

## SECTION 7: EDUCATION & CULTURE

### EDUCATION

#### EXISTING SITUATION AND CONDITIONS

Wells and Ogunquit are joined together for educational purposes in a school district that covers all grades from kindergarten through 12th grade. The school district was formed as an element of the separation agreement between Wells and Ogunquit in 1980. Each Community elects three members to the District's governing body. Budgets are deliberated and approved at annual district-wide budget meetings open to citizens of the District. Costs are apportioned between the two communities on the basis of a combination of: (A) State tax valuation and (B) student enrollment. For the 2002-03 school year, there were 60 Ogunquit students in the school system out of a total of 1,510 students or 4% of the student body.

The CSD's (Community School District's) cost-sharing formula between Ogunquit and Wells was embedded in a Private and Special Law enacted when the communities separated. In 2000, LD 1725 was enacted by the Maine legislature to amend Ogunquit's assessment of the School District's expenses from a 100% state valuation basis to a 67% state valuation basis and 33% student enrollment basis. As a result, Ogunquit's share of the District's assessment has decreased from approximately 30% in 1990 to 22% in 2002.

In 2002-03 the amount raised to support public education for the District's regular operating expenses was \$13,654,205. Of this amount, Ogunquit's share was \$2,997,183 or 22% of the total. It should be noted that per pupil operating costs, as determined by the State, are computed in a number of different ways. However, based upon the 60 students from Ogunquit, the amount actually raised by the Town per Ogunquit student was \$49,953. District-wide, the cost per student was \$9,042 when compared to the total dollars raised (\$13,654,205) to the total number of students in the District (1,510).

**TABLE 7-1**

<b>Town</b>	<b># Of Students</b>	<b>% Of Students</b>	<b>2002-03 Total \$ Raised</b>	<b>% Of Total Raised</b>
Ogunquit	60	4%	\$2,997,183	22%
Wells	1,450	96%	\$10,657,022	78%
Total CSD	1,510	100%	\$13,654,205	100%

*Source: Wells/Ogunquit Community School District*

The above table does not include 73 students from Acton, who were tuitioned and bused into the District in 2002-03.

In 2002, the Wells/Ogunquit Community School District was composed of four schools: two elementary schools, one junior high school and one senior high school. Three of these public schools were clustered on a unified academic campus near Wells Corner in Wells. This academic campus, coupled with the land of the adjoining Wells Town Hall, forms an emerging civic center in the area adjacent to the intersection of Routes One and 109. In

2002, the District was building a new elementary school on Rt. 109 next to the existing Wells academic campus. The new school replaces the existing elementary school to make room for expansion of the junior high school into the old elementary school, plus relocation of the Superintendent's office. Before the move, the Superintendent's office was located in rental space on Route One.

The fourth school in 2002, a K-5 school, is located in the heart of Ogunquit Village. Constructed in 1906 and called the Ogunquit Village School, it is part of the civic center of Ogunquit along with the adjoining Dunaway Community Center/Town Hall and the nearby Dorothea Grant Common. The Wells/Ogunquit Community School District is rare, if not unique in Maine, by having all of its public schools in the center of each of the two communities functioning not only as academic centers but also as civic centers.

In 2002-03, there were a total of 100 students at the Ogunquit Village School: 32 from Ogunquit and 68 from the Moody Beach portion of Wells. Over the years, the Village School has been deeply involved with its Ogunquit Village neighbors and surroundings. This includes producing a student pamphlet on the flora and fauna of the Marginal Way, landscape designs, which responded to children's needs, for inclusion in the plans for the Dorothea Grant Common, a local history of the Village School itself and annual beach clean-up days.

The following table compares the mill rate of the Wells-Ogunquit Community School District to other coastal school systems and the State as a whole. Because of the high percentage of seasonal dwellings in both Ogunquit and Wells coupled with the large number of seasonal businesses in Ogunquit, the mill rate to produce the property taxes to pay for the Wells-Ogunquit CSD is comparatively low. This helps keep the taxes relatively low for year-round Ogunquit families with or without school-age children. In effect, the summer home residents and tourists help the year-round residents of Ogunquit pay the cost of public education.

The share of Ogunquit's total municipal budget targeted for education remained remarkably the same over the 1990s. While the cost of municipal government increased by 47% over the decade, the cost of public education increased by 50%. In 1990, school costs were 48% of total municipal costs; in 2000, they were 49%.

**TABLE 7-2**  
**FY 2000-2001**  
**COASTAL TOWNS PER PUPIL OPERATING COST COMPARISONS**

School District	Elementary	Secondary	LEVEL OF EFFORT (Mill Rate for Education) Per \$1,000 of State Valuation
Cape Elizabeth	\$5,125.60	\$8,243.16	\$14.23
Yarmouth	\$6,293.24	\$7,648.64	\$13.59
Boothbay-Boothbay Harbor CSD	\$5,717.40	\$6,625.68	\$8.54
Falmouth	\$4,983.45	\$8,235.60	\$15.54
Kittery	\$5,378.39	\$6,675.86	\$12.07
MSAD #71 – Kennebunks	\$5,376.57	\$6,369.36	\$11.35
Wells-Ogunquit CSD	\$6,033.39	\$7,015.95	\$8.18
York	\$5,820.81	\$7,765.20	\$11.31
Old Orchard	\$5,258.35	\$6,228.06	\$12.00
Scarborough	\$4,202.01	\$5,608.59	\$12.75
Saco	\$4,320.13	\$6,311.64	\$11.91
Biddeford	\$3,904.42	\$5,328.40	\$9.47
Average of the Above	\$5,201.15	\$6,838.01	\$11.75
Statewide Average	\$4,917.85	\$5,701.46	\$11.63

*Source: State of Maine Department of Education [www.state.me.us/education/profiles/profilehome.htm] Costs is for most recent year for which figures are available (FY 2000-2001).*

### **PLANNING IMPLICATIONS FROM EDUCATION**

As in most communities, education requires the largest expenditure in Ogunquit’s budget and is one of the most important services this or any community provides. It inevitably becomes a balancing act between striving for excellence and containing costs. Given Ogunquit’s increasing retiree population and declining number of school-age children, there is a continuing need for adult education programs to better fit the needs of the changing demographic profile of Ogunquit. There has been an increased emphasis in this curriculum area over recent decades.

Even with LD 1725, the fact that the cost for public education (as a percentage of the total for running municipal government) remained the same between 1990 and 2000, suggests that the fixed costs for public education: buildings, grounds, curricula, books and overhead, irrespective of the actual number of students from Ogunquit, will likely remain the major expenses in supporting public education.

The Ogunquit Village School is a real community asset. Besides providing a sense of history and continuity to Ogunquit children who attend now and adults who attended in years past, the school also provides a real sense of community to the residents of the Village as well as a superb (upgraded in 2002) playground for the school children and the residents. Located near the Dorothea Grant Common, the Village School is part of the municipal facilities anchoring the center of the Village along with the Dunaway Community Center and Grant Common itself.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

### EXISTING SITUATION AND CONDITIONS

Paramount among Ogunquit's cultural resources is its heritage as an art colony. This history is recorded in *A Century of Color*, a lavishly illustrated 132-page book published in 1987 by Barn Gallery Associates (formally a partner to the Ogunquit Art Association, founded 1928). It chronicles the development of a mutually enriching relationship between a place and its people, over time. Since 1974, the Ogunquit Chamber of Commerce has sponsored an annual sidewalk art sale in August which includes many out-of-state artists.

Among the artists who have been based here are a number whose work and influence is known everywhere, notably Charles Woodbury, Walt Kuhn, Robert Laurent, and Peggy Bacon (whose etchings include one of a town meeting in the old Fireman's Hall).

Ogunquit's town hall/community center (gift of S. Judson Dunaway) is embellished by nine paintings, each donated by its artist or an heir; and was for years home to a marble sculpture by Laurent that is now in the collection of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The Ogunquit Museum of American Art (gift of Henry Strater) is small in size but large in stature. The museum has a permanent collection of work by artists associated with Ogunquit (some of whom are world famous) and loan exhibitions. Its architecture and setting are treasures in themselves, and attract visitors who might otherwise not choose to spend time with art.

The Barn Gallery exhibits work by Ogunquit Art Association members who are part of the local community and by artists of other regions. Since 1978 this gallery has hosted work by students in grades K through 12 from area schools in an annual show that has grown to include seven towns and involves a broad range of people. For some of them (adult viewer as well as child exhibitor) this show serves as a bridge to enjoying art. The gallery also has a full and varied schedule of workshops and performances.

The Ogunquit Arts Center, a vintage building with a long history of events, once hosted amateur theatricals as well as professional exhibitions. The building is no longer used as an arts center.

Since 1931 the Ogunquit Playhouse, one of the oldest continuously running summer theatres, has presented shows with summer-circuit stars.

The Leavitt Theatre shows first-run, first-rate films in a small old-fashioned setting. The Town's Performing Arts Committee sponsors concerts and live theatre periodically and in 1990 launched a festival of music, dance, and film on the weekend after Labor Day known as Capriccio.

The privately endowed Ogunquit Memorial Library (gift of Nannie Conarroe) has an ambiance of tradition as a nice adjunct to its collection of literature and periodicals. Among its books are quite a few by or about Ogunquit people. One of these books, *The Cove* (Carrie Boyd & Kit Ryan, 1976) blends the history of the art colony with that of the fishing community which has a rich and colorful heritage of its own that was too sparsely documented until the Winn House Museum (2002) devoted space to the Town's fishing heritage.

## **Library Services**

### **EXISTING SITUATION AND CONDITIONS**

The Ogunquit Memorial Library, located on the Shore Road with a nearby trolley stop, has year-round hours. About 5000 to 6000 volumes are circulated yearly and the Library adds an average of 700 to 800 new volumes (according to the 1991 Plan) each year.

### **PLANNING IMPLICATIONS FROM CULTURE**

A Town Library fulfills an important educational and recreational service, which is essential to any community. Traditional problems concerning library services include the scheduling of hours to best serve the needs of the community, availability of books and reference materials and space to house materials. The Library in 2002 to be fulfilling the needs of the community.

Cultural institutions are the soul of any community and both reflect that community and lead it in generating and supporting creativity and wisdom. Ogunquit is fortunate to be among Maine towns like Portland, Rockland and Bar Harbor as a conservator of Maine artistic heritage. The Town could better support its unique cultural heritage by advertising it more, through the local Chamber of Commerce.