

PUBLIC NOTICE: INVITATION OF COMMENTS

Pursuant to *Section 45-22.2-9(c)(2) of the General Laws of Rhode Island*, the Division of Statewide Planning hereby invites comments from the public, regional and state agencies, contiguous municipalities, and other interested parties regarding the local comprehensive plan document listed below.

Town of Portsmouth, Rhode Island Comprehensive Community Plan ID#: POR-CP-22

Posted May 12, 2022

This Comprehensive Plan is currently under review by the State to ensure “consistency with the goals and intent established in the [Comprehensive Planning Act] and in the State Guide Plan.” The comment period shall extend for thirty days from the posted date. All comments should reference the **document title and identifier number**, and should be submitted to:

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Town of Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Comprehensive Community Plan

PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT

Prepared by

Portsmouth, RI Planning Board

and

Weston & SampsonSM

November 17, 2021

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

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PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Town of Portsmouth, RI Comprehensive Community Plan

Introduction



PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The 2020 Portsmouth Comprehensive Community Plan (2020 Portsmouth CCP) updates the previous Town of Portsmouth (the Town) Comprehensive Community Plan approved in 2002. Although there have been several updates, the 2020 Portsmouth CCP is a full update including complete re-visioning, census and other data updates, a complete review of policy and actions, and includes input from a comprehensive public involvement process. The 2020 Portsmouth CCP is the culmination of hard work and dedication on the part of residents who have participated in surveys and data gathering exercises, the Citizens Interested in the Comprehensive Community Planning Process Committee (CICCPPC), the Portsmouth Planning Board, and, of course, Town staff, including members of the Planning Department who led the overall effort. The Planning Department wishes to extend its thanks to all involved in this work.

CRITICAL NEED FOR AN UP-TO-DATE COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Comprehensive community plans are required for each municipality by state law. The 2020 Portsmouth CCP was prepared under the authorizing legislation of Chapter 45-22.2, the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act of 1988 and subsequent amendments. Under this authority, the 2020 Portsmouth CCP is the primary land use document for the Town and all successive land use regulations.

The goals identified throughout the 2020 Portsmouth CCP are the unifying guiding principles. They are the solid foundation upon which the remainder of the 2020 Portsmouth CCP rests. Goals and policies are an extremely important part of the 2020 Portsmouth CCP because they outline the community's intent, as expressed by its direct participation in the planning process. This approach works to gain community consensus on what the overall values are, so the community and Town leadership can work to identify and agree upon those specific policies and actions necessary to achieve their goals. The 2020 Portsmouth CCP was drafted with an eye towards Portsmouth's physical, cultural, social, demographic, environmental, and economic characteristics. The 2020 Portsmouth CCP lays out how these factors, individually and in combination with each other, will influence future development in Portsmouth.

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In Rhode Island, a CCP underpins a community's zoning code and subdivision development regulations. Upon adoption of this Plan, Portsmouth will need to revise the Zoning Ordinance and Land Development and Subdivision Regulations accordingly to ensure consistency with the goals, policies and actions of the Plan.

MECHANICS OF A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

2020 Portsmouth CCP is designed to serve as the guide for development with a 20-year planning horizon. It is presented as a fully integrated policy document to be used in the planning and decision-making process by local officials. The 2020 Portsmouth CCP provides for the protection, development, use, and management of Portsmouth's land and natural resources. All land use and policy decisions must be consistent with the Plan.

The 2020 Portsmouth CCP provides a long-range vision of how various areas of the town should be developed. This vision is accomplished by outlining and identifying goals and policies associated with each of the elements identified above. At the end of each element is a list of action items intended to achieve those goals and policies. The Implementation Element provides a schedule of how, when, and who will take the lead on these items.

The 2020 Portsmouth CCP is designed to be a rational framework for future growth and decision-making. Although it is understood and expected that changes in circumstances and policy will require occasional amendments to the CCP, adherence to the 2020 Portsmouth CCP provides Town officials and residents with a predictable path.

This CCP update is a culmination of months of participation from a wide range of stakeholders with varying viewpoints working together to develop a guide for future growth in Portsmouth. This update was prepared under the direction of the Portsmouth Planning Board, with input from the CICPPC. The Planning Department offered technical assistance and generated updated drafts. Extensive public participation, which included surveys, meetings, charrettes, and workshops, is based on the understanding that the more the 2020 Portsmouth CCP reflects the sentiments of Portsmouth's people and staff, the more successful the Town will be in realizing the Plan's vision. A successful CCP should achieve the following:

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- Be reflective of the desires and viewpoints of the Town’s residents.
- Be based upon an accurate inventory of the Town’s resources.
- Act as a reference document for facts, concepts, goals and actions.
- Be maintained as a dynamic living document, providing a roadmap for the future of the Town.
- Be flexible in order to respond to changes in growth pressures, economic forces, environmental conditions and shifts in policy.
- Provide a means to manage conflict between differing town priorities

PLANNING PROCESS

The Portsmouth Planning Department, in coordination with the Planning Board, began working on updating the CCP in 2016. The exercise was approached as essentially a complete rewrite. During this process, Town staff paid particular attention to the goals, policies and implementation sections of the various elements.

Initial work was primarily conducted by the Planning Department staff and Planning Board. A coordinated effort was made to further engage residents and appropriate officials and the CICCOP was formed. This group worked in coordination with the Planning Board and Department staff to guide the formation and refinement of each element to reflect the needs and desires of the entire community.

In 2018, the Town decided to hire an outside consultant to act as a project manager and assist the Town in finalizing each element, engaging citizen participation and submitting a final document to the state for approval. The consultant worked closely with the Planning Department and Planning Board to refine each element, provide updated data and incorporate citizen input through a series of public meetings.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Planning staff have made it a priority to ensure that public engagement and involvement were considered and implemented throughout the drafting of the 2020 Portsmouth CCP. During drafting of the 2020 Portsmouth CCP by staff, regular workshops were held where the public was invited to review draft

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elements and provide feedback and comments to staff, who then worked with the consultant to incorporate that information into the draft elements.

The Town maintained a website throughout the process, which provided continual access to draft elements as they were being formulated. All meetings in which the 2020 Portsmouth CCP was discussed were advertised public meetings, providing ample opportunity for public review and input during the process.

Planning staff assisted in forming the CICCOP as an effort to prioritize public participation in the planning process. The CICCOP was composed of a broad constituency to ensure that all viewpoints and perspectives were actively engaged in the process.

The CICCOP held several meetings over the course of many months to review and revise each element as the group saw appropriate. They worked in close coordination with Planning Department staff and the Planning Board to finalize the sections of the 2020 Portsmouth CCP for ultimate adoption by the Town Council and the State of Rhode Island. Because of the extensive public engagement and input that was present throughout the process, the 2020 Portsmouth CCP is a document truly for and by the community.

STRUCTURE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

The CCP is a far-reaching, over-arching policy document. It sets a vision and lays out a path for achieving it. The 2020 Portsmouth CCP is organized by elements. Each element presents the existing conditions within the community and then provides challenges and opportunities which inform the goals and policies that are the basis for the action items identified within each element. The goals, policies and action items are the backbone of the Plan.

A goal is a desired outcome. Goals are simple, broad, and high reaching. A policy is a statement that guides municipal decision-makers so that all decisions help to achieve the goals. The actions are specific, measurable acts whose implementation will bring the municipality closer to achievement of its goals.

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The following topics are required by RIGL §45-22.2-6 for inclusion in the Plan:

- Goals and policies
- Maps
- Natural Resource Identification and Conservation
- Open Space and Recreation
- Historical and Cultural Resources
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Services and Facilities
- Circulation and Transportation
- Natural Hazards
- Land Use
- An Implementation Program

The 2020 Portsmouth CCP also provides several optional sections, which include:

- Agriculture
- Energy
- Water Supply
- Climate Change (which is included as part of the Natural Hazards element)

The 2020 Portsmouth CCP is organized in a fashion where each of the topics above, with the exception of maps and goals and policies, constitute an element of the Plan. Map references are integrated into each element as needed to support the narrative. Each goal contains policy statements that are then further refined into action items. The Implementation Program compiles the goals, policies and action items into a chart which identifies the implementation horizon (short, medium and long-term) and the party or parties responsible for implementation.

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A VISION FOR PORTSMOUTH - 2040

Natural Resources - Portsmouth will be a community that preserves and protects its abundant natural resource assets for the benefit of current and future generations.

Recreation - Portsmouth will be an active community with a high-quality, well-maintained system of passive and active recreation sites, facilities and programs that meet the changing needs of all residents.

Historic and Cultural Resources - Portsmouth will be a community where cultural heritage, historic buildings, and traditional landscapes are preserved, enriched and protected and an enduring commitment has been made to continue this effort for future generations.

Housing - Portsmouth's sense of community will be evident in a diverse stock of high quality, safe, affordable housing options for all individual needs and income levels without compromising the character of traditional neighborhood patterns.

Economic Development - Portsmouth will possess a balanced framework of local economic policies that promote sustainable growth in jobs, business activity and tax base that supports Portsmouth's unique community character, its fiscal stability and the quality of its natural environment.

Agriculture - Agriculture will remain a vital and vibrant component of Portsmouth's way of life, land use and economic activity.

Services and Facilities - Portsmouth will be a community where cost-effective, high-quality municipal services and well-maintained public facilities meet the changing needs of current and future residents.

Energy - Portsmouth will be an energy efficient community in all its municipal functions which supports the development of both public and private renewable energy production within the community.

Water Supply - Portsmouth will enjoy a safe, reliable, long-term supply of clean drinking water for the benefit of current and future residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial uses.

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Transportation - Portsmouth will enjoy a safe, efficient and well-maintained multi-modal transportation network that increases mobility for all residents, supports the growth of business activity, reduces negative impacts on the natural environment, and enhances the character and quality of life of the community.

Natural Hazards and Climate Change - Portsmouth will be a community that has prepared its vulnerable areas, assets and populations to minimize the effects of natural hazards in a changing environment.

Land Use - The landscape of Portsmouth will present an orderly, balanced, and rational development pattern that helps preserve community character, enhance fiscal stability, and protect the quality of the natural environment.

OTHER PLANS INCLUDED BY REFERENCE

Although this is a complete update to the 2002 Plan, many of the supporting documents that serve as technical guidance and historical analysis remain influential in the development of this update. These supporting plans, which are incorporated into the 2020 Portsmouth CCP here by document reference, are listed below:

- Portsmouth Home Rule Charter
- Capital Improvement Plan
- Stormwater Management Plan
- On-Site Wastewater Management Plan
- Portsmouth School District Strategic Plan
- Portsmouth School District Capital Improvement Plan
- Emergency Operations Plan
- Portsmouth Library: Long Range Plan
- Harbor Management Plan
- Affordable Housing Plan
- Open Space Plan
- Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan

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These plans provide more detail on their relative subject than the 2020 Portsmouth CCP and may be consulted for more specific information. In addition to being incorporated by reference, certain selected sections of these plans have been directly integrated into and reflected in the goals, polices, and action items with each appropriate element.

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PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

ELEMENT 1

Natural Resources



PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

ELEMENT 1 – NATURAL RESOURCES

This element addresses Portsmouth’s natural resources inventory and protection programs.

1.1 PORTSMOUTH’S NATURAL RESOURCES VISION

PORTSMOUTH WILL BE A COMMUNITY THAT PRESERVES AND PROTECTS ITS ABUNDANT NATURAL RESOURCE ASSETS FOR THE BENEFIT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.

1.2 NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

This section includes an inventory of Portsmouth’s natural resources under the following categories:

- Geography
- Soil characteristics
- Floodplains
- Wildlife and habitat areas
- Water resources

Beaches, greenways and other primarily recreation-related resources are discussed in Element 2 – Recreation.

1.2.1 GEOGRAPHY

The Town of Portsmouth is a residential coastal island community of approximately 23.3 square miles. Portsmouth is located at the northern end of Aquidneck Island and incorporates six other islands in Narragansett Bay including Prudence Island and Hog Island, which are the only two of the six with year-round residents. The Aquidneck Island portion of Portsmouth is surrounded by three major waterbodies - Narragansett Bay to the west, the Sakonnet River to the east, and Mount Hope Bay to the north. Most of the Portsmouth landscape on Aquidneck Island is characterized by steep slopes that run east to the

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Sakonnet River and west to Narragansett Bay. Northern areas of town, including the neighborhoods of Island Park, Hummocks, and Common Fence Point, can be characterized as low lying with sandy soils.

1.2.2 SOIL CHARACTERISTICS

For comprehensive planning purposes, the natural and functional characteristics of Portsmouth's soils are important for two reasons. First, as is evident in our historic land use and economic development, Portsmouth is blessed with an abundance of soils that support a wide range of agricultural activity. See the Agriculture Element of this plan for discussion and mapping of "prime agricultural" soils and "additional soils of statewide importance." See **Map 6**.

Second, and of equal importance, is the fact we rely on our soils to treat our wastewater. Except for a few customers in the Melville area, there are no sewers in Portsmouth. All wastewater treatment is done by on-site septic systems which rely on the soils beneath the system to do the actual treatment of effluent before it comes into contact with groundwater. Our soils are, for the most part, not well suited to perform that function.

Limitations for the installation of sanitary facilities for the 8,400+ acres of "prime agricultural" soils in Portsmouth are characterized by the United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA – NRCS) in their Soil Survey of Rhode Island as "severe." That is, "soil properties or site features are so unfavorable or difficult to overcome that major soil reclamation, special designs, or intensive maintenance is required." Slow percolation rates and high groundwater are primarily the causes of this characterization. For the 4,000+ acres of Portsmouth soils "of additional statewide importance," limitations for sanitary facilities range from "severe" (ex., Stissing soils), as above, to "slight" or "moderate" (ex., Hinckley and Quonset soils), meaning "limitations are minor and easily overcome" to "unfavorable but limitations can be overcome by special planning and design," respectively. There is a caveat to both of these characterizations. The problem with soils in the "slight" and "moderate" categories is not slow percolation rates but just the opposite. Soil types here have high permeability rates which may allow effluent from septic systems to pass through too quickly for effective treatment, risking groundwater pollution problems. Taken together, this 12,400+ acres of soils considered unsuitable by degrees for the installation of sanitary facilities accounts for more than 80% of the total land area of

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Portsmouth. This problem is nowhere more apparent than in the neighborhood of Portsmouth Park, with its poor percolation rate soils and the next-door neighborhoods of Island Park and Common Fence Point with their sandy soils having excessive percolation rates. Both are unsuitable but for different reasons.

1.2.3 FLOODPLAINS

Current Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), revision September 2013, indicate that all the lands adjacent to the coastal waters of the Town of Portsmouth are in one of three zones: A zone, AE zone or VE zone, all designated as high risk area zones. See **Map 14**. Flood zones are geographic areas that reflect the severity or type of flooding with the varying levels of flood risk. Some flood areas have calculated Base Flood Elevations (BFEs) which are computed elevations to which floodwater is anticipated to rise during the base flood. The BFE is the regulatory requirement for the elevation or flood-proofing of structures. The relationship between BFE and a structure's elevation is used in the determination of flood insurance premiums.

Definitions for each of the three zones:

- A Zone - Areas with a 1% annual chance of flooding, commonly referred to as the 100-year storm, and a 26% chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage. BFE are not available for this zone.
- AE Zone - Areas with a 1% annual chance of flooding, commonly referred to as the 100-year storm, and a 26% chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage. BFE and flood hazard factors are determined for this zone and are shown on the FIRM.
- VE Zone - Coastal areas with a 1% or greater chance of flooding and an additional hazard associated with storm waves. These areas have a 26% chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage. BFE derived from detailed analyses are shown at selected intervals within these zones.

1.2.4 WATER RESOURCES

This section discusses saltwater, freshwater and groundwater resources in Portsmouth. See **Maps 1 and 11**.

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Coastal Waters

Table 1.1-Estuarine	
Waterbody	Description
Sakonnet River	The Sakonnet River is located between the mainland and the eastern shore of Rhode Island. The width of the river fluctuates between 0.7 to 2 miles. The river is used predominantly by fishing vessels and small craft.
Town Pond	A major 2007-08 Army Corps rehabilitation project dredged out Town Pond and re-opened the area to tidal influence. The newly restored 23-acre salt pond is now providing habitat for coastal fish and wildlife, such as shellfish, flounder and other finfish, herons, egrets, and waterfowl, and restoring the productivity and ecological value of the area.
Blue Bill Cove	Blue Bill Cove is a saltwater embayment just south of the Sakonnet River Bridge. A portion of it is impaired due to pathogens and is, therefore, closed to shellfishing. The area is a well-known resource for kayaking and birding.

Fresh Waterbodies

Prominent fresh waterbodies in Portsmouth include:

Table 1.2-Lakes and Ponds	
Waterbody	Description
Saint Mary's Pond	Saint Mary's Pond is approximately 100 acres in area. It is part of the Newport Water Supply System. It is an important recreational finfishing resource and is stocked for the fishing season, as well as being a popular spot for birding. This waterbody is considered impaired for total phosphorus and total organic carbon.
Sisson Pond	Sisson Pond is approximately 65 acres in area. It is part of the Newport Water Supply System. It is an important recreational finfishing resource which is stocked for the fishing season, and is a popular spot for birding. This waterbody is considered impaired for total phosphorus and total organic carbon.
Lawton Valley Reservoir	Lawton Valley Reservoir is approximately 60 acres in area. It is part of the Newport Water Supply System. This waterbody is considered impaired for total phosphorus and total organic carbon.
Melville Ponds	Melville Ponds is approximately 6 acres in area. Upper Melville Pond (recently renamed Thurston Gray Pond) is stocked for the fishing season. These ponds are also popular spots for birding and observing other wildlife. This waterbody is considered impaired for total phosphorus.

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Table 1.2-Lakes and Ponds	
Waterbody	Description
Jenny Pond	Jenny Pond is approximately 7 acres in area. It is a resource for recreational fishing and is a popular spot for birding.
Nag Pond	Nag Pond is approximately 18 acres. It is a relatively small pond east of the throat of Prudence Island.
Town Pond	Town Pond is approximately 23 acres in area. Restoration of the pond was completed in 2008 by the New England District of the US Army Corps of Engineers under authority of Section 1135 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986, with the support of the RI Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM). The pond now includes a walking trail around the shore and is a popular birding spot as it provides habitat to hawks, owls, great blue heron, and osprey.

Table 1.3-Rivers and Streams	
Waterbody	Description
Founders Brook	Founders Brook is a stream on the north side of town. It runs south to north just west of Route 24 and empties to Town Pond. There are a number of historic and cultural sites along Founders Brook.
Bloody Run Brook (Barker Brook)	Bloody Brook is a stream located in Newport County and is a popular spot for fishing. It got its name during The Battle of Rhode Island in 1778, where the bloodshed caused the stream to run red.
Mill Creek	Mill Creek is a small stream on Prudence Island running south to north just east of Nag Pond. It discharges to the East Passage near North-East Point.

Groundwater

As noted by U.S. Geological Survey Report *Ground-Water Resources in Rhode Island* (1991), by Elaine C. Todd Trench, the East Bay region of Rhode Island is primarily underlain by sedimentary and metamorphosed sedimentary rock, which is mantled by a till and tends to limit groundwater production. Only about 3% of the area is underlain by stratified drift and much of this is near saltwater resources. Large withdrawals in this area would be likely to result in saltwater intrusion. Nevertheless, groundwater flows recharge many local surface water resources including streams, wetlands and water supplies. The quality of surface water in Portsmouth relies in no small part on the quality of groundwater.

No large public groundwater supplies have been developed in the East Bay region of the state.

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1.2.5 WILDLIFE AND HABITAT AREAS

This section discusses wildlife and habitat areas in Portsmouth including estuarine and freshwater fisheries, submerged aquatic vegetation, intertidal flats and tidal wetlands.

Fisheries

The discussion below describes recreational and commercial fishing areas and habit in Portsmouth. The discussion focuses on shellfish as there are no anadromous fish runs or known spawning areas in town waters.

Shellfishing in Portsmouth's waters has been and, in some cases, still is productive. Though slowing over time, commercial clamming and lobstering remain active. Scalloping has become nonexistent since Hurricane Carol. The oyster population which was wiped out after the 1938 hurricane shows some signs of comeback. Commercial aquaculture operations for growing and harvesting clams and oysters (regulated and permitted by RIDEM) have expanded in Portsmouth waters in recent years with operations in Blue Bill Cove and on the west side of Hog Island. Applications are pending for waters on the west side south of Carr Point, in the Sakonnet River north of Black Point, and in the vicinity of the Glen Manor House. Blue shell crabs were abundant in all Portsmouth waters but presently may be found only in Blue Bill Cove in Island Park. Town Pond has been dredged out by the Army Corps of Engineers and there is high hope of restoring shellfish beds in these rehabilitated tidal waters. Due to water quality concerns, the taking of shellfish for human consumption is prohibited by RIDEM in several locations in Portsmouth. See **Map**

2. These include:

- Waters from Arnolds Point northward along the Mount Hope Bay shoreline, around Common Fence Point and southward to Stone Bridge, thence to a range marker at Morningside Lane, including the southern half of Blue Bill Cove.
- Waters immediately adjacent to the outfall of Barker Brook (a.k.a. Bloody Brook).
- Waters from Coggeshall Point southward to Carr Point out to the southeastern point of Dyer Island.

Commercial fishing areas including all the waters of Narragansett Bay, Mount Hope Bay and the Sakonnet River surrounding Portsmouth have traditionally supported some type of commercial fishing and

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shellfishing activities. The most prosperous commercial fishing enterprise over the years has been the taking of Menhaden to be processed into fishmeal and used as lobster trap bait. Occasional fishing for Menhaden continues, but shellfishing has become the most prominent fishery in town waters.

In addition to commercial fishing, the waters of Narragansett Bay, Mount Hope Bay and the Sakonnet River have traditionally supported recreational fishing activities from shore and by boat. Some popular recreational fishing areas are the Stone Bridge, the Railroad Bridge, Sandy Point Beach, McCorrie Point, Musselbed Shoals and Blue Bill Cove.

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation

Eelgrass (*Zostera Marina L.*) has been identified along the shoreline of Prudence Island near the T-wharf and along the northwest shoreline. A small area exists on the west side of Aquidneck Island in Portsmouth north of East Passage Yachting Center.

Intertidal Flats

Small scale intertidal flats exist in several areas of Blue Bill Cove and along the eastern shore of Common Fence Point, south of the Weaver Cove Boat Ramp and at the outfall to Town Pond.

Tidal Wetlands

Town Pond is the only major tidal wetland in Portsmouth. A tidally influenced open water salt pond and salt marsh area prior to the early 1950s, Town Pond was designated a dredge spoils storage area by the Army Corps of Engineers and quite dramatically filled in at that time. A major 2007-08 Army Corps rehabilitation project dredged out Town Pond and re-opened the area to tidal influence. The restored 23-acre salt pond is now providing habitat for coastal fish and wildlife, such as shellfish, flounder and other finfish, herons, egrets, and waterfowl, and is restoring the productivity and ecological value of the area.

Saltwater Marshes

Saltwater marshes exist at Weaver Cove just south of Melville, behind the barrier beach extending south from the Mt. Hope Bridge, the perimeter of the tidal wetlands associated with Town Pond, on the western side of Common Fence Point, at the intersection of Park Avenue and Boyd's Lane and behind Sandy Point

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Beach. Prudence Island has saltwater marshes at Nag Pond, Jenny Pond and backing both Coggeshall and Sheep Pen Coves. In addition, there are small salt marshes on the east side of Patience Island and along the south shore of Hog Island. Many of these saltwater marshes are backed on the inland side by uplands and therefore have no place to migrate to. They will be inundated and most likely destroyed by any appreciable future sea level rise. Areas where any of these could migrate in the event of sea level rise are identified on **Map 17**.

1.3 SIGNIFICANT NATURAL RESOURCES AND ASSOCIATED THREATS

Local priorities for natural resource conservation focus on five significant natural resources:

1. Surface Waters: The surface waters of Portsmouth are of critical importance to our quality of life in that they provide not only a variety of recreational opportunities but are the source of drinking water as well as water for agricultural uses for residents and farmers of Aquidneck Island. The principal threats to water quality in our surface waters are non-point source pollution in the watersheds associated with our surface waters and natural hazards/climate change. Policies and supporting actions in this comprehensive plan designed to address these threats include: Policy NR-1.1, Policy SF-1.10, Policy WS-1.1, Policy R-1.2, Policy LU-5.1 and Policy NH/CC-1.2.
2. Coastal Features: Portsmouth abundant coastal features provide protection from natural hazards as well as commercial and recreational opportunity for our citizens. The principal threats to the environmental quality and beneficial use of our coastal features are overdevelopment and encroachment, non-point source pollution, natural hazards/climate change and trash/misuse. Policies and supporting actions in this comprehensive plan designed to address these threats include: Policy NR-1.2, Policies R-1.2 and 1.3, Policy SF-1.10, Policy LU-5.2 and Policy NH/CC-1.1.
3. Soils: As noted above, Portsmouth's soils are a significant natural resource providing two critical functions, they support our agricultural operations and treat our wastewater. Threats to the quality of our soils and by extension our quality of life are loss of prime agricultural land to development and improperly managed septic systems. Policies and

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supporting actions in this comprehensive plan designed to address these threats include: Policy NR-1.3, Policy AG-1.1, Policy SF-1.11 and Policies LU 6.1 and 6.2.

4. Groundwater Aquifers on Prudence Island: A critical natural resource, drinking water for Prudence Island residents is sourced exclusively from groundwater wells. Threats to both the quantity and quality of drinking water on the island are dwindling supply and non-point source pollution in the groundwater recharge areas. Policies and supporting actions in this comprehensive plan designed to address these threats include: Policy NR-1.1 and Policy WS-1.2.
5. Scenic Landscapes and Lands in an Undeveloped State: Multiple vision statements in this comprehensive plan describe a future for Portsmouth based on the quality and character of our natural environment, open spaces and traditional landscapes. Preserving these attributes is of vital importance to our community character and quality of life with the primary threat being a lack of commitment to do so. Policies and supporting actions in this comprehensive plan designed to address this threat include: Policy NR-1.4, Policy HCR-2.2, Policy ED-2.1, Policy AG-1.1 and Policies LU-5.1 and 6.1. See **Map 2** for Natural Resource Conservation Areas in Portsmouth.

1.4 PROTECTION PLANS, PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

This section discusses natural resources protection provided through:

- Conservation programs
- Stormwater management
- Wastewater management
- Local enforceable policy

1.4.1 CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

The Portsmouth Open Space Committee was re-established in 1999 and authorized by the Portsmouth Town Council to set up the criteria for purchasing land or acquiring development rights to land in the Town of Portsmouth. Funding for this purpose was to be provided by a dedicated portion of the Real

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Estate Conveyance Tax. The Committee functioned for approximately ten years but was ultimately disbanded and the funds from the conveyance tax were re-routed to the Town's general fund. Currently, apart from the occasional partnership with the Aquidneck Land Trust in establishing conservation easements for property in Portsmouth as opportunities arise, the Town has no formal land conservation program. This comprehensive plan calls for the development of an open space acquisition plan. The responsible party for creating such a plan should be a newly-reestablished open space committee with a reestablished funding source from the real estate conveyance tax.

While not a true land conservation program with conservation easements and other legal mechanisms at its disposal, the Portsmouth farm property tax assessment program adopted in 1990 offers an incentive to farmers to keep their land in an undeveloped state. The program assesses qualified farmland at its current use value rather than its "highest and best use" value and assigns a reduced property tax assessed value thereby giving farmers a property tax savings that can be used to offset operational costs. The State Farm, Forest, and Open Space Act, administered by Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's (RIDEM) Division of Agriculture, performs a similar function at the state level. Both programs involve farmland conservation land that does not have permanent, legal protection but where land owners have expressed a "conservation intent" to preserve the land from development. Participation offers temporary protection in that there are tax ramifications if a land owner wishes to no longer participate.

Natural Estuarine Sanctuary

The Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve is a state-owned and federally recognized estuarine sanctuary in the approximate geographic center of Narragansett Bay and within the boundaries of Portsmouth. The sanctuary is composed of 1,035 acres of permanently conserved land on Prudence, Patience, and Hope Islands and 1,591 acres of water adjoining the islands out to the 18-foot mean low water (MLW) mark.

1.4.2 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has determined that municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) are a major pathway for the introduction of pollutants to waterways and are

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a leading cause of the impairment of ambient water quality, for both fresh and coastal waters. The USEPA developed regulations governing stormwater in association with industrial and construction activities, and for MS4s in 40 CFR Part 122. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) has written and enforces equivalent regulations in their Regulations for the Rhode Island Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (RIPDES) (Rule 31).

Portsmouth is one of 36 communities currently subject to MS4 jurisdiction in Rhode Island. RIDEM requires subject communities to develop stormwater management program plans (SWMPPs). The six minimum control measures required in the SWMPP and addressed in Section 3.0 are:

- Public Education and Outreach on Stormwater Impacts
- Public Participation / Involvement
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
- Construction Site Runoff Control
- Post-Construction Runoff Control
- Pollution Prevention / Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations

In addition, the General Permit specifies that if a total maximum daily load (TMDL) has been approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (which it was in March 2005 for impaired waters south of Island Park and in Blue Bill Cove) for any waterbody into which stormwater discharges from the MS4 contributes directly or indirectly the pollutant(s) of concern, the Town of Portsmouth must address the provisions and recommendations of the TMDL in its SWMPP. In our case, the pollution of concern is pathogens sources from failing septic systems.

1.4.3 ON-SITE WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

Portsmouth has developed and adopted an Onsite Wastewater Management Plan (OWMP) and enforceable policy under its Wastewater Management District Ordinance.

The Onsite Wastewater Management Plan (OWMP) for Portsmouth provides a set of strategies and implementation items to ensure the proper management, inspection, use and maintenance of on-site wastewater treatment systems. The Town recognizes poorly managed on-site systems are prone to failure

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with age, outmoded design, overuse, poor soil conditions, or improper installation, repair or maintenance and that failing on-site systems jeopardize the health, safety and welfare of the community. The Town also recognizes a properly developed and implemented OWMP can mitigate these circumstances and provide an efficient, environmentally safe and cost-effective alternative to municipal sewers.

In part, the OWMP addresses recommendations in the 2005 Sakonnet River – Portsmouth Park and The Cove – Island Park TMDL, which was written to address pathogen impairments to the Sakonnet River and the Cove, to establish “a comprehensive town-wide wastewater management strategy.”

The Town will continue to rely on on-site wastewater treatment in the future and is committed to working cooperatively with the State and its agencies to manage the collective population of on-site treatment systems in Portsmouth.

1.4.4 ENFORCEABLE POLICY

This section discusses key local enforceable policy, such as ordinances and regulations that set standards and structure for the protection of Portsmouth’s natural resources. Enforceable policies discussed include Portsmouth’s:

- Wastewater Management District Ordinance
- Stormwater Discharge Control Ordinance
- Soil and Sediment Control Ordinance
- Zoning Ordinance:
 - Flood Hazard Areas
 - Watershed Protection Overlay District
- Tree Preservation and Protection Ordinance

Wastewater Management District Ordinance

The Town has adopted a Wastewater Management District Ordinance pursuant to R.I.G.L. Title 45, Chapter 45-24.5. Since the Town relies almost entirely on onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS)

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for its wastewater disposal and treatment needs, the district includes the entire town. The purpose of the ordinance is to establish the Portsmouth Wastewater Management District to ensure OWTS are properly operated, regularly inspected, routinely maintained and administratively managed to prevent system malfunction and to operate as an alternative to municipal sewer systems. The Ordinance provides a framework for the efficient inspection, repair and maintenance of OWTS within the District and recognizes the homeowners' responsibility to ensure their system is well maintained and properly functioning.

Stormwater Discharge Control Ordinance

Improperly managed stormwater runoff is a major cause of impairment of water quality and flow in lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, wetlands and groundwater; contamination of drinking water supplies; alteration or destruction of aquatic and wildlife habitat; and flooding. The purpose of Portsmouth's stormwater ordinance is to provide for the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of Portsmouth through the regulation of non-stormwater discharges to the municipal storm drainage system (MS4) to the maximum extent practicable as required by federal and state law. The ordinance addresses five key objectives:

- To prevent (or reduce to the maximum extent practicable) pollutants entering Portsmouth's municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4).
- To prohibit illicit connections and unauthorized discharges to the MS4.
- To require the physical removal of all such illicit connections and discharges.
- To comply with state law and federal statutes and regulations relating to stormwater discharges.
- To set forth the legal authority and procedures to carry out all inspection, monitoring and enforcement activities necessary to ensure compliance with this article.

Soil and Sediment Control

Without proper management, excessive quantities of soil may erode areas undergoing development for nonagricultural uses such as housing developments, industrial areas, recreational facilities and roads. This may cause the need for costly repairs to gullies, washed-out fills, roads, and embankments. The resulting

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sediment clogs storm sewers, road ditches, muddies streams, leaves deposits of silt in ponds and reservoirs, and is considered a major water pollutant. Construction debris, litter and spills also clog the stormwater management system and contaminate surface water and groundwater. The Town's Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance sets policy and standards to prevent soil erosion and sedimentation from occurring.

Zoning Ordinance - Flood Hazard Areas

Provisions of the Zoning Ordinance put in place to protect watercourses from encroachment and to maintain the capability of floodplains to retain and carry off flood waters will be discussed. Section F of the Town's Zoning Ordinance addresses proper management of development in flood hazard areas including the use of inland and tidal land subject to flood hazards. The purpose of this ordinance is to ensure public safety, to minimize hazards to persons and property from flooding, to protect watercourses from encroachment, and to maintain the capability of floodplains to retain and carry off floodwaters. In part, the purpose is also to comply with the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968.

Zoning Ordinance - Watershed Protection Overlay District

Portsmouth has established a watershed protection overlay district as codified in Section H of the Town Zoning Ordinance. The purpose of the overlay district is to protect, preserve, and maintain the quality and quantity of drinking water supplies and the primary water recharge areas. The watershed protection overlay district includes the land area, surface water, and ground water in the district. Land uses or activities posing a severe threat to water quality are prohibited in the watershed protection overlay district. Prohibited uses include any use that would generate a wastewater discharge other than domestic sewage; and any use involving the storage or processing of hazardous material. Environmentally sensitive site design standards are required for all uses within the District. The standards are developed to optimize water quality and include buffer requirements, surface water runoff controls, parking lot controls, and setbacks.

Tree Preservation and Protection Ordinance

The Town's Tree Preservation and Protection Ordinance regulates the planting, maintaining, maintenance and removal of trees in public rights-of-way, parks and all public property within the town. In part, the

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Ordinance establishes a tree commission, who together with the tree warden, have prepared and implemented tree regulations.

1.5 GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

1.5.1 GOAL NR-1

Produce a comprehensive set of programs and policies that guide how we grow our community in a manner which conserves and protects in perpetuity the abundant natural resources that sustain us and enhance our quality of life.

POLICY NR-1.1

Ensure that new development and redevelopment in Portsmouth takes place in a manner which protects environmentally sensitive areas and resources.

Action NR-1.1a: Investigate hiring a Town Engineer.

Action NR-1.1b: Continue to pursue acquisition of development rights, particularly parcels containing environmentally sensitive characteristics.

Action NR-1.1c: Study Portsmouth's site plan review processes and amend as necessary to strengthen protection of freshwater wetlands and other natural resources.

Action NR-1.1d: Develop criteria and identify environmentally sensitive areas as a guide reference for the site plan review process.

Action NR-1.1e: Adopt a Post-Construction Stormwater Runoff Control Ordinance.

Action NR-1.1f: Review Portsmouth's Residential Open Space Development subdivision regulations for their effectiveness and amend as necessary.

Action NR-1.1g: Review land development regulations to ensure groundwater quality on Prudence and Hog Islands is protected.

Action NR-1.1h: Continue to work with adjacent towns, state, federal, NGO and private organizations to develop effective natural resource protection plans and strategies.

POLICY NR-1.2

Preserve, protect and restore Portsmouth's valuable coastal resources and shoreline features.

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[Action NR-1.2a](#): Study salt marsh migration and make land use / zoning recommendations to guide future development.

[Action NR-1.2b](#): Update the “Flood Hazards Areas” section of the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance as directed by FEMA.

[Action NR-1.2c](#): Periodically review implementation of Portsmouth’s Stormwater Management Plan for its effectiveness in preventing pollutants from entering coastal waters.

[Action NR-1.2d](#): Develop an outfall monitoring program in cooperation with RIDEM for the Island Park / Portsmouth Park neighborhoods.

[Action NR-1.2e](#): Evaluate rezoning identified undeveloped barrier beach, salt marsh, and coastal wetland areas as open space.

[Action NR-1.2f](#): Support periodic beach clean-ups and other natural resource maintenance activities in cooperation with relevant volunteer organizations.

[Action NR-1.2g](#): Continue to implement the recommendations of Portsmouth’s RIPDES Phase II Stormwater Management Program Plan.

POLICY NR-1.3

Maintain the natural and functional characteristics of Portsmouth’s soils.

[Action NR-1.3a](#): Perform a complete inventory and assessment of Portsmouth’s town-owned stormwater infrastructure and develop a capital improvement program to upgrade the system as needed.

[Action NR-1.3b](#): Review Portsmouth Wastewater Management District and Stormwater Management ordinances for their effectiveness in abating non-point source pollution of our soils.

[Action NR-1.3c](#): Map prime agricultural soils as a guide reference for the site plan review process.

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POLICY NR-1.4

Protect the natural and rural open space character of Portsmouth and encourage the use and enjoyment of its abundant natural resources.

Action NR-1.4a: Develop an open space acquisition plan.

Action NR-1.4b: Continue to monitor water quality at the Melville ponds in cooperation with the URI Watershed Watch program.

Action NR-1.4c: Pursue conservation easements on town-owned parcels in the Glen Park / Seveney Fields / Glen Manor House area.

Action NR-1.4d: Develop comprehensive educational packages on the subject of Portsmouth's natural resources to be presented to the public.

Action NR-1.4e: Develop land use management plans for town-owned open space properties.

Action NR-1.4f: Support the preservation of open space in watersheds, along the shore, and in other environmentally sensitive areas through acquisition, conservation easements, and purchase of development rights.

Action NR-1.4g: Update standards for outdoor lighting to limit light pollution in all areas of town.

POLICY NR-1.5

Support the conservation of Portsmouth's forested areas, tree resources, native plants and wildlife species.

Action NR-1.5a: Continue to manage trees on town-owned property and roadways. Endeavor to replant with native species wherever possible.

Action NR-1.5b: Review and update Portsmouth's land development regulations to require developers to retain existing trees where possible and to provide deciduous street trees in all new development and redevelopment.

Action NR-1.5c: Continue to control invasive, nuisance and exotic species on all town-owned properties.

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[Action NR-1.5d](#): Continue Portsmouth's on-going mosquito control program.

[Action NR-1.5e](#): Work with state, federal and NGO partners to identify natural habitat restoration opportunities to ensure their long-term viability.

POLICY NR-1.6

Promote efforts to maintain good air quality in Portsmouth and its surrounding communities.

[Action NR-1.6a](#): Encourage the use of alternative transportation modes such as carpooling, public transportation and bicycling.

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ELEMENT 2

Recreation



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ELEMENT 2 – RECREATION

This element is a combined inventory and analysis, providing current status, usage and responsibilities relating to existing recreational facilities. The inventory provided identifies public recreational facilities. The Town’s existing facilities are generally adequate for the existing need; facilities are being used quite extensively. A limited recreation needs assessment is also provided in this element.

2.1 PORTSMOUTH’S RECREATION VISION

PORTSMOUTH WILL BE AN ACTIVE COMMUNITY WITH A HIGH-QUALITY, WELL-MAINTAINED SYSTEM OF PASSIVE AND ACTIVE RECREATION SITES, FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS THAT MEET THE CHANGING NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS.

2.2 EXISTING RECREATION INVENTORY

The text below provides descriptions for each Town-owned and non-Town-owned recreational facility in Portsmouth. This is followed by a tabular summary of recreational features and use limitations at each Town-owned facility. See **Map 3**. **Map 22** depicts significant existing, permanently protected outdoor recreation areas.

2.2.1 HISTORIC PARKS

Bristol Ferry Town Common – Located at the northern end of Bristol Ferry Road at Bayview Avenue, the Bristol Ferry Town Common was established on March 12, 1714 by the Portsmouth Town Committee. This 1.5-acre space was originally used by farmers and others to keep their livestock and other goods



Photo 1—Bristol Ferry Town Common

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while waiting for the ferry to Bristol. This historic common is currently maintained as a public park, with great views of Mount Hope Bay.

Fort Butts - An earthwork redoubt dating from the Revolutionary War. The fort was occupied successively by British, Hessian, and American troops and anchored the American northern line during the Battle of Rhode Island (1778). It offers today the same commanding view of the central bay that made it such a strategic location during the Revolutionary War. The fort is located north of the tennis courts at Portsmouth High School.

Founders Brook - Off Boyds Lane, the Town's founding in 1638 is commemorated with memorials for Anne Hutchinson and the signers of the Compact of 1638.

Legion Park - Small park at the intersection of East Main Road and Middle Road (just north of Town Hall) that hosts a granite memorial dedicated to veterans of World Wars I and II, the Korean War and the Vietnam Conflict, an 18th century British cannon, benches for sitting and a beautiful birch donated in 1979 as a "Liberty Tree" by the Portsmouth Garden Club. Just south across Hedly Street is a memorial to World War I veterans.

Patriots Park - Honors the 1st Rhode Island Regiment, the "Black Regiment," of free, black citizens who fought valiantly at nearby Bloody Brook during the Battle of Rhode Island. A mass grave of Hessian troops is located nearby.



Photo 2—Patriots Park

2.2.2 POCKET/MINI PARKS

Hathaway School - Provides a basketball court, playground equipment, and athletic fields. Portsmouth school properties are reserved for school use during school hours; thereafter school related activities have first priority.

Heritage Park - A scenic overlook Portsmouth, the upper reaches Brook.



Photo 3—Heritage Park

providing panoramic views of north of Narragansett Bay, and Bloody

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John F. Kennedy Park - Contains a small memorial to the late President at the corner of Freeborn Street and Turnpike Avenue.

Lehigh Overlook - Off Route 114, this overlook provides a panoramic view of Prudence Island and Narragansett Bay.



Photo 4—John F. Kennedy Park

2.2.3 NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Coggeshall School - Two Little League baseball fields are located to the rear of the Coggeshall School building.

Elmhurst Park – A passive recreation facility with scenic views of the Sakonnet River. Parking available. Unlit basketball court.

Island Park Playground - Features a new modern playground, a basketball court, baseball field, and other amenities.

Mount Hope Park - Situated along the north end of Bristol Ferry Road at the intersection of Bayview Avenue, this 4.9-acre, partially developed park has 1.4 land acres and 3.5 water acres and was acquired by the Town in early 2016. The property has historical significance, having once been used for ferry service between Portsmouth and Bristol, beginning in approximately 1680 and ending with the completion of the Mount Hope Bridge in 1929.

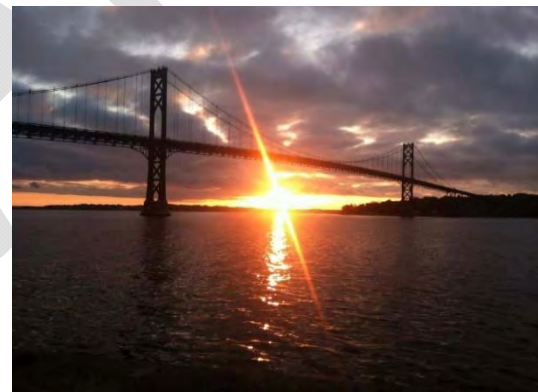


Photo 5—Sunset from Mount Hope Park

A partnership between the Town and the Aquidneck Land Trust made the purchase possible.

Portsmouth High School - Offers eight tennis courts, basketball courts, sports fields, and a modern, lighted track. Portsmouth school properties are reserved for school during school hours; thereafter school related activities have first priority.

Portsmouth Middle School - Athletic fields are available. Portsmouth school properties are reserved for school use during school hours; thereafter school related activities have first priority.

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Turnpike Avenue Playground - Contains a modern playground for younger children and a Little League ball field.

2.2.4 COMMUNITY PARKS

Glen Farm - Includes the Gardner Seveney Sports Complex with soccer fields and ball fields.

Glen Park - Includes a horse ring, ball fields, picnic areas, bathroom facilities, and cooking facilities contained in a 25-acre parcel that stretches to the Sakonnet River. Saltwater fishing is available from the Glen Manor House dock.



Photo 6—Glen Farm Linden Lane

“3S” Fields – Approximately 48-acre parcel located on Sandy Point Avenue to be used for the future development of soccer fields. This parcel is subject to a conservation easement of approximately 18 acres.

2.2.5 PLAYGROUNDS

Frank Carson Playground - Neighborhood playground located at the end of Redwood Road which has playground facilities for younger children.

Melville School - School playground facilities. Portsmouth school properties are reserved for school use during school hours, thereafter, school related activities have first priority.

SPECIAL USE: FRESHWATER ACCESS

Melville Recreation Area - One hundred and fifty acres of coastal woodland dotted by wetlands, ponds, and brooks. Hiking trails provide a variety of opportunities for bird watching and other forms of nature appreciation. Freshwater fishing is available at the upper and lower ponds. Access to the Melville Ponds



Photo 7—Melville Recreational Area

Campground, which is located within the reserve, is limited to registered campers.

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2.2.7 SPECIAL USE: SALTWATER ACCESS

Cedar Island - On Blue Bill Cove off Route 24 offers a quiet spot for fishing along the water. Ample parking exists for the boat ramp. Needs signage and “danger - no swimming” signs. Entrance road needs leveling or paving. State owned and maintained.

Weaver Cove Boat Ramp - Located off Burma Road, is a modern boat launch facility accessible to the disabled. The launch provides access to Weaver Cove. This is a site for launching boats from trailers as well as direct water access to launch canoes and kayaks. Provides 25 parking spaces for vehicles and boat trailers.

2.2.8 SPECIAL USE: BEACHES

McCorrie Point – A protected open area, this barrier beach provides access to the shoreline. There are no improvements.

Sandy Point Beach - Portsmouth’s town beach is located on the Sakonnet River and is staffed by lifeguards when available during the summer season. Bathhouses and restroom facilities are available in season.



Photo 6—Sandy Point Beach

2.2.9 SPECIAL USE: CRMC RIGHTS-OF-WAY TO THE SHORE

Pursuant to its role in safeguarding public access to the shoreline for all, the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) maintains a program of discovery and designation of public rights-of-way to the tidal areas of the state. Of the 200+ CRMC-designated rights-of-way statewide, 17 are located in Portsmouth. They are:

- V – 1 Off Mt. View Road at the tip of Common Fence Point.
- V – 2 Off Anthony Road near the tip of Common Fence Point.
- V – 3 Off Narragansett Road east of its northern intersection with Anthony Road.
- V – 4 Near the intersection of Leedham Street and Cedar Avenue.
- V – 5 An extension of Point Street running from its intersection with Bay Street to the Cove.

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- V – 6 Off Green Street near its intersection with Coral Street.
- V – 7 Off the intersection of Ivy Avenue and Seaconnet Boulevard.
- V - 8 A southward extension of Edith Avenue to the shore.
- V – 9 A southward extension of Gould Avenue to the shore.
- V – 10 A southward extension of Island Park Avenue to the shore.
- V – 11 A southward extension of Ruth Avenue to the shore.
- V – 12 A southward extension of Morgan Street to the shore.
- V – 13 Off Aquidneck Avenue in Portsmouth Park.
- V – 14 An extension of East Cory’s Lane near its intersection with Atlantic Avenue.
- V – 15 An extension of Tallman Avenue at its intersection with Atlantic Avenue.
- V – 16 An extension of Child Street at its intersection with Water Street.
- V – 17 An extension of Morningside Lane to the Sakonnet River shoreline.

See **Map 3** for the location of these 17 CRMC-designated rights-of-way in Portsmouth.

2.2.10 NON-TOWN FACILITIES

Common Fence Point - Is a neighborhood playground owned and maintained by the residents of Common Fence Point.

Green Valley Country Club - The Green Valley Country Club is an 18-hole championship course. Known as Newport’s finest semi-private country club, it is open to the public.

Gull Cove Fishing Area - Gull Cove is a fishing area along Route 24. There are trails here and with a beach walk, make for a walk of a mile. This walk is tide dependent however, as most of the trail along the shore can be submerged at higher tides.

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Montaup Country Club - Located on the shores of Mt. Hope Bay, Montaup Country Club is an 18-hole semi-private course. The fairly open, flat seaside course is known to be a good test of shot-making ability due to its sometimes tricky winds.

Newport National Golf Club - Newport National, which started out as a 200-acre landscape nursery, is now deemed the “Number One Public Access Course in New England,” by New England Golf Monthly. The 18-hole course includes sloping fairways, marshes, and strategically placed bunkers.

Oakland Forest - Located off Carriage Drive, the Oakland Forest and Meadow Trail is a 0.6-mile loop trail through a beautiful, old growth American Beech forest. Includes one of the last remaining stands of old growth American Beech trees on the East Coast. This once threatened forest now serves as a haven for people and wildlife alike. Saved by a joint effort in 2000 by the Town of Portsmouth and the Aquidneck Land Trust.

Sakonnet Greenway Trail - The Sakonnet Greenway Trail (SGT) is the longest contiguous nature trail on Aquidneck Island at 10 miles long. The SGT is a true snapshot of inland Aquidneck Island. Users of the trail have the opportunity to view wildlife across meadows and woodlands as well as enjoy pastoral views of farms and agricultural landscapes.

South Prudence Management Area - The Management Area is located at the south end of Prudence Island. It is owned and operated by the RIDEM Division of Fish, Wildlife & Estuarine Resources, and is part of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System. It is open to the public. It contains a small beach, picnic area with two fireplaces and two tables, bike path, and fishing pier. The facility is in serious disrepair with much unused land. The State allows hunting on Prudence, but geographic limitations are unclear. This has created a very dangerous situation that must be corrected.

Teddy's Beach – Located on the Sakonnet in Island Park, Teddy's Beach is not staffed by lifeguards and has no facilities, but provides a scenic view of the Sakonnet. There is no off-street parking for the boat ramp and parking can be limited.

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<i>Table 2.1- Recreational Facility Features and Use Limitations</i>			
Recreational Facility Name	Area (=.Acres)	Principal Features	Use Limitations
<i>Historic Parks</i>			
Bristol Ferry Town Common	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenic views 	Parking restricted.
Fort Butts	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiking paths • Scenic views 	
Founders Brook	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenic views 	Parking restricted.
Legion Park	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenic views 	
Patriots' Park	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenic views 	Parking restricted.
<i>Pocket/Mini Parks</i>			
John F. Kennedy Park	< 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorial park 	Parking restricted.
Hathaway School	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two basketball courts • One playground 	Playground equipment is limited. School use only is allowed during school hours. School use takes precedence.
Heritage Park	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenic views 	
Lehigh Overlook	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenic views 	
<i>Neighborhood Parks</i>			
Coggeshall School	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two baseball fields 	Lighting would expand useable hours.
Elmhurst Park	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two basketball courts • One playground 	Lighting at basketball court would expand useable hours.
Island Park Playground	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One baseball field • One basketball court • One playground 	Lighting would expand useable hours.
Mount Hope Park	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishing • Scenic views 	Limited public use pending future park safety improvements.
Portsmouth High School	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two baseball fields • Two softball fields • One football stadium • Three basketball courts • Eight tennis courts • One soccer field • One running track 	School use only is allowed during school hours. School use takes precedence.
Portsmouth Middle School	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One baseball field • One basketball court • One playground • One soccer field 	School use only is allowed during school hours. School use takes precedence. Lighting would expand useable hours.

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Table 2.1- Recreational Facility Features and Use Limitations			
Recreational Facility Name	Area (=.Acres)	Principal Features	Use Limitations
Turnpike Ave. Playground	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One baseball field • One playground 	Lighting would expand useable hours.
<i>Community Parks</i>			
Glen Farm	120	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three baseball fields • One basketball court • Ten soccer fields 	Lighting would expand useable hours. Restrooms are needed.
Glen Park	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One playground • Three soccer fields • Fishing 	Access to the Glen Manor House and its accessories may be limited during functions.
"3S" Fields	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two soccer fields 	Future development.
<i>Playgrounds</i>			
Common Fence Point	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One baseball field • One playground • Scenic views 	Baseball field floods during extreme high tides/coastal storms.
Frank Carson Playground	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One playground 	Playground equipment needs upgrade.
Melville School	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One playground 	School use only is allowed during school hours. School use takes precedence.
<i>Special Use: Freshwater Access</i>			
Melville Recreation Area	152	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog Park • Hiking paths • Camping • Fishing • One playground • Blue trails • Scenic views 	Access to the Melville Ponds Campground is limited to registered campers.
<i>Special Use: Saltwater Access</i>			
Cedar Island	24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishing • Boating access • Scenic views 	Entrance road needs leveling or paving.
Weaver Cove Boat Ramp	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boating access • Scenic views 	Ramp is steep and in need of repair.
<i>Special Use: Beaches</i>			
McCorrie Point	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishing • Beach • Scenic views 	No services.

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<i>Table 2.1- Recreational Facility Features and Use Limitations</i>			
Recreational Facility Name	Area (=.Acres)	Principal Features	Use Limitations
Sandy Point Beach	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishing • Beach • Scenic views 	Bathhouses and restroom facilities are available in season.
Town Totals	389		

2.3 ASSESSMENT OF NEED

This section includes a review and summary of the site (space) type needs and facility needs in accordance with minimum NRPA standards, and other identified site (space) and facility needs.

This section is not intended to be a comprehensive assessment of recreational need. The Town is currently working on an Open Space and Recreation Master Plan which will be incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan by amendment after final approval/adoption of both plans. The Recreation Master Plan will assess a full range of recreational needs for all ages, abilities and interests and will be guided by NRPA standards to assure there are adequate facilities for all future users.

Technical Paper 162 Rhode Island Population Projections 2010 - 2040 (RIDOA/Statewide Planning, April 2013) was used to determine both the existing and projected levels of need. The 2020 projections were utilized as the 2018 baseline (-0.1% change from 2010 - 2020) and 2025 projections for projected needs (+1.3% change).

- 2010 Population was 17,389
- 2015 Population projection was 17, 310 (-0.5% decrease)
- 2020 Population projection is 17,378 (+0.4% increase)
- 2025 Population projection is 17,606 (+1.3% increase)

Space and facility needs for the 2018 baseline (2015 census), and projected 2025, are represented in Table 2 and Table 3, respectively, based on the ‘low’ estimate for needs, and includes acreage for Mount Hope Park (2.37 acres Neighborhood Park) which is partially developed.

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The 2020 US Census reports the 2010-2020 population growth for Portsmouth at 2.8% with a total population of 17,871. This is a net increase over the 2010 population of 482 persons.

Table 2.2-Existing and Future Active Recreation Acreage Needs^a

Facility Type	Acreage Standard per Population	Existing Acreage	2015 (Population: 17,310)		2025 (Population: 17,606)	
			Acres Needed ^b by Population	Deficit	Acres Needed ^b by Population	Deficit
Pocket/Mini Park	1:4,000	5	5	none	5	none
Playground	1:2,000	8	9	1	9	1
Neighborhood Park	1:1,000	20	18	none	18	none
Community Park	1:200	145	87	none	89	none

Notes:

- a. Based on NRPA Standards, 2015 census and projected 2025 population.
- b. Acreages needed are rounded up to next acre.

Table 2.3-Existing and Future Active Recreation Facility Needs^a

Facility ^c	Unit Standard per Population	Existing Facilities	2015 (Population: 17,310)		2025 (Population: 17,606)	
			Units Needed ^b by Population	Deficit	Units Needed ^b by Population	Deficit
Basketball Courts	1:2,000	10	9	none	9	none
Tennis Courts	1:2,000	8	9	1	9	1
Baseball Fields	1:4,000	12	5	none	5	none
Soccer Fields	1:2,000	16	9	none	9	none
Softball Fields	1:3,000	2	6	4	6	4
Handball Courts	1:5,000	0	4	4	4	4
Swimming Pool (50m)	1:20,000	0	1	1	1	1
Trail, Bicycle (miles)	1 mile/2,000	0	9	9	9	9
Trail, Hiking (miles)	1 mile/4,000	5.8	5	none	5	none
Volleyball Courts	1:3,000	2	6	4	6	4

Notes:

- a. Based on NRPA Standards, 2015 census and projected 2025 population.
- b. Units needed are rounded up to next unit.
- c. Not a comprehensive list of activities, but representative of standards to be pursued.

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2.4 GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

2.4.1 GOAL R-1

Organize a system of high quality, well-maintained, active recreational facilities and passive recreation areas sufficient to meet the ongoing needs of present and future citizens of Portsmouth.

POLICY R-1.1

Maintain an active Parks & Recreation Department to manage recreational activity in Portsmouth.

Action R-1.1a: Develop a comprehensive recreation master plan to identify long and short-term needs for recreational programs and facilities.

Action R-1.1b: Restrict all Recreation Department revenue to maintaining Recreation Department programs and facilities as expressed in a comprehensive recreation master plan.

Action R-1.1c: Establish an efficient and accessible scheduling and permitting system for recreational facilities use.

Action R-1.1d: Adopt a recreational facility use fee policy and fee schedule and update as needed.

Action R-1.1e: Create meaningful programs within the Recreation Department that will benefit all age levels.

Action R-1.1f: Develop programs and facilities that extend the value of the Recreation Department beyond athletics and into general community wellness.

Action R-1.1g: Develop a comprehensive catalog of existing and active recreation acreage and facility needs based on NRPA standards.

POLICY R-1.2

Continue to provide for high-quality maintenance of current public recreation areas and facilities.

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[Action R-1.2a](#): Develop long-term maintenance plans for all town-owned recreation facilities.

[Action R-1.2b](#): Pursue stewardship of recreational facilities through “friends of” groups and work with sports leagues to enhance maintenance efforts.

[Action R-1.2c](#): Maintain existing CRMC and public-designated rights-of-way to the shore to keep them clear and safe for all users.

[Action R-1.2d](#): Pursue state, federal, and private funding opportunities for recreation facilities maintenance.

[Action R-1.2e](#): Work with RIDEM, CRMC and other state agencies on a long-term plan to address issues at the Weaver Cove Boat Ramp and the Old Stone Bridge.

POLICY R-1.3

Explore opportunities to physically improve and increase access to existing recreational facilities as well as identify areas for potential expansion of our recreational system.

[Action R-1.3a](#): Pursue opportunities to establish active and passive recreational facilities accessible to all neighborhoods in Portsmouth.

[Action R-1.3b](#): Work with the Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve to improve open space access and educational opportunities on Prudence Island.

[Action R-1.3c](#): Work with the Melville Park Committee to expand recreational opportunities at Melville Park.

[Action R-1.3d](#): Investigate the development of an indoor, multi-purpose Community Recreation Center.

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ELEMENT 3

Historic and Cultural Resources



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ELEMENT 3 – HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

An understanding of how Portsmouth came to exist - its heritage - is essential to planning for what it will become in the future. This story can in turn guide us in how we manage the mixture of modern society and infrastructure with our rich historic legacy to define a character and quality of life for our community.

3.1 PORTSMOUTH’S HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES VISION

PORTSMOUTH WILL BE A COMMUNITY WHERE CULTURAL HERITAGE, HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND TRADITIONAL LANDSCAPES ARE PRESERVED, ENRICHED AND PROTECTED AND AN ENDURING COMMITMENT HAS BEEN MADE TO CONTINUE THIS EFFORT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

3.2 A GENERAL HISTORY OF PORTSMOUTH

Occupying the northern half of Aquidneck Island and seven large and small islands to its east and west, Portsmouth is a largely rural/suburban community with physical and cultural attributes that reflect important broad patterns of Rhode Island history, including farming, the Revolutionary War, maritime activity, summer communities and country estates, the development of transportation networks, education, and religion.

Founded in 1638 by John Clarke and William Coddington, Portsmouth is the second oldest settlement in the state. Political differences among the settlers, especially after the arrival of Anne Hutchinson, provoked Clarke and Coddington in 1639 to move to the south end of Aquidneck and establish Newport, which included Middletown until 1743. Early settlement of Portsmouth occurred at the north end of town on two-acre lots near Founders Brook and Town Pond, but nothing survives of this settlement.

Two important institutional buildings from that early period remain. Like Newport, Portsmouth attracted the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in the seventeenth century. A meetinghouse they erected in 1700 still stands on East Main Road near Town Hall. Public education developed early in Portsmouth, and

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the Southermost Schoolhouse (1716-25), now on the site of the Portsmouth Historical Society, documents that phenomenon.

The early settlement was gradually abandoned after 1740 for Newtown, a village platted overlooking the Sakonnet River from the east slope of Butts Hill. By the late eighteenth century, the village had several stores, a livery stable, a blacksmith shop, two churches, a market, and a music hall. This area has remained Portsmouth's center and retains a variety of residential, commercial, and institutional buildings over the years since settlement. Twentieth-century incursions have somewhat diminished the area's historic integrity, but a number of important buildings remain.

The livelihood of early Portsmouth residents was largely tied to agriculture, especially in supplying produce, meat, and dairy products to the rapidly growing eighteenth-century town of Newport to the south. Across the town remain several early farmhouses and complexes, such as the Lawton-Almy Hall Farm (ca. 1700 et seq.) at 559 Union Street. New farms continued to be created through the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and many remain. A common adjunct agricultural building was the wind-powered gristmill; Portsmouth had more windmills than any other Rhode Island municipality, but only two remain. The Boyd's Windmill has been restored and stands in Paradise Park in Middletown. The Prescott Farm windmill, originally built in Warren, occupied two separate locations in Portsmouth as well as a site in Fall River. It has also been restored and stands at Prescott Farm at the south end of town along West Main Road.

Two important Revolutionary War events occurred in Portsmouth: the capture of General Richard Prescott in July 1777 and the Battle of Rhode Island in August 1778, unique in the history of the Revolution as the only engagement in which black Americans participated as a distinct racial group in the First Rhode Island Regiment. The Battle of Rhode Island site is a National Historic Landmark.

During the nineteenth century, coal was mined in northwest Portsmouth, off Willow Lane. On the same location, copper was smelted between 1866 and 1883. Only an open field, covered with rock and coal, and a handful of modest, shingled workers' houses remain.

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While Portsmouth's lack of natural harbor inhibited its links to maritime activity, its location, adjacent to shipping lanes, occasioned the construction of two lighthouses, one at Sandy Point (1823, 1852) and one on Hog Island (1901).

During the nineteenth century, Newport in particular and Aquidneck Island in general became desirable as places to pass the summer. Summer houses had first appeared here in the late eighteenth century, but both Metcalf Bowler's House and "Vaucluse" are gone. Nineteenth and twentieth-century country houses range from the picturesque informality of the medium-size John Barstow House, "Greenvale Farm" (1864-65, John Hubbard Sturgis (Boston), architect) to the monumental Moses Taylor House, "The Glen" (1923, John Russell Pope (New York), architect). These houses were usually sited near Narragansett Bay or the Sakonnet River to exploit fine views; one of the best concentrations lies east of East Main Road and retains not only houses, but also remarkable landscaping and extensive, meticulously laid stone walls. A summer colony developed at the north end of the island around Bristol Ferry. In addition to the remaining shingled summer cottages were a hotel and rail station. An amusement park, located south of Blue Bill Cove, thrived between 1898 and 1938, when a hurricane destroyed it. A group of small houses north of Park Avenue, built originally as summer cottages, survives. Common Fence Point was also set up as a summer colony in the mid 1920's by a Brockton developer. In the late nineteenth-century, summer cottages began to appear on Prudence and Hog Islands as well.

Nineteenth-century institutional growth included the construction of several churches, including St. Paul's Episcopal (1833, Russell Warren, architect), St. Mary's' Episcopal (1849, Richard Upjohn (New York), architect), and St. Anthony's Roman Catholic (ca. 1901).

The construction of the Mount Hope Bridge in 1929 and the Sakonnet River Bridge in 1957 greatly increased Portsmouth's accessibility. Consequently, the town has seen considerable growth in residential construction, first single-family houses and later apartments, condominiums, and industrial facilities. The growing population has encouraged commercial development, especially along East Main Road.

The varied and abundant historic resources of Portsmouth include a number of early farms and farmhouses; important summer houses, many designed by nationally important architects; large nineteenth- and twentieth-century recreational farms; houses of worship important both for their

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architecture and documentation of religious and social history; two key lighthouses; and several historic districts. Moreover, Portsmouth retains one of the State's most impressive countrysides—dramatic in its whole and with important evolved and designed landscapes. The town's strong sense of place plays an important role in its appeal and should receive strong consideration in planning for the town's future.

3.3 THEMES

In consideration of the historic and cultural resources of Portsmouth and their preservation, several themes emerge as significant.

3.3.1 GEOGRAPHY

The form historic preservation takes depends very much on the geographic nature of the Town. Towns with compact historic villages or town centers can simply concentrate on the preservation of those relatively small areas. Such areas are easy to identify visually and lend themselves well to the establishment of formal Historic Districts. Portsmouth developed as a decentralized farming community with two primary arteries bisecting the Town. There is no town center. Historically significant sites and structures are spread everywhere throughout Portsmouth. While a historic district approach may work well in some identifiable areas of town, historic preservation activities need to take a different approach. Tools of the trade for a decentralized approach include public education and promoting community awareness of the historic character of our community, land use and zoning regulations to guide infill development to ensure the new does not overwhelm the old and creating a framework where several separate entities can work in coordinated fashion to accomplish a wide variety of preservation activities all across town.

3.3.2 AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPES

For all but the past generation or two, Portsmouth was predominantly a farming community. Only with the construction of the Sakonnet River Bridge in 1957 did Portsmouth start to become a suburb. Given its beauty and now convenient location, Portsmouth's agricultural heritage has been giving way to residential developments. As one of Portsmouth's farmers so eloquently put it, "the last crop of a farmer in

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Portsmouth is a condominium development.” Carefully managing this developmental pressure is not only essential to future land use consideration but to the historic preservation of our past.

3.3.3 POLITICAL WILL

Historic and cultural resources in Portsmouth have been documented by various entities both local and at the state level over the years, but at present there is no single responsible entity in place to ensure these important structures, landscapes and sites are cataloged and preserved. If historic preservation activities are to be successful, the Town, the School Department, the Portsmouth Historical Society and the various cultural institutions in town not only need to coordinate efforts and function as a group, but also must be supported by sustained taxpayer funding to ensure an enduring commitment to preserving our heritage is maintained.

3.4 HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

This section provides an inventory of historic and cultural resources in town.

3.4.1 HISTORIC & CULTURAL SITES, STRUCTURES & LANDSCAPES

National Historic Register Sites

There are 13 properties in Portsmouth listed on the federal government’s National Register of Historic Places. See **Map 4** for their locations.

1. Battle of Rhode Island Historic District, Lehigh Hill and both sides of Rhode Island Route 24, between Hedley and Dexter Streets
2. Union Church, East Main Road and Union Street
3. Borden Farm, 2951 and 2967 East Main Road
4. Hog Island Shoal Lighthouse, Hog Island
5. Portsmouth Friends Meeting House, Cemetery, and Parsonage, 11 Middle Road and 2232 East Main Road
6. Farnham Farm, 113 Mount Pleasant Avenue, Prudence Island

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7. Pine Hill Archaeological Site, vicinity of Pine Hill, Prudence Island
8. Mount Hope Bridge, Route 114, Bristol and Portsmouth
9. Prudence Island Lighthouse, Sandy Point, Prudence Island
10. Lawton-Almy-Hall Farm/Lakeside Farm, 559 Union Street
11. Oak Glen/Julia Ward Howe House, 745 Union Street
12. Greenvale Farm/Greenvale, 582 Wapping Road
13. Wreck Sites of the H.M.S. Cerberus and H.M.S. Lark, Waters of Narragansett Bay adjacent to Aquidneck Island (4/26/73)

Sites Deserving Consideration for National Register Listing

Various sites over the years have been deemed deserving consideration for National Register of Historic Places inclusion. An incomplete list from several sources include:

- Melville Marine Historic District, Melville, Portsmouth
- Bristol Ferry Town Common, Bristol Ferry Road
- Glen Road Historic District
- Portsmouth – Newtown Historic District
- Prescott Farm Historic District
- Southeast Portsmouth Rural Estates Historic District
- Amos D. Smith House (Hall Manor, Portsmouth Abbey School)
- St. Mary's Episcopal Church

3.4.2 HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS – INFORMAL DISTRICT DESIGNATION

Six historic neighborhoods (informal districts) are identified in the Historic and Architectural Resources of Portsmouth, Rhode Island, Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission (1979):

1. The Battle of Rhode Island Historic District, Ft. Butts and Butts Hill and an area covering the major arena of action, Turkey Hill, Barker Brook, Almy Hill, Lehigh Hill and the Hessian Hole.

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2. Bristol Ferry Road Historic District, along Bristol Ferry Road immediately south of the Mt. Hope Bridge.
3. Glen Road Historic District, Glen Road.
4. Portsmouth – Newtown Historic District, along East Main Road immediately north and south of Turnpike Avenue.
5. Prescott Farm Historic District, West Main Road straddling the Portsmouth/Middletown town line.
6. Southeast Portsmouth Rural Estate Historic District, Glen, Oakland, and Sandy Point Farms, Vaucluse, and Glen Manor House.

3.4.3 PORTSMOUTH HISTORIC HOMES

Town tax records, a report from the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, the collection of books written by Town Historian, Jim Garman and others identify over 200 pre-20th century historic homes in Portsmouth. The Town Planning Department is working on a comprehensive catalog of historic homes to appear as an appendix to a future update of the Comprehensive Plan.

3.4.4 HISTORIC CEMETERIES

The Rhode Island Cemetery Commission, the Rhode Island Graves Registration Committee, Town records and various research materials all together list a total of nearly 60 cemeteries in Portsmouth. Several are large, active cemeteries, but most are small lots with some burials dating back to the 17th century. About half of the cemeteries are on private property with the remaining either on church or Town-owned property. The Portsmouth Historical Society is currently conducting a survey to determine the status and condition of all cemeteries and to update current recordkeeping. The Town Planning Department is working on a comprehensive catalog of historic cemeteries to appear as an appendix to a future update of the Comprehensive Plan.

3.4.5 SCENIC SITES, STRUCTURES LANDSCAPES & VISTAS

An incomplete list of scenic sites, structures, landscapes and vistas not listed elsewhere include:

- Camp Meeting Grove, Hedly Street

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- Prudence Island School, Prudence Island
- Island Park Summer Colony neighborhood
- Stone Bridge, Island Park
- Leonard Brown House
- Patriots Park, West Main Road at split with Rte. 24
- Founders Brook
- Portsmouth Historical Society Museum (3 buildings), Union Street at East Main Road
- Stone Barns at Glen Farm
- Green Animals Topiary Gardens

3.4.6 NOTABLE STONE WALLS

The Town Planning Department is working on a listing of the location of notable stone walls in Portsmouth to appear as an appendix to a future update of the Comprehensive Plan.

3.4.7 CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Significant cultural institutions in Portsmouth include:

The Portsmouth Historical Society

The Portsmouth Historical Society is a volunteer nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of Portsmouth, Rhode Island's history. The Society's long-term vision is to protect and promote Portsmouth's cultural heritage by creating a secure and sustainable facility, where, in conjunction with other local organizations, it can store, maintain and display a collection of historic artifacts, offer lectures and research assistance to the public, and stimulate the study of our town's history for future generations.

The Society fulfills its mission by:

1. Maintaining and providing tours of the historical buildings in its possession:
 - a. The Christian Union Church (1865)

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- b. The Southernmost School (1725)
 - c. The Old Town Hall (c. 1850).
2. Collecting, conserving and interpreting historical documents and objects linked to historical sites, houses, farms, and families of Portsmouth.
 3. Providing direction and resources to assist genealogical and scholarly research related to Portsmouth's history.
 4. Arranging exhibitions which use historical materials to enrich the public's understanding and appreciation of Portsmouth's rich history.
 5. Presenting programs on topics that build enthusiasm for preserving and supporting our local history.

The Society's museum, located on the corner of East Main Road and Union Street, has a collection of artifacts dating back to when Native Americans lived on the land. In addition to the restored church congregation room, the museum has memorabilia that belonged to Julia Ward Howe, a Portsmouth resident, whose poetic verses were used for the "Battle Hymn of the Republic." Other artifacts include a 19th century horse-drawn hearse and a mail wagon from the early 1900s.

Town Records/Archives

The vault, basement rooms and Town Clerk's office in Portsmouth Town Hall house official records of town government activity dating back to the founding of the town. Birth/death, marriage and probate records, land evidence records, old plat maps, tax and mortgage records, Town Council minutes dating back to the early 18th century and a complete set of high-resolution aerial photographs taken of the entire town in 1948 are just some of the significant documents stored there. Storage conditions are a challenge. Resources dedicated to creating a more stable environment to preserve these important records documenting the history of Portsmouth are needed.

Town Historian

In 2014, the Portsmouth Town Council appointed its first official Town Historian. With an indefinite tenure to serve at the leisure of the Council, Jim Garman's books, presentations and well-attended lectures bring an appreciation of the Town's history to life for our citizens.

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The Portsmouth Free Public Library

See Section 7.11.1 of the Services and Facilities Element of this Comprehensive Plan for a complete description of the library and the services it has to offer.

The Portsmouth Arts Guild

The Portsmouth Arts Guild was founded in January 2003 to provide an opportunity for Portsmouth artists, and those of surrounding towns, to exhibit their work and to learn from one another. Its members are painters and printmakers, photographers and sculptors, fiber artists and wood carvers, jewelers and craftspeople.

In 2006, the Arts Guild formed a partnership with St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Portsmouth for the use of its parish hall, located at 2679 East Main Road, as a gallery, meeting place and arts classroom. Currently, the Guild offers monthly exhibitions of work from members and non-members, March through December, as well as a varying number of art classes and workshops.

The Guild's Mission is to provide a welcoming and nurturing environment for the visual and performing arts in Portsmouth and the surrounding area; to celebrate, share and promote the talents and skills of artists of all ages and abilities, and contribute to the cultural enrichment of the community through exhibitions, performances and education.

Common Fence Point Improvement Association

The Common Fence Point Center for Arts, Wellness, and Community is a community center in northern Portsmouth with a strong arts and culture focus. Run by a non-profit 501-c3 organization called the CFPIA, the Center has, for nearly a century, been a place to gather, socialize and celebrate community. The original "CFP Hall" began a remarkable transformation into the now CFP Center for Arts, Wellness, and Community in 2016. After successfully rebranding, several state and philanthropic organizations, as well as private donors, came together to fund a \$750,000 renovation to the building. The six-month construction project was completed in fall 2019. The renovations modernize and professionalize the space and truly emphasize the Center's mission: "To Enrich Lives Through Arts, Wellness, and the Power of Community."

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More than 500 people visit the Center each week for a variety of programming: Saturday evening concerts featuring nationally-known talent, art classes, fitness and dance classes, ballroom socials, and culinary arts classes for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It is also home to The Gallery at Common Fence Point, a visual arts space showcasing a different local artist each month.

Most importantly, the CFP Center for Arts, Wellness, and Community serves as a hub for collaboration among several Portsmouth non-profits. Common Fence Music has hosted Saturday concerts in the main event space for a quarter of a century. The Center is a sought after venue for the well-attended lectures by the Portsmouth Historical Society. The Portsmouth Arts Guild is working with the Center to broaden its reach. The Newport YMCA provides an innovative afterschool program that features weekly arts education and theater for children ages 6-12. The YMCA also created a summer 'Arts Camp' which is an important opportunity for young artists and budding thespians. All of these collaborations strengthen the positive reach and impact of all of our organizations, as well as create jobs in our community.

The Portsmouth Community Theatre

The Portsmouth Community Theater began in 1996. The founders had a dream of offering adults and children the opportunity to experience live theater BY and FOR their own community.

In the Community Theater's early years, with no performance space of their own, they have performed at the Portsmouth's Common Fence Point Community Hall, St. Mary's Episcopal Church, the Coggeshall School and the Portsmouth Historical Society's museum building. Since 1996 they have produced numerous plays, reviews, dinner theater performances and musicals giving hundreds of adults and children the opportunity to "put on a show."

Portsmouth Abbey

Portsmouth Abbey is a community of Benedictine monks on Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island. With a focus on scholarly and artistic work, hospitality, and liturgical observance, the chief work of the monks is performing the Divine Office and the liturgy in the context of fulfilling the precepts of St. Benedict's Rule – sacred reading, prayer, routine monastic duties and manual work when able.

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The former Hall estate was purchased in 1918 by Father Leonard Sargent, an American monk of Downside Abbey in England and the monastery established formally in 1919 by Pope Benedict XV. In addition to being on National Historic Register as the last remaining landscape of the Battle of Rhode Island, the Hall estate was the colonial farm for the Freeborn family dating back to 1640. In keeping with the congregation's early history, the Abbey runs a college preparatory boarding school for boys and girls, operated continuously since it was founded in 1926. The school's mission statement is based on reverence for God and the human person, respect for learning and order, and responsibility for the shared experience of community life. The community and liturgical life of the monastery overflows into the school and town as a valuable contribution to society.

3.4.8 THREATS TO HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Portsmouth's historic and cultural resources continue to be under threat by:

- Lack of formal recognition, resources and formal protection opportunities.
- Property owner activity – renovation/demolition. Regulations, incentives and guidance should be developed to address this issue.
- Development/redevelopment pressure. Development pressure is particularly apparent on agricultural lands, which are physically easy for developers to convert to residential and commercial land uses.
- Deterioration of visual historic character. A review of land use and zoning regulations should be conducted to better manage infill development so that as new development emerges, it does not overwhelm existing historic streetscapes.

3.4.9 EXISTING LOCAL PROGRAMS TO PROTECT HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Glen Manor House

Designed by world-renowned architect John Russel Pope, architectural plans for Glen Manor House were begun in 1921. Intending to be the proper country home of the H.A.C. Taylor family and the centerpiece of their extensive Glen Farm, the interior design and furnishings were adapted from the Petit Trianon at Versailles and was unique to the area. H.A.C. Taylor died as construction began with supervision turned over to his son, Moses Taylor. The manor house was completed in 1923 and the Taylors moved in, where

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they lived for part of the year. Moses Taylor, the eldest son, died in 1928, and his widow, later Mrs. Edith Taylor Nicholson, lived in the house until her death in 1959. The Glen Manor House had extraordinary gardens, somewhat Italian in their design, and the landscaping was magnificent. The landscaping was designed by the Olmsted Brothers—sons of Frederick Law Olmsted.

In January 1959, Reginald Taylor, son of Moses, sold the estate and 43 acres to the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, who moved their Elmhurst school here from Providence in September 1961. The school closed in 1972 and the Town of Portsmouth purchased the property on a bond issue. The Portsmouth Historical Society was asked to create a plan for the use of the Glen Manor House, and from that organization was created the Glen Manor House Authority: a group of volunteers from the town. This group, along with the resident manager, maintains and operates Glen Manor House and now makes the house available for special functions including weddings, receptions, corporate meetings, events and private gatherings.

Lower Glen Farm Equestrian Center

Portsmouth's Lower Glen Farm consists of a grouping of historic buildings on 11 acres of property that represents a unique and relatively intact example of early 20th century barns, stables and outbuildings. These handsome buildings reflect an important era in Portsmouth's recent past, where agriculture was the anchor of its base economy and the practice of maintaining a country estate by figures of the "Gilded Age" was in vogue.

As the expansive Glen Farm began to be broken up and sold for private development over the years, the portion of the farm containing the historic barns and stables continued to be operated by a family member of the original country estate, Mason Phelps, as an equestrian center. Under Phelps, a member of the U.S. Olympic equestrian team, the farm hosted the International Jumping Derby each summer, one of the sporting and social highlights of the Newport summer season.

In 1988 the Town learned that Mason Phelps had decided to sell his portion of Glen Farm. After vigorous debate about the possible purchase by the Town of the Phelps land, in 1989 the Town held a special election to decide the matter and the referendum authorizing the purchase for \$3.6 million passed by a three to one margin. Prior to purchase of the property by the Town, the barns, stables and associated structures had suffered through years of neglect and restoration was going to be a tall order for the Town.

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The condition of the farm was such that not a pane of glass remained in place nor a door on its hinges. The severely derelict property needed entirely new mechanical systems including plumbing, electrical, heating and fire alarm systems.

In 1990 the Town formed a commission to study potential municipal uses for the former Phelps property, once again known under town ownership as the "Glen Farm." The rebirth of the barns and stables began with leasing the property to a Boston renovator whose intention was to not only rehabilitate the barns but establish the facility as the home of international polo in America. Under the direction of the Portsmouth Town Council, the stewardship of Glen Farm has changed hands a few more times since this original tenure, with maintenance of the barns and stables themselves shared by various parties and the Town's Department of Public Works. The Equestrian Center is currently being operated under an agreement with Clemens Equine LLC with Ann and Sam Clemens as the managers. Maintenance and renovation of the structures is shared with the Town by contractual agreement.

Green Animals Topiary Garden

This small country estate in Portsmouth was purchased in 1872 by Thomas E. Brayton (1844-1939), Treasurer of the Union Cotton Manufacturing Company in Fall River, Massachusetts. It consisted of seven acres of land, a white clapboard summer residence, farm outbuildings, a pasture and a vegetable garden.

Gardener Joseph Carreiro, superintendent of the property from 1905 to 1945, and his son-in-law, George Mendonca, superintendent until 1985, were responsible for creating the topiaries. There are more than 80 pieces of topiary throughout the gardens, including animals and birds, geometric figures and ornamental designs, sculpted from California privet, yew, and English boxwood.

Green Animals is the oldest and most northern topiary garden in the United States. Mr. Brayton's daughter Alice gave the estate its name because of the profusion of "green animals." She made the estate her permanent residence in 1939. Upon her death in 1972, at the age of 94, Miss Brayton left Green Animals to The Preservation Society of Newport County. Today, Green Animals remains as a rare example of a self-sufficient estate combining formal topiaries, vegetable and herb gardens, orchards and a Victorian house overlooking Narragansett Bay.

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Leonard Brown House

Extensively renovated by the Town in 2016-17, The Leonard Brown House sits on a 2-acre parcel off Linden Lane in the approximate center of Glen Farm. Dating from the mid-19th century, the structure was built and utilized as a farm house until 1902 when it was purchased by the Taylor family to be used as a support structure for the larger Glen Farm. The farm house gets its name not from its color (yellow) but from the name of the original owner, Leonard Brown. The Town of Portsmouth bought the property in 1989 as part of the purchase of a large portion of Glen Farm to be used as a sports complex. The Town of Portsmouth currently uses the building and grounds as offices for the Recreation Department and has recently started renting office space as a source of income for the Town.

Original Copy of the Declaration of Independence

The Town of Portsmouth has one of eight copies known to exist of the approximately 36 Declarations printed for the Rhode Island Assembly by Newport printer Solomon Southwick on July 13, 1776. Those Declarations were then distributed to each city and town clerk in Rhode Island to be read to the public or posted for the public to view.

In 1986, retired Portsmouth Police Chief and history buff John Pierce urged Town Clerk Carol Zinno to keep an eye out for the Declaration, which was framed and had once hung on the wall of the records research room but had been missing for years. He told her he always had a gut feeling it was the real thing.

A few weeks later, the town's Public Works Department came to paint the clerk's office. They moved a file cabinet and behind the cabinet was the black-framed Declaration. Zinno contacted Pierce, who contacted rare-books dealer and Newport Bookstore co-owner James Thomson. Thomson contacted Robert Mathieson, a Brown University professor specializing in authentication of historic documents.

After carefully comparing it to a July 13, 1776 copy Brown University had in their library, Mathieson declared the Declaration authentic, and the original sent to Portsmouth Town Clerk John Thurston (1775-1784) by the Rhode Island General Assembly in 1776. The Town of Portsmouth's Declaration of Independence, in fact, is believed to be the only Rhode Island copy remaining at its intended destination – a town clerk's office or a town hall.

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The document is currently stored in the Town Clerk's archive vault and may be viewed by appointment.

Storage of the Portsmouth Compact

Signed on March 7, 1638, the Portsmouth Compact is a document establishing the settlement of Portsmouth. Certainly the most important document in Portsmouth history, its purpose was to set up a new, independent colony that was Christian in character but non-sectarian in governance. It has been called "the first instrument for governing as a true democracy" and was the first document in American history that severed both political and religious ties with England.

The original document still exists and is carefully stored in a glass case at the State Archives in Providence. In recent years the Portsmouth Compact is annually brought to Portsmouth for a day of commemoration and public display.

Battle of Rhode Island Site

The only major action of the Revolutionary War to take place in Rhode Island, the Battle of Rhode Island was fought in Portsmouth on August 29, 1778. Continental army and militia forces, having abandoned their siege of British forces in Newport were followed northward and attacked at several locations in Portsmouth by the British. The initial skirmishes took place at both the intersection of East Main Road and Union Street and the intersection of West Main Road and Union Street. Subsequently, the Americans fell back to a defensive line that cut across the entire island to deny the British the high ground (Butts Hill) to the north. Battle raged throughout the day but ended inconclusively when American forces occupying Butts Hill withdrew to Bristol and Tiverton overnight leaving Aquidneck Island under British control. The battle was significant as the only battle of the Revolutionary War in which a unit made up entirely of African-American soldiers fought, and a fine monument to the 1st Rhode Island Regiment is maintained by RI Department of Transportation (RIDOT) alongside Route 114 on the main battlefield.

Butts Hill, which was fortified with earthworks still visible today, served as a command post and center of the fallback defensive position of the Americans during the battle. On and near the grounds of Portsmouth High School, the site is mowed and monuments maintained by the Portsmouth Department of Public Works. Hiking trails crisscross the earthworks and during the winter months, 360 degree views of the battlefield and its surroundings landscapes are impressive. Signs interpreting and commemorating the

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battle can be seen at two locations in the battlefield area. The Battle of Rhode Island Site was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1974 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Bristol Ferry Town Common

Located at the northern end of Bristol Ferry Road at Bayview Avenue, the Bristol Ferry Town Common was established on March 12, 1714 by the Portsmouth Town Committee. This 1.5-acre space was originally used by farmers and others to keep their livestock and other goods while waiting for the ferry to Bristol. Goods were shipped on the ferries to Bristol, steamboats to Fall River and Providence, by rail (after 1864) and by freight trolleys from 1902 to 1925. All of these forms of transportation came together at Bristol Ferry Town Common. This historic site, with superb views of Mount Hope Bay is currently maintained jointly by the Department of Public Works and the Bristol Ferry Town Common Committee as a public park.

Portsmouth Historical Society Museum

In addition to housing an extensive collection of Portsmouth artifacts and memorabilia in their museum at 870 Union Street, including a room dedicated to Julia Ward Howe, abolitionist, suffragette and poet who wrote the words to the “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” the Portsmouth Historical Society maintains three significant historic buildings on site.

Southermost School (1725) – Built in 1725 and thought to be the oldest one-room school house in America, the building, with its simple post and beam structure, stands as a remembrance of Portsmouth’s earliest history. The nearly three centuries old building has been moved several times from its original location near 102 Union Street and variously used as a school house, a residence, a school house again, a storage and harness shed, and finally a fully restored school house exhibiting original student desks along with the top of the original teacher desk and two of the school bells used over the years. There are examples of the primers, copy books and textbooks students would have used in one room schools in Portsmouth on display as well.

Old Town Hall (c. 1850) – Moved to its present location in 1975, the structure was originally built in 1895 near the present location of Portsmouth Town Hall intending to be used as an office for the Town Clerk. Later to be used as the first headquarters of the permanent fire department, a

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storage shed and a place for meetings, today it houses the Society’s vehicle and farm tool collection.

The Christian Union Church (1865) – This building, a simple 3-story Gothic structure with vertical windows featuring distinctive “eyebrow” frames, was built in 1865 for a congregation that remained active until after World War I. The congregation was in operation until 1938 although the number of participants dwindled considerably. Donated to the Historic Society in 1940, and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1974, the Society currently maintains and makes use of the first floor to house its museum collection and the second-floor congregation hall, complete with pews, an altar and pipe organ, to host occasional meetings and other functions.

Farnham Farm

Dating back to 1805, the 18-acre Farnham Farm is a classic example of southern New England farming of the period. Features of the site include a farm house, barn, milk house, fields, garden, woodland, orchards and stone walls, all restored and active due to the efforts of the Prudence Conservancy.

Purchased in 1998 by the Conservancy, the farm has been transformed into a year round community center. The facility currently offers numerous year round activities including movies, Dining Around the World, internet café, seminars, yoga, community garden plots and much more. The land surrounding the farmstead is currently producing blueberries (pick your own), blackberries, corn, potatoes, apples, and a variety of other vegetables. The area also includes a micro-vineyard and an expansion of the orchard area and a strawberry patch are in the works. Farnham Farm deserves dual listing in this plan as not only an important effort by its owners to preserve a historic landscape but also as a significant cultural resource for the community of Prudence Island. In 2006, the Farnham Farm was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

3.5 GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

3.5.1 GOAL HCR-1

Achieve a self-sustaining level of public awareness in promoting historic and cultural heritage as a vital part of Portsmouth’s community character and quality of life.

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POLICY HCR-1.1

Support the education of students, residents and visitors alike in the importance of preserving the historic and cultural heritage of Portsmouth.

Action HCR-1.1a: Develop and encourage a local history element into the curricula of Portsmouth's school system.

Action HCR-1.1b: Pursue funding for the Portsmouth Free Public Library specifically earmarked to expanding the local history resources section.

Action HCR-1.1c: Continue to work with the Portsmouth Historical Society and the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission to provide educational programs to the public.

Action HCR-1.1d: Promote tourism in Portsmouth through consideration of the establishment of a Heritage Trail and/or similar efforts.

Action HCR-1.1e: Task the Town Council with promoting historic and cultural awareness by issuing proclamations, declarations, resolutions and other public announcements of a historic nature on a regular basis.

Action HCR-1.1f: Pursue providing an annual stipend for the position of Town Historian.

POLICY HCR-1.2

Promote and encourage all public, private and non-profit entities engaged in historic preservation activities in Portsmouth at all levels of effort.

Action HCR-1.2a: Establish a Historic & Cultural Oversight Committee to be chartered by the Town to coordinate with the Portsmouth Historical Society in developing a long-range plan for historic preservation of our historic and cultural resources.

Action HCR-1.2b: Support groups in areas identified as historic neighborhoods to promote historic awareness and historic preservation activities.

POLICY HCR-1.3

Foster civic participation and community engagement through enhanced access to Portsmouth's rich historic and cultural resources.

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[Action HCR-1.3a](#): Organize and catalog the documents, maps and other archival materials in Town Hall and make available to the public.

[Action HCR-1.3b](#): Establish a voluntary “historic marker” or “historic plaque” program to identify historically significant buildings, sites and landscapes.

[Action HCR-1.3c](#): Seek grants and other sources of funding to improve the Town Hall storage environment for Portsmouth’s town records and archives.

3.5.2 GOAL HCR-2

Produce an effective set of policies and programs that insure the protection and preservation of Portsmouth’s historic sites, structures and landscapes.

POLICY HCR-2.1

Protect and preserve historic and cultural resources through the use of design standards, zoning controls, easements, tax incentives and other tools at the Town’s disposal.

[Action HCR-2.1a](#): Amend the Town’s Design Review Standards to include elements specific to the proper restoration of historic buildings in Town.

[Action HCR-2.1b](#): Seek National Register of Historic Places nomination of sites currently considered eligible for listing.

[Action HCR-2.1c](#): Develop and maintain a detailed inventory of historically and culturally significant sites, structures and landscapes. Annually monitor the inventory for changes in condition and status.

[Action HCR-2.1d](#): Review the Town’s Stone Wall and Tree Ordinances for adequate enforcement provisions and amend as necessary.

[Action HCR-2.1e](#): Investigate the establishment of Portsmouth’s identified historic neighborhoods as formal Historic Districts in order to promote awareness and preservation and to make them eligible for state and federal historic preservation assistance.

[Action HCR-2.1f](#): Review the Town’s development review processes and amend as needed in order to strengthen historic resource protection.

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POLICY HCR-2.2

Preserve Portsmouth's historic landscapes, including farms and agricultural lands as essential elements of our community character, economic vitality and quality of life.

[Action HCR-2.2a](#): Maintain the Municipal Farm Tax exemption program.

[Action HCR-2.2b](#): As opportunities arise, partner with governmental and private funding sources to purchase development rights to farmlands and other properties of historic significance.

POLICY HCR-2.3

Maintain financial support for historic preservation activities, arts and cultural organizations and neighborhood associations.

[Action HCR-2.3a](#): Pursue a private partner such as the Portsmouth Historical Society to act as the principle entity responsible for conducting an annual status report of all the historic and cultural sites, structures and landscapes listed above in this plan. Seek a permanent line item in the annual Town Budget along with an auditing process to ensure the Society has the financial resources necessary to carry out this task.

[Action HCR-2.3b](#): Pursue a tax abatement program for owners of historic structures who voluntarily wish to adhere to historic architectural standards in the renovation and restoration of historic homes in town.

[Action HCR-2.3c](#): Pursue a tax abatement program for property owners who have historic cemeteries on their property and wish to take on the task of cemetery maintenance.

[Action HCR-2.3d](#): Dedicate public funding and resources to the preservation of historic and cultural assets on Town property, including cemeteries, stone walls, and historic buildings.

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ELEMENT 4

Housing



PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

ELEMENT 4 – HOUSING

4.1 HOUSING VISION

PORTSMOUTH'S SENSE OF COMMUNITY WILL BE EVIDENT IN A DIVERSE STOCK OF HIGH QUALITY, SAFE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS FOR ALL INDIVIDUAL NEEDS AND INCOME LEVELS WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE CHARACTER OF TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD PATTERNS.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

High quality, diverse housing is a building block of a thriving community. Some of the earliest efforts to regulate land use in America were based on housing concerns. Housing is inextricably linked to issues of economic development, transportation, land use, social equality, and environmental sustainability. At 27.7% of total land area, residential development is the highest use of land in Portsmouth, and as such, will shape land use planning, now and in the future. Factors which impact housing include affordability, marketability of existing and future housing stock, patterns of development and neighborhood community character, aging of housing stock, and land use regulations established to minimize the impacts of incompatible land uses, among others. The planning challenge is to balance these interconnected dynamics and guide future development in order to achieve Portsmouth's housing vision. The Comprehensive Plan presents the Town's vision for housing, as well as historical and current housing data, as a basis for its future policies and actions. In addition, the State of Rhode Island has enacted laws to compel municipalities to produce affordable housing units and guidance to support their efforts. In developing local policies for housing, each municipality's comprehensive plan must be consistent with the State's goals and policies for housing as found in the State Guide Plan and the laws of the State:

RIGL §45-22.2-3(a)(6) states, "Comprehensive planning is needed to provide a basis for municipal and State initiatives to ensure all citizens have access to a range of housing choices, including the availability of affordable housing for all income levels and age groups."

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Further, in RIGL §45-53-2 the law states, “The general assembly finds and declares that there exists an acute shortage of affordable, accessible, safe, and sanitary housing for its citizens of low and moderate income, both individuals and families; that it is imperative that action is taken immediately to assure the availability of affordable, accessible, safe, and sanitary housing for these persons; that it is necessary that each city and town provide opportunities for the establishment of low and moderate income housing; and that the provisions of this chapter are necessary to assure the health, safety, and welfare of all citizens of this state, and that each citizen enjoys the right to affordable, accessible, safe, and sanitary housing. It is further declared to be the purpose of this chapter to provide for housing opportunities for low and moderate income individuals and families in each city and town of the state and that an equal consideration shall be given to the retrofitting and rehabilitation of existing dwellings for low and moderate income housing and assimilating low and moderate income housing into existing and future developments and neighborhoods.”

The term “housing” refers to all structures in which people live - single-family homes, multifamily homes, apartment buildings, condominiums, mobile homes, mixed-use buildings, group homes, homeless shelters, etc. Housing in Portsmouth includes nearly all of the above housing types as both private market rate units (the overwhelming majority) and public or semi-public subsidized units. Within the framework of this plan, it is necessary to differentiate between “affordable” and “low and moderate income” housing. This plan addresses both types. Specifically, “low and moderate income” housing refers to dwelling units that have received federal subsidies and are deed-restricted for eligible low-moderate income households for a minimum period of thirty years. By law, the state requires that each municipality ensure at least 10% of all housing units are affordable to low and moderate income residents. In contrast, “affordable” housing simply refers to housing and related costs that are affordable to citizens within certain income brackets. Affordable housing is often mentioned throughout the plan in the broader context of community housing goals and implementation strategies but should not be thought of as the more restrictive “low and moderate income” dwelling units described above. The State sets out specific definitions for each type of housing.

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4.3 OVERVIEW

4.3.1 HOUSING STOCK

Housing supply and demand in Portsmouth have generally balanced out, in terms of the number of dwelling units available relative to the Town’s population size. In recent years, however, development of dwelling units has outpaced population growth. As illustrated in Table 4.1, Portsmouth’s population and housing stock experienced a boom from 1980 - 1990, with a 15%- increase in population and a 20%- increase in housing units. Compared to Rhode Island during the same period, Portsmouth outpaced the state, overall, by more than double. The housing crash in the early 1990s resulted in only a slight increase in both population and housing units, 1.7% and 2% respectively. After 2000, another small boom was experienced prior to the Great Recession of 2008, followed by a slight increase in population, and an increase in housing units in 2017.

Table 4.1-Population and Housing Units: Portsmouth Compared to Rhode Island 1980 - 2017					
Portsmouth					
	1980	1990	2000	2010	2017*
Population	14,257	16,857	17,149	17,389	17,463
Total Housing Units	5,773	7,235	7,386	8,294	8,621
		% 1981 - 1990	% 1991 - 2000	% 2001 - 2010	% 2011 - 2017
Population		15.4%	1.7%	1.4%	0.4%
Total Housing Units		20.2%	2.0%	10.9%	3.9%
Rhode Island					
	1980	1990	2000	2010	2017*
Population	947,154	1,003,464	1,048,319	1,052,567	1,056,138
Total Housing Units	372,672	414,572	439,837	463,388	466,670
		% 1981 - 1990	% 1991 - 2000	% 2001 - 2010	% 2011 - 2017
Population		5.6%	4.3%	0.4%	0.3%
Total Housing Units		10.1%	5.7%	5.1%	0.7%

* Housing Works RI 2019 based on 2017 Census data.
Source: RI Housing Database 2003; U.S. Census 1990, 2000, 2010; Housing Works RI 2019 estimates.

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The number of owner- and renter-occupied units has decreased overall from 1990 to 2017, with an increase in seasonal rental units over the same period (Table 4.2). The traditional single-family home continues to dominate the housing stock in Portsmouth (80%) with nearly three-quarters being owner-occupied (76%).¹ Multi-family housing, including duplexes, apartments and condominiums make up 25.16% of the housing units in Portsmouth with approximately 315 mobile homes in three mobile home parks accounting for the remainder of the housing stock (3.65%).²

Table 4.2-Owner, Renter-Occupied and Seasonal Housing Units, Portsmouth Compared to Rhode Island 1990 - 2017					
	Year	Portsmouth	%	Rhode Island	%
Occupied Units	1990	6,313	87.3%	377,977	91.2%
	2000	6,758	91.5%	408,424	92.9%
	2010	6,988	84.3%	413,600	89.3%
	2017	7,269	84.3%	412,028	88.3%
Owner-Occupied	1990	4,552	72.1%	224,792	59.5%
	2000	5,003	73.9%	245,156	60.0%
	2010	5,191	74.3%	250,952	60.7%
	2017	5,534	76.1%	247,291	60.0%
Renter-Occupied	1990	1,761	27.9%	153,185	40.5%
	2000	1,755	26.1%	163,268	40.0%
	2010	1,797	25.7%	162,648	39.3%
	2017	1,735	23.9%	164,737	40.0%
Vacant Units Total	1990	922	12.7%	36,595	8.8%
	2000	628	8.5%	31,413	7.1%
	2010	1,306	15.7%	49,788	10.7%
	2017	1,352	15.4%	54,642	11.7%
Vacant Seasonal Units	1990	516	7.1%	12,037	2.9%
	2000	381	5.2%	12,988	3.0%
	2010	972	11.3%	18,077	3.9%

¹ 2013-2017 Census.

² Ibid.

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Table 4.2-Owner, Renter-Occupied and Seasonal Housing Units, Portsmouth Compared to Rhode Island 1990 - 2017					
	Year	Portsmouth	%	Rhode Island	%
Vacant for Sale	1990	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data
	2000	38	0.5%	2,400	1.5%
	2010	113	1.4%	5,171	1.1%
Vacant for Rent	1990	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data
	2000	74	1.0%	8,615	2.0%
	2010	156	1.9%	15,763	3.4%
Vacant Rented/ Sold Unoccupied	1990	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data
	2000	27	0.4%	1,726	0.4%
	2010	30	0.4%	1,946	0.5%
Vacant All Other	1990	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data
	2000	108	1.5%	5,684	1.3%
	2010	125	1.5%	9,831	2.1%

Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000, 2010, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates. The Census Bureau defines “occupied housing units” the same as the count of households.

4.3.2 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Prior to 1950, growth in housing was modest, reflecting the rural nature of the community at the time. After 1950, housing development surged with the highest number of new homes being built in the period between 1960 and 1980. An average of 100+ new dwellings were built per year during that period. Growth in housing construction fell to near zero in the early 2000s and again in 2009 after the Great Recession. It has slowly regained since, particularly in the high-end condominium market. As Table 4.3 below illustrates, Portsmouth represents only a small portion of housing construction in the state. Given the lack of substantial new home construction, the median age of a dwelling unit in Portsmouth is 46 years old.³

³ 2013-2017 ACS.

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<i>Table 4.3-2018 Building Permits in Portsmouth and Rhode Island</i>			
	Portsmouth	% of RI Total in Portsmouth	Rhode Island
All Building Permits	26	1.0%	2,337
Buildings with 1 Unit	24	2.5%	962
Multifamily Units	2	0.2%	1,375

Source: Portsmouth - Housing Fact Book 2019

4.3.3 HOUSING PATTERNS AND CONDITIONS

The pattern of housing development in Portsmouth clearly reflects two significant historic characteristics — a rural farming community based on the maintenance of large tracts of land, but also a densely developed resort/recreational community based on leisure pursuits and the enjoyment of natural environment. These seemingly inconsistent origins have blended in interesting ways over time. Dense year-round housing development arose out of what was intended to be mere tent and cottage sites in the historically seasonal resort neighborhood of Island Park. The traditional medium-high-density, single-family development resulted from the subdivision of large farming tracts across the town. More recently, seasonal, resort-style housing has emerged on the west side, supplementing the well-established summer homes on Prudence and Hog Islands.

These two patterns have contributed to another significant feature of Portsmouth: the lack of a “downtown.” Commercial development is not clustered in one location but is distributed in strip-type fashion along the two main north/south highways. A mix of residential and commercial uses flank these roadways, but true mixed-use housing development is almost nonexistent in Portsmouth. An unfortunate effect of the way this residential and commercial development has taken place is that with a few neighborhood exceptions, Portsmouth scores extremely low as a “walkable” community (38: car-dependent out of 100, on walkscore.com). This trend is not likely to change by any significant measure in the future unless we make radical changes to our land use regulations. In the end, the pattern of residential development in Portsmouth is one of a dispersed, semi-rural “bedroom” community with a variety of housing densities and a distinct affinity for recreation- and resort-style amenities.

Table 4.4 identifies the neighborhoods associated with each Census Block Group. Table 4.5 lists the estimated number of housing units, population per acre, median year built, and median home assessed

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value by Census Tract for Portsmouth in 2014.

Table 4.4-Neighborhoods Within Census Block Groups

Key	Census Tract	Census Block Group	Neighborhoods
1	40103	5	West Bristol Ferry, Carnegie - NBC - Arnolds Point, Abbey - Industrial, Kings Grant, North Hedly - Middle Road, Willow Lane - Lehigh Terrace
2	40101	1	Island Park, Hummocks
3	40102	1	Sherwood, McCorrie - Windstone, North Sandy Point
4	40101	3	Bristol Ferry - Bay View Avenue, Common Fence Point
5	40102	2	East Main Road - South, Wapping Road, South Sandy Point, Indian Avenue - Black Point, Old Mill Lane
6	40103	2	Oakland Farm, South Union - Jepson, St. Mary's - Sisson, South Carnegie Drive - Middle Road, Redwood Farms, Almeida - Lawton, West Raytheon - Navy, Melville Trailer Park
7	40101	2	East Bristol Ferry, Sprague - North, North Portsmouth Park
8	40103	3	Prudence Island
9	40103	6	South Hedly - Middle Road, Hilltop, Schoolhouse Road, Valley View, Indian Hill, North Union - Jepson, North Carriage Drive - Middle Road
10	40102	3	South Portsmouth Park, High School, East Central - north, East Central - south
11	40103	4	Melville Park, East Raytheon - Navy, Melville Waterfront
12	40103	1	Hog Island

Source: Town of Portsmouth Planning Department

Table 4.5-Housing and Demographic Statistics: Portsmouth Census Block Group Level

Map Key	Census		Housing Units	Population/Acre	Median	
	Tract	Block Group			Year Built	Home Value
1	40103	5	737	0.65	1969	\$350,000
2	40101	1	679	3.49	1947	\$287,300
3	40102	1	614	1.29	1975	\$572,000^a
4	40101	3	847	2.35	1975	\$285,800
5	40102	2	595	0.98	1974	\$470,500
6	40103	2	923	1.16	1981	\$338,700
7	40101	2	767	4.21	1974	\$275,000
8	40103	3	482	0.07	1952	\$227,700
9	40103	6	1,102	1.65	1971	\$359,600

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Table 4.5-Housing and Demographic Statistics: Portsmouth Census Block Group Level

Map Key	Census		Housing Units	Population/Acre	Median	
	Tract	Block Group			Year Built	Home Value
10	40102	3	1,315	2.98	1969	\$394,200
11	40103	4	81	0.41	1983	
12	40103	1	168	0.56	1956	

Notes:

- a. Bolded items represent highest values in the sample set.
 Source: 2010 - 2014 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates.

Island Park and the Common Fence Point neighborhoods remain near the top regarding density per acre, along with East Bristol Ferry and east Central (North and South). Prudence and Hog Islands, in addition to the Melville area, represent the least dense areas of the town. Single-family development remains the prevalent housing type in Portsmouth, and the general condition of housing is reported as above average by the Building Official.

Of note is the foreclosure rate for Portsmouth during the period of 2013 - 2017. The number of actual foreclosures in Portsmouth was 17 in 2013, decreasing down to a low of three in 2015, and an increase to seven in 2017. This pattern contrasts with both Middletown and Newport. Middletown experienced their peak foreclosure rate in 2015 (12), then down to a low of three in 2017, while Newport has experienced both highs and lows over the same period, now steady at seven in 2017.

4.3.4 HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Another important aspect to Portsmouth’s housing needs is the mismatch between housing and the workforce. Nearly 60% of the jobs in Portsmouth are held by those who cannot afford to purchase or rent a home in town. Salaries/wages for existing jobs in Portsmouth are relatively low, requiring those who can afford to live here to commute out of town for higher paying jobs elsewhere. An essential economic development strategy (expressed elsewhere in this plan) is to increase the economic viability of our community by making Portsmouth a desirable place to live and work. The provision of more affordable housing for our work force is essential to the success of that strategy.

HousingWorks RI summarizes housing data annually for each Rhode Island municipality and detailing how much income is required to rent or own in each city or town. For Portsmouth in 2019, it would take an

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annual income of \$110,582 to afford to purchase a median priced single-family home (\$375,000).⁴ A gap of approximately \$19,000 exists between the median household income in Portsmouth (\$91,626) and the income required to afford a single-family home. As noted above, construction of single-family homes fluctuated between 2000 and 2008, averaging 168 units annually over this time period. Median sales price of homes was high - \$423,500. After the 2008 recession, however, production declined to 106 units in 2010 (Table 4.6) and home prices dropped sharply until 2011. Incremental increases have been experienced since.

Table 4.6-Trends in Median Home Sales Price 1999 - 2017								
	1999		2000		2001		2002	
	Sales	Median Sales Price	Sales	Median Sales Price	Sales	Median Sales Price	Sales	Median Sales Price
Portsmouth								
Single Family	233	\$175,000	178	\$179,950	163	\$214,900	173	\$290,000
Multifamily	6	\$137,500	8	\$128,500	6	\$224,450	1	\$230,000
Condo	15	\$165,500	12	\$161,250	23	\$189,000	50	\$314,355
Rhode Island								
Single Family	9,695	\$126,000	9,108	\$135,976	9,113	\$156,000	9,069	\$188,150
Multifamily	1,632	\$96,000	1,882	\$108,000	2,063	\$125,000	2,284	\$153,000
Condo	1,260	\$88,500	1,283	\$102,500	1,371	\$121,500	1,327	\$147,000
	2003		2004		2005		2006	
	Sales	Median Sales Price	Sales	Median Sales Price	Sales	Median Sales Price	Sales	Median Sales Price
Portsmouth								
Single Family	177	\$320,000	191	\$345,000	201	\$376,000	165	\$423,500
Multi-Family	3	\$290,000	3	\$399,500	6	\$421,000	7	\$300,000
Condo	38	\$355,742	34	\$327,441	41	\$540,471	34	\$502,925
Rhode Island								
Single Family	9,189	\$230,000	9,982	\$264,700	9,711	\$282,900	8,313	\$282,500
Multi-Family	2,366	\$209,000	2,478	\$260,000	2,307	\$290,000	1,725	\$285,000
Condo	1,493	\$175,000	1,759	\$205,000	2,251	\$218,900	1,883	\$225,000

⁴ 2019 Housing Fact Book, Housing Works RI. This is the latest pre-pandemic data available.

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Table 4.6-Trends in Median Home Sales Price 1999 - 2017								
	2007		2008		2009		2010	
	Sales	Median Sales Price	Sales	Median Sales Price	Sales	Median Sales Price	Sales	Median Sales Price
Portsmouth								
Single Family	163	\$367,000	129	\$320,000	108	\$280,000	106	\$285,000
Multi-Family	3	\$325,000	2	\$214,000	4	\$245,000	3	\$235,000
Condo	21	\$518,000	28	\$422,500	23	\$297,000	26	\$392,450
Rhode Island								
Single Family	7,600	\$275,000	6,648	\$234,900	7,720	\$199,900	6,833	\$210,000
Multi-Family	1,254	\$255,000	1,670	\$135,000	2,284	\$90,000	1,565	\$121,900
Condo	1,806	\$221,000	1,210	\$212,700	1,203	\$214,950	1,144	\$187,000
	2011		2012		2013		2014	
	Sales	Median Sales Price	Sales	Median Sales Price	Sales	Median Sales Price	Sales	Median Sales Price
Portsmouth								
Single Family	148	\$321,500	158	\$292,500	160	\$299,500	211	\$315,000
Multi-Family	3	\$355,000	5	\$251,000	3	\$265,000	3	\$335,000
Condo	35	\$350,000	23	\$285,000	32	\$343,500	35	\$310,000
Rhode Island								
Single Family	6,701	\$195,000	8,014	\$190,000	8,844	\$205,000	8,891	\$215,000
Multi-Family	1,284	\$119,950	1,334	\$120,000	1,339	\$130,000	1,318	\$145,750
Condo	1,134	\$176,950	1,266	\$175,000	1,640	\$197,250	1,557	\$192,000
	2015		2016		2017			
	Sales	Median Sales Price	Sales	Median Sales Price	Sales	Median Sales Price		
Portsmouth								
Single Family	217	\$332,000	252	\$347,500	271	\$380,000		
Multi-Family	10	\$274,000	3	\$251,000	7	\$350,000		
Condo	45	\$331,000	59	\$391,000	56	\$400,000		
Rhode Island								
Single Family	9,782	\$225,000	11,038	\$239,900	11,282	\$255,000		
Multi-Family	1,528	\$168,000	1,655	\$182,900	1,914	\$209,000		
Condo	1,654	\$200,000	1,919	\$199,900	2,161	\$215,000		

Source: Statewide MLS/RI Living, <http://www.riliving.com/PressReleases/statistics/Default.asp>.

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The average two-bedroom rent in Portsmouth is higher than surrounding municipalities (\$1,782 compared with \$1,572 in Newport, \$1,579 in Middletown, and \$1,346 in Bristol). Prices for rental units tend to fluctuate with pricing for different-sized units following trends (i.e., when one-bedroom unit rents are falling, two-bedroom unit rents may be rising) as shown in Table 4.7. Today, it would take an annual income of \$71,280 to affordably rent an average priced two-bedroom apartment in Portsmouth, considerably higher than neighboring Middletown and Newport.⁵ Although the rental housing option in Portsmouth appears to be more affordable for families of median-household income, rental does not typically allow the renter to establish equity, which makes renting in Portsmouth less attractive than in surrounding communities.

Table 4.7-Median Rental Price in Rhode Island for 1-, 2-, and 3-Bedroom Units, 2004 - 2017

Year	1-Bedroom Unit	2-Bedroom Unit	3-Bedroom Unit
2018	\$1,267	\$1,621	\$1,732
2017	\$1,290	\$1,733	\$2,208
2016	\$1,242	\$1,714	\$2,165
2015	\$1,070	\$1,414	\$2,045
2014	\$1,121	\$1,281	\$1,812
2013	\$979	\$1,344	No Data
2012	No Data	\$1,391	No Data
2011	\$1,024	\$1,233	No Data
2010	\$1,073	\$1,441	No Data
2009	\$1,020	No Data	No Data
2008	\$1,067	No Data	No Data
2007	\$999	\$1,239	\$1,722
2006	\$1,007	\$1,128	\$1,416
2005	\$1,016	\$1,244	No Data
2004	\$983	\$1,307	\$1,937

Source: RI Rent Survey, RI Housing.

Demand for dwelling units is largely a function of population, but when one factors in income data, demand considerations shift to affordability. Housing affordability in Portsmouth is an issue for a large

⁵ 2019 Housing Fact Book, HousingWorks RI. This is the latest pre-pandemic data available.

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and growing number of households. A typical measure of housing affordability is the percentage of households that can afford the median-priced house assuming that they spend no more than 30% of their income on housing (including rent or mortgage payments, taxes, insurance, and utilities). A household paying more than 30% of its income on housing is considered “cost-burdened.” A household paying more than 50% of its income on housing is considered “severely cost-burdened.” As shown in Table 4.8, just under one-third of Portsmouth households are cost-burdened (32%) and 15% are considered severely cost-burdened, which is a concern for the Town. Whether people are forced by life circumstances or elect to spend more on housing, it equates to less disposable income to put towards necessities such as food, transportation, and healthcare, impacting quality of life as well as the local and regional economy.

	# of Households	% of Total Households
Cost Burdened Households	2,315	32%
LMI Cost Burdened Households that are Renting	816	50%
LMI Cost Burdened Households that Own Their Home	1,499	27%

LMI - Low-moderate income

Source: 2019 Housing Fact Book, HousingWorks RI.

The State definition for affordable housing determines how Portsmouth determines how many of its homes are affordable.

RIGL §42-128-8.1 (d) (1) "Affordable housing" means residential housing that has a sales price or rental amount that is within the means of a household that is moderate income or less. In the case of dwelling units for sale, housing that is affordable means housing in which principal, interest, taxes, which may be adjusted by state and local programs for property tax relief, and insurance constitute no more than thirty percent (30%) of the gross household income for a household with less than one hundred and twenty percent (120%) of area median income, adjusted for family size. In the case of dwelling units for rent, housing that is affordable means housing for which the rent, heat, and utilities other than telephone constitute no more than thirty percent (30%) of the gross annual household income for a household with eighty percent (80%) or less of area median income, adjusted for family size.

2019 HUD statistics for the Portsmouth vicinity define “median area income” for a four-person household at \$95,700 per year. The definition from the State law for a moderate-income household is one that earns between 80% and 120% of the median area income. To meet the definition of a moderate-income household, a four-person household in Portsmouth must earn between \$75,500 and \$114,840 per year.

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For a dwelling unit to be considered affordable under State law, a four-person, moderate-income family should spend no more than 30% of their income on housing. Using this calculation, a four-person family can spend between \$22,650 and \$34,452 per year for housing. A home considered to be affordable by a moderate income four-person household in Portsmouth should cost between \$215,800 and \$354,300 with the median value being \$284,200. The low end of the income range for moderate income is from 80% to 100% of the area's median income and run through this calculation again, we find that roughly half (51.7%) of single-family houses in Portsmouth are affordable to a moderate-income family of four. 40.7% of the housing stock is above their price range. The above calculation can be reworked for two-person households and for the limits on rental units. Low or very low-income households show the greatest need. As is noted above, just over one-third of Portsmouth's households spend greater than 30% of their income on housing. 15.2% spend more than half of their income on housing. A clear need exists for lower-cost housing in order to support all residents.

The Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) developed by HUD is recognized as one of the best sources of data on local housing needs and problems. The data presented in Table 4.9 is the most current available for the Town of Portsmouth and provides a good snapshot of housing needs in Town.

Table 4.9-Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy Data for Portsmouth, 2011 - 2015			
% of HUD Median Area Family Income^a	Households with at Least 1 Housing Problem	Total Households	% of Households
Renters			
≤ 30%	410	555	73.9%
> 30% - ≤ 50%	250	300	83.3%
>50% - ≤ 80%	120	310	38.7%
> 80% - ≤ 100%	45	145	31.0%
> 100%	40	450	8.9%
Total	865	1,760	49.3%
Owners			
≤ 30%	320	385	83.1%
> 30% - ≤ 50%	205	300	68.3%
>50% - ≤ 80%	399	685	56.9%
> 80% - ≤ 100%	245	560	43.8%
> 100%	595	3,350	17.8%
Total	1,764	5,280	33.1%

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Notes:

- a. HUD Area Median Family Income (HAMFI) is the median family income calculated by HUD for each jurisdiction, in order to determine Fair Market Rents (FMRs) and income limits for HUD programs. HAMFI will not necessarily be the same as other calculations of median incomes (such as a simple Census number), due to a series of adjustments that are made.

Source: 2011 - 2015 HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy data.

https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/cp/CHAS/data_querytool_chas.html

The CHAS data tracks four individual housing problems, including incomplete kitchen facilities, incomplete plumbing facilities, more than one person per room, and cost burden greater than 30% of the household income. Table 4.9 illustrates households with at least one such problem for renter- and owner-households, and by household income. HAMFI stands for HUD Area Median Family Income, which is calculated by HUD for each jurisdiction. The “Percent” column represents the percentage of households in each category with at least one housing problem; for example, the first row of statistics, “410,” represents 73.9% of all renter households (555) earning less than 30% HAMFI.

The data show that over two-thirds of renters earning less than 50% of HAMFI statistically experience one or more housing problems. Even a small percentage of renters earning more than 100% of HAMFI who typically have affordable and high-quality options experience one or more housing problems (8.9%). Of note is the fact that nearly half of all homeowners making between 80 and 100% of HAMFI, as well as almost one-fifth (17.8%) of homeowners making more than that, experience one or more housing problems. This situation may exist due to the age and/or conditions of the housing stock, or simply owners choosing to spend more on housing because they value the quality of life in Portsmouth over other household expenses.

4.3.5 LOCAL HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

To help meet the high costs of housing, there are several active public housing organizations creating housing options specifically for low- and moderate-income households in Portsmouth:

- The **Portsmouth Housing Authority** (PHA) is an independent municipal agency that manages public housing development for the elderly and Portsmouth’s Section 8 Voucher Program. It owns and manages Quaker Manor on East Main Road, a 40-unit age-restricted complex with the majority of residents either near-elderly, or elderly.

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- **Coastal Housing Corporation (CHC)** is a private 501c3 organization governed by a Board of Directors made up of nine Executive Directors of public housing authorities from municipalities across the State of Rhode Island. The CHC is active in Portsmouth as an owner of affordable units and developer of new housing projects. CHC owns five units on West Main Road that targets people with incomes at or below 50% of the area median income.
- **Church Community Housing Corporation (CCHC)** based out of Newport, is another private, not-for-profit development organization. The CCHC is active on Aquidneck Island developing and managing affordable housing programs and properties.
- **Sakonnet View Apartments** on East Main Road was built in part with financing obtained through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program and receives rental subsidies through HUD-Assisted Housing. These programs have different income limits that can lead to apartments in the same property having different income requirements. Applicants can make up to 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI) and be eligible for a HUD-Assisted Housing unit. However, they can earn at most 60% of AMI to be eligible for a LIHTC property and many units may be set aside for those with the lowest incomes (down to 15% of AMI). LIHTC properties may also contain some market-rate units. Since Sakonnet View Apartments has both programs, the most restrictive of the income limits apply for each unit. If the entire property is funded by LIHTC, the LIHTC income limit of 60% AMI would be used for all units. Apartments in properties with some units not funded by the LIHTC, but receiving Section 8 assistance, would be open to households making up to 80% AMI. Market rate units would have no subsidies or income restrictions.

In addition to the units owned and managed by these organizations, there are another 30 units in Portsmouth that serve the homeless and special needs populations in the area. Outside of town, there are also several regional opportunities for individuals in need of transitional or emergency housing.

Table 4.10 below summarizes housing program activity in Portsmouth. Despite the best efforts of people who administer housing assistance programs in Portsmouth, the housing need is far greater than the current means available to address it. Consider for instance, that current housing assistance programs offer 210 units of housing while there are 2,629 households with at least one housing affordability problem (see Table 4.9 above) and potentially in need of assistance.

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Table 4.10-Housing Assistance Programs, Portsmouth 2018

Population Served	Development Name/Owner	Type	Address	Total Housing Units
Elderly	Quaker Manor IV - Portsmouth Housing Authority	Rental	2368 East Main Road	40
	Sakonnet View - HUD	Rental	3225 East Main Road	33
	Anthony House - Church Community Housing	Rental	41 Middle Road	94
Family	Church Community Housing	Homeownership		13
Special Needs	Various	Group Home Beds		25
	Coastal Housing	Rental	West Main Road	5
Total				210

Source: RI Housing

4.3.6 HOUSING STOCK NEEDS ANALYSIS

The residential build-out analysis performed in support of this Comprehensive Plan (See Appendix A) estimates an additional 1,807 dwelling units could possibly be developed by right based on the estimated buildable land area and the current zoning and subdivision and land development regulations for the town. While the residential build-out analysis concludes that there are potentially 1,807 dwelling units that could be developed, population projections and historical building permit statistics suggest the full buildout at these rates would take a substantial number of years to occur and almost certainly not within the planning horizon (20 years) of this Comprehensive Plan.

The 2016 American Community Survey estimated the average household size in Portsmouth to be 2.38 persons per household. Using a population projection from Rhode Island Statewide Planning and incorporating the average persons per household, it is estimated that in the year 2040, an additional 170 dwelling units will be needed; a number that represents 9.4% of the potential buildable dwelling units identified in this analysis (Table 4.11).

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Table 4.11-Population and Dwelling-Unit Need Projections, Portsmouth								
	Population		Population Projections					
	2000	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Portsmouth	17,149	17,389	17,315	17,386	17,615	17,779	17,845	17,793
Change from 2010			-74	2	226	390	456	404
Increased Need for Housing in Dwelling Units				0.84	95	164	192	170

Source: Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program - April 2013.

The 2020 US Census reports the 2010 - 2020 population growth for Portsmouth at 2.8% with a total population of 17,871. This is a net increase over the 2010 population of 482 persons.

Portsmouth’s population has experienced very little growth since the early 2000s, however, population projections anticipate about a 2.5% increase by 2035, with an additional 454 people, then decreasing by 52 in 2040.

Portsmouth’s aging population (Table 4.12) is likely to be a more significant issue, with over one-third 55 years and older. Planning for housing for older residents needs to concern not only design, such as smaller units or those that are more accessible for those with disabilities, but also affordability, given many older residents are on fixed incomes.

Table 4.12-Portsmouth Population by Age		
Age	Population	% of Population
Under 5 years	662	3.8%
5 to 9 years	931	5.4%
10 to 14 years	1,165	6.7%
15 to 19 years	1,304	7.5%
20 to 24 years	748	4.3%
25 to 34 years	1,218	7.0%
35 to 44 years	1,936	11.2%
45 to 54 years	2,955	17.0%
55 to 59 years	1,660	9.6%

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Age	Population	% of Population
60 to 64 years	1,137	6.6%
65 to 74 years	2,009	11.6%
75 to 84 years	1,164	6.7%
85 years & over	462	2.7%

Source: ACS 5-Yr. Summary File 2012 - 2016, DP05.

While housing Portsmouth’s aging population will require affordable housing stock options as their lifestyle changes, there is also a strong demand for affordable housing for young adults and families looking to establish themselves in the community. Reflected in a low percentage (11.2%) of the typical family demographic (35 - 44 years of age), young families appear to be priced-out of Portsmouth. The Town should seek solutions to retain the younger generations and attract entry and junior level workforce participants to diversify our aging population and create an attractive workforce for business investment. Portsmouth has historically been commended for providing one of the best public school educations in the State of Rhode Island, but following high school and college, these former students lack the housing options to return to their hometown to begin their professional careers and start their families.

As shown in Table 4.13, Portsmouth’s housing stock is predominantly comprised of owner-occupied single-family dwelling units (75%). These units are typically larger than the statewide average unit as far as the number of rooms and bedrooms. The disproportionate ratio within the Town of multifamily rental units limits the housing choices and affects the overall affordability.

	Rhode Island		Portsmouth	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Housing Occupancy				
<i>Total Housing Units</i>	462,900	100.0%	8,420	100.0%
Occupied housing units	410,602	88.7%	7,036	83.6%
Vacant housing units	52,298	11.3%	1,384	16.4%
Units in Structure				
<i>Total Housing Units</i>	462,900	100.0%	8,420	100.0%
1-unit, detached	254,825	55.0%	6,631	78.8%

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Table 4.13-Range of Housing Size and Type				
	Rhode Island		Portsmouth	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
1-unit, attached	15,752	3.4%	400	4.8%
2 units	51,884	11.2%	279	3.3%
3 or 4 units	58,748	12.7%	179	2.1%
5 to 9 units	22,753	4.9%	83	1.0%
10 to 19 units	16,764	3.6%	57	0.7%
20 or more units	37,228	8.0%	487	5.8%
Mobile home	4,657	1.0%	304	3.6%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	289	0.1%	0	0.0%
Rooms				
<i>Total Housing Units</i>	462,900	100.0%	8,420	100.0%
1 room	10,319	2.2%	73	0.9%
2 rooms	13,271	2.9%	169	2.0%
3 rooms	45,978	9.9%	541	6.4%
4 rooms	79,809	17.2%	1,190	14.1%
5 rooms	98,760	21.3%	1,792	21.3%
6 rooms	88,849	19.2%	1,192	14.2%
7 rooms	52,177	11.3%	1,395	16.6%
8 rooms	35,802	7.7%	1,038	12.3%
9 rooms or more	37,935	8.2%	1,030	12.2%
Median rooms	5.3		5.9	
Bedrooms				
<i>Total Housing Units</i>	462,900	100.0%	8,420	100.0%
No bedroom	10,969	2.4%	79	0.9%
1 bedroom	65,005	14.0%	825	9.8%
2 bedrooms	137,834	29.8%	2,506	29.8%
3 bedrooms	178,726	38.6%	3,424	40.7%
4 bedrooms	55,595	12.0%	1,284	15.2%
5 or more bedrooms	14,771	3.2%	302	3.6%
Housing Tenure				
<i>Occupied Housing Units</i>	410,602	100.0%	7,036	100.0%

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Table 4.13-Range of Housing Size and Type				
	Rhode Island		Portsmouth	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Owner-occupied	246,909	60.1%	5,279	75.0%
Renter-occupied	163,693	39.9%	1,757	25.0%

Source: 2011 - 2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates (DP04).

Where Portsmouth falls short is in the availability of dwelling unit sizes and/or types of units to accommodate changes in the demographics of our population. Household size has been falling, our population has been aging and incomes have in many cases been stagnating. Over one-third of Portsmouth’s households (35.1% or 2,490) are considered “cost-burdened,” that is, they spend greater than 30% of their household income on housing, and 14.7% (1,040) spend greater than 50% of their household income on housing (severely cost-burdened). Future housing stock in Portsmouth must include: (1) a greater range of smaller, more affordable housing options such as studios and 1-2 bedroom units, both for rent and for sale, to accommodate smaller families in starter homes or older residents and empty nesters looking to down-size; (2) duplex and multi-family housing as rental units or condominiums to accommodate larger families and seniors with modest means; (3) more age-restricted housing to accommodate the elderly and (4) accessory dwelling units to allow seniors to age in place with family members. Mixed-use buildings, such as office or commercial space on the ground floor and an apartment above, can also be an effective method for providing lower cost dwelling units.

4.4 LOW-MODERATE INCOME HOUSING STRATEGY

In 2004, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed legislation in response to affordable housing needs. Subsequent amendments to this law, known as the Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Act (RIGL 45-53) implement a statewide plan to provide safe and affordable housing to low- and moderate-income families, the elderly and low wage workers. The Act requires all municipalities to outline strategies to meet a 10% goal of affordable local housing as defined in the Act. "Affordable" units are required to have a subsidy (state/local), with restrictions to assure they will remain affordable for a minimum of 30 years. Communities that already maintain 10% of their total housing stock as low-moderate income are exempt from the Act. The Act mandates that communities that do not meet their 10% goal must find ways to

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encourage low-moderate income (LMI) housing development. In 2005, as directed by the Act, each Rhode Island municipality assessed its affordable housing needs and outlined strategies to meet its 10% goal. At the time, Portsmouth’s 10% goal was estimated using housing units at the end of the 20-year planning horizon. As of 2021, the official percentage for Portsmouth is 2.8%, representing a total of 204 LMI units. Table 4.14 shows the percentage of populations served by these 204 LMI units. Since the Town still has not met the 10% threshold, it remains subject to housing development through Comprehensive Permits. Such developments may be allowed to override local zoning if they provide a certain percentage of LMI housing. Achieving and maintaining the 10% threshold affords the Town more control over local land use decisions in the future.

Table 4.14-Low-Moderate Income Housing by Population Served		
	Number of Housing Units	Percent
Number of LMI Housing Units	204	2.8% of Total Year-Round Housing Units
Number of 'Family' LMI Housing Units	13	6.2% of LMI Housing Units
Number of 'Elderly' LMI Housing Units	167	79.5% Of LMI Housing Units
Number of 'Other' LMI Housing Units	24	14.3% of LMI Housing Units
Number of Year-Round Housing Units (2010 minus Seasonal Homes)	7,412	

Source: RI Housing, September 2021

4.4.1 EXISTING STRATEGIES TO CREATE LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME HOUSING

In 2005, Portsmouth estimated it could reach its stated goal of 10% LMI housing units by the year 2025 by implementing a number of strategies that would achieve a total of 888 units by 2025. Excluding the existing 169 LMI units at the time, 719 new LMI units, or approximately 36 per year, were to be produced for the 20-year planning horizon. In 2021, at 204 LMI units in total, the Town has not made the intended LMI progress from the 2005 Low and Moderate Income Housing Plan or even moderately approached the 10% goal. The actual percentage of LMI housing stands at 2.8% of the Town’s total housing stock. An overarching limitation to LMI unit development is current zoning. The Town of Portsmouth does not have a public sewer system, except in limited areas on Waterfront District property in the Melville area. Residential development in this area is not permitted by right. Compounding this situation, over 80% of Portsmouth’s soils are considered unsuitable for the installation of sanitary septic facilities. Finding the

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balance of policies designed to protect our natural resources while also facilitating the development of LMI units will be challenging and require creative approaches.

An evaluation of past strategies to produce affordable housing and LMI units taken from the 2005 Low and Moderate Income Housing Plan follows below. In particular, these strategies were designed to produce a total of **794** LMI units over the 20-year planning horizon.

STRATEGY 1: PRESERVE AND EXPLOIT EXISTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE TOWN

Action 1: Maintain the affordability of the Town's current affordable housing units.

Status: Portsmouth had 169 low/mod housing units as of July 2004, but their affordable status was jeopardized by the expiration of the deed restrictions that guaranteed their affordability. Although the Town was supposed to work with the property owners to extend the restrictions, the Town took no action. Nonetheless, all **169** units remain as LMI units.

Action 2: Support local development projects that will result in additional low- and moderate-income housing for the community, including active and proposed developments referred to as, Boys Town, Coastal Housing Corporation Property, Quaker Manor expansion.

Status: This action has been partially fulfilled. In 2005, the Town's support and collaboration in known future local development projects were intended to produce **128** LMI units. The Town has not offered the Senior Center property for the development of LMI units, and Rainbow Heights is being developed by a private developer with no incentive to produce LMI units. The development of Quaker Estates, Phase - IV did, however, add **33** units to the Town's LMI unit totals.

STRATEGY 2: IDENTIFY AREAS FOR HOUSING REHABILITATION

Action 1: Designate Island Park, Common Fence Point and Prudence Island as priority areas for rehabilitation.

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Status: This strategy was not fulfilled. The intent was to preserve affordable housing and produce LMI units in these neighborhoods by establishing a program of acquisition and rehabilitation. In cooperation with the Church Community Housing Corporation or other local/regional nonprofit housing organizations, the Town was to create a long-term program to acquire properties that qualify under Rhode Island Housing's Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program. Once acquired, these properties were to be rehabilitated or sold to qualified low- or moderate-income individuals or families. This strategy was intended to produce **20** LMI units during the 20-year planning horizon. No town funds were budgeted for the program through the period.

Action 2: Create a process for conversion of surplus Town-owned lands and buildings and federal surplus property to affordable housing.

Status: This action was not fulfilled. No surplus Town-owned land was converted to affordable housing. The federal property known as the "Tank Farms" is still undergoing environmental clean-up, and is likely to have land use restrictions prohibiting residential development upon completion of the clean-up. It will not be transferred to the Town and will likely be purchased from the Navy by a private developer for commercial/industrial purposes. The **138** LMI units intended to be produced by this strategy has not and will not materialize.

Action 3: Prepare an inventory of potentially suitable sites for the rehabilitation of existing housing and adaptive re-use of nonresidential properties.

Status: This inventory has not been undertaken.

STRATEGY 3: ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORE TYPES OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Action 1: Encourage the conversion of the Town's existing mobile home parks to affordable housing.

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Status: This strategy requires the mobile home parks to be organized into a housing cooperative with the land underneath owned by a single entity (perhaps the Town) and a portion of the units committed to long-term affordability restrictions to persist as LMI units. This strategy was intended to produce **120** units during the 20-year planning horizon but has not been analyzed or implemented to date.

STRATEGY 4: CREATE LOCAL INCENTIVES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

Action 1: Create an Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Action 2: Continue property tax credits / abatements program for affordable housing.

Action 3: Waive local fees where applicable for the production of affordable housing units through new construction or rehabilitation.

Action 4: Offer density bonuses through zoning.

Action 5: Lower the minimum lot area for a two-family dwelling.

Action 6: Offer the use of internal subsidies as an incentive.

Status: These six actions taken together were intended to produce **34** duplex LMI dwelling units during the 20-year planning horizon. The Affordable Housing Trust fund was not established. The tax abatement to assist elderly and impoverished Portsmouth residents is current and active but it is unclear how this was intended to produce LMI units. Local fees can be waived where applicable. Density bonuses have been offered for duplexes only, and exclusively in the R-20 district. This entire strategy is voluntary only. The Town had not adopted inclusionary zoning making development designed to take advantage of these kinds of provisions mandatory (See Strategy 5, Action 3 below). As a result, these six actions taken together have produced **no** LMI units during the 20-year planning horizon.

STRATEGY 5: IDENTIFY AREAS FOR NEW LMI HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

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Action 1: Develop a multifamily zoning incentive district that consists of sites with the potential for the construction of low- and moderate-income housing units.

Action 2: Permit multifamily development at densities that are economical for the development of affordable housing yet protect environmental quality.

Action 3: Develop an inclusionary zoning ordinance.

Action 4: Allow payments in lieu of construction of LMI housing in any inclusionary zoning ordinance.

Action 5: Adopt Conservation Development Ordinances for new subdivisions.

Action 6: Create LMI Housing with open space preservation.

Action 7: Limit the annual total number of units in for-profit comprehensive permit applications to the aggregate of 1% of total year-round units in the municipality.

Status: Action 1 and 2 - Article XIX of the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance, Low-Moderate Income Housing, including a low-moderate multi-family incentive zoning district was adopted in June 2007. This strategy was intended to produce 583 market-rate units + **194** LMI units during the 20-year planning period. Among other incentives, the ordinance provides a 100% density bonus for multi-family dwelling units, a 50% density bonus for duplex developments and one-stop-shopping with the Planning Board using the Comprehensive Permit process. This permitting process requires at least 25% of the units in any development be LMI units. During the 20-year planning horizon, this strategy has produced **1** LMI dwelling unit. This unit was constructed several years ago and remains unsold to date. It is apparent the density bonus incentive is not enough to overcome the 25% LMI unit requirement. Our ordinance is based on State enabling legislation which may need amendment as this failed strategy is not unique to Portsmouth.

Action 3: Portsmouth has yet to develop and adopt inclusionary zoning into the Zoning Ordinance. "Inclusionary zoning" is a term that describes a technique that uses the power

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of zoning to require a certain percentage of affordable housing in new subdivisions or other land development projects. The Town will consider offering a density bonus of 30% above the maximum number of housing units permitted under zoning so that these additional market-rate units will permit private developers to finance the construction of the affordable units (if they do not use federal, state or other local subsidies). All such housing must remain affordable for at least 30 years from initial occupancy. Portsmouth's development and adoption of inclusionary zoning was calculated to add an additional **160** LMI units during the 20-year planning horizon, but no units were added since inclusionary zoning was not adopted.

STRATEGY 6: CREATE PROGRAMS THAT ACTIVELY SUPPORT AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES IN PORTSMOUTH.

Action 1: Expand collaborative efforts with local nonprofit housing providers.

Action 2: Form a Local Affordable Housing Advisory Board.

Action 3: Provide specific methods and procedures for the review of low- and moderate-income housing applications.

Action 4: Participate in statewide housing activities and planning efforts.

Status: While not necessarily intended to produce LMI units directly, the above actions work towards housing affordability in general. The Town has participated in talks with Church Community Housing on LMI housing tools and techniques and recently participated in a regional housing summit with our fellow Aquidneck Island neighbors. The Town has not established a local Affordable Housing Advisory Board.

4.4.2 PROJECTING LMI UNIT PRODUCTION

This section examines the number of affordable housing units needed to achieve the applicable threshold requirement for low and moderate housing in Portsmouth. At the present time (2021), the Town has **204** such units. Ten percent (10%) of the Town's 7,412 year-round housing units (RI Housing, Sept. 2021) requires a total of **741** units, or a deficit of **537** units. Of course, as the town grows, the 10% number also

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grows. In order to encourage the construction of enough low and moderate units to reach the ten percent (10%) goal “within a reasonable period of time,”⁶ this Comprehensive Plan must adopt policies and identify strategies that will, if successfully implemented, put the Town in compliance with the requirements of the Act. “Full residential buildout” is used here as the deadline for Portsmouth to achieve the 10% goal.

Utilizing the State’s 20-year population projections and Portsmouth’s 2016 residential buildout analysis, a new target for LMI homes may be calculated. In Portsmouth, the population is projected to increase only slightly to 17,845 persons by 2040, which means an increase of only 459 persons over 2020 projected levels. At an average household size of 2.38 (2016 ACS), Portsmouth currently has enough housing stock (7,412 units) to accommodate the projected population increase. Nevertheless, full residential buildout would be expected to add 1,807 new dwelling units if all available residentially zoned land is developed. Using the average rate of addition of new dwelling units in recent years, 31 units per year, the addition of the new 1,807 dwelling units will take approximately 58 years. Adding to the current dwelling unit stock, the total number of dwelling units in Portsmouth at buildout will be 9,219 units. The 10% threshold of LMI units at residential buildout in the year 2078 will be **922** units. Subtracting the current total of LMI units (204), Portsmouth will need to produce **718** new LMI units, or approximately 12.4 LMI units per year to achieve the 10% threshold by full residential buildout in the 58-year period. Incrementally, Portsmouth will need to add an average of **120** new LMI dwelling units for each 10-year period going forward to stay on track towards the 10% goal by 2078.

With no other action whatsoever and strict reliance on new building as a means of LMI production, Portsmouth would have to restrict approximately 40% of the usual annual average number of new housing units built in the Town to low and moderate-income housing. In other words, 40% of all new housing units permitted by the Town would have to be subsidized through some federal, state or municipal program and carry an affordability restriction for at least 30 years. This is unrealistic for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the high burden put on schools and other public services and facilities by the influx of new population and housing. Therefore, attainment of the LMI threshold will necessitate strategies beyond requiring new developments to incorporate a percentage of LMI housing.

⁶ Handbook 16, op. cit., p. IV-19.

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New and reworked strategies for low and moderate housing production are discussed in Section 4.5. Table 4.15 lays out a projected schedule of production by strategy to attain the goal of 10% low and moderate housing units by full residential buildout in 2078.

Table 4.15-Projected LMI Housing Production through 2078							
	10-Year Period						
Strategy	2020-'30	2030-'40	2040-'50	2050-'60	2060-'70	2070-'80	Total units
Inclusionary Zoning	20	20	20	20	20	20	120
Comprehensive Permits	20	20	20	20	20	20	120
Municipal Subsidy Programs	5	10	15	20	25	30	105
Duplex Construction Incentives	10	10	10	10	10	10	60
Accessory Dwelling Units	10	10	10	10	10	10	60
Land Trust Strategies	52	40	22	22	22	22	180
Mixed Use and PUD Zoning	15	15	15	10	10	10	75
Projected Total Units	132	125	112	112	117	122	720

4.4.3 DISTRIBUTION OF LMI NEED

In 2005, the distribution of need among household types was calculated and is shown below in Table 4.16. A majority of the need was for families (42%), followed by the elderly and other populations with special needs (singles, individuals with special needs, and transient housing).

Table 4.16-Distribution of LMI Unit Needs by Household Type				
Household Type	Proportional Need Projected	Number of LMI Units Needed by 2025 (773 to meet goal x CHAS %)	Existing Supply	Future Need
Elderly	34%	191	167	358
Family	42%	236	13	249
Other	24%	135	30	165
Total LMI Units		563	210	773

Source: HUD 2000 CHAS Database, based on Portsmouth data.

Portsmouth has fallen short in not only total LMI production but in the intended distribution of need by household type. As noted above in Table 4.14, we have significantly over-produced housing for the elderly and under-produced housing designed to serve families. The strategies going forward for producing LMI

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housing by household type are designed to correct this imbalance by leaning production of LMI housing towards a greater range of smaller, more affordable housing options such as studios and 1-2 bedroom units, both for rent and for sale, to accommodate smaller families in starter homes or older residents and empty nesters looking to down-size. To date all of our “elderly” LMI housing production has been in age-restricted multi-family building which certainly serves this need category but cuts out the need for low-income family housing. By re-orienting our strategies, we intend to produce LMI housing units in quantities more aligned with the 2005 distribution of need.

Table 4.17-Distribution of LMI Unit Needs by Household Type

Household Type	Proportional Need Projected	Number of LMI Units Needed at Residential Buildout (936 to meet goal x CHAS %)	Existing Supply	Future Need
Elderly	34%	318	167	151
Family	42%	393	13	380
Other	24%	225	30	195
Total LMI Units		936	210	726

4.5 CONSIDERATION OF NEW STRATEGIES

As previously noted, the above strategies for producing LMI units in Portsmouth have achieved very little progress in the last decade. A significant reworking of these strategies will be needed in order to make progress towards complying with state law. The Town must identify specific strategies required to attain the 10% threshold requirement for low- and moderate-income housing and estimate the number of LMI units that will be produced for each strategy. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that planning for affordable housing for our citizens cannot be solely oriented towards attaining the 10% LMI threshold. Of equal importance is planning for non-deed restricted affordable housing to meet the needs of a range of incomes and household types. This section presents a detailed explanation of strategies specifically recommended for all types of housing including affordable housing that is defined in state enabling legislation⁷ but is not considered to be “low- or moderate-income housing” credited toward a community’s ten percent standard.

⁷ Rhode Island General Laws, §42-128-8.1(d) (1) defines “affordable housing” as residential housing that has a sales price or rental amount that is within the means of a household that is moderate income or less. In the case of dwelling units for sale, housing that is affordable means housing in which mortgage, amortization, taxes, insurance,

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Build Partnerships, Mechanisms and Community Support for Affordable Housing

Create an Affordable Housing Trust Fund

An Affordable Housing Trust Fund would act as the treasury for funds generated specifically for creation of affordable housing. The Trust Fund would be administered by the Town, acting as the fiduciary agent for all funds generated through impact fees, fees-in-lieu-of the construction of housing, assessments, grants, state or federal funding programs, private donations, land acquisitions or other sources of funding for affordable housing. The Town's Affordable Housing Advisory Board (see below) will advise the Town on the operation of the Trust Fund to ensure that the Fund is accountable to local needs. The Town Council will approve all disbursements from the fund.

Affordable Housing Advisory Board

An Affordable Housing Advisory Board will be created to act as a catalyst for affordable housing initiatives within the Town. It would also assist the Town, the State, and private and nonprofit developers to provide affordable housing in a manner that is consistent with the Comprehensive Community Plan. The Board would initially be appointed by the Town Council and consist of citizens who represent the housing community, banking, real estate, business, local community organizations and others who have a direct interest in affordable housing in the Town. It would be advisory in nature and would not replace or duplicate the duties of the Town Council, Planning Board, Zoning Board or Planning Department.

heat and utilities other than telephone, and condominium or association fees, if any, constitute no more than thirty percent (30%) of the gross household income for a moderate income household. In the case of dwelling units for rent, housing that is affordable means housing for which the rent, heat, and utilities other than telephone constitute no more than thirty percent (30%) of the gross annual household income for a household with eighty percent (80%) or less of median income for the area of residence, adjusted for family size. Affordable housing shall include all types of year-round housing, including, but not limited to, manufactured housing, housing originally constructed for workers and their families, accessory dwelling units, housing accepting rental vouchers and/or tenant-based certificates under Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937, as amended, and assisted living housing, where the sales or rental amount of such housing, adjusted for any federal, state, or municipal government subsidy, is less than or equal to thirty percent (30%) of the gross household income of the low and/or moderate income occupants of the housing.

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Partner with Nonprofit Developers (CCHC and Others)

Church Community Housing Corporation (CCHC) has established a significant presence in the East Bay communities of Portsmouth, Middletown and Newport. Their mission is to provide decent, safe, and healthy neighborhoods. Currently, CCHC administers the Town's CDBG programs. The Town will expand its current working relationship with this group and others like it, to work cooperatively on the creation of low and moderate-income housing opportunities.

Preserve Existing LMI Units

Maintain the continued affordability of the Town's current affordable housing units. Portsmouth had 210 low/mod housing units as of July 2018. Work to ensure that none of these units are lost at the expiration of the restrictions that guarantee their affordability. Work with the property owners and with state and federal housing agencies to extend the restrictions on a case-by-case basis.

Adopt Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning with Fee in Lieu

Inclusionary zoning is a term that describes a zoning technique that provides incentives or mandatory requirements that a certain percentage of the housing constructed in new subdivisions or other land development projects is guaranteed to be affordable. Unless all of these units are financially subsidized by federal, state or nonprofit housing subsidy programs, the Town will consider offering a density bonus above the maximum number of housing units permitted under zoning, so that these additional market-rate units will permit private developers to be able to finance the construction of the affordable units, which must be a certain percentage of the total number of units in the development. All such housing must remain affordable for at least 30 years from initial occupancy.

As an alternative to mandatory requirements that all new subdivisions or other residential developments construct a certain number of LMI housing units, the Town will offer the option to allow the developer to pay a fee to the Town. These funds must be set aside and used only for the construction of LMI housing in other areas of the Town. The creation of an Affordable Housing Trust Fund is recommended below as an entity to receive, manage and distribute expenditures for the production of LMI housing units in the Town.

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Strategies for Supporting Existing Housing Through Municipal Subsidies

Tax Abatement Program - Elderly and Impoverished

These tax abatements assist elderly and impoverished Portsmouth residents and allow them to stay in their homes. The Town will continue this local subsidy program.

Revolving Loan Program for Home Repair and Rehab

The establishment of a Town-funded revolving loan program can not only provide an incentive for existing homeowners to improve their property in exchange for dedicating the dwelling unit as an LMI unit but to raise the overall condition of housing stock in Portsmouth, particularly those properties of modest value. The terms and conditions of the loan can be adjusted depending whether deed restriction is part of the agreement or not.

Acquisition of Existing Homes by the Town, Private Parties and Nonprofits

The Town will create a database of housing that has experienced code violations, sought rehabilitation loans, or has been changed from single to multi-family use. The database will include information on the potential for expansion to accommodate additional affordable housing, mixed use opportunities, parking information, lot area and merger status, etc. As of 2018 there are nearly 1,700 single-family dwelling units in Portsmouth that have assessed values that put them in the range of being “affordable” and eligible to be an LMI unit if a deed restriction is put in place. These units will be evaluated for their potential for acquisition and conversion to LMI units by the Town, nonprofit housing agencies or private parties to earn charitable tax credits.

Voluntary Deed Restriction for Tax Credits

A program should be developed to explore the tax revenue impacts to the Town by giving substantial property tax credits to those who voluntarily deed restrict their property to create a LMI unit. This strategy has the potential to generate a significant number of LMI units in the coming years if an optimum balance can be achieved where the homeowner is incentivized to participate and the drop in the tax revenue to the Town does not significantly impact the delivery of Town services.

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Comprehensive Permit

The Town currently has in place a section of our Zoning Ordinance setting out the requirements and procedures for submitting affordable housing developments as a comprehensive permit application, a process allowed under the Rhode Island Low and Moderate Income Housing Act for consolidating local review and approval of qualifying LMI housing projects. A Multi-Family Incentive Zone has been established with incentives and standards are provided to guide development. To date the Comprehensive Permit process has been underutilized. An analysis of the incentives for such development needs to be performed to discover the impediments to its use and adjust incentives accordingly.

PUD and Mixed-Use Zoning

Adopt mixed-use zoning in Portsmouth's Commercial District with a density bonus for a certain percentage of the residential units qualifying as LMI units. Amend our PUD regulations to include density bonuses and other incentives to create LMI units as part of the development.

Waive Building Permit for LMI Units

Currently the Town assesses a variety of fees against new housing construction. Waiver of fees and charges for LMI units may be considered a "municipal government subsidy" as defined in the 2004 state housing legislation. Any such housing that receives a waiver of fees, in order to be considered low or moderate-income housing, must remain affordable for a period of at least thirty years.

Incentivize the Creation of Duplex Housing Units

Two-family or duplex units are currently permitted by right wherever single-family units are allowed, but they require twice the lot area as a single-family dwelling (except for R20 zoning districts, where they are required to have 1.5 times the lot area). As an incentive to the creation of LMI housing in two-family structures, the zoning will be amended to grant a density bonus that permits two units in a structure on lots having an area that is 50% greater than that required for a single-family house in all zones, by right, provided that they are designed to be compatible with the neighborhood. The Town will develop architectural guidelines to this effect. In order to receive

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the lower minimum lot size, one of the two units must be restricted to remain affordable for at least thirty years.

Accessory Dwelling Units

The Town should amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow accessory dwelling units by right if land space requirements can be met without dimensional variances and by special use permit otherwise. If the accessory dwelling unit is to be deed restricted as an LMI unit, the Town may limit the taxes on the unit to a certain percentage of the income obtained from the property as a LMI rental unit. This is not a subsidy but an incentive to create LMI units. The municipal subsidy will be allowing accessory dwelling units by right where currently they are not allowed by ordinance. This is considered a density bonus and a municipal subsidy.

Target Selected Sites for Infill Development

Residential or mixed-use infill development is beneficial in a variety of ways, but most importantly it utilizes existing infrastructure and can incorporate new affordable housing into existing neighborhoods. An inventory of appropriate sites should be developed and density bonuses and/or tax incentives can be proposed to incentivize the production of LMI units. This strategy, along with the support of existing housing proposed above, may prove to be the most successful way for Portsmouth to achieve the 10% LMI threshold.

Land Trust Strategies

Town Property

The Town will adopt a policy of offering surplus properties for priority use as affordable housing. The Town will offer such buildings/properties through a Request for Proposals (RFP) to private or nonprofit developers, who would be required to develop a mix of affordable and market rate housing as a reuse of Town-owned buildings and land.

Land Acquisition by Town

Utilizing funds from a variety of sources to be passed through the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, the Town should look for opportunities to purchase land that can then be long-term leased to a

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nonprofit developer at a very low cost to, in-turn, leverage their resources to design and build deed-restricted affordable housing.

Mobile Home Parks

Encourage the conversion of the Town’s existing mobile home parks (approximately 275 units in three parks) to affordable housing. This strategy requires the mobile home parks to be organized into a housing cooperative with the land underneath owned by a single entity (perhaps the Town) and a portion of the units committed to long-term affordability restrictions to persist as LMI units.

Legislative Efforts

Encourage the State to amend the Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Act (RIGL Chapter 45-53) to make it easier for communities to achieve the 10% threshold of LMI units as follows:

- Amend the definition of “low- and moderate-income housing” to include a wider range of housing types.
- Lower the minimum percentage of LMI units required to be eligible to file for a comprehensive permit from the current 25%.
- Lower the minimum deed restriction for LMI units from 30 years to 20 years.

4.6 GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

4.6.1 GOAL H-1

Provide a range of housing types that meet the needs of present and future residents of all economic status and household groups.

POLICY H-1.1

Preserve existing affordable housing opportunities.

Action H-1.1a: Monitor the status of all existing LMI units for the expiration of deed restrictions and participate in activities that would extend the LMI status.

Action H-1.1b: Work with active residential developments to determine if they can add low- and moderate-income housing for the community (Quaker Manor, Boys Town, Anthony House, etc.).

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[Action H-1.1c](#): Develop a tax abatement program that incentivizes owners who voluntarily deed restrict units that qualify as affordable to LMI residents.

POLICY H-1.2

Support and incentivize future residential development projects that result in additional affordable housing units.

[Action H-1.2a](#): Adopt provisions in Portsmouth's Zoning Ordinance that make it mandatory for all new residential developments of six (6) units or more to designate a percentage of the units as LMI units (Inclusionary Zoning).

[Action H-1.2b](#): Adopt provisions in the Zoning Ordinance that allow for payment in lieu of, off-site construction or rehabilitation and other strategies that allow developers to fulfill their affordable housing obligations.

[Action H-1.2c](#): Require all proposed major residential developments to submit a cluster or open space plan in addition to the standard yield plan for land subdivision.

[Action H-1.2d](#): Continue to waive all building permit fees for the construction of low-moderate-income housing units.

[Action H-1.2e](#): Consider adjusting the assessment of Impact Fees to reduce development costs for affordable senior and LMI housing units.

[Action H-1.2f](#): Explore restructuring the present Senior Center site to include affordable senior housing plus the Senior Center at the same site.

POLICY H-1.3

Encourage the development of more types of housing choices to accommodate changing household demographics.

[Action H-1.3a](#): Allow accessory family dwelling units (so-called in-law apartments) by special use permit in all residential zoning districts.

[Action H-1.3b](#): Encourage the conversion of the Town's existing mobile home parks to affordable housing, a portion of which is to qualify as LMI units.

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[Action H-1.3c](#): Increase the density bonus for duplex housing, particularly if one or both of the units is designated as an LMI unit.

[Action H-1.3d](#): Update the Zoning Ordinance to allow more opportunities for mixed-use housing development in our Commercial and Light Industrial Districts.

POLICY H-1.4

Recognize a particular obligation to meet the housing needs of our elder population, first-time home buyers and those who are disabled or with special needs.

[Action H-1.4a](#): Continue the Town's property tax abatement program for our elderly and impoverished residents.

[Action H-1.4b](#): Work with community partners to establish a low-interest loan program for rehabilitation of housing units owned by low-moderate income homeowners or by owners seeking to age in place.

[Action H-1.4c](#): Address needs of first-time buyers, special needs, or people over the age of 65 by providing information on available programs and housing opportunities in a central location.

4.6.2 GOAL H-2

Ensure that future housing development is in character with that of Portsmouth and the traditional character of neighborhoods.

POLICY H-2.1

Promote opportunities to integrate affordable housing into existing neighborhoods.

[Action H-2.1a](#): Develop a program to be administered by an affordable housing nonprofit partner or an Affordable Housing Commission, to vigorously pursue the creation of LMI units from the existing housing stock.

[Action H-2.1b](#): Develop design guidelines for the rehabilitation and/or reconstruction of LMI housing units in existing neighborhoods.

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POLICY H-2.2

Prioritize locations for affordable housing that are closely related to existing infrastructure, facilities and services.

Action H-2.2a: Identify specific sites and specific projects for the development of affordable housing, particularly those sites in close proximity to facilities and services.

POLICY H-2.3

Recognize that scattered site and infill development accompanied by effective housing rehabilitation programs is the desired way to achieving Portsmouth's housing goals.

Action H-2.3a: Create a database of existing structures and vacant infill sites appropriate for the conversion and/or development of affordable housing and LMI units.

4.6.3 GOAL H-3

Build a level of community support for an affordable housing development that is self-sustaining, all-inclusive and proactive.

POLICY H-3.1

Create a municipal board to champion affordable housing development, launch programs and create media that raises awareness of housing needs in the community and expands civic participation.

Action H-3.1a: Establish an Affordable Housing Commission with the powers and duties necessary to guide housing strategies in Portsmouth.

Action H-3.1b: Dedicate funding to an Affordable Housing Trust Fund to aid in the financing of affordable housing and the creation of LMI units.

Action H-3.1c: Work with local nonprofit housing providers to identify collaborative projects and programs that will lead to more affordable or low-moderate income housing units.

Action H-3.1d: Participate in statewide legislative activities and planning efforts that advocate for fair and effective housing legislation reforms.

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[Action H-3.1e](#): Identify local financing sources, such as general obligation bonds, that will ensure a steady source of income to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

[Action H-3.1f](#): Advocate for fair and effective affordable housing legislation at the state level.

[Action H-3.1g](#): Conduct periodic housing summits with nonprofit housing providers and other stakeholders to discuss the effectiveness of current programs and policies and provide an educational forum for the public on housing needs and opportunities.

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ELEMENT 5

Economic Development



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ELEMENT 5 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

5.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION

PORTSMOUTH WILL POSSESS A BALANCED FRAMEWORK OF LOCAL ECONOMIC POLICIES THAT PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH IN JOBS, BUSINESS ACTIVITY AND TAX BASE THAT SUPPORTS PORTSMOUTH'S UNIQUE COMMUNITY CHARACTER, ITS FISCAL STABILITY AND THE QUALITY OF ITS NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

5.2.1 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF PORTSMOUTH'S ECONOMY – HOW DID WE GET HERE?

The economy of Portsmouth has evolved from being primarily agriculturally based between the 17th and early 20th centuries (agriculture was the main occupation until WWII) to various relatively short-term enterprises during the industrial revolution that included coal mining, copper ore smelting and, in the mid-20th century, endeavors such as Weyerhaeuser lumber processing and Kaiser Aluminum manufacturing that all saw their demise in the waning years of the 20th century. The quintessential stalwarts in industry have been fueled by the proximity to naval facilities in Newport and Middletown. Although the large Navy fleet presence ceased in the 1970s, the proximity of the schools of the Naval Training Center and Naval War College, and the robust Navy research presence of the Naval Undersea Warfare Center has maintained defense companies including Portsmouth's Raytheon's Integrated Defense Systems complex as well as many other defense-support companies.

Although many farms have been lost to residential developments, Portsmouth maintains support of its agricultural roots as an important element of its economy by embracing innovative schemes, such as "agri-tourism" and the acquisition of development rights to current farms to better preserve its open space options in the future.

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Of course, with Portsmouth being surrounded on three sides by water and its proximity to the sailing history and activities of Newport, water-related activities and a robust marine industry have always been important parts in the economy of Portsmouth. Additionally, the Rhode Island Marine Trades Association continues a very active recruiting and job placement initiative to aid companies in identifying employment opportunities and filling numerous full-time positions. Their recent study showed the marine industry is one of the few sectors of Rhode Island’s economy that has shown growth in recent history, with above-average starting salaries and attractive benefit packages, particularly for Portsmouth.

5.3 A PORTRAIT OF PORTSMOUTH’S ECONOMY

5.3.1 WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS

The total population for the Town of Portsmouth was 17,389 at the time of the 2010 Census and was estimated to grow to be approximately 17,315 by 2015. The R.I. Department of Labor and Training estimated a 2010 workforce population of 8,815. The 2020 US Census reports the 2010-2020 population growth for Portsmouth at 2.8% with a total population of 17,871. This is a net increase over the 2010 population of 482 persons. Given the slight change in projected versus actual population we could expect a proportionate increase in the as yet to be reported workforce population. Table 5.1 illustrates a relatively stable labor force population from 2006 - 2013, however the Town’s employment rate trended negatively during the recession which took place over this period. A more visible drop in the overall labor force is evident in 2017 (decrease of 598 workers), although employment rates held fairly consistently which facilitated a 4.2% decrease in the unemployment rate. Over this same period of time, Portsmouth residents have continued to be employed at a higher rate than the State’s average.

Table 5.1-Portsmouth Residents in the Workforce					
Portsmouth Resident Workforce	2006	2009	2013	2017	± 2006 - 2017
Labor Force	9,406	9,230	9,413	8,815	-591
Employment	9,021	8,417	8,640	8,464	-557
Unemployment	385	813	773	351	-34
Portsmouth Unemployment Rate	4.1%	8.8%	8.2%	4.0%	-0.1%
State Unemployment Rate	5.1%	10.9%	9.5%	4.5%	-0.6%

Source: RI Dept. of Labor and Training, <http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/laus/town/portsmouth.htm>

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Education has long been a strength for the Town of Portsmouth. Our school system is consistently ranked among the highest in the State and nearly half of all residents over 25 years old have obtained at least a four-year degree (Table 5.2), which is approximately 17% higher than the state average according to the 2013 American Community Survey. Since 1990, Portsmouth has seen a consistent increase in residents advancing their education with 4-year college degrees, with a slight decrease in 2016 of residents earning graduate/professional degrees.

Table 5.2-Educational Attainment, Portsmouth Residents				
	1990	2013	2016	±
Educational Attainment	% of Population 25 Years & Older			
Less than 9th Grade	5.9%	2.1%	2.1%	-3.8%
9th to 12th Grade, no H.S. Diploma	7.8%	3.1%	4.4%	-3.4%
H.S. Diploma or GED Equivalency	28.1%	23.5%	21.3%	-6.8%
Completed Some College	17.1%	13.8%	16.5%	-0.5%
Associate's Degree	6.5%	7.6%	7.5%	-1.0%
Bachelor's Degree	21.4%	28.3%	28.7%	7.3%
Graduate/Professional Degree	13.2%	21.4%	19.6%	6.4%
Population 25 Years & Older	11,389	12,421	12,541	1,1152/10.1%

Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2012 - 2016 ACS 5-Yr. Estimates, R.I. Dept. of Labor & Training State of the State 2015.

To accompany the high educational attainment Portsmouth residents have achieved, the Town also ranks amongst the top of RI municipalities in two commonly referenced economic indicator statistics, median household income and unemployment rate (Table 5.3). Statistically speaking, Portsmouth's residential workforce is a highly successful group that is thriving despite stagnant commercial and industrial economic growth within the town.

Table 5.3 Historical Median Household Income and Unemployment Rate				
	Year	Portsmouth	State of RI	Difference
Median Household Income	1990	\$42,474	\$32,181	\$10,293
	2000	\$58,835	\$42,090	\$16,745
	2013	\$74,487	\$55,902	\$18,585
	2016	\$86,051	\$58,387	\$27,664

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Table 5.3 Historical Median Household Income and Unemployment Rate				
	Year	Portsmouth	State of RI	Difference
Unemployment Rate	1990	4.1%	5.1%	1.0%
	2000	8.8%	10.9%	2.1%
	2013	8.2%	9.5%	1.3%
	2016	4.7%	5.2%	0.5%

Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000, ACS 5-Yr. Summary File 2012 - 2016.

Portsmouth is a desirable community to live in and its housing market reflects this. According to the HousingWorksRI 2020 Housing Fact Book, the median single-family home in Portsmouth ranks as the 9th highest price of RI’s 39 municipalities and requires an annual household income of \$114,452 to meet the 30% income affordability cost burden. This housing cost burden is a major deterrent to entry level employees and first-time home buyers looking to purchase a home in Portsmouth and is evident by the Town’s low 20-34-year-old demographic (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4-Portsmouth Population by Age		
Age	Population	% of Population
Under 5 years	662	3.8%
5 to 9 years	931	5.4%
10 to 14 years	1,165	6.7%
15 to 19 years	1,304	7.5%
20 to 24 years	748	4.3%
25 to 34 years	1,218	7.0%
35 to 44 years	1,936	11.2%
45 to 54 years	2,955	17.0%
55 to 59 years	1,660	9.6%
60 to 64 years	1,137	6.6%
65 to 74 years	2,009	11.6%
75 to 84 years	1,164	6.7%
85 years & over	462	2.7%

Source: ACS 5-Yr. Summary File 2012 - 2016, DP05.

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5.3.2 ECONOMIC BASE/INDUSTRY SECTORS

The 45-acre Portsmouth Business Park currently contains light industrial manufacturing firms. The immediate access to state Route 24 places the park in a strategic location for light industrial markets and labor supply. Occupancy in the Portsmouth Business Park continues to be steady at approximately 90% with only two lots remaining unsold.

While there are few data sources that measure Portsmouth's economy at the municipal level, the RI Department of Labor and Training (RIDLT) publishes quarterly reports on employment data for each municipality. From this data we are able to monitor employment patterns by industry within the Town. Portsmouth's largest employment sector has consistently been Manufacturing (Table 5.5). Although there was a consistent net loss from 2006 to 2017 (-1,006), due to in large part to the downsizing of Raytheon's operations, the manufacturing industry remains the largest employment sector in Portsmouth.

Augmenting these same manufacturing sector statistics is a healthy marine-related industry which operates throughout the Town but is heavily concentrated in the Melville Waterfront District and Portsmouth Industrial Park. Currently, there are thirty-nine companies of varying sizes located in Portsmouth engaged in marine-related services and manufacturing. A recent survey of the 39 marine-related companies in Portsmouth reflects that employment continues to improve, rebounding by 20% above the lows experienced in 2010. Comments on the industry's future by principals of marine-related companies in Portsmouth indicate the coming years should be very positive, in contrast to other areas in New England.

Portsmouth's geographic location, surrounded by water, has been the major factor in creating its impressive history as a leader in the marine trades industry. With three world-class yacht companies, a large community of smaller marine-support businesses continues to flourish and provide a wide range of specialized services for the boating industry and individual boat owners. In particular, the Melville companies have a renowned reputation within the industry for their high quality of work.

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Table 5.5- Occupational Categories of Employed Persons 2006 - 2017					
Establishment Employment	2006	2,009	2,014	2,017	± '06 - '17
Total Private & Government	6,120	5,928	5,770	5,887	-233
Total Private Only	5,526	2,194	5,147	5,193	-333
Manufacturing	2,371	1,971	1,553	1,365	-1,006
Health Care & Social Assistance	422	476	854	878	456
Government	594	732	623	694	100
Retail Trade	527	515	496	545	18
Accommodation & Food Services	471	449	480	471	0
Construction	381	311	307	358	-23
Educational Services	235	269	269	291	56
Administrative Support & Waste Management	122	230	219	281	159
Other Services	217	183	187	199	-18
Professional & Technical Services	142	148	173	145	3
Real Estate & Rental Leasing	110	118	135	121	11
Wholesale Trade	116	111	105	92	-24
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	119	103	94	97	-22
Transportation & Warehousing	63	74	88	87	24
Finance & Insurance	89	89	59	155	66
Information	88	65	56	51	-37
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	46	48	43	155	109
Management of Companies & Enterprises	4	0	24	0	20
Utilities	0	0	0	0	-
Mining	0	0	0	0	0

Source: RI Department of Labor and Training, Labor Market Information Unit, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/laus.htm) and Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/es202.htm).

Between 2006 and 2017, RIDLT reported the Health Care and Social Assistance industry sector in Portsmouth has more than doubled, representing almost half of Portsmouth’s largest employers (Table 5.6). The Marine Industrial/Services industry sector also continues strong as a major employer in Portsmouth.

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Table 5.6-Portsmouth's Largest Employers, 2018		
Company	Industry Sector	Employment Range
Raytheon Company	Defense and Marine Industrial	500 - 999
Clements' Marketplace, Inc.	Retail	100 - 249
Looking Upwards Inc.	Healthcare	100 - 249
New England Boatworks	Marine Services	100 - 249
Portsmouth Abbey	Education	100 - 249
Southcoast Physicians Group Inc.	Healthcare	100 - 249
The Hinkley Company	Marine Services	100 - 249
Visiting Nurse Services of Newport & Bristol Counties	Healthcare	100 - 249
Hodges Badge Company Inc.	Manufacturing	50 - 99
Magellan HRSC Inc.	Healthcare	50 - 99

Source: RI Department of Labor and Training

5.3.3 COMMUTING PATTERNS

In 2013, most Portsmouth residents commuted to jobs within Newport (24.3%), Portsmouth (23.0%), and Middletown (18.5%), with just over 65% of Portsmouth's residents remaining on Aquidneck Island for employment. Bristol, Providence, South Kingstown, and Fall River, MA rounded out the other top destinations. Also, in 2013, 32.7% of Portsmouth workers lived in Portsmouth, followed by Bristol (10.7%), and Newport (7.0%) (Table 5.7), with just over 45% of Portsmouth's workers living on Aquidneck Island. While review of these commuting patterns indicates there appears to be sufficient job opportunities for local residents within a reasonable commuting distance of 30 minutes, they also point out the striking imbalance of over 67% of Portsmouth workers having to work outside the community and fully 77% of the jobs here in Portsmouth filled by workers who do not live here.

Table 5.7-Commuting Patterns Portsmouth Residents Compared to Portsmouth Workers					
Where Portsmouth Residents Work			Where Portsmouth Workers Live		
Newport, RI	2,008	24.3%	Portsmouth, RI	1,898	32.7%
Portsmouth, RI	1,898	23.0%	Bristol, RI	621	10.7%
Middletown, RI	1,529	18.5%	Newport, RI	408	7.0%
Bristol, RI	416	5.0%	Fall River, MA	351	6.0%
Providence, RI	404	4.9%	Tiverton, RI	327	5.6%

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Table 5.7-Commuting Patterns Portsmouth Residents Compared to Portsmouth Workers

Where Portsmouth Residents Work			Where Portsmouth Workers Live		
Fall River, MA	343	4.2%	Middletown, RI	313	5.4%
South Kingstown, RI	172	2.1%	Warren, RI	257	4.4%
Warwick, RI	140	1.7%	Providence, RI	156	2.7%
Tiverton, RI	111	1.3%	North Kingstown, RI	126	2.2%
Pawtucket, RI	102	1.2%	Swansea, MA	103	1.8%
Jamestown, RI	97	1.2%	Little Compton, RI	83	1.4%
Boston, MA	87	1.1%	Seekonk, MA	80	1.4%
Portsmouth Residents Work in the State of:			Portsmouth Workers Live in the State of:		
Rhode Island	7,303	88.4%	Rhode Island	4,713	81.2%
Massachusetts	866	10.5%	Massachusetts	995	17.1%
Connecticut	31	0.40%	Connecticut	86	1.5%
Other State/Country	64	0.8%	Other State/Country	11	0.2%
Total	8,264	100.0%	Total	5,805	100.0%

Source: Commuting Patterns - RI Dept. of Labor and Training, 2013 (based on U.S. Census, 2009 - 2013 ACS 5-year Estimate).

5.3.4 CURRENT LAND USE AND ZONING RELATED TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

With a few notable exceptions, land put to use for commercial and/or industrial activity in Portsmouth is closely tied to, if not directly fronting on, the two-principal north-south highways, East Main Road (Rt. 138) and West Main Road (Rt. 114). Commercial and/or retail development clusters are located along the southern portions of the same principal highways, with a more continuous commercial corridor located along East Main Road, north of Turnpike Avenue. With anticipated traffic improvements and zoning in place to promote denser mixed-use activity, the already busy Town Center area at the intersection of Turnpike Avenue and East Main Road promises an expansion of future business activity. Access to the Town’s largest employer, Raytheon, is off West Main Road. See **Map 5**.

Commercial/industrial land use not directly tied to the two principal highways include a well-developed core of marine trades activity along the western shore of Portsmouth at Melville, a small but vibrant commercial corridor mixed in with residential uses along Park Avenue in Island Park, and the 90% occupied Portsmouth Industrial Park adjacent to West Main Road off of Hedly Street. With some exceptions,

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farming and agricultural uses are primarily in the southern and eastern portions of Town. Prudence Island enjoys a single general store and several farms. Hog Island is entirely residential.

5.3.5 LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS, PROGRAMS AND INCENTIVES

Economic Development Plans:

- **West Side Master Plan (November 2005)**

The central economic strategy of the West Side Master Plan is to increase high-income jobs and a solid return of investments for the long-term, by capitalizing on existing uses, industries, and unique redevelopment opportunities. The marina and shipbuilding industry, particularly in the Melville District, are identified for future economic growth, to bolster this area (and the Island as a whole) as a prominent regional and national yachting destination and shipbuilding center.

- Defense-Related Research and Development: Support efforts by Raytheon to expand its facilities and to create facilities for related enterprises on its campus, utilizing the PUD zoning framework.
- Marine-Related Business and Recreational Boating: Reserve land for marine-related uses through purchase and/or regulation; reserve land for accessory uses such as upland boat storage, boatyard services, and remote parking for marina use; and promote marina-related training and information exchange.
- Tourism and Recreation: Facilitate marina and marina-related upland resort developments.
- Affordable Housing: Leveraging the transfer and redevelopment of public-owned land opens a doorway for providing affordable housing.
- Entertainment: Redevelopment of one of the tank farms for 'niche' venues should be considered.
- Business Retention/Assistance: Promulgate home-based business zoning.

- **Tank Farm Redevelopment Plan (September 2008)**

The Tank Farm Redevelopment Plan is a comprehensive look at the future of the Tank Farms and how their development can be positive for the Town of Portsmouth.

- Enhance Naval Station Newport by planning for the reuse of public and private property along the West Side.

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- Plan for economic development that can provide employment and tax base that is in keeping with the quality of life and long-term value of the entire community.
- Provide more active and passive recreation for Portsmouth's citizens, including increased vistas and public access to the shoreline.

Transfer of Tank Farms 1 and 2: Portsmouth had been considering the acquisition of Tank Farms 1 and 2 from the Navy through one or more types of land transfer mechanisms for more than a decade. The Town established two goals for redevelopment of the Tank Farms:

1. To get the property onto the tax rolls as quickly as possible.
2. To develop the Tank Farms in such a way that the property supports and enhances the marine industry/activities in the Marine Waterfront District at Melville.

The Town also established a number of self-imposed limitations used to guide the decision-making process:

1. The Town does not want to own the property.
2. The Town does not have the administrative resources to assume the role of real estate developer.
3. The Town does not want to assume any liability for the necessary environmental cleanup of the property.
4. The Town does not have the fiscal resources to dedicate funds to facilitate redevelopment of the Tank Farms.

After careful consideration, in 2018 the Town came to the conclusion that the surest way to accomplish Portsmouth's redevelopment goals for the Tank Farms was to elect to work closely with the Navy to facilitate a public sale and to decline to pursue transfer of the property directly to the Town. The Town will retain zoning control once the property is privately held and intends to work closely with the Navy to insure potential buyers are fully aware of not only our goals for the redevelopment of the property but the municipal regulations under which they may do so. It is expected the property will be offered for public sale sometime in the near future.

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Economic Development Programs/Incentives:

- **The Enterprise Zone – Tax Stabilization Program**

Adopted by the State legislature, the Distressed Areas Economic Revitalization Act (RIGL 42-64.3) established individual Enterprise Zones state-wide to stimulate economic revitalization, promote employment opportunities, and encourage business development. Through a program of tax credits and other incentives, businesses in groupings of census precincts could take advantage of the program to help grow their businesses. The Enterprise Zones were designated for five-year periods with the approval of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation. The program yielded a total of over \$75M in exempted assessed value over its life, which sunset at the end of 2014. By resolution in 2014, the Portsmouth Town Council asked the state legislature for and was granted an extension through December 31, 2019. Efforts to further extend the program in 2019 failed to gain Town Council approval.

- **Activities of the Portsmouth Economic Development Committee (PEDC)**

Formed in 1992 as an advisory body to the Town Council, the Portsmouth Economic Development Committee (PEDC) is an all-volunteer group with an authorized complement of 15 members including one youth representative from Portsmouth High School. The committee holds monthly meetings to discuss and make recommendations to town officials and staff on all matters involving community economic development and business viability within the town. In addition to this important function, the PEDC often evaluates prospective developments and other economic initiatives and provides town decision-makers with information on which they can rely to make informed decisions. Among its significant accomplishments, in 2007 the PEDC analyzed economic development in Portsmouth through the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) process and developed a multi-year economic strategy for the Town. Updated in 2016 and detailed below, the analysis and accompanying economic strategy have proven useful tools in formulating this updated element of Portsmouth's Comprehensive Plan.

- **Activities of the Director of Business Development**

The Portsmouth Director of Business Development is the Town's principal advocate for businesses, commercial development and enterprises for the Town. The Director of Business Development is the primary point of contact for both existing and prospective

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businesses and is responsible for assisting in the business planning and execution processes to ensure existing and new businesses are able to navigate through the various statutes and other requirements to plan, establish and maintain their enterprises and be consistent with the values maintained by the community.

The Director of Business Development:

- Represents the town to state agencies (e.g., CommerceRI) and non-state advocacy organizations (e.g., Chamber of Commerce and Portsmouth Business Association) to ensure that the efforts of those organizations are focused on the maintenance of a positive business climate.
- Monitors Town enterprises (e.g., Melville Campground, Glen Farm Stables, etc.) to ensure that those enterprises are being operated within the existing agreements and to the benefit of the town.
- Serves as the point of contact for local media and business-related matters.
- Works closely to advise the town building official and town planner to help them provide a positive impact on the business community.

5.3.6 LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

Regulations controlling economic development in Portsmouth are primarily contained in three documents: the Zoning Ordinance (2004), the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations (2012) and the Design Review Guidelines (2004). These regulations are administered by the Zoning Board of Review, the Planning Board, and in an advisory capacity to the Planning Board, by the Design Review Board, respectively.

The development process begins with the building inspector who issues building permits for building, electrical, plumbing, occupancy and signage, but more importantly is responsible for determining whether a project needs to be routed to the Planning Board in the case of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) or to the Zoning Board of Review for approval of a special use permit or a variance. All new commercial or industrial development of greater than 5,000 gross square feet of floor area or 20,000 square feet of total land area requires a special use permit, so nearly all new commercial and/or industrial development comes before the Zoning Board.

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5.3.7 FISCAL RESOURCES

Data used in this section was obtained from the Portsmouth Tax Assessor/Collector.

Tax Revenues

For the 2021 fiscal year, total property tax revenues received in Portsmouth were \$58,644,137.

Table 5.8-Portsmouth Property Tax Revenues FYE 2020 - 2021			
Revenue Source	FYE 2019 - 20	FYE 2020 - 21	% Change
Property Tax Revenue	\$55,826,921	\$58,644,137	5.05%

Source: Portsmouth Tax Assessor/Collector

Portsmouth, as with most other Rhode Island communities, has historically relied upon property taxes and state grants for the bulk of its revenues.

Property Taxes

Portsmouth levies the same annual property tax rate on all categories of land use. Taxes are based on the assessed value of the property. Property tax rates (tax per thousand dollars assessed valuation) have changed as follows:

Table 5.9-Portsmouth Tax Rates 1999 - 2020					
Year	Tax Rate	Year	Tax Rate	Year	Tax Rate
1999	\$21.51	2007	\$11.38	2014	\$15.80
2000	\$21.86	2008	\$10.84	2015	\$15.80
2001	\$22.81	2009	\$11.27	2016	\$16.00
2002	\$16.12	2010	\$11.30	2017	\$15.42
2003	\$16.46	2011	\$13.91	2018	\$15.97
2004	\$16.20	2012	\$14.24	2019	\$16.404
2005	\$10.35	2013	\$14.53	2020	\$15.073
2006	\$11.29				
2006*	\$10.75				
2006*	\$10.95				

Source: Portsmouth Tax Assessor,
www.portsmouthri.com/DocumentCenter/View/279
Notes: * Tent Meeting/Caruolo

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Highlights from revaluations since 2002 include:

Revaluation Type	Revaluation Date	Reflected in Tax Roll Year	Change to Tax Rate
Statistical	12/31/01	2002	(\$6.69)
Statistical	12/31/04	2005	(\$5.85)
Full	12/31/07	2008	(\$.54)
Statistical	12/31/10	2011	\$2.608
Statistical	12/31/13	2014	\$1.27
Full	12/31/16	2017	(\$.58)
Statistical	12/31/19	2020	(\$1.33)

Real and Personal Property

The total assessed value of real property (land and buildings) in Portsmouth as of December 31, 2019 was \$3,713,676,740. The residential component of that was approximately \$3,403,854,575 (91.7%), including one-family residences, two-family residences, apartments, residential condominiums and vacant residential land. Table 5.10 illustrates recent trends in contributions to the tax roll for real and personal property. All real property sectors remained relatively constant in their effective contribution to the tax roll from 2017 to 2020.

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020
Residential	85.05%	85.24%	85.62%	86.75%
Commercial	8.94%	8.86%	8.82%	7.96%
Motor Vehicle	4.03%	3.77%	3.31%	2.76%
Tangible	1.98%	2.12%	2.26%	2.53%

Source: Portsmouth Tax Assessor/Collector

5.4 THE NEED FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

5.4.1 LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Analysis of 2020 personal property tax records indicate there are 313 businesses (with addresses in commercial buildings) operating in Portsmouth. This compares to 295 businesses in operation in 2015, 318 businesses in operation in 2010 and 317 in operation in 2005. While a first glance at these numbers indicates a fairly stable business environment, it must be realized these are net numbers. For example,

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during the period 2005 - 2015, 175 businesses ceased to exist and 153 new businesses came into existence, accounting for the net loss of businesses reflected in the numbers above.

A parallel trend has been taking place with home occupations (home-based businesses) in Portsmouth. 2020 tax records reveal 282 home occupations operating in Portsmouth. In 2015 there were 202 home occupations in operation and in 2005 there were 219. Again, these are net numbers with relatively the same percentages of shut downs and start-ups taking place during the fifteen-year period as with regular businesses reported above. Deeper analysis of these data and the recent effects of the pandemic will be needed to inform policy-making to help stabilize and improve home business viability and business trends in Portsmouth's future.

In the face of steady but modest development contributing tax revenue from the business/light industry sectors, in the early 2000s Portsmouth turned its attention to adopting significant changes to the Planned Unit Development (PUD) section of the Zoning Ordinance in order to encourage what the Town has come to define as "recreational-residential" development. Identified as properties with a tax billing address other than in Portsmouth and with no registered voter at that same address (i.e., the sole resident of the property is physically resident only a small portion of the year), these properties were thought to be "revenue positive" in that they do not demand the services (notably children in the school system) that year-round residents demand. The definition of "recreational-residential" and the zoning changes to encourage their development were adopted with the expectation of a large influx of "part-time" residents to permitted developments such as the Tower and surrounding multi-million-dollar properties at Carnegie and the Newport Beach Club being less of a drain on the tax base as compared to traditional residences. While the development of these types of properties has been slower than predicted and the expected tax revenue increases have not been realized, the concept of defining property as "recreational-residential" remains valid as a type of residential development. An interesting developing dynamic is the increasing number of properties being used as short-term rentals that may become significant in the "recreational-residential" equation in the future.

5.4.2 PORTSMOUTH'S ECONOMY – OPPORTUNITIES AND ISSUES

Economic activity in Portsmouth is constantly changing in size, form and nature as economic forces, both internal and external, exert often unforeseen pressures. These internal and external pressures are

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illustrated when looking at the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis published by the Portsmouth Economic Development Committee (PEDC) in 2007 compared to a Portsmouth Planning Department update of the same analysis in 2020. A summary of the 2007 Analysis and the 2020 Update follows.

5.4.2.1 STRENGTHS

S1 – The expanding 540+ employee Marine Trades Center at Melville.

S1 – 2020 Update: While the Marine Trades Center at Melville continues to remain strong, the “backyard” expansion has yet to be realized as environmental cleanup continues. A date for final property transfer to Melville Marine Partners, LLC remains unknown.

S2 – Prime coastal location with regulatory approval for a 1500-slip marina and mixed-use development at Weaver Cove on the West Side. “Rec-res” high-end resort-style residential development at several sites along the West Side is on-going.

S2 – 2020 Update: The site for the proposed marina development has recently been auctioned off. Future development is uncertain. High-end resort-style residential development has slowed considerably due to poor unit sales with two developments recently changing ownership and another due for possible foreclosure in the near future.

S3 – A stable and growing defense industry base.

S3 – 2020 Update: Naval Station Newport and NUWC remain strong and stable. Neither shows any indication of downsizing during the timeframe of this Comprehensive Plan. Raytheon (Portsmouth’s largest employer), however, has downsized considerably, reducing the size of its campus, downsizing its employee ranks and recently selling two buildings.

S4 – Desirable residential community committed to maintaining its “New England Village” character with a business-friendly environment.

S4 – 2020 Update: The Distressed Areas Economic Revitalization Act (RIGL 42-64.3) established Enterprise Zones state-wide, including the Portsmouth/Tiverton Enterprise Zone, to stimulate economic revitalization, promote employment opportunities, and encourage business development. The state program sunset in December 2014. The State legislature granted

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Portsmouth an extension to December 2019 but support to further extend the program in 2019 failed to gain Town Council support.

S5 – Advocacy of "smart growth" of developable lands by Town's decision-makers.

S5 – 2020 Update: Planned Unit Development (PUD) strategies on the West Side have yielded mixed results and state traffic improvements scheduled to enable our signature Town Center Project to go forward have been put off until 2024-26.

5.4.2.2 WEAKNESSES

W1 – Lack of public sewer infrastructure limiting economic growth, particularly in the industrial sector.

W2 – Limited public and private capital resources at both the state and municipal level.

W3 – Lack of an effective transportation infrastructure.

W4 – Current town budget and economic planning processes do not foster effective long-range planning.

W5 – The high overall cost of doing business in Rhode Island.

W6 – Limited regional cooperation in economic development planning.

W7 – Lack of immediately available "Class A" business and commercial space.

Apart from town budgeting procedures and capital improvement planning having advanced significantly in recent budget cycles (W4), all of the weaknesses identified by the PEDC as impediments to economic development in 2007 remain in play today and little has been accomplished to overcome them.

5.4.2.3 OPPORTUNITIES

O1 – Future release and development of Tank Farm land.

O1 – 2020 Update: The Town has opted to decline participation in a transfer of the property directly to the Town and to encourage the Navy to offer Tank Farms 1 and 2 to the public for sale as the best strategy for getting the property onto the tax roles as soon as possible. It is expected the property will be offered for sale at an unknown future date. Environmental cleanup of the site is on-going and will likely take many years to be completed.

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O2 – Increased business and resort tax base can reduce the tax rate and provide opportunities for instituting fee for service measures.

O2 – 2020 Update: Business and resort tax base has leveled off due to slowing high-end resort development. The Town has instituted some fee for service measures but there has been significant public resistance to doing so.

O3 – Island Park development can increase tax valuations and benefit the entire town.

O3 – 2020 Update: The Town has made a policy decision to not install sewer infrastructure in Island Park, so increased tax valuations based on the benefit of sewer hookup will not be realized.

O4 – West Side railroad right of way & Burma Road potential for public transportation and infrastructure development.

O4 – 2020 Update: Improvement to the West Side transportation corridor remains tied to the Navy's plans to excess public infrastructure at an unknown future date.

5.4.2.4 THREATS

T1 – Competing needs for the Town budget which is subject to state tax levy cap regulations.

T1 – 2020 Update: The Town does not see the property tax levy cap as a threat to economic development as through careful administration all recent annual budgets have been below the tax cap and will remain so into the future.

T2 – Upcoming decisions on the current wastewater issues may foreclose future West Side development by loss of potential capital investors.

T2 – 2020 Update: Current planning for future development of the West Side includes the potential construction of a wastewater treatment facility limited to servicing the immediate Melville area. Ownership of such a system, whether public or private (or some combination of both) remains part of the planning process.

T3 – Navy unduly delays or never releases Tank Farms 1, 2 and 3 to the Town.

T3 – 2020 Update: Tank Farm 3 has been removed from the BRAC list as the Navy wants to retain the property as a potential renewable energy facility for a future date. The Town has opted to decline participation in a transfer of the property directly to the Town and to

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encourage the Navy to offer Tank Farms 1 and 2 to the public for sale as the best strategy for getting the property onto the tax roles as soon as possible.

The additional threats listed below identified by the PEDC as impediments to economic development in 2007 remain in play today and little has been accomplished to diminish them as threats to economic development.

T4 – Lack of affordable workforce housing on Aquidneck Island.

T5 – Uncertain Navy long-term future on Aquidneck Island.

T6 – Allowing LNG transit of Narragansett Bay may discourage high-end recreational development.

T7 – Influx of development threatens to degrade the "New England Village" character of the town.

It is clear from the above analyses that there are many moving parts to creating conditions for economic growth in Portsmouth. The Town, in many cases, has limited control of the economic forces at play. It is also clear that creating conditions for economic growth requires constant proactive attention and inaction is often overcome by events. The updated goals, policies and implementation actions of this Economic Development element are designed to build upon the previous Comprehensive Plan and the PEDC's work by both identifying opportunities to enhance the overall conditions that lead to quality economic development in Portsmouth and address issues that may impair those conditions in five major areas:

- Improvements in the standard of living and increasing opportunities for Portsmouth's workforce.
- The promotion and enhancement of Portsmouth's strengths as a community.
- Making Portsmouth more resilient, self-sufficient and resistant to the impact of external forces.
- Expanding the tax base without compromising Portsmouth's community character.
- Increasing the competitive advantage of doing business in Portsmouth.

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5.4.3 POTENTIAL FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

The future of economic development is rooted in the quintessential community desire to maintain a functionally sustainable, high quality of life community which is fiscally stable, affordable and safe. The economic contribution of Portsmouth's rich history is an important element that enhances the attractiveness of the town to residents, visitors and businesses. The business tax structure coupled with high community quality of life is attractive to potential businesses. Portsmouth's access to the water with a significant coastline cannot be overlooked as we continue to tap into a growing "blue water" economy for both recreation and marine industry.

Portsmouth's economic energy has been evolving in the last twenty years from an abundance of farms to one that is creating competition for development of the dwindling area that remains available between high-end residential development (what we have characterized as "recreational-residential") and the remaining commercial and industrially-zoned areas. Developing affordable housing for low and moderate income residents is a challenge that cannot be ignored, not only due to federal mandates, but also social responsibility. It is apparent that a complete build-out of all the remaining commercial tracts will not move the "economic needle" very far in affecting the balance of tax revenue between residential and commercial property taxes. To avoid a further shift of the economic burden of funding town operations to traditional residential taxpayers, innovative ways will be required to manage the remaining developable land to ensure preservation of open space and high quality light-industrial and commercial development which adds to a "revenue-positive" tax structure that does not add to the financial tax burden of our residents.

The development of Portsmouth's west side presents the most development potential in the town, but comes with some significant liabilities with the concomitant environmental and infrastructure challenges. Significant effort will be needed to address and overcome those problems in order to create an area that is economically rich and aligns with community values and needs.

A recent review of the school and town infrastructure provided focus on the age and condition of many school and town buildings. The increased operating costs and potential need for replacement of these

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aging structures will place an increasing burden on future capital improvement expenditures and will have to be carefully analyzed and managed in an uncertain future of limited resources.

5.5 GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

5.5.1 GOAL ED-1

Achieve a high and growing standard of living for Portsmouth's citizens and entrepreneurs by empowering a 21st century workforce to match a 21st century economy.

POLICY ED-1.1

Seek local business input to assess the workforce skills gap and support strategies to meet local employers' talent needs.

Action ED-1.1a: Institute an annual roundtable of local business leaders to discuss local employers' workforce needs and ways local government can assist local businesses in hiring quality employees.

POLICY ED-1.2

Coordinate with local educational institutions and other entities that provide career growth counseling, technical education and training opportunities and management of apprenticeship/internship programs.

Action ED-1.2a: Inventory, maintain and actively publicize a list of all state and local workforce education and training programs.

Action ED-1.2b: Pursue the establishment of public / private partnerships to support adult education and training as well as apprenticeship / internship programs to improve the Portsmouth workforce.

5.5.2 GOAL ED-2

Produce an effective set of economic development programs and policies designed to promote and enhance Portsmouth's strengths as a community.

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POLICY ED-2.1

Recognize and promote the belief that the very best business attractor we can create is to make Portsmouth an exceptional place to live, work and play.

[Action ED-2.1a](#): Pursue state and federal grants to help fund programs to improve the landscape, built environment and quality of life in Portsmouth.

[Action ED-2.1b](#): Identify and prioritize items in the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan that express direct efforts to improve the quality of life as a business attractor.

[Action ED-2.1c](#): Develop short, medium and long-term marketing plans that focus on Portsmouth as an exceptional place to live/work/play and provide business initiatives when/wherever possible.

[Action ED-2.1d](#): Establish a 'Beautify Portsmouth' committee to draft a 10-year plan to enhance the physical attractiveness of the community.

[Action ED-2.1e](#): Review and update Portsmouth's Design Review standards.

POLICY ED-2.2

Prioritize programs and policies that focus on retaining and strengthening existing local businesses. Keep local businesses in Portsmouth.

[Action ED-2.2a](#): Develop a 5-year Economic Development Strategic Plan.

[Action ED-2.2b](#): Create and annually update a Portsmouth business roster.

[Action ED-2.2c](#): Develop and bi-annually update a set of industry standard economic indicators to analyze trends in the Portsmouth economy and institute a bi-annual "Report Card" on business activity.

POLICY ED-2.3

Support the growth of home occupations as an important component of business activity in Portsmouth.

[Action ED-2.3a](#): Review and amend (as necessary) provisions in the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance regulating home occupations, balancing support for the expansion of business activity and the potential negative impacts to residential neighborhoods.

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[Action ED-2.3b](#): Conduct a business survey of current home occupations to determine the best ways Portsmouth can aid in the expansion of this business sector.

POLICY ED-2.4

Continue to focus on attracting maritime, technology and defense-related businesses as desirable economic activity in Portsmouth.

[Action ED-2.4a](#): Collaborate in and support the efforts to transfer the Navy land referred to as the “Melville Backyard” for private commercial use.

[Action ED-2.4b](#): Review the Planned Marina Development provisions of the Zoning Ordinance for unwarranted limitations on marina development.

[Action ED-2.4c](#): Work closely with the Southeastern New England Defense Industry Alliance (SENEDIA), which is the primary defense industry group that advocates for defense industry support in the area.

[Action ED-2.4d](#): Work closely with Navy officials to endeavor that excessing of Navy property is handled consistent with the needs of businesses in the Melville area.

[Action ED-2.4e](#): Evaluate development plans for the West Side Defense Highway (i.e., the “Burma Road”) and Stringham Road to endeavor any plans are consistent with the support of local marine, technology, defense and other businesses.

POLICY ED-2.5

Promote tourism and the local tourist economy at every opportunity.

[Action ED-2.5a](#): Investigate the establishment of a Portsmouth Tourism Board to oversee efforts to promote tourism in Portsmouth.

[Action ED-2.5b](#): Partner with the Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce and/or similar organizations engaged in the promotion of tourism.

5.5.3 GOAL ED-3

Produce the type of economic growth that makes Portsmouth more resilient, self-sufficient and resistant to the impacts of external natural and economic forces.

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POLICY ED-3.1

Endeavor that built infrastructure and municipal services are maximized to support local business activity in Portsmouth.

[Action ED-3.1a](#): Collaborate in and prioritize the development of public or private high-speed, broadband internet to all of Aquidneck Island.

[Action ED-3.1b](#): Develop a plan to establish Wi-Fi “hotspots” to enhance the hard-connected internet infrastructure and provide internet access to more businesses and residences.

[Action ED-3.1c](#): Work with RIDOT to implement traffic improvements to both East and West Main Roads.

[Action ED-3.1d](#): Investigate public ownership of utilities and infrastructure in the Melville area as a catalyst for future growth.

POLICY ED-3.2

Encourage local business-to-business programs and policies that encourage local relationships and local business coordination. Keep Portsmouth dollars in Portsmouth.

[Action ED-3.2a](#): Task the Director of Business Development, working in conjunction with the Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce and the Portsmouth Business Association, with identifying and bringing together local businesses that can work together for mutual benefit.

POLICY ED-3.3

Address the increasing impacts of climate change and seek ways to protect both public and private business and infrastructure assets within Portsmouth.

[Action ED-3.3a](#): Collaborate with Rhode Island Sea Grant and other federal, state, regional agencies or non-profits that educate business owners on the negative impact of climate change and what can be done to protect business assets and infrastructure.

[Action ED-3.3b](#): Task the Town Director of Business Development to seek grants to protect businesses and infrastructure from the impacts of climate change.

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5.5.4 GOAL ED-4

Attain a level of business growth that supports a balanced and sustainable tax base without compromising Portsmouth's natural, historic, architectural and aesthetic character.

POLICY ED-4.1

Through zoning, work to make sure there is a sufficient amount of land to support growth in the commercial/industrial tax base to maintain a balance with Portsmouth's residential tax base at appropriate levels.

Action ED-4.1a: Compile and maintain a list of publicly and privately-owned vacant and underutilized parcels with commercial and industrial zoning designations.

Action ED-4.1b: Prepare an economic buildout analysis to determine how much commercial/industrial development remains possible under current zoning.

Action ED-4.1c: Undertake an analysis of the magnitude of commercial and industrial development required to impact the balance of residential to commercial tax revenue by a given percentage point.

Action ED-4.1d: Prepare a community purchasing power study to determine how much and what types of businesses Portsmouth has the capacity to support in the future and adjust commercial zoning accordingly.

Action ED-4.1e: Review and update provisions in the Zoning Ordinance for Mixed Use development in commercial districts.

POLICY ED-4.2

Continue to require landscape buffers and other regulatory safeguards that protect residential properties from the negative impacts of commercial and industrial development.

Action ED-4.2a: Review zoning and sub-division regulations and all town ordinances to maximize reasonable protections to residential parcels from the negative impacts of commercial and industrial development.

POLICY ED-4.3

Consider direct public investment in unique development, redevelopment and infill

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opportunities as a way to ensure quality business development that does not compromise community character.

[Action ED-4.3a](#): Pursue strategies to create a business incubation facility in Portsmouth.

[Action ED-4.3b](#): Investigate the creation of a public/private Portsmouth Economic Development Corporation to facilitate local economic development.

5.5.5 GOAL ED-5

Achieve a level of economic conditions and business climate that increase the competitive advantages of doing business in Portsmouth.

POLICY ED-5.1

Minimize regulatory constraints on new and existing business owners by seeking ways to improve local licensing, permit approvals and development regulations as well as working through Portsmouth’s state delegation to influence and streamline state-mandated licensing and permitting regulations.

[Action ED-5.1a](#): Adopt a new “Industrial Park” zoning district with updated zoning regulations to replace the now expired site restrictions and development standards guiding development of the original park.

[Action ED-5.1b](#): Create a “Handbook for Starting a Business in Portsmouth” as an aid to prospective business applicants.

POLICY ED-5.2

Promote policies and programs that reduce the cost of doing business in Portsmouth.

[Action ED-5.2a](#): Investigate the establishment of a locally funded revolving loan program to provide local small businesses with better access to short-term cash requirements.

[Action ED-5.2b](#): Work with CommerceRI and other state partners to identify grant opportunities for Portsmouth’s businesses.

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[Action ED-5.2c](#): Work with the General Assembly to support tax reform at the state level and address the competitive disadvantages Rhode Island businesses may have with our neighboring states.

POLICY ED-5.3

Ensure there is robust municipal support of local businesses, including active promotion of Portsmouth as a good place to do business.

[Action ED-5.3a](#): Where permissible by state law, adopt municipal purchasing practices that favor Portsmouth businesses.

[Action ED-5.3b](#): Investigate the holding of an annual week-long, town-wide, large-scale civic event to “put Portsmouth on the map,” foster civic engagement and promote community cohesion.

[Action ED-5.3c](#): Designate the town position of Director of Business Development as the lead advocate for existing and prospective businesses.

[Action ED-5.3d](#): Encourage agribusiness as a vital part of the Town’s economy.

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ELEMENT 6

Agriculture



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ELEMENT 6 – AGRICULTURE

6.1 AGRICULTURE VISION

AGRICULTURE WILL REMAIN A VITAL AND VIBRANT COMPONENT OF PORTSMOUTH’S WAY OF LIFE, LAND USE AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY.

Farms are one piece of a larger system; a system that must be considered and planned for in its entirety to ensure its overall economic viability. This section addresses planning for Portsmouth’s agricultural¹ resources, operations and communitywide management under the following categories:

- Relationship to land use
- Preservation of rural character, open space and scenic views
- Economic benefit

6.1.1 BASIS FOR PLANNING

Portsmouth prides itself as a community with a long agricultural tradition and has long expressed a desire to preserve active farming as a vital component of our economic and social life. Most types of agriculture: livestock, fruits and vegetables of all kinds, aquaculture, viticulture, ornamental nursery stock, wholesale greenhouse operations, Christmas trees, flowers and fiber are all active enterprises here in our community. Farm stands, Farmers markets, pick your own operations, farm tours and even a corn maze are common sights around town during the growing season. The significant agricultural operations listed

¹ Throughout this element of the Comprehensive Plan and pursuant to Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance – Article II, the terms “agriculture” or “agricultural operations” are intended to mean:

Any commercial enterprise which has as its primary purpose farming, cultivation of crops, husbandry, horticulture, viticulture, viniculture, floriculture, forestry, ranching, stabling of horses, dairy farming, or aquaculture, or the raising of livestock, including for the production of fiber, furbearing animals, poultry, or bees, along with the necessary accessory uses for packing, treating, or storing the farm product, provided that the operation of any such accessory use shall be secondary to that of the principal agricultural activity...The mixed-use of farms and farmlands for other forms of enterprise including, but not limited to, the display of antique farm equipment, retail sales, tours, classes, petting, feeding and viewing of animals, hay rides, crop mazes, festivals and other special events are hereby recognized as a valuable and viable means of contributing to the preservation of agriculture.

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below occupy over 13% of the land area of Aquidneck Island in Portsmouth, but are by no means the limit of agricultural activity. In season, there are dozens of small farms producing everything from apples & cider to fresh eggs and honey from local hives. It is imperative this significant “working landscape” be a basic component of Portsmouth’s comprehensive planning for the future.

Farm Name	Acreage	Product/Description
Escobar Farm	97 Acres	Dairy (Rhody Fresh Milk founder), Christmas trees, corn, annual Corn Maze, Farmhouse Inn (bed & breakfast). Much of farmland is preserved with Aquidneck Land Trust.
Maplewood Farms	37 Acres	Potatoes, squash, tomatoes, sunflowers, potted herbs, annual flowers, Farm Stand.
Aquidneck Farms	400 managed Acres	Black Angus beef, chickens and eggs, Farm Stand. Much of farm acreage is preserved with Aquidneck Land Trust. Excess compost, hay and baleage sold to local farmers and growers.
Chase Farm	38 Acres	Wholesale greenhouses, herbs and vegetable starts, solar farm.
Decastro Farms	90 Acres	Pumpkin, squash, corn, cabbage, fruit trees, Christmas trees, vegetable starts and herb plants, Farm Stand and wholesale, local value-added products.
Greenvale Vineyards	88 Acres	Conventional and organic wine grapes, hops, Tasting Room, special event venue.
Quonset View Farms	140 Acres	Cotta Family - strawberries, pumpkins, potatoes, Christmas trees, nursery shrubs, Pick Your Own, Farm Stand, wholesale.
Lacerda Farms	74 Acres	Potatoes, corn, pumpkins.
Rhode Island Nurseries	225 Acres	Ornamental nursery stock.
Mello Farm	19 Acres	Produce, fruit trees and shrubs, vegetable starts, herb plants, Farm Stand and Garden Center.
DeArruda Farm	43 Acres	Corn, potatoes.
Rego Brothers	30 Acres	Hay and baleage.
Pierce Anthony Farm	22 Acres	Equestrian, apples.
Ragged Island Farm Brewery	37 Acres	Agricultural activity, Farm Brewery.
Cloverbud Ranch	121 Acres	Grass-fed beef, pastured pork, rabbits.
Almy-Thurston Christmas Tree Farm	23 Acres	Christmas trees, blueberries. Land is preserved with Aquidneck Land Trust.

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6.2 ASSESSMENT OF AGRICULTURE

6.2.1 RELATIONSHIP TO LAND USE

Agriculture, more than for most other land uses, has a special connection to the land and is dependent on site conditions, particularly soil conditions. An essential part of Portsmouth's planning for incorporating agriculture into its pattern of land uses is the location of these soils suitable for agriculture. The USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has identified those soils in Rhode Island that have a combination of physical and chemical features that make them best suited for farming. These "Important Farmlands" are subdivided into: 1) "Prime Farmlands" which are the best soils for agricultural use, and 2) "Additional Farmlands of Statewide Importance" which are other soils that are less well suited for intensive farming but are still valuable for many farm enterprises. With regard to these soils and existing land uses, the maps accompanying this element tell an important story. See **Maps 6 and 7**. To be noted:

- Just under 75% of the land area of Portsmouth on Aquidneck Island is covered with soils that are of "statewide importance" or are "prime" soils for agricultural use.
- 50.1% of the above land area with soils suitable for agricultural uses has been lost to other types of land uses, 25.7% is being actively farmed.
- Of the best soils for agricultural use, "prime" soils in Portsmouth on Aquidneck Island, 53.3% have been lost to other types of uses, 29.0% are in active farm use.

Given development pressures evident here in town, it is quite likely that land currently being farmed will give way to other uses in the decades ahead. For Portsmouth to realize its vision of agriculture "*remaining a vital and vibrant component of Portsmouth's way of life, land use and economic activity,*" to the greatest extent possible and with the tools available to the municipality for regulating such things, attention will have to be paid towards making sure that development pressure does not consume "prime" soils best suited for intensive agriculture and that land uses for other than agriculture and farm enterprises not needing "prime" soils be directed towards "soils of statewide importance" or other areas of town with less valuable or non-agricultural soils. See **Map 8** for the identification of those areas of the Town where we hope to maintain active agriculture.

In addition to the suitability of the land for agriculture, consideration must be made to the most suitable types of land use for areas adjoining or near agricultural activities. While our farms add to the character

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and economy of Portsmouth, they are business operations that can have aspects which that may be objectionable to nearby residences. Accordingly, the proximity and density of other uses as well as the provision of buffers and other land use techniques in relation to agricultural activities are important considerations.

6.2.2 RURAL CHARACTER, OPEN SPACE AND SCENIC VIEWS

Agriculture as a land use or as a business activity is only part of how Portsmouth thinks about its farms. The phrase “working landscape” is an apt description here. Our farms certainly provide important economic activity such as jobs, farm products and tax revenue, but perhaps of equal or greater importance are the intangibles of highly valued open space, scenic vistas and the pleasing mix of rural and suburban landscapes our farms provide. Despite the decrease in the number of farms and amount of farmland lost to other types of development over past decades, farmland preservation remains one of the top priorities of the citizens of Portsmouth. This is manifested in our farm property tax assessment program adopted in 1990. The program assesses qualified farmland at its current use value rather than its “highest and best use” value and assigns a reduced property tax rate thereby giving farmers a property tax savings that can be used to offset operational costs.

6.2.3 ECONOMIC AND OTHER BENEFITS

Farming and agricultural activity provides additional benefits to the town. Cost of community services studies routinely demonstrate farms demand far less in services than they pay for in taxes, even at the reduced rates made available by the farm tax exemption program and because of their very existence, the value of surrounding properties is consistently higher than in more urban communities.

In addition, promoting agriculture promotes local jobs. A recent effort to increase education about and interest in agricultural careers has been started by a partnership between the Portsmouth School District and the Eastern Rhode Island Conservation District with their Portsmouth AgInnovation Farm (AgInnovation) program located on Jepson Lane at Cloverbud Ranch. This program introduces students to all aspects of farming such as business management, technology, engineering.

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Agriculture also brings tourism dollars to the town, as for example, Greenvale Vineyards and Ragged Island Brewery have done.

Moreover, promoting local agriculture addresses our food supply issue. Rhode Island only produces about 2% of the food consumed by its population - a situation made more ominous because of recent threats to the food chain supply.

6.3 GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

6.3.1 GOAL AG-1

Achieve a balance of land uses that accommodate non-agricultural development pressure all the while preserving the remaining parcels of land containing prime farmland soils for agricultural uses.

POLICY AG-1.1

Continue to work with land trusts, non-profits and other appropriate partners to target prime agricultural lands for preservation.

Action AG-1.1a: Compile and continuously update a database of parcels with prime soils or soils of statewide importance cross-referenced with farmland activity and protected status.

Action AG-1.1b: Provide an annual report to the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission on any land use changes affecting parcels containing prime agricultural soils in Portsmouth.

6.3.2 GOAL AG-2

Reach a point where a framework of programs, policies and initiatives that support and strengthen the agriculture sector as an essential component of Portsmouth's economic activity have been established and been proven to be effective.

POLICY AG-2.1

Advance regulations, programs and initiatives that increase the economic viability of agriculture in Portsmouth.

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[Action AG-2.1a](#): Continue to endorse the State of Rhode Island’s Farm, Forest, and Open Space Program (RIGL §44-27).

[Action AG-2.1b](#): Maintain the Portsmouth Farmland Exemption Program.

[Action AG-2.1c](#): Continue to work with the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council to facilitate approvals for aquaculture permits in Portsmouth waters.

[Action AG-2.1d](#): Continue to support the Portsmouth Water and Fire District’s water rates and availability policy applicable to farmers enrolled in the Portsmouth Farmland Exemption Program.

[Action AG-2.1e](#): Review the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations as well as the State Right to Farm Act (RIGL §2-23-4) for ways to increase the mutual compatibility of agricultural and residential land uses within the framework of the law.

[Action AG-2.1f](#): Review the livestock provisions of the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance for relevance to current agricultural practices.

[Action AG – 2.1g](#): Reinstate the Restricted Account in the General Fund to receive a portion of the Real Estate Conveyance Tax dedicated to the acquisition, development and protection of the natural, agricultural and recreational resources of the Town of Portsmouth.

[Action AG-2.1h](#): Continue to support efforts to educate students and community with partnerships such as the one with AgInnovation.

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ELEMENT 7

Services and Facilities



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ELEMENT 7 – SERVICES AND FACILITIES

7.1 SERVICES AND FACILITIES VISION

PORTSMOUTH WILL BE A COMMUNITY WHERE COST-EFFECTIVE, HIGH-QUALITY MUNICIPAL SERVICES AND WELL-MAINTAINED PUBLIC FACILITIES MEET THE CHANGING NEEDS OF CURRENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS.

This section addresses Portsmouth's public infrastructure, facilities and services under the following categories:

- Town administration and elected leaders
- Educational facilities and services
- Public safety and emergency services
- Public works services
- Solid waste management
- Wastewater management
- Stormwater management
- Library and community services

See **Map 9** for geographic locations of facilities described in this element. **Map 10** shows the location of federal, state and municipally owned lands in Portsmouth.

7.1.1 BASIS FOR PLANNING

This section of the Portsmouth CCP update relies on:

- Population projections as determined in Technical Paper 162 prepared by Rhode Island Statewide Planning using FY 2012 – 2013 census data.
- Local opinion of facilities and services as determined by a 2013 opinion survey.

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- Town staff assessment of services and facilities both as they currently exist and for their ability to meet projected need.

7.1.2 POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Portsmouth's population is projected to increase by a modest 2.3% over approximately the next 20 years. Anticipated need in each of the categories within the services and facilities element detailed herein have been informed by this Statewide Planning population projection.

7.1.3 OPINION SURVEY OF PORTSMOUTH SERVICES AND FACILITIES

In March 2013, the Town of Portsmouth conducted a residential telephone survey as part of the comprehensive planning process. The survey was conducted by a national research firm and included 600 randomly selected Portsmouth residents.¹ In summary, survey made three principal findings:

- Satisfaction with the existing level of service in Portsmouth is fairly strong.
- Residents of the Town generally feel that the cost of services and facilities should be borne by all tax payers as opposed to individual users.
- Residents generally accept their current level of taxation for services and facilities but have limited willingness to pay more for services and facilities; although, to some extent this would depend on the added cost and for what that cost is paying.

7.2 ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE, FACILITIES AND SERVICES

7.2.1 TOWN ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTED LEADERS

Portsmouth operates under a Home Rule Charter, first adopted in November 1972. All powers of the Town (including those powers formerly vested in and exercised by the Financial Town Meeting, which was discontinued) are vested in the elected Town Council. Elected biennially in even years, the seven-member

¹ Statistically, a sample of 600 surveys represents a margin for error of +/-4.0% at a 95% confidence level [for the size of Portsmouth's population]. In theory, a sample of Portsmouth residents will differ no more than +/-4.0% than if all Portsmouth residents [with landlines] were contacted and included in the survey. That is, if random probability sampling procedures were reiterated over and over again, sample results may be expected to approximate the larger population values within plus or minus +/-4.0% -- 95 out of 100 times.

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Town Council may enact local legislation subject only to the limitations imposed by Charter, the State Constitution and the General Laws of Rhode Island. Under the Charter, the Council determines policy, enacts law and appoints the Town Administrator.

The Town Administrator is the chief executive and manages the day-to-day operations of town government. All Town department heads report to the Town Administrator. As of September 2021, there were a total of 140 full-time employees occupying positions in the following departments:

- Town Administration
- Finance
- Planning
- Recreation
- Wastewater Management
- Building / Zoning
- Fire
- Police
- Tax Assessment/Collection
- Canvassing
- Human Resources
- Public Works
- Town Clerk

Town Boards include:

- Board of Canvassers
- Tax Assessment Board of Review
- Juvenile Hearing Board
- Wastewater Appeals Board
- Planning Board
* Design Review Board
- Zoning Board of Review

Active Town Committees include:

- Agriculture Committee
- Conservation Commission
- Economic Development Committee
- Harbor Commission
- Melville Park Committee
- Portsmouth Prevention Coalition
- Solid Waste/Recycling Committee
- West Side Advisory Committee
- Bristol Ferry Town Common Committee
- Dog Park Committee
- Glen Manor House Authority
- Housing Authority
- Mooring Assignment Appeal Committee
- Prudence Island Planning Commission
- Tree Commission

7.3 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES

7.3.1 BUILDING CAPACITY AND ENROLLMENT

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Capacity of Portsmouth’s current school facilities is calculated by the School Department and assumes the current class organization, educational programming and state-mandated class sizes. Total district enrollment is projected to increase by 3.6% over the next decade. The elementary schools are projected to be over their capacity based on the current classroom configuration. Therefore, additional classrooms will likely need to be configured from existing elementary school spaces. The Town does not anticipate the need for construction of new school facilities to address capacity needs within the next ten years.

Current Enrollments and Estimated Pupil Capacities			
School	Capacity	Grades	September 2020 Enrollment
Hathaway Elementary	492	K-4	416
Melville Elementary	399	PK-4	335
Portsmouth Middle	1,056	5-8	650
Portsmouth High	1,250	9-12	861
Totals	3,197	PK-12	2,262

Source: Portsmouth Public Schools

Portsmouth Public Schools Projected Enrollment 2021-2031				
	PK-4	5-8	9-12	Total District Enrollment
2020-21	751	650	861	2,262
2021-22	783	622	835	2,240
2022-23	804	614	802	2,220
2023-24	846	630	760	2,236
2024-25	866	623	737	2,226
2025-26	903	614	704	2,221
2026-27	917	618	696	2,231
2027-28	916	641	614	2,271
2028-29	895	696	706	2,297
2029-30	905	726	696	2,327
2030-31	910	734	700	2,344

Source: New England School Development Council (NESDEC)

Projected enrollment appears to be well within the capacity of the Town’s existing facilities. No expansion of existing school facilities is planned. School facilities are, however, in need of maintenance and

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upgrades. The School Department has developed a 5-year RIDE Stage II Capital Improvement Plan for years 2022 - 2026. The plan recommends allocation of \$21.4M over the 5-year period. Improvements are recommended for each of the school buildings in the district. Recommended improvements include upgrades to electrical systems and HVAC systems, bathroom renovations and accessibility improvements, asbestos abatement, roof replacements, and the addition of an elevator at Hathaway Elementary. The School Department's capital plan has been submitted to the RIDE School Building Authority and final approval from the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education is expected in December 2021.

The Portsmouth Public School System consists of two elementary schools, one middle school, one high school and an administration building. As of September 2020, the Portsmouth Public Schools employed approximately 322 people, including 220 certified teachers, 35 teacher aides, 16 administrators, 24 non-certified clerical staff, 2 School Security Specialists, 16 custodians, 3 maintenance specialists and 6 technology specialists.

Portsmouth High School

Constructed in 1963, with additions completed in 1981, 1989, 2000, and 2006, Portsmouth High School (PHS) serves students in grades 9 through 12 and is located on a 42-acre campus at 120 Education Lane. PHS contains approximately 88 educational and 40 education-related rooms spanning 193,500 square feet. Outdoor facilities include 57,600 square feet of tennis courts, four baseball/softball fields, one football/soccer/lacrosse stadium with a synthetic running track and four multi-use practice fields.

Portsmouth Middle School

Constructed in 1971, Portsmouth Middle School (PMS) is located on 37 acres at 125 Jepson Lane. PMS contains 54 educational and 50 education-related rooms spanning 157,800 square feet. The facility serves students in grades five through eight. Outdoor facilities include two basketball courts, one soccer field, and two baseball/softball fields.

Howard W. Hathaway Elementary School

Located on 10.75 acres at 53 Tallman Avenue, Howard W. Hathaway Elementary School was originally constructed in 1951 with major additions completed in 1967, 1990, and 2003 and currently serves

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students in grades kindergarten through four. Hathaway School contains approximately 27 educational and 13 education-related rooms spanning 50,145 square feet.

Melville Elementary School

Melville Elementary School serves pre-kindergarten through grade four students. The building was originally constructed in 1965 with major additions in 1989 and 2000. Located on 3.55 acres at 1350 West Main Road, the school contains 31 educational and seven education-related rooms spanning 44,810 square feet.

The Mario Mancieri Administration Building

Located at 29 Middle Road in close proximity to Portsmouth Town Hall, the 5,960 square foot School Department Administration Building houses administration offices on a 1.0-acre site.

7.4 PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

This section discusses services provided by the police and fire departments.

7.4.1 POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Portsmouth Police Department is located at 2270 East Main Road adjacent to the Fire Department and the Public Works Department. In 2015, a comprehensive building assessment study identified significant space and structural deficiencies of the original 5,000 square foot police department building constructed, for the most part, in 1975 with a small addition in 1995. The study recommended replacement of the original building, and new construction of a larger, modern police station began on the same site in 2017. The Police Department (PD) provides 24-hour public safety response and patrols for the community through a dispatch center staffed round the clock.

The Department currently employs 38 full-time officers. The authorized strength is 36 officers, two School Resource Officers, one Animal Control Officer, one civilian clerk and one Prudence Island Public Safety Officer. The PD also includes the position of Harbormaster. The Department has a minimum staffing level of four officers per shift with one officer assigned to dispatch and three on the road.

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In 2020, the Department handled 41,320 service calls, and made 805 arrests. Traffic and traffic enforcement are primary responsibilities and the officers conducted 7,804 motor vehicle stops and handled 402 accidents. The state police barracks in Portsmouth was closed due to staffing shortages in 2011 and Portsmouth PD also handles primary response on Route 24.

The PD has mutual aid agreements with our surrounding communities of Tiverton, Bristol and Middletown and we are required to respond to emergencies in those communities as they are for Portsmouth.

The Department has a fleet of 29 vehicles, including 13 patrol units, eight unmarked cars, one animal control truck, two Prudence Island patrol vehicles, and five detail vehicles. The Department also has two patrol boats, a 25-foot and 23-foot boat for the Harbor Unit as well as two patrol motorcycles. The Department continues their vehicle replacement plan to upgrade the fleet over the next five years.

7.4.1.1 POLICE DEPARTMENT - ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND ANTICIPATED FUTURE QUALITY OF SERVICE

Measuring 24,000 square feet, the new Police Station building is located on the same site as the original Police Station at 2270 East Main Road, which has been torn down. The project is funded by a \$10 Million Bond approved by the voters in 2016. The building includes a modern cell block, vehicle maintenance bay and sally port, adequate space for the police force men and women and a community room.

Construction started in October 2017 and was completed in May 2019 to provide Portsmouth's citizens with the best value for their investment while providing the police force the space and tools they need to keep our community safe.

The Police Department has seen a 20% increase in calls for service over the last five years. The expected trend is for police services to increase over the next 20 years with the expansion of cyber-crime and fraud. Police experts predict that increased public pressure for community problem solving policing will require increases in staffing levels of 5 to 10% even if overall crime rates do not increase.

Prudence Island is one area of the population that has historically been underserved. There is no police facility on Prudence Island. The summer population now averages over 2,000 people. The Police Department does have one Prudence Island Public Safety officer and supplements that officer with one

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additional officer during the busiest summer weekends. The Island is in need of a police substation for the Prudence Island officer to take incident reports, issue hunting permits and conduct interviews. This would greatly enhance our service for our Prudence Island residents and visitors.

7.4.2 FIRE DEPARTMENT

Portsmouth Fire Department staff work out of a single fire station located at 2300 East Main Road. The fire station building was constructed in 1970 and contains a total of 15,319 square feet with 10,433 sq. ft. on the first floor, 4,086 sq. ft. on the second floor and 800 sq. ft. in the basement. The building contains ten apparatus bays (five drive through bays), a day room, a kitchen, a radio/dispatch room, bunk space, locker room/shower room, mechanical space and offices for the Chief and Fire Marshal, along with a combination Conference/Training Room on the second floor, which serves as the Town's Emergency Operations Center.

The Portsmouth Fire Department provides fire, rescue, emergency medical, and fire prevention services with an authorized strength of forty-three full-time uniformed firefighters and four uniformed firefighter/dispatchers. There are four platoons with ten firefighters and one dispatcher assigned to each. The first-due engine is staffed with four firefighters. The other firefighters cross-staff apparatus, meaning two firefighters are assigned to both the second run engine and the first run ambulance, and three firefighters are assigned to the ladder truck and the second run ambulance. The shift commander is assigned to the command car.

The Department is the first responding organization for structural firefighting and emergency medical services. The Fire Department is tasked with responding to and managing a broad spectrum of other types of emergencies, including, but not limited to, vehicle crashes, building collapse, water and ice rescue, mass casualty incidents, weather related emergencies, and natural and technological disasters.

The Portsmouth Fire Department regularly responds to and receives mutual aid requests from several surrounding communities including Tiverton, Middletown, Bristol and the Naval Station Newport Fire Department. The Department also receives assistance and responds to calls for assistance to cities and towns throughout Rhode Island on a less frequent basis. In calendar year 2020, the Department

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responded to calls for mutual aid 133 times. The Department received assistance from its mutual aid partners 58 times during the year.

The Fire Department maintains three ambulances, two of which are in service, three engines, two of which are in service, a tower ladder, and several utility and administrative vehicles. In addition, the Department maintains three boats:

- A 2020 31-foot North Rivers, kept in the water year-round for duties including emergency response to Prudence and Hog Island.
- A 19-foot Boston Whaler, seasonally docked at the Island Park marina as primary response to emergencies in the Sakonnet River.
- A 10-foot Achilles inflatable kept trailered as a primary asset for ponds and other isolated small bodies of water.

The Portsmouth Fire Department also uses a brush truck with skid pump, an ice rescue sled, technical rescue equipment including rope rescue and confined space gear. Aside from normal emergency dispatch operations, the Department's dispatch center is also designated as East Bay Control which coordinates mutual aid requests for multi-alarm fires in the East Bay area.

7.4.2.1 FIRE DEPARTMENT - ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE QUALITY OF SERVICE

The Town-funded feasibility and space needs study identified the following deficiencies within the fire station building:

- No separation of male/female locker room spaces.
- No separation of male/female toilet facilities.
- No separation of male/female bunk facilities.
- Office space and workspace is inadequate with no area for a future administrative assistant.
- No public toilet facility that meets accessibility requirements.
- No shower/decontamination facility located reasonably close to apparatus bays.
- Minimal clearance above the tower ladder when passing through the overhead doors.

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The Fire Department has outgrown the current facility. It lacks appropriate office space and the compliment of necessary apparatus/vehicles require increased garage floor space. A training tower was partially built many years ago. In 2013 a structural analysis was performed, which came back with several recommendations including a major issue that needed to be addressed “expeditiously,” yet still remains untouched. This training tower needs to be made structurally sound or razed.

The National Fire Protection Association’s emergency response standard seeks to have the first four firefighters arriving within 4 minutes, and the full firefighting compliment assembled within 8 minutes. The current location of the single fire station is increasingly impacting acceptable response times to the north and south ends of the town. Increased demand for fire and emergencies services at the extreme ends of town along with increases in traffic have slowed down response times considerably. While mutual aid assistance response by surrounding communities can mitigate this problem somewhat, the Town needs to consider new substation facilities in various locations throughout town.

<i>Fire Department Emergency Response Times From Present Station - 2009</i>	
Location	Response Time
Coggeshall School	5.7 minutes
Schoolhouse Lane	4 minutes
Clearview Avenue	5 minutes
Fieldstone Drive	6 minutes
Union Street	7 minutes
Sandy Point Avenue	8 minutes
Woodland Drive (off East Main Road)	9 minutes
Wapping Road	8-11 minutes
Farmlands Drive	10 minutes
Black Point Lane	9 minutes
Old Mill Lane	12 minutes
Cottontail Drive (off Indian Avenue)	14 minutes
Bayberry Road (off Indian Avenue)	17 minutes

The Fire Department has monitored simultaneous call trends and evaluated the feasibility of staffing at least one ambulance with a dedicated crew that is not assigned to other apparatus. By independently

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staffing an ambulance, a higher level of fire protection coverage can be maintained throughout the Town. However, this would require the hiring of eight additional firefighter/EMT-C.

The fire prevention office is staffed by the Department's Fire Marshal. The core function of the department is to provide public fire education, ensure fire code compliance, and investigate the cause and origin of all fires that do occur. In the future, the Town should make it a priority to staff the fire prevention office with an additional fire inspector.

7.5 PUBLIC WORKS SERVICES

The Department of Public Works was created in 1972 as one of the many significant changes to Portsmouth government brought by the enactment of the Home Rule Charter. The Charter change envisaged the transformation of the old "Highway Department" into a modern multipurpose organization with wide ranging duties including street lighting, public parking lots, solid waste disposal, park maintenance, public buildings maintenance, new public and private infrastructure inspection and other public works projects as they are initiated.

The Department is based at the Public Works facility off Hedly Street. This 12,000 square foot building houses the bulk of the Department's equipment, its office, workshop, and a repair facility for all Town vehicles (with the exception of the specialized vehicles of the Fire Department). The surrounding 3+ acre "yard" area includes areas dedicated to the storage of sand, gravel, and a variety of construction materials required to carry out the Department's duties. In addition, the Department maintains a smaller facility on Prudence Island and operates the Prudence Island Transfer Station.

Department personnel currently include the Director, Deputy, two Foremen, two mechanics, and twelve operators. Two of these men are permanently assigned to Prudence Island. The Director of Public Works oversees the operation of the Department and reports to the Town Administrator.

Among its numerous other duties, Public Works is responsible for approximately 111 miles of town roads. Routine maintenance activities include roadside vegetation control, grass cutting, street sweeping, plowing, sanding, patching, and the installation and maintenance of roadside signs. On Prudence Island,

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additional, regular activities on the primarily gravel road system include grading, shaping, and dust control.

7.5.1 PUBLIC WORKS - ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE QUALITY OF SERVICE

With only modest growth in population and residential development expected within the planning period of this Comprehensive Plan, demand for services are not expected to rise dramatically. The Department does still, however, need to maintain a high level of service and needed improvement are identified in several areas.

The Public Works Department needs to develop a 10-year Strategic Plan to address current and future service demands, management procedures, assets inventory maintenance and replacement, staffing levels and budgeting procedures. This effort should include a 5-year, annually reviewed and updated department-specific Capital Improvement Plan. Current management practices, while excellent in the short-term, are not sustainable. A concerted effort towards long-term planning needs to be instituted.

Staffing levels in the department continue to be a problem. Inherent to managing a short staff with a heavy task load is the problem of day-to-day operations accommodating vacation time, sick leave, light duty and other disability issues. Long-term decisions need to be made to address this problem, not only regarding field operators but administrative staff as well.

The Town and the Public Works Department need to continue to investigate opportunities for sharing responsibilities and staffing with surrounding communities and the School Department.

7.6 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Approximately half of Portsmouth households drop off their waste and recycling at one of the Town's two Transfer Stations. The remaining households and businesses contract with private waste and recycling haulers. Portsmouth's Transfer Stations are available to residents only who are verified using auto registrations or other means the town has determined. Portsmouth businesses must contract with private waste and recycling haulers. Portsmouth schools have contracts with private waste and recycling haulers.

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As of November 2015, e-waste collection was halted at Portsmouth Transfer Stations because the company that collected and processed e-waste lost a significant amount of their capacity to process and sell the recycled electronic materials. State law prohibits e-waste from the landfill and municipalities continue to face stiff fines if these materials are found in their solid waste loads. Until a solution to this problem can be found, Portsmouth will continue to sponsor standalone e-waste collection events and promote nearby e-waste collection sites operated by the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation.

Since 2009, the Portsmouth Transfer Stations have been operated as an Enterprise Fund with costs of operation covered by vehicle sticker sales, recycled material sales and other income specific to solid waste management. As of 2017, costs of operation of the Prudence Island Transfer Station are covered by the taxpayer supported general fund. Day-to-day operations of both transfer stations, including compacting and hauling, are managed by private contractors. In an effort to reduce the price of vehicles stickers and to increase recycling rates, the Town instituted a pay-as-you-throw program in 2017.

7.6.1 SOLID WASTE - ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE QUALITY OF SERVICE

The Portsmouth Transfer Station continues to be plagued by the small overall size of the facility. However, with continuing improvements in efficiency, the capacity of the Station to accept current amounts of waste and recyclable materials is adequate and can likely accommodate modest increases in the near future. Recycling rates have dramatically improved with the pay-as-you-throw program and abuse of the system has declined due to increased monitoring of incoming refuse. Factors including the size of our local facilities, increased tipping fees and capacity problems at the Johnston landfill call for an urgent need in long-term planning for new waste management strategies.

7.7 WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT

The Town of Portsmouth relies almost exclusively upon individual on-site wastewater treatment systems for wastewater disposal. There is no publicly owned wastewater treatment system anywhere in Town. The Town relies on and encourages private, on-site wastewater treatment facilities for commercial enterprises. There are however, several multi-user private wastewater treatment systems in Town serving large facilities and/or subdivisions, and the Newport Wastewater Treatment Facility has an extension serving a portion of the naval housing complex near Melville on the west side of Town. Raytheon has a

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treatment system for its West Main Road facility, but currently the system is off-line and operates as a holding tank from which effluent is trucked to Newport.

The Town has made a policy decision to forego the installation of a publicly owned wastewater treatment system in Portsmouth and, as an alternative, adopted an On-Site Wastewater Management Plan to manage and regulate wastewater treatment throughout town. The plan provides a set of strategies and implementation items to ensure the proper management, inspection, use and maintenance of on-site wastewater treatment systems. The Town recognizes that poorly managed on-site systems are prone to failure with age, outmoded design, overuse, poor soil conditions, or improper installation, repair or maintenance, and that failing on-site systems jeopardize the health, safety and welfare of the community.

Overseen by a full-time Wastewater Manager, the plan and its accompanying Wastewater Management District Ordinance commit to the inspection of every on-site wastewater treatment system in Portsmouth by the end of 2022.

7.7.1 WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT - ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE QUALITY OF SERVICE

The Town does not anticipate the need for construction of a publicly owned wastewater treatment system in Portsmouth within the 20-year planning period of this Comprehensive Plan and will rely on the wastewater management plan and ordinance to properly manage the treatment of wastewater in Portsmouth.

7.8 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The stormwater drainage system in Portsmouth consists of approximately 2,750 catch basins, 72 outfalls discharging into waters of the state, some 48 miles of underground connecting pipes and 127 off-road structures. The Portsmouth stormwater drainage system is interconnected with the State's drainage systems in numerous places around Town, most notably along Park Avenue in Island Park. There are several significant privately-owned stormwater drainage and treatment structures owned and maintained by homeowners and condominium associations across town. Maintenance of the town-owned

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stormwater drainage system is conducted by the Department of Public Works with annual costs included in the DPW budget.

Prohibited discharges to the Town's storm drainage system are regulated by Portsmouth's Stormwater Discharge Control Ordinance. A vigorous illicit discharge detection and elimination program, the scope of which is detailed in the Town's On-Site Wastewater Management Plan, is conducted jointly by the Public Works and Planning Departments in the neighborhoods of Island Park and Portsmouth Park. The goal of this on-going and multi-year program is to isolate and eliminate the sources of contaminated discharges which have been found in town-owned outfall pipes in these neighborhoods.

7.8.1 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT - ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE QUALITY OF SERVICE

While funding is adequate for on-going catch basin cleaning, street sweeping and other regular maintenance activities (and these activities are effective at achieving desired outcomes), little if any funding is being programmed into the Town's Capital Improvement Program for stormwater infrastructure upgrades or replacement. Nearly one-third of the underground pipes in the system are approaching fifty years since installation. The system is starting to show its age. A comprehensive investigation of the town-owned stormwater drainage system needs to be performed, particularly in areas of known problems, so that funds can be dedicated in the CIP before system failures overwhelm the town's resources.

Nearly all of the neighborhood of Island Park is low-lying and vulnerable to both storm surge and future sea level rise. The state and town-owned storm drainage systems in this neighborhood, particularly along Park Avenue are particularly vulnerable. Currently, at extreme high tides, with no input from rainfall or storm surge conditions, two outfalls along the waterfront roadway back up with seawater flooding the roadway surface. The Town estimates that even under normal tide and weather conditions, these two drainage outfalls function properly only half the time. They routinely back up with any appreciable rainfall and actually reverse flow with even modest storm surge conditions. Future sea level rise will only exacerbate this predicament. An urgent engineered response to this condition is needed as Park Avenue is the principle arterial to service the entire neighborhood of some 700 homes and 1,500 Portsmouth residents.

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An appreciable amount of stormwater runoff in Portsmouth flows into private system detention/retention ponds and other stormwater handling and treatment structures. While development agreements and homeowner's association/condominium documents generally spell out maintenance responsibilities for these private facilities, often routine maintenance and emergency repairs fall to the town at the town's expense. A Post-Construction Stormwater Management Ordinance is needed to strengthen the town's ability to enforce maintenance of these private stormwater treatment facilities and bring the Town into compliance with RIDEM Phase II stormwater regulations.

7.9 LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

7.9.1 LIBRARY

Portsmouth Free Public Library is located at 2658 East Main Road. There are four full-time staff members (three of which are professional librarians) and 11 part-time staff members. A Board of Trustees comprised of 16 members appointed to staggered terms oversees library operations. Two board members are appointed by the Portsmouth Town Council.

As of FY 2020, the library collection contains 56,193 books, 538 serials, 5,223 non-print materials, as well as discount passes to area cultural institutions. There are 10 public computer stations with internet access and 10 laptop computers for special computer instruction classes. There were 4,372 individual public computer uses in FY 2020 including 5,206 WiFi connections to the internet.

Library programs include adult, young adult, and children's programs. These programs include summer reading programs for adults, young adults, and children, book clubs, story hours, craft programs special lectures, STEAM-based science programs, a genealogy club, and computer instruction programs. In addition to the in-person and virtual programs, the Library added 69 self-directed activities (take home crafts) with a total participation of 2,135 young adults and children. The Library conducted 53 program events with a total of 417 people of all ages attending. A used book store operated by volunteers was added in 2010 and is open during the Library's regular hours of operation.

These statistics have dramatically changed from previous years due to the modifications that the Library made due to COVID-19 restrictions and social distancing. Some of the changes included moving some

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computers to storage, suspending serial purchasing so people wouldn't linger in the building, reducing all in-person programming and limiting patrons' time in the building. One feature that has proved successful is adding a parking lot WiFi which gets a good deal of use by those who prefer not to be in the building.

7.9.1.1 LIBRARY - ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE QUALITY OF SERVICE

With only modest growth in student and overall population expected within the planning period of this Comprehensive Plan, demand for library services are not expected to rise dramatically.

7.9.2 PORTSMOUTH MULTI-PURPOSE SENIOR CENTER

Operating in the town-owned Anne Hutchinson Building at 110 Bristol Ferry Road, the private, non-profit Portsmouth Multi-Purpose Senior Center has served the 55 and over community since 1981. Open weekdays from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, *“the Center is a private, non-profit community focal point for residents of Newport County and surrounding communities where older persons can come together for services and/or activities which enhance their dignity, reflect their experience and skills, support their independence, encourage their involvement in and with the Center and the community and respond to their diverse needs and interests.”* Supported by annual appropriations from the Town and dues from its members, the Center has traditionally served from 100 – 200 people in various activities on a daily basis. The Center serves approximately 4,000 lunch-time meals per year.

The Center has traditionally occupied almost 8,000 square feet of usable space. The Center includes a Computer Lab, a Fitness Center, a Game Room, a Library, a Dining Hall/Multi-Purpose room, and a Thrift Shop. Services and activities include art classes, tax preparation services, computer training, exercise classes, medical equipment loan, daily lunch-time meals, a variety of social activities and much more.

7.9.2.1 SENIOR CENTER - ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE QUALITY OF SERVICE

Quality of service at the Portsmouth Senior Center is negatively impacted in two important ways. First, those wishing to use the Portsmouth Senior Center must provide their own transportation to get there which may be an impediment to some. RIPTA bus service is available to the front door of the Center but does not extend into Portsmouth's neighborhoods, so public transportation to the center is poorly used.

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Secondly, the occupancy classification of the building which houses the Senior Center has had to be changed due to building code violations identified by the state and local fire marshals. Following an inspection of the building in March 2021, the Dining Hall/Multi-Purpose room has been closed. The Portsmouth Fire Chief, with concurrence of the State Fire Marshall's office, has allowed continued use of the Center's office area, Library/TV room, Game room, and Crafts room. Additionally, the Center's Thrift Shop can remain open. The maximum, capacity of the building is 33 persons.

Quality of service is likely to worsen over time without improvements in transportation to and from the Center, maintenance and upgrade or replacement of the facility itself, and a dedicated effort by the town to identify other facilities for the expansion of not only senior services but services and activities for the benefit of other disadvantaged individuals and families in the community.

7.10 GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

7.10.1 GOAL SF-1

Deliver cost-effective, high-quality municipal services and ensure that all public facilities are well-maintained.

POLICY SF-1.1 – TOWN ADMINISTRATION

Improve procedures to maintain a physical inventory of all Town facilities and assets in order to inform both short and long-term Capital Improvement Programs.

Action SF 1.1a: Maintain a baseline physical inventory of all Town structures, facilities and Town-owned land for condition, adequacy, obsolescence and desired improvement in operations and other non-real estate assets.

Action SF 1.1b: Update the physical inventory on an annual basis during Q1 of each fiscal year.

POLICY SF-1.2 – TOWN ADMINISTRATION

Manage long-range maintenance and improvement programs for all existing public facilities and Town-owned land in order to protect prior public investment.

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[Action SF 1.2a:](#) Develop comprehensive and detailed maintenance and/or phased replacement/divestiture plans for all structures, facilities and town-owned land.

[Action SF 1.2b:](#) Undertake a comprehensive upgrade in the operational capacity of Portsmouth Town Hall including:

- A structural and space needs analysis;
- An evaluation of security issues and implement necessary security measures;
- Monitor Town Hall air quality and implement necessary mitigation measures;
- Create a maintenance and upgrade schedule for all interior facilities and resources;
- Plan and implement comprehensive IT hardware and software improvements to Portsmouth Town Hall; and
- Collaborate with the Portsmouth School Department on shared IT resources.

[Action SF 1.2c:](#) Inventory all Town-owned buildings and facilities for ADA compliance.

POLICY SF-1.3 – TOWN ADMINISTRATION

Maintain sound fiscal management of Portsmouth's financial resources by developing sustainable annual budgets that promote long-term financial stability.

[Action SF 1.3a:](#) Prepare the annual budget and tax rate calculation in Q4 of Portsmouth's fiscal year.

[Action SF-1.3b:](#) Prepare and annually update a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). All improvements to the Town's facilities and assets are to be prioritized through the CIP.

[Action SF-1.3c:](#) Prepare and annually update a 5-year Operational Budget Forecast to accompany the CIP.

[Action SF-1.3d:](#) Pursue Pension Plan, OPEB and employee healthcare reforms in a fair and equitable manner.

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[Action SF-1.3e](#): Evaluate annual budgets with the goal of restoring and maintaining Portsmouth's Fund Balance at a minimum of 16%.

[Action SF-1.3f](#): Evaluate annual budgets with the goal of maintaining Portsmouth's bond rating at current Standard & Poor's AAA and Moody's AA2 ratings.

[Action SF-1.3g](#): Continuously evaluate fiscal management, tax collection methods and recordkeeping procedures for ways to improve efficiency and transparency of government.

[Action SF-1.3h](#): Review and update the Impact Fee Ordinance for applicability to current and future growth projections and school construction needs.

POLICY SF-1.4 – TOWN ADMINISTRATION

Continuously seek grant opportunities and ways to increase revenue to the Town in order to offset the costs of providing services.

[Action SF-1.4a](#): Pursue Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for projects that meet program guidelines.

[Action SF-1.4b](#): Reevaluate all current Town property leases for opportunities to renegotiate terms more beneficial to the Town.

POLICY SF-1.5 – TOWN ADMINISTRATION

Coordinate with neighboring communities and non-governmental organizations to determine if shared facilities and/or services may increase effectiveness.

[Action SF-1.5a](#): Participate in regional planning efforts where appropriate.

[Action SF-1.5b](#): Continuously investigate opportunities to share equipment, facilities, infrastructure and services to maximize the benefit to Portsmouth taxpayers.

POLICY SF-1.6 – TOWN ADMINISTRATION

Improve municipal services and facilities to Prudence and Hog Islands commensurate with the inherent limitations of access being by ferry or private vessel only.

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[Action SF-1.6a:](#) Coordinate with and provide appropriate support to all entities responsible for maintaining high-quality, continuous ferry service to Prudence Island.

[Action SF-1.6b:](#) Continue to investigate the re-establishment of limited ferry service to Hog Island.

[Action SF-1.6c:](#) Partner with the Prudence Island Planning Commission and other stakeholders to consider the development of a 10-year strategic plan for the island.

POLICY SF-1.7 – TOWN ADMINISTRATION

Ensure a high level of administrative functions from all town departments and enhance effective communication between town staff and citizens.

[Action SF-1.7a:](#) Develop a town wide technology plan highlighting adaptation to changes in communications, facilities and equipment.

[Action SF-1.7b:](#) Pursue advanced technological means to improve transparency of government and communications with citizens.

[Action SF-1.7c:](#) Review all Town boards and committees for mission, performance and consistency of by-laws.

[Action SF-1.7d:](#) Institute professional leadership development, mentorship programs and succession planning strategies for appropriate town staff.

[Action SF-1.7e:](#) Pursue expansion of the Municipal Court.

POLICY SF-1.8 – TOWN ADMINISTRATION

Ensure the Town maintains compliance with all state and federal regulations and with the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island.

[Action SF-1.8a:](#) Review, update and codify all Town ordinances.

[Action SF-1.8b:](#) Continue to implement and update all state-approved, locally adopted plans including:

- The Harbor Management Plan
- The On-Site Wastewater Management Plan

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- The Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan
- The Stormwater Management Plan
- The Low-Moderate Income Housing Plan
- The Portsmouth Recycling Plan

[Action SF-1.8c](#): Continue to work with state agencies in a cooperative manner to resolve issues of mutual interest.

SF-1.9 – PUBLIC WORKS

Preserve the current high level of public works activities by continuously prioritizing service demands, supporting appropriate staffing levels and managing effective facilities and equipment maintenance/replacement programs.

[Action SF-1.9a](#): Prepare and submit an annual Department of Public Works budget to the Town Administrator in Q3-4 of Portsmouth's fiscal year.

[Action SF-1.9b](#): Annually, prepare and submit a comprehensive list of infrastructure improvements and other essential projects, including cost estimates, to be included in the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan.

[Action SF-1.9c](#): Continue the road paving and maintenance program as a top priority for the Department.

[Action SF-1.9d](#): Investigate and implement shared responsibilities and staffing with the School Department in the management of both Town and School facilities.

[Action SF-1.9e](#): Pursue improvements to the Public Works Department facility on Prudence Island and investigate methods and procedures for improving service to Islanders.

POLICY SF-1.10 – STORMWATER

Advance efficient and environmentally sensitive programs and practices to manage stormwater runoff to mitigate adverse impacts on receiving waters.

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[Action SF-1.10a](#): Continue to comply with RIPDES Phase II requirements for stormwater management in municipally owned storm drain systems.

[Action SF-1.10b](#): Investigate and prioritize improvements to the town's stormwater system infrastructure for inclusion in the 5-year CIP.

[Action SF-1.10c](#): Sustain a sampling program to detect and eliminate illicit discharges from town-owned storm drains into receiving waters and report compliance to RIDEM.

[Action SF-1.10d](#): Complete connectivity mapping of the stormwater collection system and develop a GIS database of all surface and underground features.

[Action SF-1.10e](#): Conduct a program to educate the public on the problems associated with impaired stormwater quality, the conditions which contribute to impaired water quality, and the actions which can be taken by the community both individually and as a whole to improve the quality of stormwater runoff.

[Action SF-1.10f](#): Amend the local land development and subdivision regulations to include low-impact development standards and develop regulations to provide density bonuses or other incentives when low-impact development techniques are used.

[Action SF-1.10g](#): Draft and adopt a Post-Construction Stormwater Management Ordinance to strengthen the town's ability to enforce maintenance of private stormwater management facilities.

POLICY SF-1.11 – WASTEWATER

Advance efficient and environmentally sensitive programs and practices to manage on-site wastewater treatment to mitigate adverse impacts on receiving waters.

[Action SF-1.11a](#): Develop a homeowner education program to discourage the disposal of environmentally harmful chemicals such as cleaners, solvents, paint, acid, and the like in onsite wastewater treatment systems.

POLICY SF-1.12 – SOLID WASTE

Promote adequate solid waste disposal and recycling programs that will serve the community with a minimum impact on the environment and assure compliance with the State's minimum goals for recycling and solid waste diversion rates.

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[Action SF-1.12a](#): Draft and implement a Solid Waste Recycling Plan designed to achieve a minimum 35% solid waste recycling rate and a minimum 50% solid waste diversion rate as required by Rhode Island General Law.

[Action SF-1.12b](#): Promote public awareness through community education programs that reduce solid waste, increase recycling, and ensure the proper disposal of household hazardous waste.

[Action SF-1.12c](#): Pursue adequate full-time provisions for electronic waste disposal at the transfer station.

[Action SF-1.12d](#): Work with the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation to host quarterly hazardous waste disposal events in Portsmouth.

POLICY SF-1.13 – COMMUNITY SERVICES

Recognize the Portsmouth Free Public Library as a cultural center and a critical public service by assisting the Library's efforts to not only maintain, but expand and diversify, Library facilities and programs.

[Action SF-1.13a](#): Advocate for the Library at the state level to increase State Grant In-Aid funds to support Library services.

[Action SF-1.13b](#): Set annual appropriations for the Portsmouth Free Public Library at or above the prior year's level.

POLICY SF-1.14 – COMMUNITY SERVICES

Improve on the current array of programs, services, and facilities for the benefit of senior citizens and disadvantaged individuals/families in the community.

[Action SF-1.14a](#): Pursue annual CDBG funding to improve the operational capacity of the Portsmouth Multi-Purpose Senior Center.

[Action SF-1.14b](#): Pursue opportunities to improve the transportation system for seniors wishing to use the Senior Center.

[Action SF-1.14c](#): Conduct a comprehensive study and community survey to determine the future needs and preferences of community services.

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[Action SF-1.14d](#): Fund substance abuse and other community service programs at increased levels as needed.

7.10.2 GOAL SF-2

Protect residents and property by delivering coordinated, cost effective, high-quality fire protection, law enforcement, emergency medical services and emergency disaster response.

POLICY SF-2.1 – PUBLIC SAFETY

Continuously assess the adequacy of public safety facilities, resources and equipment to ensure the highest state of readiness.

[Action SF-2.1a](#): Review the current use of public safety technology including communications and warning systems for adequacy. Upgrade as necessary.

[Action SF-2.1b](#): Investigate the establishment of a primary emergency shelter within the town to adequately meet the needs of Portsmouth residents.

POLICY SF-2.2 – PUBLIC SAFETY

Maintain and continuously seek to improve the current high level of public safety services within the constraints of budgetary realities and best-practice standards.

[Action SF-2.2a](#): Prepare and submit annual Police Department, Fire Department and Emergency Management budgets to the Town Administrator in Q4 of Portsmouth's fiscal year.

[Action SF-2.2b](#): Develop a program of annual measurements to assess service demand and performance against resources in both the Police and Fire Departments.

[Action SF-2.2c](#): Bi-annually update the Portsmouth Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).

[Action SF-2.2d](#): Investigate the establishment of a seasonal or permanent police substation on Prudence Island.

POLICY SF-2.3 – PUBLIC SAFETY

Plan for future population changes and potential new development to ensure capacity to deliver appropriate public safety services at appropriate levels.

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[Action SF-2.3a:](#) Study the need (and identify potential sites) for a new fire and rescue sub-station at the south end of town.

[Action SF-2.3b:](#) Study the need for and identify potential docking sites for new police and fire boats on the eastern shore of Portsmouth.

POLICY SF-2.4 – PUBLIC SAFETY

Ensure that all public safety staff is adequately trained with proper levels of certification for their public safety duties.

[Action SF-2.4a:](#) Pursue continuing federal and state accreditation for the Portsmouth Police Department.

7.10.3 GOAL SF-3

Provide students with a consistently superior public education in safe, efficient, well-maintained school buildings and facilities.

POLICY SF-3.1 – PUBLIC EDUCATION

Engage all students in rigorous learning opportunities supported by a high quality and challenging curriculum and superior teaching to prepare them to thrive in an ever-changing world.

[Action SF-3.1a:](#) Develop, implement and annually update 5-year Strategic Plans for the Portsmouth School System in coordination with the Rhode Island Basic Education Program.

POLICY SF-3.2 – PUBLIC EDUCATION

Ensure that school facilities have the capacity to meet enrollment needs, are well maintained and are continuously evaluated for their utility as a setting for academic excellence.

[Action SF-3.2a:](#) Develop, implement and update Capital Improvement Plans for School District facilities that comply with Board of Regents' standards.

POLICY SF-3.3 – PUBLIC EDUCATION

Under the provisions of the Town Charter, maintain open and cooperative relations between the School Department and Town Administration.

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[Action SF-3.3a:](#) Prepare and present a proposed School Department budget to the Town Administrator by March 25 prior to the start of the next fiscal year.

[Action SF-3.3b:](#) Pursue opportunities to share administrative services such as accounts payable, payroll and other functions with the Portsmouth Finance Department.

[Action SF-3.3c:](#) Adopt the administrative practice of having the Superintendent of Schools attend all Town staff meetings.

[Action SF-3.3d:](#) Adopt the administrative practice of having at least one Town Department Head-level staff member attend all regular School Committee meetings.

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ELEMENT 8

Energy



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ELEMENT 8 – ENERGY

8.1 ENERGY VISION

PORTSMOUTH WILL BE AN ENERGY EFFICIENT COMMUNITY IN ALL ITS MUNICIPAL FUNCTIONS WHICH SUPPORTS THE DEVELOPMENT OF BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RENEWABLE ENERGY PRODUCTION WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

8.2 INTRODUCTION

As a forward-looking community, Portsmouth is in the process of examining its energy usage patterns as a starting point in planning for the future and reducing reliance on fossil fuel and other nonrenewable forms of energy. Portsmouth intends to examine its baseline usage related to:

- Municipal school buildings
- Vehicle fleet
- Street lighting

The Town will then consider opportunities to improve overall energy efficiency, improve conservation and to implement renewable energy projects. The goals, policies and implementation actions listed below are intended to support Portsmouth's overall vision of energy efficiency and move to renewable sources of energy.

8.3 GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

8.3.1 GOAL E-1

Produce a set of programs and policies that call for the efficient use of energy, the development of sustainable energy resources and the utilization of energy-efficient transportation options.

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POLICY E-1.1

Advance the efficient use of energy in all capital projects, municipal purchases and cooperative agreements.

Action E-1.1a: Continue to study energy usage by municipal buildings, equipment and vehicles to determine where improvements in energy conservation and efficiency can be realized.

Action E-1.1b: Create a municipal energy conservation and efficiency program and commit to specific reduced energy consumption targets.

Action E-1.1c: Complete the acquisition of local streetlights and their conversion to LED technology or the most advanced technology available.

POLICY E-1.2

Support the development and maintenance of sustainable renewable energy resources in both the public and private sector.

Action E-1.2a: Amend the Zoning Ordinance and adopt performance standards for the siting of renewable energy production.

Action E-1.2b: Develop performance standards for ground-mount solar, wind turbines or other emerging technologies as accessory uses in all districts.

Action E-1.2c: Continue to abide by all contractual obligations having to do with the existing wind turbine at Portsmouth High School.

Action E-1.2d: Work with federal, state, regional and utility partners to capitalize on grants and other incentives to help fund public and private energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

Action E-1.2e: Explore location and ownership options to establish electric vehicle charging stations in Portsmouth.

Action E-1.2f: Explore options for incorporating energy efficient vehicles into the municipal fleet.

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POLICY E-1.3

Encourage residents and local businesses to adopt energy-efficient measures and pursue renewable energy systems through public information campaigns and business incentives.

Action E-1.3a: Consider participation in the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Financing Program which provides low-cost financing for residents and businesses to make energy-efficiency upgrades to their property.

Action E-1.3b: Consider development and implementation of a town-wide “Go Green” program wherein businesses and other entities can be rewarded “Go Green” certification based on a set of established energy efficiency/sustainability criteria.

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ELEMENT 9

Water Supply



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ELEMENT 9 – WATER SUPPLY

9.1 PORTSMOUTH’S WATER SUPPLY VISION

PORTSMOUTH WILL ENJOY A SAFE, RELIABLE, LONG-TERM SUPPLY OF CLEAN DRINKING WATER FOR THE BENEFIT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTIAL, AGRICULTURAL, COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL USES.

This section addresses Portsmouth’s water supply under the following categories:

- Existing conditions
- Portsmouth’s water suppliers
- Potential impacts of natural hazards and climate change
- Portsmouth’s role in water supply management
- Goals, policies and implementation

Those in Portsmouth not serviced by the few remaining private wells obtain their drinking water from one of three entities, the Portsmouth Water and Fire District, the Prudence Island Water District (both quasi municipal governmental agencies) and either directly or indirectly, the city-owned, Newport Water Department. Being legally separate from the municipal government, these entities have a critical responsibility to treat and distribute safe drinking water, but they have little to no control over land use activities that contribute not only to demand from their various transmission facilities, but to source water quality in the drinking water reservoirs located in Portsmouth and the groundwater resources on Prudence Island. This is where the Town plays a critical role as an important partner with the water suppliers. It is not simply a matter of making sure the Town’s land use planning is in alignment with the water suppliers’ demand and supply management strategies, it is also a matter of employing land use policy and regulatory controls to ensure the source water for these suppliers is as clean and pollutant-free as possible. This partnership between water suppliers and the Town and the definition of our cooperative roles is the guiding principle of this Comprehensive Plan Element.

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9.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

9.2.1 WATER SUPPLY-RELATED NATURAL FEATURES AND SENSITIVE AREAS

Map 11 shows Portsmouth’s water supply-related natural features and sensitive water supply areas.

9.3 PORTSMOUTH’S WATER SUPPLIERS

The following section discusses Portsmouth’s water supply, which is provided in combination by the Portsmouth Water and Fire District, Prudence Island Water District, and Newport Water Division. Hog Island water distribution is provided for by private wells licensed and regulated by the Rhode Island Department of Health.

9.3.1 PORTSMOUTH WATER AND FIRE DISTRICT

The Portsmouth Water and Fire District (PWFD) is a quasi-municipal governmental agency created in 1952 by act of the Rhode Island General Assembly. The District was created to obtain and maintain a supply of water for the extinguishing of fire and for distribution to the inhabitants of the district, for domestic use and for other purposes.

The District does not own or operate any water supply sources. All of the water the District supplies to its customers is purchased from the City of Newport, Newport Water Department (Newport Water) and the Stone Bridge Fire District (Stone Bridge) in Tiverton.

Water purchased from the Newport Water Department comes from the Lawton Valley Reservoir, St. Mary Pond and Sisson Pond in Portsmouth, Watson Reservoir in Little Compton and Nonquit Pond in Tiverton. This water is treated before distribution by the newly-replaced (2014) Newport Water Lawton Valley Water Treatment Plant in Portsmouth. Water purchased from the Stone Bridge Fire District (during emergency situations only) comes from Stafford Pond in Tiverton and is treated at the Stone Bridge Fire District Water Treatment Plant, also in Tiverton. PWFD does not perform any additional treatment to the water purchased from either source. PWFD has not had the need to purchase water from the Stone Bridge Fire District in almost twenty years.

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PWFD’s service area is established in its enabling legislation. In essence, the District's boundaries include all of Portsmouth on Aquidneck Island with the exception of most of the area in the southwest corner of Portsmouth bounded by Middletown, West Main Road and the northern boundary of the Melville Campgrounds. This area outside the District's boundaries, which specifically includes Redwood Farms, Bay View Apartments and Condominiums, Raytheon, and the Melville marina area, is serviced by the Newport Water distribution system. The Raytheon Corporation is supplied by its own service line connected to the Newport Water 16-inch transmission main at the Lawton Valley treatment facility. The Navy Base and Melville Navy Housing are supplied with Newport Water through Naval Station Newport transmission facilities.

It is unlikely the PWFD’s service area will extend beyond the current legislated boundaries as all surrounding areas are serviced by other public water systems. The entire Town of Portsmouth is serviced by the Portsmouth Water and Fire District, the Newport Water Department, Naval Station Newport (using water purchased from Newport Water and billed through wheeling accounts) or the Prudence Island Water Company. Although there are large tracts of undeveloped land in southern Portsmouth, most roads within the entire District are serviced with water mains so extensive infrastructure expansion to accommodate new development is not anticipated. As of July 2019, the District population served and eligible to be served was 16,979 and 17,024, respectively.

Taken from PWFD’s 2019 Water Supply System Management Plan (WSSMP), historic maximum day demand (MDD), estimated peak hour demand (PHD), and average day demand (ADD) based on a billing year basis in MGD, as well as the maximum day peaking factor, for the last five years is as follows:

Demand Factor	Calendar Year				
	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Maximum Daily Demand	1.762	2.035	2.000	1.964	2.102
Average Daily Demand	1.107	1.045	1.060	1.126	1.227
Peaking Factor	1.73	1.95	1.89	1.74	1.71

The WSSMP identified no apparent significant system deficiencies limiting capacity to meet current demand. In projecting for future water demand, the 2018 base and future residential demand projections are based on the previous five years’ annual per capita consumption experienced by the District and the

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projected population for each year, taken from Portsmouth’s Comprehensive Community Plan. Future non-residential projections are generally assumed to increase proportionally with the change in population. Updated population projections in this updated Comprehensive Plan indicate safe margins for water supply and demand well into the 20-year planning horizon. The average day demand and maximum day demand for the base year and the years 2023 and 2038 are shown in the summary table below.

Demand Factor	Year		
	2018 (Base Year)	2023 (5-Year)	2038 (20-Year)
Average Daily Demand	1.07	1.122	1.192
Maximum Daily Demand	2.033	2.131	2.265

PWFD purchases all of its water supply from other water suppliers; therefore, available water is defined by contract and/or the suppliers’ ability to deliver water as may be prescribed by their WSSMP. The District’s contract with the City of Newport to purchase 1.233 million gallons per day on an average day basis and 2.250 million gallons per day on a maximum day basis expired on December 31, 1995. The District and Newport Water continue to operate under the conditions of the expired contract, with the exception of water rates, which are determined by the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission. There have been several efforts since 1992 to obtain a long-term, forty-year contract renewal, which included a negotiated agreement in 1997 that was not ratified by the City of Newport. The District will continue to pursue a long-term agreement with Newport Water to include additional water availability to supply all of the District’s future needs. Newport Water appears to be interested in a long-term contract with the District to support the funding of the debt service for the water treatment plant improvements, although the most recent negotiations were not successful.

The Newport Water WSSMP water projections for PWFD indicates that it has the water availability to meet its 2015 and 2030 demand.

Demand Factor	Year	
	2015 (5-Year)	2030 (20-Year)
Average Daily Demand	1.480	1.670
Maximum Daily Demand	2.664	3.006

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Although the Portsmouth Water and Fire District is not affiliated legally or administratively with the Town of Portsmouth government, the District and Town work cooperatively to best serve their common constituents. The quality of potable water sources is of utmost concern to both the Town of Portsmouth and the PWFD. As the District purchases all of its water from the Newport Water Department and in emergency situations, from the Stone Bridge Fire District, PWFD does not own any sources of water or any watershed protection properties, and therefore does not have a Water Quality Protection Plan (WQPP). However, while the District does not have any legal authority to implement or enforce watershed protection in Portsmouth, it has undertaken a number of initiatives to assist the Newport Water Department, which owns the reservoirs in Portsmouth, and the Town of Portsmouth with source protection in the town.

- The District has notified Newport Water and the Town of Portsmouth that Newport's Water Quality Protection Plan fairly and adequately addresses the need and methods for water quality protection and is supported by PWFD. As a result, the Newport Water Quality Protection Plan was subsequently included in the Portsmouth Comprehensive Community Plan (PCCP) by reference.
- PWFD has worked closely with the Town concerning implementation of zoning and land use regulatory recommendations of the Newport WQPP and the Portsmouth Public Works Department regarding best management practices. At the request of the Town, the District participated in a review of the Town's subdivision regulations prior to revision for conformance with the Town's Comprehensive Plan and the Water Quality Protection Plan.
- The District has supported the recommendations of the Town's Comprehensive Plan regarding watershed protection districts and other remedial water quality protection measures and has a continuing offer to provide technical assistance to the Town to help achieve these recommendations. To that end, at the request of the Town, the District reviewed and made recommendations on the draft regulations for the Watershed Protection Overlay District as part of Portsmouth's Zoning Ordinance.

9.3.2 PRUDENCE ISLAND WATER DISTRICT

The Prudence Island Water District (PIWD) Public Water System (PWS ID#1592023) provides water service to 355 active connections located in an approximate one square-mile area along the east side of Prudence

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Island. Another 19 service connections are provided to undeveloped lots within the service area. Recent improvements in the distribution system has allowed the District's historically-maintained waiting list for connection to drop to zero, with all new applications for service able to be accommodated for the time being.

The service area extends in a crescent shaped arc along the eastern edge of the island, from Roberta Avenue (Bristol Colony) at the southern end, to Warner Avenue and Dexter Road (Warnerville) at the northern end, immediately south of Nag Pond and Northeast Point. The island population is seasonally variable with a winter population of 100 to 150 persons and a maximum summer population of approximately 1,200 persons. The peak seasonal population typically occurs on weekends during the summer with peak water demand occurring in July and August.

The system is presently served by three active drilled bedrock wells, Indian Springs Wells #1 and #4 and the Army Camp Well. As they are hydraulically connected, the two Indian Springs wells cannot be operated at the same time. The fourth well, Bristol Colony Well, is presently offline and used strictly as a backup. The active bedrock wells provide makeup service to a single (1) atmospheric water storage tank; a nominal 100,000-gallon, aboveground storage tank installed on land leased from the Prudence Island Conservancy between Hillside Avenue and Prospect Terrace, approximately in the center of the service area. This storage tank was constructed in 2003 to replace the smaller (12,500 gallon) Greer Tank, now off-line and located adjacent to the new tank. The Greer Tank is now used as a water source tank by the Prudence Island Fire Department.

The three active water supply wells pump directly into the distribution system with the water distribution system operating on the static head provided by the 100,000-gallon water storage tank ("Big Blue"). This tank is installed in the upland area at the center of the distribution system. Because the majority of the users are located along the eastern coastline at elevations below the elevation of the tank, reasonable service pressures can be maintained at the service connections. A booster pump station (Broadway Pump House) was installed to help alleviate low pressure problems in the upland areas at the southern end of the system. No treatment of the water supply is presently provided, although the Indian Spring Wells demonstrate significant iron and manganese content. To assure adequate supply in times of drought or

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exceedingly high water demand, water use restrictions are occasionally enforced by the District to limit non-critical water use (irrigation, car washing, etc.) during the summer season.

As of December 2018, safe maximum yield of the PIWD system was approximately 64,800 gallons per day (45 gallons per minute). At first glance, this compares favorably against a daily average annual demand of 17,129 gallons per day. Maximum safe yield is, however, accomplished with both the Indian Springs Well #4 and the Army Camp Well running at full capacity, which they cannot do for more than a few hours at a time. In addition, peak 3-month summer season demand is nearly 39,000 gallons per day, with drawdown of the storage tank proving difficult to recover in the overnight hours on occasions of high demand.

While capacity of the system to meet even peak season demand in the short-term seems adequate, projections for future water demand point to the need to increase available supply and/or mitigate demand. PIWD has undertaken steps to develop projections for future water demand using conservative predictions for annual increase in the number of active service connections and basing calculations on historic peak 3-month demands rather than average annual demands. Projected over a 30-year planning period (2042) the total annual system demand is expected to increase by approximately 25.7%, to an average annual water demand of 9,432,450 gallons. The peak 3-month average daily demand is calculated to be 40,088 gpd, and the peak 1-day demand is calculated to be 100,927 gallons. To achieve even a modest margin of error of supply over demand, significant steps will need to be taken to maintain an adequate water supply in the 20-year planning horizon.

On the mitigation side, the District has implemented a successful leak repair program along with the promotion of water conservation measures, resulting in a substantial reduction in total water use. During the period from 2009 through 2012, the District demonstrated an 18.5% reduction in total water demand. Further improvements in the water distribution system are likely to continue this trend. To accommodate even modest growth however, the most significant near-term and long-term issue that must be addressed by the District is to increase the available supply of potable water to the system. Potential solutions include (1) increasing and optimizing withdrawals from the existing wells, (2) development of new groundwater wells, and (3) implementation of brackish/sea water wells and a desalination system. Option (1) has been optimized and further gains are not expected to be significant. With the development of

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desalination systems being prohibitively expensive, development of new groundwater wells seems the only answer.

While costs to develop new groundwater wells is modest and should not significantly impact rate payers, the search for the location of new wells becomes the critical factor. Based upon present understanding of the bedrock geology and soils of Prudence Island, it is believed there is potential for the development of new bedrock wells to augment the existing wells. A program of test well drilling and negotiations with landowners is underway and recently the PIWD has taken the significant step of exercising their taxing authority to extend financing debt and improvements to their water system to all property owners on the island not just to the ratepayers.

In October 2017, PIWD water sampling results of routine and recheck samples tested positive for the presence of fecal coliform bacteria and/or *E. coli*. A “Boil Water Order” was immediately issued. To resolve this problem, PIWD chlorinated their wells and the distribution system, and public notification was posted or distributed to all concerned residents. Test results after three weeks demonstrated the water was contaminant-free and the boil water order was lifted. In October 2018, water sampling results of routine and recheck samples again tested positive for the presence of fecal coliform bacteria and/or *E. coli*. A “Boil Water Order” was again immediately issued and again PIWD chlorinated their wells and the distribution system and public notification was posted or distributed to all concerned residents. The Town of Portsmouth purchased and provided bottled water to residents of the island on a temporary basis. Testing continued through 2018 with coliforms found in more samples than allowed.

The Rhode Island Department of Health continues to work with PIWD to resolve the situation. As this contamination problem occurs regularly in the fall to varying degrees, current thinking is that the source of the contamination may be practices homeowners use to drain the water pipes in their seasonal homes as part of closing them for the winter. Additionally, there have been recorded cases of cross-contamination caused by the connection of existing well water and PIWD water without the installation of backflow preventers. As part of its on-going efforts to maintain quality service to its customers, PIWD has mandated the installation of backflow preventer valves for all its active connections but has not achieved universal compliance.

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9.3.3 CITY OF NEWPORT, NEWPORT WATER DIVISION

Regulated by the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission and a division of the City of Newport's Department of Utilities, the Newport Water Division (NWD) operates and maintains a drinking water treatment and distribution system which services Newport, Middletown, and a small section of Portsmouth. In addition, Newport Water provides water wholesale to the Portsmouth Water and Fire District and Naval Station Newport.

NWD draws its water supply from nine surface reservoirs, three of which are in Portsmouth under the land use protections of a Watershed Protection [overlay] District detailed in the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance. Raw water is treated at one of the two water treatment facilities - Station 1 Plant in Newport or Lawton Valley Plant in Portsmouth.

Drinking water customers serviced directly by NWD, and therefore outside the district boundaries of the Portsmouth Water and Fire District, include residents in the Redwood Farms, Overlook Point and Bayview Apartments neighborhoods, and the Raytheon campus. West Side drinking water customers serviced indirectly through a Naval Station Newport-owned and operated distribution system include the marine-related businesses in the Melville area as well as Portsmouth's Melville School and the Portsmouth-owned Melville Campground. Customers provided NWD drinking water through the Navy distribution system are billed directly by NWD which in turn credits the Naval Station Newport on their wholesale water bills. In recent years, Naval Station Newport has expressed a strong desire to suspend its water supply responsibilities on the west side of Portsmouth as this function no longer supports its mission. Discussions continue between Naval Station Newport, Portsmouth Water and Fire District, the Town of Portsmouth and other interested parties on how best to achieve this end result.

9.3.4 HOG ISLAND WATER DISTRIBUTION

The 250+ summer residents of Hog Island are serviced by private wells licensed and regulated by Rhode Island Department of Health. The municipality of Portsmouth plays no role in water use on the island.

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9.4 POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF NATURAL HAZARDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The 2018 Portsmouth Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies multiple natural hazards that pose threats to the Town as a whole. Those posing significant threats to the drinking water supply include drought, sea level rise, coastal flooding, and hurricanes/nor'easters and, while not a natural hazard in and of itself, dam failure. While there may be a great deal of disagreement regarding the effects of these natural hazards, for planning purposes these potential effects cannot be ignored.

Drought

While climate models do not agree whether annual average rainfall will increase or decrease in the coming years due to climate change, the models do agree there will be greater extremes. Rainfall events will have a higher likelihood of being more extreme and periods of drought will have a likelihood of being longer. Both of these scenarios pose a threat to not only Newport drinking water reservoirs but Prudence Island's groundwater resources as well. Excess rainfall can threaten water quality as runoff increases and dam safety in the extreme case. Longer periods of drought may critically effect Prudence Island's groundwater supply with PIWD already in need of drilling of new wells.

Sea Level Rise

While not a short-term danger to Portsmouth's water supply, future potential sea level rise may damage low-lying water distribution systems in Island Park (PWFD) and at Melville (NWD/Navy). Future salt water intrusion should certainly be a factor in the search for future locations of drinking water wells on Prudence Island.

Coastal Flooding

As with potential sea level rise, coastal flooding poses a threat to water distribution systems in areas of Portsmouth. In addition, one of Newport Water Division's water treatment plants is already at risk from coastal flooding, adding to supply worries for water supplied to Portsmouth from NWD's other treatment plants.

Hurricanes/Nor'easters

Climate models indicate increases in severity (wind speeds and storm surge) of hurricanes along with

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increases in occurrence in the coming years due to climate change. The largest threat to water supply from these coastal storms is damage to NWD's water treatment plants, and damage to infrastructure on Prudence Island preventing emergency travel and water pumping ability.

Dam Failure

Both the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) and Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) list the dams for NWD's three drinking water reservoirs in Portsmouth (Lawton Valley Reservoir, Sisson Pond and St. Mary's Pond) as high hazard dams where failure or misoperation will result in probable loss of human life. Related to flooding, more intense rain events may stress structural integrity of these dams which could lead to failure which would certainly jeopardize water supply in Portsmouth. The 2018 Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies the probability of a dam failure in these three dams as "possible" (1%, or 1 chance in the next 100 years).

9.5 PORTSMOUTH'S ROLE IN WATER SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

Although the municipality of Portsmouth is legally separated from the entities responsible for supplying quality drinking water to our citizens, Portsmouth can and will participate in this critical function in several important ways.

Water Source Protections

Maintain up-to-date, effective land use controls as expressed in the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance for the Watershed Protection [overlay] District protecting Newport Water's drinking water reservoirs and for the Water Resource Protection District protecting groundwater resources on Prudence Island.

Planning Coordination

Maintain close associations and coordinated planning efforts with the various drinking water suppliers.

West Side Water Supply

Work with all stakeholders to maintain the dual goals of ensuring an adequate water supply to Portsmouth's residents and businesses on the West Side, all the while supporting the Navy's mission to discontinue its water supply responsibilities in the area.

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New Sources of Drinking Water on Prudence Island

Provide assistance to the Prudence Island Water District and the residents of Prudence Island with land use negotiations and other issues associated with locating new drinking water wells on the island.

Stormwater Management

Maintain best practices in stormwater management in order to reduce pollution and nutrient loading of our drinking water sources.

Public Education

Coordinate and provide assistance to the various drinking water suppliers in the development and dissemination of public education materials related to drinking water quality and public health.

9.6 GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

9.6.1 GOAL WS-1

Deliver a cost-effective set of programs, policies and cooperative initiatives that protect and preserve both the quality and quantity of Portsmouth's drinking water supply.

POLICY WS-1.1

Protect Portsmouth's drinking water supply by minimizing the introduction of non-point source pollutants into our surface water reservoirs and groundwater resources.

Action WS-1.1a: Review provisions in the Zoning Ordinance governing land development in the overlay Watershed Protection District and the Water Resource Protection District as needed for their applicability and effectiveness.

Action WS-1.1b: Continue the necessary actions to remain in compliance with federal and state mandates to manage stormwater in accordance with Phase II stormwater permit requirements.

Action WS-1.1c: Continuously update and make available public education materials that describe steps individual landowners can take to reduce non-point source pollution and improve water quality.

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POLICY WS-1.2

Maintain close coordination between Town land use planning and the various water suppliers' planning for future demand.

Action WS-1.2a: Support Water Supply Management Plans of the Portsmouth Water and Fire District, the Prudence Island Water District and the City of Newport Water Division.

Action WS-1.2b: Have a Town Planning Department staff member attend all regular board meetings of Portsmouth Water and Fire District and Prudence Island Water District.

Action WS-1.2c: Continue to work with the Portsmouth Water and Fire District, Newport Water and Naval Station Newport regarding future water distribution in areas along the west side that are outside the PWFD district.

Action WS-1.2d: Assist the Prudence Island Water District in its goal of establishing new drinking water wells on the island.

Action WS-1.2e: Maintain up-to-date Emergency Action Plans for each high hazard dam in Portsmouth, per RIGL §46-19-9.

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ELEMENT 10

Transportation



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ELEMENT 10 – TRANSPORTATION

10.1 TRANSPORTATION VISION

PORTSMOUTH WILL ENJOY A SAFE, EFFICIENT AND WELL-MAINTAINED MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK THAT INCREASES MOBILITY FOR ALL RESIDENTS, SUPPORTS THE GROWTH OF BUSINESS ACTIVITY, REDUCES NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, AND ENHANCES THE CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY.

10.2 INTRODUCTION

The term transportation refers to the movement of people and goods from place to place. To accomplish this movement, the State, its municipalities and private enterprise have developed and maintain a network of facilities and infrastructure that accommodates multiple modes of travel, including streets and roadways, sidewalks, bike paths and travel lanes, bus stops and route corridors, ferry lines and rail service, all at a scale appropriate to each community. Maintaining safe and efficient access to this transportation network by all parties and at all levels is essential to the economic vitality and quality of life of Portsmouth.

The Town's transportation element focuses on:

- Aligning transportation goals with other aspects of the plan such as land use, economic development and housing.
- Considering the varying transportation needs of all community members.
- Mitigating the public health and safety impacts of our current and future transportation network.

We accomplish this using three general approaches:

- Effective management and maintenance of our town-owned roadway network. (See Transportation Goal 1.)
- Coordination and cooperation with the State in the management and maintenance of their roadway network within our community. (See Transportation Goal 2.)

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- Establishing a well-balanced multi-modal transportation network for the varying needs of all our residents. (See Transportation Goal 3.)

Portsmouth's current Comprehensive Plan makes several points with regard to transportation that are as valid today as when the plan was revised and adopted in 2002.

First, automobile transportation is the dominant form of travel in our community and is likely to remain so in the foreseeable future. This is due to:

- Our dispersed rural/suburban geography.
- Our lack of a dense town center.
- The dominance of two north-south state highways as principal arterials with minimal shoulders.
- Sidewalks being almost nonexistent throughout Portsmouth.
- Mass transit being confined to the two state highways.

As such, addressing excessive traffic volumes, traffic safety and vehicular congestion and other impacts must be key components of Portsmouth's transportation planning.

Second, most transportation planning in Portsmouth is seen as something out of the Town's control. RIDOT controls the placement, design, construction and maintenance of all State roads in town. With nearly 23% of all the roadway surface in Portsmouth under state control, coordination and cooperation with the State is essential. Developing opportunities to present local needs to RIDOT must be an integral part of Portsmouth's transportation planning.

Third, despite the dominance of automobile transportation, a community that chooses to ignore the promotion of efficient mass transit puts citizens without ready access to an automobile at risk and degrades overall quality of life and economic vitality. The support and promotion of mass transit and alternate forms of transportation must be integrated into overall transportation planning.

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And lastly, movement of people and goods throughout Portsmouth does not exist in a vacuum. Vehicle traffic accessing two of the three bridges on and off Aquidneck Island must by necessity move through Portsmouth. In particular, seasonal through traffic moving to and from the beaches and other tourist destinations to our south creates on-going congestion problems. In addition, due to the geographic position of Aquidneck Island in relation to the regional highway system, traffic that crosses the island's bridges may not have an origin or destination in Portsmouth (or on Aquidneck Island) yet contributes to congestion on our roadways. Communities of the East Bay region (along with our state and federal partners) must work together to define and solve common transportation problems.

This element of the Comprehensive Plan will catalog existing conditions and planned improvements to our transportation network, discuss challenges and opportunities in developing well-balanced transportation systems in Portsmouth, reference in detail both the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the recommendations of the 2011 Aquidneck Island Transportation Study and set forth goals, policies and implementation actions in order to fulfill Portsmouth's vision for transportation in our community.

10.3 THE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK – EXISTING CONDITIONS

10.3.1 THE ROADWAY NETWORK

Most north-south traffic in Portsmouth is borne by two **principal arterials**: West Main Road (Route 114) and East Main Road (Route 138). See **Map 12**.

East Main Road (Route 138) is the major local artery servicing most of the retail/service business and adjacent to most of the residential areas. It runs from the Middletown town line to a ramp leading onto Route 24 north at its intersection with Boyds Lane. With the addition of a traffic signal at Linden Lane later this year, East Main Road will have twelve (12) signalized intersections.

Route 114, which includes Bristol Ferry Road and West Main Road, begins at the Mount Hope Bridge in Portsmouth and continues south to the Middletown Line. This segment of roadway is approximately 7.0 miles in length. With the exception of Bristol Ferry Road, the roadway allows four lanes for travel (two lanes northbound/two lanes southbound), with posted speed limits (excluding school zones) of 35 miles

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per hour (MPH) on Bristol Ferry Road and 35 and 45 MPH on West Main Road. Route 114 carries substantial traffic volumes, ranging from an annual average daily traffic (AADT) of approximately 8,000 to its terminus at Bristol Ferry Road to 33,000 at the Middletown/Portsmouth town line. It has nine (9) signalized intersections. Much of the land abutting this roadway is only moderately developed. Areas that are developed consist mainly of residential development with two major commercial/industrial developments, Raytheon Corporation and the Melville marine trade complex (via Stringham Road), along with isolated commercial development in several locations.

Burma Road, more formally identified by the Navy as Defense Highway, which runs along the west coast parallel to West Main Road, begins in Portsmouth at Stringham Road, and continues south into Middletown. This is a two-lane roadway, in a reduced maintenance status by the Navy. The Portsmouth portion is approximately 2.5 miles in length with a posted speed limit of 35 MPH. The majority of the land adjacent to the road is United States Navy property with limited development, including former Navy fuel tank farms. The developed areas include the commercial/industrial Melville marine trades area at the north end of Burma Road, and a Portsmouth-owned public boat launch one mile to the south.

The portion of Boyds Lane from its intersection with Route 138 to its intersection with Route 114 at the base of the Mt. Hope Bridge is also classified as a **principal arterial**.

Minor arterials in Portsmouth include Boyds Lane, Sprague Street, and Union Street. They are characterized as:

- Forming the network or backbone of “cross-travel” within Portsmouth.
- Providing the role of feeding traffic from collector roads into the principal arterials.
- Carrying the heaviest volume cross-traffic between two principal arterials that closely parallel each other.

In Portsmouth, **collector** roads include Anthony Road, Bramans Lane, Burma Road, Hedly Street, Hummock Avenue, McCorrie Lane, Middle Road, Mill Lane, Park Avenue/Point Road, Sandy Point Avenue, Stringham Road and Wapping Road. These roadways:

- Are spaced at intervals to collect traffic from local streets and channel it to the arterial system.

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- Provide both land access service and traffic circulation to residential, commercial, and industrial areas.
- Are almost always fed by two or more local streets and may pass through neighborhoods.

All other roads in Portsmouth are classified as **local**.

Roadways, along with associated storm water infrastructure, in Portsmouth owned and maintained by RIDOT include East Main Road (Rte. 138), West Main Road (Rte. 114), Route 24, Chase Road, Turnpike Avenue, Union Street, Middle Road (from Schoolhouse Lane to Union Street), Schoolhouse Lane, Bristol Ferry Road, Boyds Lane, Sprague Street, Park Avenue, Point Road, Riverside Avenue and Hummock Avenue. These state-owned roadways account for just over 38 miles or nearly 23% of all roadway surface in Portsmouth.

The Town owns and maintains 112 miles of roadway and associated storm water infrastructures. Portsmouth DPW employs a GIS-based Pavement Management Program which includes a rigorous, periodic inspection of all roadway surfaces with a focus on pavement attributes that change over time. Using this data, a Road Surface Rating (RSR) is generated for each road segment on a scale of 100 to zero, with 100 representing pavement in excellent condition and zero describing a road in extremely poor condition. Portsmouth's 2018 average Road Surface Rating for all town-owned roads was 72.6. By national standards this is considered satisfactory. Current and future budgeting for the Town's annual pavement program is designed to maintain a target average of 72 or above.

To complete Portsmouth roadway ownership totals, there are approximately 25 miles of private and 7 miles of Navy-owned roadways in town. All of the roads on Prudence Island, with the exception of Narragansett Avenue, Broadway Street and a few state-owned roads, are considered paper roads or driftways and are not part of the above totals.

Major traffic generators outside of the boundaries of Portsmouth include the beaches and tourist attractions of Aquidneck Island to our south, Naval Station Newport and the Naval Underwater Warfare Center (NUWC). Within our boundaries, major traffic generators include the employment centers at Raytheon Corp and the Melville marine complex, the beaches, marinas and restaurants in the Island Park

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neighborhood, the Clements Market/Town Center District, the medium and high-density residential neighborhoods along the east side and north end of town, Glen Park and the Seveney Sports Complex and the Roger Williams University dorms/conference center on Anthony Road.

10.3.2 THE BICYCLE NETWORK

Existing Network

With the exception of the dedicated bicycle lane across the new Sakonnet River Bridge, the current existing bicycle network in Portsmouth is all on roads shared with vehicle traffic. See **Map 13**. A potential off-road bike path down the railway corridor remains in the planning stages with completion many years away, if at all. As an alternative, RIDOT has designated an Interim Bike Path through Portsmouth using surface streets. Roads have been designated as “Most Suitable” or “Suitable.” It is possible to ride from the Sakonnet River Bridge south to the Middletown line on roads with these designations. Depending on the chosen route, there are, however, three short sections designated as “Difficult Connections” requiring extreme caution. These are along East Main Road from the intersection at Turnpike Avenue south to Town Hall, along East Main Road from Union Street to Sandy Point Lane and a small area on West Main Road at the intersections of Mill Lane and Stringham Road.

Projects in the FFY 2022-2031 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) impacting bicycle travel in Portsmouth include:

- **Rte. 138, East Main Road** – This is the Town Center Project – Paving, road and intersection improvements (roundabouts) and sidewalks from Hedly Street down the hill to Turnpike Avenue.
- **Aquidneck Island Bikeway-Melville Connector** – Shared-use bicycle pedestrian facility linking West Main Road at Old West Main Road/Corys Lane to Defense Highway at Stringham Road.
- **Mt. Hope Bay Bicycle Improvements** – Safety improvements and signage to Anthony Road, Boyds Lane and the Mt. Hope Bridge.
- **East Main Road Shared Use Path – Phase I** – Shared use path for pedestrians and bicyclists along Rte. 138 from Union Street to Sandy Point Road with improvements to handicap accessibility.

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- **East Main Road Shared Use Path – Phase II** – Shared use path for pedestrians and bicyclists along Rte. 138 from Turnpike Avenue to Union Street and from Sandy Point Road to Enterprise Drive in Middletown.

Recent and Planned Bicycle Network Improvements

Dating back to the West Side Master Plan’s support of the bike path recommendations of RIDOT’s Aquidneck Island Passenger Rail Study and AIPC’s FY 06-07 regional TIP application for construction of a bike path along the Newport Secondary rail corridor, bicycle network planning within Portsmouth’s boundaries has originated from several sources and has lacked a comprehensive approach. A partial list of past and proposed efforts include:

- RIDOT’s Bike Map
- Bike Newport’s Newport County Bicycle Map
- Bicycle accommodations associated with road diet projects on state roads in Portsmouth
- VHB’s Aquidneck Island Bikeway Study to connect “gaps” in the contiguous Interim Bikeway
- The pedestrian/bicycle improvement recommendations in the Aquidneck Island Transportation Study
- AIPC’s STIP application for the “Melville Connector”
- RIDOT’s shared use signage and roadway striping along Anthony Road and Boyds Lane
- AIPC’s Two-Bridges rail corridor bike path proposal

This Transportation Element proposes a local effort to review and coordinate the various projects and proposals in a consolidated fashion with the goal of obtaining better local input from all stakeholders.

10.3.3 THE PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

Of the 182 miles of roadway in Portsmouth, only 6.9 miles (3.8%) have pedestrian sidewalks on one or both sides of the road. Apart from short sections here and there, the only town-owned roads with sidewalks are along both sides of Patriot Way and one side of Education Lane in the vicinity of Portsmouth High School and along one side of Jepson Lane from Union Street to the Middle School. The remaining

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sidewalks in Portsmouth are along state roads – both sides of Park Avenue from Teddy’s Beach to East Main Road, along Chase Road/East Main Road from Boyds Lane to Turnpike Avenue and along Bristol Ferry Road/Turnpike Avenue/East Main Road from the Mt. Hope Bridge to East Main Road with one side extending south up Quaker Hill to Quaker Hill Road. Additionally, there is an asphalt sidewalk along the west side of West Main Road from Mail Coach Road south to the Middletown line. The Navy-owned Stringham Road has sidewalks along one or both sides from West Main Road down to Melville. The 6.3 miles of state-owned roadway with sidewalks described herein have a total of 15 painted crosswalks, averaging one every 0.42 miles. The Town maintains painted crosswalks across town-owned roads in several locations around town.

The Town has identified a critical need for sidewalks on state roads in two locations, along Sprague Street to create a safe pedestrian connection between Turnpike Avenue, East Main Road and Education Lane leading up to the High School, and in the Town Center area from Town Hall down Quaker Hill to the East Main Road/Turnpike Avenue intersection. Both areas are programmed for road pavement improvements including sidewalks in RIDOT’s Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), scheduled for completion by 2023/2024.

Portsmouth’s Land Development and Subdivision Regulations, last amended in 2012, do not require sidewalks in new subdivisions. The regulations state, “Under certain conditions the Planning Board may require the installation of sidewalks where pedestrian traffic is likely, such as near schools, playgrounds, shopping areas, or high traffic volume streets.” There is little open land remaining in Portsmouth available for new residential subdivisions which meet these criteria, so it is unlikely additional sidewalks along town-owned roads are forthcoming.

Recreational walking trails are maintained by the Aquidneck Land Trust in two locations in Portsmouth, the extensive Sakonnet Greenway Trail with a northern terminus at the Leonard Brown House and walking trails in Oakland Forest accessed at the end of Carriage Drive off Union Street. See the Recreation Element for a more complete description.

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10.3.4 THE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Rhode Island Public Transit Authority Public Bus Service

Public transportation service on Aquidneck Island is provided by the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA). RIPTA's principal bus route in Town is Bus 60 which has stops along East Main Road and West Main Road. A limited-stop express bus (Route 61x) operates from the Tiverton Park & Ride (Fish Road) to and from Providence with a single stop in Portsmouth at the Park & Ride on Boyd's Lane. Three AM inbound trips and three PM outbound trips are provided Monday thru Friday. See **Map 13**.

Paratransit services are available for individuals with disabilities who are unable to use regular bus service. RIPTA provides Paratransit Services through the Ride Program which RIPTA coordinates and manages statewide. All Ride service is door-to-door, as needed.

Private Bus Service

Peter Pan offers private bus service from Portsmouth to regional destinations, predominantly for commuting purposes. Approximately 100 commuters each day use the Peter Pan Bus Lines to/from Aquidneck Island with the majority commuting to Boston (AITS). Peter Pan bus services includes a stop in Portsmouth on Boyds Lane near the Route 24 overpass.

Air Transportation

The Newport State Airport in Middletown, operated by the Rhode Island Airport Corporation (RIAC), serves the general aviation needs of the area. The airport currently houses 40 aircraft and there are approximately 21,500 operations (takeoffs and landings) annually. The airport is located on 223 acres of land accessed from Forest Avenue. A Master Plan was completed in 2008 and an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed in 2009 to review environmental impacts to the area based on the completed Master Plan. The Plan specifies that no major expansion of the airport is planned. Current facilities will, however, be upgraded and improved for safety and service. In addition to serving local general aviation traffic, Newport State Airport also serves the area's tourist destinations, corporate and local business aviation needs, and quick access to local harbors for both private boat owners and the ship building industry. T.F. Green Airport in Warwick, approximately 36 miles from Portsmouth, serves the commercial air transportation needs of residents and businesses.

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Rail Infrastructure

The existing Newport Secondary Line is a single-track railroad owned by the State of Rhode Island. The line extends along the west side of the island for approximately 13 miles from the Sakonnet River Bridge to Newport. The connection to the mainland was discontinued in the late 1980s when the rail bridge across the Sakonnet River was damaged and later demolished. The Sakonnet River is a navigable channel and, therefore, has to allow for the unimpeded movement of waterborne vessels. In order to re-establish a rail connection between Aquidneck Island and the mainland, the bridge would need to be restored as a movable structure or provide the required vertical clearance for navigation. The construction of a new railroad bridge across the Sakonnet River would be a critical initial step toward restoring rail service between Aquidneck Island and the mainland.

Existing intra-island rail services include excursion trains such as the Newport Dinner Train, the Islander Touring Train, and the Old Colony and Newport Railway. In the area where the existing excursion service operates, the track is in Class 1 condition which allows passenger trains to operate at 15 mph. North of the limits of the excursion train, the track is classified as in “excepted condition,” which means that the track is not suitable for the operation of trains. The rail line would need significant rehabilitation before service could be restored. Discussions are currently underway to offer intra-island passenger rail services.

Regional rail services are provided by Amtrak with local stops at Providence, West Kingston, and Westerly, and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) on the Providence/Stoughton Line connecting Providence to Boston. A new station and service to T.F. Green Airport in Warwick started in December of 2010 extending the MBTA line south of Providence. A commuter rail station with a large park and ride garage was added in 2012 with the opening of the Wickford Junction station in North Kingstown.

Ferry Service

A private ferry company provides service to and from Prudence Island on a daily, year-round basis with between 4 and 6 daily round-trips leaving from the Church Street dock in Bristol. A recently constructed dock, ticket house and parking lot provides easy on-off for Prudence Island residents and visitors on the Prudence Island side. Parking in Bristol is limited.

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10.4 TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Traffic circulation and transportation present both challenges and opportunities for Portsmouth. Portsmouth is an automobile-centric community and, given the Town's suburban character, island location and road layout, will likely remain that way for the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, there are local households without access to private vehicles and a portion of the population which may prefer to commute by public transit or by alternative (e.g., walking, biking) means in the future. Portsmouth has an opportunity to enhance transportation options in a way that would better serve its residents but faces the following impediments:

- Almost one quarter of the public roads in Portsmouth are under the jurisdiction of RIDOT or the US Navy. Existing intergovernmental coordination needs to be improved.
- Much of the traffic on the north-south routes, which represent the Town's main arteries, is through traffic. Management of the resulting congestion appears to be largely outside of the Town's control.
- Existing signalization and other traffic calming are inadequate for the current needs.
- Bus routes are confined to East and West Main roads, leaving many neighborhoods in town without convenient access to public transportation.

10.5 THE STATE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (STIP)

The STIP is a list of transportation projects the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) intends to implement using United States Department of Transportation funds. For a transportation project to utilize federal funds it must be included in the STIP. Rhode Island prepares the STIP through a combination of data analysis and outreach efforts to municipalities, public interest groups, and citizens throughout the state.

Federal regulations require the State Planning Council adopt a new STIP at a minimum of every four years. The STIP must present a four-year program, year-by-year, and must be fiscally constrained, meaning the list of projects in the STIP may not exceed the anticipated funding that is reasonably expected to be available over the four-year timeframe. A project's inclusion in the STIP is a critical step, but it does not represent an allocation of funds, obligation to fund, or grant of funds. In order to add projects to the STIP,

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sufficient revenues must be available. As a result, the STIP is not a wish list but a list of projects with anticipated, but not guaranteed, funding commitments during the timeframe.

The following is a list of FFY 2022 - 2031 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) projects in Portsmouth:

- **Rte. 114, West Main Road** – Paving and road improvements on West Main Road from John Kesson Lane in Middletown northward to Mill Lane (north of Stringham Road) in Portsmouth.
- **Rte. 114, West Main Road** – Paving and road improvements on West Main Road from Corys Lane northward over Lehigh Hill to Turnpike Avenue.
- **Rte. 138, East Main Road** – This is the Town Center Project – Paving, road and intersection improvements (roundabouts) and sidewalks from Hedly Street down the hill to Turnpike Avenue.
- **Rte. 138, East Main Road** – Paving and intersection improvements on East Main Road from Hedly Street southward to the Middletown Town Line.
- **Sprague Street Resurfacing and Sidewalks** – From East Main Road to Bristol Ferry Road.
- **Aquidneck Island Bikeway-Melville Connector** – Shared-use bicycle pedestrian facility linking West Main Road at Old West Main Road/Corys Lane to Defense Highway at Stringham Road.
- **Mt. Hope Bay Bicycle Improvements** – Safety improvements and signage to Anthony Road, Boyds Lane and the Mt. Hope Bridge.
- **East Main Road Shared Use Path – Phase I** – Shared use path for pedestrians and bicyclists along Rte. 138 from Union Street to Sandy Point Road with improvements to handicap accessibility.
- **East Main Road Shared Use Path – Phase II** – Shared use path for pedestrians and bicyclists along Rte. 138 from Turnpike Avenue to Union Street and from Sandy Point Road to Enterprise Drive in Middletown.

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10.6 THE AQUIDNECK ISLAND TRANSPORTATION STUDY (2011)

Led by the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission and guided by a Technical Steering Committee made up of traffic engineers and transportation professionals, the Aquidneck Island Transportation Study was a two-year coordinated planning effort of many island-wide residents, business owners, elected officials, municipal officials and staff, advocacy groups and state and federal agency representatives. The study followed a well-established planning process of evaluating existing conditions, projecting future needs, creating and evaluating a list of projects and policies and finally prioritizing recommendations for the improvement of all modes of transportation on the island.

Final recommendations from the study along with reference to relevant Policies or Implementation Actions within this Transportation Element are as follows:

Policy recommendations include:

- Promote safety as a top priority within all infrastructure projects and target educational activities to current and future travelers to improve safety for all transportation modes (Policy T-1.3);
- Continue to develop land use policies/Zoning Ordinances that support transit-oriented development with housing, retail, and jobs collocated with each other near transit (Policy T-1.2);
- Establish better communication and coordination between state and local agencies during development site plan review (Policy T-2.1);
- Expand the island-wide bicycle network through bicycle suitability studies for local roads and development of bicycle plans for each municipality to increase the number of roads designated as suitable for bicycles linking key destinations to improve mobility (Policy T-3.1).

Transit Recommendations include:

- Encourage transit-oriented development;
- Provide additional bus service particularly on East and West Main Roads including the reestablishment of Flex Service (Action T-2.2a);
- Maintain the active Newport Secondary Railway Corridor and preserve the corridor as a contiguous right-of-way (Action T-3.1c);

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- Enhance the transit experience by providing real-time bus information, providing branded bus shelters and sidewalk/crosswalk enhancements (Actions T-2.1g, T-2.2d);
- Encourage island employers to institute transit programs for employees;
- Create additional Park & Ride opportunities (Action T-2.2c), and,
- Enhance ferry service including consideration of a ferry service between Melville and Newport (Action T-2.2e).

Pedestrian/Bicycle Improvement recommendations include:

- Construct the ten-mile Shoreline Bikeway (Burma Road) Shared Use Path;
- Connect the missing links between “suitable/most suitable” roads for bicycle travel;
- Construct a 6-mile off-road shared use path along East Main Road from Turnpike Avenue to Middletown Town Hall;
- Construct a 4-mile shared use path along West Main Road from Corys Lane to Green Lane;
- Provide crosswalks with countdown timers at heavily crossed areas.

Roadway Improvement recommendations:

- Coordinate island traffic signals along major corridors such as East and West Main Roads (Action T-2.1d);
- Develop a program to maintain traffic signal equipment, collect new traffic volume data and regularly fine-tune timings (Action T-2.1d);
- Reconfigure the Mt. Hope Bridge/Boys Lane/Bristol Ferry Road intersection (Action T-2.1d);
- Implement sight distance improvements at the Linden Lane/East Main Road intersection (Action T-2.1d);
- Realign Corys Lane with Hedly Street to eliminate one traffic signal, widen to provide left turn lanes (Action T-2.1d);
- Construct new Burma Road connections at the north and south ends (Action T-2.1e);
- Construct the traffic improvement project in Portsmouth locally known as the Town Center Project (Action T-2.1f).

10.7 GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

10.7.1 GOAL T-1

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Deliver a cost-effective network of town-owned and maintained roadways that allows for the safe and efficient circulation of vehicular traffic throughout the Town.

POLICY T-1.1

Ensure the community has a safe and well-maintained street and roadway network with high standards for roadway design and a program of continuous improvement in roadway safety and capacity.

Action T-1.1a: Provide a safe town-owned roadway network through maintenance of infrastructure, consistent road surface conditions, and plowing and sanding of roads during and after winter storms.

Action T-1.1b: Establish and maintain well-defined crosswalk pavement markings and enforce regulations for motorists to STOP for pedestrians in crosswalks on all town roads.

Action T-1.1c: Institute a Pavement Management Program and continue to fund annual paving budgets in order to maintain an average Road Surface Rating (RSR) of 72.

Action T-1.1d: Adopt a Mapped Streets Ordinance to establish ownership and roadway maintenance jurisdiction for all roads in Portsmouth.

Action T-1.1e: Continuously evaluate road salt and sand operations to minimize damage to the environment.

Action T-1.1f: Undertake a program of roadway/drainage redesign and construction in critical areas of Portsmouth, particularly areas subject to stormwater contamination, coastal flooding, and potential sea level rise.

Action T-1.1g: In coordination with our fellow island municipalities and RIDOT, implement the recommendations of the Aquidneck Island Transportation Study where feasible and appropriate.

POLICY T-1.2

Advance land use regulations that improve vehicular traffic circulation, promote transportation safety and encourage alternative transportation options.

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[Action T-1.2a](#): Review and update all Zoning Ordinances, Land Use and Subdivision Regulations and Design Review Guidelines having to do with roadway design for procedural and regulatory consistency.

[Action T-1.2b](#): Review and if necessary, update, the Traffic Sensitive Overlay District provisions in the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance.

[Action T-1.2c](#): Amend Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to prohibit new residential subdivisions having access off substandard private rights-of-way.

[Action T-1.2d](#): Amend Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to require dual emergency access to all new residential subdivisions where feasible and to require the extension of all proposed dead-end streets to connect with existing streets where feasible.

POLICY T-1.3

Declare public safety to be the top priority in all matters having to do with transportation and circulation in Portsmouth.

[Action T-1.3a](#): Establish and maintain additional well-defined crosswalk pavement markings as need is demonstrated and enforce regulations for motorists to STOP for pedestrians in crosswalks on all town roadways.

[Action T-1.3b](#): Work with RIDOT to improve pedestrian safety with special emphasis on crosswalks and pedestrian controlled traffic lights and lighting on all state roads in Portsmouth.

10.7.2 GOAL T-2

Reach a high level of coordination and cooperation with RIDOT to improve the safety and efficiency of regional and local traffic circulation on state-owned roads within the borders of Portsmouth.

POLICY T-2.1

Maintain a policy of coordination with RIDOT during all phases of planning, design, construction and maintenance on state transportation projects within the community.

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[Action T-2.1a:](#) Participate as an active partner in the development of the State's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for projects of local and regional significance.

[Action T-2.1b:](#) Work with RIDOT to accelerate major road maintenance and improvement programs within Portsmouth, particularly the north-south through traffic routes of East and West Main Roads.

[Action T-2.1c:](#) Establish better communication and coordination between RIDOT and the Town Planning Department during development site plan reviews and RIDOT physical alteration permitting processes.

[Action T-2.1d:](#) Collaborate with RIDOT in the design of left-turn lanes, road diets and other traffic calming and safety measures on all state-owned principal and minor arterial roadways in Portsmouth.

[Action T-2.1e:](#) Work with partners to consider enhancements to Defense Highway (Burma Road) to create as a viable alternative to East Main and West Main Roads north-south traffic flows.

[Action T-2.1f:](#) Work closely with RIDOT and its design engineers on the redesign and construction of the Town Center traffic improvement project (East Main Road from Hedly Street to Turnpike Avenue).

[Action T-2.1g:](#) Collaborate with RIDOT to prioritize enhanced roadway conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists in future transportation projects.

[Action T-2.1h:](#) Participate in all regional transportation planning efforts, including, but not limited to efforts by Statewide Planning, AIPC, RIDOT, RIPTA, RIBTA and others.

POLICY T-2.2

Support the expansion of all aspects of state and local public transportation systems.

[Action T-2.2a:](#) Pursue RIPTA to reinstate and promote its FLEX bus program of regularly scheduled local service in Portsmouth and the immediate surrounding area.

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[Action T-2.2b](#): Investigate the feasibility of establishing a local bus/trolley system for underserved areas of town and populations.

[Action T-2.2c](#): Work with RIPTA and RIDOT to create and promote additional park-and-ride facilities in Portsmouth as need arises.

[Action T-2.2d](#): Work with RIPTA to install aesthetically compatible bus shelters at selected high usage locations in Portsmouth.

10.7.3 GOAL T-3

Achieve a well-balanced multi-modal transportation system that reduces automobile dependency and is appropriately designed to produce safe and accessible facilities for all residents.

POLICY T-3.1

Encourage the use of alternate modes of travel.

[Action T-3.1a](#): Create a town-wide pedestrian and bicycle circulation plan to serve as a basis for all multi-modal transportation system planning decisions.

[Action T-3.1b](#): Work with state and regional partners to preserve the Newport Secondary railroad right-of-way for future public use.

[Action T-3.1c](#): Work with the RIDOT to prioritize improvements to existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities and to include such facilities as part of any upgrade to state-owned roads in Portsmouth.

[Action T-3.1d](#): Develop a program to establish a network of safe walking paths and/or sidewalks on all collector roads within 1½ miles of the High School, 1 mile of the Middle School and one-half mile of the elementary schools.

[Action T-3.1e](#): Work with RIDOT to provide sidewalks or a multi-mode path and crosswalks on East and West Main Roads where appropriate and feasible, with special attention to public transit stops.

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POLICY T-3.2

Ensure that reliable ferry service exists to and from Prudence Island on a year-round basis and seek ways to reestablish ferry service to Hog Island on a limited basis.

Action T-3.2a: Work with the current ferry service provider and Prudence Island residents to address ridership concerns as they arise.

Action T-3.2b: Work with the Town of Bristol to ensure continued long-term access to Prudence Island ferry terminal facilities.

POLICY T-3.3

All Town departments, boards and commissions shall consider incorporating, to the maximum extent possible, Complete Streets concepts and design elements into all development project approvals and municipal roadway projects.

Action T – 3.3a: Conduct an assessment of all town-owned and maintained roadways to determine recommended industry-standard Complete Streets design elements and develop a prioritized list of projects for implementation.

Action T – 3.3b: Review all land development regulations for compatibility with industry-standard Complete Streets concepts and design elements and consider amendments to those regulations as needed.

Action T – 3.3c: Consider a Complete Streets policy and ordinance for adoption in the Town of Portsmouth.

Action T-3.3d: Incorporate and fund a separate line in the Department of Public Works section of the Capital Improvement Plan for the implementation of Complete Streets projects.

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ELEMENT 11

Natural Hazards and Climate Change



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ELEMENT 11 – NATURAL HAZARDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

11.1 NATURAL HAZARDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE VISION

PORTSMOUTH WILL BE A COMMUNITY THAT HAS PREPARED ITS VULNERABLE AREAS, ASSETS AND POPULATIONS TO MINIMIZE THE EFFECTS OF NATURAL HAZARDS IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT.

11.1.1 BASIS FOR PLANNING

This section addresses Portsmouth’s management of natural hazards and climate change under the following categories:

- Existing conditions, including the most significant threats from natural hazards.
- Existing, on-going resilience and mitigation measures.
- The challenges of planning for natural hazards and climate change.

Addressing the potential for future impacts of natural hazards and climate change requires a framing of the discussion in order to be effective. These potential impacts are not problems to be solved, they are predicaments we find ourselves in that demand a response. We are not going to solve climate change. We, however, must certainly respond. In crafting this response, we must understand the differences between the concepts of mitigation and resilience.

To **mitigate** is to act to reduce the severity, seriousness, or impacts of a challenging event. *Natural Hazard mitigation* is advance action taken to reduce or eliminate the risks to human life and property from natural hazard events, be they short or long-term, and advance action to decrease the severity or damage of a natural disaster event. *Structural mitigation* involves strengthening building and infrastructure as well as developing and enforcing construction practices to increase damage resistance. *Non-structural mitigation* is developing policies and regulations directing development away from known natural hazards and putting in place measures to maintain protective features of the natural environment such as forests, sand dunes, salt marshes and wetlands.

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Resilience is the ability to recover from a challenge, in this case, the ability to rebound from a natural disaster event. However, from a planning perspective, resilience must be thought of as not just bouncing back, but bouncing forward – not simply to return to a previous state, but to create a better, more thriving community, able to recover quicker with less disruption, and the ability to recover from and more easily take the next punch. *Economic resilience* is addressing the costs of building community resilience and the cost of failing to do so. *Societal resilience* involves minimizing human vulnerabilities to disasters and strengthening our social and institutional foundations while maintaining a cohesive community in the face of adversity. *Ecological resilience* is maintaining a healthy natural environment which in turn acts to protect our community against natural hazard events.

The foundation of this element of the plan are the dual concepts of (1) mitigation: reducing the damage or severity from a natural disaster event and (2) resilience: increasing our ability to recover quicker and with less disruption from a natural disaster event.

11.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

11.2.1 NATURAL HAZARDS – THREATS

According to Portsmouth’s Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, the Town is most susceptible to the following natural hazard threats:

Table 11.1-Level of Risk Associated with Types of Natural Hazards

Type of Natural Hazard	Level of Risk
Hurricane	High
Nor’easter	
Coastal Flooding	
Snow Storm	
High Winds	Medium
Ice Storm	
Street Flooding	
Extreme Heat and Cold	
Drought	
Sea Level Rise	

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Table 11.1-Level of Risk Associated with Types of Natural Hazards	
Type of Natural Hazard	Level of Risk
Brushfire	Low
Earthquake	
Hail	
Lightning	
Tornado	

The following text discusses risk posed by the most severe natural threats: hurricanes, nor'easters, coastal flooding and snow storms.

Hurricanes

The Town's close proximity to the Atlantic Ocean renders it particularly susceptible to hurricanes and the resulting loss of human life and property. The probability of future hurricane occurrence is considered likely. Cyclonic storms threaten the coast of Rhode Island virtually every year. Cyclonic storms that reach Rhode Island are usually weak (Category 1 or less). Notwithstanding, these are still potentially dangerous storms. Portsmouth is a coastal community and, therefore, susceptible to coastal storm surge, damage from downed power lines, and downed trees. Mobile homes, converted seasonal homes, and older structures are at particular risk. Climate change is likely to intensify the effect of cyclonic storms. Some recent examples of severe tropical cyclones include Hurricane Irene (2011) and Tropical Storm Sandy (2012).

Nor'easters

A strong low-pressure system along the Mid-Atlantic and New England can form over land or over coastal waters. The storm radius is often as large as 1,000 miles and the horizontal storm speed is about 25 miles per hour, traveling up the eastern United States coast. Sustained wind speeds of 10 to 40 MPH are common during a nor'easter, with short term wind speeds gusting up to 70 MPH. Typically a winter weather event, nor'easters are known to produce heavy snow, rain, and heavy waves along the coast.

The Town's close proximity to the Atlantic Ocean renders it particularly susceptible to nor'easters and the resulting loss of human life and property. The probability of future hurricane occurrence is considered

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highly likely. Similar to hurricanes, changes in air and water temperatures may lead to stronger nor'easters along the Atlantic Ocean. Since Portsmouth is a coastal community; most damage from a nor'easter would be to utilities, roads, stormwater infrastructure, personal property, trees, and snow loads on roofs. The Blizzard of 1978 was the largest nor'easter on record. Many people in Rhode Island were without heat, food, and electricity for over a week. More recent events include two nor'easters in 2011. Portsmouth should expect stronger nor'easters, but not necessarily more frequent storms.

Coastal and Street Flooding

According to the Rhode Island 2014 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, "Flooding is a localized hazard that is generally the result of excessive precipitation. Flooding is the most commonly occurring natural hazard, due to the widespread geographical distribution of river valleys and coastal areas, and the attraction of human settlements to these areas." Severe storms with heavy rain can generate flash floods which strike and end quickly. Flash flooding isn't limited to streams and rivers but also streets. Conditions in Portsmouth do not typically yield flash floods. However, during the March 2010 flood events, several roads were unpassable on Prudence Island as well as Portsmouth. Low-lying coastal roads, as well as the neighborhoods of Common Fence Point and Island Park, are the most vulnerable. Localized flooding can be expected to occur on an annual basis. The flood event which occurred in March 2010 was a 250-year +/- event. Changing climate conditions are likely to bring more rainfall events to Portsmouth and fewer snow storms. More intense storms will stress the natural floodplains and stormwater infrastructure.

Snow Storms

The majority of Rhode Island lies outside the heavy snow and ice regions of the northeast. Due to its maritime climate, Rhode Island generally experiences cooler summers and warmer winters than inland areas. However, snow and ice do occur and can be more than an inconvenience and cause extensive damage. The two major threats from these hazards are loss of power due to ice on electrical lines and snow loading on rooftops. Additionally, loss of power could mean loss of heat for many residents. Winter storms vary in size and strength and can be accompanied by strong winds that create blizzard conditions and dangerous wind chill. There are three categories of winter storms. A *blizzard* is the most dangerous of the winter storms. It consists of low temperatures, heavy snowfall, and winds of at least 35 miles per hour. A *heavy snow storm* is one which drops four or more inches of snow in a twelve-hour period. An *ice storm* occurs when moisture falls and freezes immediately upon impact. For the purpose of this plan,

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snow storms include heavy amounts of snow and ice, all of which may occur independently or at the same time. A severe winter storm could have a serious impact on private and public structures as well as the general population. Those most at risk to extreme cold are the elderly and those who work outdoors. Major snow storms are highly likely to occur in Portsmouth. Considering climate change, Portsmouth may likely experience less snowfall during the winter seasons but may see more intense blizzards when they do occur.

Climate Change / Sea Level Rise

Portsmouth's 2018 Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan regards climate change as an on-going amplifier to the above identified natural hazards. Long-term climate change is likely to cause the following impacts:

- Heavier, more frequent precipitation events likely to cause more frequent flash flooding.
- Longer periods of drought which may affect water availability and increase the threat for wildfires.
- Increasing air and water temperatures.
- More frequent high heat days and heat waves.
- More flooding from higher tides and storm surge.

How rapidly these changes will be felt is debatable, but there should be no uncertainty that our mitigation and resiliency planning efforts need to acknowledge climate change is real and its amplifying effects on a host of natural hazards needs to be taken into account.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Technical Report NOS CO-OPS 083, dated January 2017, reports global sea level rise as a persistent trend over past decades and "it is expected to continue beyond the end of this century." In assessing the most up-to-date scientific literature presented in peer-reviewed publications, the report supports a physically plausible range of global sea level rise somewhere between 11.8 inches and 8.2 feet by the year 2100. The report also finds that "along regions of the Northeast Atlantic...rise is projected to be greater than the global average for almost all future global mean sea level rise scenarios." A linear extrapolation of the data presented (local analysis) supports a physically plausible sea level rise for Portsmouth by the end of this 20-year planning period (2040) of somewhere between 5.2 inches and 3.6 feet, with slightly higher values attributable to our NE Atlantic location. While we currently debate where within this range of physically plausible sea level rise we will

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end up, and we currently characterize the level of concern as low, our mitigation and resiliency planning efforts certainly need to acknowledge that some level of rise is in our future, and to consider not only short-term rise during this 20-year planning period but potentially much higher levels towards the end of the century.

Maps to accompany this element:

- **Map 14** illustrates areas that would be currently inundated in the event of a 1% (100-year) and 0.2% (500-year) storm as they appear on the most recent FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMS).
- **Map 15** illustrates areas that would be inundated in the event of a Category 1 through Category 4 hurricane.
- **Map 16** illustrates the areas that are projected to be inundated due to 1 foot, 3 feet and 5 feet of potential sea level rise.

11.2.2 EXISTING, ON-GOING RESILIENCE AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The principal efforts to mitigate the adverse effects of natural hazards and increase community resilience in Portsmouth are summarized below.

Building Codes

In the interest of the public health, safety, and welfare, all municipalities within the State of Rhode Island share a single building code (RIGL §23-27.3-100 et al.). Last amended in 2015, the code, which incorporates the International Building Code, takes into account current scientific and engineering knowledge and allows for the utilization of modern materials and methods of construction to provide comprehensive construction requirements designed to mitigate the impacts from natural hazards such as high wind events and snow loading. The Code is enforced by the Portsmouth Building Official.

Zoning Ordinance – Flood Hazard Areas

Enabled by state legislation and intended to provide consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, Portsmouth's Zoning Ordinance (February 13, 2012) is designed to serve a variety of purposes but first

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and foremost is the promotion of public health, safety, and general welfare. Purposes specific to natural hazards and climate change include:

- Provisions for and protect the public investment in transportation, water, stormwater management systems, sewage treatment and disposal, solid waste treatment and disposal, schools, roads, recreation, public facilities, open space, and other public requirements;
- Promotion of safety from fire, flood, and other natural or man-made disasters;
- Provision for orderly growth and development which recognizes, among other things, the values and dynamic nature of coastal and freshwater ponds, the shoreline, and freshwater and coastal wetlands, and the value of our unique or natural resources and features.

Article III, Section F. of the Zoning Ordinance describes zoning standards for the Special Flood Hazard Area. The purpose of this section of the ordinance is to ensure public safety, to minimize hazards to persons and property from flooding, to protect watercourses from encroachment, and to maintain the capability of floodplains to retain and carry off floodwaters.

National Flood Insurance Program

The Town of Portsmouth is in compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program and has been an active member since 1982. FEMA literature states, “the National Flood Insurance Program aims to reduce the impact of flooding on private and public structures. It does so by providing affordable insurance to property owners, renters and businesses and by encouraging communities to adopt and enforce floodplain management regulations. These efforts help mitigate the effects of flooding on new and improved structures. Overall, the program reduces the socio-economic impact of disasters by promoting the purchase and retention of general risk insurance, but also of flood insurance, specifically.” The Town of Portsmouth has adopted the most recent (September 4, 2013) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) and Flood Insurance Study (FIS). The Town has designated the Building Official as our NFIP Coordinator and program manager.

Narragansett Bay Estuarine Projects

The Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NBNERR or “the Reserve”) is a partnership program established between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the State of Rhode Island’s Department of Environmental Management to promote informed management and sound

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stewardship of our coastal resources. The Reserve's geographic research area encompasses 4,453 acres of terrestrial and submerged land in the center of Narragansett Bay and occupies portions of Prudence, Patience, Hope and Dyer islands, all part of the Town of Portsmouth. The Reserve's headquarters and visitor center are located on the south end of Prudence Island.

One of the core functions of NBNERR is to support and conduct high quality research and monitoring with a focus on the Reserve's mission to preserve and protect representative estuarine habitats within Narragansett Bay. Long-term monitoring data gathered and analyzed at NBNERR provides insight into the current (and potentially changing) status of resources, habitat and species. Trends over time capture responses to changes in conditions (e.g., climate change, environmental policy) indicated by shifts in relative abundance or distribution on the landscape. Research is conducted in-house by Reserve staff scientists, who also lend logistical and other support to visiting scientists conducting their own research in the Reserve.

In addition to research and monitoring activities, NBNERR engages in a host of stewardship projects involving habitat maintenance and restoration at the Reserve. Recognizing habitat maintenance as an important tool in both natural hazard mitigation and coastal resilience, efforts by Reserve staff and others include invasive species eradication, wetlands restoration, streamflow and groundwater monitoring, periodic selective mowing and the application of prescribed fire, among other tools and techniques.

[Development Plan Review](#)

The Planning Board, Zoning Board of Review, the Planning Department, the Department of Public Works in its inspection capacity, and the Portsmouth Water and Fire District all coordinate to help improve community resiliency and reduce costs and damages from natural hazards by reviewing all proposed development and/or redevelopment site plans to ensure the septic, water and storm water regulations are followed during the design, the construction and the final approval of the development.

11.3 PLANNING CHALLENGES FOR NATURAL HAZARDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Natural hazards and climate change present a number of critical challenges for Portsmouth, a coastal community on the front lines of addressing our changing natural environment. As noted above, climate

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change will continue to act as an unknown amplifier of known natural hazards and the most authoritative sea level rise predictions vary widely. Given the uncertainty of available data and the potential for devastating impacts associated with future natural disasters and sea level rise, Portsmouth will need to build capacity to look at planning for climate change through a risk management perspective and develop a public information and communication strategy, thereby allowing citizens and property owners to determine their own tolerance for risk and make intelligent choices on how to manage that risk.

An effective planning approach when confronted with uncertain data and timelines is scenario planning. Taking the broadest possible range of stakeholder viewpoints, scenario planning equally (1) regards the spectrum between ignoring the possible impacts of climate change completely, and (2) spending large amounts of money to prepare for threats that may or may not materialize in the future. The planning process convenes a group of stakeholders to carve out a set of plausible intermediate scenarios between these extremes and sets forth a catalog of responses to these intermediate scenarios. Scenarios do not predict future changes, they describe and categorize potential future changes in such a way that a tolerance for risk can be arrived at by the group. In the case of sea level rise, if there is a low tolerance for risk, then the highest plausible scenarios for sea levels arriving sooner should be prioritized. Conversely, if tolerance for risk is much more acceptable, then the very lowest levels of potential sea level rise will suffice for planning purposes. This plan advocates future planning efforts be conducted in this manner, but until results are produced and consensus can emerge, this plan establishes an intermediate to low target level for planning purposes for all public and private coastal activities of 1 to 1.5 feet of sea level rise by 2040 and a 3 to 5 feet rise in sea level by 2100.

11.4 GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

11.4.1 GOAL NH/CC-1

Achieve a level of economic, societal and ecological resilience in our built and natural environment that enables Portsmouth to recover quickly from the effects of natural hazards and climate change and minimizes long-term community disruption.

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POLICY NH/CC-1.1

Manage land use and the built environment within the floodplain and other vulnerable areas to not only mitigate, but increase, community resilience to the effects of natural hazards and climate change.

Action NH/CC-1.1a: Work with RIDOT to identify ways to mitigate future impacts and increase resilience to flooding, storm surge and sea level rise along Park Avenue in Island Park and other vulnerable state roads.

Action NH/CC-1.1b: Develop “Where, When and How” land use and development management scenarios to address the effects of climate change and sea level rise.

Action NH/CC-1.1c: Work with federal and state partners to investigate and prioritize improvements in the town-owned storm drain system to enhance discharge, retention and infiltration capabilities.

Action NH/CC-1.1d: Improve Portsmouth’s mapping and data gathering capabilities to support assessment, analysis and planning activities.

POLICY NH/CC-1.2

Preserve and enhance the capacity of the natural environment to improve Portsmouth’s resilience to the effects of natural hazards and climate change.

Action NH/CC-1.2a: Work with the Aquidneck Land Trust and others to identify and conserve areas vulnerable to the effects of increased natural hazards due to climate change.

Action NH/CC-1.2b: Investigate the implementation of green infrastructure stormwater management strategies to enhance infiltration and increase retention on town properties and roadways.

Action NH/CC-1.2c: Investigate the adoption of low-impact development standards to reduce the amount of impervious coverage and increase stormwater infiltration.

Action NH/CC-1.2d: Work with stakeholders to identify, prioritize and implement coastal adaptation projects to allow wetlands expansion and salt marsh migration.

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POLICY NH/CC-1.3

Require all municipal departments, boards and commissions to incorporate resilience to natural hazards and climate change in all long-range planning and public infrastructure projects.

[Action NH/CC-1.3a](#): Maintain a FEMA-approved Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan and report implementation progress on an annual basis.

[Action NH/CC-1.3b](#): Establish a category in the 5-year Capital Improvement Program specifically for community resilience and hazard mitigation projects.

POLICY NH/CC-1.4

Work to reduce the economic impacts of and increase the societal resilience to the effects of natural hazards and climate change.

[Action NH/CC-1.4a](#): Participate in the FEMA Community Rating System and provide resources necessary to coordinate an effective implementation program. Determine a rating score target to be achieved by 2025.

[Action NH/CC-1.4b](#): On a quarterly basis, conduct community outreach including public forums and posting of information on the town website to educate residents regarding the risk of the effects of natural hazards and the concept of community resilience.

[Action NH/CC-1.4c](#): Encourage the formation of neighborhood associations to assist in the monitoring of impacts of climate change.

[Action NH/CC-1.4d](#): Provide support for property owners to help take advantage of funding opportunities that assist with covering the costs of mitigating risk in flood zone areas.

[Action NH/CC-1.4e](#): Collaborate with state agencies and others to implement the Prudence Island Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

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ELEMENT 12

Land Use



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ELEMENT 12 – LAND USE

12.1 LAND USE VISION

THE LANDSCAPE OF PORTSMOUTH WILL PRESENT AN ORDERLY, BALANCED, AND RATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PATTERN THAT HELPS PRESERVE COMMUNITY CHARACTER, ENHANCE FISCAL STABILITY, AND PROTECT THE QUALITY OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

12.2 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Community Plan is to establish a plan for land use in Portsmouth over the next 20 years and to update current as well as to propose new land use controls and regulations to implement this plan. Like most Rhode Island communities, Portsmouth is facing critical issues related to land use including:

- Providing a range of housing choices and opportunities for all residents.
- Balancing the need to preserve community character with the pressure to develop and increase the economic base.
- Providing adequate municipal, school, and recreational facilities.
- Retaining farming as a viable commercial enterprise and land use.
- Growing the non-residential tax base.
- Mitigating the impacts of natural hazards and climate change.
- Protecting critical environmentally sensitive areas of town.

Various elements of the Comprehensive Plan establish goals and policies addressing these and many other issues. Land use is inherently tied to each of the other elements, so it is natural that planning for land use, and specifically the creation of the Future Land Use Map (FLUM), becomes the culmination of the assessments, analysis, goals, policies, and implementation actions flowing from all the other elements of the plan.

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This element presents existing land uses and current zoning, along with discussion of development trends, population projections, and tax base related to land use. Recommended future land uses based on the goals and policies of the various elements of this plan are expressed as a FLUM which is then compared to the current zoning map. Inconsistencies between the two are identified along with proposed resolutions which will lead to the creation of an updated Official Zoning Map and Zoning Ordinance.

It is the overall intention of this planning effort to maintain, to the extent possible, the current relative balance of uses, general development patterns, scale, and densities of land uses in all current zoning districts or any newly created districts.

12.3 EXISTING CONDITIONS

12.3.1 EXISTING LAND USES

See **Map 18** for existing land uses. Table 12.1 below identifies existing land uses in the Town of Portsmouth as of 2011.

Table 12.1-Existing Land Uses, Portsmouth 2011				
Land Use	RIGIS LULC 2011		Portsmouth Land Area	
	Code	Description	Acres	%
Residential	111	High Density Residential (<1/8 acre lots)	386.16	2.59%
	112	Medium High Density Residential (1/4 to 1/8 acre lots)	1,416.10	9.50%
	113	Medium Density Residential (1 to 1/4 acre lots)	1,909.11	12.80%
	114	Medium Low Density Residential (1 to 2 acre lots)	297.59	1.99%
	115	Low Density Residential (>2 acre lots)	116.91	0.78%
			Total Residential	4,125.88
Commercial	120	Commercial (sale of products/services)	292.64	1.96%
Industrial	130	Industrial (manufacturing, design, assembly, etc.)	138.39	0.93%

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Table 12.1-Existing Land Uses, Portsmouth 2011				
Land Use	RIGIS LULC 2011		Portsmouth Land Area	
	Code	Description	Acres	%
Transportation & Utilities	141	Roads (divided highways >200' plus related facilities)	85.57	0.57%
	143	Railroads (and associated facilities)	29.29	0.20%
	144	Water and Sewage Treatment	6.98	0.05%
	145	Waste Disposal (landfills, junkyards, etc.)	13.75	0.09%
	146	Power Lines (100' or more width)	19.47	13.00%
	147	Other Transportation (terminals, docks, etc.)	11.73	0.08%
			Total Transportation & Utilities	166.78
Developed Recreation	161	Developed Recreation (all recreation)	744.70	5.00%
Cemeteries	163	Cemeteries	50.32	0.34%
Institutional	170	Institutional (schools, hospitals, churches, etc.)	220.36	1.50%
Agricultural	210	Pasture (agricultural, not suitable for tillage)	529.93	3.55%
	220	Cropland (tillable)	1,392.46	9.34%
	230	Orchards, Groves, Nurseries	311.60	2.09%
	240	Idle Agriculture (abandoned fields and orchards)	35.91	0.24%
			Total Agriculture	2,269.91
Undeveloped/Unprotected	162	Vacant Land	158.02	1.06%
	300	Brush Land (shrub and brush area, reforestation)	860.63	5.77%
	410	Deciduous Forest (>80% hardwood)	3,046.66	20.43%
	420	Softwood Forest (>80% softwood)	80.40	0.54%
	430	Mixed Forest	979.64	6.57%
	710	Beaches	219.06	1.47%
	720	Sandy Areas (not beaches)	68.12	0.46%
	730	Rock Outcrops	5.93	0.03%
	750	Transitional Areas (urban open)	128.31	0.85%
			Total Undeveloped/Unprotected	5,546.77
Water	500	Inland Waters	334.29	2.24%
Wetland	600	Wetland	1,021.20	6.85%
		Total	14,911.23	100.00%

Source: RIGIS.

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12.3.2 EXISTING ZONING DISTRICTS

See **Map 19** for existing zoning districts. Table 12.2 below identifies existing zoning districts in the Town of Portsmouth as of 2018.

Residential Districts (R) are intended to allow orderly development of residential dwellings designed to complement the natural features of the land, to promote suitable placement of buildings and related facilities in relation to the site and surrounding areas, with adequate living space and open space, to avoid overcrowding of land, to encourage good design, to avoid overburdening municipal facilities, and to insure compatibility with the immediate neighborhood and with the natural environment.

R-10 District - minimum lot size of 10,000 sq. ft.

R-20 District - minimum lot size of 20,000 sq. ft.

R-30 District - minimum lot size of 30,000 sq. ft.

R-40 District - minimum lot size of 40,000 sq. ft.

R-60 District - minimum lot size of 60,000 sq. ft. with special restrictions to preserve and protect important natural resources.

Commercial District (C) is established to provide areas for commercial establishments and serve community and town-wide retail shopping and service needs.

Town Center District (TC) is established to provide for a pedestrian-friendly commercial district that is more densely developed than the Commercial (C) District.

Industrial Districts are established to encourage intensive industrial and business activities, with proper safeguards for protecting nearby residential areas and environmentally sensitive areas.

Heavy Industrial (HI) is established to provide for levels of noise, vibration, smoke, odor and other evidence of industrial activity commensurate with state and federal standards and other performance standards that may be set by the Town.

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Light Industrial (LI) is established to provide for a lesser level of noise, vibration, smoke, odor and other evidence of industrial activity commensurate with performance standards that may be set by the Town.

Limited Light Industrial (LLI) is intended to provide for a lesser level of noise, vibration, smoke, odor and other evidence of industrial activity commensurate with performance standards that have been set by the Town.

Waterfront District (WD) is established primarily for businesses catering to marine and marine-related activities.

Open Space and Public Lands District (OS) is established for all lands that shall be dedicated to open space, recreation, conservation, or public uses.

Water Resource Protection Overlay District (WRPD) is established for all lands on Hog, Prudence and Patience Islands.

Watershed Protection Overlay District: Zones A & UD is that land area having a direct or indirect effect on the quality of water in the Sisson Pond, St. Mary's Pond and Lawton Valley drinking water reservoirs.

Redevelopment District (RD) is those lands now or formerly known as Navy Tank Farms 1 and 2 and any subdivisions thereof.

Traffic Sensitive Overlay District (TS) is those parcels of land having frontage on the following roadways:

- a) East Main Road (Route 138)
- b) West Main Road (Route 114)
- c) Bristol Ferry Road (Route 114)
- d) Turnpike Avenue
- e) Union Street

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- f) Middle Road
- g) Sandy Point Avenue
- h) Wapping Road
- i) Glen Road
- j) Boyds Land
- k) Bramans Lane
- l) Stringham Road
- m) Burma Road

Multi-Family Incentive District is all Portsmouth parcels of land on Aquidneck Island except those in the HI and LI Districts and in the Watershed Protection Overlay District.

Special Flood Hazard Areas Overlay District includes all special flood hazard areas within the Town of Portsmouth designated as Zone A, AE, V, or VE on the Newport County Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) and Digital FIRM issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the administration of the National Flood Insurance Program.

Table 12.2-Existing Zoning Districts, Portsmouth 2018		
District	District Name	Area (acres)
C	Commercial	292.56
HI	Heavy Industrial	623.62
LI	Light Industrial	363.18
OS	Open Space & Public Lands	555.57
RD	Redevelopment	139.38
R-10	Residential - 10	814.74
R-20	Residential - 20	4,000.48
R-30	Residential - 30	2,033.66
R-40	Residential - 40	1,483.69
R-60	Residential - 60	4,385.90
TC	Town Center	58.88
WD	Waterfront	152.89

Source: RIGIS.

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12.4 DEVELOPMENT TRENDS AND BUILDOUT

12.4.1 DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Portsmouth has some contrasts in its development patterns. The Town has developed primarily from north to south over the past 100 years. Housing is dominated by single-family homes with a few apartment buildings scattered throughout the community. The northernmost parts of town are densely developed on small lots, becoming progressively less dense, both in zoning and actual development, as you move south. Much of the southeast and south-central portion of the community is agricultural and undeveloped. Within Portsmouth are two principal through highways: East Main Road and West Main Road. The northern half of East Main Road contains strip commercial development primarily servicing local needs, as well as older residential development interspersed. The west side contains most of the industrial uses. Portsmouth has developed, however, as primarily a bedroom community.

Patterns of development emerge from the history of the Town. Prior to the construction of the Sakonnet River Bridge in the late 1950's, Portsmouth was primarily a farming community. Because nearby Fall River, Bristol, Newport and Middletown satisfied the retail and service needs of the small population, no town center ever emerged. In 1960, about 75% of the land was farmed; today this figure is well under 20%. With the Sakonnet River Bridge and the later Newport Bridge came major employers and the effects of rapid suburbanization from nearby urban centers. Farmers, comparing the financial rewards of selling to developers against the difficulty of financial success farming in New England, one-by-one have chosen the former. Thus, typical sprawl development of former farmland dots the town from north to south primarily along the eastern half of the community.

The town's soils and natural ground cover contribute to chronic problems of high water table, soil erosion, and poor drainage. As these soil conditions are prevalent throughout, compounded by a lack of a sanitary sewer system, the Town does not lend itself well to differentiating areas that should be developed from those that should not. It also limits the ability of the town to designate areas as more densely developed than what can be accommodated with septic systems. The Town has made a policy decision to forego the installation of a publicly-owned wastewater collection and treatment system, so planning for denser residential development as well as attracting new businesses will continue to be problematic in the foreseeable future.

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12.4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Portsmouth's population is projected to increase by a modest 2.3% over approximately the next 20 years. Anticipated need in each of the categories within the Services and Facilities Element detailed herein have been informed by this Statewide Planning population projection. Refer to the Housing Element for a more in-depth discussion of Portsmouth's demographics.

12.4.3 TAX BASE AND FUTURE LAND USE

A near constant theme of discussion in recent years has been about the over-reliance on residential property taxes to finance the municipal budget. From an economic development perspective, the question is, "How do we attract new business in order to give residential taxpayers some relief while still preserving Portsmouth's preferred semi-rural character?" However, from a land use perspective, the question is quite different. How much relief for residential taxpayers is actually possible given currently available land for occupation by new business?

Setting aside for the moment that agriculture is undeniably a business activity and is currently permitted in all districts, classic business activity in the economic development sense can currently take place in one of six zoning districts: the Commercial District (C), the Redevelopment District (RD), the Waterfront District (WD), Town Center (TC) and the Light and Heavy Industrial Districts (LI and HI). Detailed below, the amount of non-farmed, vacant land available for commercial development in Portsmouth totals approximately 118 acres in four districts.

COMMERCIAL (C): A total of approximately 293 acres of land is currently zoned Commercial. Approximately 83 acres in 16 parcels remain vacant and undeveloped. Of those vacant commercially zoned parcels, for planning purposes, four parcels totaling approximately 52 acres should be considered marginally developable for commercial purposes. This leaves a total of 31 acres in 12 parcels as vacant commercially zoned land. Approximately 8 acres of this land is currently active farmed.

REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (RD): This district consists of the approximately 140 acres of Navy Tank Farms 1 and 2 near Melville. Given the uncertainty of both the type and timing of economic development

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in this district, for planning purposes this land area should be set aside as a possible vehicle for residential tax relief in the near to mid-term future.

WATERFRONT DISTRICT (WD): Consisting of approximately 153 acres, the Waterfront District is largely built-out with the exception of the so-called “backyard” property, expected to be turned over to a consortium of marine businesses to allow them to expand, and the 25-acre Weaver Cove property recently sold at auction to a new developer. Given the uncertainty of environmental clean-up needed to develop these properties and the type and timing of that development, for planning purposes this land area should be set aside as a possible vehicle for residential tax relief in the near to mid-term future.

TOWN CENTER (TC): The Town Center District consists of approximately 59 acres, of which seven parcels of approximately 20 acres are currently vacant. Approximately five of those 20 vacant acres are in wetlands.

LIGHT INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT (LI): Portsmouth has approximately 363 acres of land zoned Light Industrial. Of those 363 acres, approximately 130 (17 parcels) acres are vacant. Of those 130 acres, approximately 92 are actively farmed. Excluding the actively farmed acreage, Portsmouth has approximately 32 acres of vacant light industrially zoned land.

HEAVY INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT (HI): A total of approximately 623 acres of land in Portsmouth are zoned HI. Excluding acreage at the Raytheon campus, Chase Farm, which has recently been substantially redeveloped as a solar farm, and the acreage occupied by a links-style golf course and high-end residential uses, there remain approximately 40 acres of vacant land zoned HI.

The percentage of municipal tax revenue as of 2020 stands at approximately 86.75% from residential taxes and 10.49 % from the commercial/industrial sector. In terms of tax relief for residential property owners, a recent Planning Department study concluded that to “move the dial” 1% point in favor of the residential taxpayer would require the commercial development of approximately 62 acres of vacant land currently zoned to allow commercial development. Unless the town wishes to make significant changes to current policy and zoning regulations, relief to the residential taxpayer as a result of the expansion of commercial development will not be realized in the near to mid-term future.

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12.4.4 RESIDENTIAL BUILDOUT ANALYSIS

This section, through tables and narrative, presents an updated assessment of future development capacity based on current zoning regulations and context. An estimate of total future population at anticipated buildout and the year by which residential buildout is anticipated based on historic trends is presented. While future buildout is unlikely to be achieved given current population projections, this type of analysis is useful in determining future water or housing needs and to determine whether any changes need to be made in terms of future land use.

Anticipating the impacts of future development is an essential duty of town planning. The suitability, resiliency, livability and safety of the town are determined by growth and how we manage it. The Zoning Ordinance and Town Code are the Town's governing doctrine to manage growth and development within the Town. Carefully implemented land use regulations assure residents that their quality of life will not be negatively impacted by unwanted nuisances of inappropriate development.

The residential buildout analysis is a tool utilized to assess the maximum potential future residential development and growth. This is a multi-step process that seeks to:

- Compile an inventory of the existing conditions, such as infrastructure, housing, land use, environmental constraints, natural resources, and deed-restricted conservation lands;
- Delineate the potential buildable land area; and
- Determine the maximum amount of dwelling units allowed under existing development and zoning regulations.

The buildout analysis produced an estimated figure based upon a detailed methodology and consistently applied assumptions to create a quantitative analysis based on a variety of data. The data produced through this exercise is not a prediction of future development, but an estimated inventory of what could potentially be built based on existing conditions and development regulations.

The buildout analysis estimates an additional 1,807 dwelling units could possibly be developed by right based on the estimated buildable land area and the current Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Regulations for the Town (Table 12.3). It is important to note that this estimate is only based on what would be allowed by right.

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Table 12.3-Residential Buildout by Zoning District				
Zoning District	Estimated Developable Area (acres)	% of District Potentially Buildable	% of District Built or Undevelopable Area (acres)	Estimated Buildable Units
R-10	8.74	1.08%	98.92%	26
R-20	611.03	14.75%	85.25%	903
R-30	480.67	22.37%	77.63%	486
R-40	342.30	24.70%	75.30%	243
R-60	294.25	6.68%	93.32%	149
Total	1,736.99	-	-	1,807

Source: Portsmouth Planning Department, 2018.

While the buildout analysis concludes there is the potential for 1,807 dwelling units that could be developed, population projections and historical building permit statistics suggest the full buildout at these rates would take a substantial duration to occur. The 2010 Census found the average household size in Portsmouth to be 2.44 persons per household. Using population projections from Rhode Island Statewide Planning, and incorporating the average persons per household, it is estimated that in the year 2040, an additional 166 dwelling units will be needed: a number that represents approximately 9 percent of the potential buildable dwelling units identified in the buildout analysis (Table 12.4).

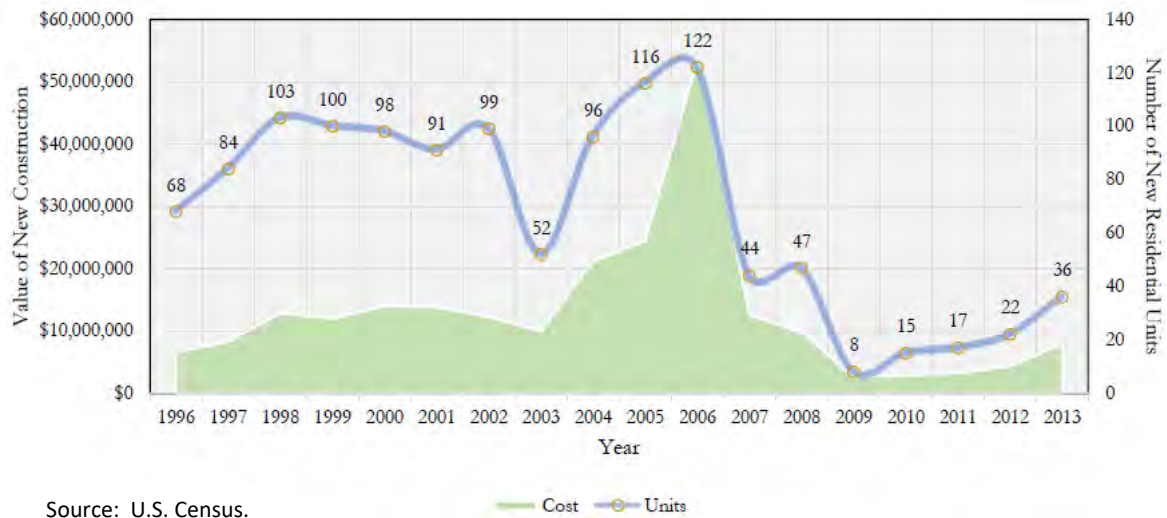
Table 12.4-Population Projections, Portsmouth							
Census Population		Projections					
2000	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
17,149	17,389	17,315	17,386	17,615	17,779	17,845	17,793
Change from 2010		-74	2	226	390	456	404
Dwelling Units Need		-30.33	0.82	92.62	159.84	186.89	165.57

Source: RI Statewide Planning Program.

From 1996 through 2013, Portsmouth, like many other municipalities across the country, suffered a great housing surge and decline. On average, 66.67 new dwelling units were created annually during this time period (Figure 12.1). However, following the housing bubble’s burst in the mid-2000s, new residential dwelling unit construction dropped below 30 units annually. Due to the significant fluctuation in new dwelling unit construction during this time period, it is difficult to quantify projections based on this rate, when the estimated 1,807 buildable dwelling units would be realized.

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Figure 12.1-1996 – 2013 Building Permits Issued: New Residential Units and Value



Portsmouth has sufficient land area available to support the construction of new additional residential units far beyond the projected population growth figures for the foreseeable future. In fact, based upon the residential buildout analysis and population projections from Statewide Planning, Portsmouth has the land capacity to support 2040 population projections tenfold. It is also assumed that many more units could be developed alternatively to the methodology utilized in this analysis, such as by Special Use permit, Planned Unit developments, and Zoning Board-approved variances. While Portsmouth enjoys considerable land area suitable for development, preservation of its rural character and identity are paramount to Portsmouth residents.

12.5 FUTURE LAND USE

12.5.1 SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES

This Comprehensive Community Plan will strive to incorporate smart growth principles as articulated by the Smart Growth Network, a cooperative agreement between ICMA and EPA, in all land use planning in Portsmouth. These principles include:

- Mix land uses
- Take advantage of compact building design
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- Create walkable neighborhoods

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- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas
- Strengthen and direct development towards the existing built environment
- Provide a variety of transportation choices
- Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions
- Balance land use with infrastructure limitations

12.5.2 FUTURE LAND USE MAP (FLUM)

Setting a vision for the future growth of Portsmouth over the next 20-years, Future Land Use Map 20 presents a visual depiction of the community's desires for types, patterns, and intensities for development of the landscape. Future Land Use **Map 22** depicts those areas of the community that are currently dedicated for conservation through ownership, easement, and deed restriction as well as those lands intended for conservation, but not yet conserved.

Future land uses in Portsmouth include:

Residential Land Uses (R) are intended to allow orderly development of residential dwellings designed to complement the natural features of the land, to promote suitable placement of buildings and related facilities in relation to the site and surrounding areas, with adequate living space and open space, to avoid overcrowding of land, to encourage good design, to avoid overburdening municipal facilities, and to insure compatibility with the immediate neighborhood and with the natural environment.

R-5 High Density - minimum lot size of 5,000 sq. ft.

R-10 Medium High Density - minimum lot size of 10,000 sq. ft.

R-20 High Medium Density - minimum lot size of 20,000 sq. ft.

R-30 Medium Density - minimum lot size of 30,000 sq. ft.

R-40 Medium Low Density - minimum lot size of 40,000 sq. ft.

R-60 Low Density - minimum lot size of 60,000 sq. ft. with special restrictions to preserve and protect important natural resources.

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Commercial Land Use (C) is intended to provide areas for commercial establishments to serve the community with town-wide retail shopping and service needs. While moderately auto-oriented in nature, commercial land use in Portsmouth is intended to be more neighborhood village-like land use rather than highway commercial with large-footprint buildings and auto-oriented signage.

Industrial Land Use is intended to encourage intensive industrial and business activities, with proper safeguards for protecting nearby residential areas and environmentally sensitive areas.

Heavy Industrial Land Use (HI) is intended to provide for levels of noise, vibration, smoke, odor and other evidence of industrial activity commensurate with state and federal standards and other performance standards that may be set by the Town.

Light Industrial Land Use (LI) is intended to provide for a lesser level of noise, vibration, smoke, odor and other evidence of industrial activity commensurate with performance standards that may be set by the Town.

Limited Light Industrial (LLI) is intended to provide for a lesser level of noise, vibration, smoke, odor and other evidence of industrial activity commensurate with performance standards that have been set by the Town in the Zoning Ordinance.

Waterfront Land Use (WD) is intended primarily for businesses catering to marine and marine-related activities exclusively in the Melville area.

Open Space and Public Land Uses (OS) is established for all lands that shall be dedicated to open space, recreation, conservation, or public uses.

Agricultural Land Uses are permitted by right in all areas of Portsmouth.

Mixed-Use Land Uses are typically a blend of residential and commercial uses within a single development, building or parcel of land. Mixed-use development is intended for commercial and light

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industrial districts only and is prohibited in all residential districts. In order to successfully implement mixed-use development in Portsmouth, performance standards need to be established.

12.5.3 INCONSISTENCIES BETWEEN FUTURE LAND USE AND CURRENT ZONING

This section identifies inconsistencies between the desired future use of all land in Portsmouth as depicted on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and Portsmouth's current Official Zoning Map (See **Map 19**). Those inconsistencies and proposed resolutions are:

- INCONSISTENCY:** The FLUM calls for open space land use on "Town Pond" parcel (plat 7, Lot 9) currently zoned Medium High Density (R-10).

RESOLUTION: Rezone the parcel from Medium High Density (R-10) to Open Space (OS).
- INCONSISTENCY:** The FLUM calls for High Density Residential (R-5) land use on selected parcels in the neighborhoods of Island Park and Common Fence Point currently zoned Medium High Density (R-10).

RESOLUTION: Rezone the parcels from Medium High Density Residential (R-10) to High Density Residential (R-5). Note: This change is being made for regulatory efficiency purposes only. The density of residential development in the area will not increase from current land use.
- INCONSISTENCY:** The FLUM calls for High Medium Density Residential (R-20) land use on several parcels currently zoned Heavy Industry (HI).

RESOLUTION: Rezone the parcel from Heavy Industry (HI) to High Medium Density Residential (R-20).
- INCONSISTENCY:** The FLUM calls for Limited Light Industrial (LLI) land use on parcels currently zoned Light Industrial (LI) in the Portsmouth Industrial Park.

RESOLUTION: Rezone the parcels Limited Light Industrial (LLI) from Light Industrial (LI).
- INCONSISTENCY:** The FLUM calls for Commercial (C) land use on all parcels currently zoned Town Center (TC).

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RESOLUTION: Rezone all parcels currently zoned Town Center (TC) to Commercial (C).

6. **INCONSISTENCY:** The FLUM calls for R-20 High Medium Density Residential (R-20) land use on parcel (plat 51, Lot 37) currently zoned Commercial (C).

RESOLUTION: Rezone parcel (plat 51, Lot 37) from Commercial (C) to High Medium Density Residential (R-20).

7. **INCONSISTENCY:** The FLUM calls for High Medium Density Residential (R-20) land uses on several parcels on Prudence Island currently zoned Low Density (R-60).

RESOLUTION: Rezone selected parcels on Prudence Island currently zoned Low Density (R-60) to High Medium Density Residential (R-20).

8. **INCONSISTENCY:** The FLUM calls for Commercial (C) land uses on parcels along the West side of East Main Road just north of Union Street currently zoned High Medium Density Residential (R-20).

RESOLUTION: Rezone these parcels from currently zoned High Medium Density Residential (R-20) to Commercial (C).

12.6 ZONING ORDINANCE REVISIONS

Portsmouth's Zoning Ordinance regulates the development of land by detailing allowed uses, dimensional requirements and other important parameters for development. It must be in alignment with the vision set forth in this Comprehensive Plan. To achieve this consistency, comprehensive plans are required to set forth a schedule for making any necessary amendments to the zoning ordinance and map that may be necessary after the comprehensive plan has been adopted. This 18-month schedule is established in the Implementation Element of this plan.

In addition to resolving the inconsistencies between the Future Land Use Map and the current Zoning Ordinance detailed in the previous section, there are a number of actions the Town should undertake in updating the Zoning Ordinance to not only bring it into consistency with this Comprehensive Plan but to bring clarity and efficiency to the document itself. These tasks include, but are not limited to:

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- Modernize the tables which identify principle and accessory uses for each zoning district. Many important and innovative new land uses have emerged in recent years and need to be incorporated into Portsmouth’s land use regulations.
- Update and modernize the definitions section of the ordinance.
- Correct any inconsistencies between the Zoning Ordinance text and the Official Zoning Map.
- Fine-tune the Planned Unit Development (PUD) provisions, particularly those provisions directly applicable to private development of the Navy Tank Farms.
- Develop performance standards for Mixed-Use Development and consider a Mixed-Use Overlay District to guide this type of development.
- Update and modernize the section of the Ordinance containing regulation signs.

12.7 GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

12.7.1 GOAL LU-1

Achieve a balanced, orderly and harmonious land use pattern that preserves historic and cultural resources, supports economic stability, maintains neighborhood integrity and protects the quality of our natural environment.

United under a single overarching land use goal, Portsmouth’s land use policies and implementation actions are grouped into six major categories:

- 1. Management/Regulation Tools and Techniques***
- 2. Patterns of Development***
- 3. Residential Neighborhoods/Housing***
- 4. The West Side***
- 5. Natural Resource Protection***
- 6. Agriculture/Rural Character***

12.7.1.1 MANAGEMENT/REGULATION TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

POLICY LU-1.1

Advance smart growth principles in all land use decisions made by the Town of Portsmouth.

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[Action LU-1.1a](#): Review and update the Zoning Ordinance and Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to ensure smart growth principles are encouraged.

POLICY LU-1.2

Improve the existing municipal land use regulatory scheme to allow for more planning initiative, less regulatory reaction, higher quality development and conformance with the provisions and intent of this Comprehensive Plan.

[Action LU-1.2a](#): Revise and update review procedures for special use permits, development plan review and design review thresholds.

[Action LU-1.2b](#): Require all proposed residential developments to submit a residential open space plan in addition to the standard yield plan for land subdivision.

[Action LU-1.2c](#): Create review procedures and regulations for occupancy change in established commercial spaces.

[Action LU-1.2d](#): Review and update Design Review Guidelines and research alternative regulatory schemes such as form-based zoning for applicability.

[Action LU-1.2e](#): Consider rezoning portions of the R-10 District to a higher density in order to reduce the number of non-standard lots of record. (See identified Future Land Use Inconsistency #2.)

[Action LU-1.2f](#): Consider removing the Town Center District from the list of zoning districts and rezone all parcels in the TC zone back to Commercial (C).

POLICY LU-1.3

Encourage the use of flexible zoning techniques such as the Planned Unit Development (PUD) for all commercial and industrial districts.

[Action LU-1.3a](#): Review and Update the PUD provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.

POLICY LU-1.4

Continue to affirm the importance of regional cooperation by participating in mutually beneficial planning initiatives with adjacent communities, state agencies and other stakeholders.

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[Action LU-1.4a](#): Continue to work with adjacent towns, state, federal NGO and private organizations to develop effective natural resource protection plans and strategies. (See Action NR-1.1h.)

[Action LU-1.4b](#): Pursue state and federal grants to help fund programs to improve the landscape, built environment and quality of life in Portsmouth. (See Action ED-2.1a.)

12.7.1.2 PATTERNS OF DEVELOPMENT

POLICY LU-2.1

Consider growth management strategies that relate residential, commercial and industrial growth to the rate of population growth in order to discourage overdevelopment of these land uses which may alter the character of the Town.

[Action LU-2.1a](#): Prepare an Economic Buildout Analysis to determine how much commercial/industrial development remains possible under current zoning. (See Action ED-4.1b.)

POLICY LU-2.2

Encourage mixed-use development/redevelopment in commercial and light industrial districts and home occupation uses in residential districts with appropriate limitations.

[Action LU-2.2a](#): Review and amend (if necessary) provisions in the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance regulating home occupations, balancing support for the expansion of business activity and the potential impacts to residential neighborhoods. (See Action ED-2.3a.)

[Action LU-2.2b](#) - Review and update provisions in the Zoning Ordinance for mixed-use development in commercial districts. (See Action ED-4.1e.)

[Action LU-2.2c](#): Update the Zoning Ordinance to allow more opportunities for mixed-use housing development in Commercial and Light Industrial Districts. (See Action H-1.3d.)

[Action LU-2.2d](#): Create incentives for property owners/developers to build mixed-use properties where they are permitted.

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[Action LU-2.2e](#): Develop standards for mixed-use development.

POLICY LU-2.3

Encourage infill development and re-development of vacant and underutilized parcels, especially those with adequate infrastructure and ready access to public services.

[Action LU-2.3a](#): Compile and maintain a list of vacant and underutilized parcels with commercial and industrial zoning designations. (See Action ED-4.1a.)

[Action LU-2.3b](#): Review and if necessary, update, the Traffic Sensitive Overlay District provisions in the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance. (See Action T-1.2c.)

12.7.1.3 THE WEST SIDE

POLICY LU-3.1

Support the reuse and redevelopment of former military land along the West Side including existing military housing, infrastructure, and the Tank Farms.

[Action LU-3.1a](#): Work with regional partners to study the condition of sewer and water infrastructure and develop options for their proposed transfer from Navy ownership.

[Action LU-3.1b](#): Continue to work with the Portsmouth Water and Fire District, Newport Water and Naval Station Newport regarding future water distribution in areas along the west side that are outside the PWFD District. (See Action WS-1.2c.)

POLICY LU-3.2

Encourage continued marine-industrial development, marina expansion, resort/tourism accommodations and public waterfront access as beneficial land uses along the West Side.

[Action LU-3.2a](#): Investigate public and/or private ownership of utilities and infrastructure in the Melville area as a catalyst for future growth. (See Action ED-3.1d.)

POLICY LU-3.3

Along the West Side, support limited commercial and residential development as part of mixed-use development projects only.

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[Action LU-3.3a](#): Incorporate the recommendations of the West Side Master Plan in all land use decisions regarding commercial and residential development on the West Side.

12.7.1.4 RESIDENTIAL LAND USE AND NEIGHBORHOODS

POLICY LU-4.1

Ensure the continued strength and stability of our residential neighborhoods by respecting valued development patterns and character.

[Action LU-4.1a](#): Amend Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to require dual emergency access to all new residential subdivisions where feasible and to require the extension of all proposed dead-end streets to connect with existing streets where feasible. (See Action T-1.2f.)

[Action LU-4.1b](#): Incorporate lot merger provisions into the Zoning Ordinance.

POLICY LU-4.2

Support a range of residential land uses to ensure a diversity of housing choices for all residents.

[Action LU-4.2a](#): Adopt provisions in Portsmouth's Zoning Ordinance that make it mandatory for all new residential developments of 6 units or more to designate a certain percentage of the units as LMI units (Inclusionary Zoning). (See Action H-1.2a.)

[Action LU-4.2b](#): Adopt provisions in the Zoning Ordinance that allow for payment in lieu of, off-site construction or rehabilitation and other strategies that allow developers to fulfill their affordable housing obligations. (See Action H-1.2b.)

[Action LU-4.2c](#): Allow accessory family dwelling units (so-called in-law apartments) by special use permit in all residential zoning districts. (See Action H-1.3a.)

[Action LU-4.2d](#): Increase the density bonus for duplex housing particularly if one or both of the units are designated as LMI units. (See Action H-1.3c.)

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POLICY LU-4.3

Encourage integrated site, mixed-use and infill residential development accompanied by effective housing rehabilitation programs as the surest way to achieve Portsmouth's housing goals.

Action LU-4.3a: Identify specific sites and specific projects for the development of affordable housing, particularly those sites in close proximity to facilities and services. (See Action H-2.2a.)

Action LU-4.3b: Create a database of existing structures and vacant infill sites that are appropriate for the conversion and/or development for affordable housing and LMI units. (See Action H-2.3a.)

12.7.1.5 NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

POLICY LU-5.1

Ensure future development is compatible with adjoining land uses, the natural environment, and existing historic and cultural features.

Action LU-5.1a: Continue to pursue acquisition of development rights, particularly parcels containing environmentally sensitive characteristics. (See Action NR-1.1b.)

Action LU-5.1b: Develop an open space acquisition plan. (See Action NR-1.4a.)

Action LU-5.1c: Pursue conservation easements on town-owned parcels in the Glen Park / Seveney Fields / Glen Manor House area. (See Action NR-1.4c.)

Action LU-5.1d: Develop land use management plans for town-owned open space properties. (See Action NR-1.4e.)

Action LU-5.1e: Study salt marsh migration and make land use / zoning recommendations to guide future development. (See Action NR-1.2a.)

Action LU-5.1f: Review provisions in the Zoning Ordinance governing land development in the overlay Watershed Protection District and the Water Resource Protection District as needed for their applicability and effectiveness. (See Action WS-1.1a.)

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POLICY LU-5.2

Manage land use and development within the floodplain and other vulnerable areas to not only mitigate the impacts of, but increase community resilience to, the effects of natural hazards and climate change.

Action LU-5.2a: Develop “Where, When and How” land use and development management scenarios to address the impacts of climate change and sea level rise. (See Action NH/CC-1.1b.)

Action LU-5.2b: Work with RIDOT to identify ways to mitigate future impacts and increase resilience to flooding, storm surge and sea level rise along Park Avenue and Boyds Lane in Island Park and other vulnerable state roads. (See Action NH/CC-1.1a.)

12.7.1.6 AGRICULTURE / RURAL CHARACTER

POLICY LU-6.1

Preserve Portsmouth’s farms and agricultural lands as essential elements of our community character, economic vitality and quality of life.

Action LU-6.1a - Maintain the Municipal Farm Tax exemption program. (See Action HCR-2.2a, AG-2.1b.)

Action LU-6.1b: Compile and continuously update a database of parcels with prime soils or soils of statewide importance cross-referenced with farmland activity and protected status. (See Action AG-1.1a.)

Action LU-6.1c: Map prime agricultural soils as a reference guide for the site plan review process. (See Action NR-1.3c.)

POLICY LU-6.2

Continue to work with land trusts, non-profits and other appropriate partners to target prime agricultural lands for preservation.

Action LU-6.2a: As opportunities arise, partner with governmental and private funding sources to purchase development rights to farmlands and other properties of historic significance. (See Action HCR-2.2b.)

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

ELEMENT 13

Implementation



PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

ELEMENT 13 – IMPLEMENTATION

13.1 IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

Portsmouth engaged in an extensive, public process to revise the 2020 Portsmouth CCP. Public meetings and workshops facilitated input from the general public. The 2020 Portsmouth CCP itself outlines goals and policies, providing specific action items to achieve them. The Implementation Matrix (“Matrix”) is where the action items of each element come together to form a strategy to move Portsmouth forward in achieving both the short- and long-term goals outlined in the previous sections of the 2020 Portsmouth CCP.

13.2 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The Implementation Matrix is presented within this chapter in a tabular form and provides each element’s goals, policies, and sets of associated action items. The Matrix then assigns timeframes—1-3 years (considered short-term), 4-7 years (considered medium-term), and 8-10 years (considered long-term)—to complete each action item. In some cases, the Matrix indicates the timeframe of the action item(s) as “ongoing.” This identifies action items that may span across timeframes and, once initiated, becomes a permanent fixture or service within the Town, continuing beyond the long-term timeframe identified. Several action items will require ongoing involvement by the responsible parties and are not confined to a specific period of time. Those are designated as “on-going” in the timeframe column. Some of these actions will span these timeframes and are provided as a guideline. The Implementation Matrix is not intended as a prioritization, and short-term actions do not necessarily take priority over longer-term actions.

The Matrix also identifies an “action lead” for each action item and any support party (“other stakeholders”) that will likely assist in carrying out the action item. In some cases, responsibility and support will overlap or span across multiple departments or parties. The Matrix identifies the lead responsible party and the supporting party or parties, along with any associated stakeholders. Many of these action items will require an effort and an investment of time from multiple groups or organizations.

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These actions are subject to amendment and will need to be reviewed and possibly revised on an annual basis to account for changes in policy or circumstances within Portsmouth. The Matrix also identifies “labor resources,” which is an estimation of staff hours that will be required to initiate and complete the action item.

13.3 MONITORING

Because action items are dynamic and policies and circumstances are constantly changing, the Matrix and action items contained within will need to be monitored and updated annually. Regular review is also needed to adjust funding sources. Annual review of the action matrix can assist the Town in creating and updating the CIP. The Planning Board will be responsible for annual review of the action matrix and determining which items are priority in the coming years and should be identified in the CIP.

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PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 1 – NATURAL RESOURCES						
GOAL NR-1 Produce a comprehensive set of programs and policies that guide how we grow our community in a manner which conserves and protects in perpetuity the abundant natural resources that sustain us and enhance our quality of life.						
POLICY NR-1.1 Ensure that new development and redevelopment in Portsmouth takes place in a manner which protects environmentally sensitive areas and resources. (Related Policies: WS-1.1, LU-5.1, SF-1.10, NH/CC-1.2, LU-1.1)						
NR-1.1a : Investigate hiring a Town Engineer.	Town Administrator	Planning Department Building Inspector DPW Director	Town Council	Program	4-7 years	0-80
NR-1.1b : Continue to pursue acquisition of development rights, particularly parcels containing environmentally sensitive characteristics. (See Action LU-5.1a.)	Town Council	Town Administrator Planning Department Conservation Commission	Aquidneck Land Trust RIDEM	Policy	Ongoing	-
NR-1.1c : Study Portsmouth’s site plan review processes and amend as necessary to strengthen protection of freshwater wetlands and other natural resources.	Planning Department	Planning Board	Town Solicitor	Regulation	Ongoing	-
NR-1.1d : Develop criteria and identify environmentally sensitive areas as a guide reference for the site plan review process.	Planning Department	Planning Board	Conservation Commission	Policy	4-7 years	80-320
NR-1.1e : Adopt a Post-Construction Stormwater Runoff Control Ordinance.	Town Council	Planning Department Building Inspector DPW	Town Solicitor	Regulation	1-3 years	80-320
NR-1.1f : Review Portsmouth’s Residential Open Space Development subdivision regulations for their effectiveness and amend as necessary.	Planning Department	Town Council Planning Board	Zoning Board of Review	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	0-80
NR-1.1g : Review land development regulations to ensure groundwater quality on Prudence and Hog Islands is protected.	Planning Department	Planning Board	PIWD	Policy	8-10 years	0-80
NR-1.1h : Continue to work with adjacent towns, state, federal, NGO and private organizations to develop effective natural resource protection plans and strategies. (See Action LU-1.4a.)	Planning Department	Town Administrator	Conservation Commission	Program	On-going	-
POLICY NR-1.2 Preserve, protect and restore Portsmouth’s valuable coastal resources and shoreline features. (Related Policies: SF-1.10, SF-1.11, NH/CC-1.2, LU-5.2)						
NR-1.2a : Study salt marsh migration and make land use / zoning recommendations to guide future development. (See Action LU-5.1e.)	Planning Department	Planning Board	Conservation Commission	Program	8-10 years	80-320
NR-1.2b : Update the “Flood Hazards Areas” section of the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance as directed by FEMA.	Planning Department	Town Council Building Inspector	Emergency Management	Regulation	4-7 years	0-80
NR-1.2c : Periodically review implementation of Portsmouth’s Stormwater Management Plan for its effectiveness in preventing pollutants from entering coastal waters.	Planning Department	DPW	RIDEM	Regulation	On-going	-
NR-1.2d : Develop an outfall monitoring program in cooperation with RIDEM for the Island Park / Portsmouth Park neighborhoods.	Planning Department	DPW	RIDEM	Policy	1-3 years	80-320
NR-1.2e : Evaluate rezoning identified undeveloped barrier beach, salt marsh, and coastal wetland areas as open space.	Planning Department	Town Council Planning Board	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	4-7 years	-
NR-1.2f : Support periodic beach clean-ups and other natural resource maintenance activities in cooperation with relevant volunteer organizations.	Town Council	Town Administrator	Conservation Commission	Policy	On-going	-

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Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 1 – NATURAL RESOURCES						
NR-1.2g : Continue to implement the recommendations of Portsmouth’s RIPDES Phase II Stormwater Management Program Plan.	Planning Department	DPW		Policy	On-going	80-320
POLICY NR-1.3 Maintain the natural and functional characteristics of Portsmouth’s soils. (Related Policies: AG-1.1, LU-6.2)						
NR-1.3a : Perform a complete inventory and assessment of Portsmouth’s town-owned stormwater infrastructure and develop a capital improvement program to upgrade the system as needed.	Planning Department DPW	Town Administrator Town Council	Finance Department	Program	4-7 years	>320
NR-1.3b : Review Portsmouth Wastewater Management District and Stormwater Management ordinances for their effectiveness in abating non-point source pollution of our soils.	Planning Department	Wastewater Manager	RIDEM	Regulation	1-3 years	0-80
NR-1.3c : Map prime agricultural soils as a guide reference for the site plan review process. (See Action LU-6.1c.)	Planning Department	Planning Board	Agriculture Committee Conservation Commission	Program	1-3 years	0-80
POLICY NR-1.4 Protect the natural and rural open space character of Portsmouth and encourage the use and enjoyment of its abundant natural resources. (Related Policies: HCR-2.2, R-1.2, ED-2.1, LU-1.1, R-1.3)						
NR-1.4a : Develop an open space acquisition plan. (See Action LU-5.1b.)	Planning Department	Town Administrator Town Council	Finance Department Conservation Commission	Program	1-3 years	>320
NR-1.4b : Continue to monitor water quality at the Melville ponds in cooperation with the URI Watershed Watch program.	DPW	Planning Department	Town Council	Policy	On-going	-
NR-1.4c : Pursue conservation easements on Town-owned parcels in the Glen Park / Seveney Fields / Glen Manor House area. (See Action LU-5.1c.)	Town Council Town Administrator	Planning Department	Aquidneck Land Trust Town Solicitor	Policy	8-10 years	80-320
NR-1.4d : Develop comprehensive educational packages on the subject of Portsmouth’s natural resources to be presented to the public.	Planning Department	Town Council	Conservation Commission	Policy	4-7 years	0-80
NR-1.4e : Develop land use management plans for town-owned open space properties.	Town Council Town Administrator	Planning Department DPW	Recreation Department	Policy	4-7 years	80-320
NR-1.4f : Support the preservation of open space in watersheds, along the shore, and in other environmentally sensitive areas through acquisition, conservation easements, and purchase of development rights.	Town Council Town Administrator	Planning Department	Aquidneck Land Trust Town Solicitor	Policy	On-going	-
NR-1.4g : Update the standards for outdoor lighting to limit light pollution in all areas of town.	Planning Department	Town Council Planning Board	Planning Board	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	0-80
POLICY NR-1.5 Support the conservation of Portsmouth’s forested areas, tree resources, native plants and wildlife species. (Related Policies: NH/CC-1.2)						
NR-1.5a : Continue to manage trees on town-owned property and roadways. Endeavor to replant with native species wherever possible.	DPW			Policy	On-going	-
NR-1.5b : Review and update Portsmouth’s land development regulations to require developers to retain existing trees where possible and to provide deciduous street trees in all new development and redevelopment.	Planning Department	Planning Board	Planning Board	Regulation	4-7 years	0-80
NR-1.5c : Continue to control invasive, nuisance and exotic species on all town-owned properties.	DPW			Policy	On-going	-

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Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 1 – NATURAL RESOURCES						
NR-1.5d : Continue Portsmouth’s ongoing mosquito control program.	DPW	Town Administrator		Policy	On-going	-
NR-1.5e : Work with state, federal and NGO partners to identify natural habitat restoration opportunities to ensure their long-term viability.	Planning Department	DPW Town Administrator	RIDEM	Program	8-10 years	80-320
<u>POLICY NR-1.6</u> Promote efforts to maintain good air quality in Portsmouth and its surrounding communities. (Related Policies: T-3.1)						
NR-1.6a : Encourage the use of alternative transportation modes such as carpooling, public transportation and bicycling.	Town Council	Planning Department DPW		Policy	On-going	-

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PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 2 – RECREATION						
GOAL R-1 Organize a system of high quality, well-maintained, active recreational facilities and passive recreation areas sufficient to meet the ongoing needs of present and future citizens of Portsmouth.						
<u>POLICY R-1.1</u> Maintain an active Parks & Recreation Department to manage recreational activity in Portsmouth. (Related Policies: ED-2.1)						
R-1.1a: Develop a comprehensive recreation master plan to identify long and short-term needs for recreational programs and facilities.	Planning Department Town Administrator	Recreation Department Town Council		Program	1-3 years	80-320
R-1.1b: Restrict all Recreation Department revenue to maintaining Recreation Department programs and facilities as expressed in a comprehensive recreation master plan.	Town Council	Town Administrator Finance Department	Recreation Department	Policy	1-3 years	0-80
R-1.1c: Establish an efficient and accessible scheduling and permitting system for recreational facilities use.	Recreation Department	Town Council Town Administrator		Policy	On-going	-
R-1.1d: Adopt a recreational facility use fee policy and fee schedule and update as needed.	Town Council	Town Administrator	Recreation Department	Policy	1-3 years	0-80
R-1.1e: Create meaningful programs within the Recreation Department that will benefit all age levels.	Recreation Department	Town Council Town Administrator		Policy	On-going	-
R-1.1f: Develop programs and facilities that extend the value of the Recreation Department beyond athletics and into general community wellness.	Recreation Department	Town Council Town Administrator		Policy	4-7 years	0-80
R-1.1g: Develop a comprehensive catalog of existing and active recreation acreage and facility needs based on NRPA standards.	Planning Department	Recreation Department	Town Administrator	Policy	On-going	0-80
<u>POLICY R-1.2</u> Continue to provide for high-quality maintenance of current public recreation areas and facilities. (Related Policies: NR-1.4, SF-1.2)						
R-1.2a: Develop long-term maintenance plans for all town-owned recreation facilities.	Town Administrator DPW	Planning Department	Recreation Department	Program	4-7 years	80-320
R-1.2b: Pursue stewardship of recreational facilities through “friends of” groups and work with sports leagues to enhance maintenance efforts.	Recreation Department	Town Council Town Administrator		Policy	4-7 years	0-80
R-1.2c: Maintain existing CRMC and public designated rights-of-way to the shore to keep them clear and safe for all users.	DPW	Planning Department Harbor Commission Town Administrator	CRMC	Policy	On-going	-
R-1.2d: Pursue state, federal, and private funding opportunities for recreation facilities maintenance.	Planning Department	Town Administrator	Recreation Department	Policy	On-going	-
R-1.2e: Work with RIDEM, CRMC and other state agencies on a long-term plan to address issues at the Weaver Cove Boat Ramp and the Old Stone Bridge.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council	DPW	Program	1-3 years	80-320
<u>POLICY R-1.3</u> Explore opportunities to physically improve and increase access to existing recreational facilities as well as identify areas for potential expansion of our recreational system. (Related Policies: NR-1.4)						
R-1.3a: Pursue opportunities to establish active and passive recreational facilities accessible to all neighborhoods in Portsmouth.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council Recreation Department	DPW	Policy	8-10 years	80-320
R-1.3b: Work with the Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve to improve open space access and educational opportunities on Prudence Island.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council		Program	4-7 years	0-80
R-1.3c: Work with the Melville Park Committee to expand recreational opportunities at Melville Park.	Town Council Town Administrator	Planning Department	DPW	Program	4-7 years	80-320

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 2 – RECREATION						
R-1.3d : Investigate the development of an indoor, multi-purpose Community Recreation Center.	Town Council Town Administrator	Economic Development Director Planning Department	Recreation Director	Program	On-going	-

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PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 3 – HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES						
GOAL HCR-1 Achieve a self-sustaining level of public awareness in promoting historic and cultural heritage as a vital part of Portsmouth’s community character and quality of life.						
POLICY HCR-1.1 Support the education of students, residents and visitors alike in the importance of preserving the historic and cultural heritage of Portsmouth. (Related Policies: SF-1.13, NH/CC-1.4)						
HCR-1.1a: Develop and encourage a local history element into the curricula of Portsmouth’s school system.	School Department	Town Administrator Planning Department Portsmouth Historical Society		Program	4-7 years	0-80
HCR-1.1b: Pursue funding for the Portsmouth Free Public Library specifically earmarked to expanding the local history resources section.	Planning Department	Town Council Portsmouth Historical Society		Program	4-7 years	0-80
HCR-1.1c: Continue to work with the Portsmouth Historical Society and the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission to provide educational programs to the public.	Planning Department	Portsmouth Historical Society	Town Council	Program	On-going	-
HCR-1.1d: Promote tourism in Portsmouth through consideration of the establishment of a Heritage Trail and/or similar efforts.	Planning Department	Economic Development Director Portsmouth Historical Society	Town Council	Program	4-7 years	0-80
HCR-1.1e: Task the Town Council with promoting historic and cultural awareness by issuing proclamations, declarations, resolutions and other public announcements of an historic nature on a regular basis.	Town Council	Portsmouth Historical Society Planning Department		Program	On-going	-
HCR-1.1f: Pursue providing an annual stipend for the position of Town Historian.	Town Council Town Administrator	Planning Department	Portsmouth Historical Society	Budget/Capital	1-3 years	0-80
POLICY HCR-1.2 Promote and encourage all public, private and non-profit entities engaged in historic preservation activities in Portsmouth at all levels of effort. (Related Policies: NH/CC-1.4)						
HCR-1.2a: Establish a Historic & Cultural Oversight Committee to be chartered by the Town to coordinate with the Portsmouth Historical Society in developing a long-range plan for historic preservation of our historic and cultural resources.	Town Council	Town Administrator Planning Department		Program	4-7 years	80-320
HCR-1.2b: Support groups in areas identified as historic neighborhoods to promote historic awareness and historic preservation activities.	Planning Department	Town Council Portsmouth Historical Society		Program	4-7 years	0-80
POLICY HCR-1.3 Foster civic participation and community engagement through enhanced access to Portsmouth’s rich historic and cultural resources. (Related Policies: SF 1.13, NH/CC-1.4)						
HCR-1.3a: Organize and catalog the documents, maps and other archival materials in Town Hall and make available to the public.	Town Clerk Planning Department	Portsmouth Historical Society		Policy	4-7 years	>320
HCR-1.3b: Establish a voluntary “historic marker” or “historic plaque” program to identify historically significant buildings, sites and landscapes.	Town Council	Portsmouth Historical Society	Town Administrator	Program	4-7 years	80-320
HCR-1.3c: Seek grants and other sources of funding to improve the Town Hall storage environment for Portsmouth’s town records and archives.	Town Clerk Planning Department	Portsmouth Historical Society	Town Administrator	Policy	On-going	-
GOAL HCR-2 Produce an effective set of policies and programs that insure the protection and preservation of Portsmouth’s historic sites, structures and landscapes.						
POLICY HCR-2.1 Protect and preserve historic and cultural resources through the use of design standards, zoning controls, easements, tax incentives and other tools at the Town’s disposal. (Related Policies: LU-5.1, LU-1.1)						
HCR-2.1a: Amend the Town’s Design Review Standards to include elements specific to the proper restoration of historic buildings in Town.	Planning Department	Design Review Board	Planning Board	Regulation	4-7 years	80-320

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Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 3 – HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES						
HCR-2.1b : Seek National Register of Historic Places nomination of sites currently considered eligible for listing.	Planning Department	Portsmouth Historical Society	Town Administrator	Program	8-10 years	0-80
HCR-2.1c : Develop and maintain a detailed inventory of historically and culturally significant sites, structures and landscapes. Annually monitor the inventory for changes in condition and status.	Planning Department	Portsmouth Historical Society	Portsmouth Historical Society	Program	8-10 years	80-320
HCR-2.1d : Review the Town’s Stone Wall and Tree Ordinances for adequate enforcement provisions and amend as necessary.	Planning Department	Town Council Town Administrator	Town Solicitor	Regulation	1-3 years	0-80
HCR-2.1e : Investigate the establishment of Portsmouth’s identified historic neighborhoods as formal Historic Districts in order to promote awareness and preservation and to make them eligible for state and federal historic preservation assistance.	Planning Department	Town Council Town Administrator Portsmouth Historical Society		Program	4-7 years	0-80
HCR-2.1f : Review the Town’s development review processes and amend as needed in order to strengthen historic resource protection.	Planning Department	Planning Board		Regulation	4-7 years	0-80
POLICY HCR-2.2 Preserve Portsmouth’s historic landscapes, including farms and agricultural lands, as essential elements of our community character, economic vitality and quality of life. (Related Policies: NR-1.4, ED-2.1, AG-2.1, LU-6.1, LU-1.1, ED-2.5)						
HCR-2.2a : Maintain the Municipal Farm Tax exemption program. (See Action AG-2.1b, Action LU-6.1a.)	Town Council	Town Administrator Tax Assessor		Policy	On-going	-
HCR-2.2b : As opportunities arise, partner with governmental and private funding sources to purchase development rights to farmlands and other properties of historic significance. (See Action LU-6.2a.)	Town Council	Town Administrator Planning Department	Aquidneck Land Trust Town Solicitor	Program	On-going	-
POLICY HCR-2.3 Maintain financial support for historic preservation activities, arts and cultural organizations and neighborhood associations. (Related Policies: NH/CC-1.4)						
HCR-2.3a : Pursue a private partner such as the Portsmouth Historical Society to act as the principle entity responsible for conducting an annual status report of all the historic and cultural sites, structures and landscapes listed above in this plan. Seek a permanent line item in the annual Town Budget along with an auditing process to ensure the Society has the financial resources necessary to carry out this task.	Town Council Planning Department	Town Administrator Portsmouth Historical Society		Program	4-7 years	-
HCR-2.3b : Pursue a tax abatement program for owners of historic structures who voluntarily wish to adhere to historic architectural standards in the renovation and restoration of historic homes in town.	Town Council	Town Administrator Tax Assessor	Portsmouth Historical Society Planning Department	Program	4-7 years	80-320
HCR-2.3c : Pursue a tax abatement program for property owners who have historic cemeteries on their property and wish to take on the task of cemetery maintenance.	Town Council	Town Administrator Tax Assessor	Portsmouth Historical Society Planning Department	Program	1-3 years	0-80
HCR-2.3d : Dedicate public funding and resources to the preservation of historic and cultural assets on Town property, including cemeteries, stone walls, and historic buildings.	Town Council	Town Administrator DPW Planning Department	Portsmouth Historical Society	Program	4-7 years	80-320

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Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 4 – HOUSING						
GOAL H-1 Provide a range of housing types that meet the needs of present and future residents of all economic status and household groups.						
POLICY H-1.1 Preserve existing affordable housing opportunities						
H-1.1a: Monitor the status of all existing LMI units for the expiration of deed restrictions and participate in activities that would extend the LMI status.	Planning Department	Town Council	Town Administrator	Policy	Ongoing	-
H-1.1b: Work with active residential developments to determine if they can add low-and-moderate-income housing for the community (Quaker Manor, Boys Town, Anthony House, etc.).	Planning Department	Town Council	Town Administrator	Policy	Ongoing	-
H-1.1c: Develop a tax abatement program that incentivizes owners who voluntarily deed restrict units that qualify as affordable to LMI residents.	Town Council	Town Administrator Tax Assessor	Planning Department	Program	1-3 years	80-320
POLICY H-1.2 Support and incentivize future residential development projects that result in additional affordable housing units. (Related Policies: SF-1.8)						
H-1.2a: Adopt provisions in Portsmouth’s Zoning Ordinance that make it mandatory for all new residential developments of six (6) units or more to designate a percentage of the units as LMI units (Inclusionary Zoning). (See Action LU-4.2a.)	Town Council	Planning Board Planning Department		Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	80-320
H-1.2b: Adopt provisions in the Zoning Ordinance that allow for payment in lieu of, off-site construction or rehabilitation and other strategies that allow developers to fulfill their affordable housing obligations. (See Action LU-4.2b.)	Town Council	Planning Board Planning Department		Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	80-320
H-1.2c: Require all proposed major residential developments to submit a cluster or open space plan in addition to the standard yield plan for land subdivision. (See Action LU-1.2c.)	Planning Board	Town Administrator Tax Assessor	Town Solicitor	Regulation	1-3 years	0-80
H-1.2d: Continue to waive all building permit fees for the construction of low- moderate-income housing units.	Town Council	Building Inspector Planning Department		Budget/Capital	On-going	-
H-1.2e: Consider adjusting the assessment of Impact Fees to reduce development costs for affordable senior and LMI housing units.	Town Council Planning Department	Building Inspector		Regulation	1-3 years	0-80
H-1.2f: Explore restructuring the present Senior Center site to include affordable senior housing plus the Senior Center at the same site.	Town Council Town Administrator	Planning Department		Program	On-going	-
POLICY H-1.3 Encourage the development of more types of housing choices to accommodate changing household demographics. (Related Policies: ED-2.1, LU-4.2, LU-1.1)						
H-1.3a: Allow accessory family dwelling units (so-called in-law apartments) by special use permit in all residential zoning districts. (See Action LU-1.2c.)	Town Council	Planning Board Planning Department	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	80-320
H-1.3b: Encourage the conversion of the Town’s existing mobile home parks to affordable housing, a portion of which is to qualify as LMI units.	Planning Department	Town Council Town Administrator	Town Solicitor	Program	8-10 years	0-80
H-1.3c: Increase the density bonus for duplex housing, particularly if one or both of the units is designated as an LMI unit. (See Action LU-4.2d.)	Town Council	Planning Board Planning Department	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	0-80
H-1.3d: Update the Zoning Ordinance to allow more opportunities for mixed-use housing development in our Commercial and Light Industrial Districts.	Town Council	Planning Board Planning Department	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	80-320

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Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 4 – HOUSING						
POLICY H-1.4 Recognize a particular obligation to meet the housing needs of our elder population, first-time home buyers and those who are disabled or with special needs. (Related Policies: SF-1.14)						
H-1.4a: Continue the Town’s property tax abatement program for our elderly and impoverished residents.	Town Council	Town Administrator Tax Assessor	Planning Department	Policy	On-going	-
H-1.4b: Work with community partners to establish a low-interest loan program for rehabilitation of housing units owned by low-moderate income homeowners or by owners seeking to age in place.	Economic Development Director Town Council	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Solicitor	Program	4-7 years	80-320
H-1.4c: Address needs of first-time buyers, special needs, or people over the age of 65 by providing information on available programs and housing opportunities in a central location.	Economic Development Director Planning Department	Town Council		Policy	4-7 years	80-320
GOAL H-2 Ensure that future housing development is in character with that of Portsmouth and the traditional character of neighborhoods.						
POLICY H-2.1 Promote opportunities to integrate affordable housing into existing neighborhoods. (Related Policies: LU-4.1)						
H-2.1a: Develop a program to be administered by an affordable housing nonprofit partner or an Affordable Housing Commission, to vigorously pursue the creation of LMI units from the existing housing stock.	Economic Development Director Town Council	Town Administrator Planning Department		Program	4-7 years	>320
H-2.1b: Develop design guidelines for the rehabilitation and/or reconstruction of LMI housing units in existing neighborhoods.	Planning Department Building Inspector	Planning Board	Design Review Board	Regulation	4-7 years	80-320
POLICY H-2.2 Prioritize locations for affordable housing that are closely related to existing infrastructure, facilities and services. (Related Policies: LU-2.3, T-2.2)						
H-2.2a: Identify specific sites and specific projects for the development of affordable housing, particularly those sites in close proximity to facilities and services. (See Action LU-4.3a.)	Planning Department			Program	4-7 years	80-320
POLICY H-2.3 Recognize that scattered site and infill development accompanied by effective housing rehabilitation programs is the desired way to achieving Portsmouth’s housing goals. (Related Policies: LU-4.3, LU-1.1)						
H-2.3a: Create a database of existing structures and vacant infill sites appropriate for the conversion and/or development of affordable housing and LMI units. (See Action LU-4.3b.)	Planning Department			Program	4-7 years	80-320
GOAL H-3 Build a level of community support for an affordable housing development that is self-sustaining, all-inclusive and proactive.						
POLICY H-3.1 Create a municipal board to champion affordable housing development, launch programs and create media that raises awareness of housing needs in the community and expands civic participation. (Related Policies: NH/CC-1.4)						
H-3.1a: Establish an Affordable Housing Commission with the powers and duties necessary to guide housing strategies in Portsmouth.	Town Council	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Solicitor	Program	1-3 years	>320
H-3.1b: Dedicate funding to an Affordable Housing Trust Fund to aid in the financing of affordable housing and the creation of LMI units.	Town Council	Town Administrator Finance Department	Planning Department	Program	1-3 years	80-320
H-3.1c: Work with local nonprofit housing providers to identify collaborative projects and programs that will lead to more affordable or low-moderate income housing units.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council		Policy	4-7 years	80-320
H-3.1d: Participate in statewide legislative activities and planning efforts that advocate for fair and effective housing legislation reforms.	Town Council Planning Department	Town Administrator	Planning Department	Policy	On-going	-

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 4 – HOUSING						
H-3.1e : Identify local financing sources, such as general obligation bonds, that will ensure a steady source of income to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.	Economic Development Director	Planning Department	Town Administrator	Program	4-7 years	80-320
H-3.1f : Advocate for fair and effective affordable housing legislation at the state level.	Town Council Planning Department	Town Administrator		Policy	On-going	-
H-3.1g : Conduct periodic housing summits with nonprofit housing providers and other stakeholders to discuss the effectiveness of current programs and policies and provide an educational forum for the public on housing needs and opportunities.	Planning Department	Town Council Town Administrator	Town Council	Program	8-10 years	80-320

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PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 5 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
GOAL ED-1 Achieve a high and growing standard of living for Portsmouth’s citizens and entrepreneurs by empowering a 21 st century workforce to match a 21 st century economy.						
POLICY ED-1.1 Seek local business input to assess the workforce skills gap and support strategies to meet local employer’s talent needs.						
ED -1.1a: Institute an annual roundtable of local business leaders to discuss local employer’s workforce needs and ways local government can assist local businesses in hiring quality employees.	Economic Development Director Economic Development Committee	Planning Department	Town Council	Program	4-7 years	80-320
POLICY ED-1.2 Coordinate with local educational institutions and other entities that provide career growth counseling, technical education and training opportunities and management of apprenticeship / internship programs. (Related Policies: SF-3.1)						
ED -1.2a: Inventory, maintain and actively publicize a list of all state and local workforce education and training programs.	Economic Development Director Economic Development Committee	Planning Department		Policy	1-3 years	0-80
ED-1.2b: Pursue the establishment of public / private partnerships to support adult education and training as well as apprenticeship / internship programs to improve the Portsmouth workforce.	Economic Development Director Town Council	Economic Development Committee	Planning Department	Program	8-10 years	80-320
GOAL ED-2 Produce an effective set of economic development programs and policies designed to promote and enhance Portsmouth’s strengths as a community.						
POLICY ED-2.1 Recognize and promote the belief that the very best business attractor we can create is to make Portsmouth an exceptional place to live, work and play. (Related Policies: R-1.1, HCR-2.2, H-1.3, AG-2.1, ED-5.3, NR-1.4, LU-1.1, WS-1.2, NH/CC-1.3, T-1.1, T-1.3)						
ED-2.1a: Pursue state and federal grants to help fund programs to improve the landscape, built environment and quality of life in Portsmouth. (See Action LU-1.4b.)	Planning Department Economic Development	Town Council Town Administrator	Finance Department	Policy	On-going	-
ED-2.1b: Identify and prioritize items in the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan that express direct efforts to improve the quality of life as a business attractor.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council	Finance Department	Budget/Capital	1-3 years	0-80
ED-2.1c: Develop short, medium and long-term marketing plans that focus on Portsmouth as an exceptional place to live/work/play and provide business initiatives when/wherever possible.	Economic Development Director Economic Development Committee	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council	Program	4-7 years	80-320
ED-2.1d: Establish a “Beautify Portsmouth” committee to draft a 10-year plan to enhance the physical attractiveness of the community.	Town Council	Town Administrator Planning Department	Economic Development	Program	4-7 years	80-320
ED-2.1e: Review and update Portsmouth’s Design Review standards.	Planning Department	Planning Board Design Review Board		Regulation	1-3 years	80-320
POLICY ED-2.2 Prioritize programs and policies that focus on retaining and strengthening existing local businesses. Keep local business in Portsmouth. (Related Policies: AG-2.1, NH/CC-1.4)						
ED-2.2a: Develop a 5-year Economic Development Strategic Plan.	Economic Development Director Town Administrator	Planning Department Town Council	Economic Development Committee	Program	1-3 years	>320
ED-2.2b: Create and annually update a Portsmouth business roster.	Economic Development Director	Planning Department	Economic Development Committee	Policy	1-3 years	80-320
ED-2.2c: Develop and bi-annually update a set of industry standard economic indicators to analyze trends in the Portsmouth economy and institute a bi-annual “Report Card” on business activity.	Economic Development Director Planning Department	Economic Development Committee		Program	1-3 years	80-320

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 5 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
POLICY ED-2.3 Support the growth of home occupations as an important component of business activity in Portsmouth. (Related Policies: LU-2.2)						
ED-2.3a: Review and amend (as necessary) provisions in the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance regulating home occupations, balancing support for the expansion of business activity and the potential negative impacts to residential neighborhoods. (See Action LU-2.2a.)	Town Council	Planning Board Planning Department	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	>320
ED-2.3b: Conduct a business survey of current home occupations to determine the best ways Portsmouth can aid in the expansion of this business sector.	Economic Development Director Planning Department	Economic Development Committee		Policy	4-7 years	80-320
POLICY ED-2.4 Continue to focus on attracting maritime, technology and defense-related businesses as desirable economic activity in Portsmouth. (Related Policies: LU-3.1)						
ED-2.4a: Collaborate in and support the efforts to transfer the Navy land referred to as the “Melville Backyard” for private commercial use.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council	Economic Development	Policy	8-10 years	80-320
ED-2.4b: Review the Planned Marina Development provisions of the Zoning Ordinance for unwarranted limitations on marina development.	Planning Department	Town Council Planning Board	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	4-7 years	0-80
ED-2.4c: Work closely with the Southeastern New England Defense Industry Alliance (SENEDIA), which is the primary defense industry group that advocates for defense industry support in the area.	Economic Development Director	Planning Department	Town Council	Policy	Ongoing	-
ED-2.4d: Work closely with Navy officials to endeavor that excessing of Navy property is handled consistent with the needs of businesses in the Melville area.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Economic Development Director	Town Council	Policy	Ongoing	-
ED-2.4e: Evaluate development plans for the West Side Defense Highway (i.e., the “Burma Road”) and Stringham Road to endeavor any plans are consistent with the support of local marine, technology, defense and other businesses.	Planning Department Town Administrator	Planning Board Town Council		Policy	Ongoing	-
POLICY ED-2.5 Promote tourism and the local tourist economy at every opportunity. (Related Policies: HCR-2.2, LU-3.2)						
ED-2.5a: Investigate the establishment of a Portsmouth Tourism Board to oversee efforts to promote tourism in Portsmouth.	Economic Development Director Planning Department	Town Council	Town Administrator	Program	8-10 years	0-80
ED-2.5b: Partner with the Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce and/or similar organizations engaged in the promotion of tourism.	Economic Development Director Town Council	Town Administrator		Policy	On-going	-
GOAL ED-3 Produce the type of economic growth that makes Portsmouth more resilient, self-sufficient and resistant to the impacts of external natural and economic forces.						
POLICY ED-3.1 Endeavor that built infrastructure and municipal services are maximized to support local business activity in Portsmouth. (Related Policies: T-1.1, NH/CC-1.4, LU-2.3)						
ED-3.1a: Collaborate in and prioritize the development of public or private high-speed, broadband internet to all of Aquidneck Island.	Economic Development Director Town Administrator	Planning Department	Town Council	Program	On-going	-
ED-3.1b: Develop a plan to establish Wi-Fi “hotspots” to enhance the hard- connected internet infrastructure and provide internet access to more businesses and residences.	Economic Development Director Town Administrator	Planning Department		Program	1-3 years	80-320
ED-3.1c: Work with RIDOT to implement traffic improvements to both East and West Main Roads.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council DPW	Economic Development	Policy	On-going	-
ED-3.1d: Investigate public ownership of utilities and infrastructure in the Melville area as a catalyst for future growth.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Economic Development Director Town Council	Town Solicitor	Program	On-going	-

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 5 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
POLICY ED-3.2 Encourage local business-to-business programs and policies that encourage local relationships and local business coordination. Keep Portsmouth dollars in Portsmouth. (Related Policies: NH/CC-1.4)						
ED-3.2a: Task the Director of Business Development, working in conjunction with the Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce and the Portsmouth Business Association, with identifying and bringing together local businesses that can work together for mutual benefit.	Economic Development Director	Town Council Planning Department Economic Development Committee	Town Administrator	Policy	1-3 years	80-320
POLICY ED-3.3 Address the increasing impacts of climate change and seek ways to protect both public and private business and infrastructure assets within Portsmouth. (Related Policies: E-1.2, NH/CC-1.4)						
ED-3.3a: Collaborate with Rhode Island Sea Grant and other federal, state, regional agencies or non-profits that educate business owners on the negative impact of climate change and what can be done to protect business assets and infrastructure.	Economic Development Director Planning Department	Town Administrator	Town Council	Policy	1-3 years	80-320
ED-3.3d: Task the Town Director of Business Development to seek grants to protect businesses and infrastructure from the impacts of climate change.	Economic Development Director	Planning Department	Economic Development Committee	Policy	Ongoing	-
GOAL ED-4 Attain a level of business growth that supports a balanced and sustainable tax base without compromising Portsmouth’s natural, historic, architectural and aesthetic character.						
POLICY ED-4.1 Through zoning, work to make sure there is a sufficient amount of land to support growth in the commercial/industrial tax base to maintain a balance with Portsmouth’s residential tax base at appropriate levels. (Related Policies: LU-1.1, LU-1.3)						
ED-4.1a: Compile and maintain a list of publicly and privately-owned vacant and underutilized parcels with commercial and industrial zoning designations. (See Action LU-2.3a.)	Planning Department	Economic Development Director		Policy	1-3 years	80-320
ED-4.1b: Prepare an economic buildout analysis to determine how much commercial/industrial development remains possible under current zoning. (See Action LU-2.1a.)	Economic Development Director Planning Department	Town Administrator		Program	8-10 years	>320
ED-4.1c: Undertake an analysis of the magnitude of commercial and industrial development required to impact the balance of residential to commercial tax revenue by a given percentage point.	Economic Development Director Planning Department	Town Administrator Tax Assessor		Program	4-7 years	80-320
ED-4.1d: Prepare a community purchasing power study to determine how much and what types of businesses Portsmouth has the capacity to support in the future and adjust commercial zoning accordingly.	Economic Development Director Planning Department	Town Council	Town Solicitor	Program	1-3 years	80-320
ED-4.1e: Review and update provisions in the Zoning Ordinance for Mixed-Use development in commercial districts. (See Action LU-2.2b.)	Town Council	Planning Board Planning Department	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	80-320
POLICY ED-4.2 Continue to require landscape buffers and other regulatory safeguards that protect residential properties from the negative impacts of commercial and industrial development.						
ED-4.2a: Review zoning and sub-division regulations and all town ordinances to maximize reasonable protections to residential parcels from the negative impacts of commercial and industrial development.	Planning Department	Town Council Planning Board	Economic Development Director	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	0-80
POLICY ED-4.3 Consider direct public investment in unique development, redevelopment and infill opportunities as a way to ensure quality business development that does not compromise community character. (Related Policies: LU-2.3)						
ED-4.3a: Pursue strategies to create a business incubation facility in Portsmouth. (See Action LU-2.2a.)	Economic Development Director Planning Department	Town Council Town Administrator	Town Solicitor	Program	8-10 years	>320

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 5 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT						
ED-4.3b : Investigate the creation of a public/private Portsmouth Economic Development Corporation to facilitate local economic development.	Economic Development Director Planning Department	Town Administrator	Town Solicitor	Program	8-10 years	>320
GOAL ED-5 Achieve a level of economic conditions and business climate that increase the competitive advantages of doing business in Portsmouth.						
POLICY ED-5.1 Minimize regulatory constraints on new and existing business owners by seeking ways to improve local licensing, permit approvals and development regulations as well as working through Portsmouth’s state delegation to influence and streamline state-mandated licensing and permitting regulations. (Related Policies: SF-1.7)						
ED-5.1a : Adopt a new “Industrial Park” Zoning District with updated zoning regulations to replace the now expired site restrictions and development standards guiding development of the original park.	Town Council	Planning Board Planning Department	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	80-320
ED-5.1b : Create a “Handbook for Starting a Business in Portsmouth” as an aid to prospective business applicants.	Economic Development Director	Planning Department Economic Development Committee		Policy	On-going	-
POLICY ED-5.2 Promote policies and programs that reduce the cost of doing business in Portsmouth. (Related Policies: SF-1.8)						
ED-5.2a : Investigate the establishment of a locally funded revolving loan program to provide local small businesses with better access to short-term cash requirements.	Economic Development Director Town Administrator	Town Council Planning Department	Town Solicitor	Program	8-10 years	>320
ED-5.2b : Work with Commerce RI and other state partners to identify grant opportunities for Portsmouth’s businesses.	Economic Development Director Town Administrator	Planning Department		Policy	On-going	-
ED-5.2c : Work with the General Assembly to support tax reform at the state level and address the competitive disadvantages Rhode Island businesses may have with our neighboring states.	Town Council Town Administrator	Economic Development Director Planning Department	Economic Development Committee	Policy	On-going	-
POLICY ED-5.3 Ensure there is robust municipal support of local businesses, including active promotion of Portsmouth as a good place to do business. (Related Policies: ED-2.1, NH/CC-1.4, AG-2.1)						
ED-5.3a : Where permissible by state law, adopt municipal purchasing practices that favor Portsmouth businesses.	Town Administrator	Finance Department	Town Solicitor	Policy	1-3 years	80-320
ED-5.3b : Investigate the holding of an annual week-long, town wide, large-scale civic event to “put Portsmouth on the map,” foster civic engagement, and promote community cohesion.	Town Council Planning Department	Economic Development Director Town Administrator		Program	4-7 years	-
ED-5.3c : Designate the town position of Director of Business Development as the lead advocate for existing and prospective businesses.	Economic Development Director	Town Council Planning Department	Town Administrator	Policy	On-going	-
ED-5.3d : Encourage agribusiness as a vital part of the Town’s economy.	Town Council	Agriculture Committee	Economic Development Director	Policy	On-going	0-80

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 6 – AGRICULTURE						
GOAL AG-1 Achieve a balance of land uses that accommodate non-agricultural development pressure all the while preserving the remaining parcels of land containing prime farmland soils for agricultural uses.						
POLICY AG-1.1 Continue to work with land trusts, non-profits, and other appropriate partners to target prime agricultural lands for preservation. (Related Policies: NR-1.3, LU-6.2, LU-6.1)						
AG-1.1a: Compile and continuously update a database of parcels with prime soils or soils of statewide importance cross-referenced with farmland activity and protected status.	Planning Department	Agricultural Committee	Planning Board Conservation Commission	Policy	1-3 years	0-80
AG-1.1b: Provide an annual report to the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission on any land use changes affecting parcels containing prime agricultural soils in Portsmouth.	Planning Department	Planning Board Conservation Commission	Agricultural Committee	Policy	4-7 years	0-80
GOAL AG-2 Reach a point where a framework of programs, policies and initiatives that support and strengthen the agriculture sector as an essential component of Portsmouth’s economic activity have been established and been proven to be effective.						
POLICY AG-2.1 Advance regulations, programs and initiatives that increase the economic viability of agriculture in Portsmouth. (Related Policies: HCR-2.2, ED-2.1, ED-2.2, WS-1.2, LU-1.1, ED-5.3)						
AG-2.1a: Continue to endorse the State of Rhode Island’s Farm, Forest, and Open Space Program (RIGL §44-27).	Town Council	Town Administrator Planning Department		Policy	On-going	-
AG-2.1b: Maintain the Portsmouth Farmland Exemption Program. (See Action HCR-2.2a, Action LU-6.1a.)	Town Council	Town Administrator Tax Assessor	Agriculture Committee	Policy	On-going	-
AG-2.1c: Continue to work with the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council to facilitate approvals for aquaculture permits in Portsmouth waters.	Planning Department		CRMC	Policy	On-going	-
AG-2.1d: Continue to support the Portsmouth Water and Fire District’s water rates and availability policy applicable to farmers enrolled in the Portsmouth Farmland Exemption Program.	Town Council	Planning Department	Town Administrator Portsmouth Water and Fire District	Policy	On-going	-
AG-2.1e: Review the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations as well as the State Right to Farm Act (RIGL §2-23-4) for ways to increase the mutual compatibility of agricultural and residential land uses within the framework of the law.	Planning Department	Town Council Planning Board	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	0-80
AG-2.1f: Review the livestock provisions of the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance for relevance to current agricultural practices.	Planning Department	Town Council Planning Board	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	0-80
AG-2.1g: Reinstate the Restricted Account in the General Fund to receive a portion of the Real Estate Conveyance Tax dedicated to the acquisition, development and protection of the natural, agricultural, and recreational resources of the Town of Portsmouth.	Town Council	Town Administrator Planning Department	Agriculture Committee Conservation Commission	Budget/Capital	1-3 years	80-320
AG-2.1h: Continue to support efforts to educate students and community with partnerships such as the one with AgInnovation.	Town Council	Agriculture Committee	Economic Development Director	Policy	On-going	0-80

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Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 7 – SERVICES AND FACILITIES						
GOAL SF-1 Deliver cost-effective, high-quality municipal services and ensure that all public facilities are well-maintained.						
POLICY SF-1.1 Town Administration: Improve procedures to maintain a physical inventory of all Town facilities and assets in order to inform both short-and long-term Capital Improvement Programs.						
SF 1.1a: Maintain a baseline physical inventory of all Town structures, facilities and Town-owned land for condition, adequacy, obsolescence, and desired improvement in operations and other non-real estate assets.	Town Administrator	Town Council Planning Department Economic Development		Policy	1-3 years	80-320
SF 1.1b: Update the physical inventory on an annual basis during Q1 of each fiscal year.	Town Administrator	Planning Department Economic Development		Policy	1-3 years	80-320
POLICY SF-1.2 Town Administration: Manage long-range maintenance and improvement programs for all existing public facilities and Town-owned land in order to protect prior public investment. (Related Policies: R-1.2, E-1.1, T-2.1)						
SF-1.2a: Develop comprehensive and detailed maintenance and/or phased replacement/divestiture plans for all structures, facilities and town-owned land.	Town Administrator	Town Council Planning Department DPW	Economic Development Director	Policy	On-going	-
SF-1.2b: Undertake a comprehensive upgrade in the operational capacity of Portsmouth Town Hall.	Town Administrator	DPW		Budget/Capital	On-going	-
SF-1.2c: Inventory all Town-owned buildings and facilities for ADA compliance.	DPW	Town Administrator	Town Council	Policy	1-3 years	0-80
POLICY SF-1.3 Town Administration: Maintain sound fiscal management of Portsmouth’s financial resources by developing sustainable annual budgets that promote long-term financial stability. (NH/CC-1.4)						
SF-1.3a: Prepare the annual budget and tax rate calculation in Q 4 of Portsmouth’s fiscal year.	Town Administrator	Finance Department	Town Council	Budget/Capital	Ongoing	-
SF-1.3b: Prepare and annually update a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). All improvements to the Town’s facilities and assets are to be prioritized through the CIP.	Town Administrator	Finance Department	Town Council Planning Department	Budget/Capital	1-3 years	-
SF-1.3c: Prepare and annually update a 5-year Operational Budget Forecast to accompany the CIP.	Town Administrator	Finance Department	Town Council Planning Department	Budget/Capital	1-3 years	>320
SF-1.3d: Pursue Pension Plan, OPEB, and employee healthcare reforms in a fair and equitable manner.	Town Administrator	Town Council	Town Solicitor	Policy	1-3 years	-
SF-1.3e: Evaluate annual budgets with the goal of restoring and maintaining Portsmouth’s Fund Balance at a minimum of 16%.	Town Council Town Administrator	Finance Department		Policy	1-3 years	-
SF-1.3f: Evaluate annual budgets with the goal of maintaining Portsmouth’s bond rating at current Standard & Poor’s AAA and Moody’s AA2 ratings.	Town Council Town Administrator	Finance Department		Policy	1-3 years	-
SF-1.3g: Continuously evaluate fiscal management, tax collection methods and recordkeeping procedures for ways to improve efficiency and transparency of government.	Town Administrator Tax Assessor	Town Council		Policy	Ongoing	-
SF-1.3h: Review and update the Impact Fee Ordinance for applicability to current and future growth projections and school construction needs.	Town Council Planning Department	Town Administrator Building Inspector	Finance Department	Regulation	1-3 years	80-320
POLICY SF-1.4 Town Administration: Continuously seek grant opportunities and ways to increase revenue to the Town in order to offset the costs of providing services.						
SF-1.4a: Pursue Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for projects that meet program guidelines.	Planning Department	Town Council Town Administrator		Policy	Ongoing	-

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 7 – SERVICES AND FACILITIES						
SF-1.4b : Reevaluate all current Town property leases for opportunities to renegotiate terms more beneficial to the Town.	Town Administrator	Town Council		Policy	1-3 years	80-320
POLICY SF-1.5 Town Administration: Coordinate with neighboring communities and non-governmental organizations to determine if shared facilities and/or services may increase effectiveness. (Related Policies: LU-1.4)						
SF-1.5a : Participate in regional planning efforts where appropriate.	Planning Department	Town Administrator Economic Development Director	Town Council	Program	On-going	-
SF-1.5b : Continuously investigate opportunities to share equipment, facilities, infrastructure and services to maximize the benefit to Portsmouth taxpayers.	Town Administrator	DPW Finance Department	Planning Department	Policy	On-going	-
POLICY SF-1.6 Town Administration: Improve municipal services and facilities to Prudence and Hog Islands commensurate with the inherent limitations of access being by ferry or private vessel only. (Related Policies: T-3.2)						
SF-1.6a : Coordinate with and provide appropriate support to all entities responsible for maintaining high-quality, continuous ferry service to Prudence Island.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council Prudence Island Planning Commission	DPW	Policy	Ongoing	-
SF-1.6b : Continue to investigate the re-establishment of limited ferry service to Hog Island.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Police Department Fire Department	Town Council Prudence Island Planning Commission	Policy	4-7 years	-
SF-1.6c : Partner with the Prudence Island Planning Commission and other stakeholders to consider the development of a 10-year strategic plan for the island.	Planning Department	Town Council Prudence Island Planning Commission	Police Department Fire Department DPW	Program	4-7 years	>320
POLICY SF-1.7 Town Administration: Ensure a high level of administrative functions from all town departments and enhance effective communication between town staff and citizens. (Related Policies: LU-1.1, ED-5.1)						
SF-1.7a : Develop a town wide technology plan highlighting adaptation to changes in communications, facilities and equipment.	Town Administrator	School Department Police Department Fire Department	Town Council Economic Development Director Planning Department	Program	1-3 years	80-320
SF-1.7b : Pursue advanced technological means to improve transparency of government and communications with citizens.	Town Administrator	School Department Town Council	Planning Department	Program	On-going	-
SF-1.7c : Review all Town boards and committees for mission, performance, and consistency of by-laws.	Town Administrator	Town Council Planning Department	Town Solicitor	Policy	1-3 years	80-320
SF-1.7d : Institute professional leadership development, mentorship programs and succession planning strategies for appropriate town staff.	Town Administrator Human Resources Department	Town Council		Program	On-going	-
SF-1.7e : Pursue expansion of the Municipal Court.	Town Council Town Administrator	Town Solicitor	Town Clerk	Program	8-10 years	0-80
POLICY SF-1.8 Town Administration: Ensure the Town maintains compliance with all state and federal regulations and with the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island. (Related Policies: ED-5.2, H-1.2)						
SF-1.8a : Review, update and codify all Town ordinances.	Town Clerk Town Solicitor	Town Administrator	Town Council	Regulation	On-going	-
SF-1.8b : Continue to implement and update all state-approved, locally adopted plans.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council		Policy	On-going	-

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Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 7 – SERVICES AND FACILITIES						
SF-1.8c : Continue to work with state agencies in a cooperative manner to resolve issues of mutual interest.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council		Policy	Ongoing	-
POLICY SF-1.9 Public Works: Preserve the current high level of public works activities by continuously prioritizing service demands, supporting appropriate staffing levels and managing effective facilities and equipment maintenance/replacement programs. (Related Policies: T-1.1)						
SF-1.9a : Prepare and submit an annual Department of Public Works budget to the Town Administrator in Q3-4 of Portsmouth’s fiscal year.	DPW	Town Council Town Administrator		Budget/Capital	On-going	-
SF-1.9b : Annually prepare and submit a comprehensive list of infrastructure improvements and other essential projects, including cost estimates, to be included in the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan.	DPW	Town Council Town Administrator	Planning Department	Budget/Capital	On-going	-
SF-1.9c : Continue the road paving and maintenance program as a top priority for the Department.	DPW	Town Council Town Administrator		Budget/Capital	On-going	-
SF-1.9d : Investigate and implement shared responsibilities and staffing with the School Department in the management of both Town and School facilities.	Town Administrator School Department	Town Council		Policy	On-going	-
SF-1.9e : Pursue improvements to the Public Works Department facility on Prudence Island and investigate methods and procedures for improving service to Islanders.	Town Administrator DPW	Planning Department Prudence Island Planning Commission		Budget/Capital	On-going	-
POLICY SF-1.10 Stormwater: Advance efficient and environmentally sensitive programs and practices to manage stormwater runoff to mitigate adverse impacts on receiving waters. (Related Policies: NR-1.2, WS-1.1, NR-1.1)						
SF-1.10a : Continue to comply with RIPDES Phase II requirements for stormwater management in municipally owned storm drain systems.	Planning Department DPW		RIDEM	Policy	1-3 years	80-320
SF-1.10b : Investigate and prioritize improvements to the town’s stormwater system infrastructure for inclusion in the 5-year CIP.	Planning Department DPW	Town Council Town Administrator		Budget/Capital	1-3 years	>320
SF-1.10c : Sustain a sampling program to detect and eliminate illicit discharges from town-owned storm drains into receiving waters and report compliance to RIDEM.	Planning Department DPW		RIDEM	Policy	1-3 years	>320
SF-1.10d : Complete connectivity mapping of the stormwater collection system and develop a GIS database of all surface and underground features.	Planning Department DPW			Policy	On-going	-
SF-1.10e : Conduct a program to educate the public on the problems associated with impaired stormwater quality, the conditions which contribute to impaired water quality, and the actions which can be taken by the community both individually and as a whole to improve the quality of stormwater runoff.	Planning Department	Town Council		Policy	On-going	-
SF-1.10f : Amend the local land development and subdivision regulations to include low-impact development standards and develop regulations to provide density bonuses or other incentives when low-impact development techniques are used.	Planning Department	Town Council Planning Department	DPW	Program	4-7 years	80-320
SF-1.10g : Draft and adopt a Post-Construction Stormwater Management Ordinance to strengthen the town’s ability to enforce maintenance of private stormwater management facilities.	Planning Department	Town Council Planning Department DPW Planning Board	Town Solicitor	Regulation	1-3 years	80-320

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 7 – SERVICES AND FACILITIES						
POLICY SF-1.11 Wastewater: Advance efficient and environmentally sensitive programs and practices to manage on-site wastewater treatment to mitigate adverse impacts on receiving waters. (Related Policies: WS-1.2)						
SF-1.11a: Develop a homeowner education program to discourage the disposal of environmentally harmful chemicals such as cleaners, solvents, paint, acid, and the like in onsite wastewater treatment systems.	Planning Department		Town Council	Policy	On-going	-
POLICY SF-1.12 Solid Waste: Promote adequate solid waste disposal and recycling programs that will serve the community with a minimum impact on the environment and assure compliance with the State’s minimum goals for recycling and solid waste diversion rates.						
SF-1.12a: Draft and implement a Solid Waste Recycling Plan designed to achieve a minimum 35% solid waste recycling rate and a minimum 50% solid waste diversion rate as required by Rhode Island General Law.	Town Administrator	Town Council Solid Waste Manager	Planning Department	Program	1-3 years	80-320
SF-1.12b: Promote public awareness through community education programs that reduce solid waste, increase recycling, and ensure the proper disposal of household hazardous waste.	Solid Waste Manager	Planning Department	Town Administrator	Policy	On-going	-
SF-1.12c: Pursue adequate full-time provisions for electronic waste disposal at the transfer station.	Solid Waste Manager Town Administrator	Town Council		Program	On-going	-
SF-1.12d: Work with the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation to host quarterly hazardous waste disposal events in Portsmouth.	Solid Waste Manager Town Administrator	Town Council		Program	On-going	-
POLICY SF-1.13 Community Services: Recognize the Portsmouth Free Public Library as a cultural center and a critical public service by assisting the Library’s efforts to not only maintain, but expand and diversify, library facilities and programs. (Related Policies: HCR-1.1, HCR-1.3)						
SF-1.13a: Advocate for the library at the state level to increase State Grant In-Aid funds to support library services.	Town Council	Town Administrator Planning Department		Policy	On-going	-
SF-1.13b: Set annual appropriations for the Portsmouth Free Public Library at or above the prior year’s level.	Town Council	Town Administrator Finance Department		Budget/Capital	On-going	-
POLICY SF-1.14 Community Services: Improve on the current array of programs, services, and facilities for the benefit of senior citizens and disadvantaged individuals/families in the community. (Related Policies: H-1.4)						
SF-1.14a: Pursue annual CDBG funding to improve the operational capacity of the Portsmouth Multi-Purpose Senior Center.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council DPW		Program	Ongoing	-
SF-1.14b: Pursue opportunities to improve the transportation system for seniors wishing to use the Senior Center.	Planning Department	Town Council Town Administrator		Program	1-3 years	-
SF-1.14c: Conduct a comprehensive study and community survey to determine the future needs and preferences of community services.	Town Administrator	Town Council	Planning Department	Program	4-7 years	-
SF-1.14d: Fund substance abuse and other community service programs at increased levels as needed.	Town Council	Town Administrator Finance Director		Budget/Capital	Ongoing	-
GOAL SF-2 Protect residents and property by delivering coordinated, cost effective, high-quality fire protection, law enforcement, emergency medical services and emergency disaster response.						
POLICY SF-2.1 Public Safety: Continuously assess the adequacy of public safety facilities, resources and equipment to ensure the highest state of readiness. (Related Policies: T-1.3)						

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 7 – SERVICES AND FACILITIES						
SF-2.1a : Review the current use of public safety technology including communications and warning systems for adequacy. Upgrade as necessary.	Police Department Fire Department	Town Council Town Administrator Emergency Management Director		Program	On-going	-
SF-2.1b : Investigate the establishment of a primary emergency shelter within the town to adequately meet the needs of Portsmouth residents.	Emergency Management Director	Town Council Town Administrator	Planning Department	Program	On-going	-
POLICY SF-2.2 Public Safety: Maintain and continuously seek to improve the current high level of public safety services within the constraints of budgetary realities and best-practice standards.						
SF-2.2a : Prepare and submit an annual Police Department, Fire Department and Emergency Management budgets to the Town Administrator in Q4 of Portsmouth’s fiscal year.	Police Department Fire Department Emergency Management Director	Town Administrator Finance Department Town Council		Budget/Capital	On-going	-
SF-2.2b : Develop a program of annual measurements to assess service demand and performance against resources in both the Police and Fire Departments.	Police Department Fire Department	Town Administrator		Program	8-10 years	80-320
SF-2.2c : Bi-annually update the Portsmouth Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).	Emergency Management Director	Police Department Fire Department Town Administrator	Town Council	Program	On-going	-
SF-2.2d : Investigate the establishment of a seasonal or permanent police substation on Prudence Island.	Town Administrator Police Department	Town Council Prudence Island Planning Commission		Program	On-going	-
POLICY SF-2.3 Public Safety: Plan for future population changes and potential new development to ensure capacity to deliver appropriate public safety services at appropriate levels.						
SF-2.3a : Study the need (and identify potential sites) for a new fire and rescue sub-station at the south end of town.	Fire Department Planning Department	Public Safety Town Administrator	Town of Middletown	Program	On-going	-
SF-2.3b : Study the need for and identify potential docking sites for new police and fire boats on the eastern shore of Portsmouth.	Police Department Fire Department	Prudence Island Planning Commission Town Administrator	Planning Department	Program	On-going	-
POLICY SF-2.4 Public Safety: Ensure that all public safety staff is adequately trained with proper levels of certification for their public safety duties.						
SF-2.4a : Pursue continuing federal and state accreditation for the Portsmouth Police Department.	Police Department	Town Administrator	Town Council	Policy	On-going	-
GOAL SF-3 Provide students with a consistently superior public education in safe, efficient, well-maintained school buildings and facilities.						
POLICY SF-3.1 Public Education: Engage all students in rigorous learning opportunities supported by a high quality and challenging curriculum and superior teaching to prepare them to thrive in an ever-changing world. (Related Policies: ED-1.2)						
SF-3.1a : Develop, implement and annually update 5-year Strategic Plans for the Portsmouth School System in coordination with the Rhode Island Basic Education Program.	School Department	Town Administrator	Planning Department	Program	On-going	-
POLICY SF-3.2 Public Education: Ensure that school facilities have the capacity to meet enrollment needs, are well maintained and are continuously evaluated for their utility as a setting for academic excellence.						
SF-3.2a : Develop, implement and update Capital Improvement Plans for School District facilities that comply with Board of Regents’ standards.	School Department	Town Council Town Administrator		Budget/Capital	On-going	-

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 7 – SERVICES AND FACILITIES						
<i>POLICY SF-3.3</i> Public Education: Under the provisions of the Town Charter, maintain open and cooperative relations between the School Department and Town Administration.						
SF-3.3a : Prepare and present a proposed School Department budget to the Town Administrator by March 25 prior to the start of the next fiscal year.	School Department	Town Council Town Administrator		Budget/Capital	On-going	-
SF-3.3b : Pursue opportunities to share administrative services such as accounts payable, payroll and other functions with the Portsmouth Finance Department.	School Department	Finance Department	Human Resources Department	Program	On-going	-
SF-3.3c : Adopt the administrative practice of having the Superintendent of Schools attend all Town staff meetings.	School Department Town Administrator			Policy	On-going	-
SF-3.3d : Adopt the administrative practice of having at least one Town Department Head-level staff member attend all regular School Committee meetings.	School Department Town Administrator		Planning Department	Policy	1-3 years	0-80

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PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 8 – ENERGY						
GOAL E-1 Produce a set of programs and policies that call for the efficient use of energy, the development of sustainable energy resources and the utilization of energy-efficient transportation options.						
POLICY E-1.1 Advance the efficient use of energy in all capital projects, municipal purchases and cooperative agreements. (Related Policies: NH/CC-1.3, SF-1.2)						
E-1.1a: Continue to study energy usage by municipal buildings, equipment and vehicles to determine where improvements in energy conservation and efficiency can be realized.	Town Administrator DPW	Economic Development Director	Planning Department	Program	On-going	-
E-1.1b: Create a municipal energy conservation and efficiency program and commit to specific reduced energy consumption targets.	Town Administrator Planning Department	DPW	Economic Development	Program	8-10 years	80-320
E-1.1c: Complete the acquisition of local streetlights and their conversion to LED technology or the most advanced technology available.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council	Economic Development Director	Program	4-7 years	80-320
POLICY E-1.2 Support the development and maintenance of sustainable renewable energy resources in both the public and private sector. (Related Policies: ED-3.3)						
E-1.2a: Amend the Zoning Ordinance and adopt performance standards for the siting of renewable energy production.	Town Council	Planning Board Planning Department	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	80-320
E-1.2b: Develop performance standards for ground-mount solar, wind turbines or other emerging technologies as accessory uses in all districts.	Planning Department	Town Council Planning Board	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	80-320
E-1.2c: Continue to abide by all contractual obligations having to do with the existing wind turbine at Portsmouth High School.	Town Council		Town Council Town Administrator	Policy	On-going	-
E-1.2d: Work with federal, state, regional and utility partners to capitalize on grants and other incentives to help fund public and private energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council Economic Development Director		Policy	On-going	-
E-1.2e: Explore location and ownership options to establish electric vehicle charging stations in Portsmouth.	Planning Department	Town Administrator	Town Council	Program	On-going	0-80
E-1.2f: Explore options for incorporating energy efficient vehicles into the municipal fleet.	Town Administrator	Department of Public Works School Department Fire Department Police Department	Planning Department	Program	On-going	0-80
POLICY E-1.3 Encourage residents and local businesses to adopt energy-efficient measures and pursue renewable energy systems through public information campaigns and business incentives. (Related Policies: ED-3.3, NH/CC-1.4)						
E-1.3a: Consider participation in the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Financing Program which provides low-cost financing for residents and businesses to make energy-efficiency upgrades to their property.	Planning Department Economic Development	Town Council Town Administrator		Program	8-10 years	80-320
E-1.3b: Consider development and implementation of a town-wide “Go Green” program wherein businesses and other entities can be rewarded “Go Green” certification based on a set of established energy efficiency/sustainability criteria.	Planning Department Economic Development Director		Town Council Town Administrator	Program	8-10 years	80-320

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 9 – WATER SUPPLY						
GOAL WS-1 Deliver a cost effective set of programs, policies and cooperative initiatives that protect and preserve both the quality and quantity of Portsmouth’s drinking water supply.						
POLICY WS-1.1 Protect Portsmouth’s drinking water supply by minimizing the introduction of non-point source pollutants into our surface water reservoirs and groundwater resources. (Related Policies: NR-1.1, SF-1.11, NH/CC-1.1, LU-1.1, SF-1.10)						
WS -1.1a –Review provisions in the Zoning Ordinance governing land development in the overlay Watershed Protection District and the Water Resource Protection District as needed for their applicability and effectiveness. (See Action LU-5.1f.)	Planning Department	Town Council Planning Board	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 Years	80-320
WS-1.1b : Continue the necessary actions to remain in compliance with federal and state mandates to manage stormwater in accordance with Phase II stormwater permit requirements.	Planning Department	DPW		Regulation	On-going	-
WS -1.1c : Continuously update and make available public education materials that describe steps individual landowners can take to reduce non-point source pollution and improve water quality.	Planning Department			Policy	On-going	-
POLICY WS-1.2 Maintain close coordination between Town land use planning and the various water suppliers’ planning for future demand. (Related Policies: AG-2.1, LU-6.1, LU-2.1, ED-2.1)						
WS-1.2a : Support Water Supply Management Plans of the Portsmouth Water and Fire District, the Prudence Island Water District and the City of Newport Water Division.	Planning Department	Town Council	Town Administrator DPW	Policy	On-going	-
WS-1.2b : Have a Town Planning Department staff member attend all regular board meetings of Portsmouth Water and Fire District and Prudence Island Water District.	Planning Department	Town Administrator		Policy	1-3 years	0-80
WS-1.2c : Continue to work with the Portsmouth Water and Fire District, Newport Water and Naval Station Newport regarding future water distribution in areas along the west side that are outside the PWFD district. (See Action LU-3.1b.)	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council	Portsmouth Water and Fire District	Program	On-going	-
WS-1.2d : Assist the Prudence Island Water District in its goal of establishing new drinking water wells on the island.	Planning Department	Prudence Island Water District	Town Administrator	Program	On-going	-
WS-1.2e : Maintain up-to-date Emergency Action Plans for each high hazard dam in Portsmouth, per RIGL §46-19-9.	Emergency Management Director	Planning Department Police Department Fire Department		Policy	1-3 years	80-320

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 10 – TRANSPORTATION						
GOAL T-1 Deliver a cost-effective network of town-owned and maintained roadways that allow for the safe and efficient circulation of vehicular traffic throughout the Town.						
POLICY T-1.1 Ensure the community has a safe and well-maintained street and roadway network with high standards for roadway design and a program of continuous improvement in roadway safety and capacity. (Related Policies: SF-1.9, ED-3.1, ED-2.1)						
T-1.1a: Provide a safe town-owned roadway network through maintenance of infrastructure, consistent road surface conditions, and plowing and sanding of roads during and after winter storms.	DPW	Town Council Town Administrator	Finance Department	Budget/Capital	On-going	-
T-1.1b: Establish and maintain well-defined crosswalk pavement markings and enforce regulations for motorists to STOP for pedestrians in crosswalks on all town roads.	DPW	Police Department	Town Administrator Planning Department	Policy	8-10 years	80-320
T-1.1c: Institute a Pavement Management Program and continue to fund annual paving budgets in order to maintain an average Road Surface Rating (RSR) of 72.	Town Council	Town Administrator DPW	Planning Department	Budget/Capital	On-going	-
T-1.1d: Adopt a Mapped Streets Ordinance to establish ownership and roadway maintenance jurisdiction for all roads in Portsmouth.	Town Council	Planning Department Town Administrator	Town Solicitor	Regulation	8-10 years	>320
T-1.1e: Continuously evaluate road salt and sand operations to minimize damage to the environment.	DPW			Policy	On-going	-
T-1.1f: Undertake a program of roadway/drainage redesign and construction in critical areas of Portsmouth, particularly areas subject to stormwater contamination, coastal flooding, and potential sea level rise.	Planning Department DPW	Town Council Town Administrator		Program	4-7 years	>320
T-1.1g: In coordination with our fellow island municipalities and RIDOT, implement the recommendations of the Aquidneck Island Transportation Study where feasible and appropriate.	Town Council Town Administrator	Planning Department		Policy	On-going	-
POLICY T-1.2 Advance land use regulations that improve vehicular traffic circulation, promote transportation safety and encourage alternative transportation options. (Related Policies: LU-1.1)						
T-1.2a: Review and update all Zoning Ordinances, Land Use and Subdivision Regulations and Design Review Guidelines having to do with roadway design for procedural and regulatory consistency.	Planning Department DPW	Town Council Planning Board	Town Solicitor	Regulation	1-3 years	>320
T-1.2b: Review and if necessary, update the Traffic Sensitive Overlay District provisions in the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance.	Planning Department	Town Council Planning Board	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	80-320
T-1.2c: Amend Land Development & Subdivision Regulations to prohibit new residential subdivisions having access off substandard private rights-of-way.	Planning Board	Planning Department	Town Council Town Administrator	Regulation	1-3 years	0-80
T-1.2d: Amend Land Development & Subdivision Regulations to require dual emergency access to all new residential subdivisions where feasible and to require the extension of all proposed dead-end streets to connect with existing streets. (See Action LU-4.1a.)	Planning Board	Planning Department	Town Council Town Administrator	Regulation	1-3 years	0-80
POLICY T-1.3 Declare public safety to be the top priority in all matters having to do with transportation and circulation in Portsmouth. (Related Policies: SF-2.1, ED-2.1)						
T-1.3a: Establish and maintain additional well-defined crosswalk pavement markings as need is demonstrated and enforce regulations for motorists to STOP for pedestrians in crosswalks on all town roadways.	DPW Police Department		Town Council Town Administrator	Policy	On-going	-

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 10 – TRANSPORTATION						
T-1.3b : Work with RIDOT to improve pedestrian safety with special emphasis on crosswalks and pedestrian controlled traffic lights and lighting on all state roads in Portsmouth.	DPW Police Department Town Administrator	Town Council	Planning Department	Policy	On-going	-
GOAL T-2 Reach a high level of coordination and cooperation with RIDOT to improve the safety and efficiency of regional and local traffic circulation on state-owned roads within the borders of Portsmouth.						
POLICY T-2.1 Maintain a policy of coordination with RIDOT during all phases of planning, design, construction and maintenance on state transportation projects within the community. (Related Policies: SF-1.2)						
T-2.1a : Participate as an active partner in the development of the State’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for projects of local and regional significance.	Planning Department	Town Council Town Administrator	DPW	Policy	On-going	-
T-2.1b : Work with RIDOT to accelerate major road maintenance and improvement programs within Portsmouth, particularly the north-south through traffic routes of East and West Main Roads. (See Action LU-2.3b.)	Town Administrator	Town Council DPW		Policy	On-going	-
T-2.1c : Establish better communication and coordination between RIDOT and the Town Planning Department during development site plan reviews and RIDOT physical alteration permitting processes.	Planning Department DPW	Planning Board		Policy	On-going	-
T-2.1d : Collaborate with RIDOT in the design of left-turn lanes, road diets and other traffic calming and safety measures on all state-owned principal and minor arterial roadways in Portsmouth.	Planning Department DPW	Town Administrator Town Council		Policy	On-going	-
T-2.1e : Work with partners to consider enhancements to Defense Highway (Burma Road) to create as a viable alternative to East Main and West Main Roads north-south traffic flows.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council	Economic Development Director	Policy	On-going	-
T-2.1f : Work closely with RIDOT and its design engineers on the redesign and construction of the Town Center traffic improvement project (East Main Road from Hedly Street to Turnpike Avenue).	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council		Policy	4-7 years	>320
T-2.1g : Collaborate with RIDOT to prioritize enhanced roadway conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists in future transportation projects.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council		Policy	On-going	-
T-2.1h : Participate in all regional transportation planning efforts, including, but not limited to efforts by Statewide Planning, AIPC, RIDOT, RIPTA, RIBTA and others.	Planning Department	Town Council Town Administrator		Policy	On-going	-
POLICY T-2.2 Support the expansion of all aspects of state and local public transportation systems. (Related Policies: H-2.2)						
T-2.2a : Pursue RIPTA to reinstate and promote its FLEX bus program of regularly scheduled local service in Portsmouth and the immediate surrounding area.	Planning Department	Town Administrator	Town Council	Program	8-10 years	0-80
T-2.2b : Investigate the feasibility of establishing a local bus/trolley system for underserved areas of town and populations.	Planning Department	Town Administrator Economic Development	Town Council	Program	8-10 years	0-80
T-2.2c : Work with RIPTA and RIDOT to create and promote additional park-and-ride facilities in Portsmouth as need arises.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council Economic Development		Program	On-going	-
T-2.2d : Work with RIPTA to install aesthetically compatible bus shelters at selected high usage locations in Portsmouth.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council Economic Development		Program	On-going	-

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 10 – TRANSPORTATION						
GOAL T-3 Achieve a well-balanced multi-modal transportation system that reduces automobile dependency and is appropriately designed to produce safe and accessible facilities for all residents.						
POLICY T-3.1 Encourage the use of alternate modes of travel. (Related Policies: NR-1.6, LU-1.1)						
T-3.1a: Create a town-wide pedestrian and bicycle circulation plan to serve as a basis for all multi-modal transportation system planning decisions.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council DPW		Program	4-7 years	>320
T-3.1b: Work with state and regional partners to preserve the Newport Secondary railroad right-of-way for future public use.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council		Policy	On-going	-
T-3.1c: Work with the RIDOT to prioritize improvements to existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities and to include such facilities as part of any upgrade to state-owned roads in Portsmouth.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council DPW		Program	On-going	-
T-3.1d: Develop a program to establish a network of safe walking paths and/or sidewalks on all collector roads within 1½ miles of the High School, 1 mile of the Middle School and one-half mile of the elementary schools.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council DPW	School Department	Policy	4-7 years	>320
T-3.1e: Work with RIDOT to provide sidewalks or a multi-mode path and crosswalks on East and West Main Roads where appropriate and feasible, with special attention to public transit stops.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council DPW		Program	On-going	-
POLICY T-3.2 Ensure that reliable ferry service exists to and from Prudence Island on a year-round basis and seek ways to reestablish ferry service to Hog Island on a limited basis. (Related Policies: SF-1.6)						
T-3.2a: Work with the current ferry service provider and Prudence Island residents to address ridership concerns as they arise.	Town Administrator	Planning Department Prudence Island Planning Commission		Policy	On-going	-
T-3.2b: Work with the Town of Bristol to ensure continued long-term access to Prudence Island ferry terminal facilities.	Town Administrator	Planning Department Prudence Island Planning Commission	Town of Bristol	Policy	On-going	-
POLICY T-3.3 All Town departments, boards and commissions shall consider incorporating, to the maximum extent possible, Complete Streets concepts and design elements into all development project approvals and municipal roadway projects.						
T-3.3a: Conduct an assessment of all Town-owned and maintained roadways to determine recommended industry-standard Complete Streets design elements and develop a prioritized list of projects for implementation.	DPW	Planning Department	Police Department	Program	1-3 years	0-80
T-3.3b: Review all land development regulations for compatibility with industry-standard Complete Streets concepts and design elements and consider amendments to those regulations as needed.	Planning Department	Planning Board		Program	1-3 years	0-80
T-3.3c: Consider a Complete Streets policy and ordinance for adoption in the Town of Portsmouth.	Town Council	Planning Department DPW Town Solicitor	Police Department	Program	1-3 years	80-320
T-3.3d: Incorporate and fund a separate line in the Department of Public Works section of the Capital Improvement Plan for the implementation of Complete Streets projects.	Town Council	Town Administrator Finance Department	DPW Planning Department	Program	1-3 years	0-80

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 11 – NATURAL HAZARDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE						
GOAL NH/CC-1 Achieve a level of economic, societal and ecological resilience in our built and natural environment that enables Portsmouth to recover quickly from the effects of natural hazards and climate change and minimizes long-term community disruption.						
POLICY NH/CC-1.1 Manage land use and the built environment within the floodplain and other vulnerable areas to not only mitigate, but increase, community resilience to the effects of natural hazards and climate change. (Related Policies: NR-1.2, WS-1.1, LU-5.2)						
NH/CC-1.1a: Work with RIDOT to identify ways to mitigate future impacts and increase resilience to flooding, storm surge and sea level rise along Park Avenue in Island Park and other vulnerable state roads. (See Action LU-5.2b.)	Planning Department DPW	Town Administrator		Program	On-going	-
NH/CC-1.1b: Develop “Where, When and How” land use and development management scenarios to address the effects of climate change and sea level rise. (See Action LU-5.2a.)	Planning Department	Planning Board Town Council Town Administrator	Town Solicitor	Program	1-3 years	>320
NH/CC-1.1c: Work with federal and state partners to investigate and prioritize improvements in the town-owned storm drain system to enhance discharge, retention and infiltration capabilities.	Planning Department DPW	Town Administrator		Program	On-going	-
NH/CC-1.1d: Improve Portsmouth’s mapping and data gathering capabilities to support assessment, analysis and planning activities.	Planning Department	DPW	Town Administrator	Program	1-3 years	0-80
POLICY NH/CC-1.2 Preserve and enhance the capacity of the natural environment to improve Portsmouth’s resilience to the effects of natural hazards and climate change. (Related Policies: NR-1.5, NR-1.1, NR-1.2)						
NH/CC-1.2a: Work with the Aquidneck Land Trust and others to identify and conserve areas vulnerable to the effects of increased natural hazards due to climate change.	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council	Aquidneck Land Trust Conservation Commission	Program	On-going	-
NH/CC-1.2b: Investigate the implementation of green infrastructure stormwater management strategies to enhance infiltration and increase retention on town properties and roadways.	Planning Department	DPW		Program	On-going	-
NH/CC-1.2c: Investigate the adoption of low-impact development standards to reduce the amount of impervious coverage and increase stormwater infiltration.	Planning Department	Planning Board DPW	Town Council	Program	4-7 years	8--320
NH/CC-1.2d: Work with stakeholders to identify, prioritize and implement coastal adaptation projects to allow wetlands expansion and salt marsh migration.	Planning Department	Town Administrator	Town Council Conservation Commission	Program	8-10 years	>320
POLICY NH/CC-1.3 Require all municipal departments, boards and commissions to incorporate resilience to natural hazards and climate change in all long-range planning and public infrastructure projects. (Related Policies: E-1.1, LU-1.1, ED-2.1)						
NH/CC-1.3a: Maintain a FEMA-approved Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan and report implementation progress on an annual basis.	Planning Department		FEMA	Policy	On-going	-
NH/CC-1.3b: Establish a category in the 5-year Capital Improvement Program specifically for community resilience and hazard mitigation projects.		Town Council		Budget/Capital	1-3 years	0-80
POLICY NH/CC-1.4 Work to reduce the economic impacts of and increase the societal resilience to the effects of natural hazards and climate change. (Related Policies: ED-3.3, HCR-2.3, H-3.1, ED-3.2, ED-5.3, E-1.3, LU-2.1, HCR-1.3, ED-2.2, LU-6.1, SF-1.3, HCR-1.1, HCR-1.2, LU-1.2)						
NH/CC-1.4a: Participate in the FEMA Community Rating System and provide resources necessary to coordinate an effective implementation program. Determine a rating score target to be achieved by 2025.	Planning Department Building Inspector	Town Council Town Administrator		Program	4-7 years	>320

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 11 – NATURAL HAZARDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE						
NH/CC-1.4b : On a quarterly basis, conduct community outreach including public forums and posting of information on the town website to educate residents regarding the risk from the effects of natural hazards and the concept of community resilience.	Planning Department	Town Council		Policy	1-3 years	80-320
NH/CC-1.4c : Encourage the formation of neighborhood associations to assist in the monitoring of impacts of climate change.	Town Council	Planning Department	Town Administrator	Program	On-going	-
NH/CC-1.4d : Provide support for property owners to help take advantage of funding opportunities that assist with covering the costs of mitigating risk in flood zone areas.	Planning Department Building Inspector	Town Council		Program	8-10 years	80-320
NH/CC-1.4e : Collaborate with state agencies and others to implement the Prudence Island Community Wildfire Protection Plan.	Planning Department	Fire Department	Prudence Island Planning Commission	Policy	4-7 years	0-80

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PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 12 – LAND USE						
GOAL LU-1 Achieve a balanced, orderly and harmonious land use pattern that preserves historic and cultural resources, supports economic stability, maintains neighborhood integrity and protects the quality of our natural environment.						
<i>Category LU-1.1 Management/Regulation Tools and Techniques</i>						
POLICY LU-1.1 Advance smart growth principles in all land use decisions made by the Town of Portsmouth. (Related Policies: ED-4.1, NR-1.1, NR-1.4, HCR-2.1, HCR-2.2, H-1.3, H-2.3, T-1.2, ED-2.1, AG-2.1, WS-1.1, T-3.1, NH/CC-1.3, SF-1.7, SF-2.3, LU-1.1)						
LU-1.1a: Review and update the Zoning Ordinance and Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to ensure smart growth principles are encouraged.	Planning Department Town Council	Planning Board Town Council	Town Solicitor	Policy	On-going	80-320
POLICY LU-1.2 Improve the existing municipal land use regulatory scheme to allow for more planning initiative, less regulatory reaction, higher quality development and conformance with the provisions and intent of this Comprehensive Plan. (Related Policies: NH/CC-1.4)						
LU-1.2a: Revise and update review procedures for special use permits, development plan review and design review thresholds.	Planning Department	Planning Board Town Council	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	80-320
LU-1.2b: Require all proposed residential developments to submit a residential open space plan in addition to the standard yield plan for land subdivision. (See Action H-1.2c.)	Planning Department	Planning Board	Town Solicitor	Regulation	1-3 years	0-80
LU-1.2c: Create review procedures and regulations for occupancy change in established commercial spaces.	Town Council	Planning Board Planning Department Building Inspector	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	80-320
LU-1.2d: Review and update Design Review Guidelines and research alternative regulatory schemes such as form-based zoning for applicability.	Planning Department	Planning Board Design Review Board		Regulation	1-3 years	>320
LU-1.2e: Consider rezoning portions of the R-10 District to a higher density in order to reduce the number of non-standard lots of record. (See identified Future Land Use Inconsistency #2.)	Town Council	Planning Board Planning Department	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	80-320
LU-1.2f: Consider removing the Town Center District from the list of zoning districts and rezone all parcels in the TC zone back to Commercial (C).	Town Council	Planning Board Planning Department	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	80-320
POLICY LU-1.3 Encourage the use of flexible zoning techniques such as the Planned Unit Development (PUD) for all commercial and industrial districts. (Related Policies: ED-4.1)						
LU-1.3a: Review and update the PUD provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.	Town Council	Planning Board Planning Department	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	On-going	-
POLICY LU-1.4 Continue to affirm the importance of regional cooperation by participating in mutually beneficial planning initiatives with adjacent communities, state agencies and other stakeholders. (Related Policies: SF-1.5)						
LU-1.4a: Continue to work with adjacent towns, state, federal NGO and private organizations to develop effective natural resource protection plans and strategies. (See Action NR-1.1n.)	Planning Department	Town Administrator	Town Council Conservation Commission	Policy	On-going	-
LU-1.4b: Pursue state and federal grants to help fund programs to improve the landscape, built environment and quality of life in Portsmouth. (See Action ED-2.1a.)	Planning Department Economic Development	Town Council Town Administrator	Finance Department	Policy	On-going	-
<i>Category LU-1.2 Patterns of Development</i>						
POLICY LU-2.1 Consider growth management strategies that relate residential, commercial and industrial growth to the rate of population growth in order to discourage overdevelopment of these land uses which may alter the character of the Town. (Related Policies: WS-1.2, NH/CC-1.4)						

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

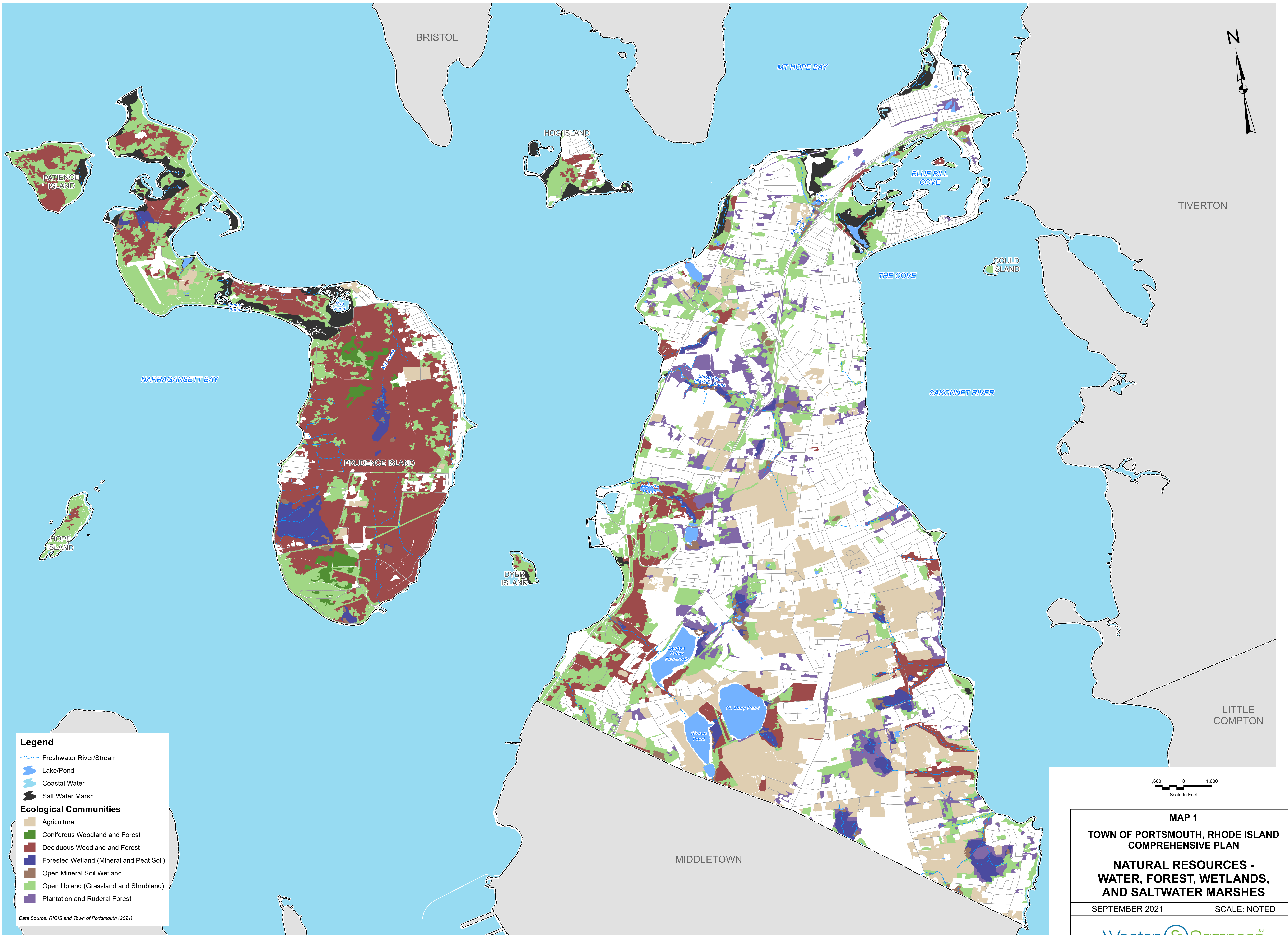
Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 12 – LAND USE						
LU-2.1a : Prepare an Economic Buildout Analysis to determine how much commercial/industrial development remains possible under current zoning. (See Action ED-4.1b.)	Planning Department Economic Development Director	Town Administrator		Program	4-7 years	80-320
POLICY LU-2.2 Encourage mixed-use development/redevelopment in commercial and light industrial districts and home occupation uses in residential districts with appropriate limitations. (Related Policies: ED-2.3)						
LU-2.2a : Review and amend (if necessary) provisions in the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance regulating home occupations, balancing support for the expansion of business activity and the potential impacts to residential neighborhoods. (See Action ED-2.3a.)	Town Council	Planning Board Planning Department	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	80-320
LU-2.2b : Review and update provisions in the Zoning Ordinance for mixed use development in commercial districts. (See Action ED-4.1e.)	Town Council	Planning Board Planning Department	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3years	80-320
LU-2.2c : Update the Zoning Ordinance to allow more opportunities for mixed-use housing development in Commercial and Light Industrial Districts. (See Action H-1.3d.)	Town Council	Planning Board Planning Department	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	80-320
LU-2.2d : Create incentives for property owners/developers to build mixed-use properties where they are permitted.	Planning Department	Planning Board Town Council	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	0-80
LU-2.2e : Develop standards for mixed-use development.	Planning Department	Planning Board Design Review Board	Town Council Town Administrator	Regulation	1-3 years	>320
POLICY LU-2.3 Encourage infill development and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized parcels, especially those with adequate infrastructure and ready access to public services. (Related Policies: H-2.2, ED-3.1, ED-4.3)						
LU-2.3a : Compile and maintain a list of vacant and underutilized parcels with commercial and industrial zoning designations. (See Action ED-4.1a.)	Planning Department	Economic Development Director		Program	1-3 years	0-80
LU-2.3b : Review and if necessary, update, the Traffic Sensitive Overlay District provisions in the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance. (See Action T-1.2c.)	Planning Department	Planning Board Town Council	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	0-80
Category LU-1.3 The West Side						
POLICY LU-3.1 Support the reuse and redevelopment of former military land along the West Side including existing military housing, infrastructure, and the Tank Farms. (Related Policies: ED-2.4)						
LU-3.1a : Work with regional partners to study the condition of sewer and water infrastructure and develop options for the proposed transfer from Navy ownership.	Planning Department	Town Council Town Administrator	Town of Middletown Naval Station City of Newport	Program	On-going	-
LU-3.1b : Continue to work with the Portsmouth Water and Fire District, Newport Water and Naval Station Newport regarding future water distribution in areas along the west side that are outside the PWFD District. (See Action WS-1.2c.)	Planning Department	Portsmouth Water and Fire District	Town Administrator	Program	On-going	-
POLICY LU-3.2 Encourage continued marine-industrial development, marina expansion, resort/tourism accommodations and public waterfront access as beneficial land uses along the West Side. (Related Policies: ED-2.5)						
LU-3.2a : Investigate public and/or private ownership of utilities and infrastructure in the Melville area as a catalyst for future growth. (See Action ED-3.1d.)	Town Administrator Planning Department	Town Council Economic Development Director	Town Solicitor	Program	On-going	-
POLICY LU-3.3 Along the West Side, support limited commercial and residential development as part of mixed-use development projects only.						
LU-3.3a : Incorporate the recommendations of the West Side Master Plan in all land use decisions regarding commercial and residential development on the West Side.	Planning Department	Town Council	Town Administrator	Policy	On-going	-

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 12 – LAND USE						
<i>Category 1.4 Residential Land Use and Neighborhoods</i>						
Policy LU-4.1 Ensure the continued strength and stability of our residential neighborhoods by respecting valued development patterns and character. (Related Policies: H-2.1)						
LU-4.1a : Amend Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to require dual emergency access to all new residential subdivisions where feasible and to require the extension of all proposed dead-end streets to connect with existing streets where feasible. (See Action T-1.2d.)	Planning Board	Planning Department	Town Council Town Administrator	Regulation	1-3 years	0-80
LU-4.1b : Incorporate lot merger provisions into the Zoning Ordinance.	Planning Department	Planning Board	Town Council Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	8-10 years	80-320
POLICY LU-4.2 Support a range of residential land uses to ensure a diversity of housing choices for all residents. (Related Policies: H-1.3)						
LU-4.2a : Adopt provisions in Portsmouth’s Zoning Ordinance that make it mandatory for all new residential developments of 6 units or more to designate a certain percentage of the units as LMI units (Inclusionary Zoning). (See Action H-1.2a.)	Town Council	Planning Board Planning Department	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	80-320
LU-4.2b : Adopt provisions in the Zoning Ordinance that allow for payment in lieu of, off-site construction or rehabilitation and other strategies that allow developers to fulfill their affordable housing obligations. (See Action H-1.2b.)	Town Council	Planning Board Planning Department	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	0-80
LU-4.2c : Allow accessory family dwelling units (so-called in-law apartments) by special use permit in all residential zoning districts. (See Action H-1.3a.)	Town Council	Planning Board Planning Department	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	80-320
LU-4.2d : Increase the density bonus for duplex housing particularly if one or both of the units are designated as LMI units. (See Action H-1.3c.)	Planning Department	Town Council Town Administrator	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	80-320
POLICY LU-4.3 Encourage integrated site, mixed-use and infill residential development accompanied by effective housing rehabilitation programs as the surest way to achieve Portsmouth’s housing goals. (Related Policies: H-2.3)						
LU-4.3a : Identify specific sites and specific projects for the development of affordable housing, particularly those sites in close proximity to facilities and services. (See Action H-2.2a.)	Planning Department			Program	1-3 years	80-320
LU-4.3b : Create a database of existing structures and vacant infill sites that are appropriate for the conversion and/or development for affordable housing and LMI units. (See Action H-2.3a.)	Planning Department			Program	1-3 years	80-320
<i>Category LU-1.5 Natural Resource Protection</i>						
POLICY LU-5.1 Ensure future development is compatible with adjoining land uses, the natural environment, and existing historic and cultural features. (Related Policies: NR-1.1, HCR-2.1)						
LU-5.1a : Continue to pursue acquisition of development rights, particularly parcels containing environmentally sensitive characteristics. (See Action NR-1.1b.)	Town Council	Town Administrator Planning Department Conservation Commission	Aquidneck Land Trust Conservation Commission	Program	On-going	-
LU-5.1b : Develop an open space acquisition plan. (See Action NR-1.4a.)	Planning Department	Town Administrator Town Council	Finance Department Conservation Commission	Program	1-3 years	>320
LU-5.1c : Pursue conservation easements on town-owned parcels in the Glen Park / Seveney Fields / Glen Manor House area. (See Action NR-1.4c.)	Town Council Town Administrator	Planning Department	Aquidneck Land Trust Town Solicitor	Program	On-going	-

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Actions	Action Lead	Action Support	Other Stakeholders	Action Type	Timeframe	Labor Resources (Staff Hours)
ELEMENT 12 – LAND USE						
LU-5.1d : Develop land use management plans for town-owned open space properties. (See Action NR-1.4e.)	Town Council Town Administrator	Planning Department DPW	Recreation Department	Program	1-3 years	0-80
LU-5.1e : Study salt marsh migration and make land use / zoning recommendations to guide future development. (See Action NR-1.2a.)	Planning Department	Planning Board		Program	8-10 years	80-320
LU-5.1f : Review provisions in the Zoning Ordinance governing land development in the overlay Watershed Protection District and the Water Resource Protection District as needed for their applicability and effectiveness. (See Action WS 1.1a.)	Planning Department	Planning Board Town Council	Town Solicitor	Regulation Zoning Amendment	1-3 years	80-320
POLICY LU-5.2 Manage land use and development within the floodplain and other vulnerable areas to not only mitigate the impacts of, but increase community resilience to, the effects of natural hazards and climate change. (Related Policies: NR-1.2, NH/CC-1.1)						
LU-5.2a : Develop “Where, When and How” land use and development management scenarios to address the impacts of climate change and sea level rise. (See Action NH/CC-1.1b.)	Planning Department	Planning Board Town Council Town Administrator	Town Solicitor	Program	1-3 years	>320
LU-5.2b : Work with RIDOT to identify ways to mitigate future impacts and increase resilience to flooding, storm surge and sea level rise along Park Avenue and Boyds Lane in Island Park and other vulnerable state roads. (See Action NH/CC-1.1a.)	Planning Department DPW	Town Administrator		Program	On-going	-
Category LU-1.6 Agriculture / Rural Character						
POLICY LU-6.1 Preserve Portsmouth’s farms and agricultural lands as essential elements of our community character, economic vitality and quality of life. (Related Policies: HCR-2.2, AG-1.1, WS-1.2, NH/CC-1.4)						
LU-6.1a : Maintain the Municipal Farm Tax exemption program. (See Action HCR-2.2a, AG-2.1b.)	Town Council	Town Administrator Tax Assessor		Policy	On-going	-
LU-6.1b : Compile and continuously update a database of parcels with prime soils or soils of statewide importance cross-referenced with farmland activity and protected status. (See Action AG -1.1a.)	Planning Department	Agriculture Committee	Planning Board Conservation Commission	Program	1-3 years	0-80
LU-6.1c : Map prime agricultural soils as a reference guide for the site plan review process. (See Action NR-1.3c.)	Planning Department	Planning Board		Program	1-3 years	0-80
POLICY LU-6.2 Continue to work with land trusts, non-profits and other appropriate partners to target prime agricultural lands for preservation. (Related Policies: NR-1.3, AG-1.1)						
LU-6.2a : As opportunities arise, partner with governmental and private funding sources to purchase development rights to farmlands and other properties of historic significance. (See Action HCR-2.2b.)	Town Council	Town Administrator Planning Department	Aquidneck Land Trust Town Solicitor	Program	On-going	-



Legend

- ~ Freshwater River/Stream
- Lake/Pond
- Coastal Water
- Salt Water Marsh

Ecological Communities

- Agricultural
- Coniferous Woodland and Forest
- Deciduous Woodland and Forest
- Forested Wetland (Mineral and Peat Soil)
- Open Mineral Soil Wetland
- Open Upland (Grassland and Shrubland)
- Plantation and Ruderal Forest

Data Source: RIGIS and Town of Portsmouth (2021).

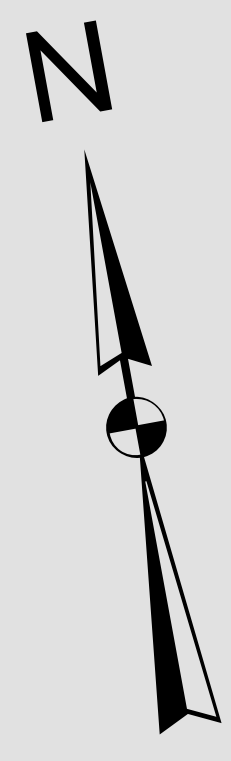
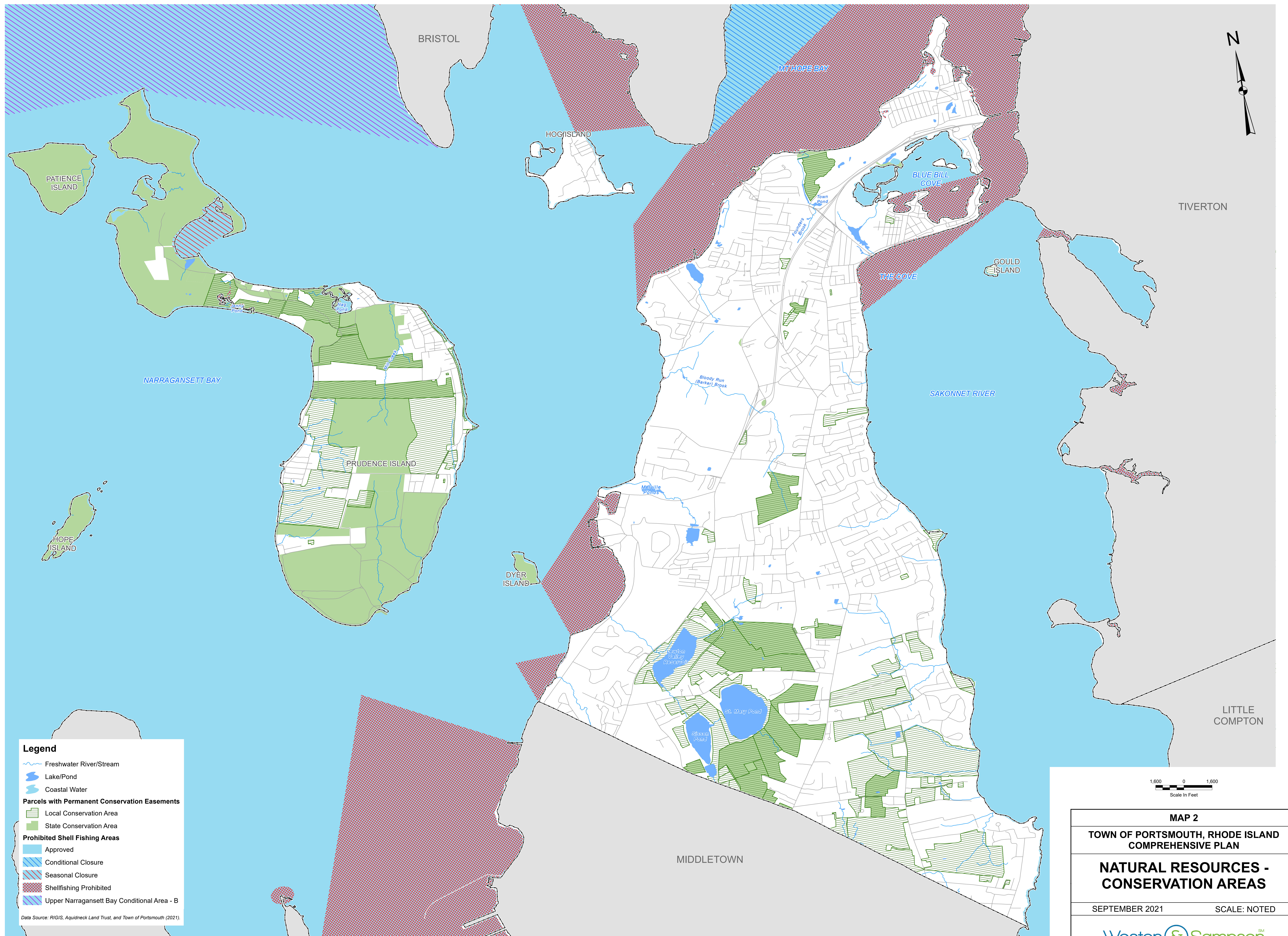


MAP 1
TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

NATURAL RESOURCES -
WATER, FOREST, WETLANDS,
AND SALTWATER MARSHES

SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED





Legend

- Freshwater River/Stream
- Lake/Pond
- Coastal Water
- Parcels with Permanent Conservation Easements**
 - Local Conservation Area
 - State Conservation Area
- Prohibited Shell Fishing Areas**
 - Approved
 - Conditional Closure
 - Seasonal Closure
 - Shellfishing Prohibited
 - Upper Narragansett Bay Conditional Area - B

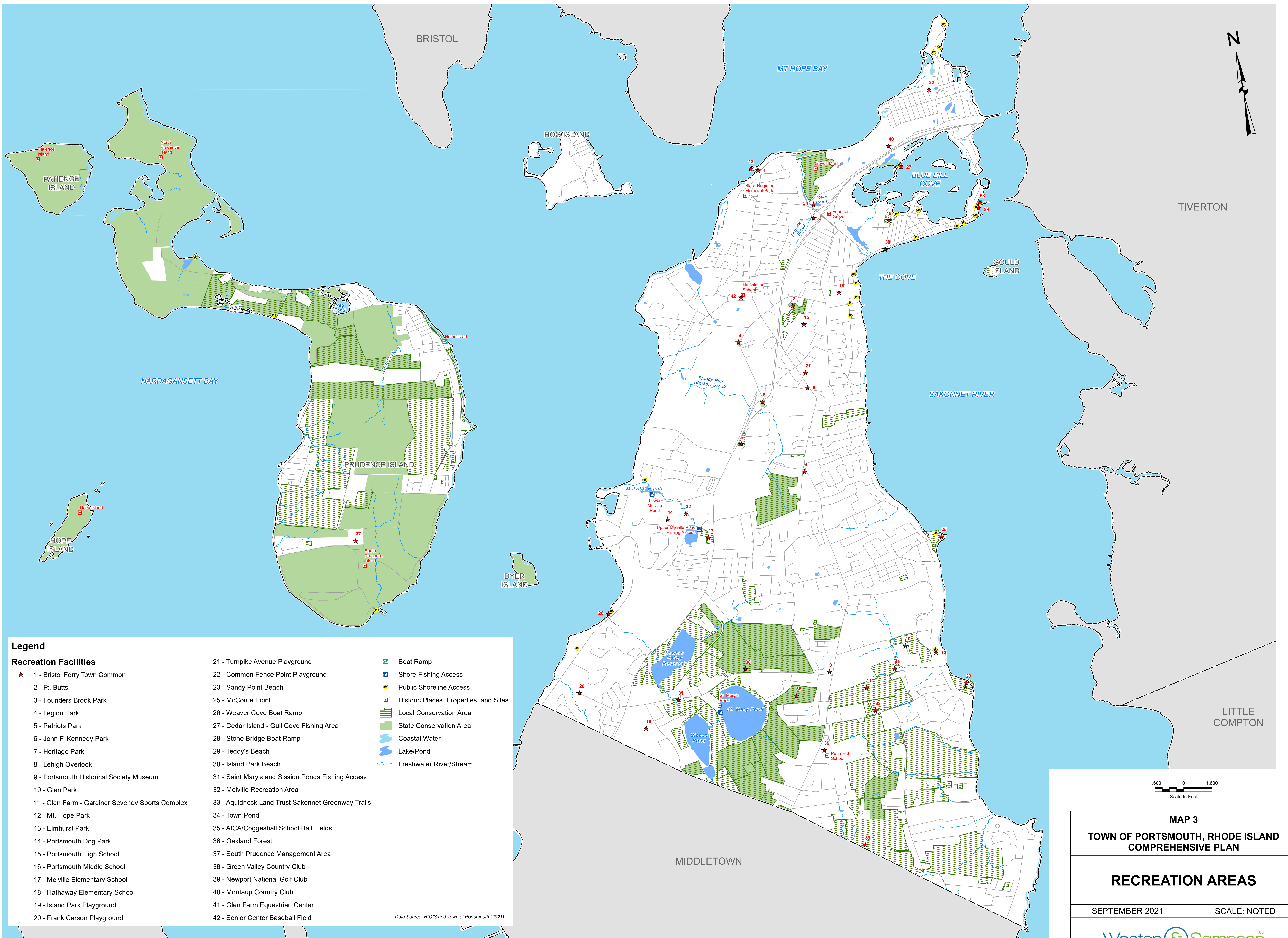
Date Source: RIGIS, Aquidneck Land Trust, and Town of Portsmouth (2021).



MAP 2
TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

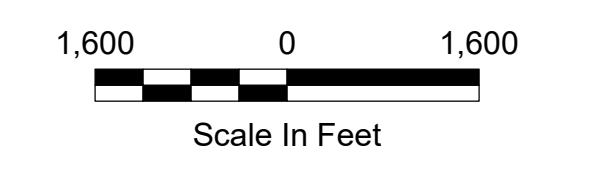
NATURAL RESOURCES -
CONSERVATION AREAS

SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED



Legend		
Recreation Facilities		
★ 1 - Bristol Ferry Town Common	21 - Turnpike Avenue Playground	🚤 Boat Ramp
2 - Ft. Butts	22 - Common Fence Point Playground	🏞️ Shore Fishing Access
3 - Founders Brook Park	23 - Sandy Point Beach	🌊 Public Shoreline Access
4 - Legion Park	25 - McCorrie Point	🏛️ Historic Places, Properties, and Sites
5 - Patriots Park	26 - Weaver Cove Boat Ramp	🌿 Local Conservation Area
6 - John F. Kennedy Park	27 - Cedar Island - Gull Cove Fishing Area	🌳 State Conservation Area
7 - Heritage Park	28 - Stone Bridge Boat Ramp	🌊 Coastal Water
8 - Lehigh Overlook	29 - Teddy's Beach	🌊 Lake/Pond
9 - Portsmouth Historical Society Museum	30 - Island Park Beach	🌊 Freshwater River/Stream
10 - Glen Park	31 - Saint Mary's and Sission Ponds Fishing Access	
11 - Glen Farm - Gardiner Seveney Sports Complex	32 - Melville Recreation Area	
12 - Mt. Hope Park	33 - Aquidneck Land Trust Sakonnet Greenway Trails	
13 - Elmhurst Park	34 - Town Pond	
14 - Portsmouth Dog Park	35 - AICA/Coggeshall School Ball Fields	
15 - Portsmouth High School	36 - Oakland Forest	
16 - Portsmouth Middle School	37 - South Prudence Management Area	
17 - Melville Elementary School	38 - Green Valley Country Club	
18 - Hathaway Elementary School	39 - Newport National Golf Club	
19 - Island Park Playground	40 - Montaup Country Club	
20 - Frank Carson Playground	41 - Glen Farm Equestrian Center	
	42 - Senior Center Baseball Field	

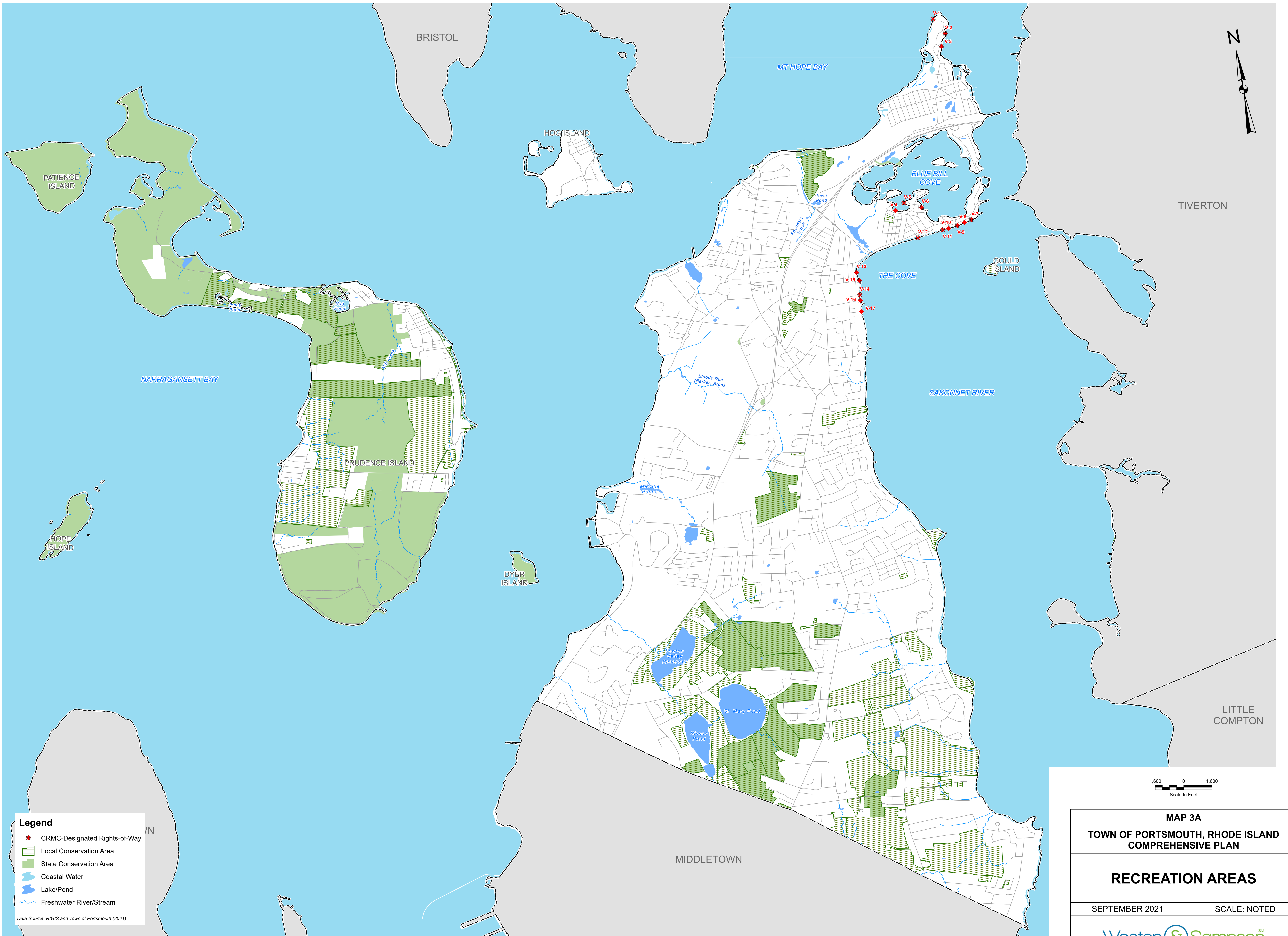
Data Source: RIGIS and Town of Portsmouth (2021).



MAP 3
TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

RECREATION AREAS

SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED



Legend

- * CRMC-Designated Rights-of-Way
- Local Conservation Area
- State Conservation Area
- Coastal Water
- Lake/Pond
- Freshwater River/Stream

Data Source: RIGIS and Town of Portsmouth (2021).

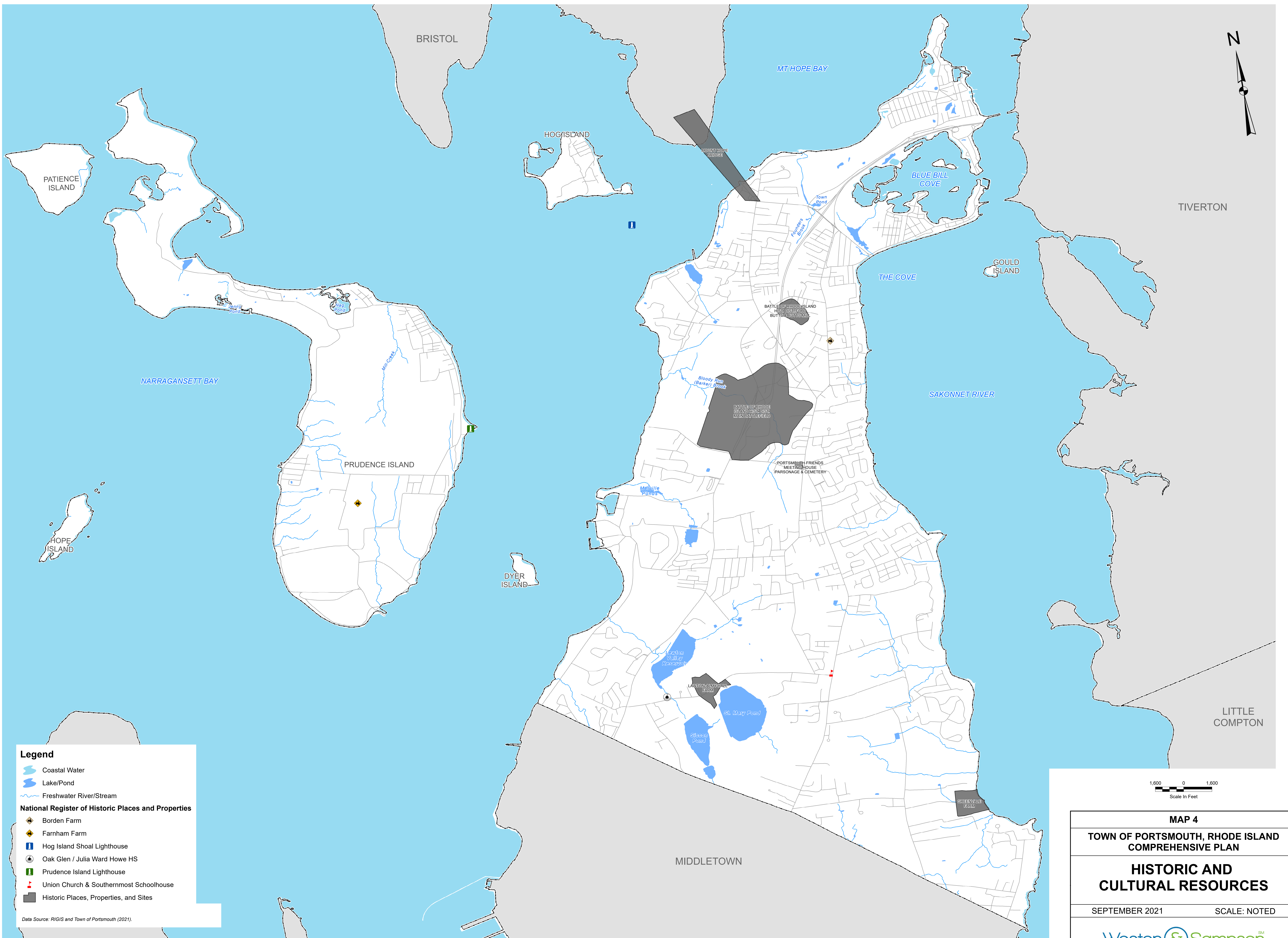


MAP 3A
TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

RECREATION AREAS

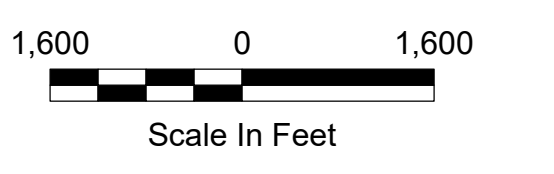
SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED

Weston & SampsonSM



- Legend**
- Coastal Water
 - Lake/Pond
 - ~ Freshwater River/Stream
 - National Register of Historic Places and Properties**
 - ◆ Borden Farm
 - ◆ Farnham Farm
 - Hog Island Shoal Lighthouse
 - Oak Glen / Julia Ward Howe HS
 - Prudence Island Lighthouse
 - Union Church & Southernmost Schoolhouse
 - Historic Places, Properties, and Sites

Data Source: RIGIS and Town of Portsmouth (2021).

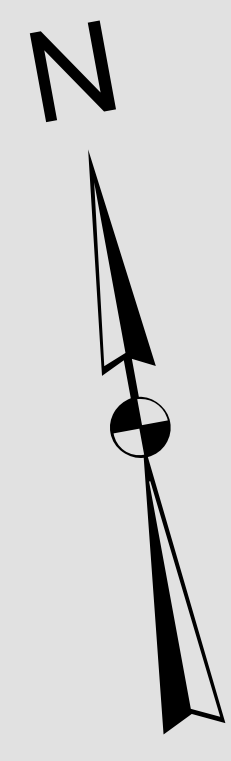
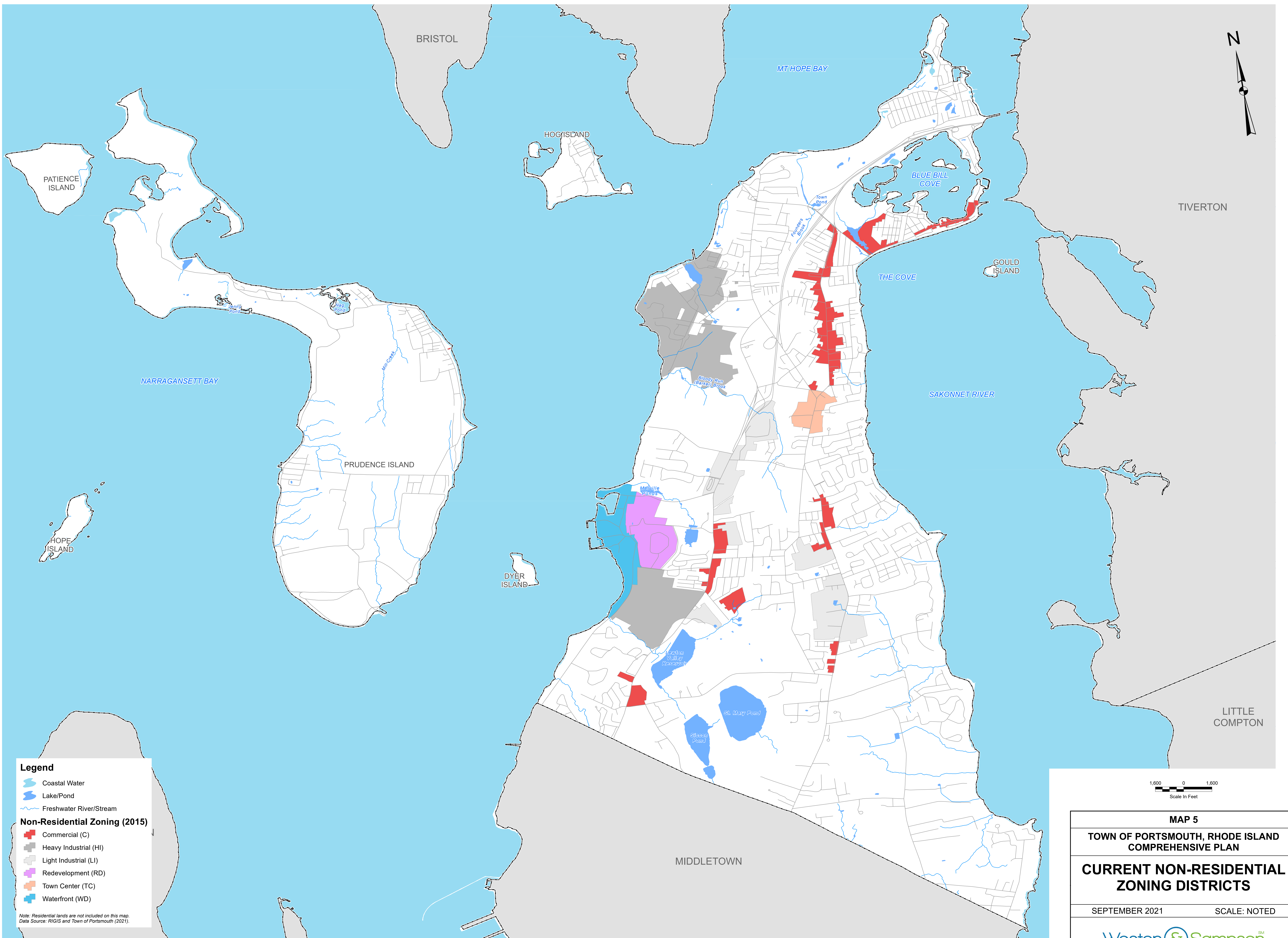


MAP 4
TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

HISTORIC AND
CULTURAL RESOURCES

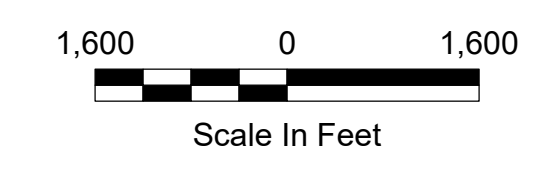
SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED





- Legend**
- Coastal Water
 - Lake/Pond
 - Freshwater River/Stream
 - Non-Residential Zoning (2015)**
 - Commercial (C)
 - Heavy Industrial (HI)
 - Light Industrial (LI)
 - Redevelopment (RD)
 - Town Center (TC)
 - Waterfront (WD)

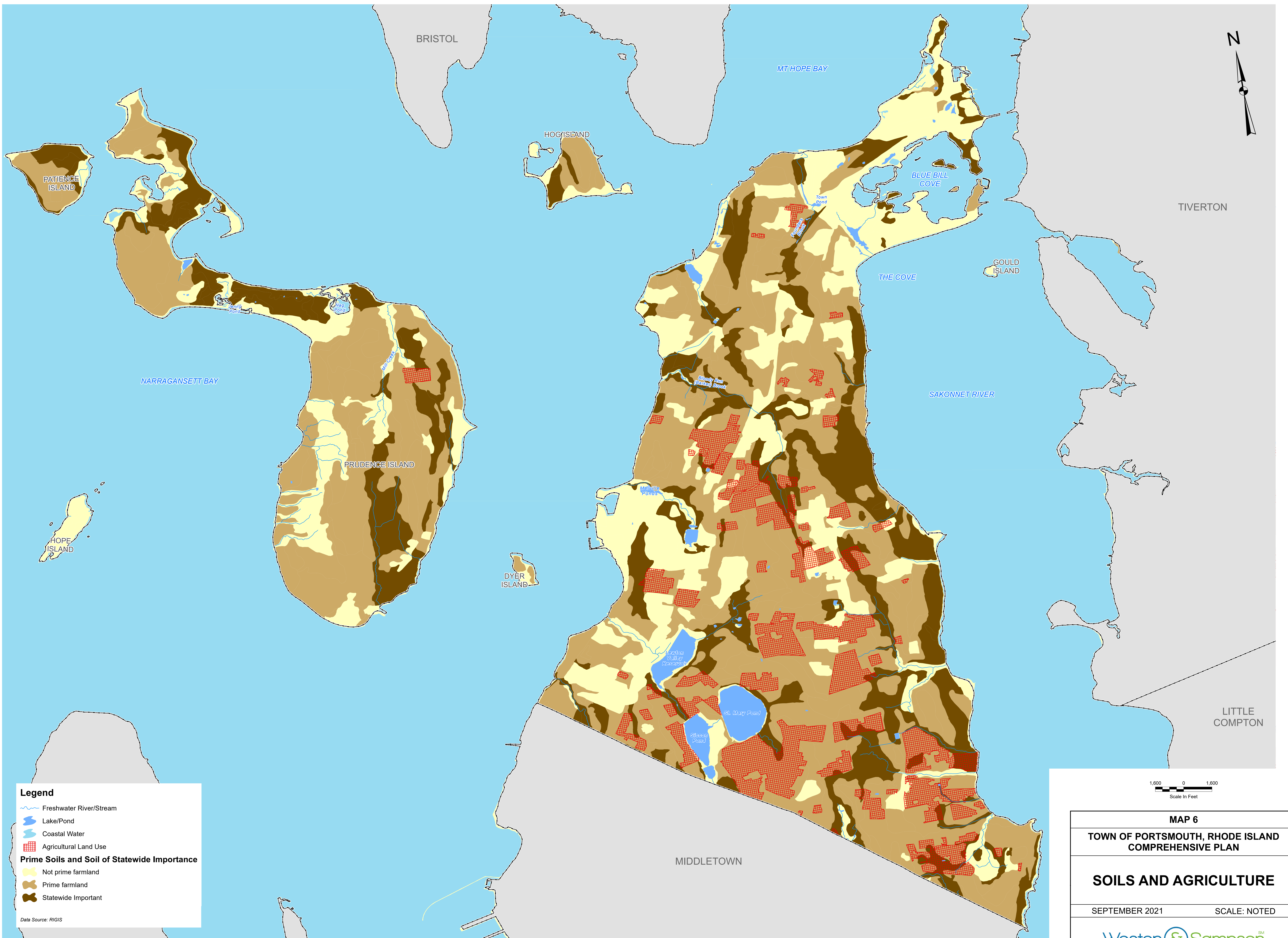
Note: Residential lands are not included on this map.
Data Source: RIGIS and Town of Portsmouth (2021).



MAP 5
TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
CURRENT NON-RESIDENTIAL
ZONING DISTRICTS

SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED





Legend

- Freshwater River/Stream
- Lake/Pond
- Coastal Water
- Agricultural Land Use

Prime Soils and Soil of Statewide Importance

- Not prime farmland
- Prime farmland
- Statewide Important

Data Source: RIGIS

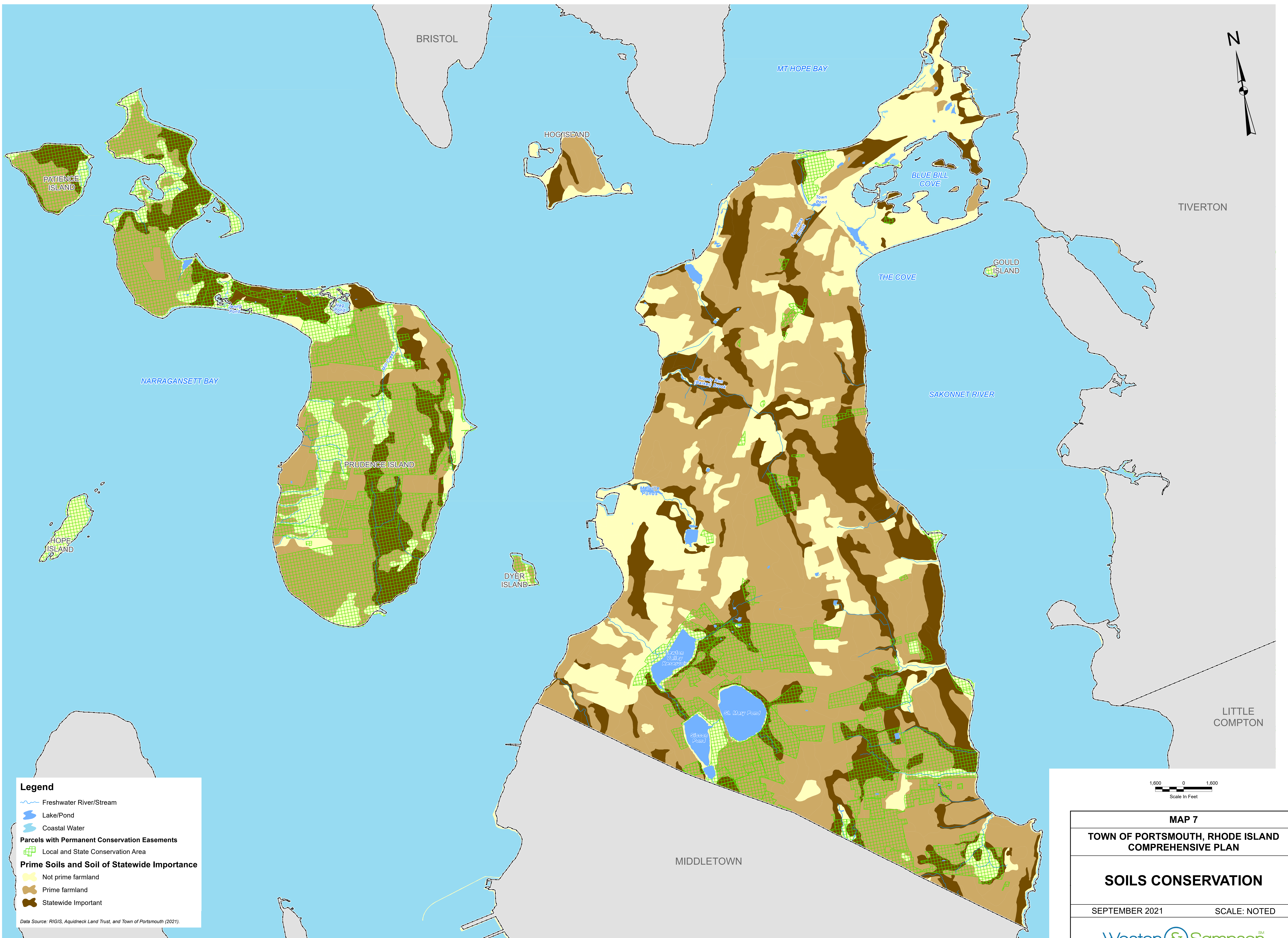


MAP 6
TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SOILS AND AGRICULTURE

SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED





BRISTOL

MT HOPE BAY

HOG ISLAND

TIVERTON

BLUE BILL COVE

GOULD ISLAND

THE COVE

SAKONNET RIVER

NARRAGANSETT BAY

PRUDENCE ISLAND

DYER ISLAND

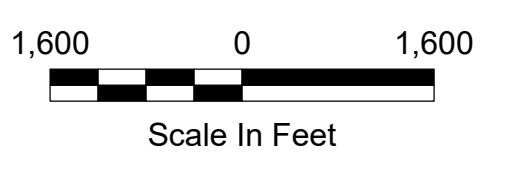
LITTLE COMPTON

MIDDLETOWN

Legend

- Freshwater River/Stream
- Lake/Pond
- Coastal Water
- Parcels with Permanent Conservation Easements**
- Local and State Conservation Area
- Prime Soils and Soil of Statewide Importance**
- Not prime farmland
- Prime farmland
- Statewide Important

Data Source: RIGIS, Aquidneck Land Trust, and Town of Portsmouth (2021).

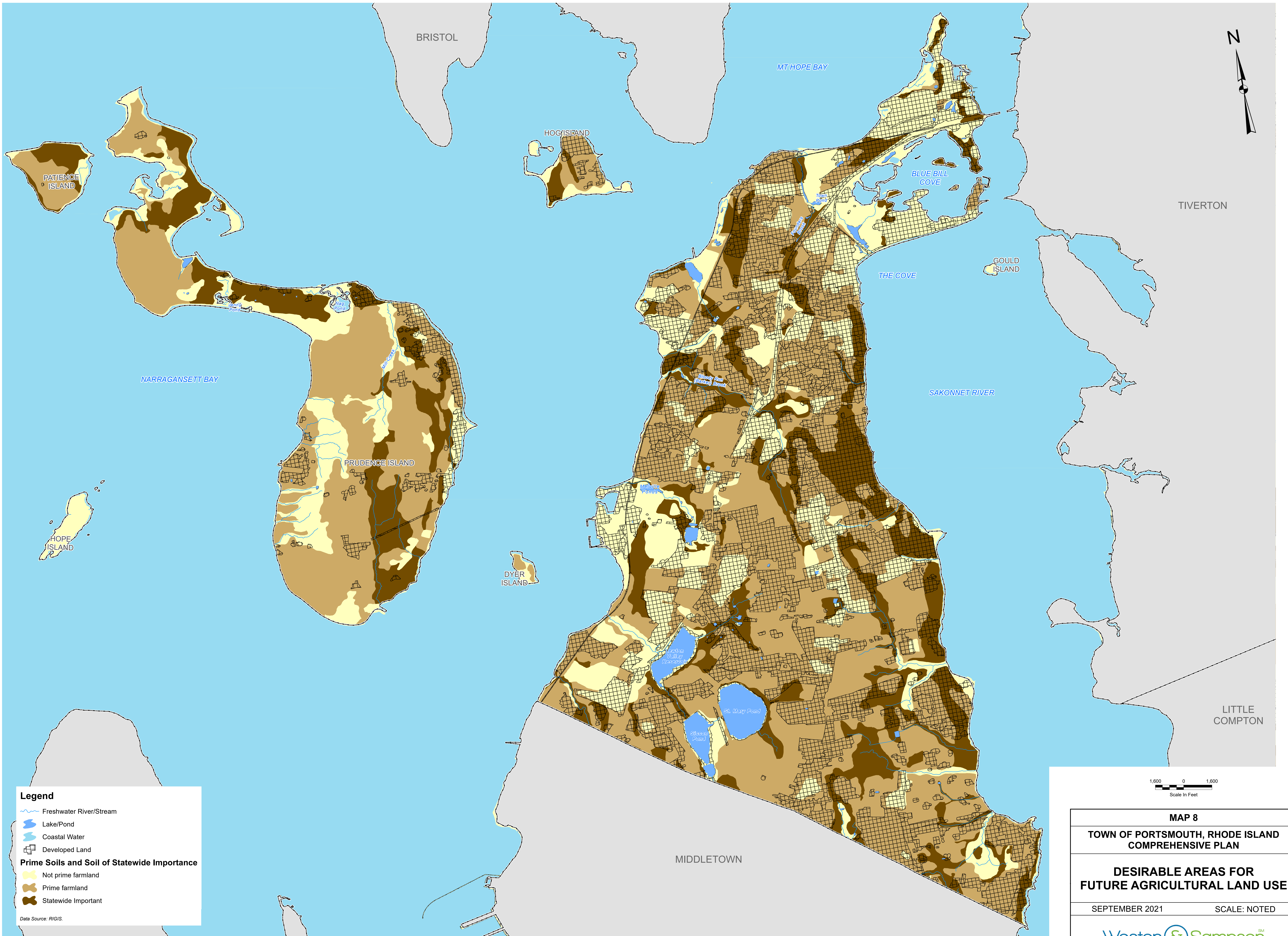


MAP 7

TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SOILS CONSERVATION

SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED



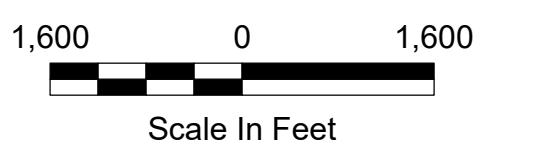
Legend

- Freshwater River/Stream
- Lake/Pond
- Coastal Water
- Developed Land

Prime Soils and Soil of Statewide Importance

- Not prime farmland
- Prime farmland
- Statewide Important

Data Source: RIGIS.

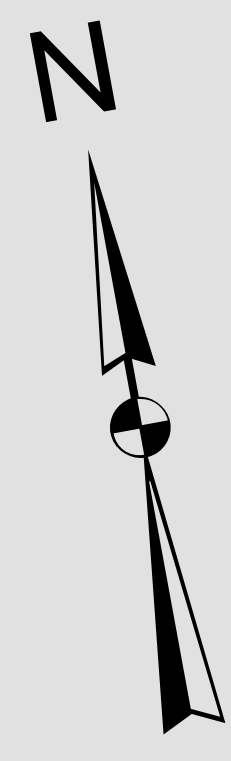
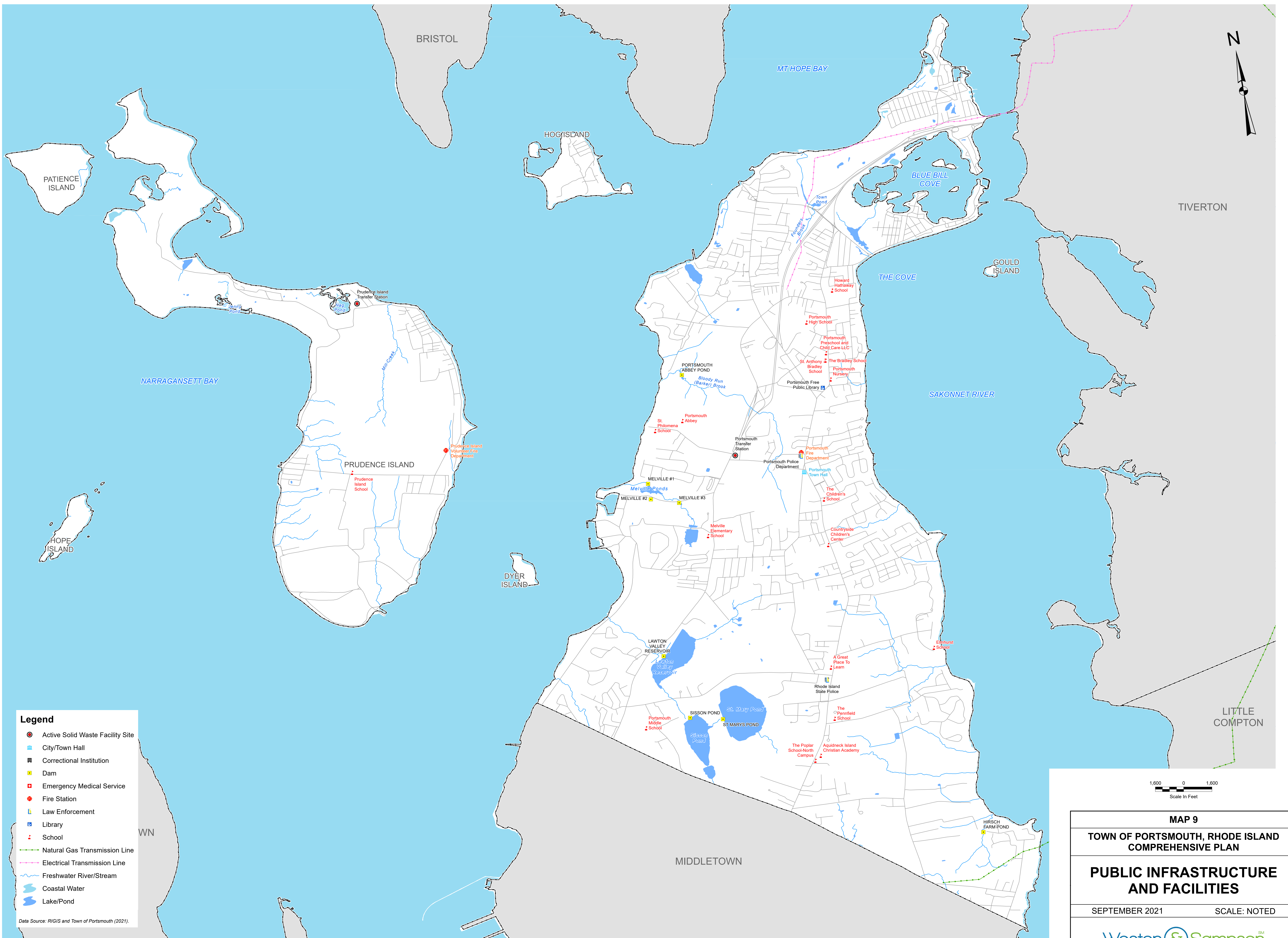


MAP 8
TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

DESIRABLE AREAS FOR
FUTURE AGRICULTURAL LAND USE

SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED





- Legend**
- Active Solid Waste Facility Site
 - City/Town Hall
 - Correctional Institution
 - Dam
 - + Emergency Medical Service
 - Fire Station
 - Law Enforcement
 - Library
 - + School
 - Natural Gas Transmission Line
 - Electrical Transmission Line
 - Freshwater River/Stream
 - Coastal Water
 - Lake/Pond

Data Source: RIGIS and Town of Portsmouth (2021).

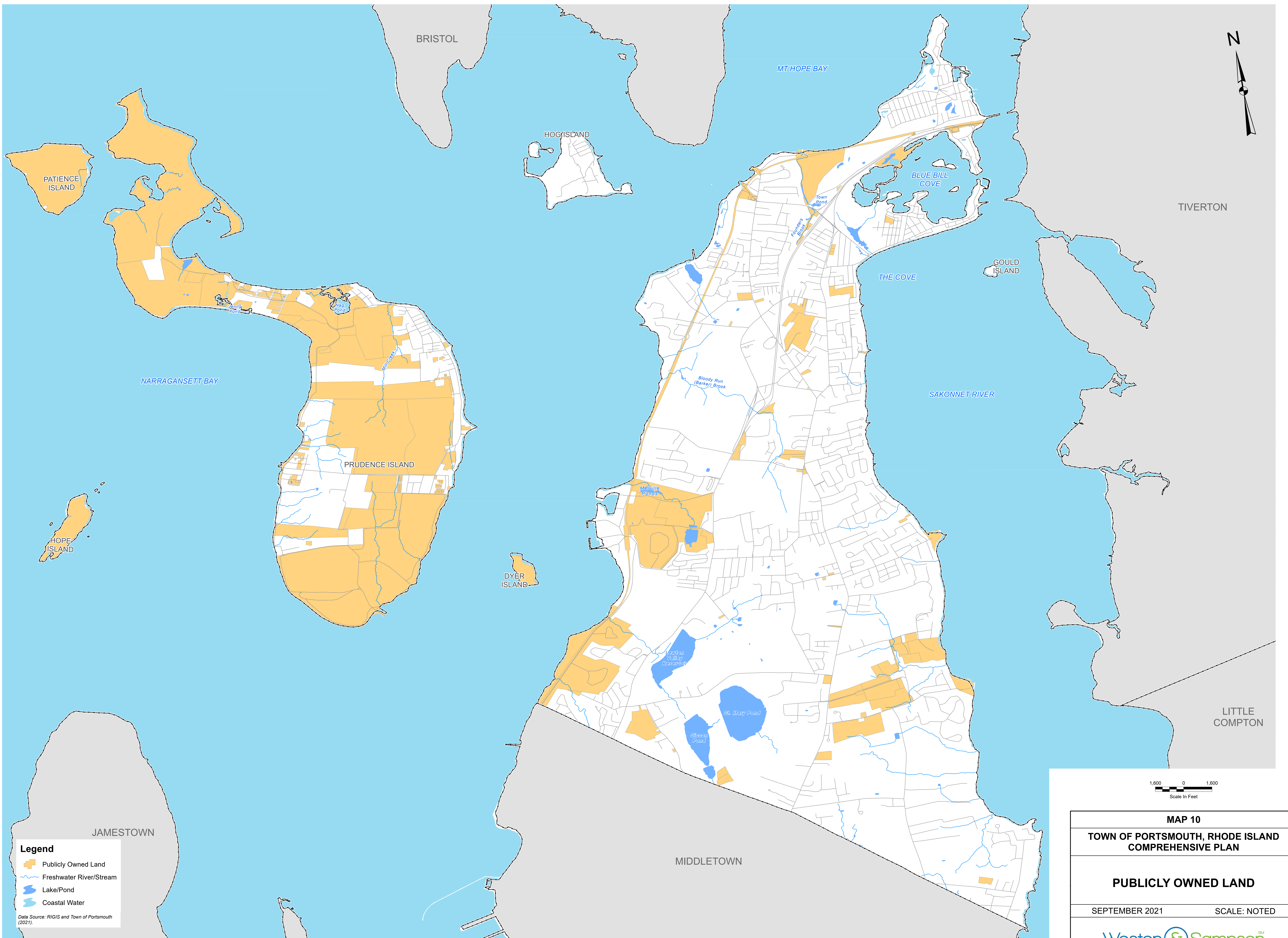


MAP 9
TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE
AND FACILITIES

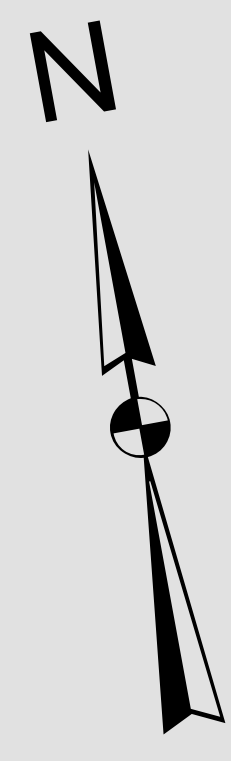
SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED





BRISTOL

MT HOPE BAY



TIVERTON

HOG ISLAND

PATIENCE ISLAND

BLUE BILL COVE

GOULD ISLAND

NARRAGANSETT BAY

THE COVE

SAKONNET RIVER

PRUDENCE ISLAND

HOPE ISLAND

DYER ISLAND

LITTLE COMPTON

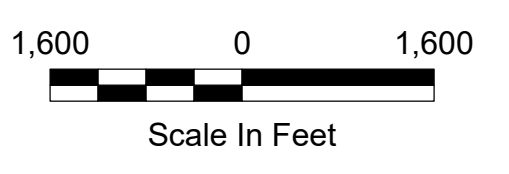
JAMESTOWN

MIDDLETOWN

Legend

- Publicly Owned Land
- Freshwater River/Stream
- Lake/Pond
- Coastal Water

Data Source: RIGIS and Town of Portsmouth (2021).

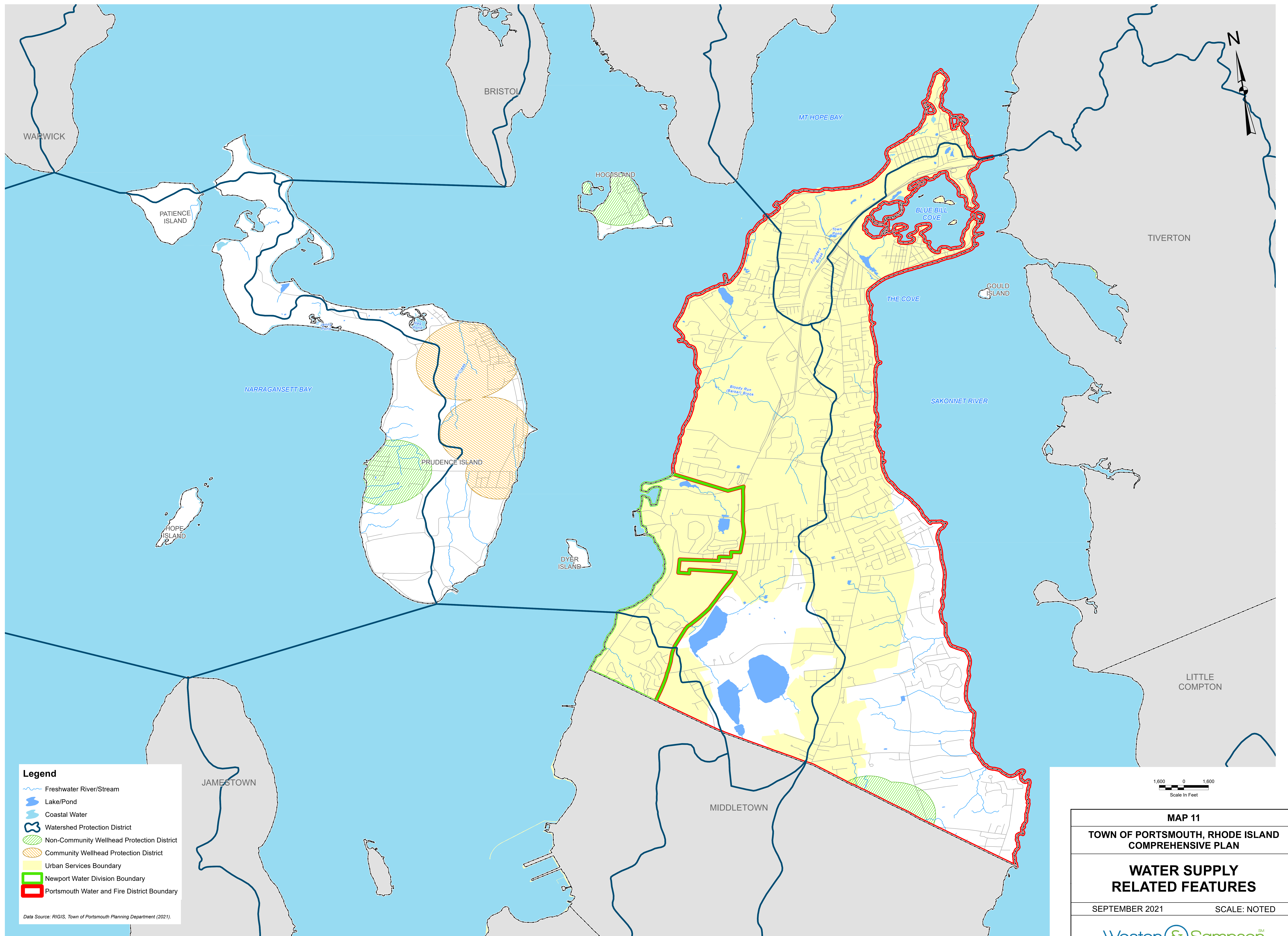


MAP 10





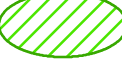

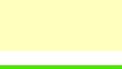
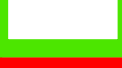

TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

PUBLICLY OWNED LAND

SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED



Legend

-  Freshwater River/Stream
-  Lake/Pond
-  Coastal Water
-  Watershed Protection District
-  Non-Community Wellhead Protection District
-  Community Wellhead Protection District
-  Urban Services Boundary
-  Newport Water Division Boundary
-  Portsmouth Water and Fire District Boundary


Data Source: RIGIS, Town of Portsmouth Planning Department (2021).

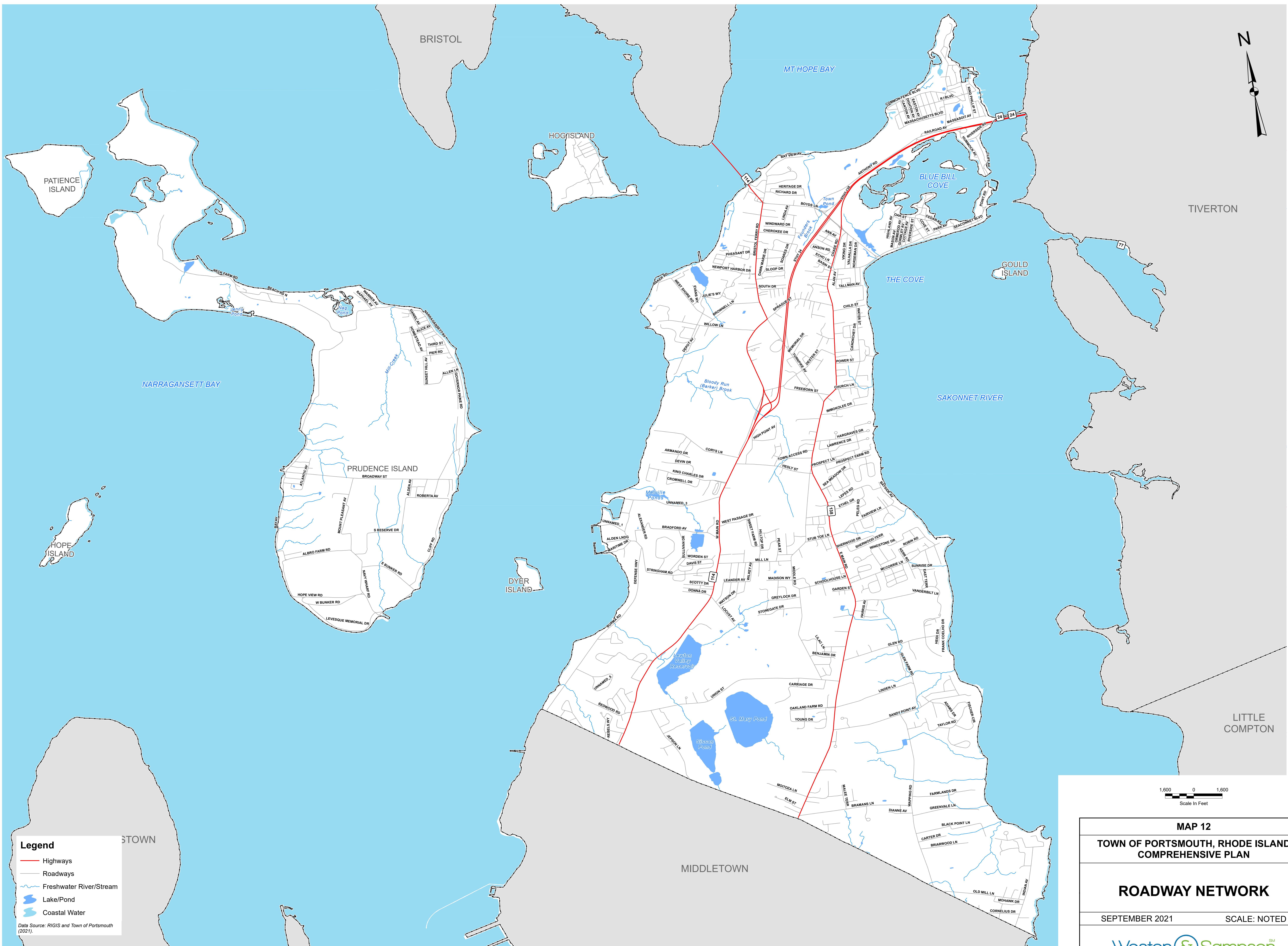


MAP 11
TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WATER SUPPLY
RELATED FEATURES

SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED





Legend

- Highways
- Roadways
- Freshwater River/Stream
- Lake/Pond
- Coastal Water

Data Source: RIGIS and Town of Portsmouth (2021).

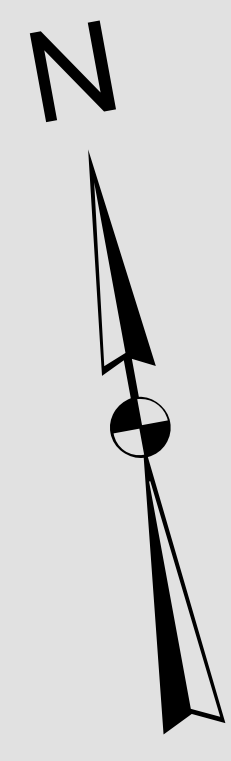
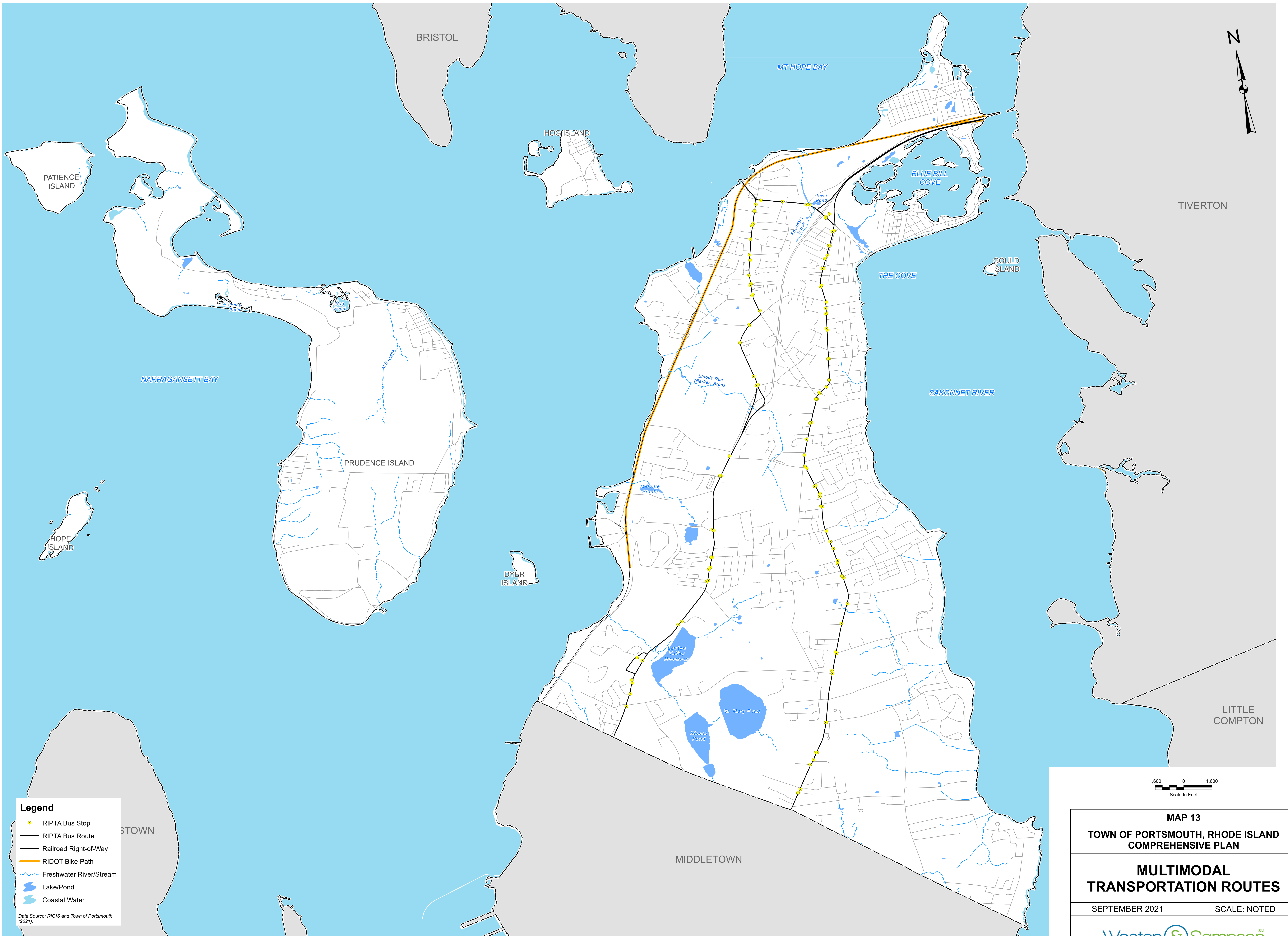
1,600 0 1,600
Scale In Feet

MAP 12
TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

ROADWAY NETWORK

SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED





- Legend**
- RIPTA Bus Stop
 - RIPTA Bus Route
 - Railroad Right-of-Way
 - RIDOT Bike Path
 - Freshwater River/Stream
 - Lake/Pond
 - Coastal Water

Data Source: RIGIS and Town of Portsmouth (2021).

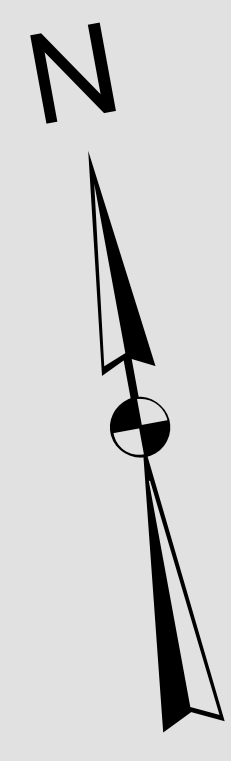
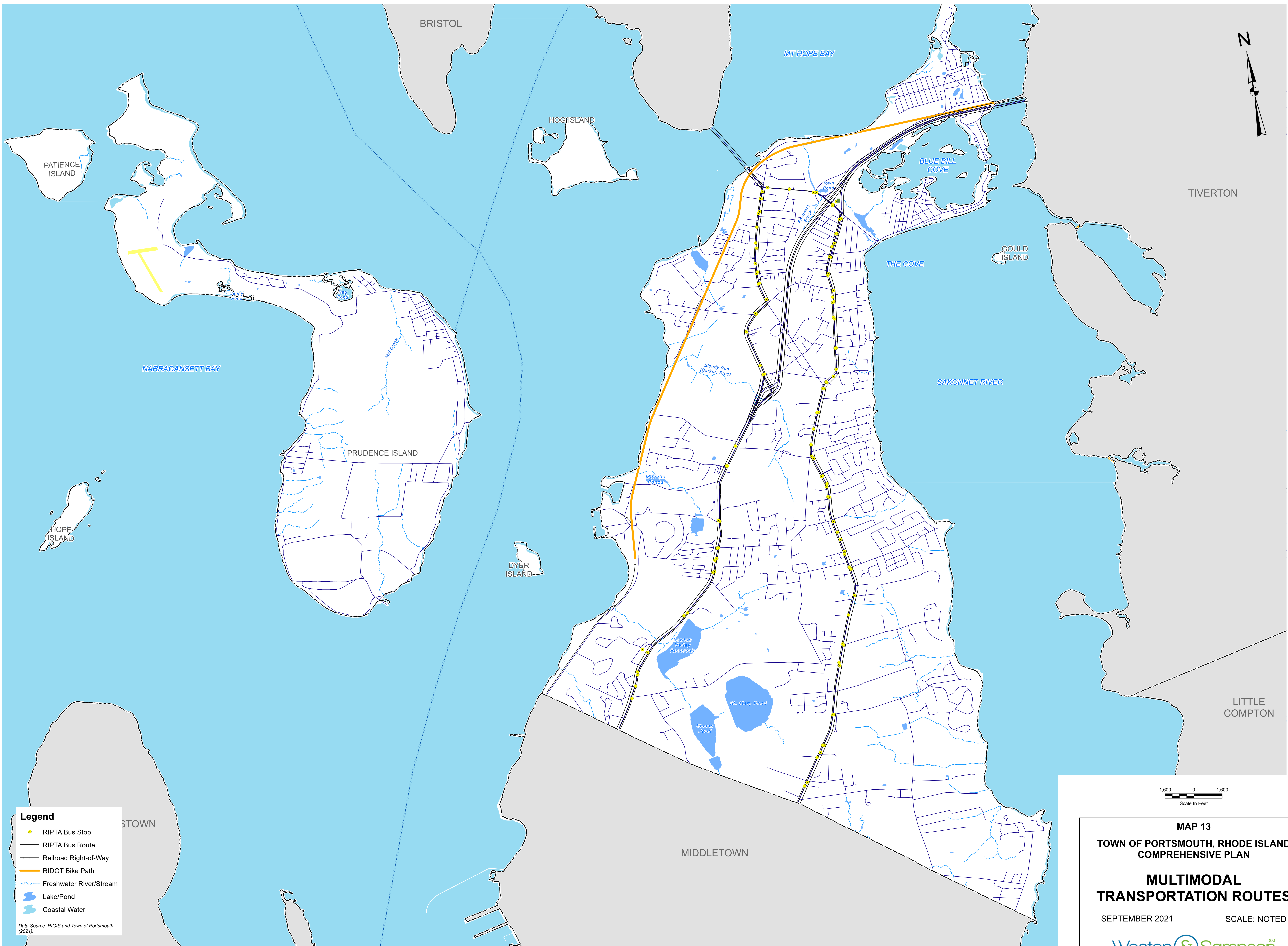


MAP 13
TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

MULTIMODAL
TRANSPORTATION ROUTES

SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED

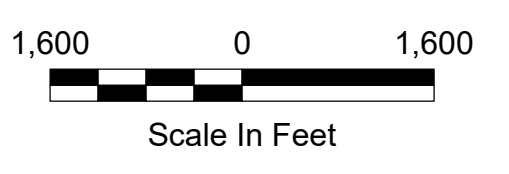




Legend

- RIPTA Bus Stop
- RIPTA Bus Route
- Railroad Right-of-Way
- RIDOT Bike Path
- ~ Freshwater River/Stream
- Lake/Pond
- Coastal Water

Data Source: RIGIS and Town of Portsmouth (2021).

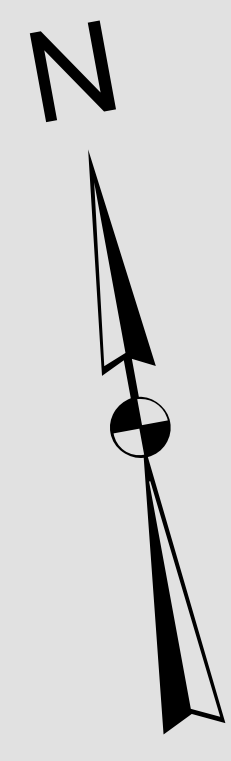
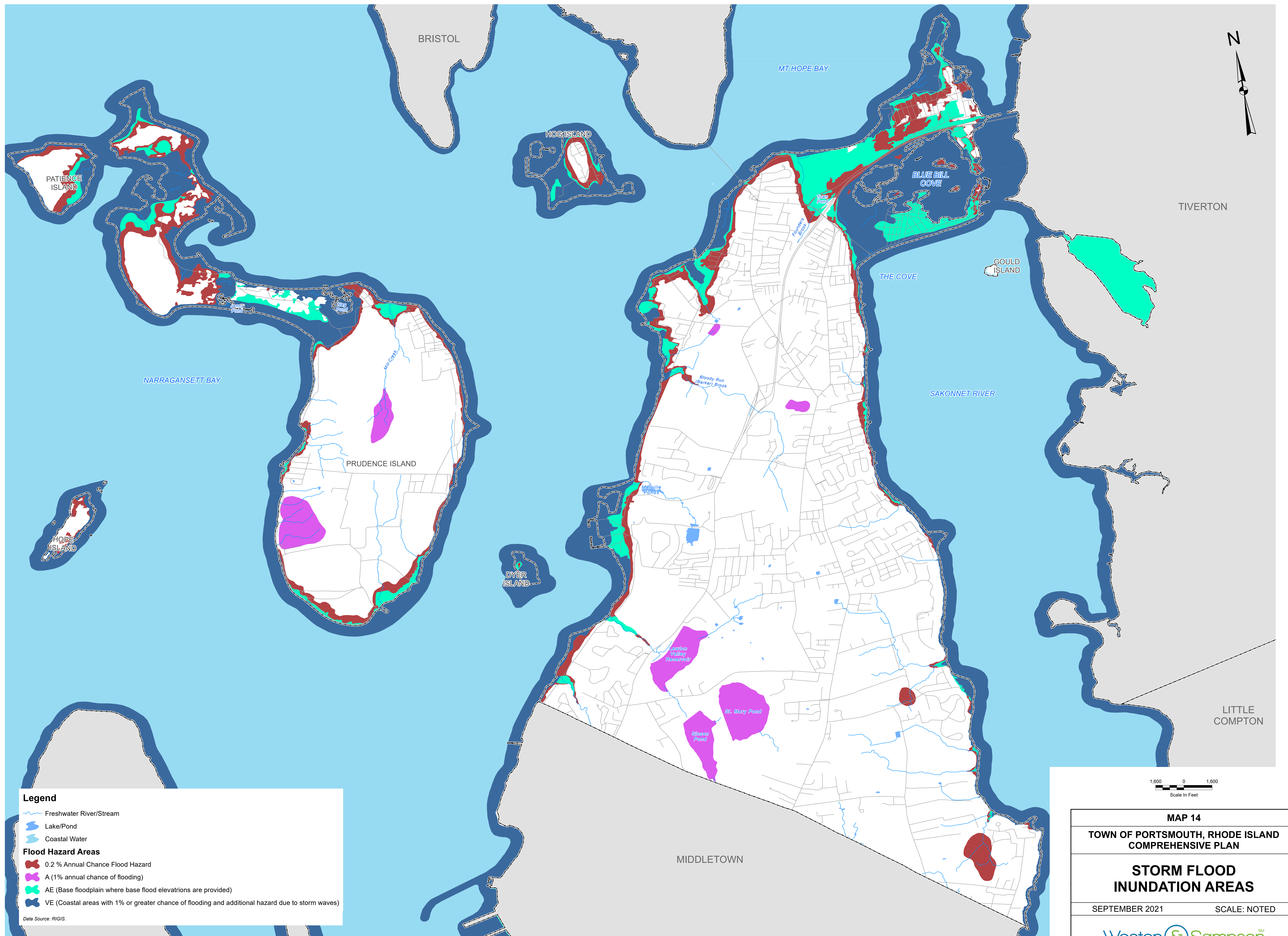


MAP 13
TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

MULTIMODAL
TRANSPORTATION ROUTES

SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED





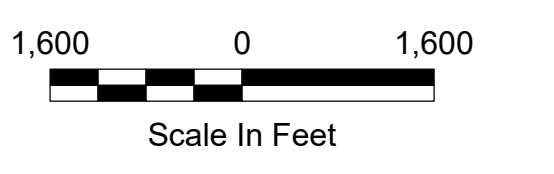
Legend

- Freshwater River/Stream
- Lake/Pond
- Coastal Water

Flood Hazard Areas

- 0.2 % Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- A (1% annual chance of flooding)
- AE (Base floodplain where base flood elevations are provided)
- VE (Coastal areas with 1% or greater chance of flooding and additional hazard due to storm waves)

Data Source: RIGIS.

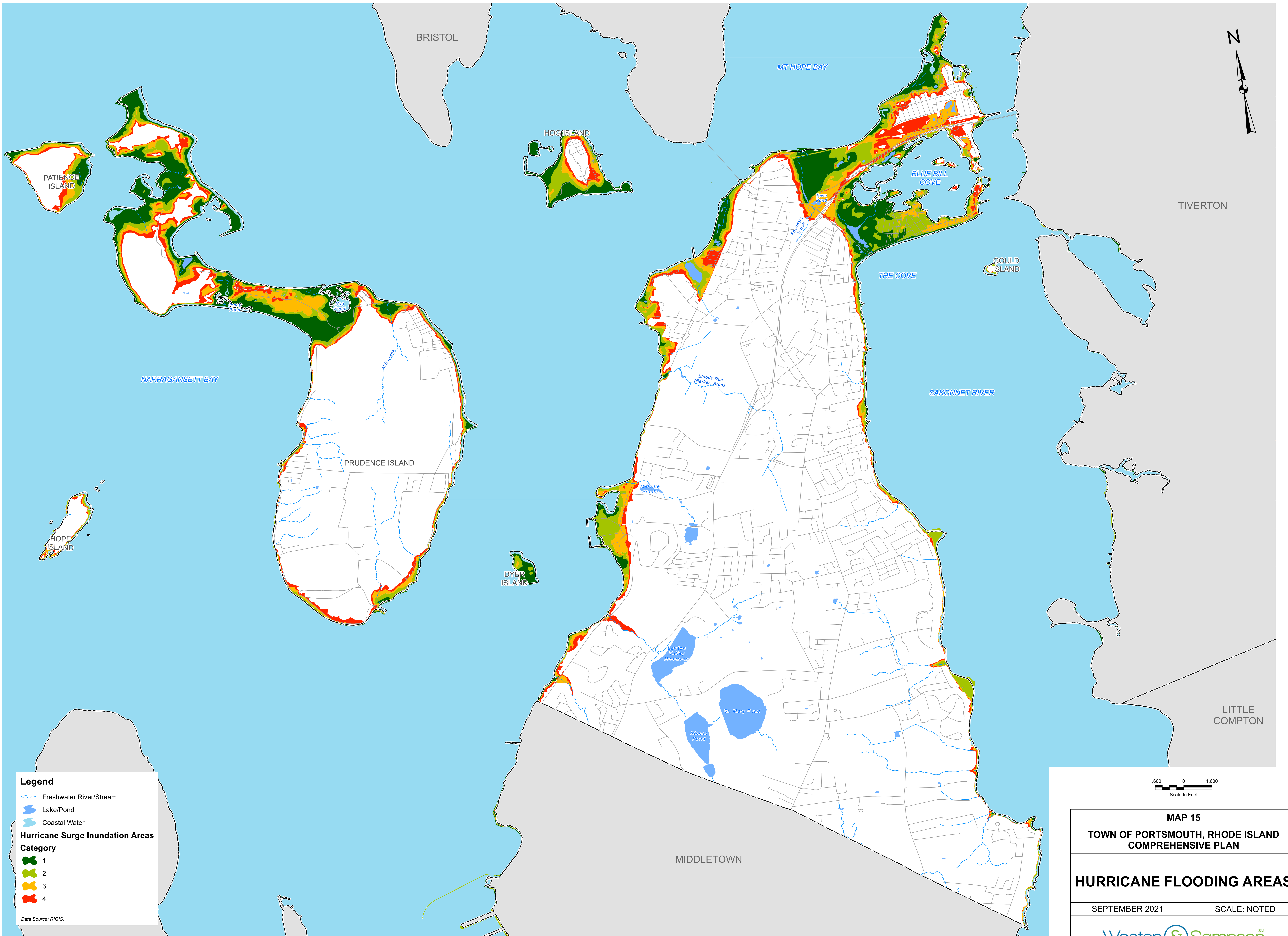


MAP 14

**TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**STORM FLOOD
INUNDATION AREAS**

SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED



BRISTOL

MT HOPE BAY

HOG ISLAND

BLUE BILL COVE

TIVERTON

GOULD ISLAND

THE COVE

NARRAGANSETT BAY

SAKONNET RIVER

PRUDENCE ISLAND

Bloody Run (Barker) Brook

DYER ISLAND

Melville Ponds

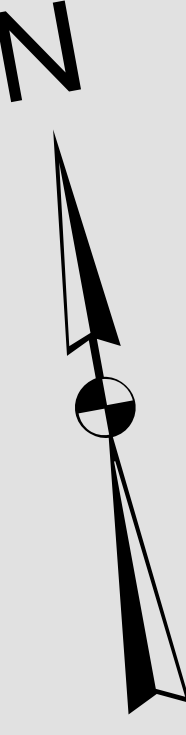
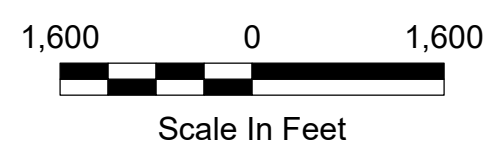
LITTLE COMPTON

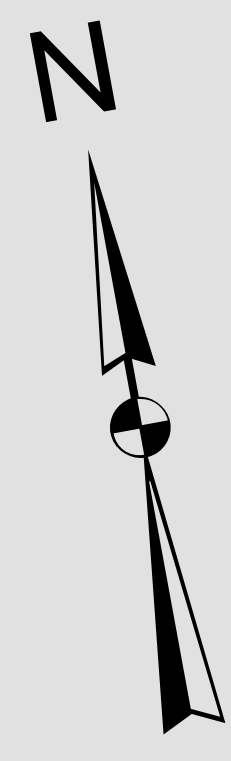
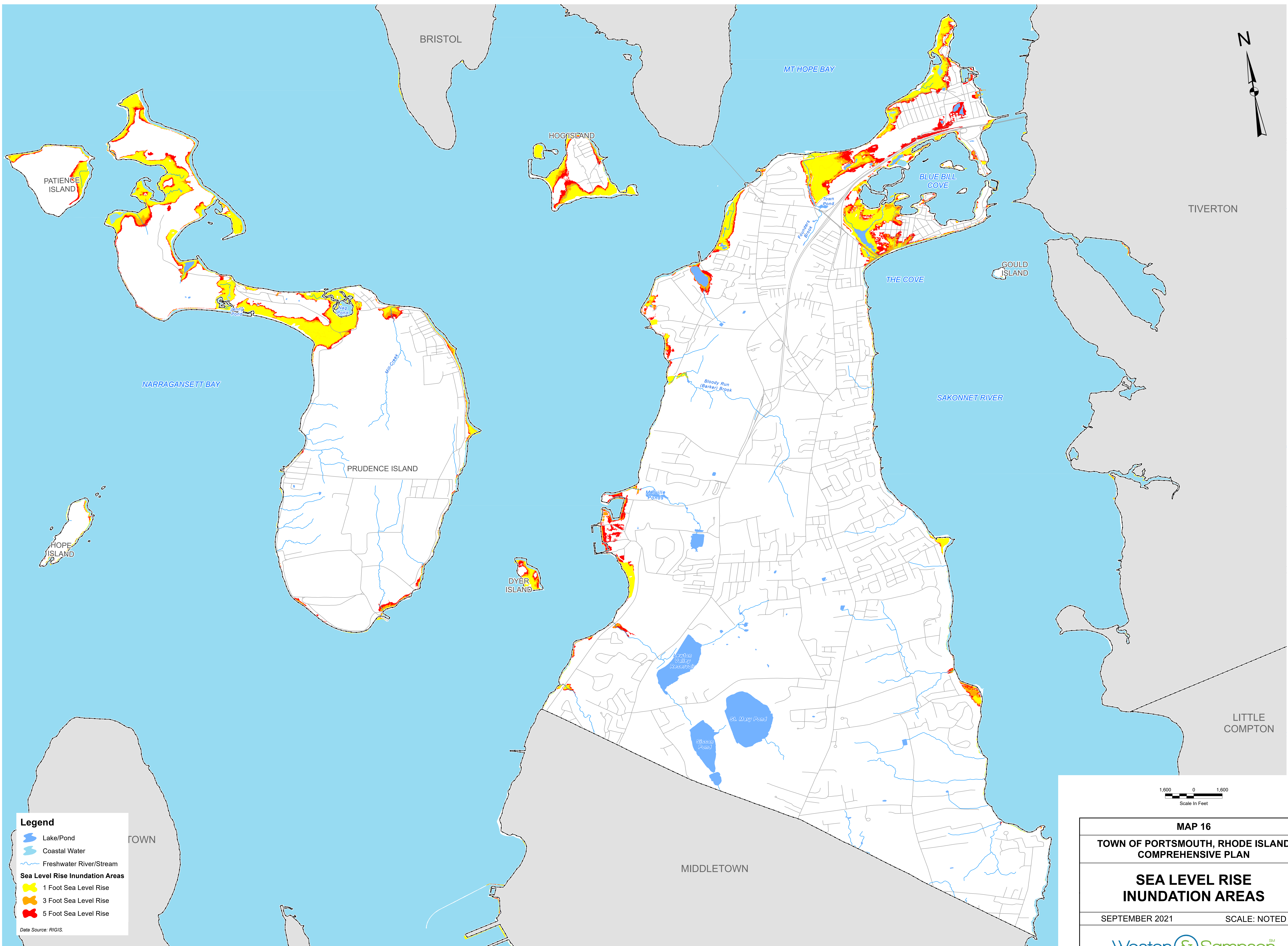
MIDDLETOWN

Wampanoag Valley Reservoir

St. Mary Pond

Slason Pond





Legend

- Lake/Pond
- Coastal Water
- Freshwater River/Stream

Sea Level Rise Inundation Areas

- 1 Foot Sea Level Rise
- 3 Foot Sea Level Rise
- 5 Foot Sea Level Rise

Data Source: RIGIS.

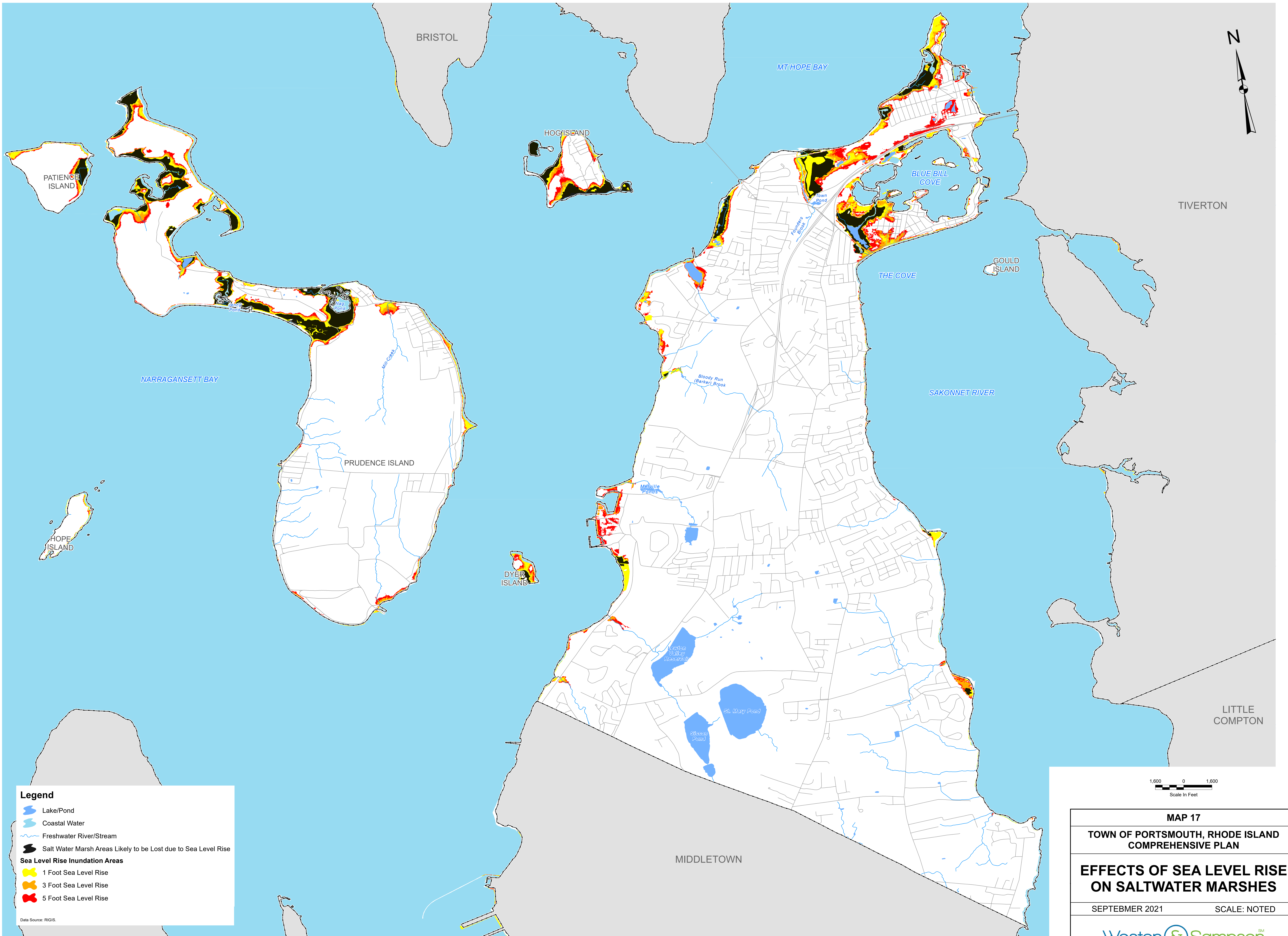


MAP 16

**TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**SEA LEVEL RISE
INUNDATION AREAS**

SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED



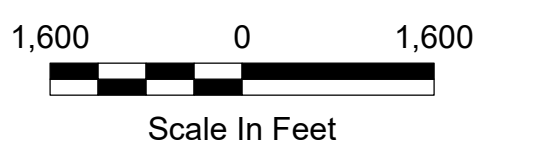
Legend

- Lake/Pond
- Coastal Water
- Freshwater River/Stream
- Salt Water Marsh Areas Likely to be Lost due to Sea Level Rise

Sea Level Rise Inundation Areas

- 1 Foot Sea Level Rise
- 3 Foot Sea Level Rise
- 5 Foot Sea Level Rise

Data Source: RIGIS.



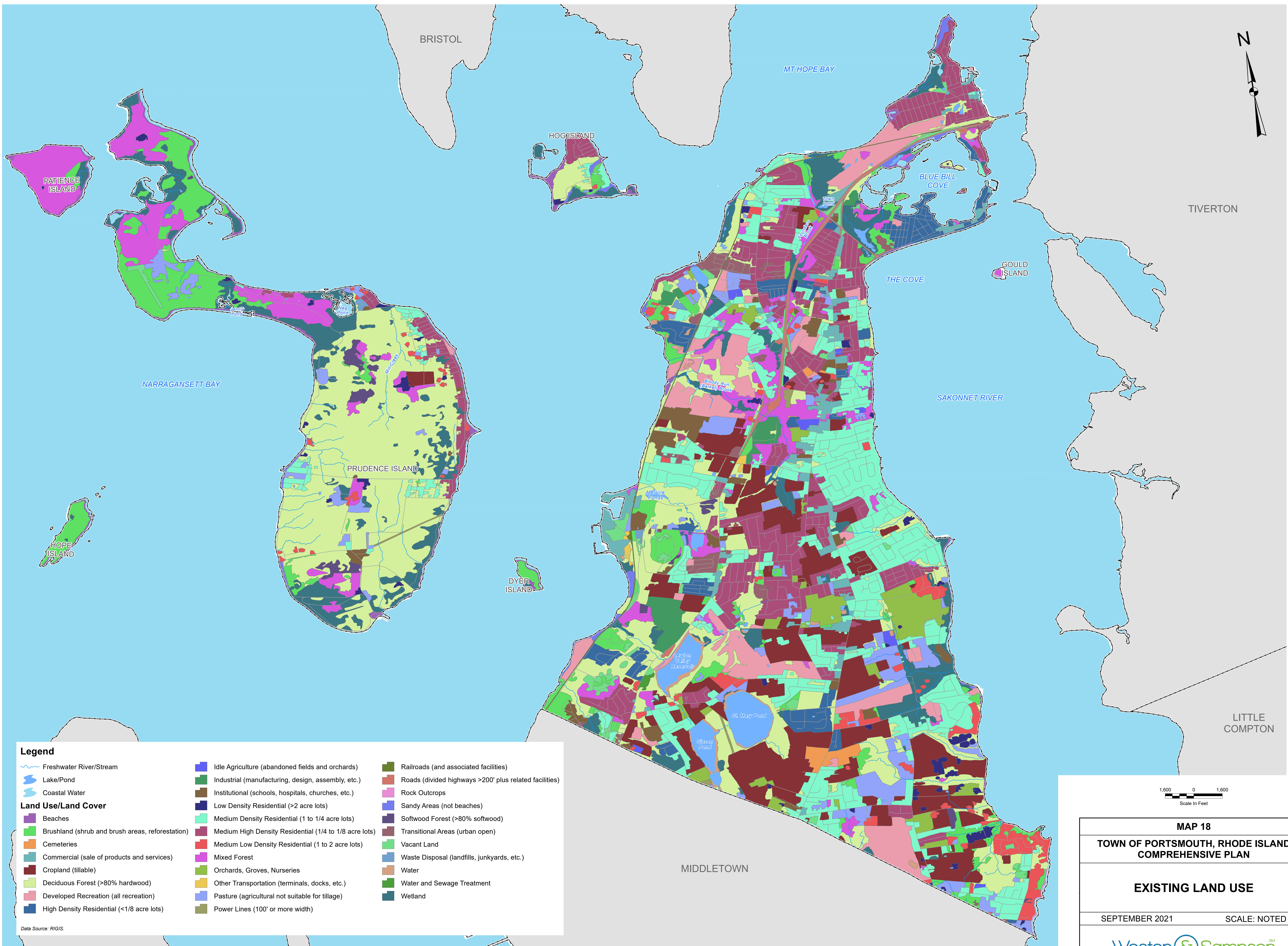
MAP 17

**TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**EFFECTS OF SEA LEVEL RISE
ON SALTWATER MARSHES**

SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED

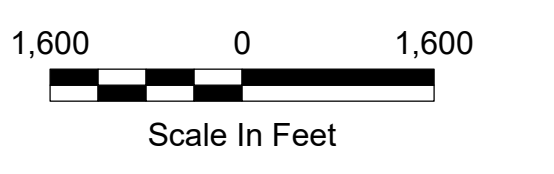




Legend

- Freshwater River/Stream
- Lake/Pond
- Coastal Water
- Land Use/Land Cover**
- Beaches
- Brushland (shrub and brush areas, reforestation)
- Cemeteries
- Commercial (sale of products and services)
- Cropland (tillable)
- Deciduous Forest (>80% hardwood)
- Developed Recreation (all recreation)
- High Density Residential (<1/8 acre lots)
- Idle Agriculture (abandoned fields and orchards)
- Industrial (manufacturing, design, assembly, etc.)
- Institutional (schools, hospitals, churches, etc.)
- Low Density Residential (>2 acre lots)
- Medium Density Residential (1 to 1/4 acre lots)
- Medium High Density Residential (1/4 to 1/8 acre lots)
- Medium Low Density Residential (1 to 2 acre lots)
- Mixed Forest
- Orchards, Groves, Nurseries
- Other Transportation (terminals, docks, etc.)
- Pasture (agricultural not suitable for tillage)
- Power Lines (100' or more width)
- Railroads (and associated facilities)
- Roads (divided highways >200' plus related facilities)
- Rock Outcrops
- Sandy Areas (not beaches)
- Softwood Forest (>80% softwood)
- Transitional Areas (urban open)
- Vacant Land
- Waste Disposal (landfills, junkyards, etc.)
- Water
- Water and Sewage Treatment
- Wetland

Data Source: RIGIS.

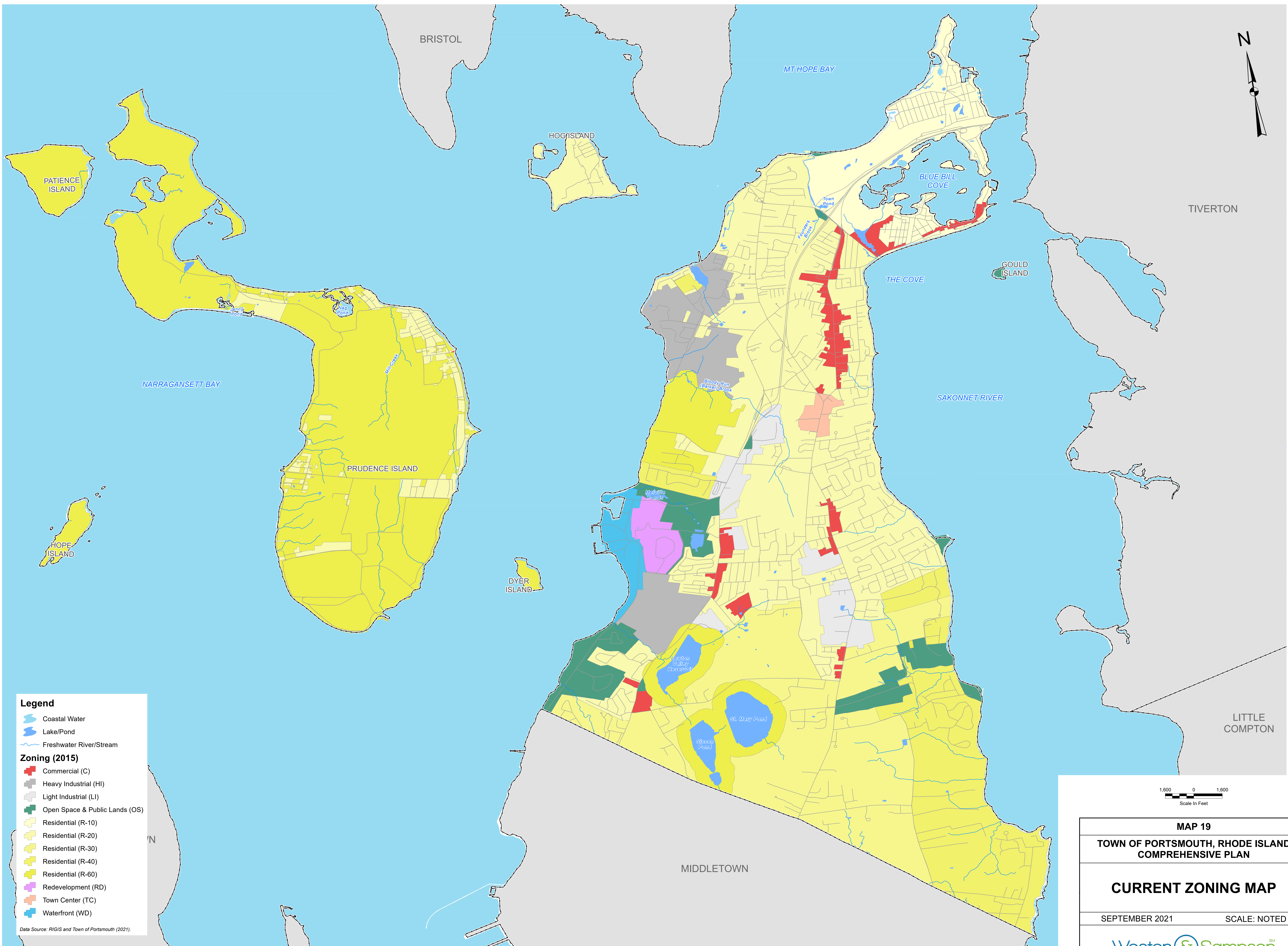


MAP 18
TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

EXISTING LAND USE

SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED

Weston & SampsonSM



BRISTOL

MT HOPE BAY

HOG ISLAND

BLUE BILL COVE

TIVERTON

GOULD ISLAND

THE COVE

SAKONNET RIVER

NARRAGANSETT BAY




PRUDENCE ISLAND

DYER ISLAND













LITTLE COMPTON

MIDDLETOWN

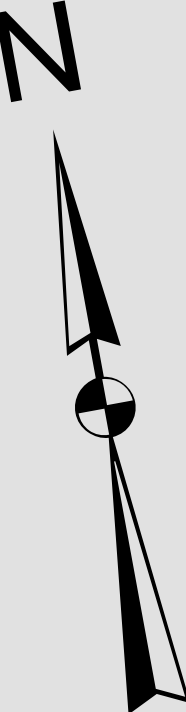
Legend

-  Coastal Water
-  Lake/Pond
-  Freshwater River/Stream

Zoning (2015)

-  Commercial (C)
-  Heavy Industrial (HI)
-  Light Industrial (LI)
-  Open Space & Public Lands (OS)
-  Residential (R-10)
-  Residential (R-20)
-  Residential (R-30)
-  Residential (R-40)
-  Residential (R-60)
-  Redevelopment (RD)
-  Town Center (TC)
-  Waterfront (WD)

Data Source: RIGIS and Town of Portsmouth (2021).




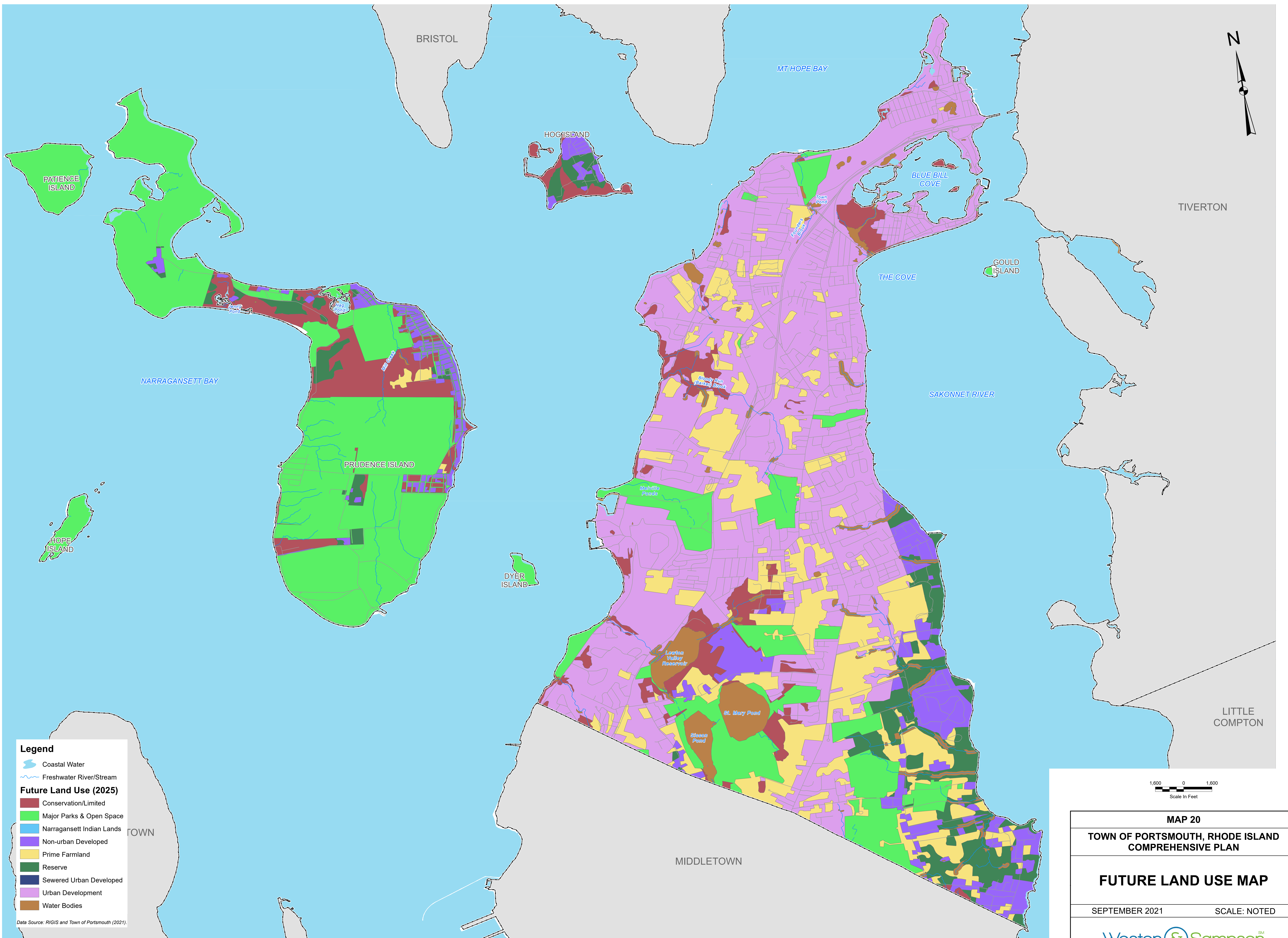
MAP 19

TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

CURRENT ZONING MAP

SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED





BRISTOL

MT HOPE BAY

HOG ISLAND

TIVERTON

PATIENCE ISLAND

BLUE BILL COVE

GOULD ISLAND

NARRAGANSETT BAY

THE COVE

SAKONNET RIVER

PRUDENCE ISLAND

DYER ISLAND

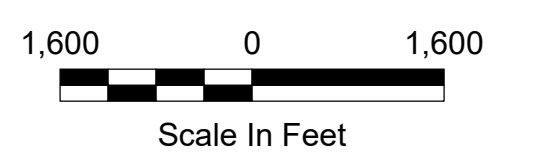
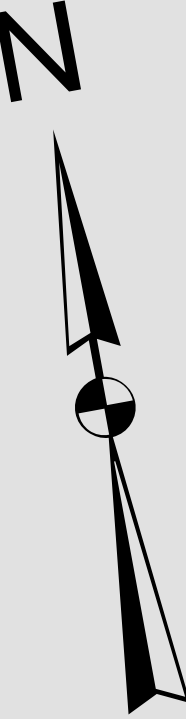
LITTLE COMPTON

MIDDLETOWN

Legend

- Coastal Water
- Freshwater River/Stream
- Future Land Use (2025)**
- Conservation/Limited
- Major Parks & Open Space
- Narragansett Indian Lands
- Non-urban Developed
- Prime Farmland
- Reserve
- Sewered Urban Developed
- Urban Development
- Water Bodies

Data Source: RIGIS and Town of Portsmouth (2021).

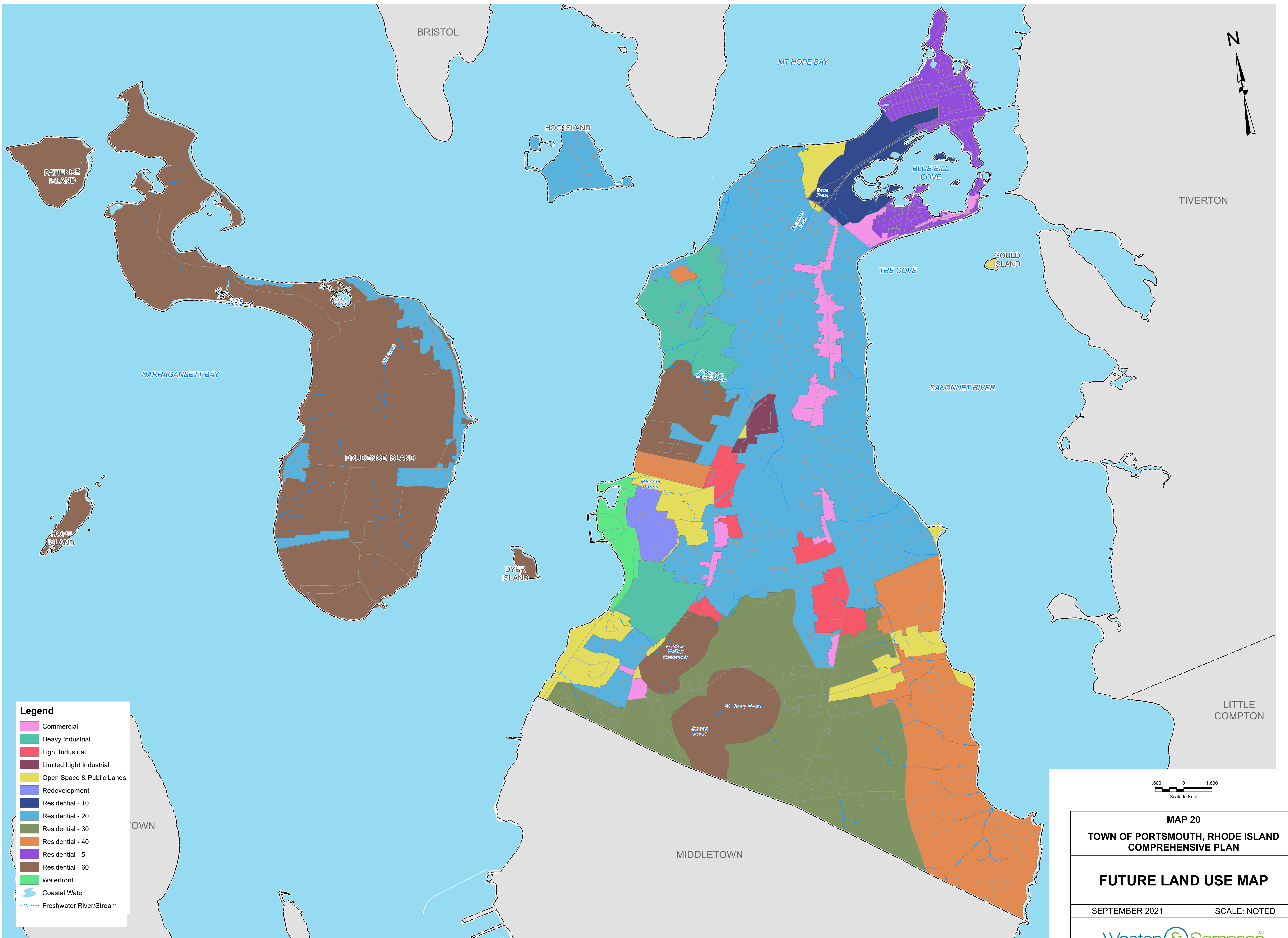


MAP 20
TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED





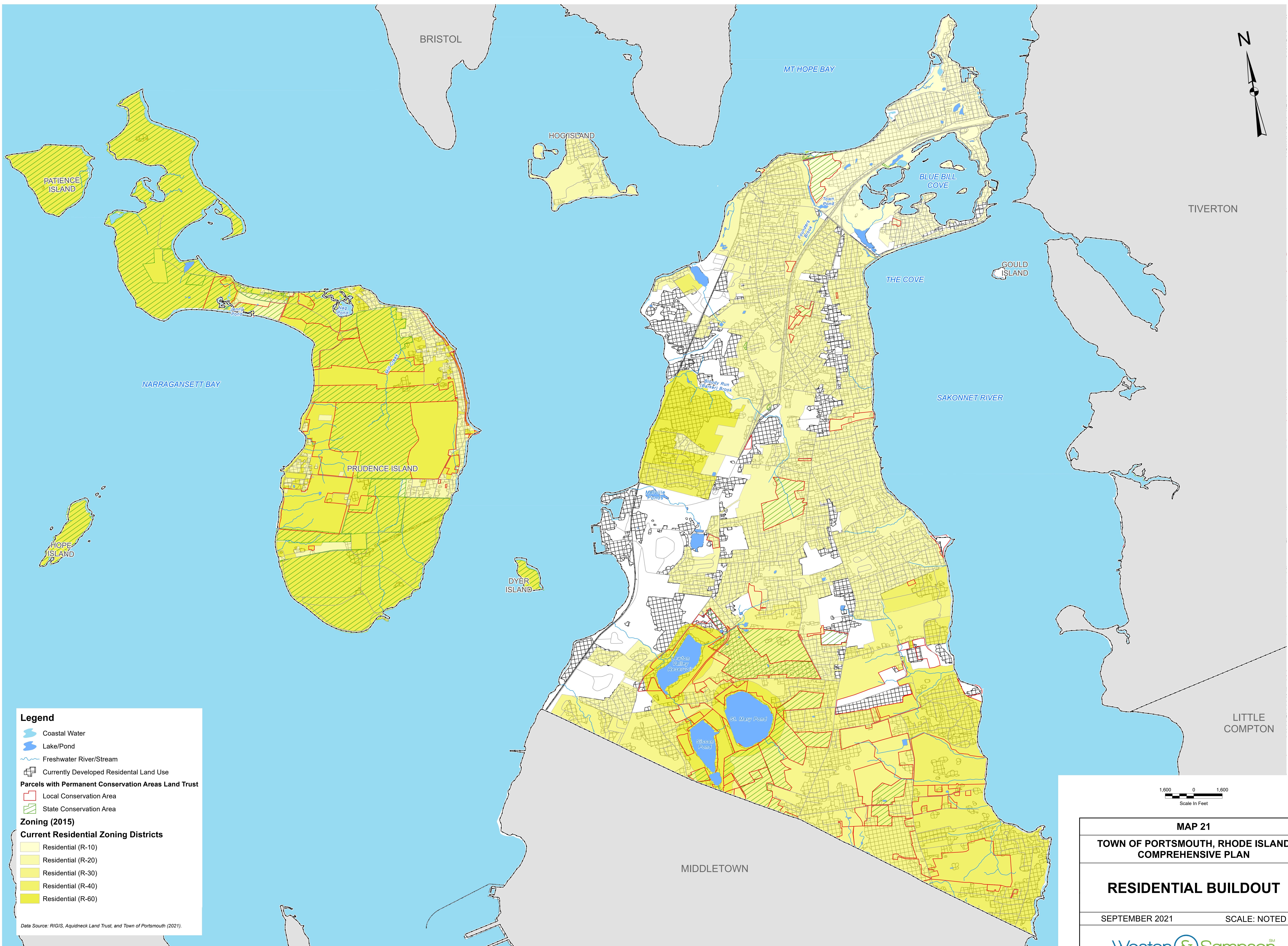
Legend

- Commercial
- Heavy Industrial
- Light Industrial
- Limited Light Industrial
- Open Space & Public Lands
- Redevelopment
- Residential - 10
- Residential - 20
- Residential - 30
- Residential - 40
- Residential - 5
- Residential - 60
- Waterfront
- Coastal Water
- Freshwater River/Stream

MAP 20
TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED



Legend

- Coastal Water
- Lake/Pond
- Freshwater River/Stream
- Currently Developed Residential Land Use

Parcels with Permanent Conservation Areas Land Trust

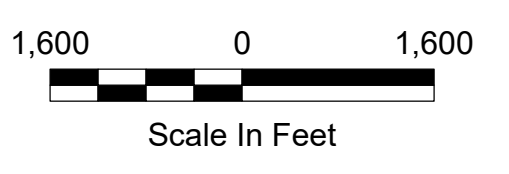
- Local Conservation Area
- State Conservation Area

Zoning (2015)

Current Residential Zoning Districts

- Residential (R-10)
- Residential (R-20)
- Residential (R-30)
- Residential (R-40)
- Residential (R-60)

Data Source: RIGIS, Aquidneck Land Trust, and Town of Portsmouth (2021).

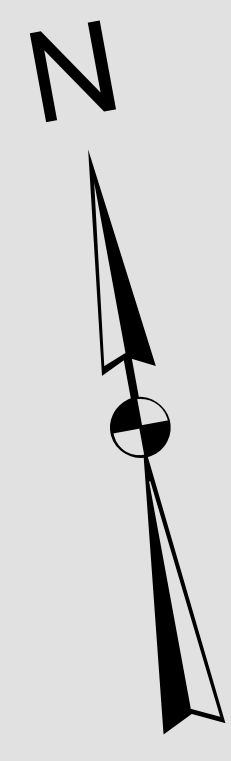
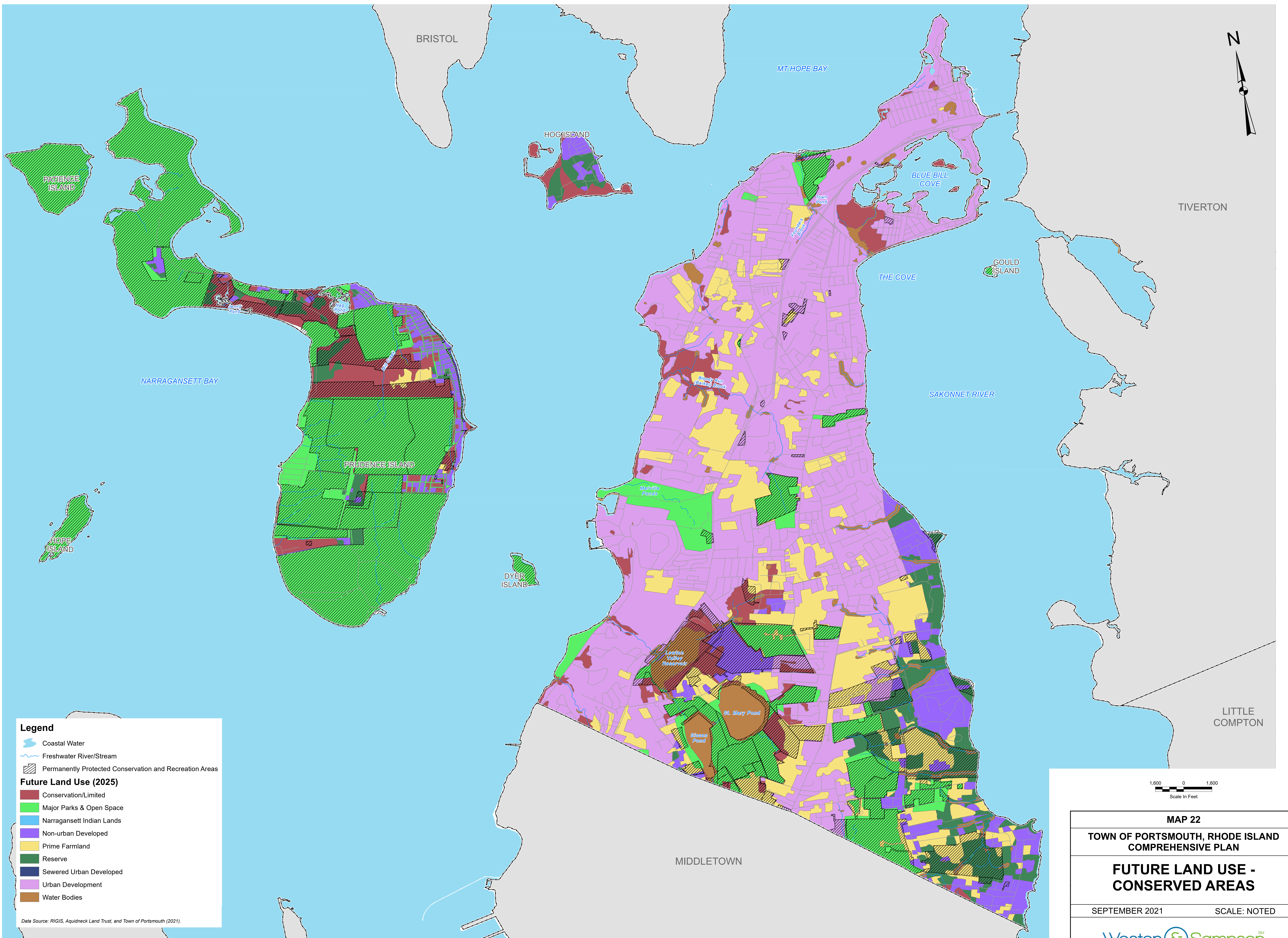


MAP 21
TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

RESIDENTIAL BUILDOUT

SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED





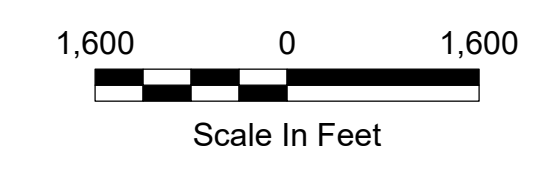
Legend

- Coastal Water
- Freshwater River/Stream
- Permanently Protected Conservation and Recreation Areas

Future Land Use (2025)

- Conservation/Limited
- Major Parks & Open Space
- Narragansett Indian Lands
- Non-urban Developed
- Prime Farmland
- Reserve
- Sewered Urban Developed
- Urban Development
- Water Bodies

Data Source: RIGIS, Aquidneck Land Trust, and Town of Portsmouth (2021).



MAP 22

**TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**FUTURE LAND USE -
CONSERVED AREAS**

SEPTEMBER 2021 SCALE: NOTED
