	Aurora		Hancock County	
	number	percent	number	percent
Agriculture	0	0	239	2%
Forestry and Fisheries	0	0	799	5%
Mining	0	0	16	0
Construction	2	5%	1,468	10%
Manufacturing	9	21%	2,421	16%
Transportation, Communications & Public Utilities	4	9%	762	5%
Wholesale Trade	0	0	455	3%
Retail Trade	16	37%	2,617	17%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	0	0	446	3%
Services	7	16%	5,357	35%
Public Administration	5	12%	806	5%
Total	43	100%	15,386	100%

Source: 1980 Census

**FIGURE II.B.4
TRAVEL TIME TO WORK FOR WORKERS WHO DID NOT WORK AT HOME: AURORA 1980**

	NUMBER	PERCENT
0-14 MINUTES	11	41%
15-29 MINUTES	10	37%
30-44 MINUTES	0	0
45-59 MINUTES (None over 60 minutes)	6	22%
TOTALS	27	100%

Source: 1980 U.S. Census

FIGURE II.B.5
UNEMPLOYMENT RATES: AURORA AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1980-1989

Date	Aurora	Hancock County
1980	8.5 %	11.0 %
1989	10.0 %	4.3 %

Source: 1980 Census, Maine Department of Labor

FIGURE II.B.6
TAXABLE SALES: CONSUMER GOODS BY RETAIL SECTOR, IN THOUSANDS OF REAL DOLLARS
ELLSWORTH ECONOMIC SUMMARY AREA AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1985-1989

		1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	85-89 % change	1989 % of annual
Ellsworth Economic Summary Area	Building Supply	19,405	24,663	30,098	33,798	36,240	+87%	19%
	Food	17,443	17,785	20,940	22,596	23,872	+37%	12%
	General Merchandise	28,822	31,238	36,229	37,780	37,804	+31%	19%
	Other Retail	12,268	14,070	15,747	18,186	17,858	+46%	9%
	Autos & Transportation	38,712	48,599	48,771	58,404	53,321	+38%	27%
	Restaurant & Lodging	16,216	18,972	22,865	25,933	27,372	+69%	14%
	Annual Total, all sectors	132,866	155,327	174,650	196,697	196,467	+48%	100%
Hancock County	Building Supply	32,373	41,029	48,830	53,151	56,323	+74%	17%
	Food	30,690	31,471	35,690	38,336	40,723	+33%	13%
	General Merchandise	34,017	35,754	41,166	43,362	43,489	+28%	13%
	Other Retail	24,000	27,727	30,951	35,434	36,800	+53%	11%
	Autos & Transportation	50,035	61,721	63,039	75,036	69,665	+39%	21%
	Restaurant & Lodging	46,182	57,626	64,477	75,060	78,230	+69%	24%
	Annual Total, all sectors	217,298	255,328	284,154	320,379	325,230	+50%	100%

Source: Maine Bureau of Taxation, Sales Tax Division

II.C

HOUSING

SECTION II.C: HOUSING

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is:

- a. to profile the housing stocks of Aurora and Hancock County in terms of size and composition;
- b. to describe the affordability of the housing stock of Aurora for very low income, low income, and moderate income households;
- c. to identify and understand how Aurora's housing stock relates to the region's housing stock and housing demands; and
- d. to predict the size, characteristics, and affordability of new and rehabilitated housing needed to meet the housing demands of the projected future population, and whether the local housing market will meet the predicted housing needs.

2. YEAR-ROUND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

a. Number of Housing Units

Figure II.C.1 shows the total number of year-round housing units in Aurora and Hancock County as a whole for 1970, 1980 and 1990. The National Planning Data Corp., a private planning organization, recently estimated Aurora would have 61 year-round housing units by 1990 and projected 68 year-round units in town by 1995. In contrast the U.S. Census found 41 year-round units in Aurora, 32 of which were occupied. The Census recorded a decrease of 9 year-round units in the last 10 years, a loss of 18%. This figure, together with the recorded loss of 11% between 1970 and 1980 yields a projected loss of 8 units by the year 2000. The Committee notes that the decrease in population is apparently a result of several factors among them the migration of older residents to warmer climates and death.

The Bureau of Taxation compiled new units data for Aurora and reports 4 new mobile homes and 1 unit lost to fire in the years 1981 through 1989. All the activity was in the years 1982 through 1984.

b. Vacancy Rates For Year-Round Housing

Figure II.C.2 shows vacancy rates for Aurora and Hancock County as a whole for 1990. The rental vacancy statistic is for a total of 6 units. The vacancy rate for all units is higher than in Hancock County as a whole. This is not surprising given the decrease in year-round units in Aurora between 1980 and 1990. Besides vacant year-round houses there are a number of seasonally occupied units in Aurora.

c. Distribution of Housing Units By Structure Type

Figure II.C.3 shows a distribution of structure types in Aurora and Hancock County as a whole for 1970 through 1990. The information shows that all of the housing units in Aurora are either mobile homes or single family houses. Although the Bureau of Taxation reported 4 new mobile homes were added to Aurora's housing stock between 1981 and 1989, the Census shows an increase of 44 mobile home units between 1980 and 1990. The Town is collecting taxes on around 10 mobile homes in town, which suggests that the Census may have been including recreational vehicles in their count of mobile homes.

Also note the difference between Figures II.C.1 and II.C.3. For 1970 II.C.1 shows a total of 56 year round housing units, II.C.3 shows 54 housing units. For 1980 II.C.1 shows a total of 50 year round housing units, II.C.3 shows 48 housing units. For 1990 II.C.1 shows a total of 41 year round housing units and II.C.3 shows 101 total units. Committee members suggest that the 101 unit figure is wrong and it is not clear why there is a discrepancy in the other figures.

d. Distribution of Housing Units By Tenure

The tenure of housing units is a term used to describe whether people are more likely to own or rent their places of residence. Figure II.C.4 shows the tenure for both Aurora and Hancock County for 1970, 1980 and 1990. This figure shows that during this period the number of rental units in Aurora remained constant while the number of owner-occupied units fluctuated: up from 24 to 35 units in 1980, then back down to 26 units in 1990. Committee members estimate that the 1990 figure for the number of renters in Aurora may be on the low side.

e. Distribution of Housing Units By Condition

The condition of the housing stock is very important in terms of the welfare of a community. The 1980 Census of Housing provides no complete measure of housing condition, but does provide a few key indicators which can be used for comparative analysis. The number of people per room and the existence of complete plumbing facilities are two such indicators.

Figure II.C.5 shows that Aurora's housing stock had more units with less than one room per person but fewer plumbing amenities than that of the County in 1980. It should be noted that this information is over ten years old. The available 1990 Census data still lists one unit in Aurora with more than one person per room. Committee members estimate that more than 24% of the town's housing stock may still be without complete plumbing facilities.

Aurora follows state minimum guidelines as a building code, and has a part-time code enforcement officer. Union River Electric Coop requires a certificate from a licensed electrician before they hook-up new structures to their power grid. By January 1, 1993 it is required that all code enforcement officers be trained by the state. About 3 Aurora residents have been attending State certification sessions. Increased effectiveness of code enforcement may help upgrade housing in Aurora.

f. Distribution of Housing Units By Affordability

The most direct factors affecting the affordability of housing are income levels and costs associated with housing. Housing costs include rent or mortgage payments, interest rates, taxes, utilities, and many other related expenses. Just as it is difficult to measure exactly how much these expenses are, it is also difficult to establish exactly what percent of income is spent on these items.

The State defines affordable housing as housing which does not cost more than 30% of a renting household's income (including insurance and utilities), or 28% of an owner's household income (including mortgage payments, property tax, insurance, maintenance costs and utilities).

Figure II.C.6 lists affordable rents and selling prices for the rural part of Hancock County for 1990, which includes income level groupings for very low, low, and moderate income levels based on Hancock County median incomes in the study area. The affordable gross monthly rent for very low income families (family income less than \$13,250 annually) is up to \$250 per month. The 1990 U.S. Census found the monthly rents for 3 of Aurora's 6 rental properties which was a median of \$236; therefore these units are affordable to very low income families.

Figure II.C.7 gives average selling prices for homes in Aurora and the County for 1987 and 1988. The State compiles a Real Estate Transfer Tax data base that indicates the selling prices for each year. These measures are important, but obviously only include the real estate which was sold in a given year. Also, these figures do not give any indication of the transactions resulting from property which is leased seasonally. Real estate is a volatile market in many areas, and transfer of speculative, seasonal, or investment properties can inflate the estimated cost of housing in an area: most of the real estate prices which were above the County average were on Mount Desert Island.

Figure II.C.8 shows an affordability index for Hancock County developed by the U.S.M. Institute for Real Estate Research and Education. This index uses the definitions of affordable housing outlined above. This U.S.M. index for Hancock County for 1989 was 67.72, meaning that the median family made 67% of the money necessary to afford a medium priced home. In 1988 the index was 70.08. The change in the index is the result of housing sale prices rising faster than incomes and indicates that housing in Hancock County is not very affordable. Since housing is significantly less expensive in Aurora than in other areas of the County, and since income levels are only moderately lower, it is fair to state that housing in Aurora is more affordable than housing in other areas of the County.

By many measures, housing in Aurora is affordable for low income residents. However, since there is very little turnover in the housing stock, it is difficult to get accurate information on the average cost.

According to the Opinion Survey, 46% of respondents felt that it should be the town's policy to allow low income housing, only 11% thought it should be promoted, 35% thought it should be discouraged and 8% thought it should be forbidden. Also, 42% of survey respondents thought the Town should discourage the development of mobile home parks and 42% thought they should be forbidden. It is not legal to forbid the development of mobile home parks in towns but the town can regulate where mobile home parks can be developed.

b. Planning Implications

The characteristics of Aurora's housing are very important to the future of the town. If the population stays fairly constant while the household size increases the vacancy rate will continue to increase. This may lower the property values in the town as a whole. The town must recognize the likely decrease in year-round units as part of its land use strategy.

According to the Opinion Survey the only type of housing development which respondents thought the town should favor is single family housing. This

Because manufactured housing is generally the most affordable housing type available, the availability of affordable housing in Aurora is largely a question of availability of affordable lots. Although some of the shorefront lots in Aurora are relatively expensive, there are numerous affordable houselots without shore frontage for sale.

Traditionally people with land holdings in Town provide building space for their younger family members. This tends to alleviate any fear that younger families will be forced out of town. Vacancy is not an important issue in Aurora except to the extent that there is a very low turnover of housing stock in town, and it is therefore difficult to buy or rent existing buildings. This is a function of landowners preference, rather than a complete lack of demand.

The Land Use Plan details the number of housing units which will be demanded by the year 2000. Based on past trends, it is projected that most of these units will be primarily single family and that nearly a quarter will be manufactured housing.

4. SUBSIDIZED HOUSING UNITS

There are no subsidized housing units in Aurora. Aurora residents are able to obtain partial subsidies through housing loans or vouchers for purchase or rental of existing units. It is impractical for a Town of Aurora's size to provide subsidized housing. In Hancock County as a whole there are 571 elderly and 391 family federally assisted housing units.

5. SEASONAL HOUSING UNITS

The 1990 U.S. Census found 60 seasonal housing units in Aurora. Champion leases 32 seasonal camps in Aurora: 22 on Upper Middle Branch Pond and 7 on Long Pond. Diamond leases 2 seasonal camps in Town. Champion may be planning to sell some of their camps in the next few years. Seasonal houses and seasonal population can have a strong influence on the town's taxes, recreation, transportation, and natural resources.

FIGURE II.C.1
TOTAL NUMBER OF YEAR-ROUND HOUSING UNITS
AURORA AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1970-2000

	1970	1980	1990
Aurora	56	50	41
Hancock County	14,378	17,057	20,260

Source: 1970, 1980 & 1990 U.S. Census

FIGURE II.C.2
VACANCY RATES, AURORA AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1990

	Aurora	Hancock County
Rental Vacancy	0%	8.5%
Total Vacancy	%	9.6%

Source: 1990 Census

FIGURE II.C.3
DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING UNITS BY STRUCTURE TYPE
AURORA AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1970, 1980 & 1990

	Type of Building	1970		1980		1990	
		number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
Aurora	1 family	54	100%	46	96%	55	55%
	2-4 family	0	0	0	0	0	0
	5 + family	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Mobile home	0	0	2	4%	46	46%
	Total units	54	100%	48	100%	101	100%
Hancock County	1 family	12,395	86.2	13,137	77.0	23,412	77%
	2-4 family	1,081	7.5	1,489	8.7	1,574	5%
	5 + family	234	1.6	828	4.8	1,147	4%
	mobile home	668	4.7	1,620	9.5	4,263	14%
	Total units	14,378	100%	17,074	100%	30,396	100%

Source: 1970, 1980, 1990 U.S. Census

NO mobile homes

**FIGURE II.C.4
DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUPIED YEAR-ROUND HOUSING UNITS BY TENURE
AURORA AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1970, 1980 & 1990**

		1970		1980		1990	
		number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
Aurora	owners	24	80%	35	85%	26	81%
	renters	6	20%	6	15%	6	19%
Hancock County	owners	9,065	80%	12,037	78%	13,876	76%
	renters	2,269	20.9%	3,405	22%	4,466	24%

Source: 1970, 1980, 1990 U.S. Census

**FIGURE II.C.5
CONDITION OF YEAR-ROUND OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS
AURORA AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1980**

	Aurora		Hancock County	
	number	percent	number	percent
Lacking Complete Plumbing for Exclusive Use	10	24%	1421	9.2%
Having more than one person per room	1	2%	504	3.3%
Total Year-Round Occupied	41	100%	15,442	100%

Source: 1980 Census of Housing

**FIGURE II.C.6
AFFORDABLE HOUSING RENTS AND SELLING PRICES, 1989
HANCOCK COUNTY**

Annual Family Income	Percent of Total Families	Affordable Gross Monthly Rent	Affordable Selling Price
Very Low Income \$0 to \$13,250	26%	up to \$250	up to \$23,500
Low Income \$14,200 to \$22,700	20%	up to \$460	up to \$42,800
Moderate Income \$22,700 to \$39,000	33%	up to \$890	up to \$83,900

Median Family Income: \$26,500

Source: Office of Comprehensive Planning, Maine D.E.C.D.

FIGURE II.C.7
REAL ESTATE TRANSFER TAX DATA: 1987, 1988
AURORA AND HANCOCK COUNTY

	Aurora		Hancock County	
	1987	1988	1987	1988
Number of Sales	3	3	672	769
Average Price	\$18,217	\$26,733	\$73,514	\$93,104

Source: Maine State Housing Authority

FIGURE II.C.8
AFFORDABILITY INDEX
HANCOCK COUNTY, 1988-1989

	1988	1989
Index	70.08	67.72
Median Family Income	\$24,000	\$26,000
Income Necessary to Afford Median Priced Home	\$34,246	\$39,390
Median Purchase Price (from Multiple Listing Service)	\$73,375	\$85,000

Source: U.S.M. Institute for Real Estate Research and Education

II.D

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION

SECTION II.D: PUBLIC FACILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is:

- a. to identify and profile the Town's public facilities and service systems in terms of their extent, capability, and use;
- b. to assess the adequacy of those systems in handling current use demands;
- c. to predict whether public facility or service improvements will be needed to adequately accommodate the use demands of the projected population and development within the town and region;
- d. to assess the general costs of providing the needed public facility and service system improvements;
- e. to describe Aurora's parking situation and assess whether improvements will be needed to accommodate adequately the needs of projected population and economy.

2. PUBLIC WORKS

a. Water Supply

Homes and businesses in Aurora obtain water from a number of sources which include private wells, springs and ponds.

b. Stormwater and Public Sewage Collection and Treatment

Aurora has no public stormwater or sewage system. Stormwater runs off roads in ditches and gullies and eventually into streams. All sewage disposal is through private subsurface septic systems or outhouses.

c. Solid Waste Management

The location of the Aurora landfill is shown on the Public Facilities, Historic Sites and Recreation Map. The Town dump was closed in April of 1990 and since then has contracted with Union River Solid Waste Inc. for trash collection. This company collects roadside trash once per week and hauls it to P.E.R.C. for disposal. Since this collection system began the company has collected white goods on one occasion and is directed to collect it as needed. Construction debris is handled by individuals: local contractors must hire their own dumpsters. In 1990-91 the contract with Union River Solid Waste cost \$3,977.70. The 1991-92 budget figure is \$8,000. This figure probably increased as a result of increased tipping fees charged by P.E.R.C. (to make D.E.P. recommended changes at the P.E.R.C. facility). The town also needs to cover the old dump site.

The old dump site or the Aurora Farm building would be likely town owned sites for locating a future recycling facility. 77% of respondents to the town's Growth Management Opinion Survey expressed satisfaction with the existing provisions for trash pickup. 77% also said that provisions for disposal of white goods, construction debris, etc. needs improvement.

d. Maintenance of Municipal Buildings and Public Areas

The location of the Aurora Town Hall is shown on the Public Facilities, Historic Sites, and Recreation Map. This building was constructed in 1902 and is in poor condition. A portion of the building is rented to the Post Office for \$1,500 per year. This building needs painting, partitions on the first floor for town office space, new windows and insulation. The septic system is new

but there is no drinking water available at the building. The heating is forced hot air. It accommodates about 30 people for meetings on the first floor, but if the second floor had a second means of egress (for fire escape) it could easily accommodate twice that number. The building is used regularly by the Selectmen, Planning Board, Tax Assessors and for other Town business such as the Town Meetings. If repairs are not made soon the end result will be more costly repairs.

The cemetery is maintained with town funds: \$185 was spent on this in 1990-91.

The Old Brick School House is now used as the town library and is a registered Historic Building. Each year \$500 has been appropriated for its maintenance but has not been spent in a number of years because the work needed will cost considerably more than this. The building's 1827 granite foundation is caving in and needs to be rebuilt. This work will involve dismantling and rebuilding the old brick walls. This project is also described in the Historic and Archaeologic Resources Section. Erica Tulloss is working at obtaining a C.D.B. Grant for making improvements to this building.

The Aurora Farm on Route 9 is a 2 story wood frame new england farmhouse in poor condition. The Town collects revenue from the sale of gravel off the property and stumpage on the trees cut on the property. At one time the house was rented and the town was making repairs. Most of the work needed to make this building useful again is cosmetic in nature. But until there is a need for the building the town is not likely to spend the money.

e. Planning Implications

The provision of public services is very important for the continued growth of a community. Because all water and septic services are individual, it is important that the town assure that development occur on land suitable for septic systems and that the town protect its aquifers and subsurface water supplies, as discussed in Section II.F: Water Resources, and Section VI: Land Use Plan of this report.

The Hancock County Planning Commission should be completing various assessments of regional waste and recycling needs within a year. Assessments of existing disposal rates, and recycling options may change on a monthly basis. The Town should begin to consider its options and to formulate a new waste management plan as soon as possible, preferably in conjunction with other towns.

In addition, the Town will need to construct a sand and salt storage shed within the next 10 years. The Town already owns land which might be used for the shed.

3. ROADS

The location of Aurora's roads and bridges is shown on the Transportation Map. Most of this information was obtained from the Comprehensive Planning Committee. There are a total of approximately 16.7 miles of public roads in the Town of Aurora, 10.5 miles of which are State roads.

a. Profile of Public Roads

- 1) **Route 9 / the Airline:** the main road which links Aurora with neighboring Amherst, and Townships 28 & 22 and Washington County to the east. It is currently maintained by the state. This road is paved and in good condition. About 8 miles of Route 9 is in Aurora.

2) **Route 179:** the main collector road for southwest Aurora, linking the town with Osborn and Waltham to the south. Route 179 is paved and in good condition. About 2.5 miles of Route 179 is in Aurora. This road is maintained by the town and the State.

3) **Great Pond Road:** leads from Route 9 north 4.5 miles to the town of Great Pond. This road is paved and maintenance was recently returned to the town by the State. The condition of this road is fair.

4) **Richardson Road:** a town-maintained paved road in poor condition. This leads south off of Route 9 just east of the Middle Branch of the Union River.

5) **Silsby Hill Road** is one half mile long, paved and maintained by the town. This road extends north of Route 9 and up Silsby Hill.

6) **Giles Pond Road** is a town-maintained partially paved road in poor condition. It extends east from Route 179 around the south of Giles Pond.

b. Bridges

The largest bridge in Aurora is the concrete bridge on Route 9 which is in good condition and is maintained by the State. The other culverts on this route and Route 179 are maintained by the state and are in good condition. The town maintains several culverts, none of which are in need of major repair within the next five years.

c. Maintenance and Plowing

According to the opinion survey, residents felt that Aurora's road maintenance, snow plowing and road sanding was in need of improvement. The Committee feels that with improved timing and increased frequency (paying for plowing at 4 a.m. after a storm, during the day to scrape the roads dry, and at 4 p.m. before the roads freeze) the plowing and sanding would be greatly improved even without purchasing heavier road equipment. It is also felt that money for road repairs could be better spent by doing a better job to begin with, such as placing culverts deeper and with better fill material, and avoid doing the work again so soon. Adopting town wide road standards might rectify this situation.

The bulk of town road maintenance work is contracted out: to Lane Construction for paving in 1989-90. The town owns two plow trucks and a backhoe/loader for snow plowing and ditch maintenance. The roads are posted in the Spring to minimize damage from heavy loads.

d. Usage and Safety of Roads

The roads in Aurora are used below their capacity. Even with summer traffic, there are few congestion or safety problems. 64% of survey respondents felt that traffic control in town was adequate. The Committee identified three areas which could use improvement:

1. At Route 9 near Macces Store: a lot of traffic plus a blind hill makes this area hazardous;
2. At the junction of Route 9 and Great Pond Road: a sharp curve and the narrowness of the road make this a dangerous intersection;
3. On the Great Pond Road: the log truck traffic is very tough on this road which is best suited for light duty use.

e. Planning Implications: Roads

The road needs of Aurora are primarily residential, with some hauling of lumber and gravel on Great Pond Road and through traffic on Route 9. With the exception of Route 9, the roads in Aurora are not of significant quality or size to attract commercial traffic or support heavy industry in the town. The Great Pond Road needs to be upgraded to support heavier loads (at considerable expense) or needs to be posted with a weight limit to extend the life of the thoroughfare. Otherwise, roadway planning can be limited to residential concerns.

The town should consider petitioning the State for safety improvements to Route 9. It may also want to consider a provision in its ordinances setting standards for new roads in town.

Road maintenance plays a large role in the budget of the Town of Aurora: in 1990-91 43% of the town's expenditures went to road maintenance and snow removal. Proper management of a maintenance program can lead to more stable tax, debt, and expenditure levels. The town's two plow trucks have a life expectancy of about 3 and 5 years and the backhoe/loader has a life expectancy of about 7 years. The town should plan for replacing this important equipment. Exacting fees on new developments to cover the costs of resulting road improvements can offset transportation costs.

4. OTHER TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES

a. Public Transportation

There are no taxi services in Aurora. Greyhound Buslines' closest terminal is in Bangor. Down East Transportation runs bus service to Aurora and other area communities several times a week.

The Washington/Hancock Community Agency provides door-to-door on-demand transportation from Aurora to Ellsworth or Bangor for clients referred to them by the Department of Human Services. These clients must be income-eligible and are typically children in state custody, welfare clients, or handicapped residents. Most longer trips are for medical reasons.

Aurora residents rely primarily on personal autos for their transportation. Public transportation is an issue only in isolated cases of those unable to drive.

Intrastate bus or rail service through Aurora is unlikely in the near future. A bus route to Aurora would not be profitable and it is unlikely that the state or local government will opt to subsidize a route. Any future endeavors in public transportation in Aurora are sure to be most effective if coordinated regionally. Aurora's public and private transportation services are currently adequate for the town, given the rural nature of the community.

b. Public Parking Facilities

There are no public parking facilities in Aurora except around the Town Hall. This parking area is sufficient for current and projected use. Is there any parking around the boat landings?

c. Sidewalks and Footpaths

Aurora has no sidewalks or footpaths. Pedestrian traffic is minor, and of little concern to the town.

d. Railway and Airport Facilities and Services

Aurora is served by Bangor International Airport 30 miles away. The closest active rail lines and freight facilities are also in Bangor. Aurora has little reason to be concerned with the construction or maintenance of rail facilities or airports in the area, except as part of general regional economic concerns as they are planned through the Hancock County Regional Planning Commission.

5. POLICE, FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Town of Aurora now has 911 emergency telephone service for both sheriff and ambulance service. The 911 service also handles calls for the fire department, but there is trouble relaying messages for this service between 4:30 and 5:30 weekday afternoons.

a. Hancock County Ambulance Service

Through direct contributions and Town taxes (\$330 in 1990-91) the Town of Aurora receives ambulance services through the Hancock County Ambulance Service. The Service is staffed by full and part time employees. Recruiting and training is ongoing and the availability of training programs is at times inadequate. The quality of service is policed both internally and by the State. Service is also available from Capital Ambulance out of Brewer but response time is generally less from Ellsworth. 58% of survey respondents said rescue (ambulance) service needed improvement.

b. Hancock County Sheriffs Office and Maine State Police

Through County and State assessments and taxes, the Town of Aurora receives police and protective services through the County Sheriff and the State Police on call. 50% of survey respondents thought that the existing law enforcement was adequate.

c. Aurora Volunteer Fire Department

The Aurora Volunteer Fire Department is staffed by a total of about 10 volunteers, 4 of whom are certified. The staff is trained through a monthly in-house program. 4 members are receiving ongoing state training. Officers are elected by members of the fire department. There is one fire station in town located on Route 9 next to the Town Hall which needs some repair work.

The V.F.D. responded to 23 calls in the last 5 years: 6 in 1986, none in 1987, 10 in 1988, 8 in 1989 and 9 in 1990. 4 of the calls were for fires in stick-built houses, 4 were for forest fires, 6 were for vehicle fires, 11 were for chimney fires and 8 were unspecified.

The V.F.D. is a private corporation and its operation and capital improvements are funded through Town contributions and fund raising events. The Town contributed \$2,500 to its operation in 1990 and 1991, and \$1,000 in 1989, 1988, 1987 and in 1986. The Department also receives \$2,500 annually from Amherst. The V.F.D. raises from \$6,000 to \$7,000 annually and has an annual operating budget of \$7,000. The Department wants to be collecting its operating budget from the two participating towns in 5 years and be able to use the money from fund raisers for purchasing capital equipment. It now relies on ponds and rivers for water but is working on installing dry hydrants and hopes to have a system in place by the summer of 1992. The Department is working on setting up a 24 hour dispatch system with H.C.S.D.: four department members will soon be equipped with beepers to alert them of fire calls. A.V.F.D. has mutual aid agreements in place with the towns of Great Pond, Osborn and Mariaville.

The Fire Department's equipment includes:

- 1950 Mack Pumper Truck in good condition but needs upgrading (about \$4,000),
- 1961 International Pumper Truck in fair condition but also needs upgrading (about \$4,000),
- Army 4 wheel drive Woods Truck of unknown age also needs improvement,
- 4 sets of turn out gear purchased in 1990 at a cost of \$2,400, and
- 3 Air Packs purchased in 1990 at a cost of \$5,200.

Other equipment identified as needed immediately by the Department are:

- 2,000 gal. Tanker truck with pump and hose: \$90,000 to \$100,000 new,
- 4" hose: 2000' @ \$4 per foot: \$8,000.

Fire fighters greatest impediment is water availability: the addition of a tanker truck to the Department's equipment would go a long way to remedy this situation. The Department is also concerned that the Town consider fire safety and access when writing the building codes and land use ordinances (ensure adequate truck access and consider potential water sources). Any growth in town would trigger the need for more staffing and equipment because the V.F.D. is already understaffed and ill equipped. In addition to these issues the Department is addressing recruitment problems, equipment needs, funding, and trying to keep up with State requirements. 63% of survey respondents felt that fire protection needed improvement. If this is the case throughout town then it should be possible to raise more money for the Department at town meeting.

The V.F.D. plans to have a "Learn Not to Burn" program at the Airline School in 1992. But even the success of this program relies on additional funding: the project would take around a one time expense of \$1,000 to purchase the audio visual material and supplies for distribution.

d. Planning Implications

The Fire Department might develop a capital improvement program to map out a way to purchase the needed equipment and to demonstrate to potential funding sources what funding would be used for. It can also be recommended that future growth be encouraged to occur on well maintained roads to facilitate service by the fire department and that standards be adopted for the construction and maintenance of the existing town roads.

The volunteer fire departments serving Aurora, Amherst, Osborn, and Great Pond created the Union River fire district in 1991. Together this group applied for C.D.B.G. funding in October 1991 to build dry hydrants in all four towns, buy a tanker truck and fund other projects. The result of this application will be known in January 1992.

6. EDUCATION

The Towns of Aurora, Great Pond, Osborn, and Amherst are members of the Airline Community School District and jointly administer the Airline School in Aurora for grades K-8. Aurora and the other member towns each elect 3 residents to the school board at the town meetings. The town pays tuition for high school students to go to any accredited high school, but most students attend the Brewer, Bangor and John Baptist High Schools. Bussing is provided to all of these High Schools.

Most individuals interested in adult education travel to Orono to take classes at the University.

a. Facilities and Programs

The Airline School was built in 1972 and has 3 classrooms, a gym with lunch kitchen and stage, a library/resources room, a special education room and a teachers' room. The school is staffed by 3 teachers and bussing service is provided for all Aurora students. The school is used for community activities such as meetings, public suppers, aerobics and basketball.

FIGURE II.D.1 STUDENT ENROLLMENT FIGURES: AURORA									
Grade	1980	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	
Kindergarten	6	1	5	5	4	5	6	7	
First Grade	9	6	1	5	9	6	5	5	
Second Grade	6	6	6	2	7	6	10	3	
Third Grade	8	2	5	7	6	7	5	8	
Fourth Grade	6	4	2	4	4	4	6	6	
Fifth Grade	2	5	4	3	6	7	4	3	
Sixth Grade	6	8	4	4	5	7	7	3	
Seventh Grade	11	6	10	3	4	3	10	8	
Eighth Grade	6	6	6	10	5	4	4	8	
Elementary Special Ed.	1	0	3	1	1	1	0	0	
Elementary School Total	61	44	46	44	37	50	57	51	
Ninth Grade	12	9	7	8	5	5	4	6	
Tenth Grade	7	5	6	5	10	7	8	2	
Eleventh Grade	8	9	6	5	5	4	6	3	
Twelfth Grade	8	7	6	2	7	7	4	6	
Secondary Special Ed.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
Secondary School Total	35	30	25	20	27	23	23	18	
Total Enrollment	96	74	71	64	64	73	80	69	

Source: Superintendent's Office

b. Student Enrollment

Figure II.D.1 shows student enrollment totals for Aurora by grade and by year. The number of Aurora residents enrolled has decreased from 96 students in 1980 to 69 students in 1991. Tuition paid by Aurora for student enrollment in 1991-92 was \$51,524, up 43% in four years from \$35,957 in 1987-88. During this same period Aurora's enrollment rose only 8%.

c. Finance and Expenditures

The education budget has been rising steadily, both in terms of per pupil costs and total expenditure. Many of these costs are due in large part to increasing statewide demands and expectations of public schools, and therefore cost controls are beyond the jurisdiction of the towns and school board. However, there is a common perception in town that the education available at the Airline School is not commensurate with the money the town is paying for it. On the surface the problems at this time appear to be disciplinary but the root of the problems is far more elusive.

The Airline School is financed in part by direct contributions by Aurora and the other towns in the School Union. The local contribution component of the budget is divided between the towns based on enrollment.

d. **Planning Implications**

The greatest concern about education in Aurora is that even though the town is paying an adequate sum for elementary school tuition, and even though the Airline School is a new facility, the students consistently test near the bottom of the list Statewide. Recently, the school hired a new teacher and some of the problems that were present in the school in the past are being addressed and conditions are improving.

7. HEALTH CARE

The hospital needs in Aurora are currently met by Eastern Maine Medical Center and St. Joseph's Hospital in Bangor, the Maine Coast Memorial Hospital and the Med Now Clinic in Ellsworth. E.M.M.C. is a private full service hospital offering in-patient and out-patient care in the fields of cardiac care, cancer treatment, physical therapy, x-ray services and intensive care. The hospital employs 2000 people and has 400 beds. Private rooms are \$431/day, semi-private \$395/day. E.M.M.C. is now completing the construction of a Magnetic Resonance Imaging unit: state of the art equipment which provides comprehensive visual information on individuals' physical condition. St. Joseph's is a full service private hospital with 100 beds and is in the process of expanding. Private rooms are \$335/day, semi-private \$295/day.

There are adequate elderly health care facilities in Brewer, Bangor and Ellsworth and New England Home Health Care and Community Health and Counseling in Ellsworth for special health care and human services. There are no clinics, health centers or other medical facilities in town but these services are currently adequate for the Town's needs. In 1990-91 the town supported the Mental Health Services Program (\$82), the Washington-Hancock Community Agency (\$215), Hancock County Mental Health Association (\$83), and the Eastern Agency on Aging (\$105). The last three organizations in this list offer counseling services.

8. CULTURAL FACILITIES

The Grand Theater in Ellsworth offers films, musicals, children's programs, variety shows and music concerts. In Orono the University of Maine offers a wide variety of entertainment and educational opportunities.

9. OTHER MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Aurora has a Town Meeting form of government and holds its annual meeting the last Saturday in March at the Aurora Town Hall.

The Town of Aurora provides basic municipal services and administration. The following officers are elected by popular vote at Town Meeting: Selectpersons, Overseers of the Poor, Road Commissioners and Code Enforcement Officers (3), Assessors (3), Town Clerk, Treasurer and Tax Collector, Auditor, Superintending School Committee (3), Board of Trustees of the Airline Community School District (3), Registrar of Voters, Civil Defense Director, Planning Board (6), Constable, and Animal Control Officer. The Selectmen, Planning Board, Board of Appeals, Superintending School Committee and Airline Community School District are all elected for 3 year terms on a rotating basis. The other officers are elected to one year terms. The Plumbing Inspector and Chimney Inspector are appointed to one year terms. The Town Clerk issues licenses and marriage and death certificates and takes minutes at all town meetings. The Treasurer collects excise taxes and the rent on town properties and handles the bookkeeping and state grants. The Constable serves papers and posts notices. The Animal Control Officer issues summonses to non-licensed dog owners and animal control. The Civil Emergency Preparedness Director conducts two test alerts per year and relays messages to other communities.

54% of survey respondents felt that the town government needed improvement and respondents were evenly split between feeling the town's sensitivity to public needs was adequate or needed improvement. 48% felt that there was adequate opportunity for public participation in government.

II.E

RECREATION

SECTION II.E: RECREATION

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is:

- a. to identify and profile Aurora's major open space areas, major public and private recreational facilities, and public access points to surface waters in terms of their characteristics and use;
- b. to assess the adequacy of those open space areas, recreational facilities, and public access points in handling current use demands;
- c. to predict whether additional open space areas, public access points, or recreational facility improvements will be needed to accommodate adequately the use demands of the projected population;
- d. to predict whether the availability of major private open space areas for public recreation use will be threatened by the impacts of growth and development; and
- e. to estimate the general costs of providing the needed recreational facility improvements.

2. RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

The following recreational assets are mapped on the Public Facilities, Historic Sites, and Recreation Map:

- a. **Downeast Y.M.C.A.**
The Downeast Y.M.C.A., located in Ellsworth, offers programs to area residents of all ages on a fee basis. The facility includes a large lap pool, gymnasium and weight room. The Town donated \$100 in 1990 but did not support this facility in 1991.
- b. **Airline School**
The playing field at the Airline School needs to be improved with the addition of a layer of top soil and grass seed for it to be useful. This field is maintained by the school. The Airline School gymnasium is open to the public for adult programs including aerobics and basketball. An outdoor basketball court was recently built and paved as well as a 4-square hopscotch pad. This school is also building a new swing set and lumber sided sand box.
- c. **Boat Landings**
There is a boat launch site with trailer access to Giles Pond off route 179 and to Long Pond off Great Pond Road. There is also a boat launch site with hand carried access to Upper Middle Branch Pond.
- d. **Little League**
The closest Little League practices at the playing field on Route 179 in Waltham near the dome house. A number of Aurora children participate in this program.
- e. **Hunters' Breakfast and Dinner**
These are sponsored by the Fire Department and the Amherst/Aurora Congregational church.
- f. **Aurora Volunteer Fire Department Chicken Barbecue**
This is the town-wide festival held every August. Activities include a dunking booth, music food sale and a flea market in addition to the chicken.

g. Dow Pines Recreation Area

This Recreation Area on the shores of Great Pond has been run by the Air Force but is now for sale. The site has a good sand beach, boat landing area, picnic tables and grills, parking lot and recreational buildings which house pool and ping-pong tables and an arcade.

h. Union River Valley 4-H Club

The members learn many basic skills such as sewing and crafts.

There is no longer a snowmobile club in Aurora: it was discontinued due to lack of interest. 69% of respondents to the Opinion Survey indicated that the parks and recreation facilities available for town residents are in need of improvement. 59% of respondents felt that recreational facilities for youth are in need of improvement.

3. RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

To the north, east, and west of Aurora there are many forests and lakes, both developed and wild. Great Pond, Alligator Lake, Long Pond, the West and Middle Branches of the Union River and many other areas are used by Aurora residents for recreational purposes. The Union River supports several well-established canoe trips on both the Middle and West branches. In addition to the Y.M.C.A. in Ellsworth, both Ellsworth and Bangor have important recreational resources such as health clubs, sports areas and exercise centers available to town residents.

Recreation issues such as access to surface water, open spaces, and picnic areas cannot be analyzed adequately for Aurora without also considering the assets of the surrounding area. The 1988 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (S.C.O.R.P.) includes an assessment of regional recreational needs and recommended State standards for provision of recreational facilities for communities of different sizes. For a community smaller than 1,000 people the plan recommends a town offer:

- a. Recreation & Park Board or Committee,
- b. Swimming instructors,
- c. Swimming instruction program,
- d. Community-wide special events,
- e. A developed Community Recreation Area,
- f. Softball and/or Little League Diamond,
- g. Basketball court,
- h. Ice skating,
- i. Playgrounds,
- j. Picnic Area with tables and grills.
- k. School facilities available for public use
- l. Gymnasium or large multipurpose room
- m. Auditorium or assembly hall
- n. Public library

With the towns of Osborn, Amherst and Great Pond the town should form a Recreation Committee to raise money and together work to secure the Great Pond beach. If this plan becomes a reality the towns could then create a swimming instruction program and develop this community recreation area to benefit all the communities. The Town already has some good community-wide special events which are enjoyed by many Aurora residents as well as the residents of neighboring towns. The Town should work with the School Recreation Committee to improve the playing field and playgrounds at the Airline School. The school already has facilities available for public use including a large multi-purpose room/assembly hall. The library in the Old Brick School House is used by four communities and the school has a reference room which both supplement the more

extensive collections available at the Ellsworth and Bangor Public Libraries.

S.C.O.R.P. gives some information about the Ellsworth Urban Area. Because of the proximity of Acadia Nation Park, the Ellsworth area ranks high in terms of picnic areas and trails. However, it ranks 11th, just above the mean, for provision of freshwater swimming. The other identified recreational need for the Downeast/Acadia Region is camping. Four privately owned primitive campsites are mapped in Amherst.

4. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

It is very important that any residential area have adequate recreation opportunities, either within the municipality, or on a broader regional scale. Open spaces, public parks and recreation programs serve a vital function in a community: they ensure that the people have somewhere to go to enjoy the outdoors. Parks give children safe areas to play, provide areas for local functions, and are open spaces which provide an aesthetically pleasing atmosphere. Public access to ponds and streams is also important because surface waters offer recreational opportunities including fishing, swimming and boating. Access to surface waters has been guaranteed by the State Legislature which reserves the right of people to cross unimproved land to get to a great pond. This does not give people the right to engage in activities on the shore without the permission of the land owner.

Aurora must work on two levels to assure recreational opportunities: regional and local. Regional efforts coordinated by state or county agencies, based partly on the 1988 S.C.O.R.P., should be supported by the Town. On a local level, the Town should continue to work to provide both public and private recreational opportunities. Aurora can contribute to meeting regional needs by encouraging camping and freshwater swimming opportunities.

Aurora residents currently have access to surface water at several boat landings. Otherwise, residents are dependent upon the continued public availability of private shore front land for water access. Should these areas become unavailable to the public there will be no public swimming area in Aurora: an ironic predicament for a Town with extensive surface water resources. The Town should consider developing a picnic and swimming area in Town or acquiring the Dow Pines Recreation Area in Great Pond. Such a facility could add to the community's recreation resources and guarantee public access in the future.

II.F

WATER RESOURCES

SECTION II.F: WATER RESOURCES

1. AURORA'S WATER RESOURCES

a. Watersheds

Aurora contains parts of the watersheds of five ponds. They are:

1. Long Pond
2. Halfmile Pond
3. Upper Middle Branch Pond
4. Lower Middle Branch Pond
5. Giles Pond

The boundaries of these watersheds are shown on the Natural Resources Map. Most of Upper and all of Lower Middle Branch Ponds, Halfmile Pond, Giles Pond and part of Long Pond are within the town's lines.

b. Major Streams

Aurora contains parts of fourteen named streams and their tributaries. They are:

1. Allagash Brook
2. Archer Brook
3. Beaver Brook
4. Browns Brook
5. Camp Brook
6. Freeman Brook
7. Giles Pond Brook
8. John Brown Brook
9. Leighton Brook
10. Salmon Island Brook
11. Sevensmile Brook
12. Union River Middle Branch
13. Union River West Branch
14. Warm Brook

The location of these streams and their tributaries are shown on the Natural Resources Map. All branches of the Union River have high fishery values with good populations of brook trout, brown trout and smallmouth bass. The Union River West Branch is considered a Significant River segment by the D.E.P. under their Shoreland Zoning Law. This will affect setbacks and uses along this river under D.E.P. guidelines. All of Aurora's brooks and streams support brook trout fisheries. Most also provide cranberry picking opportunities. The Union River is rated by the State as a Class C river by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife meaning it has moderate water quality.

c. Freshwater Wetlands

There are two major wetlands in Town in addition to numerous small wetlands. The major wetlands are:

1. at the Middle Branch Union River and Beaver Brook confluence,
2. Sevensmile Brook.

Freshwater wetlands are of interest to both the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (D.E.P.) and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (I.F.&W.). Aurora has 37

freshwater wetlands mapped by the D.E.P. (National Wetlands Inventory Sites) which are regulated under the Natural Resources Protection Act. The Natural Resources Map shows the locations of fresh water wetlands areas mapped by the D.E.P. The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife recently (June 1991) mapped significant waterfowl and wading bird habitat in Aurora including nesting and feeding areas. They found 6 such areas all of which they classified as of moderate value. The available information from both agencies is summarized in Figures II.F.1 and II.F.3.

Some of the Town's wetlands may already have been damaged by development and erosion due to timber harvesting. For instance, those wetlands adjacent to ponds may be affected by camps and other shorefront development. Additionally, wetlands may be negatively affected by runoff from development upstream: for instance those wetlands on the Middle Branch Union River.

d. Lakes and Ponds

Aurora contains all or part of five lakes and ponds. They are:

1. Long Pond
2. Upper Middle Branch Pond
3. Lower Middle Branch Pond
4. Halfmile Pond
5. Giles Pond

The locations of these lakes and ponds are shown on the Natural Resources Map. Information available on these ponds from the D.E.P. is included Figure II.F.2. The D.E.P. classifies the water quality in lakes and ponds as outstanding, good, moderate/stable, moderate/sensitive, poor/restorable, and poor/non-restorable. All of Aurora's ponds fall into the third and fourth categories.

Moderate/stable waters are fairly clear and do not have algae blooms. Algae levels are moderate as are phosphorus concentrations. Despite their relatively high nutrient and algae levels, lakes in this category do not appear to have a high risk of developing algae blooms. In Aurora, Upper Middle Branch Pond falls into this category.

Moderate/sensitive waters exhibit clarity, algae and nutrient levels similar to the moderate/stable lakes, but have a high potential for developing algae blooms because of significant summertime depletion of dissolved oxygen levels and/or large seasonal fluctuations in algae and nutrient levels. Many lakes fall into this category because of their high risk of having significant water quality changes due to small increases in phosphorus concentration. The balance of Aurora's ponds fall into this category.

1. Long Pond: Long Pond has a brook trout fishery and is considered a "trophy" trout pond by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife. It may be accessed off Alligator Lake Road and the Great Pond Road. These routes both traverse private land but are useable by the public. In order to maintain the pond's water quality, the D.E.P. recommends that the Town contribute less than 11.5 pounds of phosphorus per year from the 961 acres of the pond's watershed located in Aurora.

2. Upper Middle Branch Pond: This has valuable salmon and trout fisheries and is unique in having a natural sustaining salmon fishery: it is not stocked. This Pond as well as Lower Middle Branch Pond may be accessed from the Champion Paper Company road. This Pond has a maximum depth of 55 feet, a mean depth of 23 feet, and a surface area of 467 acres. The D.E.P. recorded some information on the water quality of this pond in 1982. The mean secchi disk reading for this year was 6.7 meters. A mean secchi disk reading of from 4 to 5 meters is

average but shallow lakes have generally lower secchi readings. A secchi disk transparency of less than two meters usually indicates an algae bloom. Upper Middle Branch Pond's reading indicates fair transparency. The dissolved oxygen profile data available for Upper Middle Branch Pond is for September 8, 1982. The testing found about 9 parts per million of oxygen down to a depth of 10 meters with water temperatures of around 17 degrees celsius. A lake with a dissolved oxygen content of less than 5 ppm is usually an indication of oxygen depletion. Upper Middle Branch Pond has good dissolved oxygen content. Dissolved oxygen profiles provide an earlier indication of potential environmental hazards than secchi disk transparency data. (One meter equals 3.28 feet.) To preserve the current water quality of the Pond, the D.E.P. recommends that the Town of Aurora contribute less than 21.5 pounds of phosphorus per year from the 1,754 acres of the watershed within the Town. This data is insufficient to indicate any trend in the Pond's water quality. In fall 1991 the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife did more studies on the pond and recommend that the outlet stream be protected as it is a spawning habitat for salmon.

3. **Lower Middle Branch Pond:** This Pond is a shallow, boggy pond without the fishery value of Upper Middle Branch Pond. In order to preserve the current water quality of the pond, the D.E.P. recommends that not more than 15.3 pounds of phosphorus per year reach the pond from the 1,131 acres of drainage area located in Aurora.

4. **Halfmile Pond:** This Pond has exceptional brook and lake trout fisheries and is considered a "trophy" pond by the M.D.I.F. & W. It is publicly accessible by foot off the 29-44-40 Champion Road. In order to preserve this pond's water quality the town should not contribute more than 6.5 pounds of phosphorus from the 353 acres of drainage area located in Aurora.

5. **Giles Pond:** This Pond has a brown trout and white perch fishery and is accessible both from the Giles Pond Road and over a public foot right of way established over the Giles Pond Acres subdivision. In order to preserve this pond's water quality the town should not contribute more than 2.2 pounds of phosphorus from the 192 acres of the pond's drainage area located in Aurora.

e. Phosphorus Water Quality Data

Figure 11.F.2 and the above paragraphs list phosphorus loading vulnerability information and the phosphorus coefficient for all ponds in Aurora as well as those lakes and ponds whose watersheds are partly contained in Aurora. For many lakes, phosphorus is the limiting nutrient for algal blooms. If the phosphorus level in the lake is high, among other factors, the lake may be in danger of algal blooms, which, in turn, may deplete oxygen levels and harm fish. The phosphorus coefficient is not a measure of water quality, but rather is an indicator of the pond's capacity to accept phosphorus. This coefficient can be used as a planning guide for limiting development in the watershed.

The D.E.P.'s water quality rating, described above, is based on the pond's vulnerability to phosphorous levels. This rating is derived from many variables such as flushing, growth and development rates. When the D.E.P. analyzed the affect the Giles Pond subdivision would have on Giles Pond it estimated that each new house would contribute .25 kg. of phosphorus to the pond and that Giles Pond's phosphorus load should not increase more than 1 kg and thereby recommended that the new subdivision be limited in the number of new house lots it created.

f. Flood Hazard Areas

Aurora has elected not to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. The National Program has categorized Aurora as having "no special flood hazard areas and is a non-flood prone community" as of October 1991. The town does have a Land Use Ordinance which regulates

development in areas with flood plain soils. The locations of these flood plain soils are shown on the Geologically Restricted Map.

g. Ground Water

Ground water in Aurora occurs both in surficial deposits or sand and gravel aquifers and in fractured or porous bedrock in bedrock aquifers. Aurora has one large and one small sand and gravel ground water aquifer, which are shown on the Natural Resources Map. The large aquifer follows Route 9 from the south border of town up to the D.O.T. road salt pile (at the Whalesback) and then northwest across the Great Pond Road, across Warm Brook and Slisby Plain, and up the Union River West Branch. It is composed of sand & gravel and has potential yields of 10-50 gallons per minute and in excess of 50 gallons per minute in southern areas and along the Union River West Branch; a very productive and valuable potential water source. No gravel quarries are mapped by the U.S.G.S. on this aquifer but the town has sold gravel from the Aurora Farm site. Also the old town dump is located over this aquifer. The small aquifer runs east from the northeast shores of Upper Middle Branch Pond and into Township 28.

There is no public water supply in Aurora. Since all residences and businesses in Aurora rely on private wells groundwater throughout the town should be preserved.

2. EXISTING AND POTENTIAL WATER QUALITY PROBLEMS

a. Identified and Potential Point Source Pollution

Point source discharges are known sites where a pollutant is being discharged directly into an identified body of water. There are no known point sources of pollution in Aurora however the D.E.P. has identified 14 underground oil storage tanks in Town. There are 2 owned by A.R. Mae, one at Jordan's store, 2 are owned by Peter Larson, 3 owned by Robert A. Larson which are out of service, one at the D.O.T. maintenance facility and one owned by Gregory Palman. The D.E.P. lists the 2 owned by Peter Larson and the 1 at the D.O.T. maintenance facility as sensitive. Committee members believe there may also be one at H. T. Slisby's which is not in use. The D.E.P. also furnishes information on the handlers of hazardous waste. The Union River Electric Coop. on Route 9 generates 100 to 1000 kilograms per month of hazardous waste. This business notified the D.E.P. in 1983 of its activity and as of 1990 had not notified the D.E.P. otherwise.

b. Identified and Potential Non-Point Source Discharges

Non-point source pollution is contamination which does not arise from a single identifiable source, but rather as runoff or leaching from an area. The D.E.P. has identified three potential non-point sources of pollution in Aurora: an 800 cubic yard Town owned sand and salt pile, the D.O.T. owned sand and salt pile, and the town land fill. The town owned sand and salt pile is listed as a low priority because it has no measurable effect on the source of public water. The D.O.T. pile, located over a highly productive area of the town's aquifer, is listed as moderate to high priority because chloride levels in nearby domestic or secondary water supplies exceed 20 mg/l (milligrams per liter) or because the site is likely to be causing chloride concentrations in existing water supplies to exceed 20 mg/l but samples can not be collected to confirm this. The State had plans to fund covering the Town sand and salt pile in 1994 but due to budget cuts this project may be delayed a number years. The land fill scores 30 points (105 is worst) on the basis of hazard posed to the environment and public health: it is a fairly low hazard. The Town does not plan to act on covering the pile until some State funding to help with this project becomes available. The D.O.T., also due to the budget crisis, cannot give a firm date for covering its sand and salt pile in Aurora.

In addition to the sand and salt storage piles and the town land fill, there are numerous other potential sources of non-point pollution. These include roads, failed septic systems, and farm fertilizers. Route 9 and the Great Pond Road cross the town's large aquifer. There is no information

available on whether runoff from the winter application of salt, is a problem in Aurora.

The Committee has noted that the water quality in Aurora, although now excellent, may in the future be most threatened by water runoff and erosion following clear cutting and skidder road use and from chemical contamination resulting from application of chemicals associated with forestry and agriculture practices. Rain which falls on land that has been clear cut runs off relatively rapidly, usually carries sediment with it, and enters water bodies at a significantly higher temperatures than water which falls on forested land. Trout fisheries require cool water temperatures in order to thrive.

3. EXISTING WATER QUALITY PROTECTION PROGRAMS

a. Ground Water Protection Program

In recognition of the critical nature of ground water resources to the health, safety, and general welfare of the people of Maine, the Legislature has declared that an adequate supply of safe drinking water is a matter of highest priority. Therefore, it will protect, conserve, and maintain the State's ground water resources by eliminating sources of pollution such as the leachate from landfills, hazardous waste sites and underground sewerage disposal, and by identifying potential sources of ground water pollution.

b. Protection of Natural Resources Act

In order to protect Maine's rivers, streams, great ponds, and freshwater wetlands, this Act requires permits through the D.E.P. for any construction adjacent to identified water resources.

c. Maine State Water Classification Program

The purpose of this program is to classify the water resources of Maine by level of quality in order to eliminate discharge of pollutants into State waters where appropriate, and to protect the quality of the State's waters.

d. Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act

This Act requires towns to adopt Shoreland Zoning Ordinances which control development within 250 feet of the shore of great ponds, rivers, and streams; and sets a minimum setback for development of 75 feet from the shores of great ponds, rivers, and streams.

e. Maine State Plumbing Code

The Code sets minimum standards for the siting and construction of wastewater disposal systems. These standards prohibit new septic systems in steep areas and poor soils.

f. Aurora Ordinances and Codes

Aurora's 1989 Shoreland Zoning Ordinance is designed specifically to protect water resources. The Hancock County Planning Commission conducted a review of this Ordinance in 1991 to check for compliance with the new State Shoreland Zoning requirements. Aurora may elect to enact an ordinance which is stricter than the State's. The Planning Board is in the process of drafting changes to this and plans to have the ordinance ready by January 1992. Aurora's water quality is further protected through enforcement of the State Plumbing Code by the local Plumbing Inspector.

4. ANALYSIS

a. Analysis of Existing Water Resource Problems

1. Insufficient Mapping and Data

In order to effectively protect water resources in Aurora accurate information about the

existing condition of these resources over a period of years and for consecutive months in the summer is needed.

2. Sand and Salt Storage Pile

There is no evidence that the Sand and Salt Storage Piles are contaminating Aurora's water resources, however, they are identified threats. The State's plans to cover both are bound to be delayed while the State's fiscal problems are brought under control.

b. Potential Water Resources Problems From Future Growth

1. Pollution of Surface Waters from non-point runoff

Due to marginal economics, Aurora's farmers are increasingly under pressure to increase the yields from their agricultural land. This may result in increased use of fertilizers: a significant source of water pollution. Similarly, owners of forest land may use herbicides (e.g. Roundup) following significant cutting practices to kill hardwoods and encourage the growth of soft woods.

New development and timber harvesting will cause increased runoff from roads, clear cuts and construction sites. This runoff could decrease the quality of Aurora's wetlands, streams and ponds. Of particular concern is increased phosphorus loading. Especially in a pond in which the water quality is considered "moderate/sensitive," increased phosphorus could cause an algal bloom. In order to protect Aurora's ponds, the town may need to adopt Watershed Management Programs which limit the amount of phosphorus, among other pollutants, which flow into the ponds as a result of increased activity.

2. Aquifer Contamination or Destruction

There is no evidence that the sand and gravel aquifers in Town have been contaminated; however, the town landfill, two sand and salt storage piles and acres of agricultural land are located on Aurora's aquifers. Additional industrial development near the aquifers could contaminate the water, possibly to the detriment of Aurora's water supplies. Further research about the recharge area, potential and use of these aquifers is needed to determine the priority for protecting each aquifer. In the meantime, the Town should consider protecting the surrounding area from harmful development or further destruction. The Town may also choose to adopt a policy about the use of agricultural chemicals on fields above the aquifers.

3. Flood Damage

Since flood damage can be quite severe and since flood hazard zones are often environmentally sensitive, the Town should continue to limit development in flood plains. At present flood plains or land with soil types identifiable as recent flood plain soils are included in the Resource Protection District in the Town's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. In these areas, under this ordinance the construction of principal structures is prohibited and most other uses require a permit from the Planning Board. The Town is not now a participant in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's flood insurance program.

**FIGURE II.F.1
INLAND FISHERIES & WILDLIFE NOTES ON VALUE OF WETLANDS IN AURORA**

I.F. & W. #	LOCATION	COMMENTS
050056	Beaver Brook	Significant Wildlife Habitat, rated as moderate
050057	Allagash Brook	same
050059	Archer Brook	same
050060	Browns Brook	same
050061	Slisby Plain Marsh	same
050062	Pug Hole Marsh	same

Source: Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

**FIGURE II.F.2
AURORA: LAKE WATER QUALITY INFORMATION FOR PHOSPHOROUS CONTROL**

Lake	Location of Direct Drainage Area	Direct Drainage Area in Aurora (in acres)	Percent of Drainage Area in Aurora	Phosphorus Coefficient in kg	Water Quality Category (phosphorus content only)
Giles Pond	Aurora	192	100%	2.2	Moderate/Sensitive
Halfmile Pond	Aurora	353	100%	6.5	Moderate/Sensitive
Little Dutton Pond *	Amherst Aurora Great Pond Township 32	12	5%	.1	Moderate/Sensitive
Long Pond	Aurora Great Pond	961	57%	11.5	Moderate/Sensitive
Lower Middle Branch Pond	Aurora Township 28	1,131	92%	15.3	Moderate/Sensitive
Upper Middle Branch Pond	Aurora Great Pond Township 28	1,754	43%	21.5	Moderate/Stable

* Not located within Aurora
Source: Department of Environmental Protection, Lakes Division

FIGURE II.F.3: AURORA'S WETLANDS MAPPED BY THE MAINE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION		
WETLAND #	WETLAND TYPE	REGULATIONS
48		Freshwater Wetlands Act
49		Stream Alteration Act
50		Stream Alteration Act
51	Shrub Swamp	Stream Alteration Act
52	Bog	Freshwater Wetlands Act
53	Bog, Wooded Swamp, Shrub Swamp	Stream Alteration Act
53A	Shrub Swamp	Stream Alteration Act
54	Inland Fresh Meadow	Stream Alteration Act
55	Bog	Great Ponds Act, Stream Alteration Act
56		Stream Alteration Act
57	Shrub Swamp, Bog	Stream Alteration Act
58		Freshwater Wetlands Act
59	Bog	Freshwater Wetlands Act
60		Freshwater Wetlands Act
61*	Wooded Swamp	Freshwater Wetlands Act
62*	Shrub Swamp	Stream Alteration Act
63*		Freshwater Wetlands Act
64*		Freshwater Wetlands Act
65*	Shrub Swamp, Bog	Stream Alteration Act
66*		Freshwater Wetlands Act
67*		Great Ponds Act
68*	Wooded Swamp	Freshwater Wetlands Act
69*	Inland Fresh Meadow	Stream Alteration Act
70*	Wooded Swamp	Stream Alteration Act
71*	Shrub Swamp	Stream Alteration Act
61**	Inland Fresh Meadow	Stream Alteration Act
62**	Shrub Swamp, Bog	Stream Alteration Act
63**	Inland Fresh Meadow	Stream Alteration Act
64**	Shrub Swamp	Stream Alteration Act
65**	Shrub Swamp	Stream Alteration Act
66**	Inland Deep Fresh Marsh	Stream Alteration Act
67**	Inland Deep Fresh Marsh	Stream Alteration Act
68**	Inland Fresh Meadow	Stream Alteration Act
69**	Bog	Stream Alteration Act
70**		Freshwater Wetlands Act
71**	hl, Shallow Fresh Marsh, Wooded Swamp	Stream Alteration Act
72**	Shrub Swamp	Stream Alteration Act

Source: Maine Department of Conservation, Geological Survey. Maps #27 (*) & #42 (**), 1983

II.G

CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCES

SECTION II.G: CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCES

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to:

- a. identify and profile the town's significant critical natural resources particularly their extent, characteristics, and significance;
- b. predict whether the existence, physical integrity, or quality of identified significant critical natural resources will be threatened by the affects of future growth and development; and
- c. assess the effectiveness of existing measures to protect and preserve significant critical natural resources.

2. IDENTIFIED CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCES

a. Areas Identified By the State Critical Areas Program

The Maine Critical Areas Program (Title 5 M.R.S.A., §312) was created by the 106th Legislature, in 1974. Critical areas are defined as naturally occurring phenomenon of statewide significance which because of their uniqueness, rarity or other critical factors are deemed important enough to warrant special planning and management consideration. These areas include those places where changes in use would jeopardize resources of natural, educational, historic, archaeological, scientific, recreational, or scenic significance.

To meet the requirements of this program, areas must be identified, catalogued and submitted to the Critical Areas Advisory Board for review. Landowners of affected land have an opportunity to respond to the registration. The status of the proposed area is then decided based on the following criteria:

1. The provisions of the statute;
2. Values and qualities represented by the area;
3. Probable effects of uncontrolled use;
4. Present and probable future use;
5. Level of significance; and
6. Probable effects of registration both positive and negative.

There are no areas in town which are qualified but have not been registered with the Program. Currently, the following areas in Aurora are registered with the State Critical Areas Program and are mapped on the Environmentally Sensitive Land Map:

1. **The Whalesback Esker:** a steep esker 25 yards high which rises sharply from a swamp. Route 9 runs along the top for 2.5 miles affording grand views of vast glacial plains.

2. **the Silsby Plain Esker:** a sandy plain left as glacial outwash, used for blueberry cultivation. Some esker segments are visible.

b. Areas Recognized as National Natural Landmarks

National landmarks of significant state and federal importance are to be preserved for the future enjoyment by other citizens and to protect their environmentally unique characteristics. There are no National Natural Landmarks in Aurora.

c. Areas Identified by the Maine Natural Heritage Program

Sites listed with the Maine Natural Heritage Program are selected for their contribution to the natural diversity in Maine. The State Natural Heritage Program lists the same two eskers as the State Critical Areas Program.

d. Scenic Areas and Views

Scenic areas and views are important to a community both for their aesthetic qualities and their recreational value. These areas provide a place for citizens to enjoy the beauty of the outdoors and increase the quality of life in the Town. The Committee identified the vistas from route 179 overlooking Giles Pond, from the Whale's Back section of route 9 where the State maintains a scenic overlook, from Roberts Bluff, from the top of Sisby Hill and other areas around the town's water bodies as some of the town's most scenic areas. These resources may be threatened by conventional camp and shorefront development patterns and clearcutting practices. The town's shoreland zoning ordinance now requires Planning Board review of any activity within 300 feet of a river, stream, lake or pond. But otherwise these resources are unprotected.

e. Significant Fish and Wildlife Habitat

In Aurora, the principal species of large game are deer and bear, but deer are by far the more important. Moose are thinly scattered in groups of two or three and usually range near isolated marshes and bogs. Small game includes ruffed grouse, snowshoe hare and woodcock. Teal and black duck are hunted along streams and lakes. Other ducks and the Canada goose are hunted as they migrate south. The economic value of furbearers, particularly beaver and mink, fluctuates greatly. Trapping was once important but is no longer of much significance. Some trapping of beaver and mink, as well as muskrat, otter, and fisher is still done. Fisher have recently rehabilitated the area.

Winter has long been considered a bottleneck for survival of white-tailed deer in the Northeast. During winter, deer in northern climates often subsist on limited quantities of low quality foods, while simultaneously coping with low temperatures, chilling winds, and higher energy requirements. The primary behavioral mechanism for deer to conserve energy during winter is to move to traditional wintering areas or yards. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife has located two deer wintering areas in Aurora. These areas are mapped on the Natural Resources Map and are of "indeterminate" status. This means that they are not now protected under the provisions of the Natural Resources Protection Act.

Inland fisheries are freshwater habitats such as streams, rivers, lakes and ponds with existing or potential value to fish. Aquatic habitats are also some of the most sensitive and vulnerable. Land use activities that directly affect water quality can significantly alter or destroy the value of these areas for fish. Land clearing or development in the adjacent upland habitat, or riparian zone, can also degrade a fisheries. Riparian habitats protect water quality and fisheries values by filtering out excessive nutrients, sediments, or other pollutants leaching in from upland areas, maintaining water temperatures suitable for aquatic life, and contributing vegetation and invertebrates to the food base. Riparian habitat is also important as cover for the many species of wildlife attracted to aquatic systems, and serves as a protective travel corridor for movement between undeveloped tracts of land.

The following fish species may be found in Aurora's many ponds, streams and rivers:

American eel	Alewife	Landlocked salmon
Brown trout	Brook trout	Lake trout
Rainbow smelt	Chain pickerel	Golden shiner
Creek chub	White sucker	White perch
Redbreast sunfish	Pumpkinseed	Smallmouth bass
Yellow perch	Landlock salmon	

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife located no bald eagle nesting sites in Aurora as of June 1991. State regulations now protect areas within one quarter mile of the nesting site from development and the Towns are responsible for enforcing these regulations. The I.F. & W. did locate six sites which are significant waterfowl and wading bird habitat in town which supplement the National Wetlands Inventory sites under the jurisdiction of the D.E.P.

f. Other Natural Resources

There are two geologic faults in Aurora which run parallel to each other in a direction from the southwest to the northeast. The first fault starts in Clifton and follows the Union River West Branch in Aurora and continues up to Grand Lake Stream. The second, shorter, fault starts in Amherst, runs south and parallel to the first fault in Aurora, and ends near the head of the Narraguagus River near Lower Sabao Lake. These are mapped on the Natural Resources Map.

3. CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION

a. Identified and Potential Threats to Critical Natural Areas

The potential threats to critical natural areas in Aurora at this time is camp and shoreland development. This is a subject which is of great importance and is addressed in the Proposed Land Use Section of this Plan.

b. Existing Measures to Protect Critical Natural Resources

1. The State Critical Areas Program: as described above this program is designed to preserve, through identification and increased public awareness, unique natural areas of state wide significance.
2. The Town of Aurora has a Resource Protection District defined in its Land Use and Shoreland Zoning Ordinances which is shown on the Existing Zoning Map.

c. Planning Implications

Critical areas maintain biological diversity by providing necessary habitat for a wide range of plant and animal species. They provide undisturbed natural systems for research, educational opportunities for teaching natural systems, and provide benchmarks in the changing environments modified by humans.

In consideration of the importance of Critical Areas to the understanding of the environment and to the history of Aurora, proper management of these exemplary areas is necessary in order that they may be preserved for future use.

II.H

AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST RESOURCES

SECTION II.H: AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST RESOURCES

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is:

- a. to identify Aurora's potential and existing commercial farmlands and forestlands;
- b. to predict whether the viability of important commercial farmlands and forestlands will be threatened by the affects of future growth and development; and
- c. to assess the effectiveness of existing measures to protect and preserve important commercial farmlands and forestlands.

2. COMMERCIAL FARMLANDS

a. Farm and Open Space Law Taxation Program Parcels

Aurora has four parcels with two owners registered under the Farm and Open Space Tax Program. The 1990 State Municipal Valuation Land Classification lists 862 acres valued at \$65,222 for the purposes of taxation under this program. The scarcity of land registered under this program is probably an indication that the Town's valuation of agricultural land is close to the State's. If the town's valuation for this land increases faster than the State's the quantity of land registered under this program will also increase.

b. Commercial Farmlands

Including the land registered under the above program, the Town tax records list 2,597 acres of farm land in Aurora, about 1,500 of which are in blueberries. Other farmlands are used to grow hay for animals or are used for fruits and vegetables for personal consumption. This acreage constitutes 10% of the Town's total area. The location of the farm land in Aurora is shown on the Existing Land Use Map and the Forest and Agricultural Resources Map.

Although the individuals now growing berries in town will probably not soon be choosing other livelihoods, this industry does not contribute to the town's economy in the way it once did. It appears that the State's subsidies to this industry have done much to help the processor without contributing to the welfare of the grower and have hurt the finances of the rakers. Today many of the rakers of Aurora's berries are from out of town and even out of State. This was not true when the pay for raking a box of blueberries was better.

c. Agriculture Dependent Production Facilities

There are no agriculture dependent production facilities. Blueberries grown in Aurora are taken to processing centers in Ellsworth, Cherryfield, and Machias.

d. Planning Implications

Farming within Aurora is still fairly important to the town's economy and small-scale farming and gardening contributes to the food supply of many residents. In addition, the open blueberry grounds and hayfields contribute to the rural character of Aurora.

41% of respondents to Aurora's Growth Management Opinion Survey felt that agricultural land use in town should be promoted. 50% of respondents felt that agricultural land use should be allowed. This suggests that the Town should support measures which protect the rights of individuals to farm and which protect farm land for long term agricultural use.

3. COMMERCIAL FORESTLANDS

a. **Tree Growth Tax Law Program Parcels**
There are 16,878 acres registered under the Tree Growth Tax Law in the Town of Aurora. In 1990 the State Bureau of Taxation counted 16,523 acres held by 14 owners in Aurora registered under this program and valued the area at \$898,349 in 1989: \$54 per acre. The major owners of forest land registered under this program in Aurora are Diamond Occidental Forestry, Inc. (7,080 acres: 28% of the town's total area), Champion International (6,245 acres: 25% of total area), A.R. Mace (1,283 acres: 5% of total area), John Pierce (903 acres: 4% of total area), and 10 other land owners together holding 867 acres: 3% of the town's total area. These parcels are shown on the Existing Land Use Map and the Forest and Agricultural Resources Map.

b. **Commercial Forestlands**

Commercial forestlands are those owned by major land management, paper, or lumber companies. In Aurora these owners are Diamond Occidental Forestry, Inc., Champion International, A.R. Mace and John Pierce. In addition to commercial forestlands, many residents of Aurora cut wood or sell stumpage from their own smaller lots.

c. **Forestland Dependent Land Uses and Facilities**

There are no forest dependent production facilities in the Town of Aurora at this time. All the wood cut in Town is transported to other facilities in the region such as pulp and saw mills and the energy plant in Deblois. There are many Aurora residents who work seasonally in the woods.

d. **Planning Implications**

Forestlands play an important role in the economy and natural environment of Aurora. There are 18,720 forested acres in Aurora constituting 75% of the town's total area. Unfortunately, because this land is registered under the Tree Growth Tax law and therefore assessed at \$54 per acre the industry contributes very little to the Town's tax base. The use of Aurora's forestlands is highly dependent on the availability of labor, markets, production facilities in neighboring towns and the status of the State's tax policies. It is important that the Town consider policies which will encourage proper forestry techniques, encourage the maintenance of forests for recreational, scenic, and environmental reasons, and recognize the importance of the forests as a sustainable economic resource.

50% of respondents to the Growth Management Opinion Survey felt that clear cutting of wood lots in Aurora should be forbidden, 21% felt that it should be discouraged and 26% felt that it should be allowed. Recently when a commercial forest owner was clear cutting his land for bolt wood production everyone who could see the clearcut from their land complained until the operation was stopped. The town should consider developing standards which protect the forest land in town while still protecting owners' rights to harvest their land.

The sustained management of land would improve if the value of the harvest was increased. This might be achieved by organizing collective marketing efforts in town and the region. This practice is common among producers of other commodities with U.S.D.A. assistance.

4. FARMLAND AND FORESTLAND PROTECTION

a. **Identified and Potential Threats to Farm and Forestlands**

The primary threat to farm and forestlands in Aurora is over cutting of forest land (rendering it unproductive as a forest resource) and residential development. Because of the size of new development in the Town compared to the many acres of forest, the threat of residential development is not a major concern at present. Conversion of blueberry land to residential lots

has occurred but is not likely to be a major problem due to the availability of other lands. There is concern, however, that forested land be harvested in such a way that the resource is readily renewable and may sustain part of the town's economy for many years.

b. Existing Protection Measures

1) **Tree Growth Tax Law:** The Maine Legislature has declared, in the Tree Growth Tax Law (Title 36, M.R.S.A. §571, et seq.), that "...the public interest would be best served by encouraging forest landowners to retain and improve their holdings of forest lands upon the tax roles of the state and to promote better forest management by appropriate tax measures in order to protect this unique economic and recreational resource." The Tree Growth Tax Law applies to all parcels of forestland over 10 acres in size at the discretion and application of the owners. It taxes forestland on the basis of its potential for annual wood production. Those thinking of putting their land under the Tree Growth Tax Law Program should consider the future carefully, as there are penalties for withdrawing such lands for other uses.

2) **Farm and Open Space Tax Law:** The Maine Legislature has declared in the Farm and Open Space Tax Law (Title 36, M.R.S.A., Section 1101, et seq.), that "...it is in the public interest to encourage the preservation of farmland and open space land in order to maintain a readily available source of food and farm products close to the metropolitan areas of the state..." and "...to prevent the forced conversion of farmland and open space land to more intensive uses as a result of economic pressures caused by the assessment thereof..." Farmland is eligible for this program if that farm consists of at least 5 contiguous acres in a single town, and has shown gross earnings from agricultural production of at least \$2,000 during one of the last two years, or three of the last five years. The benefits of this program are that it enables farmers to continue their way of life without having to worry about excessive property taxes which can be brought about by run-away land valuations, in turn forcing them out of business. The farmland is not taxed based on its market value, but rather at a significantly lower rate.

Along with this program is the Farmland Registration Program. While the eligibility requirements are similar to the Farm and Open Space Tax Law, the purpose is different. This act is designed to protect a farmer's right to farm. Principally, upon registration, the farmer is guaranteed a 100 foot buffer zone between productive fields and new incompatible development, such as a residential development, or a commercial dining establishment. This program also lets new and potential abutters know that a working farm is next door. There are no farms in town now registered under this program at this time.

3) **Local Ordinances:** The existing ordinances of the Town of Aurora limit some forestry and agricultural practices through the Resource Protection and Shoreland Residential Districts. These ordinances are intended to protect natural resources, rather than to maintain or protect forest and agricultural land. Agricultural and forestry practices restrictions are adequate for Resource Protection areas, but very weak in Shoreland Residential areas, both in terms of the degree to which cutting is permitted, and the degree to which agricultural chemicals may be used near the shore.

c. Planning Implications

The Town should consider more restrictions on forestry practices. The Town currently has little protection and few mechanisms in place to encourage the preservation of its agricultural lands. The Town should continue to support the Tree Growth, Farm and Open Space programs that assist local farmers and foresters.

II.I

HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGIC RESOURCES

SECTION II.: HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is:

- a. to outline the history of Aurora;
- b. to identify Aurora's significant historic and archaeological resources in terms of their type and significance;
- c. to predict whether the existence and physical viability of Aurora's historic and archaeological resources will be threatened by the impacts of future growth and development; and
- d. to assess the effectiveness of existing measures to protect and preserve significant historic and archaeological resources.

2. IDENTIFIED HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

- a. **Historic Events and Settlement Patterns Important to the Character of the Town**
Most of the following is taken from the 1979 Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Aurora.

From 1677 until 1820 Maine was part of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Settlement of Maine and especially its eastern section came slowly in comparison with the rest of New England. When settlement did occur, it was along the coast rather than inland. Shortly after the Revolutionary War two land speculations developed that resulted in the further settlement of Eastern Maine including Aurora.

The first speculation was in 1786 when Massachusetts enacted the Land Lottery Act to raise funds for debts incurred during the Revolutionary War. The sale of public lands in the District of Maine appeared to be a solution for reducing the debt and increasing the public funds.

The land between the Penobscot and the St. Croix Rivers, excluding the already settled coastal towns, was chosen for the lottery. The region was divided into fifty townships each six miles square. Within each township there was a further division of lots ranging in size from 160 to 1,280 acres, and these parcels became the majority of the lottery lots. When the drawing was held in October 1787, only 437 tickets out of a total of 2,720 had been sold. The Committee of 1783, which originally devised the lottery, now decided to sell outright large tracts of land. In 1791 Henry Knox and William Duer, who both served important posts in Washington's administration, entered into contract with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the purchase of two tracts of land each containing one million acres. One tract was on the Kennebec River, and the other was the unsuccessful lottery land between the Penobscot and the St. Croix. Neither Duer nor Knox was financially capable of fulfilling the contract with Massachusetts. Duer soon landed in debtors' prison. Knox then convinced wealthy William Bingham of Philadelphia to buy Duer's share of the contract. Later Knox conveyed his half to Bingham in return for one-third of any residuary profits in the sale of land. Unfortunately Knox forfeited this arrangement for a cash settlement in order to pay debts. Thus the two tracts have become known as the Bingham Purchase.

Bingham took an active interest in his eastern land purchase and felt he could make a profit from it. He had the land surveyed, hired a land agent, and within two years found a partner: Alexander Baring. Bingham's first land agent for the eastern territory was General David Cobb. Convinced that the region was suitable for farming Cobb concentrated his efforts on attracting farmers. He

promoted land sales through flyers advertising cheap land with easy payment terms. He worked first at settling Northern Hancock County along the Union River. From 1800 to 1804 settlements were made in Mariaville, Amherst, and Waltham. Settlement of the "up river" country was slow due to events outside the region including the death of Bingham in 1804. Bingham died and the passage of the Embargo Act of 1807 which prohibited trade with foreign countries. The latter caused economic harm to Maine which in turn hindered growth. Finally during the War of 1812 the coast of Eastern Maine was virtually under English control.

In 1805 Samuel Sisby made the first purchase of land in Township 27 which is now Aurora. In that year he bought two lots, but he did not settle in Aurora until 1808. Soon after he settled, Daniel and Joseph Giles made Aurora their residence. By 1820 there were nine families totaling 46 people in Aurora. These early settlers cleared over 200 acres for crops in just a few years: not an easy task without power tools or machinery.

In 1820 John Black succeeded General Cobb as land agent of the Bingham estate. Black did not share the viewpoint of Cobb or Bingham that the region should solely become an agricultural center. At this time eastern cities were beginning to expand with the coming of the Industrial Revolution. This expansion was creating a demand for lumber, and Black was determined to supply that demand with the white pine of Eastern Maine. Thus began the second stage of Aurora's settlement. New settlers came to Aurora primarily to lumber and secondarily to farm. From 1820 to 1830 the town grew from 9 families to 25 and this growth continued until the 1860s.

Figure II.1.1
Historic Population of Aurora

Year	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900
Population	46	127	149	217	277	212	212	175	152
Year	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990
Population	114	95	86	81	91	75	72	110	98

Source: United States Census Bureau

After 1860 the long lumber business diminished since most of the virgin pine had been cut and many who went to fight in the Civil War chose not to return. Second and third generation residents sought their livelihoods elsewhere, often on the west coast. Aurora's population decrease followed a statewide population drop.

Aurora became an organized plantation in 1822 and was named Richards Plantation in honor of John Richards, Alexander Baring's first land agent. The purpose for organizing was to raise taxes for schooling and the upkeep of roads. In 1831 the residents decided to incorporate into a town, and petitioned the legislature for the privilege. In February of the same year the legislature passed an act to incorporate the plantation into the Town of Hampton, the 289th town of Maine. Within 2 years a number of residents petitioned the legislature to change the name of the town due to confusion with the Town of Hampden. A change was granted and the name Aurora, Roman goddess of the dawn, was chosen. It is the only town in Hancock County with a classical name.

Before Aurora even became a plantation, it had a grammar school. This first school burned and was replaced in 1827 by the Brick School House which served as a school until 1918. In 1837 and 1848 two other schools were built to accommodate students in the eastern section and on the Great Pond Road. These two schools were closed by 1911 and then all students attended the

Brick School House. This school finally closed in 1918 and students of grades 1-8 attended school in the present Town Hall. In 1971 the communities of Aurora, Amherst, Osborn and Great Pond Plantation formed the Airline Community School District and built the Airline Community School located in Aurora on the Great Pond Road. The Community School District provides transportation to the high school in Brewer. Before this students either commuted on their own to high schools in Brewer, Bangor or Ellsworth or attended boarding schools.

Agriculture and wood harvesting have been the backbone of Aurora's economy with farming traditionally taking the second position. Most families made a living by a combination of lumbering and farming. The cash crops in the early years were wheat, oats and hay. The Census of 1880 also includes harvest records for indian corn, potatoes, apples and peaches. Farming declined throughout Maine after 1880 and hay and oats remained the Town's principal agricultural products until 1911. By 1914 blueberry cultivation dominated almost every cleared field in Town. In that same year the first blueberry canning factory in Hancock County was established in Aurora and remained active until the late 1940s. Today blueberries are still Aurora's dominant agricultural crop.

By 1852 all virgin pine had been cut in Aurora. Most of the wood cut during and after the Civil War was short lumber used for the manufacturing of shingles, clapboards and barrel staves. Wood is now primarily harvested for fuel chips, bolt wood and pulp.

Aurora residents never owned the major portion of land in Town. It has always been in the possession of nonresidents. Before settlement the entire town was owned by William Bingham. His estate sold to farmers and homesteaders who cleared the land. When the lumber boom started in the 1820s, the estate held on to the woodland and sold stumpage. When the boom ended, the estate sold to various small lumber companies who in turn sold to larger companies such as Penobscot Development, Dead River and Ellsworth Forest Products. The largest holders of woodland in Aurora today are Diamond Occidental Forestry Inc. and Champion International.

b. Registered Historic and Archaeological Resources

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission (M.H.P.C.) is the central repository in the State for all archaeological and historic resources survey information in three topical areas: Prehistoric archeology, historic archeology and architectural history. The M.H.P.C.'s Maine Historic Resources Inventory includes the Brick School House which is the oldest standing public brick building in Hancock County. It is located on Route 179 not far from Route 9.

c. Nonregistered Historic and Archaeological Resources

While not registered by M.H.P.C. or the National Register of Historic Places, the following places and buildings are considered to be of historic importance in Aurora:

1. Aurora Cemetery;
2. Aurora Town Hall (formerly a School House) built in 1902; and
3. Union River Telephone Company building (formerly a stage coach stop).

d. Planning Implications

Because historic resources are important in preserving knowledge of the town's history and maintaining the character of the town, it is important to identify all historic sites which are important to the community. A History of Aurora, Maine, by Herbert T. Sitsby II (1958) forms the basis of Aurora's history.

3. PROTECTION OF HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

a. Identified and Potential Threats

The primary threat to any archaeological resources which may exist are vandalism to, and development on top of these sites. Development may include the construction of new housing or the building of new roads.

b. Existing Protection Measures

1) Maine Historic Preservation Commission

M.H.P.C. maintains an inventory of sites yet has no jurisdiction over those sites.

2) National Register of Historic Places

M.H.P.C. coordinates this national registry. Sites registered by the owner with the National Register are protected through federal legislation, but only against any intervention or development by a federal agency. Eligible sites include those with local significance or value.

3) Town Ordinances

Town ordinances can protect historic areas or zones from harmful impact and regulate their development. The Town of Aurora has no such ordinances at this time.

4) Easements and Initiatives

Individual landowners, historic societies or non-profit agencies may apply a number of development restrictions to their properties on a voluntary basis. These restrictions may be strengthened by deed constraints or easements. There are no known easements or deed restrictions for the purpose of historic preservation at this time.

With the exception of the regular maintenance of the old cemetery no known funds have been spent by the Town on historic preservation purposes. The Town Meeting has appropriated a sum annually toward the maintenance of the old brick school house, but it has not been enough to undertake the big job of replacing the foundation and therefore has not been spent.

c. Planning Implications

Once sites have been comprehensively identified, the Town or the owners of the sites may decide to have them protected to varying degrees. Resource protection zoning, the process of delineating those resources the town would like to protect, is one way that a town can institute such protection. Individual landowners may also be asked to allow the nomination of any significant historic or archaeological sites on their property to be listed with the National Register of Historic Places or the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, and additionally grant preservation easements if they so desire.

II.J

EXISTING LAND USE

SECTION II.J: EXISTING LAND USE

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is:

- a. to identify and understand the uses of land throughout the town in terms of amounts and locations of land generally devoted to various land uses;
- b. to identify and understand the changes in the town's land use patterns and how they might reflect future land use patterns; and
- c. to predict the amount of undeveloped land area needed to accommodate the predicted future growth or needs in housing, commercial and industrial development, transportation systems, public facility and services, open space areas and recreational facilities.

2. EXISTING LAND USES

The total area of Aurora is 24,937 acres or about 39 square miles. The existing land uses in Aurora are shown on the Existing Land Use Map. Previous sections of this plan, including Housing, Agricultural and Forest Resources, Critical Natural Resources, Water Resources and Recreation also address specific issues of land use.

a. Open Space

There is a large amount of open space, farmland and forestland throughout Aurora that has remained undeveloped. Some of this land (16,878 acres: 68% of the town's total area) has been protected to a degree by registration under the Tree Growth Tax Law Program. There are approximately 1,842 acres of woods not registered under this program in town. The State lists the town as having 862 acres of farmland registered under the Farm Tax Law Program and none under the Open Space Program. Town tax records list 2,597 acres of farmland in town, over 1500 of which is in blueberries and much of the balance is run out hay. 21,317 acres of the town is either forest or used for agriculture: 85% of the total area.

b. Residential/Commercial

Residential and commercial areas in Aurora are primarily located on Routes 9 and 179 and the Great Pond Road. Most commercial land uses are located on Route 9. Residential uses exceed commercial uses.

c. Lakes and Ponds

These areas are, obviously unsuitable for development. About 1,000 acres of Aurora is surface water. This includes Upper & Middle Branch Ponds, Halfmile Pond, Giles Pond and part of Long Pond. In addition there are 3,827 acres in town which could be classified as either bog or swamp. Some of this land is probably also classified as forestland or agricultural.

d. Planning Implications

The existing land use pattern in Aurora is characterized by the mixture of extensive tracts of undeveloped land and open spaces intermixed with residential areas and small commercial uses. Thus far this has worked very well and has posed no threat to the rural character of the town. As Aurora continues to grow and there will be more demand for land for both residential and commercial uses. The currently undeveloped land may come under pressure from development. To avoid the proliferation of incompatible land uses in various areas of town, proper planning will be necessary to preserve the rural nature and character of Aurora.

3. CHANGES IN LAND USE OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS

During the last decade, Aurora has experienced little change in the amount of land being used for residential purposes. 47 stick-built houses and 7 mobile homes were added to the town's housing stock. Also, 63 seasonal units were built in town. This growth has taken place throughout the town and much of the seasonal construction has taken place on land leased from the paper companies. There has been one new subdivision in town: Giles Pond Acres which created 5 house lots, none of which have been sold yet. Champion Internation laid out a subdivision on Upper Middle Branch Pond but so far has just been leasing the camps there. To help guide future growth it would be helpful if the D.E.P. would work with the Town to figure out what development should be permitted on this valuable pond.

The creation of the Giles Pond subdivision increased the availability of house lots in town but these new lots are not affordable to many. With the recent recession, this increased availability has not helped land values in town.

4. NATURAL AREAS POSING A HAZARD TO DEVELOPMENT

There are several types of areas which occur naturally which are either threatened environmentally by development, or pose a threat to development itself due to their natural instability. Previous sections of this plan have discussed critical natural areas, flood plains, shorelands, and wetlands all of which are areas where the interaction between the environment and development are important.

In addition to these areas already discussed, the primary environmental limitation to development is topography, most specifically the slope or gradient of land. In general most land use activities encounter serious problems and significant additional construction and maintenance costs when located on slopes greater than 15%. The Town's existing Shoreland Zoning Ordinance includes land with a sustained slope in excess of 25% in the Resource Protection District. The Town may elect to make this more restrictive in its new Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. Areas with slopes greater than 20% have been indicated on the Geologically Restricted Land Map. This map also synthesizes all other natural areas such as flood plains and soils which could threaten, or be threatened by, development. The following is a list of soils unsuitable for development.

Since slopes from 8 to 25% are considered difficult and expensive to build on, future growth and development should continue to be carefully regulated when proposed on these gradients, with careful attention given to accelerated surface water runoff and erosion. Slopes greater than 25% are considered as unbuildable gradients and future growth and development on such slopes should be prohibited, including any alteration of the natural vegetative cover. The Town's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance now prohibits construction of principal structures but allows many other uses pending Planning Board permit.

Other natural areas, as discussed elsewhere in this section, should also be regulated to protect both the environment and the development itself.

5. EXISTING LAND USE CONTROLS

a. Aurora Land Use Guidance Ordinance

This ordinance applies to all land areas in town and regulates all land uses in town after April 1, 1982 and includes a Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. This ordinance is available at the Town Office. This ordinance gives the Resource Protection District as 250' of the normal high water mark of any lake, pond, river stream, brook or wetland. The old Shoreland Zoning ordinance has been review by the Hancock County Planning Commission for compliance with the State requirements and the Planning Board is now in the process of reviewing and revising the existing Ordinance.

b. Planning Implications

The existence of effective land use controls is necessary in maintaining orderly growth in a town. These ordinances are designed to promote orderly and environmentally sound growth while still enjoying the benefits offered by a growing community. Can the Committee comment on deficiencies in the existing ordinances? Should they be combined into one document? Should site plan design be addressed? Should any other development possibilities be anticipated at this time? To help guide future growth it would be helpful if the D.E.P. would work with the Town to figure out what development should be permitted on this valuable pond.

II.K

FISCAL CAPACITY

SECTION II.K: FISCAL CAPACITY

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is:

- a. to identify and understand Aurora's financial condition;
- b. to identify and understand recent changes in Aurora's fiscal condition and how these changes may effect Aurora's future fiscal conditions; and
- c. to predict the town's revenues, expenditures, and debts for the next ten years.

2. TOWN FINANCIAL RECORDS

The majority of the financial information in this section was derived from town reports. The town reports are careful to record all information accurately and in proper accounting format. It is the purpose of this section to summarize that information rather than to duplicate it. For the sake of readability and simplicity many figures have been grouped together. Some figures have been rounded off and are expressed in real dollars with no adjustment for inflation. The following is an inventory and analysis of general trends for the purpose of planning. More precise information is available from the original sources.

3. MUNICIPAL TAX BASE

a. Valuations

The primary method of generating revenue within the town is through property taxes. These taxes are assessed on local property owners according to the value of their real estate and personal property. This assessment is known as the town valuation and is determined by the town tax assessor. Figure II.K.1 shows the valuation of all property in Aurora broken down by category for the years 1987 through 1991 along with the percentage change in each category. The greatest increase was between the years 1988 and 1989 when real estate prices throughout Maine were expanding as a result of speculation.

b. Mill Rate

After valuation, each tax-payer is assessed their share of the tax burden through an assessment ratio. This assessment is determined by dividing the total tax commitment (the amount voted on at the annual town meeting) into the total tax valuation of the town. This assessment is usually expressed in mills or dollars per thousand dollars valuation, or in decimal form. For example, if the town voted to raise one million dollars in taxes, and the total tax valuation of the town was 100 million dollars, the tax rate could be expressed as "10 mills", "\$10.00 per thousand", or "0.010". This would mean that a person who owned property valued at \$100,000 would be assessed \$1000 in taxes. Figure II.K.2 shows the changes in the mill rate from 1986 to 1990. The mill rate has stayed very constant during this period.

The mill rate may fluctuate with both the total valuation and the total tax commitment. A comparison of Figures II.K.1 and II.K.2 shows that while the mill rate has remained constant the valuation has increased substantially. The increase in assessed value has matched the increase in funds needed to run the town so there has not been a need to make large changes in the mill rate.

c. Planning Implications

When planning for any large capital improvements the town assessments and mill rate should be taken into account to avoid raising taxes beyond owners' ability to pay them. While Aurora's total valuation has increased by 49% since 1986, the mill rate has remained constant: increasing the

burden on tax payers.

4. MUNICIPAL REVENUE

Figure 11.K.3 shows major sources of municipal revenues for the last five years. Most of the Town's revenue is generated by property taxes, including Tree Growth Tax Refund. For any town the education subsidy is also a substantial figure. In the 1990-91 fiscal year the State allocated \$469,252 to the Airline Community School where Aurora accounts for 25% of the students (25% of \$469,252 is \$117,313). In the same fiscal year the Town paid the Airline Community School District \$47,933 as its local share of the educational expenses (this does not include money spent on secondary school by the town but includes \$2,725 in debt service on the construction of the school). While revenues have been increasing as a whole, state budget adjustments may soon affect the share of funds flowing back to towns. Although the D.O.T. has returned maintenance responsibility for the Great Pond Road to the towns of Aurora and Great Pond, overall the money coming from the State for road work rose between 1986 and 1990.

Municipal revenue projections for the next ten years are likely to be stable, barring large shifts in population which would change both valuation and state and federal appropriations. In a town as small as Aurora, a difference of a few large families can shift the population by 10%. Similarly, one or two lakefront subdivisions could significantly broaden the town's tax base. The projected revenue stability could also be altered by changes in State budgets and priorities. Such matters are beyond the control of the Town and can not be directly planned for. The municipality should be prepared for shifts in funding sources and the next several years presents nothing out of the ordinary.

Exacting fees on developers of subdivisions and mobile home parks is one tool often used as a source of revenue. Fees exacted on developers may be used for improvements to town infrastructure directly abutting their subdivisions or developments. This is one way for small towns to cope with one aspect of increased demand on public services created by new developments.

5. ANNUAL RECURRING MUNICIPAL EXPENDITURES

Figures 11.K.4 and 11.K.5 show the amounts of money appropriated for each department and the actual amounts spent by each department for the years 1986-1991.

In this five year period, the U.S. Department of Commerce's Gross National Product Implicit Price Deflator for State and Local Government Expenditures has been +23%. Municipal expenditures have been increasing faster than inflation. Education expenses can be directly linked to population size so if Aurora's population increases, so will this area of the budget. Most other municipal expenses are not affected by small population shifts. County taxes have increased steadily. These taxes cover necessary services such as county courts and sheriffs. The appropriations for roads and snow removal have dropped because the town now contracts with Osborn to handle their snow plowing. This has resulted in efficiencies of scale which were not before realized. The Town also contracts with the Union River Solid Waste District which also includes Great Pond, Osborn, Amherst, and Waltham. But even so this portion of the town budget has escalated rapidly.

It is difficult to predict municipal expenditures for the next ten years because demands for services, county assessments, valuation, population, and many other factors all enter into the process. Capital expenditures, improvements and debt service can be anticipated to some extent. To eliminate annual increases and sharp declines in such expenditures, the town should develop a Capital Improvement Program to predict what capital expenses may be needed and to establish a plan to finance them.

Figure II.K.6 compares the total expenditures from the preceding three figures to give an indication of Aurora's revenues and budgeted expenditures in comparison with the actual expenditures. The budgeted expenditures are relatively low because the town collects rents and sells services. But the actual expenditures are still consistently lower than total revenues.

6. LONG-TERM MUNICIPAL DEBT

Aurora is fortunate to have very little long term municipal debt at this time: the Town has paid about \$2,700 annually as its share of the construction loan on the Airline Community School. This debt is due to be retired in 1994. Aurora may need to secure bonds in the future to make capital improvements in order to avoid drastic shifts in the town's mill rate.

FIGURE II.K.1 TAXABLE PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS AURORA, 1986-1990						
	1986-87	1987-88	1988	1989	1990	1988-90 % change
TAXABLE PROPERTY						
Real Estate	\$2,502,980	\$2,562,141	\$2,879,088	3,500,332	\$3,741,591	+ 49%
Personal Property	\$ 22,479	\$ 23,392	\$ 26,002	\$ 30,029	\$ 33,632	+ 50%
Total Valuation	\$2,525,459	\$2,585,533	\$2,907,090	\$3,530,361	\$3,775,223	+ 49%

Source: Annual Town Reports

FIGURE II.K.2 MILL RATES, (DOLLARS PER THOUSAND IN VALUATION) AURORA, 1986-1990		
	Mill Rate	Percentage Change from Previous Year
1986-87	.0227	+ 1%
1987-88	.022	-3%
1988	.02236	+ 2%
1989	.0205	-8%
1990	.022	+ 7%

Source: Annual Town Reports

**FIGURE II.K.3
ANNUAL REVENUES IN DOLLARS AND PERCENTAGES OF TOTALS: AURORA, 1986-1991**

	1986-87 number, percent	1987-88 number, percent	1988-89 number, percent	1989-90 number, percent	1990-91 number, percent	1986- 91 % change
Real Estate Taxes	\$55,798 54%	\$57,669 45%	\$66,168 56%	\$70,143 42%	\$81,225 49%	+46%
Tax Interest	\$169 0%	\$173 0%	\$114 0%	\$118 0%	\$457 0%	170%
Excise Taxes & Suppl. Tax	\$6,510 6%	\$7,941 6%	\$9,735 8%	\$11,629 7%	\$10,909 6%	+68%
Rents & Services	\$7,971 8%	\$10,289 8%	\$12,707 11%	\$8,904 5%	\$8,235 5%	+3%
Road Assistance	\$19,090 18%	\$17,363 14%	\$21,183 18%	\$55,756 34%	\$40,773 24%	+114%
Revenue Sharing	\$4,254 4%	\$5,600 4%	\$5,432 5%	\$6,232 4%	\$5,267 3%	+24%
Interest on Town accts.	\$6,512 6%	\$1,169 1%	\$1,169 1%	\$1,169 1%	\$619 0%	N/A
Liens & Permits	\$966 0%	\$952 1%	\$499 0%	\$956 1%	\$1,120 0%	+16%
Tree Growth Refund	\$2,476 2%	\$2,493 2%	\$624 1%	\$3,985 2%	\$14,057 8%	+468%
Misc.	\$177 0%	\$24,061 19%	\$699 1%	\$7,007 4%	\$2,597 1%	N/A
Total Revenues	\$103,923	\$127,710	\$118,330	\$165,899	\$165,259	+59%

Source: Annual Town Reports

FIGURE II.K.4
BUDGETED APPROPRIATIONS BY DEPARTMENT IN DOLLARS AND PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL BUDGET
AURORA, 1986-1991

ACCOUNT	1986-87 number, percent	1987-88 number, percent	1988-89 number, percent	1989-90 number, percent	1990-91 number, percent	1986-91 % change
General Government	\$15,614 19%	\$10,661 18%	\$12,720 18%	\$13,364 18%	\$13,394 15%	-14%
Protection	\$1,050 1%	\$1,050 2%	\$1,050 2%	\$1,050 1%	\$1,000 1%	-4%
Health & Sanitation	\$1,894 2%	\$1,618 3%	\$2,202 3%	\$6,983 9%	\$8,298 9%	+338%
Roads & Snow Removal	\$25,070 30%	\$6,070 10%	\$12,000 17%	\$17,000 16%	\$17,000 19%	-32%
General Welfare	\$1,000 1%	0 0%	\$1,000 1%	\$1,000 1%	\$1,000 1%	0%
Education	\$35,732 43%	\$35,957 61%	\$36,395 53%	\$36,212 49%	\$43,967 50%	+23%
Cemeteries	\$1,100 1%	\$500 0%	\$500 1%	\$500 0%	\$500 0%	-55%
County Tax	\$2,241 3%	\$2,550 4%	\$2,427 4%	\$2,357 3%	\$2,851 3%	+27%
Unclassified	\$300 0%	\$625 0%	\$595 0%	\$880 1%	\$305 0%	+2%
Total Appropriations	\$84,001	\$59,031	\$68,969	\$74,346	\$88,315	+5%

Source: Annual Town Reports

FIGURE II.K.5 ACTUAL EXPENDITURES BY DEPARTMENT AND PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL EXPENDITURES: AURORA, 1986-1991							
ACCOUNT	1986-87 number, percent	1987-88 number, percent	1988-89 number, percent	1989-90 number, percent	1990-91 number, percent	1986-91 % change	
General Government	\$11,188 12%	\$13,627 10%	\$14,833 15%	\$19,447 18%	\$20,413 15%	+82%	
Protection	\$1,000 1%	\$1,000 1%	\$1,000 1%	\$1,000 1%	\$2,500 2%	+150%	
Health & Sanitation	\$4,467 5%	\$9,324 7%	\$5,002 5%	\$7,962 7%	\$8,486 6%	+90%	
Roads & Snow Removal	\$36,824 40%	\$72,149 53%	\$35,272 37%	\$42,408 39%	\$59,674 43%	+62%	
General Welfare	\$0 0%	\$34 0%	\$416 0%	\$0 0%	\$140 0%	N/A	
Education	\$35,732 39%	\$35,957 27%	\$36,395 38%	\$36,333 33%	\$44,298 32%	+24%	
Cemeteries	\$489 0%	\$500 0%	\$255 0%	\$323 0%	\$185 0%	-62%	
County Tax	\$2,241 2%	\$2,550 2%	\$2,427 3%	\$2,357 2%	\$2,886 2%	+29%	
Unclassified	\$0 0%	\$25 0%	\$100 0%	\$280 0%	\$305 0%	N/A	
Total Expenditures	\$91,941	\$135,166	\$95,700	\$110,108	\$138,887	+51%	
Source: Annual Town Reports							

Source: Annual Town Reports

FIGURE II.K.6 TOTAL REVENUES, BUDGETED EXPENDITURES AND ACTUAL EXPENDITURES AURORA: 1987 - 1991			
Fiscal Year	Total Revenues	Total Budgeted Expenditures	Total Actual Expenditures
1986-87	\$103,923	\$84,001	\$91,941
1987-88	\$127,710	\$59,031	\$135,166
1988-89	\$118,330	\$68,969	\$95,700
1989-90	\$165,899	\$74,346	\$110,108
1990-91	\$165,590	\$88,315	\$139,136
Source: Town Reports			

Source: Town Reports



GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

SECTION III: GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

A. INTRODUCTION

This section synthesizes the recommendations developed in the various Inventory and Analysis sub-sections. The policies in this section are intended to provide the Town of Aurora with a coordinated framework for local public policy from which to address the problems, opportunities, and needs identified in this Plan.

The various Growth Management Policies are followed by recommended activities to be initiated and completed by the Town of Aurora to ensure the stated policies are implemented. These strategies contain specific activities, identify the parties responsible for carrying them out, assign a time frame for starting and completing the activity, and estimated costs and sources of funding for each activity. It must be noted that the estimated costs are subject to further refinement and require approval by voters at a town meeting, before any major expenditures are made.

B. POPULATION

Given the interaction of year-round population levels and characteristics with every aspect of the Town:

"It is the policy of the Town of Aurora to monitor actively the size and distributions of its year-round and seasonal populations and to integrate this information with all relevant decisions made by the municipality, including, but not limited to, periodic revision of the Comprehensive Plan."

To implement the Population Policy stated above, it is recommended that the Town of Aurora:

1. All available population estimates and population characteristics from federal, state and regional agencies, will be collected, maintained in appropriate files, and made available for day to day policy and planning decisions and used for future revisions of this plan.

Start Date:	1992
Completion Date:	On Going
Responsibility:	Planning Board
Estimated Cost:	\$100 per year
Sources of Funding:	Local Funds

C. ECONOMY, AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY

Because Aurora's economy and forest and agricultural policies should be closely correlated, all the policies and strategies for these topics are collected here. The State of Maine has adopted a goal to safeguard the State's agricultural and forest resources from development that threatens those resources. Given that 85% of the town's total area is either forested or used for agriculture, recognizing the concern for proper management of these lands as sustainable resources, given the concern for adequate employment opportunities in Aurora:

"The Town of Aurora will promote economic development through local and regional economic development efforts which are consistent with the rural character of the town and do not sacrifice air and water quality."

"The Town of Aurora will encourage the improvement of existing employment opportunities and new job opportunities which offer conventional benefits to workers including unemployment insurance and workers compensation."

"The Town of Aurora will safeguard agricultural and forest resources from development by encouraging forest management techniques which enforce reforestation practices and by encouraging participation in the Farm Registration Program."

To implement the Economic Development, Agriculture and Forestry Policies stated above, it is recommended that the Town of Aurora:

1. Participate in regional economic development efforts which benefit the town's economy, yet do not negatively affect its environment and rural character. A good new business would be a day care because it would make two income families more feasible.
2. Provide opportunity for economic growth through land use ordinances which allow commercial growth which is compatible with the desires of the Town.
3. Encourage new economic development which brings jobs that pay more than minimum wage and offer some other benefits to employees.
4. Develop forest harvesting standards into a forest practices ordinance which encourages best management practices, restrict clear cutting in town (no clearcuts larger than 5 acres without first submitting a harvesting plan and obtaining a permit from the Selectman). The goal of this action would be to encourage the sustained management of land designated as forest land for tax sheltering purposes. If forestry land becomes unproductive it should not be eligible for reduced property taxes under the Tree Growth Tax Law. Encourage appropriate forestry and agricultural activities in respective resource protection and shoreland zones, especially with regard to pesticide and herbicide use, erosion control and phosphorus loading, by making information on these issues available in the town offices. The Maine Forest Service's June 1991 Erosion & Sediment Control Handbook for Maine Timber Harvesting Operations Best Management Practices should be used as a starting point for this work.
5. Encourage adjacent towns to adopt sustainable forest practices.
6. Encourage owners of agricultural land to participate in the Farmland Registration Program by notifying property owners about this program.
7. Encourage the organization of collective marketing efforts for locally produced commodities like pulp wood and blueberries.
8. Organize a Growers' Association of town farmers and foresters. Share with the Association in the cost of hiring someone to monitor growth and insect populations to determine the effectiveness of using insecticides and herbicides on Aurora's agricultural and forest lands both in order to reduce the amount of these chemicals entering the town's aquifers and water bodies and also to reduce the amount of money farmers and foresters spend on chemicals. This work could lead to prohibiting the use of toxic chemicals without documentation that it is needed.
9. The Planning Board should become familiar with State standards for outdoor pesticide application.

10. Require a copy of the State's new Intent to Harvest form for forestry harvesting activities be filed with the Town when it is filed with the State.

Start Date:	1992
Completion Date:	On Going
Responsibility:	Selectmen/Planning Board
Estimated Cost:	\$500 per year
Sources of Funding:	Local Funds

D. HOUSING

Given the concern for decent housing opportunities for all current and future citizens of Aurora,

"It is the policy of the Town of Aurora to encourage and promote affordable, appropriate, and adequate housing for its residents."

To implement the Housing Policy stated above, it is recommended that the Town of Aurora:

1. The Planning Board will study the issues related to manufactured housing and parks and prepare recommendations for how the issues should be handled in Aurora.
2. Apply for a Community Development Block Grant, part of which would be used to improve existing low-income housing in Aurora.
3. Reduce the environmental impact of growth of waterfront homes through water quality and land use regulations discussed in the Water Resources and Land Use sections of this plan.
4. The Selectmen will appoint a Committee to study the feasibility and desirability of developing elderly housing in town. Study will include evaluating the applicability of the H.U.D. Elderly Housing Program.
5. The Planning Board will revise the permit procedure to clarify the process of obtaining a building permit in town. Revisions may include:
 - a. Developing a brief handbook to advise applicants of the mandatory hurdles and approvals involved in the permitting process for different types of development projects;
 - b. Adding a question on where water is available in the case of a fire at a new home site;
 - c. Sending a form letter with information on what activities the town regulates and a list of existing ordinances to individuals named in Transfer Tax Declaration Forms (these forms are issued to the assessors after deeds or leases are transferred).
 - d. Fining the owner if a construction project begins without a building permit.
6. Develop wood stove/furnace installation and electrical standards for new construction in Town.
7. Ask the electric utility not to hook up power if the owner doesn't have a building permit for the new construction.

8. Revise the definition of structure in existing ordinances to include tents or temporary structures for habitation.

Start Date:	1992
Completion Date:	1994
Responsibility:	Selectmen/Planning Board/Community Development Committee
Estimated Cost:	\$2,000
Sources of Funding:	Local Funds/CDBG Funds

E. PUBLIC FACILITIES & TRANSPORTATION

Given the concern for a healthy, educated, productive town and population:

"It is the policy of the Town of Aurora to plan for and provide adequate public facilities and services for current and future populations."

"It is the policy of the Town of Aurora to plan for the optimum use, construction, maintenance, and repair of roads and municipal buildings in conjunction and cooperation with neighboring towns, given available resources."

To implement the policies stated above, it is recommended that the Town of Aurora:

1. Request the Board of Selectmen create a committee in March 1992 to conduct a feasibility study of waste management options, including possibilities for recycling for the town;
2. Ask the Town Meeting to increase the Fire Department's budget to help it make its capital improvements after it defines them in a Plan;
3. Continue with the regular municipal maintenance and paving program;
4. Develop a long-term Road Maintenance Program;
5. Plan for replacement of two snow plows in 3 and 5 years;
6. Plan for building a salt shed within 10 years (est. \$20,000).
7. Plan to cover the old town landfill.
8. Retrieve the town water cooler from the Fire Station. Put up a permanent sign warning people not to drink the water at the town hall.
9. Prepare a Community Development Block Grant project for repairing the Brick School House and support the project if it is funded by contributing the matching funds.
10. Apply for wind break planting funds through Soil and Water Conservation District for site improvements at the Airline School.

Start Date:	1992
Completion Date:	1994
Responsibility:	Selectmen
Estimated Cost:	Unknown
Sources of Funding:	Local Funds/State Funds/CDBG Grant

F. RECREATION

Given the concern for adequate recreation facilities and especially for access to surface water,

"It is the policy of the Town of Aurora to expand the recreation opportunities and surface water access provided to its citizens."

To implement the recreation policy stated above, it is recommended that the Town of Aurora:

1. Work with the neighboring towns of Osborn, Great Pond and Amherst to form a regional Recreation Committee. This Committee could try to secure the Dow Pines Recreation Area once the Air Force stops using it.
2. The Town should support recreation programs for the town's youth including improving the Airline ballfield and supporting the Union River 4-H Club so that they can afford to undertake more community minded activities (such as building window boxes for the town hall or planting flowers at the school or library).

Start Date:	1992
Completion Date:	On Going
Responsibility:	Selectmen/Planning Board/Recreation Committee
Estimated Cost:	\$1,000 per year
Sources of Funding:	Local Funds

G. WATER & CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCES

Given the concern for adequate protection of Aurora's ground and surface water, given the public significance of maintaining environmental diversity and preserving outstanding examples of undisturbed natural areas, scenic areas, wildlife habitat, and exemplary natural features for future generations, and given the vulnerability of such areas to adverse impact from incompatible development activities:

"The Town of Aurora will preserve and protect the surface water, wetlands, and groundwater resources, through municipal ordinances and enforcement of State laws."

"The Town of Aurora will participate actively in regional programs to preserve and protect the area's water resources and other natural resources."

"The Town of Aurora will further prohibit incompatible development in or adjacent to locally and state identified Critical Natural Areas."

In order to implement these policies Aurora should take the following actions:

1. Encourage the further mapping and study of Aurora's water resources, particularly the value of wetlands, location of flood hazard zones and water quality in ponds. Encourage the identification, mapping, and registry of any and all sites which may be eligible for the State Critical Areas and/or Natural Heritage Programs, and encourage the continued inventory of fish and wildlife resources by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.
2. Cooperate with the State to build Sand and Salt Storage Sheds over the existing piles.
3. Cooperate with the State to cover the Town's old landfill site.

4. Protect surface waters from non-point runoff from new development and timber harvesting by continuing to work with the River Union for the development of a management plan for the Union River watershed and for the preservation of the Union River watershed. The River Union membership includes the towns of Aurora, Amherst, Clifton, Eastbrook, Ellsworth, Great Pond, Osborn, Aurora, Waltham and Townships 8 and 28.
5. Prevent the destruction and contamination of aquifers by prohibiting all incompatible development in and within 250 feet of aquifers. The town may ultimately identify drinking water sources which are of community significance.
6. Prohibit all further incompatible development in designated flood hazard areas.
7. Undertake mapping existing and future wells to monitor their location, depth and productivity.
8. Regulate incompatible development in significant Critical Areas, through Resource Protection zoning as outlined in Section VI: Land Use Plan.
9. Encourage public and private educational activities which enhance the understanding of and the aesthetic appreciation of Aurora's identified critical natural resources.

Start Date:	1992
Completion Date:	On Going
Responsibility:	Selectmen/Planning Board
Estimated Cost:	\$1,000 per year
Sources of Funding:	Local Funds

H. HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY

Given the public significance of maintaining and preserving outstanding historic and archaeological areas for future generations, and given the vulnerability of these areas to adverse impact from decay and incompatible growth and development activities:

"The Town of Aurora will encourage and promote the identification and protection of the Town's historic and archaeological resources."

To implement the Resource Management Policy stated above, it is recommended that the Town of Aurora:

1. Encourage the further mapping and quantitative and qualitative analysis of Aurora's historic and archaeological resources through the efforts of its citizens;
2. Encourage public and private educational activities which enhance the understanding of and the aesthetic appreciation of the Town's identified historic and archaeological resources;
3. Continue to support the Cemetery Association which maintains the Aurora Cemetery.

4. Establish an reserved account for funding improvements to the old brick school house, whether or not C.D.B.G. funds are obtained (see Public Facilities & Transportation strategies).

Start Date: 1992

Completion Date: On Going

Responsibility: Selectmen/Planning Board

Estimated Cost: Unknown

Sources of Funding: Local Funds/CDBG Funds

I. LAND USE

Given the importance of planned use to the future of Aurora:

"The Town of Aurora will adopt and periodically update an official Land Use Map which designates areas for future growth and development, areas where the rural character of the community will be protected and enhanced, and which protects vulnerable natural resources from the adverse impact of development, as part of the Town's adopted Comprehensive Plan."

"The Town of Aurora will adopt and enforce Land Use Regulations which direct future growth and development in areas identified as suitable and appropriate for such growth, and restrict future growth and development in areas where such activities have the potential of adversely affecting identified vulnerable natural resources, as recommended in the Town's adopted Comprehensive Plan."

In order to implement its Local Land Use Policies, Aurora will take the following actions:

1. Prepare and maintain an official Land Use Map designating the recommended areas contained in this Section of the Comprehensive Plan.
2. The Town will revise its Land Use Ordinance to implement the dimensional, location, and performance recommendations contained in the Proposed Land Use Plan. Performance standards will include preparing a Lighting section of the ordinance in order to protect the darkness of the night sky: a resource which is now only available in rural areas. The Subdivision section of the ordinance will be revised to include subdivisions which only include 40 acre plus lots.

Start Date: 1992

Completion Date: 1993

Responsibility: Selectmen/Planning Board

Estimated Cost: \$2,500

Sources of Funding: Local Funds/State Funds

J. FISCAL CAPACITY

Given the importance of sound fiscal policies:

"The Town of Aurora will develop and enhance its capacity to provide the most efficient and cost effective financing and operation of existing and future public facilities and services."

"The Town of Aurora will prepare, maintain, and annually update a 5 year Capital Improvement Program."

In order to implement Local Fiscal Capacity Policies, Aurora will take the following actions:

1. Develop a five year Capital Improvement Program prioritizing the projects listed in the Proposed Capital Investment Plan.
2. Develop and adopt an ordinance for assessing exactions on developers consistent with State law.
3. Leave funds appropriated in town meeting for a particular project in a fund for that purpose instead of letting the dollars lapse back into general savings if the project is not undertaken during the fiscal year.

Start Date:	1992
Completion Date:	On Going
Responsibility:	Selectmen/Planning Board
Estimated Cost:	Unknown
Sources of Funding:	Local Funds/State Funds

IV

REGIONAL COORDINATION PLAN

SECTION IV: REGIONAL COORDINATION PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

Many issues facing a town either have interlocal (between several towns) effects or are effected by the actions of several towns. The purpose of this section is to identify those issues which have significance beyond the Town of Aurora's borders and to recommend action strategies.

2. REGIONAL ISSUES

The significant regional issues identified in this plan include:

- a. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT;
- b. FOREST PRACTICES REGULATIONS;
- c. COLLECTIVE MARKETING;
- d. REGIONAL RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES;
- e. UNION RIVER WATERSHEDS.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

a. Regional Coordination Policy:

Given the regional aspects of many issues facing the town,

"It is the policy of the Town of Aurora to cooperate and communicate with other communities in order to efficiently address issues of interlocal significance."

b. Regional Coordination Actions

To implement the Regional Coordination Policy stated above, it is recommended that the Town of Aurora:

1. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:**
Participate in regional economic development efforts which benefit the town's economy, yet do not negatively affect its environment and rural character.
2. **FOREST AND PRACTICES REGULATION:**
Encourage adjacent towns to adopt sustainable forest practices.
3. **COLLECTIVE MARKETING:**
Encourage the organization of collective marketing efforts for locally produced commodities like pulp wood and blueberries.
4. **REGIONAL RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:**
Work with the neighboring Towns of Osborn, Great Pond and Amherst to form a regional Recreation Committee. This Committee could try to secure the Dow Pines Recreation Area once the Air Force stops using it.
5. **UNION RIVER WATERSHED:**
Protect surface waters from non-point runoff from new development and timber harvesting by continuing to work with the River Union for the development of a management plan for the Union River watershed and for the preservation of the Union River watershed. The River Union membership includes the Towns of Aurora, Amherst, Clifton, Eastbrook, Ellsworth, Great Pond, Osborn, Waltham, and Townships 8 and 28.

V

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN

SECTION V: CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

In the various Inventory and Analysis sections, recommendations have been made which will require a substantial amount of funding over the next ten years. In order to plan for the efficient raising and expenditure of funds, all recommended actions involving over \$5,000 have been listed below. These actions have been analyzed with respect to priority, cost, and feasibility.

2. CAPITAL INVESTMENT ACTIONS

A. Apply for Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) funds, to improve existing low-income housing in Aurora.

Responsible Party: Community Development Committee
Time Frame: 1993
Estimated Cost: \$1,000 prepare application, \$60,000 local match
Sources of Funding: 25% local match - 75% CDBG Funds

B. Construct a salt and sand shed (est. \$20,000).

Responsible Party: Community Development Committee
Time Frame: 1993
Estimated Cost: \$10,000 local match
Sources of Funding: 50% local match - 50% CDBG Funds

C. Repair the Brick School House.

Responsible Party: Community Development Committee
Time Frame: 1993
Estimated Cost: \$10,000 local match
Sources of Funding: 50% local match - 50% CDBG Funds

D. Establish a Reserve Account for funding improvements to the old brick school house and Salt-Sand Shed in the event CDBG Funds are not obtain.

Responsible Party: Selectmen
Time Frame: 1992
Estimated Cost: \$10,000
Sources of Funding: Local taxes/revenue sharing

3. ANALYSIS

Three of the capital investments identified by the plan depend upon receipt of a grant. If a grant is not obtained, these projects remain priorities; therefore, the town should continue to explore other options. For those projects which are ineligible for grants, the town may be able to finance them by setting aside some money in reserve each year as part of its Capital Improvements Program.

This Capital Investment Plan does not include all potential new costs to the town. As mentioned above, it does include all one-time expenses of over \$5000 this plan has identified for the next ten year. However, there are several other significant possible expenses which should be noted.

First, there are several planning studies recommended in this plan which may in turn reveal the need for capital improvements within ten years.

Many of the recommendations include changes to be made to Aurora's Land Use Guidance Ordinance.

Because of changing financial conditions, the Capital Improvement Program should be revised annually. This is necessary in order to determine the yearly budget allocation for each investment. In addition, the town should re-evaluate all of its capital outlays during the 1997 revision of this Plan.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Capital Investment Policy

Given the limited budget of the Town of Aurora:

"It is the policy of the Town of Aurora to anticipate major expenditures and plan for the efficient use of the town's fiscal resources."

B. Capital Investment Actions

To implement the Capital Investment Policy stated above, it is recommended that the Town of Aurora:

1. Develop a Capital Improvement Program; and
2. In accordance with this Program, assess impact fees of developers to help finance capital improvements directly attributable to their developments.

VI

LAND USE PLAN

SECTION VI: PROPOSED LAND USE PLAN

A. PROJECTED FUTURE GROWTH

In planning where and how growth should occur, a reasonable estimate of the amount of growth expected is required.

Calculation Alternatives:

1. Divide the difference between Aurora's projected year 2000 population and the estimated 1990 population by the projected year 2000 median household size:

87 2000 projected year-round population
-81 1990 year-round population
6 persons

6 divided by 2.64 (median household size in 2000) equals 1 additional year-round housing unit needed by 2000.

2. Subtract the projected year 2000 number of households from the 1990 number of households:

33 2000 projected number of households
-32 1990 number of households
1 new households.

Space for 1 new household should be needed by the year 2000. Although the number of households does not translate directly to the number of year-round housing units, this figure still provides another estimate of the amount of residential growth that can be anticipated.

Using the average of these methods (6 plus 1 divided by 2), gives a projected 3 additional units needed between 1990 and the year 2000. The existing minimum lot size in town is 40,000 square feet. Assuming about 1 acre per housing unit, 3 acres of land will have to be developed to accommodate these new housing units if there were no conversions of seasonal units to year-round use or building on existing undeveloped subdivision lots. The accommodation of these projected units is clearly not a serious growth problem for the town.

The actual growth rate will depend on the economy, the growth rate of Ellsworth, the availability of land, and other local and regional factors. If the current recession persists the growth rate will stay as projected or be slower. When the plan is revised in 1997 population figures will be updated and the growth projection will be adjusted.

B. LANDS IDENTIFIED AS LESS SUITABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Although there is a large amount of undeveloped land in Aurora, much of it is unsuited for development. In order to plan for development in areas of the town which are physically best suited for growth, the unsuitable areas must first be located.

Land considered less suitable for growth and development include the following areas which are shown on the Land Less Suitable for Development Map:

1. Freshwater wetlands;
2. Bald eagle nesting sites;
3. Slopes over 15%;
4. Flood plains;
5. Very low soils potential for development;

6. Sand and gravel aquifers; and
7. Deer wintering areas.

Recommended regulations governing future development in these areas are included later in D.3 of this Section. The Land Less Suitable for Development Map also shows land which is valued for agriculture and forestry.

C. IDENTIFYING GROWTH AND RURAL AREAS

Aurora's Growth and Rural Areas were identified based upon the amount of growth expected and the Land Less Suitable for Development Map.

The proposed Growth Area is shown on the Proposed Land Use Map. The Town can anticipate a need for about 3 new housing units in the 10 year planning period. Although, this residential Growth is realistically expected to occur in a number of areas in town, it was decided to locate the Proposed Growth Area near the center of Town, on both sides of Route 9. It was felt that development in this area could be easily serviced by the Town's existing school bus routes and would not adversely affect the Town's many identified natural resources. Residential development in this area would add to the support of the small businesses established just east of this site.

Approximately 100 acres are included in this proposed Growth Area. Residents support a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet, so even subtracting unbuildable sites, developed sites, and access roads this area could more than accommodate the expected growth for the next 10 years.

Areas which may be designated for future mobile home parks are the upper end of the Richardson Road and the Andy Giles Road.

D. ADDITIONAL GROWTH MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to encourage development in the Growth Areas and discourage inappropriate development in Rural Areas, it is recommended that new land use regulations be enacted in accordance with the following recommendations:

1. Proposed Growth Areas

A 40,000 square foot minimum lot size is recommended in the Growth Area designated on the Proposed Land Use Map. Clustered subdivisions would be encouraged by ordinance in this area: a half acre lot size would be permitted if an additional half acre per lot were set aside for no development (net 1 acre per unit) and soils could support the septic systems. This area is intended to be primarily residential but small businesses and home occupations should be encouraged according to guidelines developed by the Planning Board or Implementation Committee.

Two mobile home park areas should be designated in the revised Land Use Ordinance. It is recommended that one of these areas be on the upper end of the Richardson Road, the other on the Andy Giles Road. Mobile home parks would be prohibited in the remainder of town.

2. Proposed Rural Areas

A minimum lot size of 80,000 square feet is recommended in the Rural Areas. Clustered subdivisions would also be encouraged in this area by use of a density bonus: a minimum one acre lot size would be permitted if an additional one acre per lot were set aside for no development (net two acres per unit). A 50 foot vegetated buffer strip would be maintained between new development in the Rural Areas and the rights of way of all public roads.

Significant parts of the Rural Areas would be further protected by the proposed special areas regulations described below.

3. Special Areas

This Plan recommends protection for some of the Town's sensitive resources. In these areas regulations which exceed the Growth and Rural Area land use controls would apply.

- a. **Resource Protection Zone:** This would include all freshwater wetlands and areas within 75 feet of their upland edges. In this zone no development activity would be allowed, as is presently the case under Aurora's existing Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. If future analysis by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife identifies deer wintering areas in Aurora which are of essential or significant value then they should also be included in this zone. The only deer wintering area now identified in town is of indeterminate value.
- b. **Shoreland Zone:** This would include all land within 250 feet of all shoreland and Resource Protection Zones, as is presently the case. Within this zone the Planning Board upholds State protection standards based on the Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act.
- c. **Stream Protection Zone:** This would include land within 75 feet of streams unless the land falls in a Resource Protection Zone or Shoreland Zone as is now the case. Within this zone new development would continue to be prohibited.
- d. **Limited Resource Protection Zone:** This zone would include areas within 1,000 feet of all mapped sand and gravel aquifers and areas with slopes over 15%. Developers of land in these areas would need to demonstrate to the Planning Board that they were aware of the natural resources in the area and that new development would not significantly adversely affect these important resources as a condition of receiving a building permit. The revised Land Use Ordinance should specify what form this proof should take. This zone would overlay other districts identified in the Town's Official Zoning Map.
- e. **Forest Resources Management Zone:** This zone would include any parcel currently registered under the Tree Growth Tax Law Program and such areas would remain in this zone even if later withdrawn from the Program. In this zone a minimum lot size of 12 buildable acres is proposed. The purpose of this zone is to protect the forest resources which are important to the Town's economy and rural character.
- f. **Development in Flood Plains:** Development in the Floodplains should continue to be regulated by the Town's 1991 Floodplain Management Ordinance which directs new construction to be developed in such a way as to minimize damage from potential floods.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to implement the Land Use Plan outlined in this Section, it is recommended that the Town of Aurora:

Adopt and periodically update an official Land Use Map which designates areas for future growth and development and protects vulnerable natural resources from the adverse effects of development, as part of the Town's adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Adopt and enforce Land Use Regulations which direct future growth and development in areas identified as suitable and appropriate for such growth, and restrict future growth and development in areas where such activities have the potential of adversely affecting identified vulnerable natural resources, as recommended in the Town's adopted Comprehensive Plan.

In order to achieve these policies it is recommended that the Town of Aurora:

1. Prepare and maintain an Official Zoning Map designating the recommended Growth, Rural and Special Areas contained in this Section of the Comprehensive Plan,
2. Revise its Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to implement the dimensional, location, and performance recommendations contained in this Section of the Comprehensive Plan, and
3. Recalculate the anticipated growth at regular 5 year intervals.