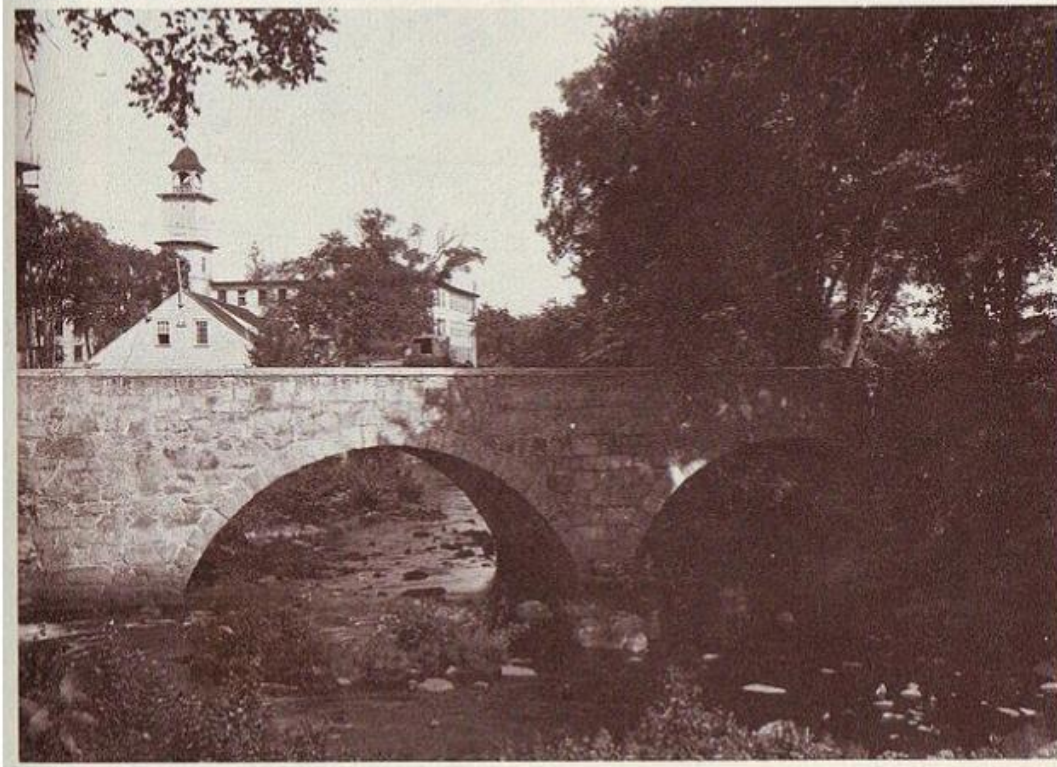


**TOWN OF NORTH SMITHFIELD
RHODE ISLAND**

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
2019**



Historic stone arch bridge & Slater Mill

Adopted by North Smithfield Town Council

April 1, 2019

**Town of North Smithfield
Comprehensive Plan 2019**

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Please note the following five documents are recommended as reference material as they provide more detail and/or historical analysis as related to their specific subjects:

1. Natural Hazards / Mitigation Plan
2. Branch Village Redevelopment Plan
3. Wastewater Facilities Plan
4. Town of North Smithfield 2019-2020 Solid Waste Diversion Plan
5. Community engagement charrette memo

Previous versions and or amendments to the comprehensive plan may obtained from the Planning Department.

I. Community

Introduction

Community is generally defined as a group of people living within the same area, especially a town, city, county, or state. For the purposes of comprehensive planning, the community is the land and people within particular municipal boundaries that will be affected by the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan.

This section of the Town's Comprehensive Plan illustrates some of the creative thinking that goes into comprehensive planning as a result of a community engagement process. The intent of the engagement process is to provide the residents and local government with a general guide to improve physical development and creative placemaking -with creative ideas around social cohesion. Physical development refers to the physical growth of the community, economic development, whether implementing new development projects, or revitalizing existing buildings and spaces within the community. Placemaking is an interdisciplinary approach to planning, designing, and managing public spaces, capitalizing on the community's assets, interests, and vision to create public spaces that promote residents' health, happiness, and well-being.

Recreational activities, transportation options, access to healthy food, and access to healthcare are important aspects of achieving a healthy community. Cities and towns with a strong sense of community encourage the implementation of plans that include improvement of walking and bicycling infrastructure, compact development, local food activities, and community involvement. North Smithfield is a town full of residents already working towards building community. Activities such as Clean and Green Day, the summer Sunday concert series, and Pumpkin Fest, changes in the Town zoning ordinance to promote appropriately scaled farms and farm operations, and the recently-expanded Blackstone Valley Bike Path to the Meadows, are great examples of this in Town. This plan builds on those existing activities and encourages residents and government officials to continue making North Smithfield a safe, healthy, and affordable place to live through tax revenue generation with strategic economic development.

History

North Smithfield was originally part of Smithfield, RI, which was founded as a farming community in the early 17th century. North Smithfield was incorporated in its current form in 1871. Throughout the early 1800s, industrialists and entrepreneurs settled in the area to capitalize on the rich natural resources, most

importantly the Blackstone and Branch Rivers, and developed various villages. It was here in North Smithfield that the first planned mill village in the United States, known as Slatersville, was developed. Each village (Forestdale, Primrose, Waterford, Branch Village, Union Village, Park Square, and Slatersville) was developed as a result of specific industries and residents, with a unique identity and community character.

Today, North Smithfield is a rural, mostly residential community that combines traditional small-town New England charm with modern-day development patterns of retail and services, especially along the town's arterial and collector streets. Automobile dependence, highway retail development, and a more regional economy have given rise to more spread-out residential and commercial developments, allowing individuals to live further from employment, retail and other service centers. This pattern of development has led to less compact communities, especially in rural areas.

The Town of North Smithfield can preserve much of its traditional identity through community development and creative placemaking. The Comprehensive Plan is a document where creative ideas reside for prioritization in future years.

Goals, Policies, and Actions

Goal 1: Foster a greater sense of community through physical development and creative placemaking.

Policy 1: Use physical development projects to create places that will serve all members of the community.

Action 1: Seek local, state, and federal funding opportunities to combine services and the locations of those services to better serve community residents and visitors.

Action 2: Pursue development projects that seek to maintain rural character and small-town New England charm.

Policy 2: Develop a Gateway Plan for major entry points into the town and individual villages.

Action 1: Identify the areas where residents and visitors are most likely to enter the town and where gateway signs will be most visible.

Action 2: Determine signage and landscape designs for gateways that promote and preserve the rural small-town character of North Smithfield.

Goal 2: Enhance Active Lifestyles.

Policy 1: Provide recreational opportunities for residents across all generations.

Action 1: Work with the Parks and Recreation Department to develop athletic programs for adults as well as children of all ages.

Policy 2: Encourage walking and bicycling as active transportation options as well as recreational opportunities.

Action 1: Continue working with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation and Blackstone Heritage Corridor to expand a town-wide Bicycling and Pedestrian Plan to improve bicycling and walking infrastructure along popular routes between employment, retail and other service centers.

Action 2: Continue working complete streets concepts into land development and subdivision projects, where practical, to ensure multiple transportation options.

Goal 3: Promote public health and a sense of community through local food initiatives.

Policy 1: Encourage the development of a local community food system.

Action 1: Work with local farmers to facilitate new marketing opportunities.

Action 2: Work with the school superintendent's office to promote school gardens in all town schools.

Physical Development and Creative Placemaking

Physical Development

A concrete example of the Town's commitment to community building through physical development is the redevelopment of the Kendall Dean School building, located at 83 Green Street near some of the oldest residences of the town. The building was constructed during the 1930s as part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) program and was designed in the Neo-Classical architectural style common to many WPA projects. The building is currently in the National Historic District as a contributing structure and is included in the Local Historic District as well.

While it will be far more convenient to all of North Smithfield's residents to have a Town Hall with all local government offices and services in one location, the rehabilitation and renovation of Kendall Dean, Bushee School, and repurposing of the Halliwell School property, will provide opportunities where community members can be involved in local government. Walls within the building can be used for art exhibits featuring local artists and students. The town could host community picnics, game nights, and other events that promote community building.

This redevelopment of the Kendall Dean School will ensure that the building continues to contribute to the small New England village charm of the Slatersville Historic District and the Town of North Smithfield,

while providing opportunities for residents to come together and forge new, stronger relationships. Its close proximity to Heritage Hall may provide more use of Grange Hall.

Placemaking

There are numerous spaces within North Smithfield that contribute to the small-town New England charm and community character of the area. A few of these include Union Village, the Slatersville Village Green and Congregational Church, North Smithfield Public Library, Scouter's Hall, Slatersville Granite Commercial Blocks, and various playgrounds and athletic facilities, among others. The potential of these areas to promote a sense of community through creative placemaking is significant.

Gateways and Wayfinding

Placemaking through gateways and wayfinding signs are relatively inexpensive yet impactful ways to show community pride and promote a unique identity. A gateway is a means of access or entry to a place and can provide the first impression that community residents want visitors to feel when they arrive. Gateways also promote roadway beautification projects and provide an opportunity for a community to pursue public art projects and natural resource protection, much like the current Adopt-A-Spot program. North Smithfield's main gateway points are:

- RI Route 146 at the MA/RI border
- Route 146A (Quaker hwy near DPW)
- RI Route 146 at the I-295 Interchange
- Providence Pike on the town's southern border
- RI Route 146A at the Route 104 split into Woonsocket
- RI Route 102 at Slatersville Reservoirs on the town's western border[GE1]

These are the areas where the most traffic is likely to come into and out of North Smithfield, making them ideal spots for gateway improvements and beautification efforts. Gateways can be a public or private effort, or a combination of both. The Town can identify the most ideal locations for gateways and invite private organizations or corporations to adopt the area for landscaping and signage improvements. Individual village areas could also adopt gateway plans to promote the unique identity and character of each village throughout town.

Wayfinding is defined as knowing where one is in a city or town, where the desired location is, and the best route to get to that final destination from the current location. Wayfinding signs are important especially for new visitors in town and identify landmarks and points of interest while providing directional information to help orient visitors and new residents. North Smithfield is full of rich history, natural resources and unique character both on its own and as part of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. Located on the town website, visitors and residents can find a map of a short walking tour of some of the most historic areas of Slatersville. Wayfinding signs to guide visitors and residents through the historic tour would be beneficial, and the areas included can become interactive nodes for families and individuals alike. The historic tour has great potential to be expanded into more of the historic local villages and include other sites such as Wright's Dairy that are historically significant throughout North Smithfield.

Recreation

Goals and policies for recreation opportunities in the town are discussed more in depth in the Open Space and Recreation chapter of this Plan. North Smithfield provides numerous opportunities for recreation with its abundance of walking and biking trails, parks and playgrounds. There are several opportunities for organized sports for children and young adults through the Parks and Recreation Department and local schools.

The creation of adult-league sports and recreation teams would reach more members of the town and promote life-long recreation opportunities as well as community building activities. Often, individuals find it easier to participate in recreational activities when involved with a group of people who share the same interest. It can create a sense of belonging amongst participants, a crucial aspect of community building and involvement. Life-long group recreational activities lead to individual physical and mental health, as well as improved public health as more members of the community become involved and encourage each other to remain active and choose healthier lifestyles. Physical activity, combined with a healthy diet, has been linked to significant decreases in obesity and the risk of diabetes. A community that values participation in physical activity opportunities is healthier physically and mentally.

Active Transportation

Transportation and circulation are discussed in detail in the Circulation chapter of this Plan. Due to automobile dependence and modern development patterns, walking and bicycling have become unattractive methods of transportation. Roads can be unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists, especially if

travel lanes are wide, speed limits are high, and shoulders contain sand and debris. The Town can incrementally make improvements as developments occur.

To promote alternate transportation methods and safety for all residents, the Town could begin a campaign to ensure that all individuals on the road are aware of others, regardless of what transportation mode they are using. A similar campaign can promote safety and help build a sense of community as all residents acknowledge each other in a way they may not have.

Local Food and Healthy Diets

2011, the state of Rhode Island adopted a five-year strategic plan, entitled *A Vision for Agriculture*, to support the economic viability of a statewide local food system. The development of a local food system can lead to economic stability, community inclusiveness, environmental sustainability, and improvement of public health within local communities and throughout the state. A community with a strong local food system has more access to local products, protects more of its natural resources, is more economically viable, and promotes healthy lifestyle choices and educational opportunities.

A growing sector of the local food system throughout the nation is the development of school gardening programs, especially in elementary schools. School gardening programs are used to teach children lessons in plant science and biology, environmental sustainability, diet and nutrition, and healthy lifestyles. During the 2012-2013 school year, a school garden was created at North Smithfield Elementary School after surveys sent out to parents and families of students garnered significant positive response and support. The garden has been used for educational activities, and the school's new principle will gauge interest in continuing and expanding the garden and its programs during the 2015-2016 school year. The Town could benefit from implementing school garden programs at each North Smithfield school, teaching students important lessons from elementary through their high school years.

By adopting projects and ordinances that protect and promote local farms and farming activities, the Town can be active in supporting a local and even regional food system. Town ordinances allowing local agricultural activities protect local farms and prime farmland from being developed for residential or commercial purposes. Farms and farm activities have sometimes been found to constitute a public nuisance through odor and noise related to agricultural activities, including raising livestock and growing crops. The State of Rhode Island adopted a Right to Farm Act, which protects such activities from nuisance

cases. Town ordinances further protect agricultural activities from such cases, and can promote environmental sustainability, economic development, tourism, and healthy communities.

Before it was incorporated as North Smithfield, the local area was settled largely as farming communities, and still maintains much of that character. Wright's Dairy Farm and Goodwin Brothers Farm Stand are two important examples of agricultural businesses that are important to the health and economy of North Smithfield. These and other farm operations (including former agricultural areas) should be encouraged and protected to ensure a healthier, more inclusive community throughout the future.

Conclusion

In addition to the State of Rhode Island's legal requirements of comprehensive plans, this section on community provides insight as to the community engagement process and a place where creative thinking is housed. While not all actions or ideas can be funded in effort to keep the residential tax rate palatable, the attached memorandum offers ideas for both financial prioritization and volunteerism in partnership with town departments.

North Smithfield is a town of vibrant people with a community-oriented mindset. There are many opportunities available for residents to foster a stronger sense of community and social cohesion. From summer concerts to Clean and Green Day, the Town offers many community building opportunities. Taking those further and incorporating new projects that promote public health through recreation, active transportation, and physical development of public spaces will benefit residents and visitors throughout all stages of their lives.

II. LAND USE

Introduction

According to State Comprehensive Planning Guidance Handbook #13, “Planning for Land Use”, The term land use signifies the physical ways in which we use, or develop, land. There are a wide variety of land uses, including residential, commercial, industrial, conservation, recreation and agricultural. Land use can require the physical alteration of land, the preservation of land in its natural state, or a combination of both. For comprehensive plans, planning for land use implies creating a balance of land uses that is appropriate for achieving the community’s goals and is reflective of the natural characteristics of the land, its suitability for use, and the availability of existing and proposed public and/or private services and facilities. Land use planning must also be consistent with available resources and the need to protect public health, safety and welfare.

Land use and traffic circulation are inextricably linked. The nature and density of land uses will have an influence on the volumes of traffic which can be anticipated along given sections of the roadway system. The availability of roadways with excess capacity and convenient links to a broader region influences the location of commercial and industrial development. The existing road network creates an interconnectedness between subjects that, on the surface, seem quite different, such as land conservation and economic development. In a general sense, it is why existing and new commercial areas are called for along the 146-corridor using arterial roadways which can handle increased traffic by confining it to the 146 corridor. Preserving the Town’s undeveloped areas is also important to prevent commercial traffic flow from overburdening the Town’s local and collector roads. This approach will allow the Town to grow its tax base thereby placing it in a position to do more land preservation while maintaining its rural character.

The Land Use Element becomes a major tool for implementing the goals and policies of other elements of the plan through changes of use or as a result of revisions in zoning or other development regulations. Economic growth opportunities are furthered by the allocation of land areas for commercial, manufacturing or other job and tax base enhancing development. Water resources in underground aquifers or surface reservoirs can be protected, in part, by land use decisions within recharge and drainage areas. When asked what type of growth should be encouraged, respondents to a 2014 Community Survey indicated that industrial development, office and retail development were most important with the

building of age-restricted housing following. Seventy-six percent of respondents felt that the town should encourage permanent open space.

History of Land Use

In 1969, the first Comprehensive Plan for the Town was prepared with the assistance of the Planning Division of the Department of Community Affairs. In the mid 80's a second Comprehensive Plan was initiated by the North Smithfield Planning Board with guidance from the Division of Planning. The plan established the framework upon which present land use regulations in the form of zoning controls and zoning districts were enacted. With some exceptions, the development that has taken place during the past forty years has followed the general outlines of zoning which modeled the Town's historical development pattern prior to zoning.

History is an important land use determinant. First settled in 1666, what ultimately became the Town of North Smithfield in 1871, has experienced a gradual transition from a farming community to industrial development in the nineteenth century, and from both farming and industry to the present-day combination of industry, business and suburban and rural housing.

The first neighborhood of Union Village initially flourished as a stagecoach stop along Great Road (146A). Subsequent small-lot residential growth within and in areas to the north and south of Union Village represented outward suburbanization of Woonsocket which spilled into North Smithfield.

Slatersville, the Nation's first planned mill villages, was established in conjunction with the Slatersville Mill along the Branch River. Forestdale, Branch Village and Waterford were all Branch River valley communities near water powered mills.

These early influences are very apparent in North Smithfield today. Industry is still clustered along or near the Branch River. Small-lot housing, predominantly single-family with scattered two-family units, tends to be concentrated in and around the old mill villages and adjacent to the Woonsocket line. In contrast, the westerly and southerly sections of Town retain a rural and rural-residential character furthered by larger lot zoning requirements. Except for the industrial zone along North Smithfield Industrial Drive and the commercial development along Route 146 in the Sayles Hill Road area, virtually the entire land area

to the south of the Providence and Worcester Railroad and to the west of Route 146 is zoned for residential development.

Although the villages had a few stores and shops to serve the mill workers, North Smithfield never developed what might be considered a downtown. Woonsocket served this function and at one-time trolley cars extended out to North Smithfield from downtown Woonsocket. Today there are about five clusters of commercial/retail activity in North Smithfield as follows: highway-oriented businesses along the non-limited access section of Route 146 between the 146A merge and the Lincoln Town line; Park Square area of Eddie Dowling Highway (Route 146A) which is a retail district straddling the North Smithfield/Woonsocket municipal lines; Branch Village area along Route 146A near St. Paul Street serving both local residents and transients; Carpenter's Corner (North Main Street and Route 146A) which is the locus of a shopping center anchored by a supermarket; and the Route 102/South Main Street intersection with highway-oriented business activities.

In general, the Land Use Element perpetuates the use and density patterns which have been historically established. The 2014 Community Survey results support the existing land use pattern. Ninety-one percent of the respondents support maintaining the small-town character throughout the town and 90% believe the preservation of open space is important. The current pattern of land use can be seen on Map 2 Existing Land Use.

Zoning Descriptions

In 2019, the Town revised its Zoning Ordinances Uses section in order to eliminate zoning use table redundancy amongst districts and to simplify the zoning code. The eliminated districts were:

- **Professional Services (PS)**

The Professional Services district was removed from the Zoning Map and Use tables due to similar uses allowed in the Business Highway (BH) district. All properties along Route 146 were changed to BH to reflect existing land uses, particularly Dowling Village.

- **Business Agricultural (BA)**

The Business Agricultural district was deleted from the Zoning Map and Use tables due to similar agricultural uses being allowed in other districts.

- **Residential Village (RV)**

The Residential Village district was deleted from the Zoning Map and Use tables due to similar uses being allowed in other districts, particularly the Urban Residential (RU) and Neighborhood Business (BN) districts.

In addition to eliminating redundant districts, several of the remaining districts were renamed. Also, the areas of the Town designated to certain of these other districts were revised. The following list describes the current 11 zoning districts.

Urban Residential – Medium High Density (RU)

Urban Residential areas are currently served by water and/or public sewer services. These areas are now included within the RU zoning district which allows the following types of residential development: single-family homes, two-family homes, and multifamily dwellings by Special Use Permit from the Zoning Board of Review.

The designated areas for Medium High-Density use are extensively developed with little space for new growth and therefore expansion of the zone in particular areas is needed.

Additions to the RU-20 zoning district should be considered in villages that are served by sewers. The purpose of expanding the RU district is to promote in-fill development and provide opportunities for the development of multi-unit and affordable housing.

Suburban Residential – Medium Density (RS)

Suburban Residential development at a density of one dwelling unit per acre for single or two-family homes. Approximately two-thirds of the Suburban Residential land has been subdivided and developed. Most of the area proposed for Suburban Residential use is now located within the RS zoning district which allows the following: single-family homes on lots of 40,000 sq. ft.; two-family homes on lots of 80,000 sq. ft. and multifamily dwellings by Special Use Permit. For multifamily, depending on the number of bedrooms per dwelling unit and the adequacy of water supply availability, this could mean a density of up to 7 dwelling units per acre.

Rural Agricultural (RA) – Medium Low Density (formerly Rural Residential (RR))

Rural Agricultural areas were originally designated under the assumption that public sewer and water services would not be provided. The intent was to perpetuate a rural atmosphere in the southern, western and northern sections of the Town. As has been discovered in other communities, large-lot zoning does not necessarily create a rural environment, particularly where new houses are lined up at 200-foot intervals along country roads and the vacant lots between older homes are built upon. As such, the Town has revised the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Regulations to allow for Conservation Development to promote shared open space that is protected.

Under the RA zoning district, single- family homes are allowed with lot sizes of 65,000 sq. ft. and two-family homes may be built providing the lot has a minimum of 130,000 sq. ft. Multi-family is allowed by Special Use Permit. Depending upon the number of bedrooms per dwelling unit, a multi-family density of up to 2 dwelling units per acre would be allowed.

Although less than one-third of the RA area is presently developed, substantial sections are not suitable for development due to wetlands, ledge or excessive slopes.

Rural Estate Agricultural (REA) – Low Density (formerly Rural Residential Conservation (RRC))

The REA area covers land and groundwater aquifer areas requiring conservation action. It includes major natural areas such as Todd's Pond, Cedar Swamp and Cedar Brook, all sensitive areas where utilities should not be provided and open space preserved. The designated area also has been established as a buffer district along Trout Brook, Trout Pond, Dawley Brook/Pratt Pond and around the Slatersville Reservoirs. It is proposed that the buffer be increased to include the portions of the Reservoir's drainage area and the Slatersville Aquifer and aquifer recharge area between the Reservoirs and Pound Hill Road. This area encompasses the Landfill & Resource Recovery and Western Sand & Gravel EPA Superfund sites. Less than 10 percent of the REA area is currently developed. Development proposals must consider the constraints associated with the existence of the EPA Superfund sites and the need to protect the Slatersville Aquifer and Reservoirs.

REA currently helps protect and serve as a buffer district for Woonsocket's water supply facilities in the Town of North Smithfield including Reservoirs Number 1 and 3 and Crookfall Brook. Expansion of this

district is proposed in the Crookfall Brook area along Old Smithfield Road and in the area around Reservoir #3.

Land on either side of the Blackstone River Gorge and along the Blackstone where property has been acquired by the State and the Town, are also designated for REA. Consistent with recreational and open space recommendations for the Mammoth Mill site and the Paul S. Kelly Sports Complex, REA replaced the Manufacturing (M) District. These and other recreation and conservation areas owned by the State, Town and City of Woonsocket should be considered for inclusion in the Open Space zone.

In the REA District, single-family housing is the principal allowed residential use; the minimum lot frontage is 300 feet and the lot size requirement is 120,000 sq. ft.

Business and Commercial Land Use

As previously noted, North Smithfield does not have a downtown area; most retail and business uses serving local shopping needs are to be found along Route 146A. The stores and supermarket at Carpenter's Corner (Slatersville Plaza) provide convenience shopping for the Town's northern neighborhoods as well as sections of Burrillville and adjoining communities in Massachusetts.

At Park Square, CVS Pharmacy, Super Stop and Shop across from Eddie Dowling Highway in North Smithfield and other retail stores and restaurants combined provide a strong draw for both North Smithfield and Woonsocket residents.

Most commercial and retail development, other than the shopping centers at Carpenter's Corner and Park Square has been small scale and generally related to local needs and the service of transient traffic. "Dowling Village", a regional shopping center has recently been partially completed in the Booth Pond area off of Route 146A. Development of this center provides residents with a greater array of choices for comparison shopping and reduces the need to travel to nearby communities for larger ticket items.

In the Circulation Element, there is mention of an anticipated decline in traffic levels-of-service and peak-hour congestion along Route 146A in the area between Park Square and School Street. There is scattered retail and commercial development along the aforementioned section of 146A with the major concentration in the vicinity of St. Paul Street, Branch Village. It's important to create a more direct access

between Branch Village and Route 146 to improve existing traffic levels of service while accommodating the buildout.

Neighborhood Business (BN)

Neighborhood Business, as currently embodied in the BN zoning district, is designed primarily to serve local needs for convenience shopping, personal services and small business offices.

Business Highway (BH)

Business Highway use areas are designed to serve specialized retail and commercial uses requiring high volumes of passing traffic.

Mixed Use (MU-1 and MU-2)

In 2013, the Zoning Ordinance was updated to include two mixed use districts, MU-1 and MU-2. MU-1 is intended to provide for compact, planned mixed use development of a village nature with existing commercial, but not big-box retail, with a mix of small-scale businesses such as restaurants, coffee shops, bookstores, retail shops and service industries. The sub-district MU-2 is intended to provide for compact, planned mixed use light industrial/office/accommodation-type development where buildings are preferred to be clustered, campus-style, around shared open space amenities, with most parking preferred to the side and rear of structures.

Manufacturing (M)

Manufacturing uses intent to provide for industrial development, research and certain transportation, storage and utility uses. In addition, certain commercial services catering to the needs of industry and its employees are permitted. M districts are located at north side of Route 146A and the Branch River, and along either side of North Smithfield Industrial Drive. This represents a continuation of present zoning.

The northern portion of the Blackstone-Smithfield Industrial Park is currently used to generate hydroelectric power and should be encouraged to continue as long as the operations do not cause any diminution of downstream flows. This property was discussed earlier and is proposed to be rezoned to promote the mill's rehabilitation by allowing certain mixed uses.

Limited Commercial (LC)

Allowed uses include light industry and certain types of retail and commercial development.

Open Space (OS)

The Zoning Enabling Act allows for the designation of an Open Space district. Town and State-owned land currently used for recreation or conservation should be considered for inclusion in an Open Space zone. The Blackstone River Gorge and Paul S. Kelly Sports Complex which was rezoned in 1995 to REA-120 should be considered for inclusion in an open space zone given the level of Federal, State and local funding used to secure, develop and protect these sites. Protected and non-protect private open space are mapped in further detail in the open space chapter.

The table below lists zoning map changes that were approved in conjunction with this comprehensive plan update (see Map 2. Official Town Zoning Map).

Table II. 1. Zone Changes

| ID | Previous Zone | New Zone | Map-lot | Location | Reasoning |
|----|---------------|------------|---|---|--|
| 1 | M | MU2 | 1-459, 1-17, 1-461, 1-462 | Quaker Highway, Central St | #1 site for Office Commercial per Industrial Site Survey |
| 2 | RS-40 | RU-20 | 1-015,18,19,20,21,25,26,48,49,50,51,53,54,55,67,68,87,89,90,91,96,97,99,101,103,105,118,120,121,123,145,147,154,159,160,170,192,196,198,199,200,203,204,206,211,220,222,231,232,234,237,238,239,240,242,243,244,247,248,252,255,263,264,287,290,292,294,298,301,304,308,317,321,322,328,331,332,334,335,336,337,338,341,352,364,366,391,418,421,439 | Slatersville- Victory Hwy, N. Main, Main, Mechanic & Buxton, Quaker Hwy | Identified in affordable housing chapter (Map 1) up-zone infill development. |
| 3 | REA-120 | Open Space | 2-18,19,21,60,319,320 | Off of Harkness Road | Publicly-owned, Blackstone Gorge |
| 4 | REA-120 | Open Space | 3-241, 3-135, 3-183 | On border with Blackstone, off of | Kelly Sports Complex |

| | | | | | |
|----|-----------------|------------|--|---|---|
| 5 | RS-40 | RU-20 | 5-1, 5 thru 14, 105,208,215,237,305,372,380,381,383,386,390,395 thru 400, 402,404,405,406,413 | Forest Dale -School St., Halliwell Blvd., Lorraine, Roselawn & Maple | Identified in affordable housing chapter (Map 1) up-zone infill development. |
| 6 | RS-40 | Open Space | 4-224 | Main St/Park View | Town-owned, Pacheco Park |
| 7 | RS-20 | Open Space | 4-436 | Off of Main St | Publicly-owned, OS Wellhead Protection |
| 8 | RA-65 | RS-40 | 1-127,134,330, 4- 239,240,250,252,278,286,294,297,303,305,310,315, 316,321,325,327,328,329,343,344,345,357,358,370, 377 thru 384,406,410, | Morning Star Dr. & Tall Timber Tr./Greenwood Ln., Victory | Adjacent to RU-20, infill development to support sewer extension. |
| 9 | REA | Open Space | 9-142 | Smithfield Road | Union Cemetery |
| 10 | REA-120 | Open Space | 9-875 | Off of Village Way | Land Trust-owned |
| 11 | BN | BH | 9-630,794, 13-2, 21-33,35,37,51,52,54,55,59,67,68 | Eddie Dowling Highway | Reflects land use |
| 12 | PS, BH, RA | BH | 13-7,8,9,18,13A-57, 13-60,70,75,78,81,84,86,88 thru 92, 111,112,114,118,123,137,141,143,145,406 thru 411, 415,416,417, 21- 19,26,50,401,403,404,405,419,420,421 | Eddie Dowling Highway | Reflect existing land use |
| 13 | RA-65, RS-40 | REA-120 | 13-23,26, 27, 28,29, 32,36,37,40,43,54,56,66,67,68,72,95,97,98,101,110, 119,121,124,126,128,135,160,163 thru 167, 169,17- 22,23,25,26,27,29,30,89,284 | Off of Old Smithfield Rd | Watershed Protection |
| 14 | RA-65 | Open Space | 8-14, 11-4,28,124A,193,124,149 | Off of Providence Pike | Audubon-owned, OS Protection |
| 15 | RA-65 | Open Space | 11-241 | Off of Old Oxford Rd | Land Trust, Cedar Swamp |
| 16 | RA-65 | REA-120 | 017-47,293,48,309,271,204,073 | Iron mine Hill Road/ Old Road Over Sayles Hill Road | Watershed protection, poor soils adjacent to Crookfall Brook |
| 17 | RA-65, REA | Open Space | 17-69,53,308, 20-31, 21-2 | Woonsocket Reservoir | Woonsocket-owned, water supply protection |
| 18 | REA-120 | Open Space | 4-320 | Off of Victory Highway | State boat launch |
| 19 | REA-120 | Open Space | 9-163,165, 12-2 thru 6,256,13,13A | Cedar Swamp Conservation area | State owned conservation area |
| 20 | RA | Open Space | 20-15 | Rocky Hill Rd | Town Land Trust |

| | | | | | |
|----|--------|------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 21 | RA, PS | Open Space | 21-418 | Booth Pond Land | Town & Land Trust |
| 22 | RS | BH | 17-92,128,111,112,63, 15 | 146 | Reflect commercial market changes. |
| 23 | REA | RU-20 | 4-270 | Main Street, Slatersville | Identified in affordable housing chapter (Map 1) up-zone infill development. |

Future Land Use

The Town’s vision for its pattern of future development and land conservation is established by Map 3 Future Land Use Map (FLUM). While the FLUM presents the general pattern of development and conservation, the Zoning Ordinance is the means by which it is implemented. As noted previously, the Town’s zoning was recently amended in conjunction with the development of the Comprehensive Plan. The future land use categories displayed on the FLUM are, in many instances, broader than the Town’s zoning districts. For example, with respect to the FLUM and Zoning Map, low residential density is REA and RA, medium density is RS, and high density is RU. Heavy manufacturing is the M district, Moderate mixed use is the MU1, MU2, BN, and BH districts which all speak to mixed use in terms of the use table and what the Town hopes to accomplish in the Branch Village Redevelopment District - Dowling Village is mixed use as well. Light commercial contains both LC and BN. The FLUM also reflects areas that were down-zoned to open space in the eastern part of town around Old Smithfield Rd and the Woonsocket Reservoirs.

Lastly, the hatched area within the FLUM reflects the solar photovoltaic overlay district that now applies to this area. Solar is allowed by special use permit in all zoning districts except OS. Given that, even though the zone district hasn’t changed, the FLUM reflects the potential industrial use given the overlay zone.

Build-out Estimates

The following estimates (Tables I. 1 thru 3 here) were derived using the methodology for basic mathematical assessment in accordance with Statewide Planning’s Handbook # 13 on Land Use. The Town is estimated to build out by the year 2235 and contain a total of 16,233 residential units.

Table II. 2.

| Residential District | Acreage | Net developable area by zone | units per acre | Total # of dwelling units at build-out by zone | Net units to build-out (projection-existing) |
|----------------------|---------|------------------------------|----------------|--|--|
| RA Total | 8,297 | 5,808 | 1.5 | 8,654 | |
| REA Total | 2,570 | 1,799 | 2.8 | 5,038 | |
| RS Total | 2,077 | 1,454 | 1.0 | 1,454 | |
| RU Total | 716 | 501 | 2.2 | 1,088 | |
| total acreage | 13,660 | 9,562 | | 16,233 | 11,165 |

Source: Planning Dept.

Table II. 3.

| Persons per HH (2012-2016) | Total dwelling units at build-out | Total population estimate |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2.65 | 16,233 | 43,017 |

Source: U.S. Census, Planning Dept.

Table II. 4.

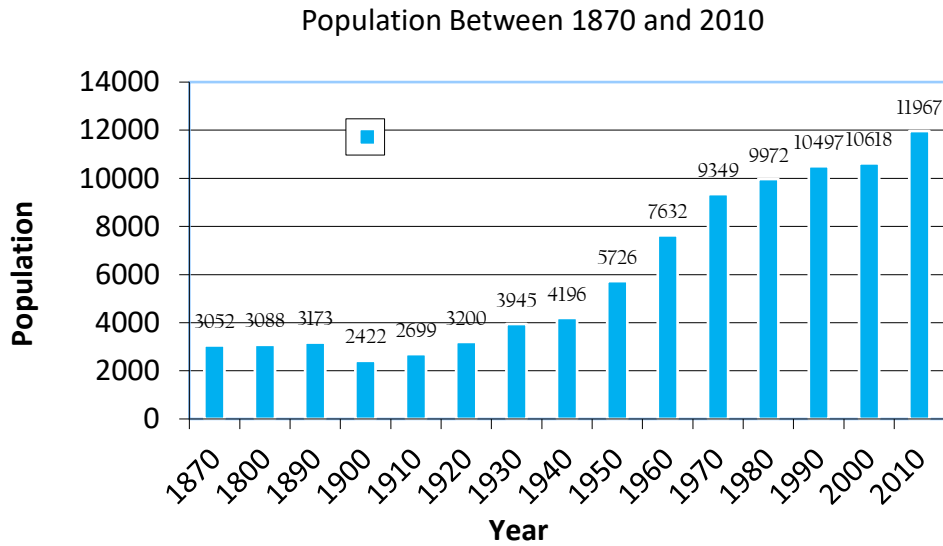
| Year | Growth rate | Avg units per yr since 1980 | Avg unit rate 30 yrs | Estimated yrs to build-out | Yr. by which build-out is likely to occur |
|------------|-------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|---|
| 1980 | 3,526 | | | | |
| 1990 | 3,835 | 30.9 | | | |
| 2000 | 4,070 | 23.5 | | | |
| 2010 | 5,068 | 99.8 | 51 | 217 | 2235 |
| Total/mean | | 154.2 | | | |

Source: Planning Dept.

Population

Since 1950, North Smithfield's population has climbed from 5,726 to 11,967 (based on final count data from the 2010 U.S. Census).

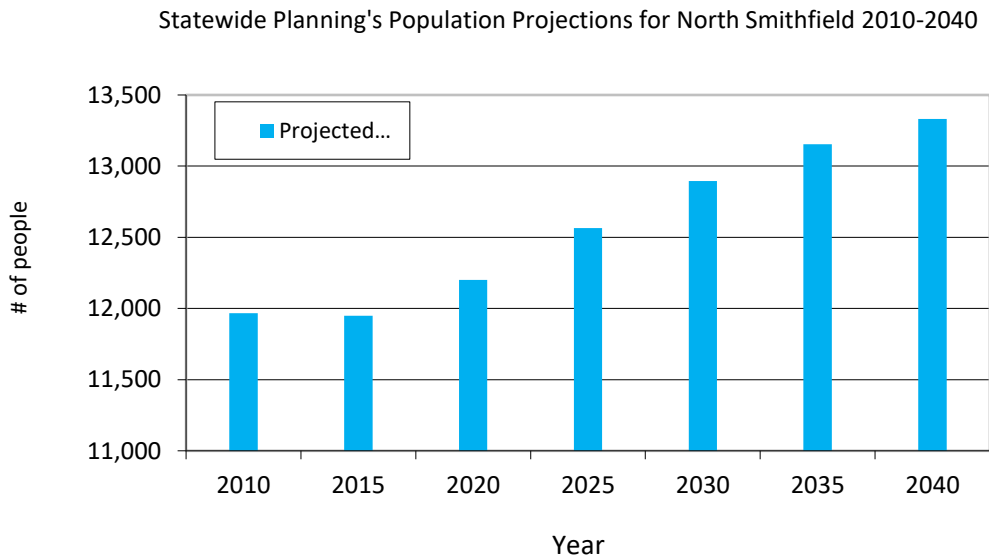
Figure II. 1. Population Growth



Source: U.S. Census

Between 1990 and 2000, average household size continued its decline from 2.7 to approximately 2.6. This compares with 2.9 for 1980 and 3.3 for 1970. Between 2000 and 2010, average household size continued its decline from 2.6 to 2.5.

Figure II. 2. Population Projections



Source: RI Statewide Planning

Zoning Map and Future Land Use Map (FLUM) Consistency

All 2019 zone changes were done in conjunction with the Town's comprehensive plan review process and have been rendered as part of this comprehensive plan re-write. There are no inconsistencies between the Official Zoning map and FLUM.

Zoning Ordinance and Map Amendment Process

It is recommended that all provisions of the Zoning Ordinance be given a comprehensive review so that the regulations will be more in line with contemporary zoning practices regulating parking and loading, signs, special land uses, encouragement of home occupations, district use regulations, etc.

General Land Development

Land use proposals relate to historic development patterns, availability of public utilities and services, and natural characteristics of the land. Concentrated urban and suburban development is located in the northern and eastern sections of the community and rural residential densities are recommended for the balance of the Town. Options for flexible, land-compatible residential development are encouraged.

Water Resources

The Land Use Element includes proposals for the protection of major water supply resources in the community including, but not limited to, the Slatersville Aquifer, Slatersville Reservoirs (which is not a drinking water source per say), Woonsocket Water Supply Reservoirs #1 and #3 and Crookfall Brook.

Energy

Energy is being generated by a hydropower facility in North Smithfield; the Plan encourages continuation of this efficient form of power generation.

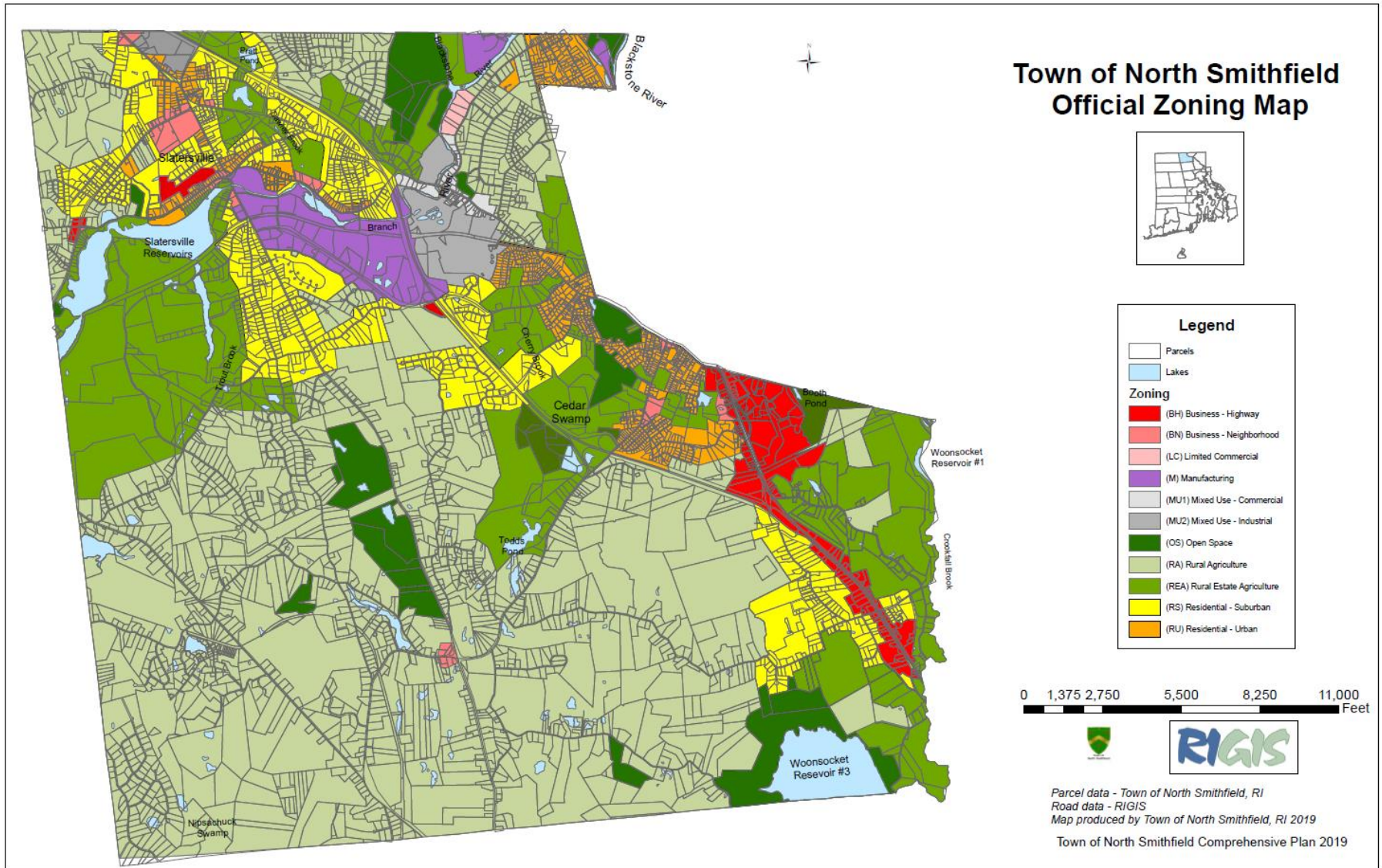
Housing

As a suburban community, the major emphasis is on single-family residential use. The Land Use Element recognizes the need to provide a greater diversity of affordable housing opportunities meeting the local needs of individuals and families of all age groups.

Transportation

The Land Use Element proposals have been carefully related to the existing and proposed vehicular circulation system.

Map III. 1 Official Zoning Map



Recreation and Open Space

Proposals for land use have been related to the need to provide a range of recreational facilities and to protect unique or important open space areas.

The Land Use Element has been integrated with and related to State and interstate and Federal programs/plans such as the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor and the Branch River Park Plan.

Adjacent Community Land Use Compatibility

North Smithfield shares a common boundary with three towns and one city in Rhode Island and three towns in Massachusetts. Common sense, as well as state mandates, requires compatibility of uses in adjoining communities. Prior to advertisement and review by the Town Council, seek input from adjacent Town's via the Planning Departments.

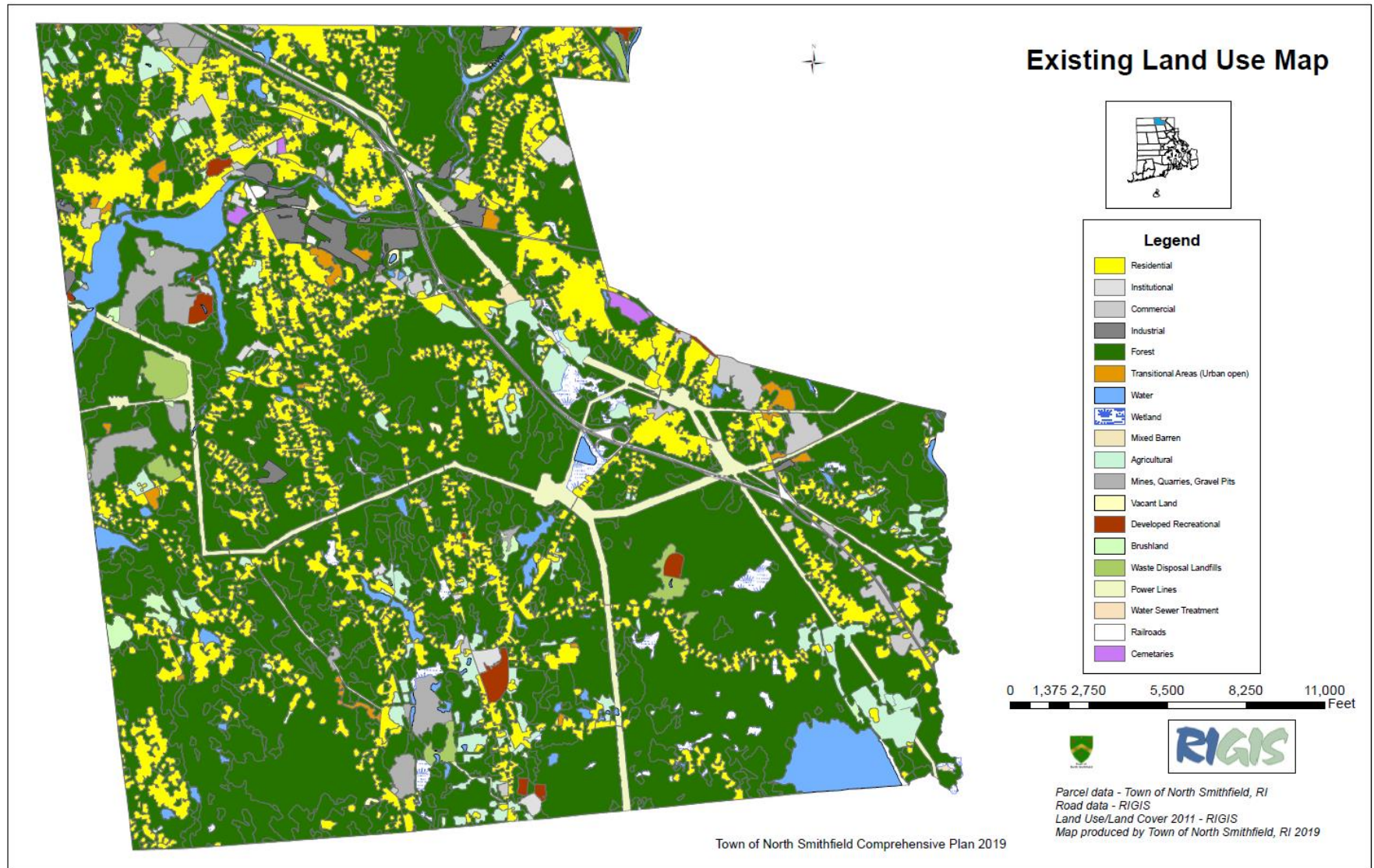
Table III. 4.

| Goal | Policy | Action |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Ensure that the density and location development is sympathetic to the capacity of public facilities and services. | 1.a. Promote low overall residential densities in those areas where municipal water and sewers are not currently available. | 1.a.1. Institute growth management controls by instituting controls such as building permit caps and impact fees (Review existing Town Code Chapter 10). |
| 2. Promote "Smart Development" by directing medium to high density housing to areas in or immediately adjacent to established villages in accordance with the State Land Use Plan "Land Use 2025" | 2.a. Establish residential densities and smaller lot frontages within or adjacent to village centers in a commensurate manner, where public water and sewer systems are available. | |
| | 2.b. Ensure pedestrian links to village centers are made between proposed medium and high-density developments and existing | 2.b.1. Require sidewalk design that includes a tree lawn separating sidewalks from roadways and including the planting of shade trees where practical. |

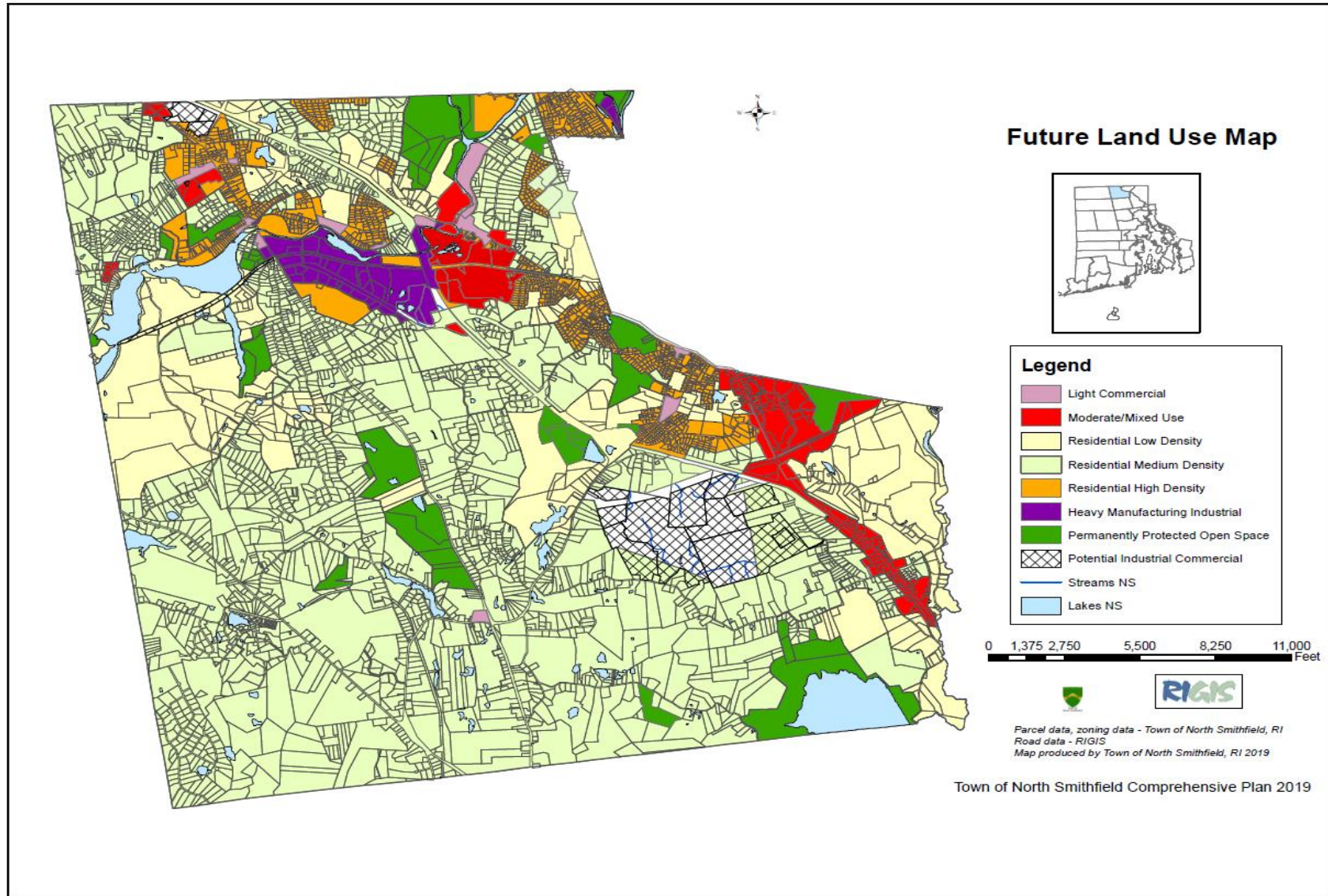
| | | |
|---|--|--|
| | commercial, recreational and town facilities. | |
| | 2.c. Allow for differing road widths based on AASHTO defined road categories and build-out potential of the area. | |
| 3. Prevent incompatible non-residential uses in residential neighborhoods | 3.a. Encourage redevelopment projects to promote land use recycling and efficiency. | 3.a.1. Consider mixed uses for the former ATP site. |
| 4. Grow the non-residential tax base in a manner that encourages local employment opportunities. | 4.a. Promote redevelopment and expansion within existing manufacturing areas. | |
| 5. Encourage growth of an appropriate scale commensurate with road carrying capacity. | 5.a. Consider the development of office, commercial, light industrial and/or research and development activities in Branch Village consistent with its Redevelopment Plan. | 5.a.1. Introduce direct access to Branch Village from the Pound Hill Rd and 146 interchange to both make the project marketable and improve level of service to Great Road. |
| | 5.b. Continue growth in nodes confined along the 146 corridor to preserve the rural character of Town. | 5.b.1. Be forward thinking when evaluating development along 146 as if the existing signal at the Sayles Hill Road and Route 146 intersection was eliminated in favor of express lanes that benefit local regional traffic flow. |
| 6. Continue to both preserve rural areas and build the tax base through economic development as described in the natural resource, open space elements, and economic development element. | | 6.a. In the long term 20-year planning horizon after buildout of Branch Village, consider office, commercial, light industrial and/or research and development activities in the Whortleberry Hill area. |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| | | |
| | | 6.b. Consider downzoning portions of RA to REA (RRC) to maintain rural character in undeveloped areas. |
| 7. Protect the Town’s abundant groundwater resources in the western to northwester portion of Town around the Slatersville Reservoir. | 7.a. Encourage EPA, DEM and landowners to monitor historically-polluted sites. | |

Map III. 2. Existing Land Use



Map III. 3. Future Land Use



III. HOUSING

Introduction

The Town of North Smithfield will use the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan to determine the housing needs of the community, and to identify and develop goals and strategies for the Town to ensure that the diverse housing needs of residents are met, including how the Town will meet the 10% goal of affordable housing required by the Low and Moderate Income Housing Act of 2004.

Affordable housing is defined by the State 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.” Generally, the accepted definition of housing affordability is that a household should spend no more than 30% of their gross income on housing costs, including rent and utilities or a mortgage payment and be available to persons earning less than 120% of median income. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development uses this definition in all of its affordable housing programs. Affordable housing units that count towards the ten percent state mandate must remain affordable either by land lease or deed restriction.

Population and Demographics

Since 1980, the Town’s population has increased only slightly above 10,000 with the largest increase having occurred between 2000 and 2010.

Table III. 1. Population 1980 to 2010

| POPULATION | | | | |
|-------------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| Year | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 |
| # of people | 9972 | 10497 | 10618 | 11967 |

Source: U.S. Census

Existing Housing Stock

A substantial increase in the number of housing units occurred between 2000 and 2010. Of North Smithfield’s housing units, nearly 75% are single-family, detached housing units, according to the 2010 US Census. The past decade has seen a slight increase in the availability of multifamily housing units, as can be seen in Table III. 3. Housing Type.

Table III. 2. Housing units 1980 to 2010

| HOUSING UNITS | | | | |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Year | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 |
| # of homes | 3,526 | 3,835 | 4,070 | 5,068 |

Source: U.S. Census

Table III. 3. Housing type.

| | 2000 | 2010 |
|-----------|-------|-------|
| Single | 80% | 74.2% |
| 2-4 Units | 10.6% | 12.7% |
| 5+ Units | 9.4% | 13.1% |

Source: U.S. Census

Age of Housing Stock

According to 2013 ACS data, nearly 72% of homes in North Smithfield were built prior to 1980, making the majority of the Town’s housing stock more than 30 years old. Table III. 4 provides a breakdown of the age of the housing stock. This presents a challenge as well as an opportunity for the Town to develop a home maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation program to maintain the character of the town while providing more housing opportunities for North Smithfield residents. Much of the original mill worker housing is modest and smaller in size, perfect for aging individuals and families and individuals who are restricted by income.

Table III. 4 . Age of Housing in North Smithfield

| Year Built | Number | Percentage | |
|---------------|-------------|------------|--|
| 2005 or later | 113 | 2.4 | |
| 2000-2004 | 193 | 4.1 | |
| 1990-1999 | 478 | 10.2 | |
| 1980-1989 | 517 | 11.1 | |
| 1970-1979 | 696 | 14.9 | |
| 1960-1969 | 472 | 10.1 | |
| 1950-1959 | 896 | 19.2 | |
| 1940-1949 | 430 | 9.2 | |
| 1939 or older | 879 | 18.8 | |
| Total | 4674 | 100 | |

Source: U.S. Census ACS data, 2013.

Table III 5 depicts the Town’s housing tenure as of the 2010 Census. Approximately 74.1 percent of the Town’s housing stock is owner-occupied while 25.9 percent is rental housing.

Table III. 5 Housing Tenure

| HOUSING TENURE | | Percent |
|---|-------|---------|
| Occupied housing units | 4,714 | 100 |
| Owner-occupied housing units | 3,493 | 74.1 |
| Population in owner-occupied housing units | 9,495 | (X) |
| Average household size of owner-occupied units | 2.72 | (X) |
| Renter-occupied housing units | 1,221 | 25.9 |
| Population in renter-occupied housing units | 2,147 | (X) |
| Average household size of renter-occupied units | 1.76 | (X) |

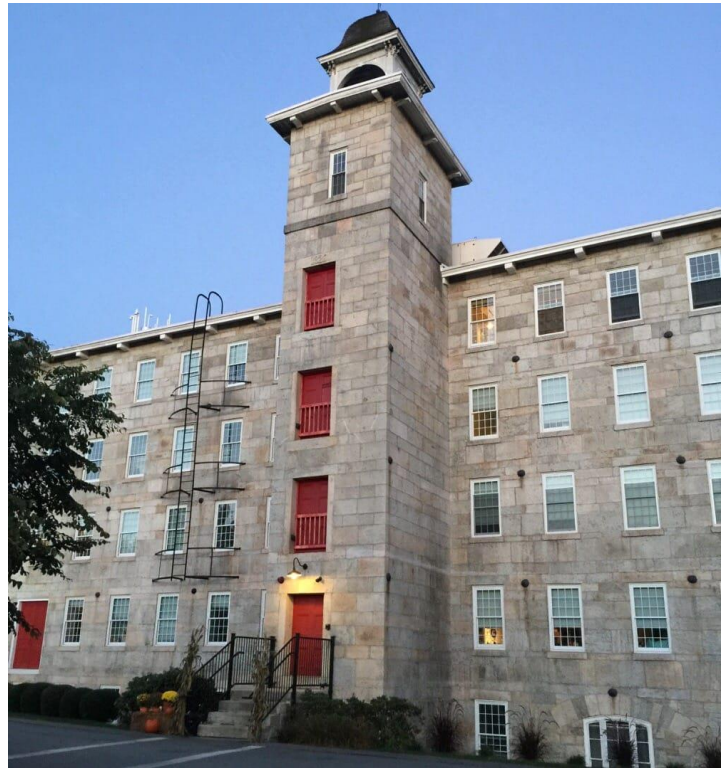
Source: U.S. Census, 2010 demographic profile data

Rehabilitation

The Town has encouraged mill rehabilitation, affordable housing development, and elderly housing, which explains the increase in multifamily units (see Slater Mill, here).

Existing Affordable Housing Stock

According to Rhode Island Housing’s most recent data, 415 units (8.2%) of housing in North Smithfield are considered low or moderate income. Appendix A lists all North Smithfield housing that currently counts towards the 10% affordable housing goal. While the town has made significant progress towards the 10% goal over the



past few years, absent of new overall growth, it still needs 90 new units of affordable housing to meet the 10% goal. These numbers correlate closely to 2015 American Community Survey data discussed in more detail further in this chapter.

Housing Need and cost burden

American Community Survey data (2015) as provided by statewide planning will serve as the basis for needs discussion, all of which may be viewed here:

<http://www.planning.ri.gov/publications/state-guide-plan.php>

One of the highlights of this data show that, of single family homeowners, nearly 32% of North Smithfield’s households are cost burdened, meaning that they are paying more than 30% of their income on housing.

The burden on renters is greater, and it correlates to anecdotal knowledge of the earning potential of our youngest and oldest cohorts. Of all renter householders between the age of 15 to 24 years, 100% of the group (41 out of 1,067, have rent and utility costs that exceed 30% of their income. The same percentage by cohort is as follows: Years 25 to 34; 67%, years 35 to 64; 44%, years 65 and older; 54%.

Table III. 6. AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER BY GROSS RENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS - Universe: Renter-occupied housing units

| AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER BY GROSS | North Smithfield town, | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|
| | Estimate | Margin of |
| Total: | 1,067 | +/-211 |
| Householder 15 to 24 years: | 41 | +/-29 |
| Less than 20.0 percent | 0 | +/-19 |
| 20.0 to 24.9 percent | 0 | +/-19 |
| 25.0 to 29.9 percent | 0 | +/-19 |
| 30.0 to 34.9 percent | 0 | +/-19 |
| 35.0 percent or more | 41 | +/-29 |
| Not computed | 0 | +/-19 |
| Householder 25 to 34 years: | 159 | +/-129 |
| Less than 20.0 percent | 26 | +/-42 |
| 20.0 to 24.9 percent | 6 | +/-9 |
| 25.0 to 29.9 percent | 20 | +/-31 |
| 30.0 to 34.9 percent | 20 | +/-26 |
| 35.0 percent or more | 87 | +/-119 |
| Not computed | 0 | +/-19 |
| Householder 35 to 64 years: | 356 | +/-138 |
| Less than 20.0 percent | 126 | +/-86 |
| 20.0 to 24.9 percent | 19 | +/-17 |
| 25.0 to 29.9 percent | 26 | +/-32 |
| 30.0 to 34.9 percent | 49 | +/-56 |
| 35.0 percent or more | 108 | +/-70 |
| Not computed | 28 | +/-45 |
| Householder 65 years and over: | 511 | +/-141 |
| Less than 20.0 percent | 23 | +/-39 |

| | | |
|----------------------|-----|--------|
| 20.0 to 24.9 percent | 100 | +/-64 |
| 25.0 to 29.9 percent | 107 | +/-68 |
| 30.0 to 34.9 percent | 38 | +/-38 |
| 35.0 percent or more | 236 | +/-101 |
| Not computed | 7 | +/-12 |

Source: U.S. Census ACS, 2017

A summary of this same data is provided here in Table III. 7 Roughly 54 percent of all renters' income is considered cost burdened.

Table III. 7 GROSS RENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS - Universe: Renter-occupied housing units

| GROSS RENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF | North Smithfield town, | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|
| | Estimate | Margin of |
| Total: | 1,067 | +/-211 |
| Less than 10.0 percent | 6 | +/-9 |
| 10.0 to 14.9 percent | 37 | +/-53 |
| 15.0 to 19.9 percent | 132 | +/-90 |
| 20.0 to 24.9 percent | 125 | +/-72 |
| 25.0 to 29.9 percent | 153 | +/-83 |
| 30.0 to 34.9 percent | 107 | +/-70 |
| 35.0 to 39.9 percent | 170 | +/-122 |
| 40.0 to 49.9 percent | 50 | +/-43 |
| 50.0 percent or more | 252 | +/-94 |
| Not computed | 35 | +/-47 |

Source: U.S. Census ACS, 2017.

Families

It is a priority of the Town to allow for policies that encourage affordable housing for families. A recent, 2017 Rhode Island Housing LMI report indicated only 60 units are reserved for low and moderate income (LMI) families. This represents 15% of the total LMI stock.

Elderly

One positive aspect to the affordable housing cohort exists with elderly housing. The total number of LMI units again is 415, of this, 295 is reserved for the elderly.

Special Needs

Special needs housing incorporates a wide range of populations, including persons with physical or mental disabilities, battered women and their families, people recovering from addictions, and people with

specialized health needs. Housing incorporating supportive service models has been developed to meet the needs of these populations. One program available to the special needs population is the Neighborhood Opportunities Program (NOP). One component of the NOP is Permanent Supportive Housing, housing for disabled and special needs persons coupled with essential services. The program also provides housing for very low-income families.

Senior Women Head-of-Household

Today there are more senior women head-of-households than in the past. Many of the women own their own homes but for those who have a mortgage, the cost burden is high. Data from the 2010 census indicates that 10.7% of households in North Smithfield are females over the age of 65 living alone. With income becoming fixed at retirement age coupled with advances in medicine enabling people to live longer, it's important for the town to support affordable housing policies for seniors.

Homeless

There are no reported homeless families or individuals in North Smithfield. A local organization, Tri-town Community Action Agency, part of the large Rhode Island Community Action Association network, serves the towns of Johnston, North Providence, Smithfield, North Smithfield, Burrillville, Glocester, Scituate and Foster. Residents struggling with housing are referred to this agency.

While there are no homeless shelters in North Smithfield, The Blackstone Shelter in Pawtucket, The Salvation Army in Providence and Crossroads in Providence are shelters close by that are available to the homeless. The closest shelter is the Woonsocket Shelter available for homeless families, single head-of-household families and single women over the age of 18. The Children's Shelter of Blackstone Valley provides services for children in need.

Barriers to Affordable Housing Development

There are several barriers to affordable housing development in North Smithfield. An understanding of these barriers and the development process is necessary if the Town hopes to encourage affordable housing.

Limited sewer and water infrastructure

The portions of North Smithfield which do not have access to public water and sewer are served by on-site wells and individual sewage disposal systems. This limited public infrastructure restricts sustainable densities outside of public utility areas to single-family and two-family homes on lots ranging from 1.5 acres to 2.75 acres, which makes it difficult to develop affordable housing. Even within those portions of Town that do contain public water, many areas have inadequate pressure due to antiquated 3" to 6" water mains, several streets have 1" to 2" mains. Infrastructure inadequacies act as a barrier to not only deed-restricted affordable housing, but all housing and non-residential development.

The lack of non-profit affordable housing developers failing to participate in land auction and unit foreclosure bidding processes at the local level is problematic too. Active participation could yield a better geographic dispersion of affordable housing as part of the rural landscape at low densities without compromising rural character or infrastructure.

Public Transportation

North Smithfield is serviced by two bus routes (59x express route & 282 flex) via RIPTA's public transportation system. Public transportation enables residents to commute to work, and provides access to shopping, religious institutions, and government services. A link to RIPTA's website: <https://www.ripta.com/fixed-route>

Zoning

North Smithfield's Zoning Ordinance establishes four (4) residential zoning districts, ranging from REA-120 to RU-20. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of the land in North Smithfield is zoned residential. Residential development is not permitted in commercial, business, or manufacturing districts, unless proposed under a land development project. The smallest residential zoning classification is RU-20, which requires 20,000 square foot lots and is found primarily in Slatersville, Forestdale, Union Village, and Park Square. This plan proposes up-zoning several village areas to RU20 to encourage growth in dense areas where utilities exist, thereby preserving open spaces that give the Town its rural feel. (see Map III. 1).

Environmental Factors

Environmental constraints are caused by high water tables, shallow bedrock (ledge), and wetlands. The Town has a sizable number of large wetland systems which in many cases, divide large parcels of land,

making the access to the buildable portion of the land difficult or cost prohibitive. The costs of permitting development around wetlands and the costs associated with ledge removal place many parcels of land outside the reach of affordable housing developers.

Cost of Housing and Land

The cost of housing and land is a major impediment to affordable housing development. Non-profit affordable housing developers have a difficult time finding a building or a lot they can afford to develop affordable housing on.

Affordable housing strategies

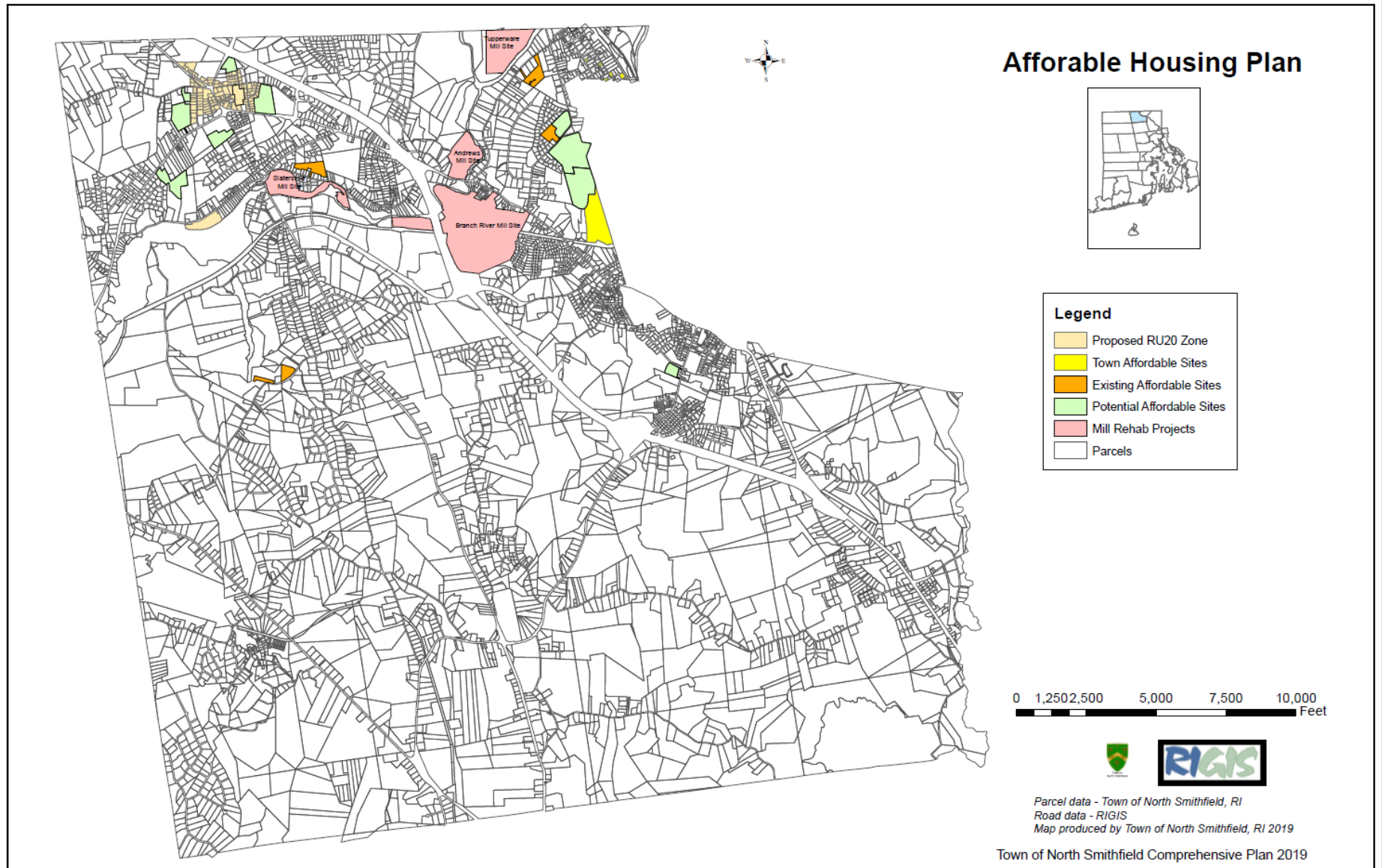
Significant gains have been made in support from the community regarding affordable housing developments. Marshfield Commons opened in 2013, providing 38 affordable housing units for low- and moderate-income families. Initially, there was community opposition to the development due to fears that an affordable housing development



would lower property values and be unattractive. However, Marshfield Commons (here) was developed using design features that copy traditional New England village charm with common open space.

North Smithfield enacted General Ordinance 10-67 providing the planning board the ability to require inclusion of low-income housing and the option to provide a greater municipal subsidy when the developer provides for low income housing. The ordinance (10-64) requires 20 percent affordable units for every subdivision or land development of six or more units.

Map III. 1 Affordable Housing Areas



Sec. 10-67. Affordable housing.

The Town has made significant progress in the addition of affordable units through the General Ordinance 10-67 especially in the Slater Mill rehabilitation and redevelopment. Mill rehabilitation like that of the



former Andrews Mill, recently acquired by Neighborworks Blackstone River Valley Inc. and nominated for the National Register as a historic property could offer an additional 90 affordable units and senior center space. Notwithstanding the existing policies in place to create affordable housing, this mill by itself could raise the Town's percentage from 8.18% to 9.80%. Notwithstanding successful, historical mill rehabilitation projects, it is the Town's intent to geographically disperse housing type whenever possible as to avoid concentrations or pockets of LMI housing.

According to the Statewide Planning Information Center population projections, North Smithfield's population is expected to grow by 11.4% by the year 2040 to a total population of 13,331. Based on the current household size of 2.47, North Smithfield can expect 683 new households that will need housing by 2040. Of those 683, 68 must be designated as affordable by deed restriction. The town is expected to achieve and maintain the 10% threshold through its local ordinance 10-67 which requires 20% affordable units for subdivisions of 6 or more.

Table III. 8.

| Goals | Policies | Actions |
|--|---|--|
| <p>1. Achieve a diversity of housing opportunities that are affordable for the various population groups of North Smithfield for both current and future populations.</p> | <p>1.a Promote affordable housing options to families and younger cohorts..</p> | <p>1.a.1 Collaborate with Rhode Island Housing regarding homebuyer education.</p> |
| | | <p>1.a.2 Consider housing for younger populations at the former Andrews Mill.</p> |
| | <p>1.b. Maintain the existing housing stock to preserve community character.</p> | <p>1.b.1 Create affordable homeownership opportunities in existing village areas in partnership with non-profit organizations using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds.</p> |
| | | <p>1.b.2. Continue to expand the Town’s home repair and home maintenance grant programs.</p> |
| <p>2. Housing locations and types will be closely related to the presence of existing services and facilities and will be easily accessible to the range of targeted population groups in town.</p> | <p>2.a. Identify Programs and Potential Locations for Affordable Housing Development</p> | <p>2.a.1. Enact zone changes as recommended in the future land use map to achieve the 10% threshold.</p> |
| | | <p>2.a.2. Consider expansions of the medium to high density (RS40 and RU20) zone districts</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | | to promote infill and multi-unit deed-restricted housing. |
| | 2.b. Promote increased housing density commensurate with that of existing village areas. | 2.b.1. Support infill development along with affordable housing in high density areas. |
| | 2.c. Discourage increased housing density in areas not supported by public infrastructure. | |
| 3. Meet and maintain the 10% threshold of affordable units mandated by the Low and Moderate-Income Housing Act. | 3.a. Use existing ordinances to promote affordable housing development. | 3.a.1. Explore and adopt a fee-in-lieu ordinance for the Town. |
| | 3.b. Identify Existing and New Resources for Affordable Housing Development | 3.b.1. Establish a local Affordable Housing Land Trust Fund to maintain fee-in-lieu funds for affordable housing development. |
| | 3.c. Strengthen Partnerships and Build Community Support for Affordable Housing | 3.c.1. Create a North Smithfield Affordable Housing Committee to monitor the implementation of the Affordable Housing Plan. |

IV. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

This economic plan focuses on the financial aspects of maintaining and developing revenue to operate the Town of North Smithfield. The taxes on residential and commercial real estate, tangible taxes on equipment and taxes on services provide the primary revenue for town operations.

Aside from a select few rural areas in the southwestern quadrant of Town, North Smithfield is primarily a suburban residential community with a significant historical heritage and character. This plan maintains the open space and historic character of the town while recognizing the importance of generating tax revenue from commercial enterprise in town as well as providing local services for town residents.

Strategic Planning

Comprehensive plans are normally general guiding land use documents which require coordination with the Town Council, Planning Board, and, on occasion, the Zoning Board to implement them. The action items found in the Goals/Policies/Actions table at the end of this chapter are specific and do not necessitate additional strategic plans. Some actions relate to zone changes to enhance the Town's non-residential tax base. Future commercial/industrial zone areas were further discussed in detail in the context of the Town's road system with particular attention having been given to the functional classification system. There are ways to utilize the existing road network in a manner that allows for growth that will not compromise rural-suburban characteristics for the vast majority of residents.

Also, a detailed buildout of all non-residential zone districts was performed using GIS and discussed later in this chapter in section entitled "**Non-residential buildout analysis**". All maps related to the buildout are available in Appendix A. The findings confirm that North Smithfield has very little undeveloped commercially-zoned property remaining. As a result, the Town must consider both flexibility in its subdivision and land development process to encourage development of remaining industrially-zoned land, along with potential zone changes to add to the Town's industrial base. Such will likely require cooperation between the Planning and Zoning Boards for subdivision and land developments. Areas for potential future zone changes, perhaps after the town builds out its existing industrial areas.

This plan is guided by the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning Standards Manual, adopted January 14, 2016. As such, this chapter will describe existing types and patterns of economic activity, discuss the ways in which local government can positively affect the business climate, include goals that embody the State’s goals for economic development, and include an implementation program. Most importantly, this chapter is synchronized with other chapters that discuss land use, natural resources, circulation, and open space preservation. Having a strong tax base affords the town an opportunity to build reserves and strategically acquire key open space parcels.

Financial Revenue Basics and Trends

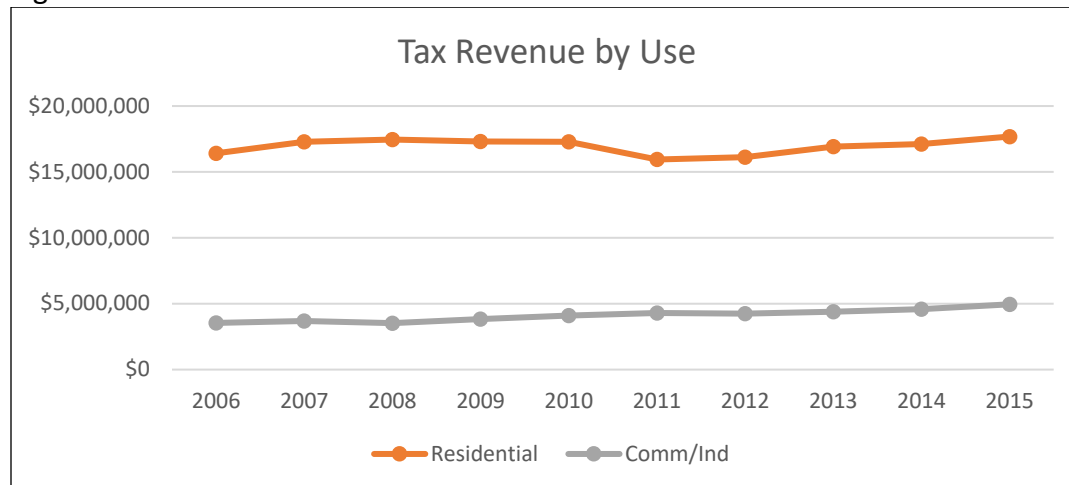
North Smithfield’s revenue is dominated by residential taxes. The commercial tax revenue has been growing which helps to mitigate the tax burden to residents. However, the delta between commercial and residential is nearly identical to that of 2006 which tells us that reliance on residential revenue vs that of commercial has not made the progress we’d prefer. It would appear that the reliance gap shrank during 2011 and 2012, however that was a result of the post 2008 recession. Residential values are rebounding but the structural reliance has not changed much. Table IV. 1., below, summarizes the tax revenue and trend over the past ten years.

Table IV. 1 Total Revenue by Residential & Commercial/Industrial Use

| Use by Year | Residential | Comm/Ind | Yearly Delta |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| 2006 | \$16,400,813 | \$3,544,558 | \$12,856,255 |
| 2007 | \$17,286,450 | \$3,688,192 | \$13,598,258 |
| 2008 | \$17,458,243 | \$3,524,814 | \$13,933,429 |
| 2009 | \$17,312,344 | \$3,825,101 | \$13,487,243 |
| 2010 | \$17,275,271 | \$4,090,122 | \$13,185,149 |
| 2011 | \$15,941,744 | \$4,290,067 | \$11,651,677 |
| 2012 | \$16,108,966 | \$4,253,512 | \$11,855,454 |
| 2013 | \$16,927,853 | \$4,399,979 | \$12,527,874 |
| 2014 | \$17,108,628 | \$4,586,179 | \$12,522,449 |
| 2015 | \$17,684,783 | \$4,953,187 | \$12,731,596 |

Source: Assessing Dept., August 2917.

Figure IV. 1.



Source: Assessing, Planning Dept., August 2017.

A large part of the town’s \$43 million budget (2017) is school costs. According to the Finance Dept. this is 58% of the budget or \$25 million.

The mean tax revenue per housing unit is \$3,207 (($\$16,500,997$ (2017 revenue residential / 5,144 total residential units)). The average students per housing unit is .33. Therefore, each new housing unit in town incurs a cost of \$4,932 ($\$14,714 \times .33$) just for the School’s budget, not including other services and infrastructure costs. Commercial/Industrial real estate taxes as well as tangible taxes are essential to mitigate residential taxes.

The trend of new houses being built in North Smithfield over the past ten years is shown in Table IV. 2 here. A significant addition is expected at Dowling Village with 80+ units to be built during the period of this plan.

Table IV. 2. Number of units by year.

| Year and Unit Type | | | | | |
|--------------------|----|------|--------|------------|-----|
| Single Family | | 2-5 | Family | Apartments | |
| 2008 | 15 | 2003 | 2 | 2008 | 1 |
| 2009 | 12 | 2008 | 1 | 2012 | 324 |
| 2010 | 6 | 2009 | 2 | | |
| 2011 | 7 | 2012 | 1 | | |
| 2012 | 9 | 2013 | 3 | | |
| 2013 | 11 | | | | |
| 2014 | 11 | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|----------|----|--|---|--|-----|
| 2015 | 8 | | | | |
| 2016 | 9 | | | | |
| 2017 | 4 | | | | |
| Subtotal | 92 | | 9 | | 325 |
| Total | | | | | 426 |

Source: North Smithfield Tax Assessor, 2017

We must address the challenge of increasing revenue from commercial taxes to meet the town’s financial needs without raising residential taxes in addition to creating local jobs to the greatest extent possible. The expansion of this tax base is critical to a community’s success in stabilizing residential tax rates, controlling the cost of living for its residents, and generating tax revenues to fund quality municipal services, the most demanding of which is public education. Expanding the commercial tax base also allows the commercial tax rate to be low, which in turn attracts business.

North Smithfield’s tax rates are competitive with other Rhode Island municipalities (see Table IV. 3. for details).

Table IV. 3 MUNICIPAL TAX RATES

| Municipality | Real Estate | Commercial | Personal Property | Motor Vehicle |
|------------------|-------------|------------|-------------------|---------------|
| North Smithfield | \$16.36 | \$18.16 | \$40.83 | \$37.62 |
| Smithfield | \$16.73 | \$17.53 | \$60.74 | \$39.00 |
| Cumberland | \$17.08 | \$17.08 | \$29.53 | \$19.87 |
| Burrillville | \$17.39 | \$17.39 | \$17.39 | \$40.00 |
| Scituate | \$18.04 | \$21.65 | \$38.37 | \$30.20 |
| Lincoln | \$21.60 | \$26.35 | \$33.92 | \$30.66 |
| Glocester | \$22.45 | \$25.51 | \$44.69 | \$24.37 |

Source : RI Municipal Finance Office. <http://www.municipalfinance.ri.gov/documents/data/taxrates/2016-Tax-Rates-12-31-15-FINAL.pdf>

Current Employment

In Rhode Island, employment data is available for each municipality for business establishments subject to the Rhode Island unemployment insurance tax. The employment is reported by major industry type for those employed in North Smithfield regardless of their place of residence. See UI Covered Employment Data on page 52.

Table IV. 4. U.I.-Covered Employment – North Smithfield, RI Annual 2005 and 2015

| | Number of Units | | Average Employment | | Avg. Emp. Percent Change |
|--|-----------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| | <u>2005</u> | <u>2015</u> | <u>2005</u> | <u>2015</u> | |
| Total Private & Government | 369 | 388 | 4,165 | 4,866 | 17% |
| Total Private Only | 358 | 379 | 3,780 | 4,502 | 19% |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting | 2 | 2 | 14 | * | |
| Mining | 2 | 2 | * | * | |
| Utilities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Construction | 61 | 65 | 299 | 208 | -30% |
| Manufacturing | 29 | 21 | 639 | 561 | -12% |
| Wholesale Trade | 29 | 23 | 202 | 167 | -17% |
| Retail Trade | 40 | 40 | 599 | 1,010 | 69% |
| Transportation & Warehousing | 11 | 8 | 205 | 341 | 66% |
| Information | 6 | 3 | 20 | 10 | -50% |
| Finance & Insurance | 14 | 13 | 71 | 50 | -30% |
| Real Estate & Rental & Leasing | 13 | 12 | 24 | 20 | -17% |
| Professional & Technical Services | 38 | 50 | 251 | 263 | 5% |
| Management of Companies & Enterprises | 0 | 1 | 0 | * | |
| Administrative Support & Waste Management | 15 | 27 | 46 | 158 | 243% |
| Educational Services | 3 | 3 | 6 | 3 | -50% |
| Health Care & Social Assistance | 37 | 51 | 781 | 771 | -1% |
| Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation | 4 | 6 | 26 | 75 | 188% |
| Accommodation & Food Services | 22 | 26 | 431 | 635 | 47% |
| Other services, (except Public Administration) | 35 | 32 | 123 | 173 | 41% |
| Government | 12 | 10 | 384 | 364 | -5% |

Source: Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training; Some data are not shown due to the possibility of identifying data of a single employer.; Data compiled June 2016 subject to revision. Some data may not add up precisely because of variations in the sequences of rounding, summing & averaging.

The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training also tracks identical units of covered employment by way of projections (see Table IV. 5. On page 53). It's interesting to compare the major industry divisions in North Smithfield, covered employment 2005 to 2015 to the state-wide projections which project out to the year 2024.

Table IV. 5.

**Rhode Island Industry Projections by Major Division
RI Labor Market Information Division
2014 - 2024**

| Naics Code | Industry Title | 2014 | 2024 | Numeric Change | Percent Change |
|------------|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | Estimated Employment | Projected Employment | | |
| | Total All Industries | 506,324 | 542,400 | 36,076 | 7.1% |
| | Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers, All Jobs | 42,500 | 43,000 | 500 | 1.2% |
| 11 | Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting | 760 | 805 | 45 | 5.9% |
| 21 | Mining | 208 | 210 | 2 | 1.0% |
| 22 | Utilities | 1,057 | 1,065 | 8 | 0.8% |
| 23 | Construction | 16,497 | 19,700 | 3,203 | 19.4% |
| 31-33 | Manufacturing | 40,821 | 43,280 | 2,459 | 6.0% |
| 42 | Wholesale Trade | 16,842 | 17,295 | 453 | 2.7% |
| 44-45 | Retail Trade | 47,157 | 49,320 | 2,163 | 4.6% |
| 48-49 | Transportation and Warehousing | 9,970 | 10,935 | 965 | 9.7% |
| 51 | Information | 8,850 | 8,970 | 120 | 1.4% |
| 52 | Finance and Insurance | 24,140 | 26,310 | 2,170 | 9.0% |
| 53 | Real Estate and Rental and Leasing | 5,942 | 6,200 | 258 | 4.3% |
| 54 | Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | 22,848 | 26,750 | 3,902 | 17.1% |
| 55 | Management of Companies and Enterprises | 12,001 | 14,250 | 2,249 | 18.7% |
| 56 | Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Se | 26,109 | 29,600 | 3,491 | 13.4% |
| 61 | Educational Services | 44,040 | 45,250 | 1,210 | 2.8% |
| 62 | Health Care and Social Assistance | 81,261 | 88,350 | 7,089 | 8.7% |
| 71 | Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation | 8,807 | 9,600 | 793 | 9.0% |
| 72 | Accommodation and Food Services | 46,379 | 50,700 | 4,321 | 9.3% |
| 81 | Other Services (except Government) | 17,569 | 18,260 | 691 | 3.9% |
| 92 | Government | 32,566 | 32,550 | -16 | -0.1% |

North Smithfield has seen extensive growth (243%) in Administrative Support & Waste Management while future state projections in this category is expected to be strong at 14%. It must be noted however that the number of units for this category is only reporting fifteen for North Smithfield.

Conversely, as one would expect, retail is reporting a much larger share of total units at forty. Arts, Entertainment and Recreation appear to be strong correlating areas along with Retail Trade and Accommodation & Food Services. The highest state projection is construction which should help reverse North Smithfield’s trend of -30% from 2005 to 2015.

Existing Industrial and Commercial Zoning

The town has one Manufacturing (M) District which allows a variety of industrial and heavy commercial uses by right or by Special Use Permit from the Zoning Board of Review. This is located along Industrial Drive. This includes a railroad up to Railroad St.

The town has two business zones. The Highway Business (BH) zone is located along the non-limited access portion of Route 146 and at the intersection of Main Street and Route 102. Most of the land in the zone is developed and maintains only a few legal-nonconforming single-family homes along Route 146.

The Neighborhood Business (BN) zone is found throughout the community. Substantial portions of the zoned areas adjacent to Route 146A and Victory Highway have been developed with retail, service or office uses. Several zoned sites in outlying areas are undeveloped or only partially used for business purposes.

A Professional Service (PS) zone and Limited Commercial (LC) zone are located along portions of Eddie Dowling Highway. While uses such as office space for persons in professional and related fields are allowed in the PS zone, nearly all of the PS zone is comprised of Dowling Village -a substantial regionalized retail center. For this reason, it may make sense to also rezone this area to BH (see Dowling Village map in Appendix A). Commercial establishments, light industry and office uses are allowed in the LC zone.

Two Mixed-Use Zones (MU1 and MU2) exist along Great Road from the intersection of Mendon Rd to just past the intersection with St. Paul St. This includes a railroad through the southern side.

The Importance of Public-Private Partnerships

North Smithfield has limited internal human resources to effectively manage economic development issues and initiatives. It is critically important that North Smithfield forge and maintain working relationships with the various regional and statewide economic development entities including the Commerce RI, Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, New England Economic Development Services (“NEEDS”) and NEEDS’ parent company, The Economic Development Foundation of Rhode Island. Each of these organizations has niche strengths that could be invaluable in North Smithfield’s various proposed economic development initiatives. Other organizations such as the Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc. and Grow Smart Rhode Island can also serve as important sources for technical support and even funding support in North Smithfield’s efforts to manage and nurture growth that reinforces North Smithfield’s sense of place while strengthening the community’s fiscal base and contribution to the regional and state job base.

Diversifying Economy through Tourism – The Blackstone River Natural Heritage Corridor

The Town of North Smithfield, through various proposals in this Comprehensive Plan, intends to work closely with the Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc. and the National Park Service. North Smithfield intends to be a partner with BHC, Inc. as described in their strategic plan, “Surging Forward 2026”. A link to the plan, which offers a SWOT analysis as well as an action plan, is shown here: <https://blackstoneheritagecorridor.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/BlackstoneStrategicPlanweb.pdf>

The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council gives special attention to coordinating local programs with those of the surrounding region to generate tourism which generates revenue for local businesses. Activities such as historic district and structure rehabilitation and conservation, adaptive reuse of historic mill structures and creation of the Branch River Park will have economic benefits for North Smithfield.

Retention of Existing Industry & Local Jobs

Often overlooked in the zeal to attract new industry is the need to be continuously in touch with the major businesses and industries already in Town. All too often, communities are not aware of issues which may cause a business to leave town. Assisting local businesses is the best way to create local jobs. Various goals, policies and actions at the end of this chapter reflect such an approach.

One solution is to have a Town official maintain contact with the management of key industries on an annual or more frequent basis. A brief meeting at the company's offices will let local businesses know they are important. If there are problems the Town or State can address, prompt attention may not only be good public relations, but also may help to make local businesses more profitable and keep industry in Rhode Island.

As discussed in the previous public/private partnerships section, the various public and private economic development organizations are valuable sources of information regarding company and industry specific problems and opportunities. By forging partnerships with these organizations, North Smithfield enhances its capacity to get early warning of emerging problems and opportunities and respond accordingly. A quality economic development program begins with a heightened awareness of North Smithfield's existing business community and strategies to retain and grow these businesses.

Non-residential build out analysis

The Economic Development Element calls for an aggressive program to attract new, quality industrial and commercial development to North Smithfield. In addition, it suggests measures to assure the retention of existing business and industry. This Economic Development Element encourages a type, scope and scale of industrial and commercial development that will result in the creation of quality job opportunities and expansion of North Smithfield's tax base while at the same time preserving North Smithfield's unique character and environment. This is best accomplished by encouraging redevelopment within existing commercial and industrial areas and establishing corridors of commercial and industrial development in designated areas that are near transportation facilities.

A detailed buildout of all non-residential zone districts was performed using GIS and 2014 aerials. The findings indicate that North Smithfield has very little undeveloped commercially-zoned property remaining. As a result, the Town must consider both flexibility in its subdivision and land development process to encourage development of remaining industrially-zoned land, along with potential zone changes to add to the Town's industrial base.

Accepting More Industrial and Commercial Growth

Using GIS, we have examined all remaining commercial and industrially zoned property along with development characteristics to ascertain total possible growth and revenue. The analysis resulted in an estimated 260 acres of land left to develop which could yield a total \$1,176,992 in property tax revenue to the Town. This represents merely 2.7% of the recently adopted 2017/18 Town budget of \$43,207,228. It is imperative to continue to embrace non-residential growth in existing industrial and commercial areas and be open to the idea of adding more commercial/industrial zoning along Route 146 where property and access allows. Confining growth to Route 146 via only those select portions of Greenville Road and Pound Hill Road that are closest to 146, takes advantage of the carrying capacity of 146 -a Principal Arterial Roadway while not compromising rural character.

The analysis was performed using current assessing data. Because GIS parcel data and assessing data can be combined, overlays can be done with zoning and other layers like natural features such as wetlands and topography. Various analysis can then be performed and linked to monetary values, revenues and development projections. For example, the Table 1 depicts existing municipal revenue for all parcels

within various commercial or industrial zoning districts. Generally, a picture can be developed that may help guide future zoning decisions relating to economic development.

Both developed and undeveloped parcels were considered with legal non-conforming residential uses excluded because they do not represent a true revenue source that is reflective of the commercial/industrial uses allowed in each district. In other words, a non-conforming use is not apples to apples in this particular analysis.

Table IV. 6. Municipal Revenue in Non-residential Zones

| Municipal Revenue in Non-residential Zones | | | | |
|--|---------|------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Zone | Acreage | Net Assessment | Net Revenue | Revenue per |
| Business Highway (BH) | 141 | \$ 47,202,040.00 | \$ 857,047.44 | \$ 6,078.06 |
| Limited Commercial (LC) | 12 | \$ 1,627,100.00 | \$ 29,543.25 | \$ 2,391.75 |
| Professional Services (PS) | 81 | \$ 41,868,300.00 | \$ 760,203 | \$ 9,359.13 |
| Manufacturing (M) | 350 | \$ 54,069,330.00 | \$ 981,737 | \$ 2,805.52 |
| Mixed use commercial | 33 | \$ 10,070,900.00 | \$ 182,857 | \$ 5,494.83 |
| Mixed use industrial (MU2) | 198 | \$ 6,043,030.00 | \$ 109,723 | \$ 554.53 |
| Business neighborhood (BN) | 146 | \$ 29,726,070.00 | \$ 539,736 | \$ 3,690.64 |

Source: Planning & Assessing Dept., 2017

When mapping the data, another important observation can be made as to whether the current zoning district is truly indicative of the revenue generated. For example, it is worth noting that nearly all of Dowling Village is located within the PS district (see Map IV. 1). The yellow graphic indicates the extent of the PS zone while the red line is that of Business Highway. We know that regionalized retail and restaurant uses are more closely defined to business highway versus professional services. Before writing off PS, however, there’s merit in examining other factors in addition to municipal revenue such as the type, number, and salary associated with PS jobs. The best example of PS uses may be Branch River Professional Offices at 501 Great Road which is actually in the MU1 district.

While these data nuances make land, use seem like a bit of a moving target with respect to trying to apply a scientific analysis, it’s important to establish some basis for decision-making. The takeaway is GIS can

be a helpful tool with which to conceptualize projections based on remaining land as we can analyze the same parcels for future development.

If we focus on the land itself and natural constraints such as wetlands, and less on property ownership which can be modified through administrative subdivisions, we can map potential developable acreage and use the previously calculated revenue per acre to ascertain potential future revenue.

Map IV. 1 PS district in yellow. BH district in red.



Build out development mapping

As an example, for the projected revenue analysis, the map here depicts one of the least constrained properties in the BN zone district; property to the south west of Brigido's IGA plaza (see Map IV. 2). The property is virtually flat with topographic contours depicting an elevation difference of just 10 feet (295 to 305), and virtually no wetlands.

Accounting for setbacks, a conceivable development acreage of 18.53 acres could be multiplied by the BN revenue average of \$3,690.64 yielding a net annual revenue for the town of \$68,387.55.

This analysis was performed for all developable areas of land by zone district, including excess land on properties that are already developed, assuming again, future subdivisions occur. A series of maps depicting total potential acreage are included at the end of this section.

Map IV. 2



If all available non-residential land was developed, based on the unit factors of revenue per acre for the various districts, the Town could realize a potential of \$690,707 over 260 acres of remaining buildable land. When looking at the data more closely, remember that PS is not indicative of PS, but rather, BH, due to Dowling Village -a relatively new regionalized retail center that accounts for substantial revenue.

Also, MU2 is a curiously low number at \$554 per acre. Despite Banneker Industries which comprises 79 percent of the total revenue for the MU2 zoning district, this district is largely vacant and contains more vacant acreage than any district. If we considered Banneker's revenue factor of \$5,721 per acre, for all

85 acres of potentially developable land, which is more in line with the mean revenue per acre for all non-residential districts, that could add \$486,285 to the MU2 district. **This would bring the total, potential Town revenue to \$1,176,992 in a best-case scenario that would require exceptional cooperation between the Planning and Zoning Boards with respect to subdivision and land development applications.** Table IV. 7 below depicts a summary of the non-residential buildout analysis when examining developable land remaining under the existing non-residential zone districts.

Table IV. 7. Potential Revenue in Non-residential Zones

| Zone | Acreage | Rev. Per acre unit factor | Net Revenue |
|----------------------------|---------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Business Highway (BH) | 32 | \$ 6,078.06 | \$ 196,321 |
| Limited Commercial (LC) | 0 | \$ 2,391.75 | \$ - |
| Professional Services (PS) | 0 | \$ 9,359.13 | \$ - |
| Manufacturing (M) | 111 | \$ 2,805.52 | \$ 312,086 |
| Mixed use commercial (MU1) | 9 | \$ 5,494.83 | \$ 48,190 |
| Mixed use industrial (MU2) | 85 | \$ 554.53 | \$ 46,863 |
| Business neighborhood (BN) | 24 | \$ 3,690.64 | \$ 87,247 |
| TOTAL | 260 | \$ 4,339.21 | \$ 690,707 |

Source: Planning Dept., Assessing Dept, 2017.

This GIS analysis can show us important aspects of the Town’s land use that can support productive discussion about policy. It enables us to see how zoning may not necessarily correlate to what is in the field.

We know there is remaining land within non-residential zones that could be developed but doing so is going to require cooperation from the Planning Board through its subdivision and land development process, and at times, the Zoning Board.

There is land available on which to develop non-residential uses without having to compromise North Smithfield’s rural areas in the southwestern quadrant of Town. However, select nodes of commercial opportunity should be considered along select portions of Route 146.

Opportunities exist in areas that are adequately zoned commercial or industrial such as with the abundance of vacant land in the MU2 district, as evidenced by this analysis as well as the Branch River Redevelopment Plan build out incorporated hereto by reference. Branch River must be enhanced with

better access to route 146 to realize its potential. Accordingly, action items have been included into the goals, policies and actions table at the end of this chapter.

Infrastructure – Public Sewer and Water

Improvements to the Town’s sewer and water utilities will be necessary to support future growth in designated commercial and industrial areas. The Town currently pays \$1,332,699.60 annually to the City of Woonsocket for utilization of its wastewater facility. Select portions of North Smithfield’s public water infrastructure is also owned by the City of Woonsocket.

North Smithfield may want to consider long-term capital planning as it relates to waste water as a means of limiting future wastewater expenses.

Table IV. 8.

| Goals | Policies | Actions |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Define and manage a comprehensive economic development program that creates local jobs. | 1.a. Work with RI Commerce corp., Northern RI Chamber, EDFRI., to further economic development initiatives. | 1.a.1 Undertake a local economic development strategic planning initiative to define a community’s economic vision and strategies to achieve this vision. |
| | | 1.a.2 Use local EDC to coordinate and oversee implementation of strategic plan. |
| | | 1.a.3 Aggressively pursue State and/or Federal grant funds for economic development. |
| | 1.b Communicate regularly with the business community to understand how or if government has a role in growth opportunities. | 1.b.1 Initiate a business retention strategy involving periodic contact between the North Smithfield Economic Development Commission, Town staff, and the business community. |
| 3. Strive to balance economic development and preservation of the Town’s natural resources and open spaces. | 3.a Encourage private investment in the Town’s existing commercial areas. | 3.a.1 Review the Zoning Ordinance as it pertains to industrial and commercial zoned areas and investigate the feasibility of implementing greater use flexibility in these zones along with design standards. |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | 3.b. Amend regulations that inhibit redevelopment and investment into historically-contaminated sites | 3.b.1. Study the Aquifer Overlay Zone to reconcile existing groundwater contamination and consider build out in those areas. |
| | | 3.b.2. Support tenants who expand or locate new businesses in Town with tax stabilization when requested. |
| | 3.c. Encourage development and redevelopment of older retail and commercial areas along route 146 and 146A. | 3.c.1. Rezone sections of Quaker Highway and Route 146 to recognize the existing and likely business highway (BH) uses. |
| | | 3.c.2. Maximize the potential for development in Branch River by providing designed and permitted access to route 146 via an entrance from the Pound Hill Rd. interchange. |
| | | 3.c.3. Work with the private sector to expand sewer infrastructure to Branch Village. |
| | | 3.c.4. Continue developing Branch River Commercial Park and the Branch Village Revitalization Plan |
| 4. Promote alternative forms of economic development such as mixed-use infill, tourism, and agro-economic development. | 4.a Partner with the National Park Service (NPS) and Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc. (BHC) to establish a presence in the Slatersville Historic District. | 4.a.1 Consider the existing library site, or Town Hall at 1 Main Street as the new home for the NPS Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park. |
| | 4.b Support historic preservation with which to promote destination-based tourism. | |
| | 4.c Support the community’s agriculturally based businesses by providing technical assistance for available grants for purchase of development rights and investigate tax incentives for landowners who maintain active agricultural pursuits. | 4.c.1 Facilitate the economic viability of North Smithfield’s remaining farms by supporting landowners under the Federal right to farm act. |

Appendix A

GIS maps depicting remaining build-out areas within all non-residentially zoned districts

LC district Map



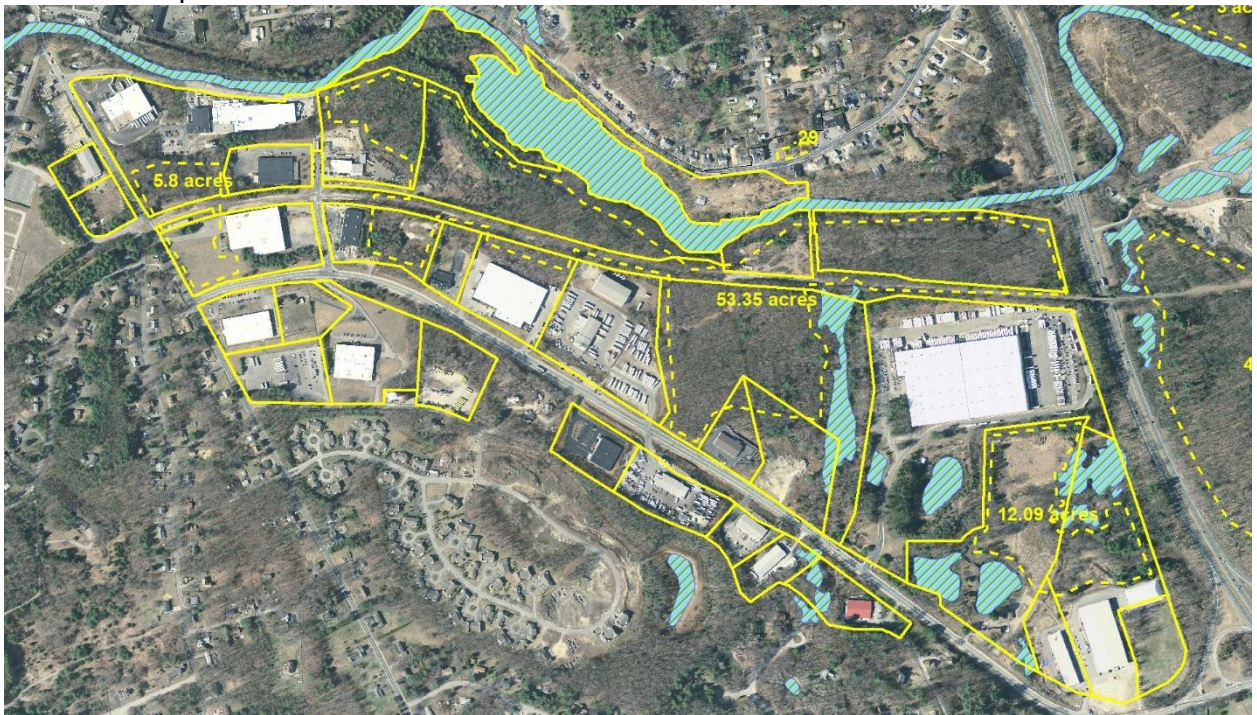
PS District Map (PS district to be eliminated and replaced with BH district)



M district Map



M district Map



M district Map



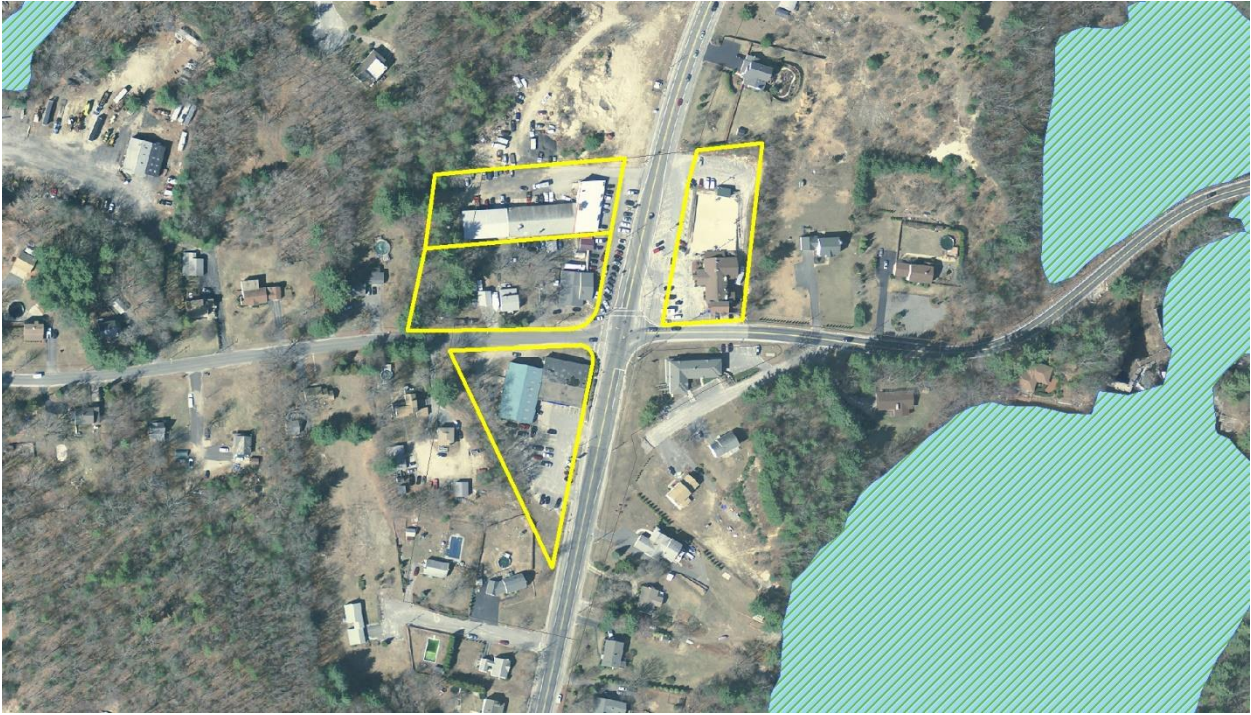
M district Map



M district Map



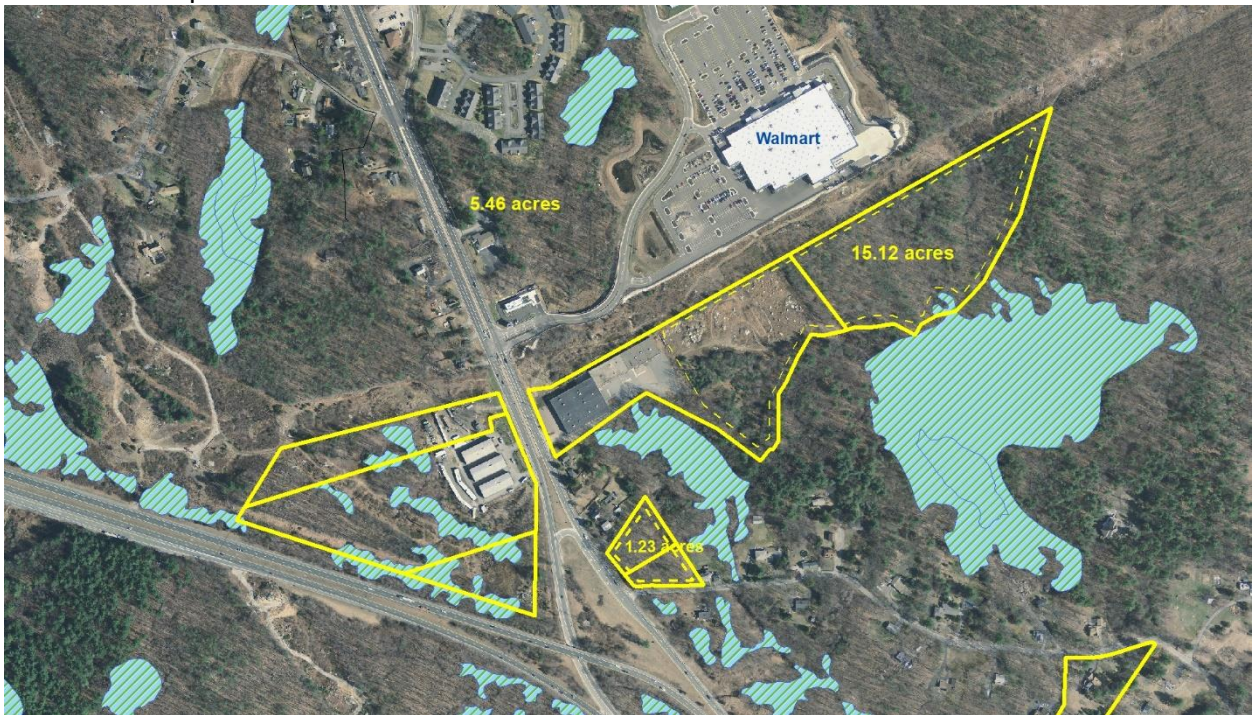
BH district Map



BH district Map



BH district Map



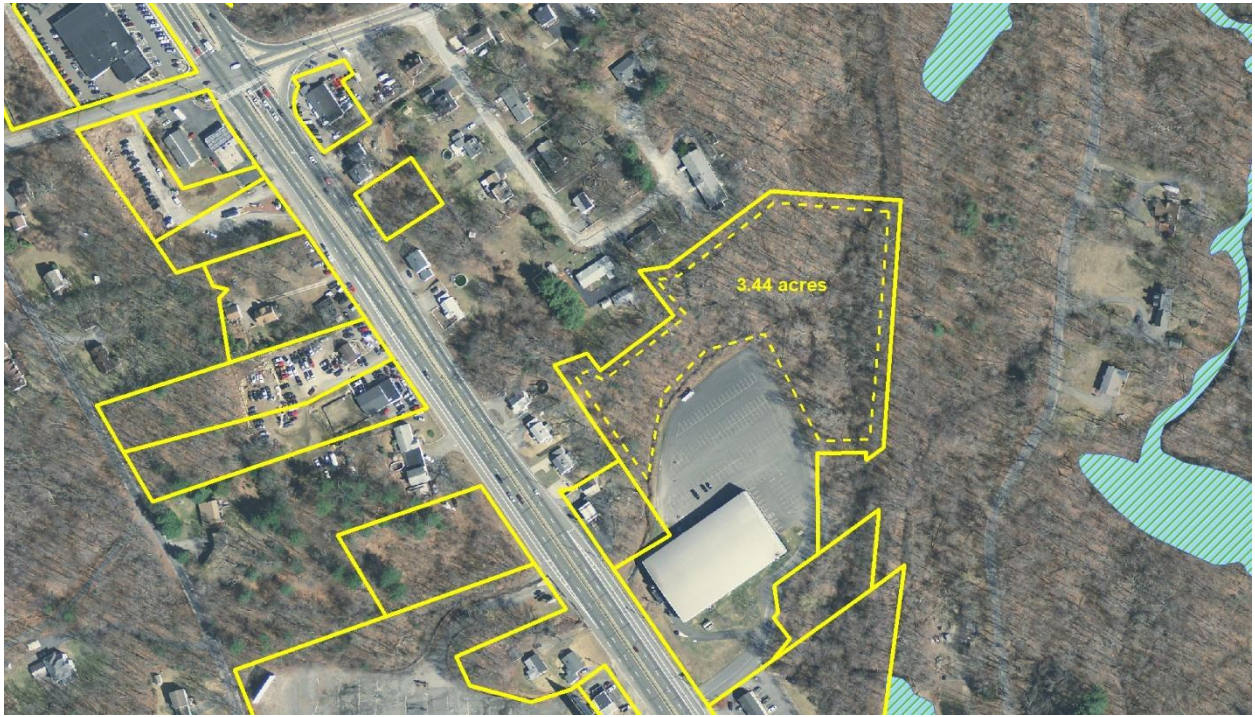
BH district Maps



BH district Map



BH district Map



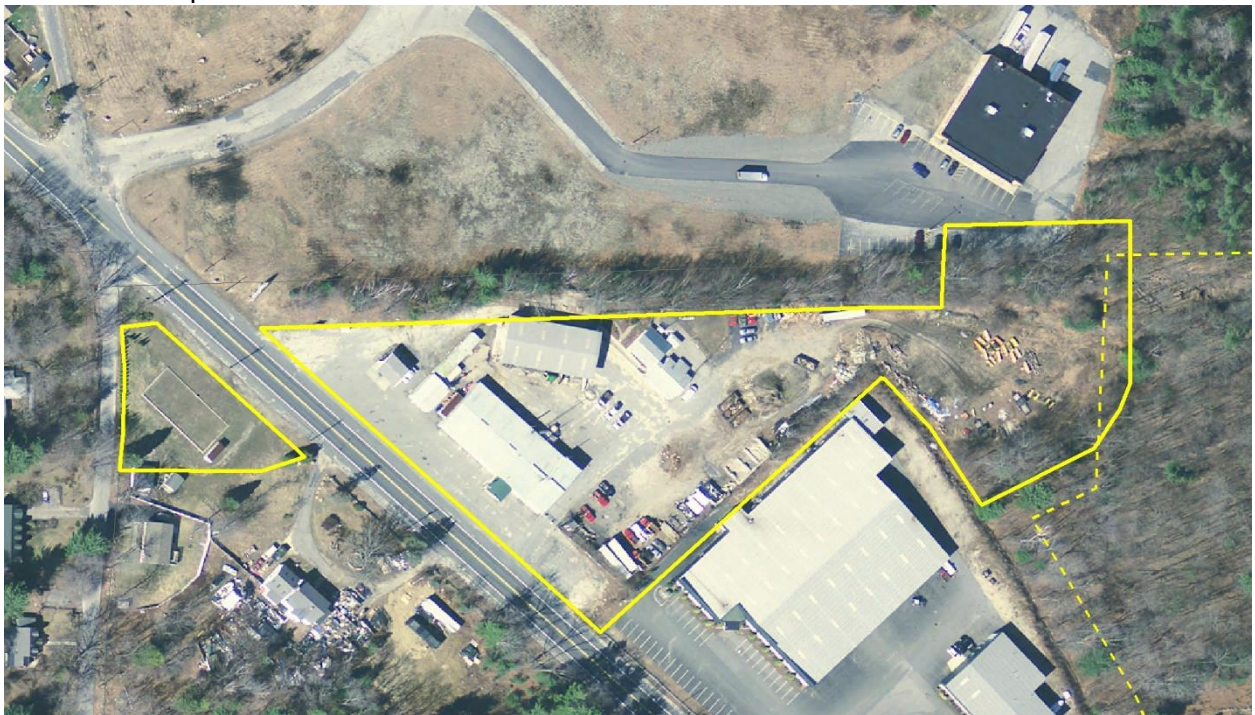
BN district Map



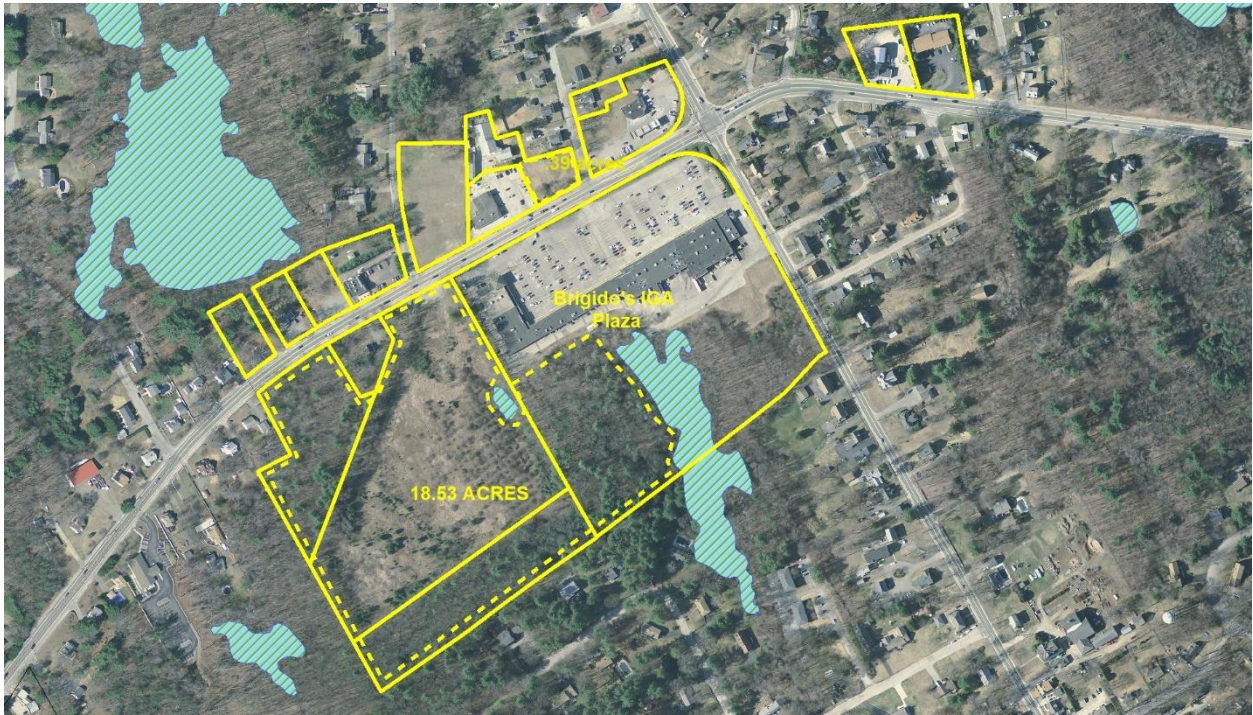
BN district Map



BN district Map



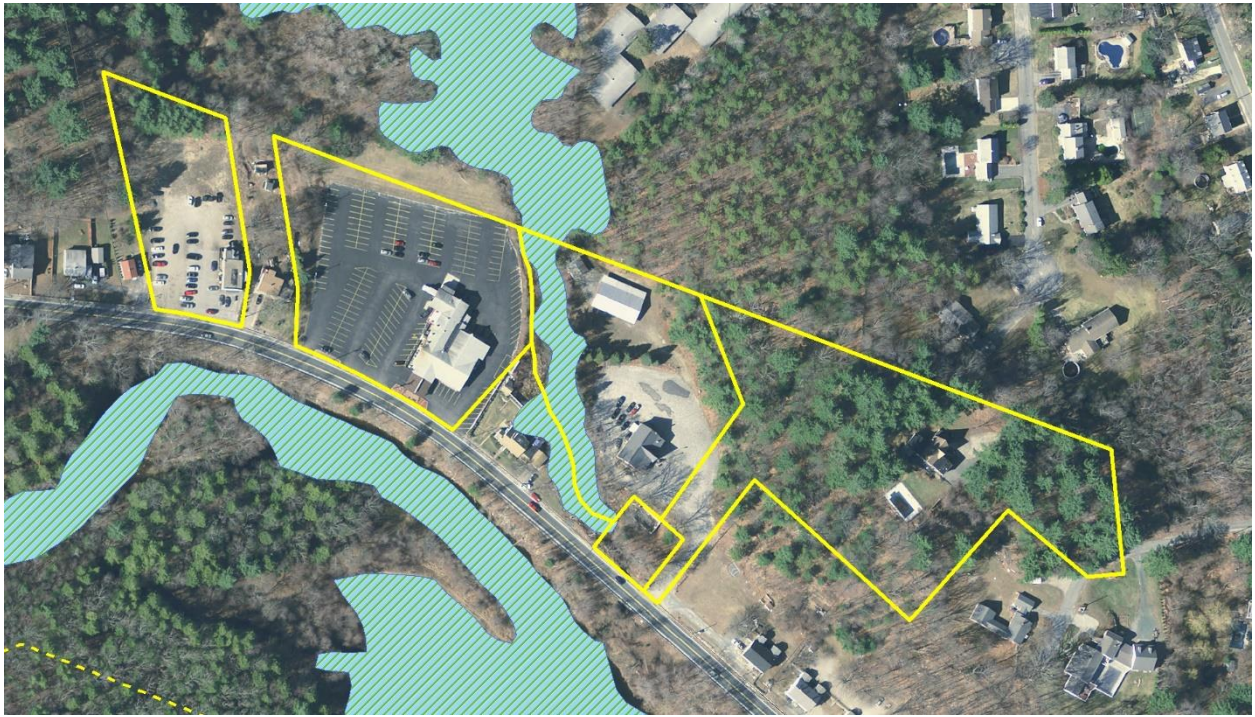
BN district Map



BN district Map



BN district Maps



BN district Map



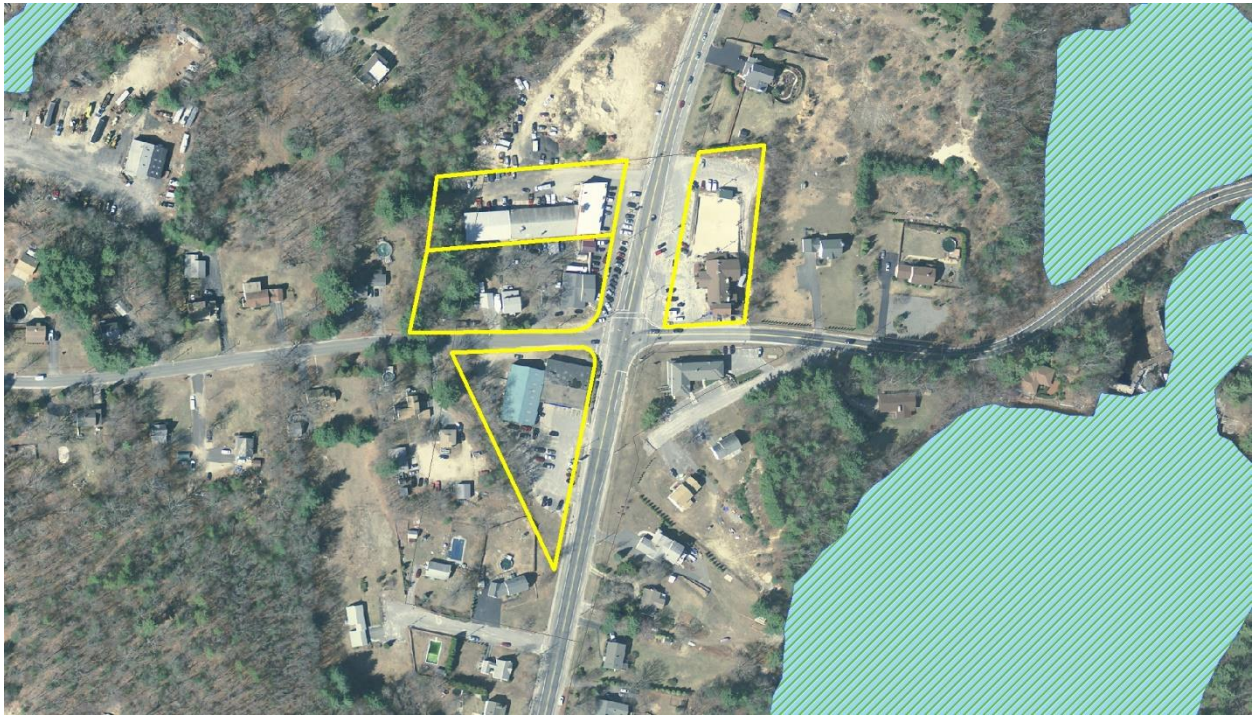
BN district Map



BN district Map



BN district Map



MU1 district Map



MU2 Map



V. NATURAL RESOURCES

Introduction

The purpose of the Natural Resource and Conservation element is to provide guidance and support through various goals, policies, and actions for conservation efforts that protect and manage the town's natural resources. Conservation of natural resources are evaluated and protected concurrently with open space, historical and cultural significant areas. Therefore, this element is closely linked to the Open Space element as well as the Historical and Cultural elements of this Plan. This Plan includes an inventory of existing natural resources, the threats to these resources, and ways to assure the conservation of these Town assets.

Land protection and land development have a symbiotic relationship with respect to the Town's capability to preserve its natural resources. The Town must generate revenue with which to protect undeveloped lands. Generally speaking, when one observes the historical development pattern of Town in conjunction with the road network resulting thereto, it make sense to continue redevelopment along 146 and 146A in an arc along the northeastern to northern part of Town along 102, with preservation efforts in the western, central, southern and southwestern area.

Natural Resources Inventory

The residents of North Smithfield are the caretakers of 15,600 acres (26.4 square miles) rich in natural resources worthy of protection. Whether it is wildlife, vegetation, wetlands, forests or water resources, the natural features of North Smithfield create a sense of place that is valued by the community. Significant natural resources include surface and groundwater aquifers as a result of glacial outwash.

Groundwater Water Resources

Groundwater is an important resource as it supplies drinking water for a large percentage of the town's households. North Smithfield has two class GAA groundwater aquifers, the Slatersville and Lower Branch. Groundwater classified GAA are those groundwater resources that are known or presumed to be suitable for drinking water use without treatment and are in one of the two areas described below. Groundwater classified GAA underlies approximately 21% of the state and 32% of North Smithfield. Groundwater classified GAA includes the following:

The state's major stratified drift aquifers that can serve as a significant source for a public water supply ("groundwater reservoirs") and the critical portion of their recharge area as delineated by DEM

The wellhead protection area for each public water system community water supply well. Community water supply wells are those that serve resident populations and have at least 15 service connections or serve at least 25 individuals, e.g., municipal wells and wells serving nursing homes, condominiums, mobile home parks, etc.

Map V. 1 is the Groundwater Aquifer Protection Overlay District from the North Smithfield Zoning Ordinance. This map combined with North Smithfield Zoning Ordinance 6.19 regulates the use and development of land to protect major stratified drift aquifers and their recharge areas (GAA Classification), surface drinking water supplies and their watersheds, community well-head protection areas, and town-owned non-transient, non-community wellhead protection areas (schools).

While much of the town's more intense residential, commercial and industrial development has historically been located over aquifers, ordinances have been put in place specifying permitted uses and non-permitted (possibly contaminating) uses to protect the drinking water of North Smithfield's residents.

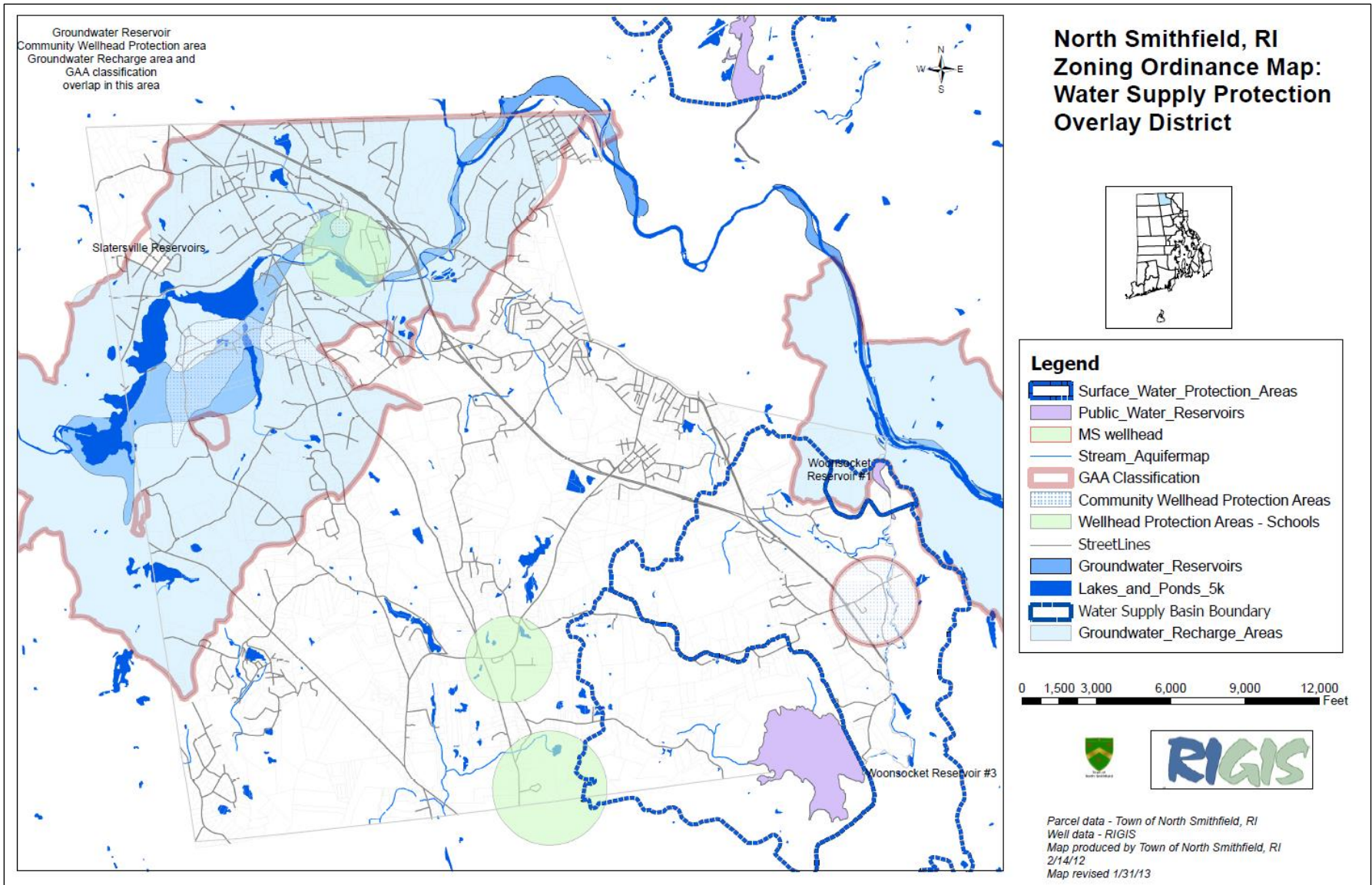
Surface water resources impaired waters, and watersheds

North Smithfield is located within the drainage system of three major Rhode Island rivers. The northern portions of the Town drain into the Branch River which in turn joins the Blackstone River in the northeastern section of Town. In the southwest corner several streams, including those flowing through Primrose Pond, combine to form the headwaters of the Woonasquatucket River. In the eastern section of the community both the Cherry Brook and Crookfall Brook systems flow to the east and into the Blackstone River in Woonsocket.

State Guide Element 162 classifies the various river segments in North Smithfield as follows:

The Branch River from its confluence with the Clear and Chepachet Rivers to the Slatersville Reservoir is suitable for swimming or fishing. It has recreational open space value, and mill villages are located along its corridor. (Classified as "Recreational Open Space")

Map V. 1 Aquifer protection overlay map



Slatersville Reservoir (both upper and lower) has recreational value and is designated as swimmable and fishable. It has a state boat ramp and fishing club access. Its current condition with respect to contact recreation is, however, marginal due to coliform and metals levels that exceed state standards. The Land Resource and Recovery Landfill Superfund site is located near the Reservoir. (Classified as “Recreational Open Space”)¹

The Branch River, from the Slatersville Reservoir to its confluence with the Blackstone River at the Blackstone Gorge in the Town of North Smithfield, has scenic and open space value with mill villages located along the river corridor. It is suitable for non-contact recreation. (Classified as “Recreational Multiple Use”)

The Blackstone River from the Blackstone Gorge to the Rhode Island state line is suitable for boating recreation. White-water rafting is occasionally possible in this segment. (Classified as “Recreational Open Space”)

The Blackstone River from the Rhode Island state line to Thundermist Falls in Woonsocket is suitable for boating recreation activities. Mills with historical value are located along the river corridor. (Classified as “Recreational Multiple Use”)

The Woonsocket Reservoirs and Crookfall Brook and its tributaries are components of a public drinking water supply. The main reservoir, identified as Reservoir No. 3, is in Smithfield and North Smithfield. Crookfall Brook conveys water from Reservoir No. 3 through Reservoir No. 2 to Reservoir No. 1, the terminal reservoir and the water treatment facility. Mill sites, historical resources, and archeological remains can be found along the Crookfall Brook corridor. (Classified as “Water Supply”)

There are four major dams in North Smithfield. Three, located along the Branch River, were originally developed to provide waterpower for the mills. The fourth is across Crookfall Brook to create Woonsocket Reservoir #3. The maintenance of existing dams is important for water quality. The three dams on the Branch River are maintained by private owners and the dam on Crookfall Brook is maintained by the City of Woonsocket. The dams, particularly those along the Branch River, have served to trap contaminated

sediments; a breach could have adverse environmental consequences of statewide significance. RIDEM's Dam Division regulates dam safety in Rhode Island.

Impaired waters

There are numerous impaired waters within Town that require remediation. The Town supports water quality improvement through zoning and subdivision and land development regulations including site plan review. Stormwater management technologies and practices are constantly evolving, and on an incremental basis through site plan review, improvements will occur.

Impaired waters are classified as follows: AA, A, B, B1, and C with AA being the purest for drinking water. For a more complete description of not only impaired waters, but water quality regulations, see the following link: <https://rules.sos.ri.gov/regulations/part/250-150-05-1>

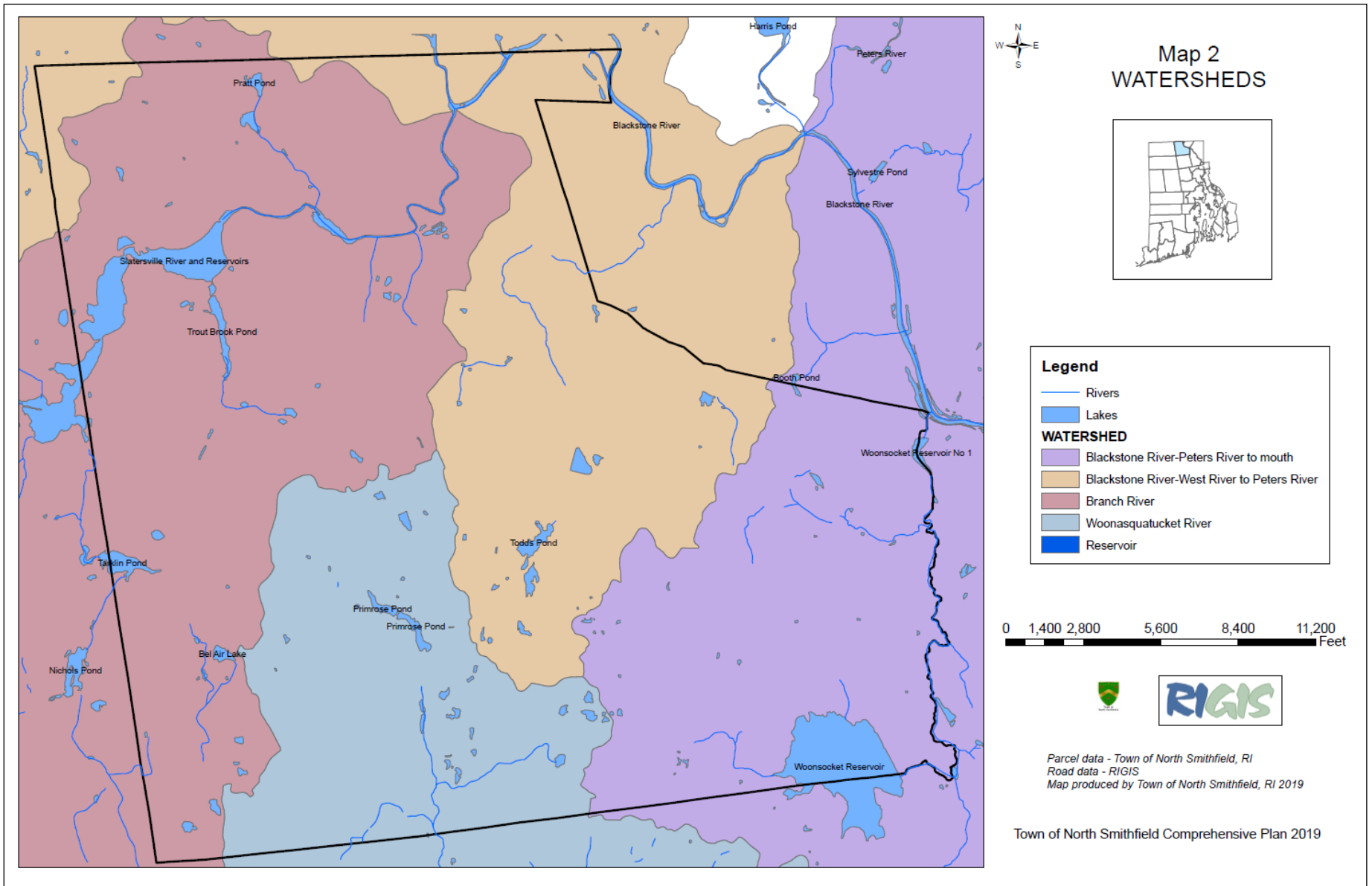
For a complete list of impaired surface water bodies, including rivers and streams, see the following link: <http://dem.ri.gov/programs/benviron/water/quality/surfwq/pdfs/irc16.pdf>

Water Supply Basin

The Blackstone River Watershed drains into two reservoirs located in North Smithfield serving the Woonsocket Water Supply. As shown on Map V. 2., major portions of the watersheds serving Reservoir #3 and Reservoir #1 of the Woonsocket water supply system are in North Smithfield. The watershed is divided into two sections. The westerly portion drains to Reservoir #3 which straddles the North Smithfield/Smithfield Town line. The easterly section drains directly into Crookfall Brook and Reservoir #1; Reservoir #1 is bisected by the North Smithfield/Lincoln Town line. Risk assessments of the watersheds were undertaken in 2004 by the Department of Health and URI Cooperative Extension. Based on an analysis of existing uses and zoning, the Woonsocket water supplies are “moderately susceptible to contamination”.

The City of Woonsocket owns about 30% of Reservoir #3 watershed, primarily around the reservoir's perimeter. The entire Reservoir #3 watershed in North Smithfield is zoned for single family homes; only a small percentage of potential watershed development has taken place to date. Because of existing and

Map V. 2. Watersheds



potential development, the Reservoir #1 watershed is the most critical in terms of hydrologic importance. Development activities in the watershed are constrained to the extent that special measures or restrictions may apply to this important watershed. Water quality is constantly monitored, and development activities are constrained for protection from contaminants.

Rivers and streams running through the watershed carry storm water drainage and drainage from impervious surfaces such as roadways and parking lots. To protect the groundwater reservoirs and streams, the North Smithfield Zoning Ordinance limits the amount of impervious surface in new development and specifies no impervious surface within 100 feet of a freshwater wetland. In Section 17, the section on Site Plan Review, impervious cover is to be minimized in driveways and parking lots. In Section 18 a low impact design Stormwater Prevention Plan is recommended to minimize surface runoff.

Minerals and Soils

37% of North Smithfield soils have only moderate limitations for development, 47% have severe constraints due to high water tables, steep slopes, and shallow bedrock or wetland conditions. Increasingly, new development is encountering more demanding sites. Over 3,000 acres have agricultural soils rated as prime or of statewide importance, only 500 acres are in use for agriculture.

Map V. 3 shows wetlands and hydric soils. Hydric soils have water at or near the surface for significant periods of the year. Development in areas with hydric soils usually is not feasible nor allowed by local, State or Federal wetland regulations without a specific permit granted by RIDEM. Hydric soils cover about 2,250 acres or approximately 14% of North Smithfield. Wetlands are periodically flooded lands occurring between uplands and open water bodies such as lakes, rivers, streams and estuaries. They are important to fish and wildlife habitat, flood protections, erosion control and water quality maintenance. To develop on or near wetlands, permits are required from RIDEM.

The Town's abundant groundwater aquifer exists due to the presence of glacial outwash as depicted on Map V. 4. Map V. 5 shows soils classified as prime farmland and those of statewide importance. Generally, farmlands of statewide importance include those lands that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to modern farming methods.

Forest and Trees

Woodlands serve major ecological, hydrological, climatological and aesthetic functions in North Smithfield. North Smithfield's undeveloped areas are made up of small woodlands, wooded swamps, streams which serve as habitat for a diverse group of plant and animal species (see Map V. 6). With one acre and larger housing sites being used for new development in large portions of the community, a considerable amount of woodland is now located on individual house lots. As can be seen on Map 7, most of the forested area in North Smithfield is in the southern portion and is deciduous forest.

Forest fragmentation due to residential and urban development is of concern in the state as well as in North Smithfield. Fragmentation occurs when contiguous forest land is divided into smaller patches. The division has the potential to change the local water cycles, reduce critical wildlife habitat and foster the growth of invasive plant species.

Wildlife

The Town's rolling and forested terrain, interspersed with streams, ponds and wetlands, creates habitats for a variety of plant and animal species, both common and rare. These same features help to break up the development pattern and provide varied living environments for residents as well. Small ponds and a variety of deciduous and coniferous trees provide for a diverse habitat of wildlife. But this break in the development pattern also causes fragmentation of habitat. According to the Rhode Island Wildlife Action Plan of 2015 (RI WAP), the primary threat to wildlife habitats is the conversion of land for housing, urban growth, transportation, commercial, industrial, and recreational uses. According to Land Use 2025, it took over 300 years to develop the first 20 percent of the state's land, and only 25 more years to develop another 9 percent. This shift causes breaks in contiguous land for habitats as well as loss of habitat. This fragmentation has a profound effect on wildlife and on species diversity.

Many species of wildlife depend on the forested habitats for their survival. The maturing/aging of the forests and the lack of young forests are changing the wildlife species in Rhode Island. Maturing/aging forests are a benefit to some species of the wildlife because of the abundance of nuts and fruits but this varies year to year. Aging forests also contain dead and fallen trees providing habit for cavity-nesting animals and those that need dead wood to survive. The lack of young trees and plants and the inhibition of understory growth affect the nesting and feeding habits of other wildlife.

Conservation and Protection

Although North Smithfield's scenic resources do not run to the unusual and dramatic, there are many man-made and natural landscapes which add to the attractiveness of the community. Many of the natural resources such as Todd's Pond or the Blackstone River Gorge and locally-known cobble rock (pictured here) are obscured from public view due to private ownership or limited access. Others are not; the view of the farms and barns on Woonsocket Hill Road as one travels north on Route 146 is both dramatic and memorable.

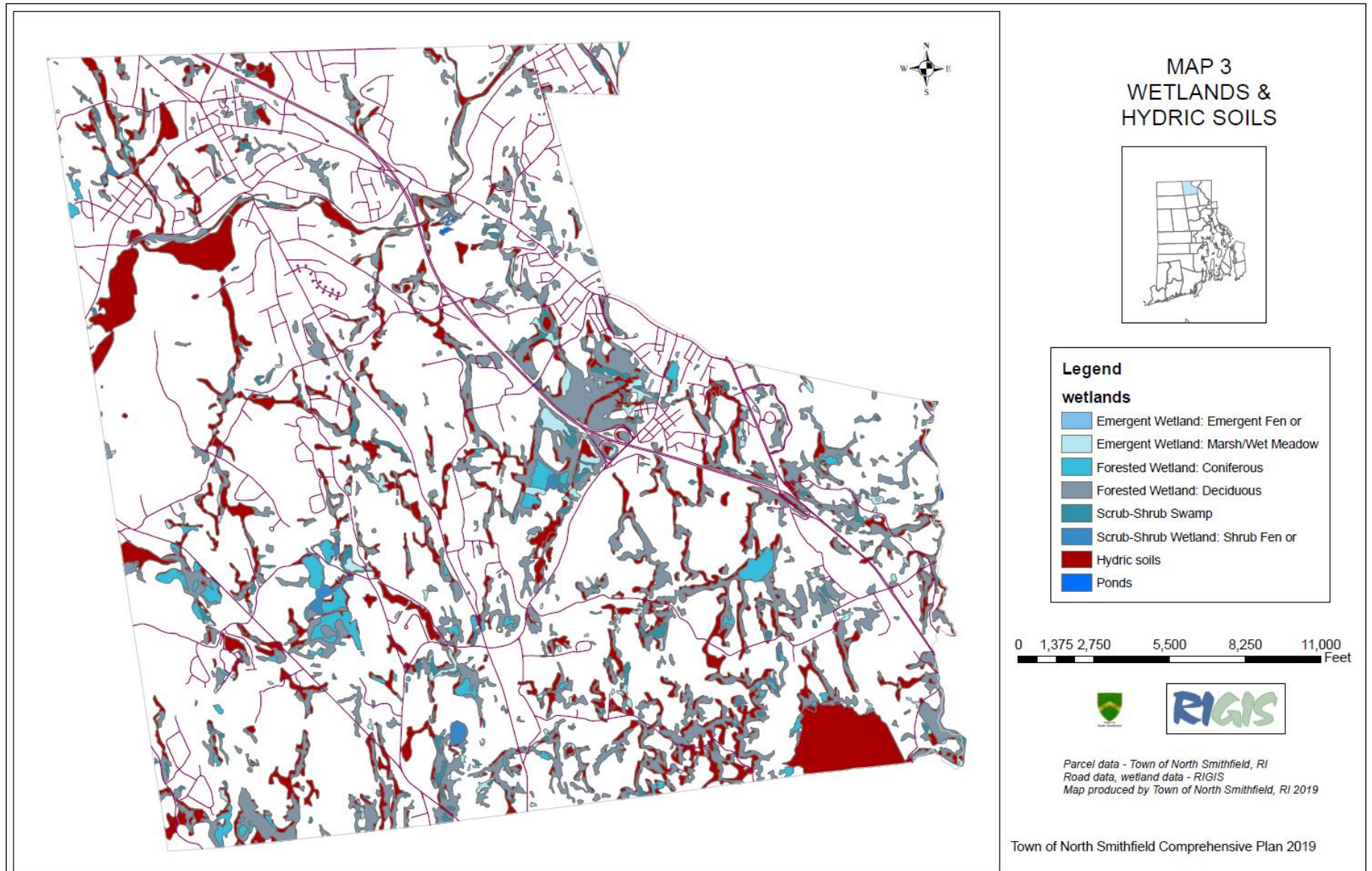


Cedar Swamp Conservation Area is town-owned and managed by the North Smithfield Conservation Commission, consists of 69.5 acres of freshwater wetlands off route 146 and Greenville Rd. Walks through the Audubon Property off the Providence Pike take one into a seemingly virgin area of streams, ponds, fields and woods that could pass for an isolated section of northern New England. These are but a few of North Smithfield's "highly scenic" resources.

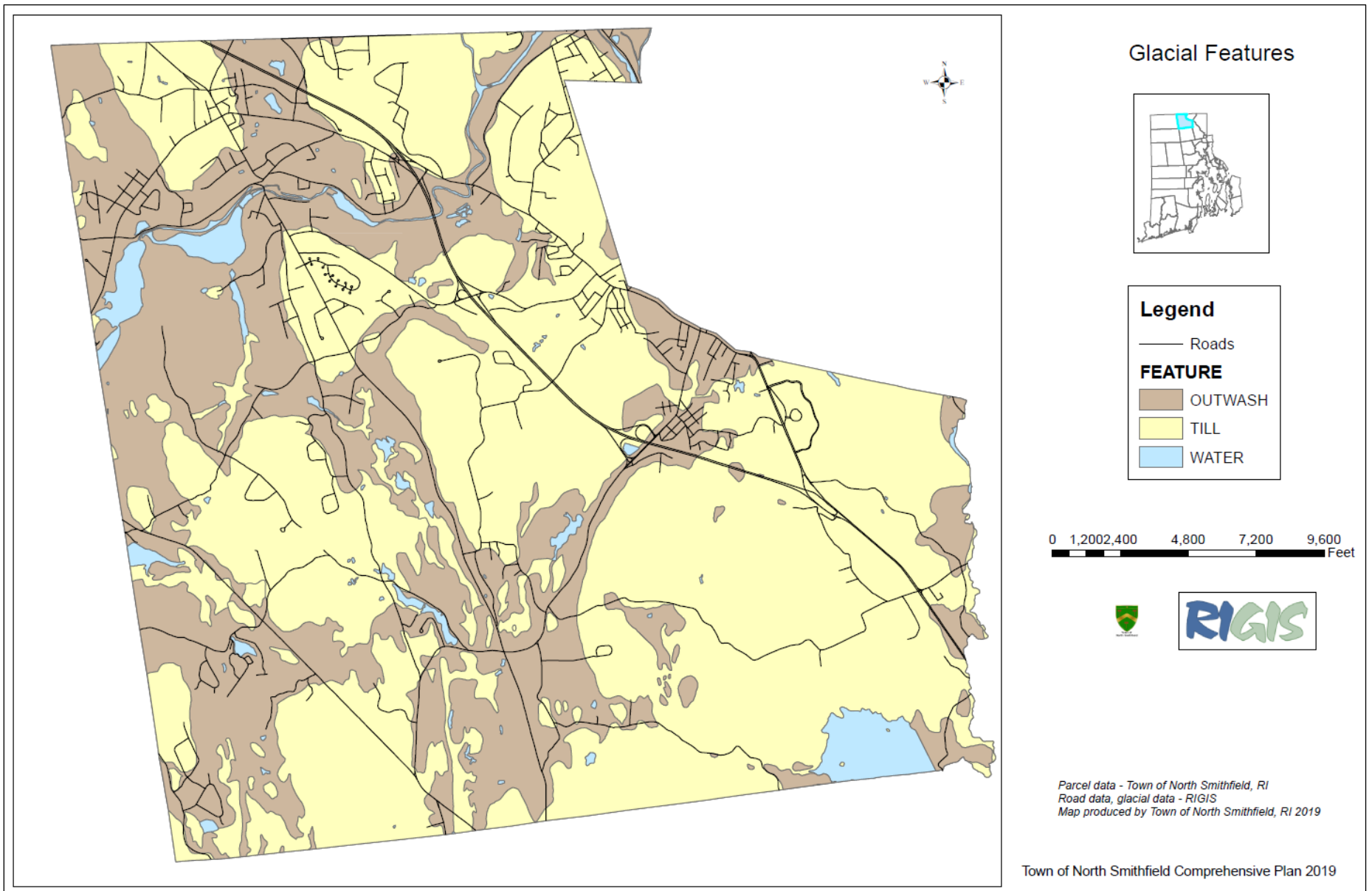
Aquifer Protection

One could argue that of all the natural resources, groundwater might be most important which is why this section contains more actions than previous sections. The following will be implemented for the protection of the Slatersville and Branch River Aquifers and other lesser groundwater reservoirs and recharge areas which have potentials for public water supply.

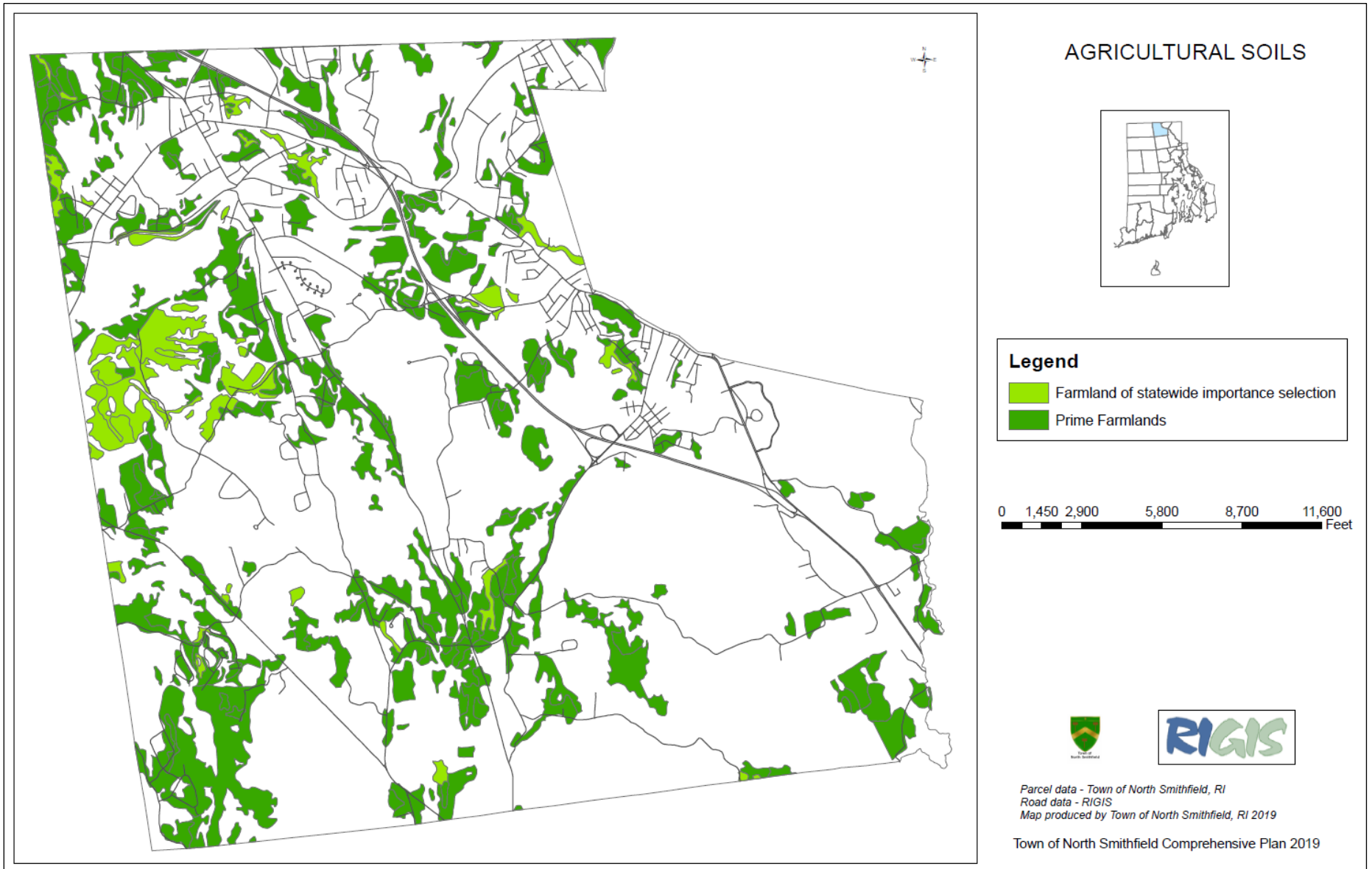
Map V. 3. Hydric Soils



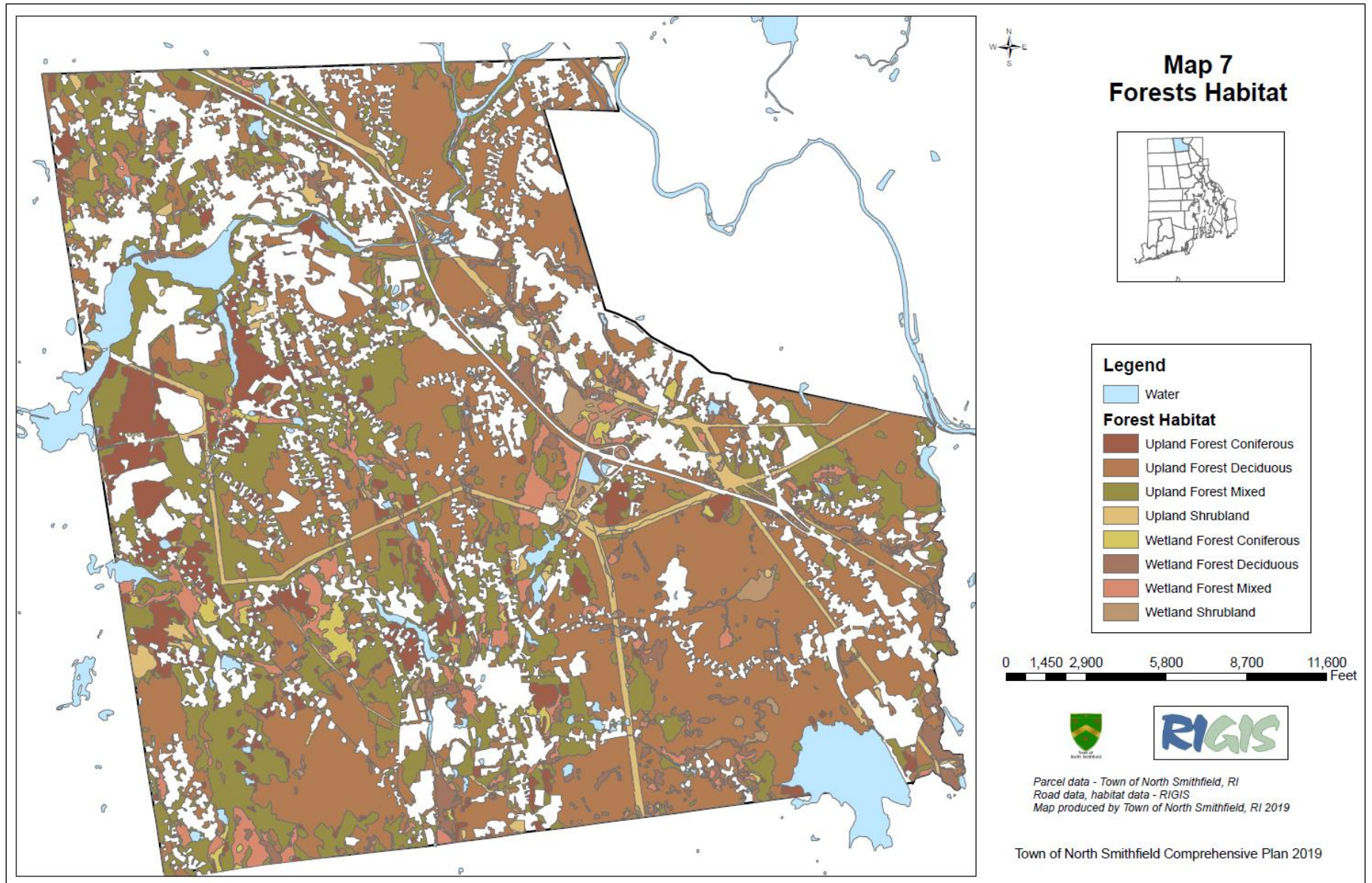
Map V. 4. Glacial Outwash



Map V. 5. Prime Farmland Soils



Map V.6. Forest Habitat



Groundwater Overlay Zoning

The Town responded to the 1992 Comprehensive Plan requirement for groundwater protection by adopting Section 6-19 of the Zoning Ordinance titled "Regulation of Groundwater Aquifer Zones, Groundwater Recharge Areas, Wellhead Protection Areas and Water Supply Basin". As recommended by the Comprehensive Plan, the regulations dictating uses over these resources are more stringent than in the underlying districts. The current Overlay language will be reviewed for possible expansion of the list of prohibited uses and the Overlay map will be revised to clearly show all protection zones including surface water supply basins. More specifically, it will prohibit excessive water drawdown for non-municipal uses. More resources will be spent on enforcement of the Ordinance and property owner education.

There is merit to carving out areas of the overlay within existing industrial areas to support expansion in those areas. This is particularly true in pockets where water quality has been degraded historically such that it would never be approved for drinking water

Post-Construction Storm Water Control Ordinance

North Smithfield recently completed, in 2017, adoptions of its Post-Construction Storm Water Control Ordinance requiring proper provisions for the protection of soil surfaces and after construction is in conformance with State law.

Soil and Earth Removal Ordinance

The Soil and Earth Removal Ordinance does not apply to several sand and gravel operation which were in operation prior to the enactment of the Ordinance. One, for example, is located between the Slatersville Reservoir and the Slatersville groundwater reservoir. Since critical resources of the Town and State may be at risk, the Town should reexamine present regulations about the underlying water resources and adjacent wetland and surface waters and the restoration of the land in a manner which will provide long-term protection.

Underground Storage Tanks

State regulations on the installation, management and testing of underground storage tanks are administered by RIDEM. Failed tanks can impact individual wells, large aquifers, streams and waterbodies. The Town will insist on enforcement of these regulations in critical water resource areas.

Hazardous and Emergency Spill Response

Through its Emergency Management Agency, the Town continues to participate with nine other Northern Rhode Island communities in a regional compact covering hazardous and emergency spill responses. Via the September 2019 FEMA-approved Hazard Mitigation Plan, there is now better coordination amongst the various public safety organizations in and around North Smithfield and a comprehensive inventory of the equipment that may be used to deal with hazards and emergency spills.

Watershed Protection

Two watersheds are of prime importance. They include those relating to the Slatersville Reservoirs and Woonsocket Water Supply Reservoirs #1 and #3. The Town will use the resources of the EPA and RIDEM as well as the Northern Rhode Island Conservation District to help protect these areas. Other key organizations are the Watershed Councils. The Woonasquatucket and Blackstone River Watershed Associations are non-profit organizations, empowered by the Rhode Island Rivers Council, to restore and improve the communities within their respective watersheds.

Reservoir Protection

Various development regulations will be strongly enforced where there is the potential to degrade the Slatersville and Woonsocket Reservoirs. While the Slatersville Reservoir is not a drinking water source, per se, the aquifer is being recharged, in part, by surface water from the Reservoir. The Town will work cooperatively with the City of Woonsocket as part of a regional protection strategy. Where possible, North Smithfield's program for conservation area protection, as presented in the Open Space and Recreation Plan Element, will be coordinated with the land holdings, both existing and proposed, of the City of Woonsocket. North Smithfield will encourage strong upstream protection of both surface and groundwater resources by the Town of Burrillville.

Temporary vs Permanent Protection of Farms, Forests and Open Space

In North Smithfield the number one protection of farms, forest and open spaces is Rhode Island Law (44-27) the Farm, Forest, Open Space Act (FFOS). This law allows landowners of farm, forest or open space, to enroll for 30 years and may withdraw (with a penalty) at any time. Properties qualified for the FFOS program are assessed according to their current use instead of the value of the land if redeveloped. To qualify as a farm, the land must have more than 5 acres of agricultural land, woodlands and wetlands.

Farmers who depend on their farms for sustenance and have very limited income also qualify for this tax benefit.

Farmland can be permanently protected through the purchase of development rights by the State Agricultural Lands Preservation Commission which places a conservation easement on the subject land.

Farms

Proposals for the conservation of significant natural areas are contained in the Open Space and Recreation Element. The array of regulatory controls discussed in this Natural Resource Element will be applied with equal vigor to the protection of significant natural resources. Of special importance is the inclusion in Town regulations of provisions for the review of development applications by all concerned Town boards. The regulations will be amended, as necessary, to protect special areas (e.g. Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program sites) and allow for development in existing developed areas to build tax revenue to purchase more open space. Protection of remaining farmland can be accomplished by: Encouraging applications for reduced property assessments under the Farm, Forest and Open Space Act. Martin's Dairy Farm (right) located on Woonsocket Hill Rd is especially picturesque.

Aside from land protection, the town will remain open to new farming techniques on micro-scale such as hydroponics or vertical farming.

Wildlife Protection

While some invasive species have thrived in developed areas, most wildlife, birds and plant populations are vulnerable to multiple threats associated with human activity. Some threats include: Residential and commercial development - Natural systems modification - Invasive species - Pollution - Severe weather - Human intrusion and disturbance



A primary threat to Rhode Island’s fish, wildlife, and their habitats is conversion of land by human development for housing, urban areas, commercial, industrial, and recreational uses. Forest plants and animals are disrupted by development and roads. Protecting land and water remains the most effective, long-lasting, and essential tool for conserving habitats.

Map V. 7., contains information pertinent to wildlife protection. Non-state conservation lands are real property permanently protected from future development by recognized land protection organizations other than the State of Rhode Island. Natural Heritage areas are areas of estimated habit and ranges of rare species and noteworthy natural communities. The forest habitat layer on the map is derived from land-use and land-cover data enhanced by existing forest datasets, shrubland data and data classified manually.

North Smithfield Land Development and Subdivision Regulations (LDSR)

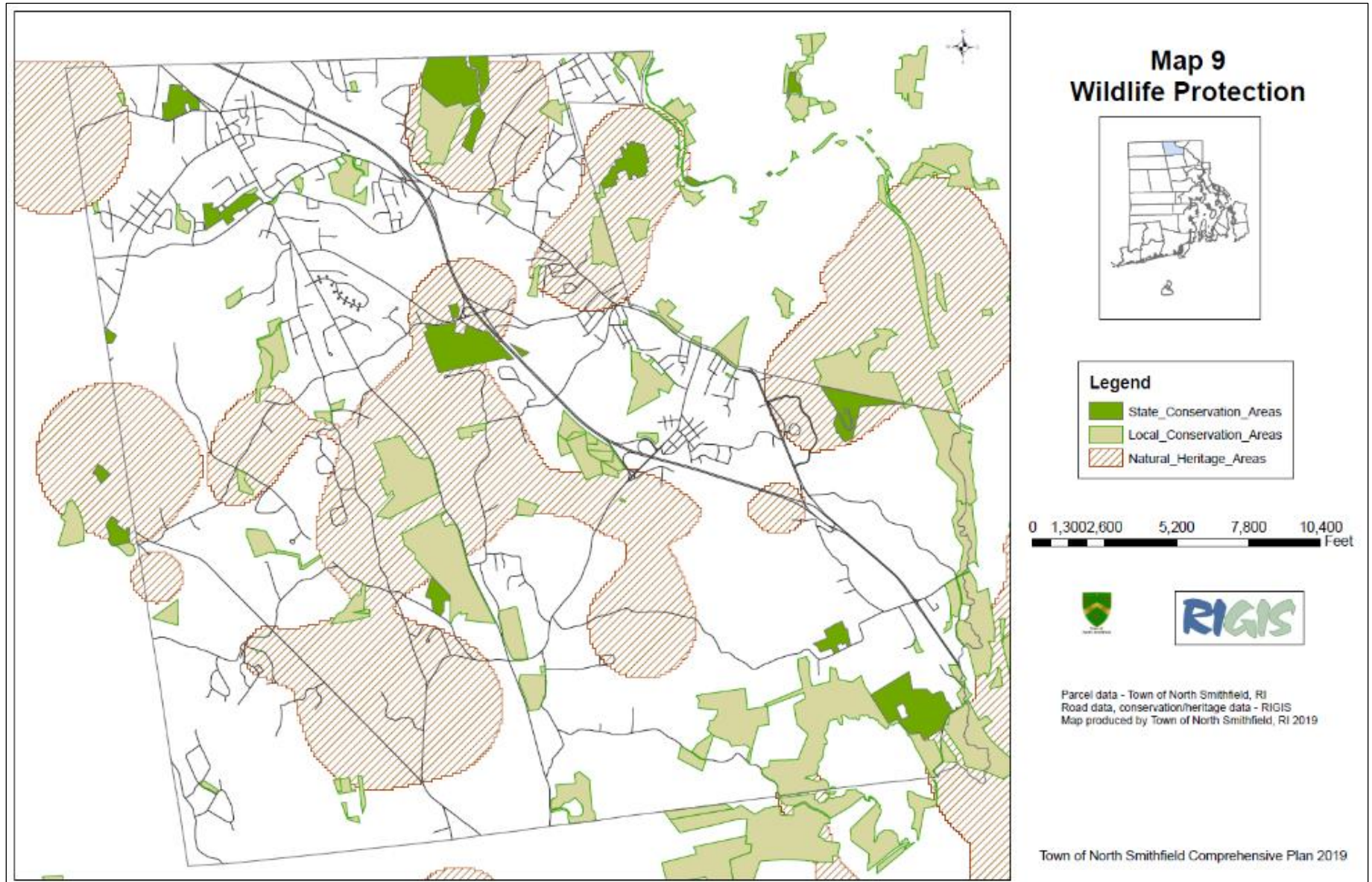
Conservation Development is a land use technique that allows a community to guide growth to the most appropriate areas within a parcel of land to minimize negative impacts to the environment and preserve community character. In the LDSR under Article IV Special Requirements, Article 4.1 Conservation Developments was created for those reasons.

Within Article V Design Standards in the LDSR, Article 5.1 Land Unsuitable for Development land deemed unhealthy for residential purposes, according to the Planning Board and consultation with the DEM’s OWTS Section will not be approved for subdivision. The LDSR section is governed by the provisions of Section 5.5.3 of the North Smithfield Zoning Ordinance.

Conservation Commission

The North Smithfield Conservation Commission was created for promoting natural resources, protecting watershed resources, and preserving natural esthetic areas of the town. The commission currently oversees several properties including the Cedar Swamp Conservation Area and Monica’s Garden (see Table V. 1., on page 96).

Map V. 7. Wildlife Protection



The Commission recommends programs for better municipal promotion, development, utilization or preservation of open areas, streams, shores, wooded areas, roadsides, swamps, marshlands and natural esthetic areas. The Commission was instrumental in obtaining gifts of land, most notably 69.5 acres abutting Route 146 near the Greenville Road exit (Cedar Swamp Conservation Area).

Table V. 1.

| Property | Location | Size | Map/Lot | Use |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|--|---|
| Monica's Garden | 151 Mendon Road | 10 acres | 003/007 | Conservation area/park consisting of a grassy area with 2 picnic tables, a walking trail with several benches, flowers, and ornamental and unusual shrubs and trees. There is a well-preserved stone wall along the road and approximately 100 feet of split rail fence. Wildlife living on or passing through include deer, foxes, coyotes, raccoons, and many bird species. |
| Cedar Swamp Conservation Area | off route 146 and Greenville Rd. | 69.5 acres | 009/163, 165, 012/002, 003, 004, 005, 006, 013, 256, 181 | Freshwater wetlands and forest off route 146 and Greenville Rd. It is accessible and is home to wildlife including rabbits, raccoons, foxes, fishers, deer, turkey, hawks and waterfowl as well as amphibians, reptiles and insects. Town-owned and managed by the North Smithfield Conservation Commission |



Monica's Garden

Source: North Smithfield Conservation Commission



Cedar Swamp Conservation Area

Source: North Smithfield Conservation Commission website



North Smithfield Land Trust

North Smithfield Land Trust is a private, non-profit corporation whose function is to preserve and protect natural resources in North Smithfield. The Trust encourages cooperation in the protection of the beauty of the land and natural resources. Four properties owned by the trust are available for passive recreation, birding and hiking (see Table V. 2., below)

Table V. 2.

| Property | Location | Size | Use |
|----------------------|--|---|--------------------------|
| Booth Pond Property | East of Dowling Village | 40 acres mixed wetlands, woodlands and Booth Pond | Walking, birding, hiking |
| Rocky Hill Property | South of Rocky Hill Rd #431, borders Woonsocket Reservoir #3 | 22 acres mixed wetlands and woodlands | Birding, walking, hiking |
| Mattity Rd Property | West of Mattity Rd and Black Plain Rd intersection | 17 acres wetlands and woodlands | Birding, hiking |
| Village Way Property | Past the Meadows subdivision at 2 Village Way. | 42 acres fields, woodlands, bogs and rocky outcroppings | Passive recreation |

The picture below shows the 17-acre parcel on Mattity Road at the headwater region of the Woonasquatucket River. Protecting the headwaters ensures the water stays pristine further downstream. The Land Trust and the Town of North Smithfield were recently jointly awarded an Open Space Grant for 40 acres of conservation land near and including half of Booth Pond. The grant will ensure that nearly three quarters of the area around Booth Pond is protected; half is already protected by Woonsocket’s Booth Pond Conservation Area. The grant will also protect a globally endangered dragonfly, along with countless other species that rely on the rare wetland habitat type.



Source: North Smithfield Land Trust Website

Rhode Island Wildlife Action Plan (RI WAP)

The RI WAP is a comprehensive plan developed by a collaboration of the Nature Conservancy, The University of Rhode Island and the RI DEM to conserve and protect wildlife. The document presents a framework for wildlife management, for decision-making and for protecting species that have been identified as in the greatest need of conservation. This is an exhaustive document that should be used by the Town to protect wildlife and establish habitat as a priority for preservation.

Contaminated sites of North Smithfield

A list of all contaminated sites in North Smithfield can be found on page 45 of the following link:
<http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/benviron/waste/pdf/cercstat.pdf>

Table V. 3.

| Goals | Policies | Actions |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Natural resource systems, wetlands, wildlife habitats, and groundwater aquifers, will be protected. | 1.a. Limit development in environmentally sensitive and rural areas in accordance with zoning policy. | 1.a.1. Determine compatible land uses and develop land acquisition and management programs to identify open space and river corridors. |
| | | 1.a.2. Protect existing natural environments and mitigate impacts of proposed development on those environments. |
| | | 1.a.3. Require peer review of master plans for large developments. |
| 2. Maintain rural character in concert with concisely-located development or redevelopment of existing areas. | 2.a. Encourage urban infill development as a means of protecting rural areas from development. | 2.a.1. Support the ZBR when practical to support infill from a dimensional and use perspective. |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | 2.b. Support integrated strategies to protect natural systems in rural areas while encouraging desirable growth adjacent to road systems of adequate carrying capacity. | 2.b.1. Coordinate with Economic Development initiatives to preserve large tracts of undeveloped land by allowing for growth along major arterial roadways. |
| | | 2.b.2. Strive to permanently protect areas through fee simple or development rights purchase, or conservation easement protections. |
| 3. Respect the Town’s significant ground water resources for future use and benefit of the Town. | 3.a Protect prime, undeveloped groundwater aquifers and recharge areas from excessive development. | 3.a.1 Investigate alternatives such as packaged wastewater treatment facilities to those developed areas impacting groundwater resources. |
| | | 3.a.2. Encourage development in existing industrial areas where bmps can be implemented to protect water quality. |
| | | 3.a.3. Require the use of properly designed and maintained OWTS especially in areas with highly permeable soils (generally associated with groundwater reservoirs); encourage DEM to remain vigilant in making sure that necessary OWTS maintenance contracts remain in place. |
| | | 3.a.4. Develop better lines of communication between RIDEM |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | | and EPA regarding Superfund sites near the Slatersville Aquifer. |
| 4. Restore degraded waters and aquatic habitats to a condition that meets their water quality and habitat goals. | 4.a. Protect the Town's surface water resources with emphasis on the Slatersville and Woonsocket Reservoirs, and Blackstone watershed. | 4.a.1. Maintain strong enforcement of development regulations within reservoir drainage areas under the presumption that the town needs to improve water quality from the current B status. |
| | | 4.a.2. Encourage the Town of Burrillville to consider land use and development impacts relating to downstream areas such as the Slatersville Reservoir. |
| | 4.b Adopt and implement programs to protect natural resources and conservation areas through acquisition, conservation easements and other measures. | 4.b.1. Ensure that the timing of peak flows from new development is designed to minimize downstream flooding especially in flood prone watersheds such as Cherry Brook. |
| | 4.c. Protect prime farmland and farmlands of statewide importance with emphasis on those areas actively used for farming. | 4.c.1. Recommend zoning changes to allow more low impact use that will keep farms economically feasible. |
| | 4.d. Protect forestland of statewide importance with emphasis on those areas actively in Farm, Forest, Open Space. | 4.d.1. Use a cooperative approach between the Town, State, and private organizations to identify, plan for, and protect valuable and ecologically |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | | sensitive forestland from development in critical areas. |
| | | 4.d.2. Conserve and enhance forests to support water quality, forest products, water supply and wildlife habitat. |
| | 5.a. Consider protecting natural resources for the benefit of local needs for the Town. | 5.a.1. Maintain the Town GIS and utilize it to identify environmentally sensitive areas and potential conservation areas and opportunities. |
| | | 5.a.2. Encourage the practice of forest management planning to promote healthy forests. |

VI. SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Introduction

It is the intent of the Services and Facilities Element to make residents aware of existing services and facility locations, evaluate existing conditions, determine short and long-range needs, and plan for cost-effective solutions into the future. It discusses police, fire, emergency management, library and school services, and public utility services.

Currently, departments are located at the Town Hall, a Municipal Annex, and the Public Works Garage at the northernmost point in Town.

The town is planning for major capital expenses through investments in its schools and municipal offices. In April 2017, North Smithfield Schools contracted with the architectural and engineering firm SMMA (<http://www.smma.com>) to help develop a Master Education and Facilities Plan. SMMA was chosen due to its extensive experience developing similar plans for K-12 school districts throughout Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

For North Smithfield, this plan will include decommissioning Halliwell Elementary School, address NEASC Accreditation issues at North Smithfield High School (locker rooms, science labs, and 21st-century skills/spaces) and a map as to how to best fix, improve, and maintain our facilities to support instruction now and into the future. North Smithfield Schools are following the clearly defined Necessity of School Construction process defined by the Rhode Island Department of Education. A link to comprehensive information is provided here: <http://www.northsmithfieldschools.com/master-educational-and-facilities-plan.html>

Inventory of School Facilities

The North Smithfield School District is comprised of the High School, Middle and Elementary School, along with Halliwell Elementary School. Halliwell contains multiple buildings in a campus arrangement and is no longer effective to maintain due to its wood frame and wood sided construction. Capacity exists within the schools and student population projections show continued declines out to 2026 that will allow grade adjustments when removing the Halliwell school.

Current and Projected School Enrollment

School enrollment for grades K-12 has decreased from a high of 1871 students in 2007 to 1685 students in 2016. New England School Development Council or NESDEC maintains a decline in student population through 2026 down to 1573 students. See comprehensive data analysis on projections here:

http://www.northsmithfieldschools.com/uploads/9/4/0/8/94089809/nedec16_north_smithfield_ri_analysis.pdf

Existing Capacity and Adequacy Analysis

According to the recent school facilities master plan of 2017, NESDEC projections depict the following capacities out through the year 2021/2022. There is capacity within the system to support grade separation alternatives.

Halliwell Elementary

Enrollment: 348
Capacity: 346

North Smithfield Elementary School

Enrollment: 453
Capacity: 606

North Smithfield Middle School

Enrollment: 450
Capacity: 550

North Smithfield High School

Enrollment: 500
Capacity: 672

Inventory of Town Administration

Three buildings provide space for the administration of town services. They are the Town Hall, the Municipal Annex, and the Public Works Garage. Map VI. 1., depicts all of the public services and facilities within Town.

Town Hall

Located at the intersection of North Main and Main Streets in Slatersville, the Town Hall has an elevated site overlooking the Branch River, located within the Slatersville Historic District listed in the State and Federal Registers of Historic Places. For reasons discussed in the Municipal Annex section, all Town Hall services will be consolidated and located into the former Kendall Dean School, a project that is scheduled for completion on November 1, 2019.

Current usage by floor is as follows: first floor (there is ground level access at rear of building) - Planning and second floor Town Administrator, Finance Director and staff. There is a conference room on the first

floor used for administrative meetings and several Boards such as the Economic Development Commission and Recreation Commission.

Over the years, various proposals for creating a new municipal center have been considered and most recently have settled on consolidating services at the Kendall Dean School.



Memorial Town Hall, Slatersville

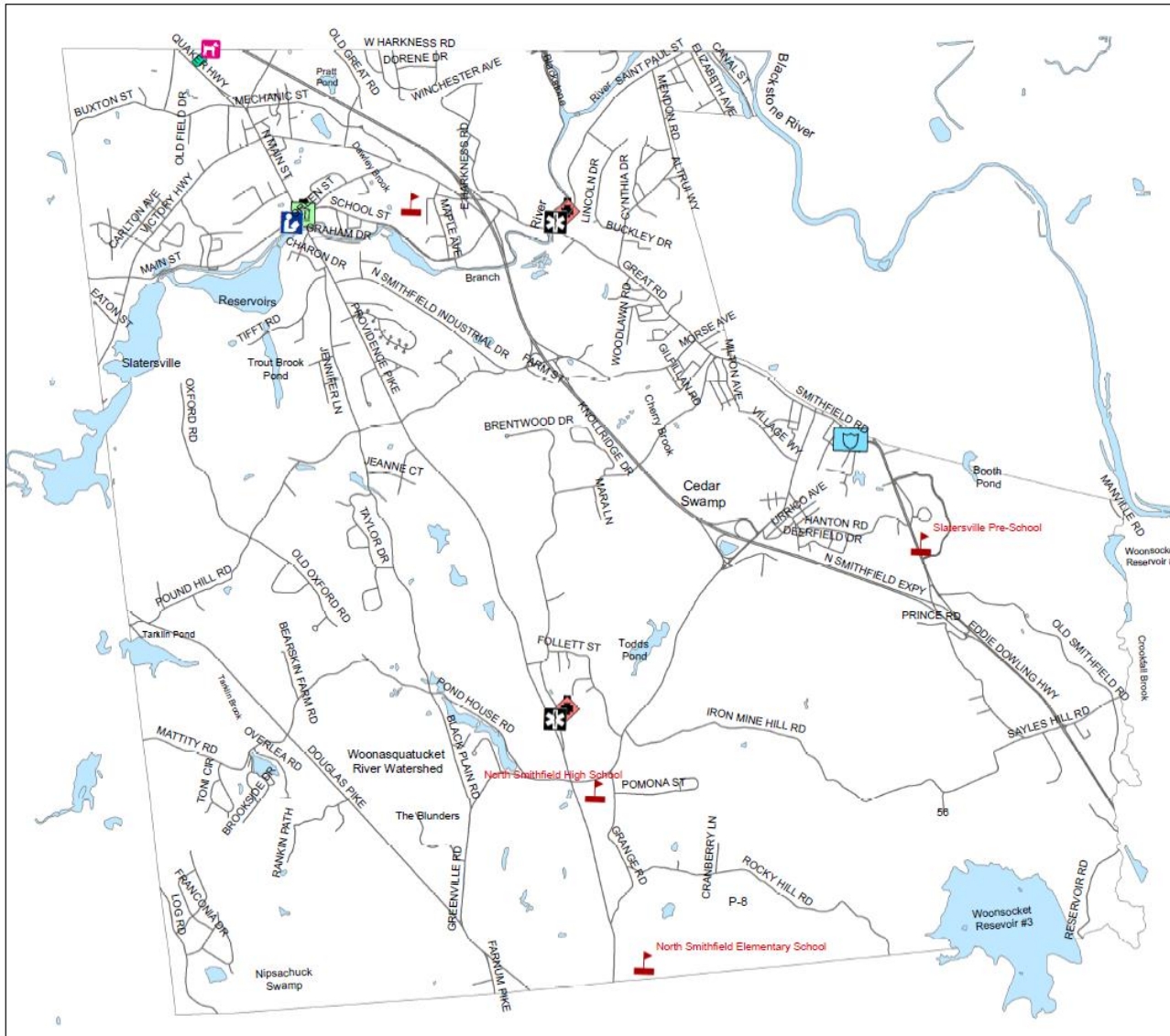
Municipal Annex

The Municipal Annex is in the former Bushee School on Route 146A near Park Square approximately three miles south of the Town Hall. Originally constructed in 1926, with an addition in 1935, the early 90's conversion to municipal use has provided a modernized facility with parking in the rear and side for municipal users and parking in the front for police purposes. The site covers 2 acres.

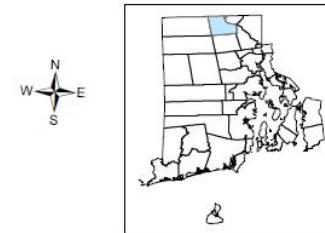
Present occupants include the Police Department, Clerks Office, Tax Assessor's Office, Tax Collector, Building Inspection and the Town's Emergency Operations Center. This meeting room needs HVAC improvements and parking is tight during well-attended public meetings.

The main drawback to the present facility is the split nature of municipal management; there is inefficiency in traveling between the Town Hall and Municipal Annex for matters that cannot be handled by a phone call or e-mail. The public is often inconvenienced by mistakenly going to the wrong facility. The relocation of the Building Inspectors office to the Annex has helped to rectify this to an extent; Building Inspection and the tax offices work together closely on many projects, so the relocation was beneficial. Also, the building floor plan is painfully inadequate in terms of serving a police department which would benefit from a more modern design that fits current needs.

Map VI. 1. Public services and facilities



Services and Facilities



Legend

- NS Library
- Town Hall
- Animal Shelter
- Emergency Services NS
- Law enforcement NS/Town Hall Annex
- Schools NS
- DPW
- NS fire stations
- Ponds and Lakes
- Roads NS



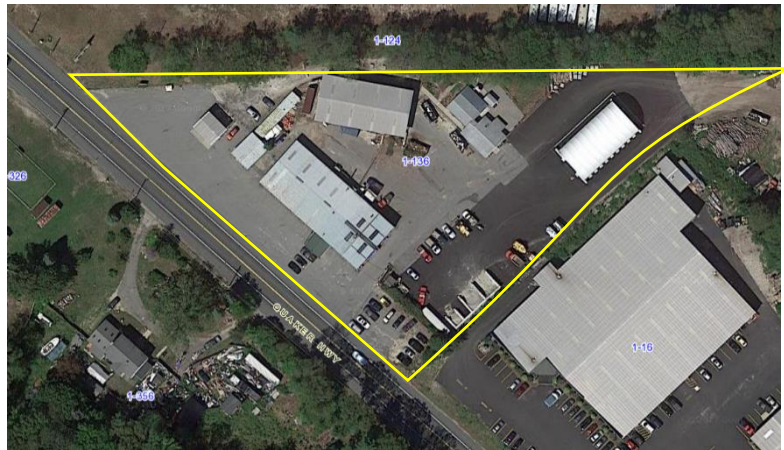
Parcel data - Town of North Smithfield

Town of North Smithfield Comprehensive Plan 2019

Public Works Garage

The Public Works Garage (right) is located on a 3.5-acre site at 281 Quaker Highway adjoining the Uxbridge, Massachusetts Town and State line. Although situated far from a convenient central location, this is a good area because the facility does not adversely influence on properties either in North Smithfield or Uxbridge.

The Public Works Department's responsibilities include highway maintenance and construction, inspections, and parks and recreation.



The garage has six bays used for the storage of Public Works vehicles and equipment and repair of police and other Town vehicles. There is a partially enclosed salt storage shed on the site. A recent addition to the facility included office space and a record storage area. The site also functions as a limited recycling center where Town residents can bring waste oil and compost to the site.

Stormwater Management (under the direction of DPW)

For the benefit of the natural environment and its resources, North Smithfield will continue to work with the development community to implement the guidance set by the RI Stormwater Management, Design, and Installation Rules. MS4s (Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems) are required to submit an Annual Report documenting progress made towards achieving the requirements of the Rhode Island Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (RIPDES) program, as well as reporting on ongoing maintenance of their stormwater system. The Town has made great strides by mapping, sampling, and testing illicit discharges Town-wide. The Town follows the RIDEM MS4 program.

Water and Sewer Department

The Water and Sewer Department is housed in a 40' x 60' two-bay building on Main Street. This building provides storage for the Department's vehicles, equipment and has a small office for the Superintendent.

Police Department

The North Smithfield Police Department is located at the Municipal Annex. Two lock-up cells are sufficient for normal conditions. The staff includes the Chief, 20 officers and 4 civilian employees. There are twelve vehicles, and one van assigned to the Animal Control Officer. The cars are fueled and maintained at the Public Works Garage. Fine tuning is done by a private garage as the Town does not have a computer diagnostic facility. For police protection purposes, the Town has been divided into three districts. There is ample onsite parking; all is uncovered.

Fire Protection and Rescue Services

The North Smithfield Volunteer Fire Department, Primrose Fire Department and the North Smithfield Ambulance and Rescue Association form North Smithfield Fire and Rescue Services, Inc. (NSFRS) which provides fire and rescue services to the entire Town.

NSFRS operates as a non-profit organization receiving the bulk of its income through annual contracts with the Town. Supplemental financing is provided through periodic fund raisers and third-party billing. Most of the major equipment has been purchased by the Town and is leased to the NSFRS. The fire stations are independently owned by the NSFRS.

NSFRS has two stations. Station #1 is located on St. Paul Street at the intersection with Route 146A is convenient to the more urbanized sections of Town and Station #2 is located on Providence Pike to the north of Greenville Road, is situated to serve the more rural areas. Dispatching is handled at the North Smithfield Fire and Rescue Station #1. NSFRS has 21 full-time employees and 15 volunteers. The amount and expense of training required for certification of volunteer fire fighters and Emergency Medical Technicians has resulted in a reduction in the number of volunteers.

Some current deficiencies include long runs to reach the southeast sections of Town near the Sayles Hill Road/146 intersection and new development off of Log Road that can only be approached by a circuitous route passing through sections of Burrillville. The Sayles Hill Road section is serviced, in part, under a mutual aid agreement with the Manville Fire Department in Lincoln.

Since it's a rural-to-suburban community, another is the lack of a comprehensive fire suppression system stemming from the limited coverage of municipal water. Although only about 30 percent of the Town

is served by community water systems. New developments that are located outside of a municipal water district are required to provide fire suppression cisterns.

Hazard Mitigation and Emergency Management

The North Smithfield Office of Emergency Management operates from the Emergency Operating Center located in the Public Safety Center at the Municipal Annex (575 Smithfield Road). The Department consists of a Director, Deputy Director and 20 sworn Emergency Management Officers who are all volunteers. Volunteers under the Community Emergency Response Team are trained in many different areas of emergency services and in the techniques of disaster recovery and search and rescue. Members include amateur radio, citizens band radio, licensed general mobile radio service GMRS and Land mobile radio operators. A special REACTION team aids local authorities in traffic and crowd control.

Many recommended land management techniques, capital improvements, “hazard proofing” and other aspects of emergency mitigation have been incorporated into the other elements of this plan. These elements are discussed in greater detail in the *Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan* incorporated herein by reference.

Library Service

The North Smithfield Public Library, a 501c Non-Profit Corporation, operates under a fifteen-member Board of Trustees. The operating budget is funded by an annual appropriation from the Town of North Smithfield, matched by 25% state grant-in-aid, when minimum state standards are met.



The Library (see map here) is located at the intersection of Main Street and Providence Pike in a renovated stone mill structure, the John Slater building, situated on a 2.2 acre sloping site overlooking the Branch River and Centennial Park. Parking is provided for 31 vehicles. Planned in 1985 for twenty years of service, the current 6,985 square foot facility expansion project was completed in 1989.

Although not located near the geographical center of Town, the Library is convenient to some of the more urbanized neighborhoods. In conjunction with the adjacent Slatersville Post Office and the nearby Town Hall and Pacheco Park, it helps to define a civic center for North Smithfield. The building has been sensitively designed to reflect the historic character of the surrounding Slatersville Historic District.

With the current Library at capacity, library officials anticipate a new energy efficient facility of sufficient size and layout to accommodate the growing demands of the library community.

Identified needs include larger assembly space, study areas, computer lab, young adult area, innovation and maker spaces, expanded storage for media collections, materials and supplies, office space, and staff lunchroom and lockers. There have been preliminary discussions with the administration about relocating the library or developing a senior center at the former Andrews Mill site if it can be redeveloped into a modern facility. The present facility could be an excellent location for the National Park Service outpost, due to the current library single floor level composition and large parking area. Memorial Town Hall, although limited parking and ADA compliance challenges, can still be considered perhaps with the former Andrews Mill – seeing it was recently placed on the National Register in 2018.

Animal Shelter

The North Smithfield Animal Shelter, along with an animal crematorium, is located behind the Public Works Garage. Renovation of the Shelter in 1997 included a 28' x 28' addition with a reception area, office space, separate cat room, quarantine room, and food storage areas.

On weekdays, the dogs are cared for by the Town's Animal Control Officer. Volunteer Services for Animals ("Friends of the North Smithfield Animal Shelter" cares for the cats throughout the week and the dogs on weekends at no cost to the Town. This volunteer organization also runs the Lost and Found, Pet Adoption and Return-to- Owners programs.

Aside from a need for a new heating system, which is budgeted for FY 2020, the Animal Shelter adequately serves the needs of the community. It operates with one full time employee accompanied by one part

time employee. The facility reports monthly to both the RI Department of Health and the State Veterinarian Office statistical information related to animal bites and rabies.

Senior Center

The Town of North Smithfield does not have a facility dedicated to senior citizens. There is an active seniors' organization which holds weekly meetings at St. John's Church Hall. Periodic day and overnight trips also are organized. The administration is examining the ATP site for this purpose as a compliment to a potential library site.

Solid Waste Disposal

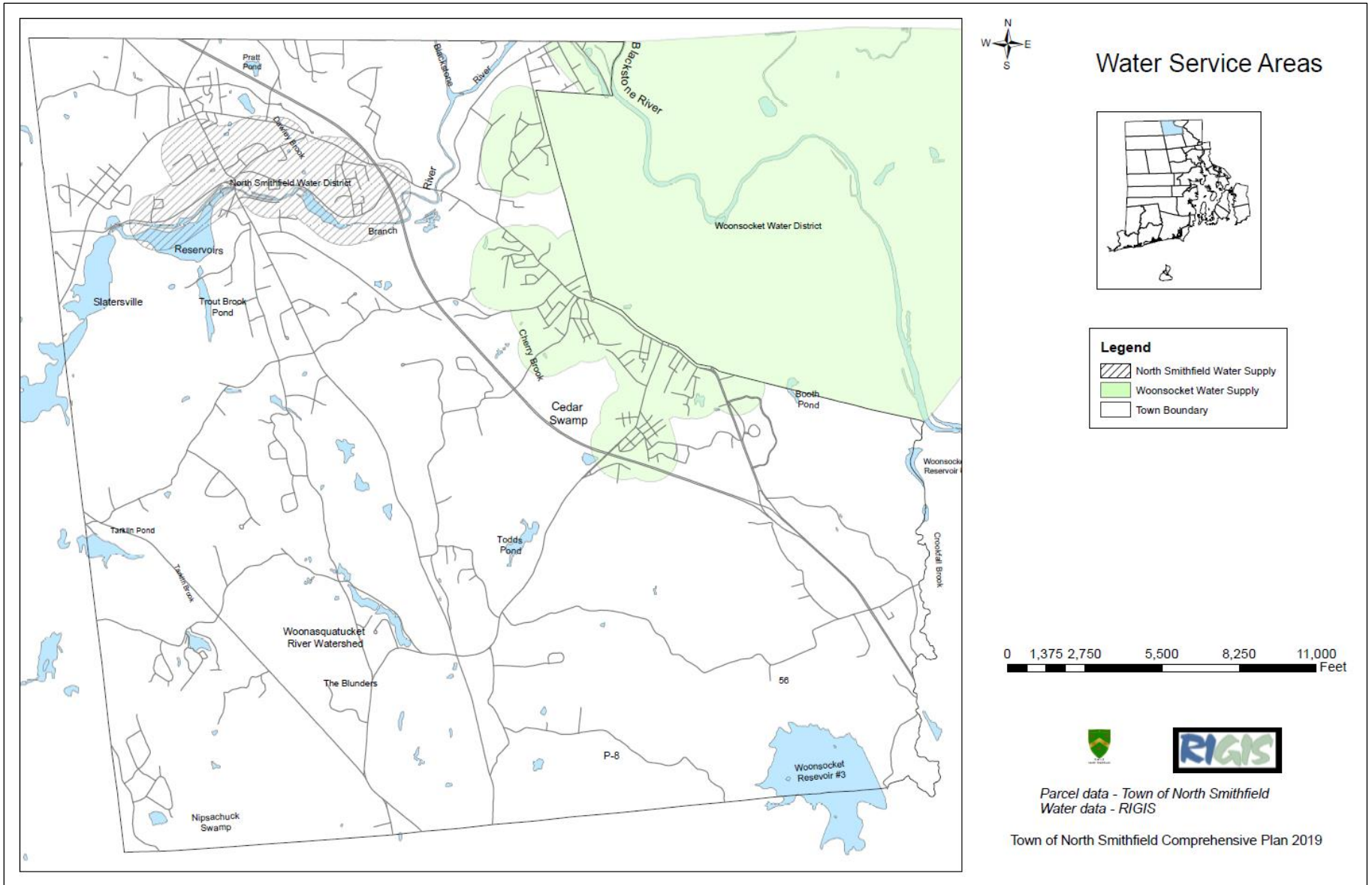
Solid waste collection and disposal is handled under annual contracts with private operators who remove the waste to disposal sites outside of North Smithfield. The Town has a solid waste diversion plan for 2019-2020 that is offered as reference material for this section. The Town began its mandatory recycling program in November of 2009 and strives to meet its state-mandated recycling targets annually. 2018 showed a recycling rate of 30.1%, roughly 5.4% shy of the mandatory target of 35.5%.

Water Supply

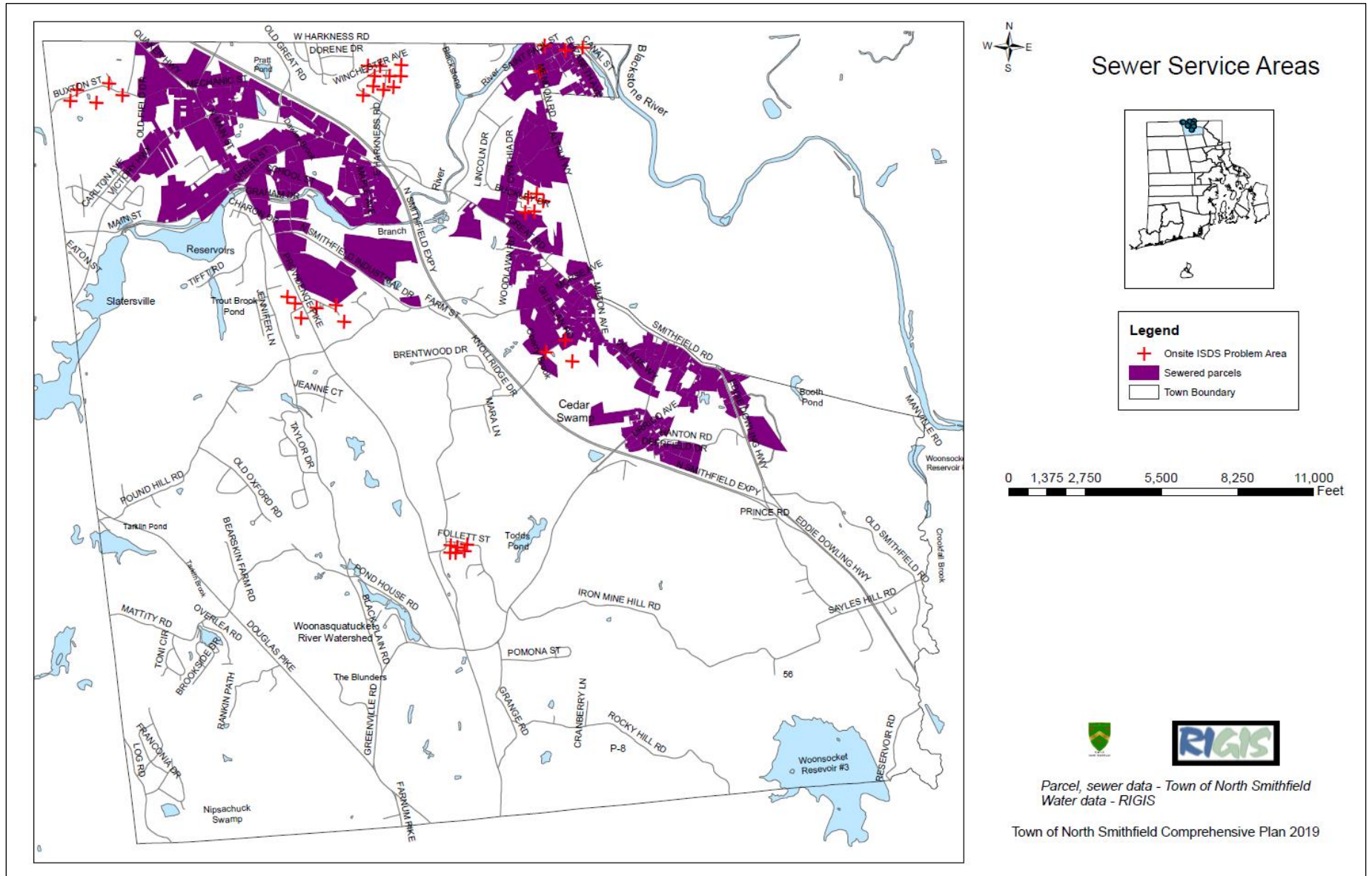
Water is supplied to the Town's residences and businesses by a combination of individual wells and community systems. The systems are as follows: the municipally-owned Slatersville Water Company operated by the Town and which uses three wells to serve the Slatersville and Forestdale neighborhoods totaling 385 residential and 62 commercial customers; the City of Woonsocket water system providing service to 604 services in Union Village and adjoining development and in the Mendon Road/Rhodes Avenue area; and the Town of Blackstone Water System serving 42 services in the Waterford neighborhood. The approximate limits of the service areas are shown on Map VI. 2., Water Service Areas.

The Town recognizes that it has a fragmented water supply system that is having difficulty meeting the needs of its current users. The system will struggle to meet the needs of future development efficiently without investment in its infrastructure and better management of the system. It is recommended to consolidate the systems into a North Smithfield water system after careful analysis so that it can be properly scheduled and budgeted into a capital improvements program. The Rhode Island Water Resources Board maintains a list of Water

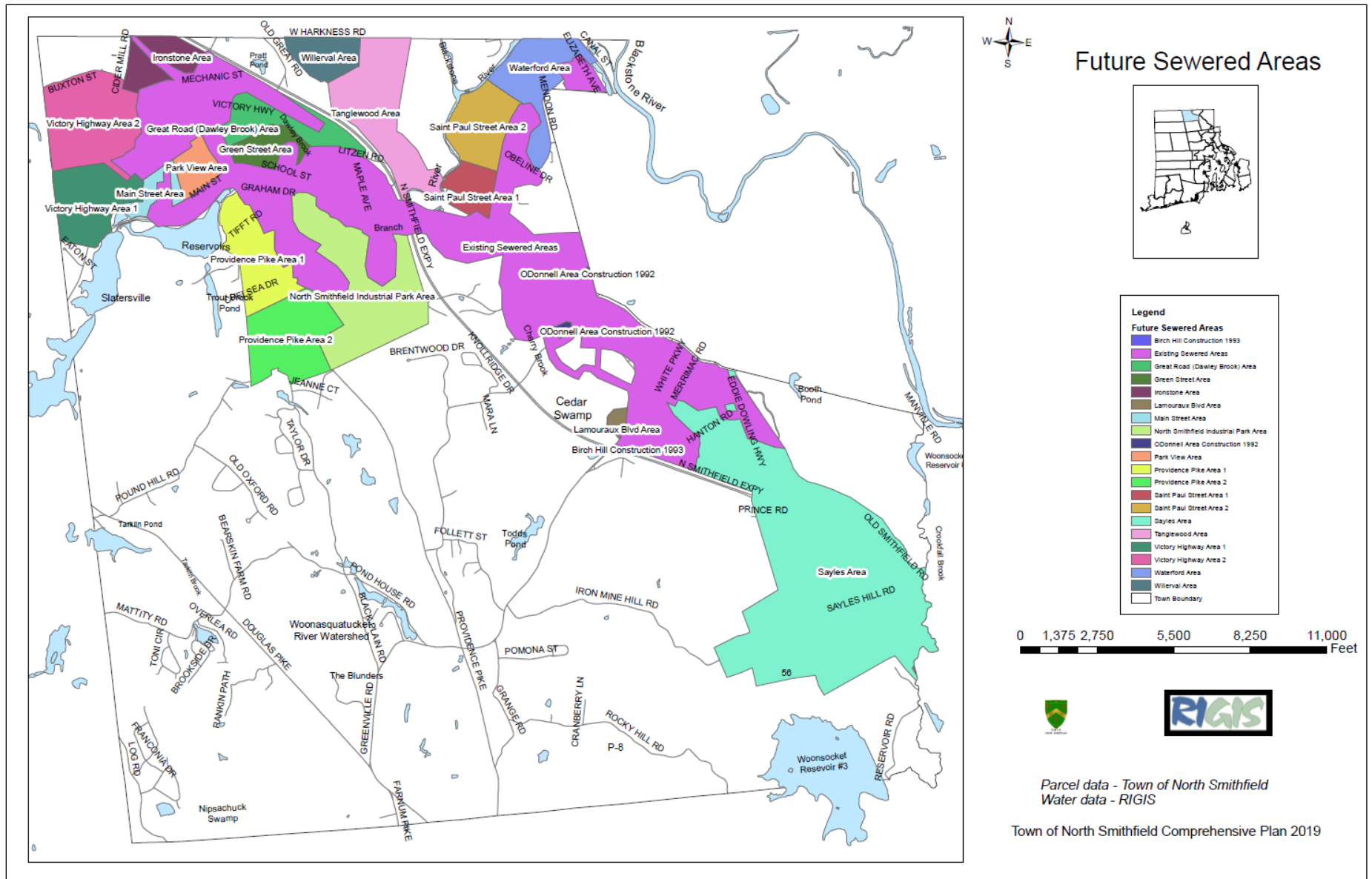
Map VI. 2. Water service area



Map VI. 3. Existing sewer areas



Map VI. 4. Future sewer areas



Supply System Management Plans (WSSMP) here:
http://www.wrb.ri.gov/work_programs_wssmp.html#plansummaries

Wastewater Management

Wastewater generated by the Town is serviced by the Woonsocket Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility. Existing data shows that North Smithfield discharges through 1,880 connections. Map VI. 3., depicts sewer service areas while Map VI. 4., shows future sewer service areas. The Town of North Smithfield maintains a working partnership with the City of Woonsocket via an updated 2017 agreement for the treatment and disposal of wastewater generated by the Town. The agreement indicates that the cost disbursement for capital expenses are proportioned based on percentages of total design flow. Operating costs including maintenance, repairs, supplies and administration are based upon the actual metered flow from the Alice Avenue Metering Station and water usage records for units that do not pass through the metering station and are then proportioned based on the total flow treated by the Facility. A link to the Town’s 2007 Waste Water Facilities Plan is here:
<https://www.nsmithfieldri.org/water-sewer-department/pages/waste-water-facilities-plan>

Areas not on sewers have onsite wastewater treatment systems for wastewater disposal. Although there are guidelines for property owner maintenance of these systems, most are serviced only when there are problems. Private septage haulers must be engaged to pump out septic tanks; the resulting septage is emptied into sludge disposal facilities at the Woonsocket Wastewater Treatment Facility or other similar facilities in the region.

Table VI. 1.

| Goals | Policies | Actions |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Organize public buildings in a manner which will allow efficient delivery of public services while enhancing community character. | 1.a. Focus redevelopment in existing urban areas while preserving undeveloped, select rural spaces. | 1.a.1. Redevelop Kendall Dean School into a new Town Hall that will house municipal administrative functions. |
| | | 1.a.2. Redevelop ATP brownfield for mixed uses |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | including library and senior center |
| | | 1.a.3. Enhance tourism by locating National Park Service to either the existing library site, Memorial Town Hall, or former Andrews Mill. |
| 2. Expand sewer and water services as necessary to protect natural resources and support economic development activities. | | 2.a.1. Update the long-range Wastewater Facilities Plan for extending sewer services with emphasis on economic development with private partners, including prioritization for Branch Village, and areas with onsite system failures. |
| | 2.a. Continue discussions with neighboring communities regarding the water system to ensure existing and future customers have safe, reliable drinking water. | 2.a.2. Examine the utilization of the town's abundant water resources to manage its own town-wide water system. |
| | | 2.a.3. Work with private partners to expand water to Branch Village in accordance with the Redevelopment Plan. |
| 3. Adhere to the Phase II Stormwater Program | 3.a. Continue the practice of cleaning and inspecting catch basins at least twice per year. | 3.a.1. Implement the stormwater pollution prevention plan and spill prevention/protection plan at DPW. |
| | 3.b. Promote educational materials related to the effects | |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | of stormwater and the natural environment. | |
| 4. Consider regionalization of public services. | | |
| 5. Provide 1 st class educational opportunities. | 5.a. Maintain existing schools to serve educational needs. | 5.a.1. Work with the Town Council and school committee to prioritize, schedule, and budget 2017 master education and facilities plan. |
| | 5.b. Monitor projections to plan for enrollment changes. | |
| | 5.c. Coordinate recreational facilities between the schools and town programs. | |
| 6. Reach both the 35% MRF recycling rate and 50% Diversion rate. | 6.a. Monitor and seek innovative, low cost, low labor solutions to achieving recycling rate goals | 6.a.1 Conduct curbside feedback via hangtag. |
| | | 6.a.2. Consider social media/email outreach along with local outreach at events. |
| | | 6.a.3. Research pay as you throw policies / ordinances. |

VII. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Introduction

The Open Space and Recreation Element of the Comprehensive Plan addresses North Smithfield's need to provide a variety of recreational opportunities for all segments of the population and addresses open space and conservation needs and opportunities. This local plan strives to comply with State Guide plan by offering a system of outdoor recreation facilities and conservation areas to meet the needs of its residents and visitors, RI



SCORP goal 2.; provides for a diverse, well-balanced system of public outdoor recreational facilities, LU 2025 objective 2c; preserve and expand access to the state's, rivers, lakes, ponds, streams and other inland waters for recreational use, while maintaining water quality, RI SCORP policy 16., and promotes recreational activity among the population as a means of improving their health and general welfare, RI SCORP policy 8.

State & Local Protected Lands

Town open space and recreational facilities owned and managed by the State is limited to 4.2 acres at the Slatersville Reservoir Fishing Access area, 7.5 acres at the North Smithfield Wildlife Marsh, and the 117 acres at the Blackstone Gorge.

The Blackstone Gorge, a bi-state property purchase, was one of the first steps taken towards the implementation of the *Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan for the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor* and the *Blackstone River Park Master Plan*. In addition to the Blackstone Gorge preservation, these plans propose a greenway along the Branch River from the Slatersville Reservoirs to the confluence with the Blackstone (see Map 1 Open Space). Various forms of active and passive recreation and a system of trails and bikeway links to those along the Blackstone Corridor are proposed. The Branch River Greenway will be complemented by rehabilitation and historic preservation programs in Slatersville and other heritage sites in North Smithfield.

The designation of the Woonasquatucket and Blackstone Rivers as American Heritage Rivers has provided opportunities for recreational activities including the development of bikeways from Providence. The RI Rivers Council has designated two groups to serve as Watershed Councils in North Smithfield, and both, the Woonasquatucket and Blackstone River Watershed Councils have already begun assisting the Town with protecting and preserving the watersheds in which these rivers are located

We must be mindful of the cost of maintaining active recreational areas. Any program to acquire new recreational facilities must be matched by a long-term capability of maintaining and managing the same. The adoption of a Capital Improvements Program will provide the necessary structure to address this need.

Existing Open Space and Recreational Areas and Facilities

Table VII. 1 provides an inventory of existing open space and recreation areas and facilities in North Smithfield. Map VII. 1., depicts their location.

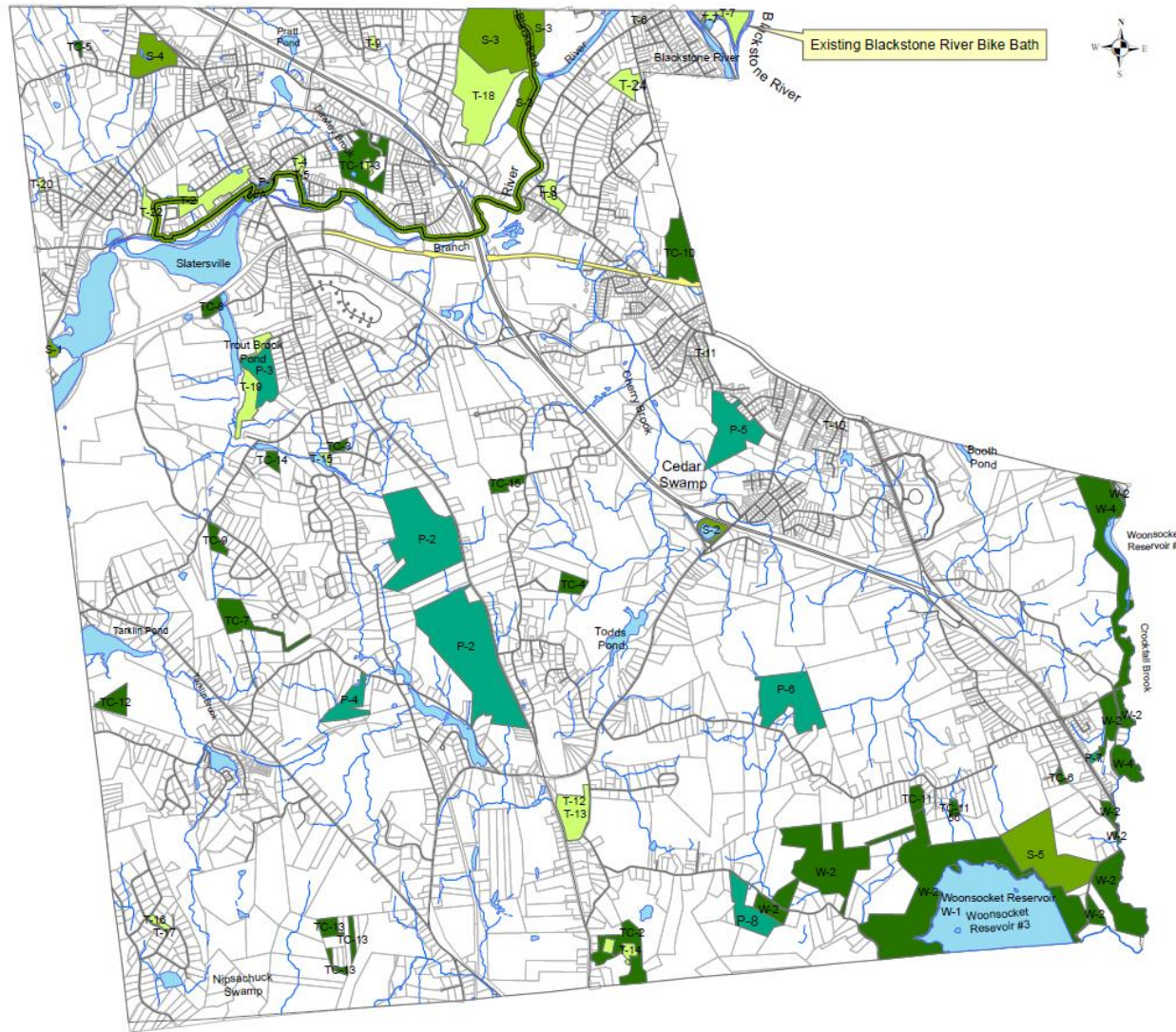
The major Town-owned facilities include the playfields at Pacheco Park and the Junior-Senior High School; playfields at the "Paul S. Kelly Recreation Complex"; playfields at North Smithfield Elementary School; 8 playgrounds; two small parks; and the Mowry Fire Tower property.



State facilities include the Slatersville Fishing Access and the North Smithfield Wildlife Marsh. Also listed is the Blackstone River Gorge, where RIDEM acquired the land on the west and east banks of the River. Additionally, the State purchased the development rights of Christiansen's Orchard (23 acres) and West Wind Farm (86 acres).

Private and semi-public areas accessible to the public include the Centennial Memorial Park (owned by the North Smithfield Public Library) and the Audubon Society of Rhode Island's nature preserve. Although not listed in Table 1, the privately-owned Slatersville Reservoirs are available for public use.

Map VII. 1. Open space by type (including recreation)



Protected Open Space and Recreation Plan



Legend

- Conserv & Passive Rec Areas
- Private Open Space & Recreational Areas
- Town Open Space & Recreational Areas
- State Open Space & Recreational Areas
- Conceptual Branch River Bike Path
- Conceptual Branch River Greenway
- Ponds and Lakes NS

0 1,350 2,700 5,400 8,100 10,800 Feet



Parcel data, open space data- Town of North Smithfield, RI
 State data - RIGIS
 4/26/19

Open space properties not accessible to the public for protection of water supply purposes are the reservoirs and city-owned watershed properties of the City of Woonsocket Water Supply; their combined area is 596.3 acres. Currently, as of 2019, there are 193 properties within the local FFOS program. The FFOS program comes with a certification that allows for a reduction of taxes meant to encourage the preservation of large, undeveloped parcels of land.

Recreation

According to the state guidance handbook #3, planning for recreation, three important areas of recreational need must be addressed and consider existing and future population needs:

1. geographic distribution of recreational resources.
2. suitability of recreational options; and
3. access to recreation

While the Town does appear to be meeting the programmatic recreational desires of the community, there appears to be growing interest in the Blackstone Valley Bikeway now that a recent segment was completed connecting Woonsocket to North Smithfield to Blackstone. The large aqueduct bridge that borders RI and MA at the Town of Blackstone and North Smithfield state line is under construction and expected to be completed in the Fall of 2020.

For those who seek recreational standards, the National Recreation & Parks Association 2019 Agency Performance Review states, in bold, that it “does not include ‘national standards’, nor do the benchmarks represent any sort of standards against which every park and recreation agency should measure itself.”

For more comprehensive information see NRPA website: <http://www.nrpa.org/siteassets/nrpa-agency-performance-review.pdf>

Ideally, the Town should conduct its own recreational needs assessment based on the desire of the community to expand or contract specific recreational programs. The form, content and location of both parks and open space is important in terms of usefulness and accessibility. Based on Table 1 and Map 1, the town does not have deficiencies, and the open space areas do not appear to be out of balance but evenly distributed. See Map 1 to understand site locations when reviewing the table below.

Table VII. 1. Existing Open Space And Recreation Areas And Facilities, 2017

| ID | Name | Acreage | Facility Type | Service Area | Uses/Facilities |
|--|--------------------------------|---------|---------------|--------------|--|
| State of Rhode Island | | | | | |
| S-1 | Slatersville Fishing Access | 4.2 | SP | S | Fishing/boat launch |
| S-2 | N. Smithfield Wildlife Marsh | 7.5 | CS | S | Conservation |
| S-3 | Blackstone River Gorge | 117 | SP | S | Walking Trail |
| S-4 | Christiansen Orchard | 22.7 | DR | T | Farm Fields/Orchard |
| S-5 | West Wind Farm | 85.9 | DR | T | Farm Fields |
| | TOTAL | 237.3 | | | |
| Town of North Smithfield: Active/Passive Recreation/Open Space Areas | | | | | |
| T-1 | Carroll Park | .2 | SP | T | Heritage Park, walking trail potential |
| T-2 | Pacheco Park | 23.8 | PF | T | Baseball, BB, playground equip. |
| T-3 | Halliwell Sch Plygrnd | 4.0 | PG | N | BB, playground equip. |
| T-4 | Kendall-Dean School Playground | 1.0 | PG | N | Baseball |
| T-5 | School St Playground | 2.0 | PG | N | |
| T-6 | Waterford Playground | 0.7 | PG | N | Playground equipment |
| T-7 | Kelly Park/Mammoth Mill | 14.8 | PF | T | Soccer, baseball, future bike path, |
| T-8 | Branch Village Park | 7.5 | SP | N | Open space |
| T-10 | Bushee School Playground | 0.5 | PG | N | Playground Equipment |
| T-11 | Union Village Playgrnd | 0.5 | PG | N | Playground Equipment |
| T-12 | Primrose Playground | 0.7 | PG | N | Playground Equipment |
| T-13 | Jr./Sr. High School | 24.0 | PF | T | Baseball, tennis/volley, BB |
| T-14 | NS Elementary School | 9.7 | PG | N | Soccer, Playground Equipment |
| T-18 | Blackstone Gorge | 65.5 | SP | R | Walking Trail |
| T-22 | Main Street | 8.9 | SP/LP | T | Walking Trail/Wellhead Protection |
| T-23 | Con Comm | 69.5 | CS | T | Cedar swamp trail area |
| T-24 | Con Comm | 10 | CS | T | Monica's Garden trail, picnic area |
| T-25 | NS Land Trust | 40.1 | CS | T | DEM grant/easement. Protected land |
| | TOTAL | 283.4 | | | |
| Subdivisions | | | | | |
| T-9 | Oakwood Estates Sub. | 1.5 | PG | N | Meadow |
| T-15 | Slatersville 88 Sub. | 4.5 | SP | N | Pond, Proposed Equip to be Installed |
| T-16 | Rolling Acres Subdiv. | 1.7 | PG | N | Proposed Equip to be Installed |
| T-17 | Nipsachuck Estates Subdivision | 1.5 | PG | N | Playfield, Proposed Equip to be |
| T-19 | Trout Brook Pond Sub. | 17.2 | SP | T | Cross Country Trail |
| T-20 | Brookside Estates Sub. | .3 | SP | N | Equestrian/Pedestrian Easement |
| T-21 | Sunnycrest Subdivision | 1.3 | PG | N | Wooded lot |
| | TOTAL | 28.0 | | | |
| ID | Name | Acreage | Facility Type | Service | Uses/Facilities |
| Conservation Areas | | | | | |
| TC-1 | Halliwell School | 15.0 | CS | N | Wellhead Protection |
| TC-2 | NS Elementary School | 17.0 | CS | T | Nature Trail |
| TC-3 | Secluded Pines | 2.7 | CS | N | Wooded grove, detention pond |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---------|----|---|-----------------------------------|
| TC-4 | Stone Ridge Subdiv. | 9.7 | CS | N | Con Ease./no public access |
| TC-5 | Scott Farm Subdivision | 1.6 | CS | N | Conservation Easement |
| TC-6 | Rustic View Subdiv. | 1.7 | CS | N | Wooded grove, detention pond |
| TC-7 | Christy Court Subdiv. | 22.0 | CS | N | Conservation Easement |
| TC-8 | Tifft Road Well | 4.9 | SP | N | Wellhead Protection |
| TC-9 | Old Oxford Rd. Subdiv. | 6.3 | CS | N | Wooded lot, wetland |
| TC-10 | Spooner Property | 26.9 | CS | T | Conservation-No access – Proposed |
| TC-11 | Valley View Estates Subdivision | 8.2 | CS | N | Watershed Protection/no public |
| TC-12 | Gold Prop. Mattity Rd | 11.5 | CS | N | Conservation Easement/no access |
| TC-13 | Nipsachuck Hill | 5.7 | CS | N | No access |
| TC-14 | Pine Estates Subdiv. | 3.8 | CS | N | Con Ease./no public access |
| TC-15 | Mowry Fire Tower | 7.0 | SP | T | No public access |
| | TOTAL | 144.0 | | | |
| Private and Semi-Public | | | | | |
| P-1 | Centennial Memorial Park | 1.2 | SP | T | Heritage Park, benches |
| P-2 | Audubon and/or Private | 230.5 | SP | R | Nature Trails |
| P-3 | R/Goal Park | 20.1 | XC | T | Cross-country Trail |
| P-4 | Land Trust/Mattity Swamp | 17.3 | CS | T | Conservation |
| P-5 | Land Trust/Village Wy | 42.5 | CS | T | Conservation |
| P-6 | Iron Woods Driving Range | 17.0 | SP | T | Golf |
| P-7 | RI Sports Center, Ice Rink | | SP | R | Ice skating |
| P-8 | Land Trust Rocky Hill Rd | 22.2 | CS | T | Conservation nature trail |
| | TOTAL | 350.8 | | | |
| City of Woonsocket | | | | | |
| W-1 | Reservoir #3 Water | 156.3 | SP | R | No Access, Water supply |
| W-2 | Reservoir #3 Watershed | 287.4 | SP | R | No Access, Water supply |
| W-3 | Reservoir #1 Water | 7.1 | SP | R | No Access, Water supply |
| W-4 | Reservoir #1 Watershed | 145.5 | SP | R | No Access, Water supply |
| | TOTAL | 596.3 | | | |
| | TOTAL All Facilities | 1,639.8 | | | |

* Facility Type: PG=Playground; PF=Playfield; SP=Special; XC=Cross Country Trail; DR=Development Rights and CS=Conservation

** Service Area: N=Neighborhood; T=Town; R=Region; and S=State

Recreation and Open Space Facility Types

Playgrounds / Minor Parks

Minor Parks are generally small in area and have a specialized purpose. Some, as in the case of Carroll Park and Centennial Memorial Park, may serve a community-wide purpose. Others are oriented towards a local neighborhood.

Playgrounds are active recreational areas for children between the ages of 5-15 but may include tot lots and trike parks for the 1-5 age group and have sections set aside for the passive activities of all age groups.

Frequently, they are located next to an elementary school. Site standards range from 3 to 15 acres. In North Smithfield, playgrounds, such as the one-half acre Union Village and Bushee School Playgrounds, are equipped to serve younger children but are not large enough for field sports.

Playfields / Major Parks

Playfields typically range in size from 12 to 20 acres and are equipped with facilities for active sports such as tennis, baseball, softball, soccer and basketball. Those served are generally ages 13 and older.

Major Parks serve more passive activity needs such as boating, swimming, skating, walking, picnicking, day camps and the like.

Facilities such as the Slatersville Fishing Access and adjoining reservoirs, the Blackstone River Gorge, Trout Brook Recreation area and the Audubon area allow for some of these activities.



Linear Parks

Typically, these relate to some form of recreational travel such as biking, canoeing, horseback riding and hiking. Such facilities often serve as a regional resource and may be related to unique natural features or an available corridor such as those provided by utility rights-of-way. A bike path would be a form of linear park. There are no standards for linear parks.

Existing Recreational Resources, Programs

The Town Parks and Recreation Division and along with community organizations, run several recreational programs including:

Youth winter basketball at several of the schools.

Annual events include: an Easter egg hunt at the North Smithfield Junior-Senior High School and Christmas Tree lighting ceremonies at the Municipal Annex and Slatersville Church Commons.

Little League baseball and softball are independent organizations that use Town ball fields as follows: 1 at Kendall-Dean School; 3 at Pacheco Park; 2 at Junior-Senior High School; 1 at the Kelly Complex. Fields change to meet general standards.

There is an independent Youth Soccer Program that approximately 400 children participate in. A recreation complex completed in the late 1990's at the North Smithfield Elementary School provides field space for the Youth Soccer Program. Private programs exist at Wide World of Indoor Sports which contains indoor field complexes along with a newly-opened trampoline park in 2017. The RI Sports Center (indoor ice rink). There are no swimming programs as there are no public swimming areas in North Smithfield.

Open Space / Conservancy

As stated above, there are no standards which can be applied to conservancy requirements in a community. As a general guideline, the State of Rhode Island encourages rural and suburban communities such as North Smithfield to protect large percentages of land and water to compensate for the lack of same in more urbanized areas.

In North Smithfield, open space and conservancy actions should be focused on the preservation of critical natural resources including but not limited to: rivers, ponds, reservoirs, streams, flood plains, freshwater marshes and wetlands, groundwater aquifers and their recharge zones, unique geography and geology, special habitats and vegetation such as those identified by the RI Natural Heritage Program, farmlands, trees (remaining tracts of forest and street trees) and natural vegetation.

As general practice, existing playgrounds and playfields should be examined for modification to reflect new needs prior to creating new playgrounds and playfields. A capital improvements program containing a recreational element is a great way to organize needs and provides the town with a predictable expense schedule.

Major park projects such as the Branch River Park and formal river access to the Rivers through the construction of a canoe/kayak launch will add major areas for passive recreation. These areas are often enjoyed independently or in small groups of people and serve to compliment organized team sports that occur on playfields. In combination with existing open areas such as the Audubon Society lands and those

to be protected under open space conservancy proposals, North Smithfield will have recreational resources enhancing the living environment for all its citizens.

Playgrounds and Parks

As noted in the Introduction to the Open Space and Recreation Element, there are advantages to concentrating the playing fields in several locations. To accomplish this goal, proposed playfields are in two concentrations; one in the northern and the other in the southern end of Town.

Northern Part of Town

Implement Phase I improvements to Pacheco Park multi-purpose fields, walking trails, parking and access road. Phase II of the Pacheco Park expansion may include development of several additional tennis courts.

Southern End of Town

Existing playfield facilities are located at the Junior-Senior High School. The existing playfields could be expanded by acquisition of the Mowry land across a street.

Close by is the North Smithfield Elementary School which has a small playground and four soccer fields. The Town owns an additional 17-acre portion of the 40-acre site that because of wetlands and other constraints is not suited for active recreation. Acquisition of an adjacent 45-acre parcel could aid in future expansion of facilities in the area.

Branch River Greenway and Blackstone River Park

The Blackstone River Greenway is a conceptual idea that needs funding to be advanced to a more detailed engineering and design plan. The path could compliment the Blackstone River bike path. It is hopeful partnership with the National Park Service will result in funding to create the Branch River greenway beginning in Slatersville.

Existing Blackstone River Bikeway

The Blackstone River Bikeway, paralleling the Blackstone River, ultimately will provide a connection through Providence to the East Bay Bike Path. Sections of the Blackstone River Bikeway, recently completed in 2018, now pass through North Smithfield in two locations as follows: between Manville

Road and the Blackstone River in the eastern corner of Town and through the Paul S. Kelly complex (i.e., the meadows) within the Waterford neighborhood near Canal Street.

As discussed in the Circulation Element, an alternative route to Slatersville would be along the right-of-way of P&W's Slatersville Spur in the event rail service is discontinued.

Trails / Greenways

As Map VII. 1., conceptually shows, trails could follow the formerly-utilized railroad right of way. The existing Blackstone river bike path is also depicted. It is recommended that funding be pursued in partnership with the National Parks Service to fund a comprehensive Trails / Greenways Plan.

Open Space and Conservancy Areas to be Protected/Enhanced

In addition to the protection of lands that contain critical natural resources development protections generally apply to the following locations:

Branch River and Tributaries

This conservation area includes the Branch River, the Slatersville Reservoirs, Trout Pond and two major tributaries, Tarkiln and Trout Brooks. Actions to create a linear Branch River Greenway are discussed above in the Recreation Facilities proposals. Permanent protection of the tributaries is proposed. In the case of Tarkiln Brook, which is fed in small part by Tarkiln Pond, the cooperation of the Town of Burrillville will be essential.

Screech Hole Bog

Screech Hole Bog is located primarily in Burrillville near the point where the Town lines of North Smithfield, Burrillville and Uxbridge meet, and extends into Massachusetts. The Bog has been identified for protection by the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program. Subject to further study, part of the buffer area for its protection may extend into North Smithfield. Included in the State's 1983 inventory of significant sites, this Bog has the physical and biological characteristics of a fen – a unique wetland in Rhode Island. The area serves as a habitat for unique flora, is a good example of a glacial esker and is of critical importance as a groundwater resource because it contributes to the Ironstone Reservoir in Massachusetts. Its neighboring areas should be closely monitored to ensure that infill or run-off from development does not harm the Bog.

Cherry Brook / Cedar Swamp

Cedar Swamp is the largest wetland in North Smithfield; further encroachments should be limited. Cherry Brook flows through Cedar Swamp and drains some of the most urbanized sections of Town. The brook and its flood plain must be protected. Drainage, flood and water quality impacts of new development within the brook's watershed require scrutiny when development proposals are reviewed.

Crookfall Brook/Woonsocket Water Supply

The Crookfall Brook watershed is located primarily in North Smithfield but does extend into Smithfield and Lincoln. A tributary brook, which forms near Rocky Hill Road, feeds Woonsocket Reservoir No. 3 through one sub drainage area. The second sub drainage area is focused on another tributary brook which starts near Smithfield Road to the east of the Route 146/146A merge. This brook enters Crookfall Brook above Woonsocket Reservoir No 1.

Woonsocket has prepared a *Water Quality Protection Plan* which calls for additional land acquisition within North Smithfield by the City to protect the watershed. See the Natural and Cultural Resources Element of this plan for further discussion of watershed protection.

Crookfall Brook was originally the means for moving water from Woonsocket Reservoir No. 3 to No. 1. To replace this pollution-prone method, Woonsocket constructed a 24-inch pipeline parallel to and connecting the reservoirs.

Woonasquatucket River Watershed

The headwaters of the Woonasquatucket River are formed in North Smithfield from wetlands and small streams. Among these are the brook passing through the Audubon Society's property, the stream and wetlands associated with Primrose Pond, a small brook starting to the east of Grange Road, and Nipsachuck Swamp. The Woonasquatucket River was designated a National Heritage River in 1998. This designation, the formation of the Woonasquatucket Watershed Council and the implementation of the Watershed Action Plan are crucial steps toward protecting the watershed. Like the authority given to the Blackstone River Watershed Council, the RI Rivers Council designated the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council as a player in the Watershed's protection. A recent regional effort led by the Watershed Council resulted in several maps containing this Plan which were prepared under the auspices of the Woonasquatucket Greenspace Project.

The Blunders

This unique area combines interesting geological formations with historical artifacts and an ecology supporting rare species selected for protection by the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program. A 17-lot subdivision is being constructed on the property, however the historic district area and the large area containing the rare species has been protected as open space.

Audubon Property

The Audubon Society of Rhode Island developed a plan for its 250-acre property along Providence Pike. A nature education center, along with continued passive use is contemplated. Hunting and the use of motorized vehicles is prohibited.

Techniques for Conservation

In recognition of growing constraints on the availability of State and Federal grant funds for the acquisition and development of recreation and conservation areas, there must be greater emphasis on viable alternatives to fee simple acquisition (ownership). Several, which may be applicable to North Smithfield, are described below.

Land Trust

A Land Trust is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of open space, conservation areas, and significant cultural amenities. It can acquire property, receive donations of same, and manage the land in accordance with the appropriate conservation goals. Although many of its functions are like those of a public agency, a Land Trust has the advantage of being able to move quickly when a critical property becomes available. The Audubon Society of Rhode Island assisted the North Smithfield Conservation Commission with the establishment of a Land Trust. North Smithfield's Land Trust has, in fact, been very effective since its inception, in acquiring ownership of certain parcels worthy of protection.

Conservation Easement

According to *The Conservation Easement Handbook*, prepared by the Trust for Public Land, "A conservation easement is a legal agreement a property owner makes to restrict the type and amount of development that takes place on his or her property. Each easement's restrictions are tailored to the particular property and the interests of the individual owner."

Easements have the advantage of being less costly than fee simple acquisition. If public access is allowed, a donation of an easement to the Land Trust or public agency will allow the donor to take an income tax deduction. The IRS has special criteria applying to such donations.

Zoning Enabling Act

The 1992 Rhode Island Zoning Enabling Act, through its statement of General Purposes, allows communities to use a broader range of techniques to advance conservation, open space and recreation purposes. Several of those applicable to this discussion are stated below:

Provide for the protection of the natural, historic, cultural, and scenic character of the city or town or areas therein.

Provide for the preservation of agricultural and forest land.

Provide for the preservation of open space for wildlife protection, flood water storage, air and water pollution abatement, and to shape and balance urban and rural development.

Provide for the preservation and enhancement of the recreational resources of the city or town.

The above-stated purposes permit municipalities such as North Smithfield to develop special regulations in the form of overlay districts with special review requirements relating to the resources that are being protected. All land development proposals, for example, can be subject to consideration of conservation issues.

Table VII. 2.

| Goals | Policies | Actions |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Provide a variety of active and passive recreational facilities serving town residents and visitors. | 1.a. Periodically review for recreational enhancements with the Recreation Commission for inclusion in the Town’s capital program. | 1.a.1. Implement Phase I and II of the proposed Pacheco Park expansion including construction of a multi-purpose field and three (3) tennis courts, walking trail, parking and new access road. |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| | 1.b. Coordinate Town and school recreational facilities planning. | |
| | | 1.b.1. Continue to seek funding for acquisition of key parcels of land and for the development of the Branch River Greenway walking trail in Slatersville linking Pacheco Park, Slatersville Reservoir and Library Island Park and explore the possibility of linking this trail to the Blackstone River Bikeway. |
| | | 1.b.2. As part of subdivision or land development approval, continue the option of requiring dedication of land for recreational and open space purposes or a fee in-lieu of dedication. |
| | | 1.b.3 Work in collaboration with Federal and State authorities to implement the Woonasquatucket Bikeway and complete the Blackstone River Bikeway. |
| | 1.c. Coordinate local historic rehabilitation efforts with recreational planning as a component of the Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan for the Blackstone River National Heritage Corridor. | 1.c.1. Develop Trails/Greenway Plan connecting conservation and recreation areas. |
| 2. Protect the Town's natural resources while preserving rural areas. | 2.a. Prioritize areas for conservation based on historical development patterns while redeveloping existing commercial areas. | 2.a.1. Preserve land based on criteria including but not limited to size, adjacent protected parcels, significant natural resources, rare or endangered species or habitat, significant cultural features, development potential, road access etc. |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | | 2.a.2. Work with the Land Trust and other organizations to protect land via conservation easements and land donations along with fee simple purchase. |
| | 2.b. Recognize the value associated with the town's impressive groundwater resources. | 2.b.1. Cooperate with the City of Woonsocket in the implementation of its <i>Water Quality Protection Plan</i> for the City's watershed and reservoir properties in North Smithfield. |

VIII. CIRCULATION

Introduction

The format of this element is modeled after the State Planning Council's Guidance Handbook #11 "Planning for Transportation." Accordingly, it is consistent with the following goals and policies of state guide plan number 611, "Transportation 2035.":

- Ensure that the transportation system equitably serves all Rhode Islanders regardless of race, ethnic origin, income, age, mobility impairment, or geographic location, Goal EQ.
- Improve the safety of all transportation modes through education, enforcement, and engineering solutions, Goal S.
- Give priority to preserving and managing the transportation system. Follow regularly scheduled programs of pavement and bridge management to prevent highway structures from premature deterioration, resulting in safety hazards and the need for more frequent and costly full rehabilitation or replacement, Policy H.2.a
- Minimize recurring and non-recurring congestion through increased use of other travel modes, effective incident management and access management, and traffic flow improvements, Policy H.2.c
- Support a vigorous economy by facilitating the multi-modal movement of freight and passengers within Rhode Island and the northeast region, Goal ED.
- Maintain the functional integrity of existing and planned roadways, LUO 4G.
- Strive for excellence in design of transportation projects to enhance safety, security, mobility, environmental stewardship, aesthetic quality, and community livability, Goal D.
- Create and maintain safe and attractive walkable communities to encourage more walking trips, enhance transit usage, improve public health, and reduce auto congestion and dependency, Goal PE.

The predominant east-west traffic circulation is served by: Main Street, School Street, St. Paul Street, Pound Hill Road, Sayles Hill Road and Greenville Road which are the principal east-west roadways. Although Victory Highway (Route 102) serves east-west flows in North Smithfield, it is also a north-south road passing through the more rural sections of northern Rhode Island. The major north south routes in town are Route 146 and 146A, Providence Pike, Douglas Pike and Black Plain Road.

A freight-only spur line of the Providence and Worcester Railroad extends from the main line in Woonsocket and terminates at Providence Pike.

Lacking a downtown area, North Smithfield does not have numerous off-street parking problems. Pursuant to the Town's Zoning Ordinance, off-street parking is provided by individual property owners. However, because of increased residential development, there are more cars on the street and a greater need for sidewalks and traffic calming measures.

RIPTA 59X is a “express commuter” service that runs on weekdays only, and, RIPTA Flex bus loop is a Monday thru Friday service that connects passengers to RIPTA’s statewide fixed route network via the 9X, 59X and 54. a new 59X bus that starts at the Slatersville Plaza and links North Smithfield with Providence. In addition, a RIPTA flex bus offers semi-custom transportation in a loop route to and from Burrillville.

This element is consistent with the economic development, natural resource and land use elements with respect to siting employment and housing sites. Location of future development should strive to confine non-residential growth into nodes along Route 146 with direct access to Route 146. This approach inherently limits traffic on local roads thereby preserving carrying capacity and rural character. These concepts play a major role in linking travel and land development with road improvements and other transportation options. The goals and policies outlined in the Transportation Element must be consistent with the State’s Transportation 2035, as amended. The Town’s functional highway classification system is shown on Map 1 in appendix A at the end of this chapter.

Complete Streets

In 1971 the concept of Complete Streets was developed; a policy requiring that all new or rebuilt roads must accommodate bicycles and pedestrians.¹ Complete streets enable the safe travel of pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders. In 2012, North Smithfield passed a resolution supporting and encouraging the use of the Complete Streets concepts in the planning and redevelopment of transportation related infrastructure improvements in the Town and in the State.²

¹ Source : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Complete_streets

² Source: <http://sos.ri.gov/documents/publicinfo/omdocs/minutes/4540/2012/25430.pdf>

Roads

Except for Route 146 (the North Smithfield Expressway) and sections of Route 146A between Park Square and Route 146, virtually the entire street system in North Smithfield is comprised of two-lane roadways of varying pavement widths. Although improved over the years, most of the local streets, other than in subdivided areas, were laid out to serve the needs of those who used a horse and buggy.

The Rhode Island Division of Planning, in cooperation with Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT), has developed a functional classification system for roadways according to their actual or expected use. Essentially there are three major classes as follows:

- **Arterials** - Includes Interstates, other freeways and expressways These highways emphasize a high level of mobility for through movement. They provide the highest level of mobility, at the highest speed, for long, uninterrupted travel. Arterials generally have higher design standards than other highways, often with multiple lanes and some degree of access control.
- **Collectors** - These highways provide a lower level of mobility but a larger level of property access than arterials. They are designed for travel at lower speeds and for shorter distances. Collectors typically are two-lane highways that gather and distribute traffic to and from the arterial system and the local system.
- **Local Streets** - These highways emphasize a high level of land access. They provide the highest level of property access, at the lowest speeds, and the lowest level of mobility. They generally have the lowest design standards and are typically two-lane highways with no striping or other painted markings. They represent the bulk of the mileage in the public highway network.

Road Repair

The Town of North Smithfield, through its Department of Public Works, has a continuing 5-year program for the repair and resurfacing of the local street system. This program is prioritized from a professionally-prepared pavement management system analysis. Roadwork is funded as a capital expense requiring annual allocation through the town's budgeting process. Bonding such improvements must be avoided.

At the State level the Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Planning, in cooperation with local towns and cities and the Department of Transportation, prepares a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP sets priority schedules for repair of state and federal-aid roadways.

RIDOT maintains statewide mapping depicting North Smithfield's Highway Functional Classification (see weblink here: <http://www.dot.ri.gov/about/maproom/index.php>)

Traffic insufficient flow areas

The major traffic generators in North Smithfield include the following: 1) the industrial areas along and near North Smithfield Industrial Drive and at the Branch River Industrial Park complex; 2) retail development at the intersection of Route 5 and Victory Highway; 3) retail, commercial and office development along Route 146A, particularly at Park Square and Dowling Village; and 4) the commercial activities along the non-limited access portions of Route 146.

Regionally, major out-of-town destinations include businesses and industries in Woonsocket, the mall and office parks in Lincoln, and the interchange of I-295 and Route 146. Route 146 provides direct access to areas to the north and south, while I-295, which passes within one-half mile of the southern boundary of the Town, facilitates movement to points to the east, west and south. Route 99, an Industrial Highway which connects with Route 146 immediately to the south of the town line funnels off considerable amounts of regional traffic which used to pass through North Smithfield on its way to destinations in Woonsocket; approximately two-thirds of the traffic traveling north to the industrial areas of Woonsocket uses Route 146 and 146A.

The signalized intersection at Sayles Hill Rd and 146 causes traffic backups that affect nearby roads in that vicinity. One of only two signalized intersections along Route 146 from Providence to Worcester, the proper solution is to remove the signal and create either express lanes or a bridge/underpass.

Volumes and Projections

The Department of Transportation compiles annual 24-hour average daily traffic (AADT) for the major streets and highways throughout the State. See link here: http://www.dot.ri.gov/documents/maps/Traffic_Flow_Map.pdf

The Town does not have current traffic projections other than what it receives as part of local development applications which are on file in the Planning Department.

Traffic Collisions

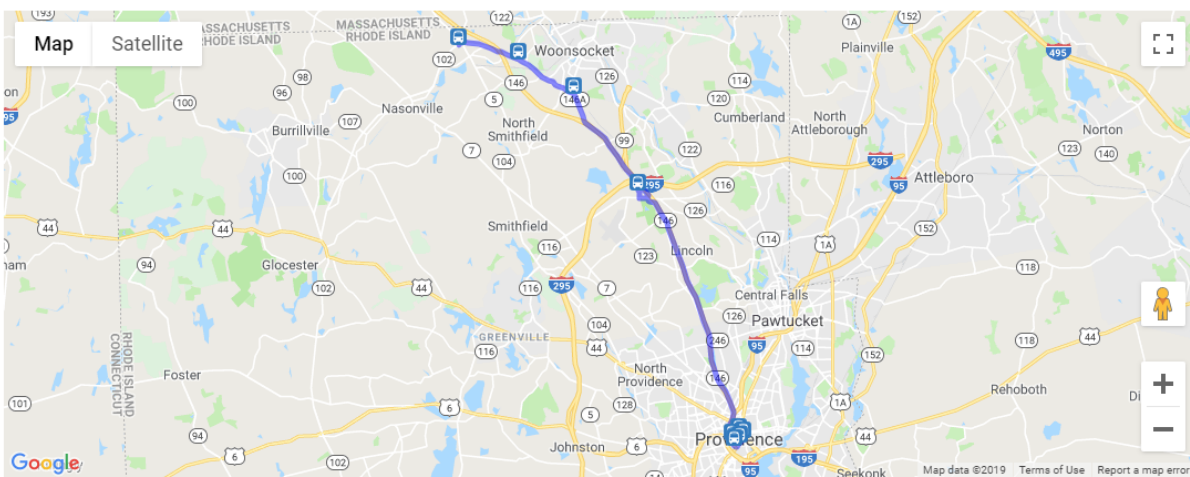
The North Smithfield Police Department has identified the following intersections as being prone to accidents: Douglas Pike at the northerly and southerly points where Route 5 joins the roadway at an angle; Victory Highway at North Main and Main Streets; Route 146 at Sayles Hill Road; Route 146A at the Landmark Medical Center light, South Main Street (Woonsocket), Lapre Road, Mendon Road, St. Paul Street, and Great Road/East Harkness Road.

Due to the lack of sidewalks and the narrow pavement widths in outlying neighborhoods, many areas in Town are not conducive to safe bicycling or walking, especially by children.

Public Transportation

RIPTA'S 59X is a "express commuter" service that runs on weekdays only, and, RIPTA Flex bus loop is a Monday thru Friday service that connects passengers to RIPTA's statewide fixed route network via the 9X, 59X and 54.

As part of the RIDOT "Beat Traffic, Try Transit" campaign of 2014, two Park-N-Ride lots were added in North Smithfield at Slatersville Plaza and North Smithfield Urgent Care in Branch Village. The route currently runs along Great Rd from Slatersville Plaza through Branch Village to Park Square and then on to Lincoln and Providence. Enclosed is a map from the RIPTA website for the current route as of 2019. The website link is: <https://www.ripta.com/59>



Sidewalks

Generally, sidewalks exist only within the urban zoning districts. A substantial portion of the Town's geography contains low density zoning along collector and minor arterial streets that lack sidewalks.

It is recommended that a Sidewalks Plan be developed, prioritized and implemented as part of the annual Capital Improvements Program. This would be a joint effort of the Planning Division and the Department of Public Works, possibly with the advice of a specially appointed committee. The Slatersville stone arch bridge will provide improved pedestrian amenities in concert with a planned home for the National Park Service. The improved bridge will have two 13-foot-wide road lanes with protected sidewalks on both sides, adding 15 feet of width to the historic bridge without obstructing the historic arches. There will be a sidewalk from the bridge to the library and an ADA-compliant ramp on the opposite side of the road with a stone wall constructed of rocks meeting the criteria of the Historic District Commission.

Pedestrian Trails and Bicycle Paths

Pedestrians and bicycles are important components in the discussion of circulation. Sidewalks are more prominently used in urban transportation design and are used sparingly in towns like North Smithfield because the sprawling nature of the community makes them cost prohibitive. Pedestrian trails and bicycle paths are discussed in more detail within the Open Space and Recreation Element of this Comprehensive Plan.



Stone arch bridge reconstruction

Railroads

The former Providence and Worcester Railroad recently acquired by the Genesee & Wyoming family of railroads (G&W) provides railroad service to the Town of North Smithfield. G&W's main line crosses the Town in two places as follows: in the eastern corner of Town between Manville Road and the Blackstone River; and in the Waterford area parallel to Canal Street. Because of the constraints of slope and adjacent canal or river, the main line cannot be accessed for rail service.

Manufacturing, industrial and distributor firms along the north side of North Smithfield Industrial Drive and at the Branch River Industrial Park have access to G&W's Slatersville Secondary track which extends from G&W's main line in Woonsocket and terminates at Providence Pike. State Guide Plan Element 661, *Rhode Island Rail Plan* (December 2013), proposes the continuation and rehabilitation of the spur track.

The Land Use and Economic Development Elements of this Comprehensive Plan promotes expansion of manufacturing uses adjoining the tracks. Industries requiring bulk shipments or deliveries by rail would be an allowed use.

If abandonment of the line is considered by G&W at any future date, the right-of-way should be maintained with the Town of North Smithfield. It would provide a desirable route for a bikeway extending from the Blackstone River Bikeway to the Branch River Park and Slatersville. Such a proposal would support RIDOT's statewide rails-to-trails plan.

Although RIDOT also is investigating the use of rail lines for commuter rail transit, it does not appear there would be the density of development in North Smithfield to justify use of the spur line for commuter transit purposes.

Mapped Streets

The adoption of a Mapped Streets Ordinance and official street map is recommended. The town currently lacks this information which makes prioritization for road improvements and maintenance difficult in the context of blurred boundaries between public and private road systems. Until a comprehensive analysis is performed utilizing professional land surveyor and title services, the Planning Board must occasionally rely on the development community to formulate such information as part of the subdivision and land development process.

Scenic Roads

The town may wish to consider adopting a scenic roads inventory as a means of preserving rural characteristics from development. The National Park Service offers a Heritage Landscape Inventory that could serve as the basis around which to work with subdivision and land development applicants to preserve features of the landscape that contribute to rural character. See weblink: <https://www.nps.gov/blac/learn/management/heritage-landscape-inventory.htm>

One of the strong recommendations of the Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan for the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor is the preservation of the country roads which, along with the more densely developed mill villages, give the region its unique character.

Table VIII. 1.

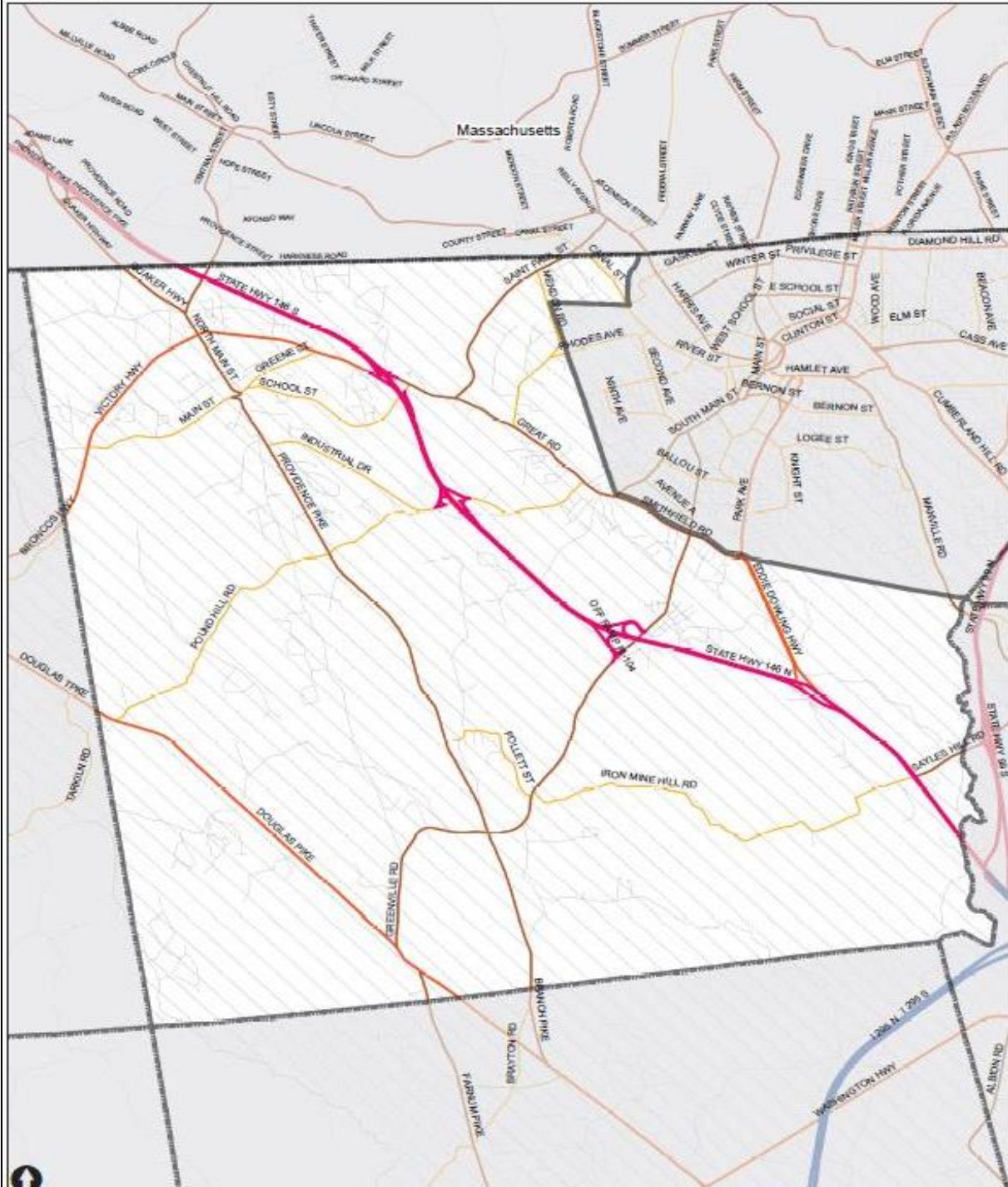
| Goals | Policies | Actions |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Maintain safe, efficient and convenient transportation that promotes conservation and environmental stewardship. | 1.a. Promote traffic safety on new and existing roadways. | 1.a.1. Improve safety at West Acres interchange on Route 146 where 146 and 146A diverge/merge. (including south to north U-turn). |
| | 1.b. Commit annual funding to a road and sidewalk capital improvement program as to avoid unnecessary bonding. | 1.b.1. In accordance with RIGL 45-23.1, create and adopt a Mapped Street Ordinance and official road map. |
| | 1.c. Collaborate with DPW, Police, and Fire to improve safety in problem areas through selective roadway alignments, and intersection improvements. | 1.c.1. Eliminate traffic congestion due to the signalized intersection at Route 146 and Sayles Hill Road through the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). |
| | 1.d. Consider promoting modern roundabouts at appropriately sited intersections to reduce bottlenecks, enhance safety and promote air quality. | 1.d.1. Exercise repair strategy as described in the Pavement Management Study for North Smithfield. |
| | | 1.d.2. Work with PRISM to maintain safe street lighting conditions. |
| | | 1.d.3. Consider a comprehensive pedestrian safety analysis along |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| | | the entirety of Great Rd from School Street to Dowling Village. |
| 2. Within village or dense areas, allow for the safe use of roads by pedestrians, bicyclists, transit and automobiles | 2.a. Encourage and support the use of the Complete Streets concepts in the planning and redevelopment of transportation related infrastructure improvements | 2.a.1. Consider revising road standard to include a planter strip between curb and sidewalk to encourage a separation between pedestrians and motorists. |
| | 2.b. Ensure the subdivision process promotes pedestrian circulation where sensible. | 2.b.1. Require traffic studies for all major land development and subdivision plans. |
| | | 2.b.2. Develop, prioritize and implement a sidewalk plan. |
| | 2.c. Continuously work with public transit agencies to improve and encourage use of the transit system. | |
| 3. Utilize the road system to promote both rural character and economic development. | 3.a. When examining development, be sensitive to carrying capacity and not overburdening the street systems. | 3.a.1. Consider a Scenic Roads Inventory and a Scenic Road Ordinance. |
| | 3.b. Confine industrial & commercial growth to the Route 146 corridor. | 3.b.1. Provide for direct access between Route 146 and Branch River Park. |
| | 3.c. Encourage access management to consolidate access points, increase capacity, and reduce delays. | 3.c.1. Consider a comprehensive traffic plan for 146A through Park Square. |
| | 3.d. Assist business interests with freight interests when reviewing projects near the railroad right of way. | 3.d.1. Work with G & W to facilitate freight railroad service to manufacturing areas. |

Appendix A

State of Rhode Island Highway Functional Classification

Town of North Smithfield Map Created on March 9, 2015



Legend

- Interstate
- Other Freeways and Expressways
- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local
- 2013 Transportation Urban Area Boundary



RHODE ISLAND
STATEWIDE
PLANNING
PROGRAM

RIGIS

This map is not the product of a Professional Land Survey. It was created by RI Statewide Planning Program for general reference, informational, planning and guidance use, and is not a legally authoritative source as to location of natural or manmade features. Proper interpretation of this map may require the assistance of appropriate professional services. RI Statewide Planning Program makes no warranty, express or implied, related to the spatial accuracy, reliability, completeness, or currentness of this map.

IX. HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Introduction

North Smithfield's significant historic resources consist of districts, structures and archaeological resources that represent patterns of community settlement and growth from pre-European settlement through twentieth centuries. Most of these resources are fully documented and described in *Historic and Architectural Resources of North Smithfield: A Preliminary Report*, prepared by the RIHPC in 1980. One subsequent inventory of historic resources has been taken by the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission for their 1989 *Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan*. However, this document was based on the earlier 1980 inventory, which remains the most comprehensive record of North Smithfield's historic resources prepared to date. Due to the presence of these documents, this section is not intended to provide a detailed history but rather to give an overview for resource protection.

Early History

North Smithfield's cultural history is evident today in the Town's pattern of development and architecture, much of which dates to the 18th and 19th centuries. Agriculture, once the basis of the region's economy, is now a minor occupation. Nevertheless, the legacy of the Town's agricultural past is still apparent in the historic farmhouses, the stone walls, and the open fields once devoted to agriculture. In a similar way, the manufacturing settlements which sprang up in the latter part of the 18th century have left a rich legacy in the mill villages, characterized by an urban design and architecture of another age.

In 1666, present-day North Smithfield was settled by European colonists from Providence. Prior to that time, the area was inhabited by Native Americans. North Smithfield remained largely agrarian during the early years of the 18th century. During the latter part of the 18th century, small, decentralized milling operations sprang up wherever waterpower was available. The simplicity of 18th century life is reflected in the buildings that survive. Along Farnum Pike, Iron Mine Hill Road and Old Louisquisset Pike are several surviving 18th century houses. They are also to be found in the Grange Road District, in Union Village, on Grange Road, and Pound Hill Road.

A major route in the pre-Revolutionary period is today's Smithfield Road (146A), formerly the Great Road and today marked by milestones indicating the distance from Providence. Several mills, serving the

farmers, were located at various waterpower sites in North Smithfield. These most likely included a gristmill, sawmills initially and a mill manufacturing iron farm tools by the end of the century.

During the 19th century, what had been small settlements began to expand. In Union Village, several large houses, a tavern, bank (the first in northern R.I.), and academy were built shortly after 1800. Later, several substantial dwellings were constructed. After 1851, Union Village was bypassed by the completion of the Providence and Worcester Railroad through Woonsocket. Whereas Union Village grew as a result of its highway location, the other villages grew as mill villages dependent on the waterpower of the Branch and Blackstone Rivers. The industrial transformation of the area contributed to the decline of agriculture as the basis for the Town's economy.



Mill, Circa 1880's

Of the several textile mill villages that developed during the 19th century, Slatersville was the first. In 1806, Samuel Slater, who had earlier set up America's first successful textile mill in Pawtucket, formed a partnership which was the basis for "Slatersville" which began operations a year later, as one of the first factory villages in the United State. The present mill was erected in 1826. The village was designed to be self-contained and included additional factories, mill houses, a Congregational Church and a pair of

commercial blocks. Much of the village remains today, including not only the buildings cited, but later 19th century additions, such as St. John's Roman Catholic Church (1872) built for the French-Canadian millworkers.

Another extant mill village, Forestdale, was inaugurated in 1825 with a scythe factory along the Branch River. By the end of the century, the Forestdale settlement included a commercial block, a cotton mill, a row of Greek Revival houses, and a one-room schoolhouse. Waterford developed as a village in the early 1800's to serve several mills including Mammoth Mill along Canal Street. The mill's name was derived from its size as the largest mill building in the United States at the time. The mill's ruins are still in evidence.

Transportation improvements during the 19th century stimulated industrial development of that time. These included highways, a canal and rail and streetcar service. By 1875, agriculture had experienced a gradual decline at which time the census recorded 191 farms, with farmland beginning to revert to forest. By 1900 the Town's population had dipped to 2,400 from its 19th century peak of 3,200 in 1875.



Turn-of-the 20th century photo of Mammoth Mill (1864) off Canal Street with the old Blackstone Canal (1828) and Blackstone River in the foreground.

During the first half of the 20th century, the textile industry of New England underwent a serious decline which adversely affected North Smithfield firms. Tupperware's purchase of two North Smithfield factories helped stabilize the local economy in the 1950's. During the same decade, Slatersville village properties, once owned by one company, were sold piecemeal.

The advent of car ownership facilitated North Smithfield's gradual conversion from a self-contained group of settlements to a community functioning increasingly as a suburb. As a result, the villages declined, and the countryside became dotted with homes. North Smithfield's access to employment stimulated residential development. This development continued along public ways, as it had historically. However, with the advent of zoning, the development was sited on uniform-sized lots, which continues today in response to the real estate market. A significant departure from the traditional settlement patterns reflects changing industrial, agricultural and housing economies, transportation systems, and municipal tax system. Innovation will continue to effect land development patterns but in terms of "change-factors", subdivision and zoning are among those under local control.

Significant Historic Resources

Union Village and Slatersville are both Town designated historic districts, and both are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This section discusses the National Register and National Register Eligible Districts.

National Register Districts - The following districts in North Smithfield are listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

Forestdale Historic District: Lies at the intersection of Main Street and Maple Avenue, near the Branch River/Mill Pond dam and mill. The mill housing runs along both streets. As with other mill villages, the value of Slatersville and Forestdale lies not only in individual structures but also in its historic street plan and development pattern, which evolved into a self-contained community.

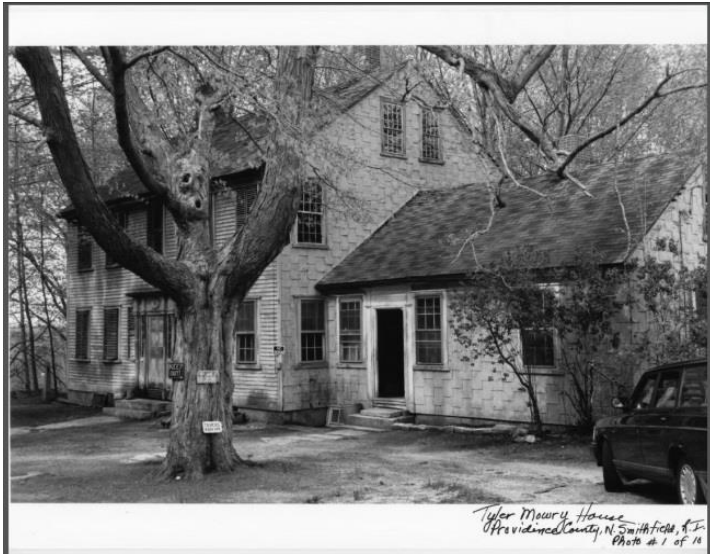
Tyler Mowry House, 112 Sayles Hill Road (8/16/96)- The Tyler Mowry House is an historic house at 112 Sayles Hill Road in North Smithfield, Rhode Island. It is a 2-1/2 story wood frame structure, five bays wide, with a gable roof and two interior chimneys. The entry is centered on the main (south-facing) facade, with sidelight windows and pilasters supporting a complex entablature and cornice. A 1-1/2 story ell extends to the east. The interior of the house has retained much of the original Federal-period woodwork, plasterwork, doors, and hardware. The house is distinctive as a remarkably unaltered house from the early 19th century, lacking modernizing alterations such as electricity and plumbing. The house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996.

William Mowry House, Farnum Pike (Route 104) (2/10/83) - The William Mowry House is an historic farmhouse on Farnum Pike (622 Greenville Road) in North Smithfield. It is a 2-1/2 story plank-framed house, five bays wide, with a gable roof and a large central chimney. The main entrance is centered on the main (south-facing) entry and is enclosed within a single-story hip-roof vestibule of 20th-century construction. A small single-story ell extends to the west of the main block. The interior follows a typical center-chimney plan, with the kitchen and parlor in the front of the house, and the dining room flanked by a small pantry and bathroom in the rear. The house was built c. 1802-05 by William Mowry, whose family has owned land in the area since the 17th century. The house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.

Old Smithfield Road Historic District: This historic area consists of a seven-tenths mile section of Smithfield Road (originally Great Road) north of the Manville Road. There are six noteworthy houses, two cemeteries, stone walls, an apple orchard, fields, woods and two brooks. Laid out in the 17th century, the original Great Road joined Providence to Worcester. In this part of North Smithfield, the highway's course was altered in about 1741 to follow what is now Smithfield Road. Except for an 18th century tavern, the

district's features are 19th century. Smithfield Road itself is important as it retains the narrow, winding roadway, lined by stone walls and passing through open fields, woods, and houses.

Slatersville Historic District: Main, Green, Church and School St and Ridge Rd., Slatersville. The district includes the Slatersville reservoir, dams and water-power systems, and 19th century mill, commercial blocks, mill houses, churches, and other buildings along Main Street, Green Street, School Street, Railroad Street and several side streets.



Three Dog Archaeological Site, (RI-151), Farnum Pike (11/1/84)- The site features Late Archaic and prehistoric archeological evidence and was added to the National Historic Register in 1984.

Smith-Andrews-Taft-Todd Farm, 670 Farnum Pike, (Route 104) (2/10/83) - The Todd Farm (also known as the Smith-Andrews-Taft-Todd Farm) is an historic farm at 670 Farnum Pike (Greenville Road)

in North Smithfield. The farm includes a house dating to 1740, as well as a collection of outbuildings dating to the early 20th century. The main block of the house is a 2-1/2 story wood frame structure, five bays wide, with a gable roof and a large central chimney. The main block has been added to numerous times, with full-size additions to both sides as well as a sloping addition to the rear, giving the house a [saltbox](#) appearance in the rear and a total width of 11 bays. Behind and beside the house are arrayed a number of small outbuildings, and a barn which has been converted into residential space. The house was probably built by Noah Smith around 1740, around the time he established a sawmill on Cherry Brook, which runs behind the house and is dammed to form Todd Pond. The farm was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.

Peleg Arnold Tavern, 4 Woonsocket Hill Rd (7/30/74) - The Peleg Arnold Tavern off Great Road in Union Village in North Smithfield is one of the oldest homes in North Smithfield. The oldest part of house was built in the late 17th century by Richard Arnold, one of the earliest settlers in the area. His descendant, Peleg Arnold, greatly expanded the building a century later. Peleg Arnold was a justice of the Rhode Island

Supreme Court and a representative to the Continental Congress. Arnold's popular tavern served as center of American military operations in the town during the American Revolution. The house was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.

Union Village Historic District: This district is a half-mile long section of Great Road (Route 146A), from Woonsocket Hill Road to a point just beyond Westwood Road. Union Village includes fifteen 18th and early 19th century structures as well as twelve late 19th and 20th century buildings.

Significant Cultural and Archaeologic Resources

The Natural Resources Conservation Service defines Cultural Resources as evidence of past human activity. These may include pioneer homes, buildings or old roads; structures with unique architecture; prehistoric village sites; historic or prehistoric artifacts or objects; rock inscription; human burial sites; earthworks, such as battlefield entrenchments, prehistoric canals, or mounds. These nonrenewable resources often yield unique information about past societies and environments and provide answers for modern day social and conservation problems.

The following “Cultural/Historic Areas” from the 1980 report on *Historic and Architectural Resources in North Smithfield* are worthy of protection:

Grange Road: this road was part of the Town’s early road systems and retains its historic character with winding bends, free-standing rock walls and established tree canopy. The road is dotted with historic 18th century homes, foundations and a family graveyard.

Nipsachuck: this 8,000-acre region of southwest North Smithfield is rugged upland, with wooded swamps and wetlands. This largely undeveloped area which extends west of Douglas Pike to south of Rankin Path was an important tribal site associated with Native Americans for thousands of years including during King Philip’s War (1675-76). Existing stone structures and stones were examined by the Narragansett Tribe and identified as sacred ceremonial and potential burial sites

Primrose Pond: this 64-acre former ice pond at the headwaters of the Woonasquatucket River was once used by a sawmill (ca. 1780- early 20th century) and an ice house in the early 20th century. Today the pond is privately owned and is surrounded by private homes with only two non-owners granted boat access.

Invasive species and adverse effects on water quality from the surrounding homes are threats to the overall health of the pond.

Wright's Dairy Farm: This 90+acre family owned, and operated dairy farm located at 217 Woonsocket Hill Road is a rich agricultural resource that comprises homes, farm buildings, a commercial bakery, and acres of fields planted in corn to maintain approximately 135 milking Holsteins. The farm has been operating since the late 1800s and is considered a cornerstone and tourist attraction of North Smithfield.

Blackstone River/High Rocks Natural and Historic Area: Located along the northern border of Town where the Blackstone River enters Rhode Island is a rugged, and mainly undeveloped section of the River. This area includes High Rocks and continues south to just below Branch River.

Cedar Swamp Natural and Historic Area: This is a relatively large swamp of historic importance for trapping of animals and hunting along Cherry Brook in the north-central part of Town.

Mattity or Mattetokomitt Meadow Natural and Historic Area: An extensive swamp in the southwestern part of Town at the headwaters of the Woonasquatucket River used initially for animal grazing but is now of greater botanical importance.

Nipsachuck Natural and Historic Area: Located in the extreme southwestern corner of North Smithfield, south of lake Belair and west of Nipsachuck Hill, this area was of historic importance during the King Phillip's War in the late 1600s but is still of geologic interest due to its swamp, irregular "kame and kettle" topography and esker (a long, narrow and steep ridge).

Woonsocket Reservoir No. 3 Natural and Historic Area: Of critical importance as a modern watershed, this area north of Rocky Hill Road and west of Woonsocket Reservoir No. 3 in the southeastern corner of North Smithfield, contains a rich mixture of cultural features and was of historic importance for its farmsteads.

Heritage Landscapes

Blackstone Heritage Corridor and National Park

Heritage landscapes are special places created by human interaction with the natural environment that help define the character of a community and reflect its past. They are dynamic and evolving; they reflect the region's history and provide a sense of place. They include the natural ecology that influenced land

use patterns and they often have scenic qualities. Since maintaining the historical and cultural character of the Town is important to its residents, North Smithfield has integrated into the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor includes 25 communities in Rhode Island and Massachusetts that are linked by a common geography and by historical events that helped to shape the Industrial Revolution, which is central to America’s economic, social and political development.

The five Rhode Island communities of Burrillville, Glocester, Lincoln, North Smithfield and Smithfield, have a shared legacy, a rich cultural heritage that represents the dynamic interaction between nature and culture.

Year 2014 brought about the establishment of the Blackstone River Valley National Park, the 402nd park in the national park system and Slatersville was included in that park. The park was created to preserve and protect the resources that exemplify the industrial heritage of the Blackstone River Valley. The National Park will interpret and protect the sites, districts and landscapes that convey the industrial heritage of the Blackstone River Valley.



The John H. Chaffee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.

Opportunities to repurpose Historical/Cultural Resources

Whenever possible, the Town will look for opportunities to partner with the National Parks Service, private constituents, and Rhode Island Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission to secure funding

to rehabilitate historic properties and structures. Building a prioritized program for repurposing properties in a manner that meets modern market needs is a critical goal.

Incremental Development

North Smithfield's historic and cultural resources are also threatened by the development that occurs incrementally over time. Loss of historic character typically occurs in areas that have no growth management plan or where weak land use controls permit haphazard construction. Development or redevelopment which introduces uses without regard for neighborhood character or is otherwise uncoordinated with actual community needs cannot best take advantage of timing and locational benefits or maximize potential economic advantages of a market area or provide a climate where ancillary uses will thrive. This type of development can separate historic buildings from the environmental context in which they are best appreciated, creating visual intrusions or conflicting uses that devalue historic properties and negatively affect quality of life. Typical sprawl development including strip malls, cookie-cutter suburban subdivisions with large lots and uniform setbacks lead to a sameness which eliminates open spaces, destroys scenic vistas and detracts from the sense of place. North Smithfield has clearly recognized the need for coordinated development in creating a Comprehensive Plan to guide the future.

Protecting Historic and Cultural Resources

Within Town government, there are several offices and boards which, while not charged with the protection of cultural resources, nevertheless have the potential to be highly influential in that regard. For regulation of all land uses, the Planning Board and Zoning Board have the primary authority. Thus, the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Regulations are their primary responsibility. The Ordinance and Regulations have a strong impact on cultural resources, an impact which is often unrecognized.

North Smithfield Historic District Commission

The North Smithfield Historic District Commission is a group of town residents appointed by the Town Council, who have demonstrated an interest in historic preservation and the architectural value of properties in town. The Commission administers historical area zoning to preserve districts and specific buildings of North Smithfield which have been designated by Town Ordinance as historic districts. Within a Historic District, a property owner (including the Town itself) proposing an alteration affecting the

exterior appearance of a structure and requiring a building permit, must receive a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Commission. The current regulatory function of the Commission is limited to exterior changes within Historic Districts which would require a building permit.

The goal is not to prohibit change but to guide changes in a way that preserves the historic character of the structures and the district. Currently, two areas are subject to the regulation of the Commission; the Union Village Historic District and the Slatersville Historic District. The Commission's main responsibility is to ensure that the structures in these two districts and their uniqueness and sense of place are protected and preserved.



Regulation

Historic District Zoning: Under Title 45-24.1 of [Slatersville Mill, 1917](#)

the General Laws of Rhode Island, the Town

Council is empowered to designate mapped districts for historic district zoning which empowers the local Historic District Commission to grant or deny permissions for exterior alterations within the district. North Smithfield has designated two such districts, the Union Village Historic District and Slatersville Historic District. This designation is the primary, but not the only, regulatory tool available to the Town for the protection of cultural resources. Its advantages are the extent of protection afforded to the exterior of significant structures (both public and private) within a district.

Zoning and Subdivision Regulations: Whereas Historic District Zoning is quite limited in its scope, land use zoning covers a broad array of subjects codified in North Smithfield in the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Regulations. It is possible to include cultural resource protection in zoning and subdivision regulations. Common examples of doing so include requiring a Special Use Permit prior to significant alteration of mapped cultural resources or including impacts on cultural resources in site or design review procedures, as North Smithfield is considering doing with the proposed Conservation Development Ordinance.

Overlay Districts: According to the State's Zoning Enabling Act of 1991, municipalities may create overlay districts. Such districts are superimposed on one or more underlying zones and involve a set of additional requirements applicable to the properties within the Overlay District. North Smithfield already uses this tool to protect its aquifers and is considering another overlay zone to preserve and facilitate reuse of several of its mill villages.

Economic Development and Tourism

One aspect of economic development particularly appropriate to cultural resource protection is tourism. The primary focus, initially, should be on increasing local awareness of the value of the Town's cultural resources (both aesthetically and economically). Local awareness then turns into regional and statewide awareness and ultimately potential improvements to the tourist economy. Both the *Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan for the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor* and *Draft Regional Comprehensive Tourism Planning Component*, prepared by the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Inc., are rich with ideas. Local efforts involving culturally related economic development should be coordinated with these two regional organizations.

Preservation Education

There is an ongoing need to educate local residents and property owners about the value of their historic resources and advise them of the direct relationship of the elements that comprise historic character to this value. Choice of unsuitable architectural materials, out-of-scale additions, styles that bear little relation to surrounding New England architecture, and poorly executed craftsmanship can cheapen and degrade structures, often negatively affecting their market value. In addition to the direct economic benefit of well-maintained historic properties (such as those evidenced in Union Village and Slatersville) there is the less tangible but equally important value of community identity and particular character - qualities by which the Town is identified and recognized by residents and visitors. Education relies on ready sources of information on local periods and styles of architecture, where to find architects and contractors skilled in restoration practice, and where to get financing assistance for appropriate materials and technical help.

The Town should harness resources for ongoing preservation activities and new research and documentation in town-wide educational efforts. Education can occur in several forms and be for several purposes. The North Smithfield Historic District Commission has a slide presentation program for

residents of Slatersville to increase awareness of the Village's historic assets which serves as a prelude to other activities. Another type of educational effort which is recommended is signing. Signs erected by the BLACKSTONE HERITAGE CORRIDOR can alert residents and visitors to the existence of a National Register District. If a walking tour is created for specific sub-areas, such as around the Slatersville Mill and Centennial Park, then signing is essential for self-guided tours.

The schools in North Smithfield have a powerful potential role in educating local children about local history including the architecture, urban design and other types of ancient structures in the community

Placement on National Historical Register

North Smithfield contains several concentrations of historic structures, industrial systems and other historic resources which represent a cohesive development pattern, and which retain many of their original qualities of design and environment. Several of these areas, recorded in the local inventory, are protected by entry on the National Register of Historic Places and two have been designated as local historic districts. These historic districts are shown on Map IX. 1., Historic Resources, within this Plan Update.

Placement on the National Register, the official inventory of the nation's cultural and historic resources worthy of preservation, affords limited protection from potentially intrusive federally funded or licensed projects through review procedures. Under certain circumstances, it also may provide tax benefits for rehabilitated income-producing properties, and more limited funds for matching grants for restoration of key properties. The establishment of local historic districts provides, through enactment of historic district zoning, more stringent control on the exterior appearances of structures located within district boundaries. A local Historic District Commission rules on the appropriateness of alterations and new construction within districts.

Historical Preservation Planning and Management

The Historic and Cultural Resources Plan will present a strategy and action program that supports and satisfies the broad preservation goals, which are to:

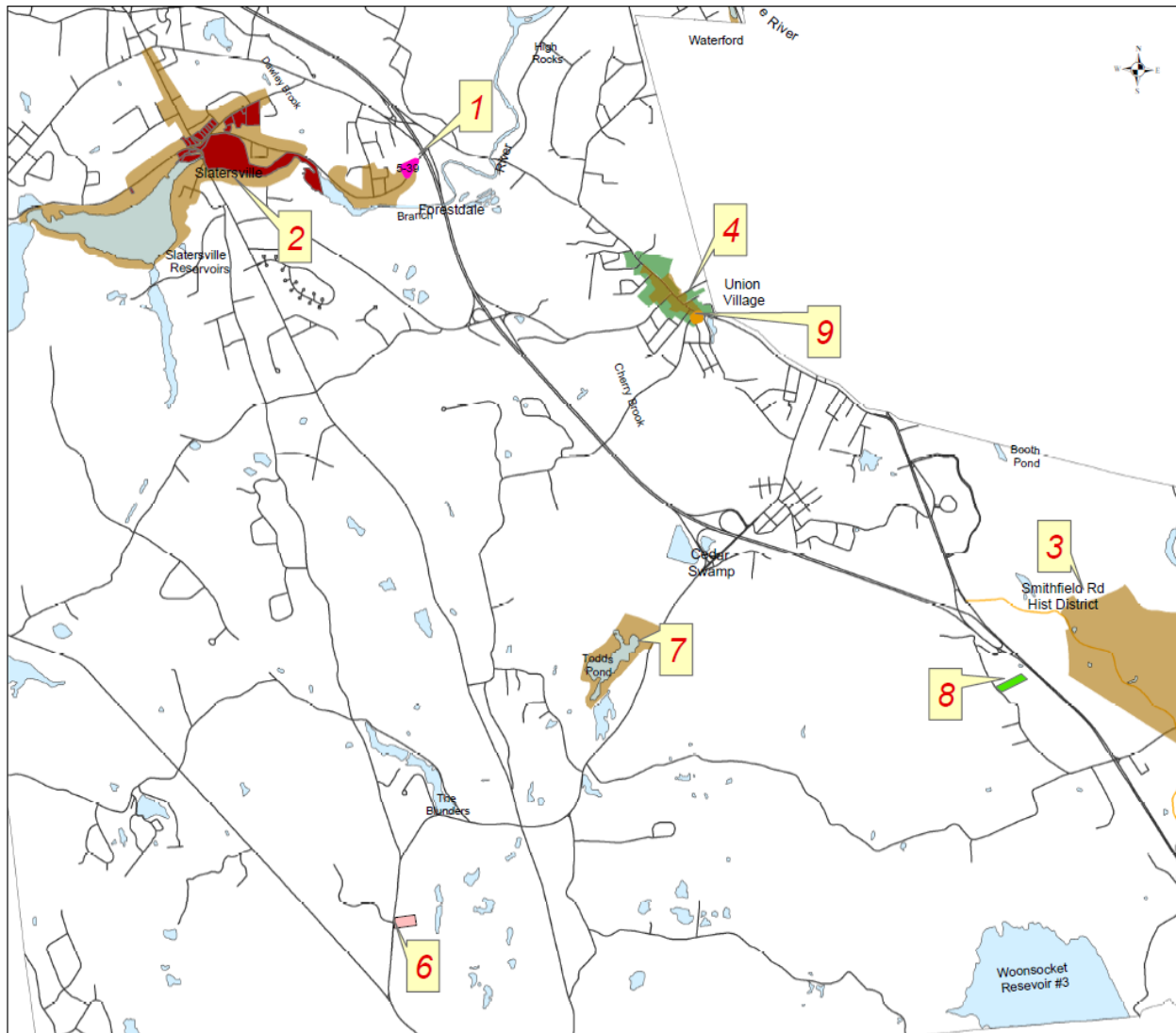
- Increase Awareness of Cultural Resources
- Protect Cultural Resources from Change
- Encourage Rehabilitation/Adaptive Use
- Integrate Planning and Development with BLACKSTONE HERITAGE CORRIDOR Programs

- Preserve and Protect the Historic Village of Slatersville

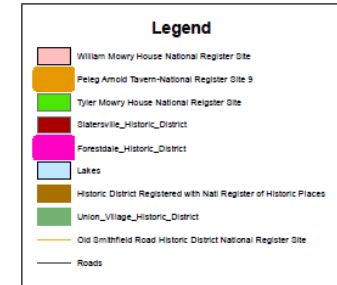
Clearly, the 1980 inventory of historic areas and structures must be updated, and archaeological resources must be studied in greater detail to create a contemporary framework for historic resource evaluation. Because local resources are limited and the work to be accomplished town-wide is extensive, Slatersville will remain the focus of preservation efforts. As a result, Slatersville could serve as a model for future preservation efforts in other parts of Town. People are persuaded by tangible results. Adaptive reuse for underutilized areas should be considered and facilitated with routine town activities such as zoning, public works activities, maintenance and code enforcement. It should also be considered in other town-initiated improvements including the protection of existing affordable housing and in upgrading pedestrian amenities. A variety of protection methods should be used to prevent haphazard development and guide growth comprehensively. The findings from ongoing preservation activities and research should serve as a basis for a community-wide education program. Such a program could be composed of a diverse group of people from stakeholders, conservationists to concerned citizens. The group's input would build a constituency critical for effective implementation.

The American Battlefield Protection Program and the Nipsachuck Battlefields Project Two major battles of the King Philip's War (1675-1676) took place in a region of Northern Rhode Island in an area of over 14,000 acres known as Nipsachuck. This area covers the southern region of North Smithfield.

Map IX. 1. Historic resources



CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES



| Location | National Register Sites |
|----------|--|
| 1 | Forestdale Mill Village |
| 2 | Slatersville Historic District |
| 3 | Old Smithfield Road Historic District |
| 4 | Union Village Historic District |
| unknown | Three Dog Archaeological Site |
| 6 | William Mowry House |
| 7 | Smith-Andrews-Taft-Todd Farm/Todd Farm |
| 8 | Tyler-Mowry House |
| 9 | Peleg Arnold Tavern |

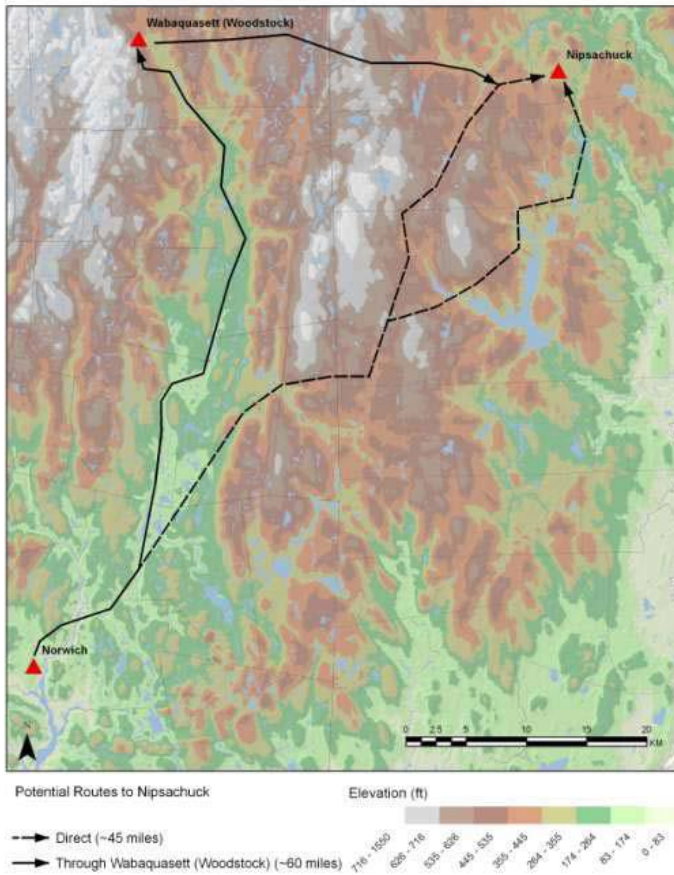


1 inch = 2,500 feet



Parcel data, local historic data - Town of North Smithfield
 Road data, National historic data - RIGIS
 Map produced by Town of North Smithfield, RI 2019

Town of North Smithfield Comprehensive Plan 2019



Nipsachuck Battlefield

institutions and varying levels of government to locate, preserve and protect battlefield sites. The main goals of the program are 1) to protect battlefield sites associated with armed conflicts that influenced the course of American history, 2) to encourage and assist all Americans in planning for the preservation, management, and interpretation of these sites, and 3) to raise awareness of the importance of preserving battlefield sites for future generations.

This program enabled the RIHPHC, NITHPO AND BVHS to identify potential battlefield sites, educate local officials and the general public, and reach out to individuals living on possible battlefield areas. The program also brought together Tribal Historic Preservation Offices of six New England tribes whose ancestors were involved in the battles in the Nipsachuck region.

However, the specific locations of the battlefields are unknown. In order to preserve and protect the historical importance of Nipsachuck and identify these battlefield locations, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission (RIHPHC), the Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation Office (NITHPO) and the Blackstone Valley Historical Society (BVHS) created a research collaborative, applying for a planning grant via the American Battlefield Protection Program to allow the groups to start a multi-year project to identify and preserve the battlefield locations.

The American Battlefield Protection Program seeks to preserve important American battle sites from wars that took place on American soil. The program works with citizens, public and private

The project has broadly defined the potential battlefield study areas and core areas to include several possible battlefield scenarios. Most of the battlefield study area, with archaeological verification, contributed important information concerning the location of the battles, troop movements and tactics, and the kinds of weaponry used by both sides. The program also recovered information about further sites such as Indian encampments and ceremonial core areas.

Table IX. 1.

| Goals | Policies | Actions |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Protect the historical/cultural resources from physical change inappropriate to their character. | 1.a Review impacts of private and public projects involving cultural and historic resources. | |
| | 1.b Encourage investment in historic properties by being flexible to repurposing of structure or site elements. | |
| 2. Pursue a preservation and redevelopment plan for Slatersville that coordinates regulatory bodies at multiple levels of government. | 2.a. Work under the National Park Service Agreement for all development within Slatersville and coordinate with RIDOT and RIDEM when necessary. | 2.a.1 Work with Blackstone Heritage Corridor and National Park Service on the installation of heritage signage. |
| | | 2.a.2. Obtain information from RIDOT to locate potential threats to archaeological resources from state road improvements. |
| | | 2.a.3 Evaluate expansion alternatives for the public library. |
| | | 2.a.4 Explore the potential of having a National Park visitor center in Slatersville. |
| 3. Preserve the rural areas of North Smithfield. | 3.a. Adopt measures and policies to protect rural areas, with an emphasis on preserving rural character and agricultural values and features. | 3.a.1. Continue to periodically downzone select areas of town to protect rural character and or natural resources. |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | . | 3.a.2. Evaluate other potential options to protect agricultural lands, such as conservation easements through the purchase of development rights. |
| 4. Promote an appreciation of the value of the Town’s historic and cultural resources to its character and vitality. | 4.a. Identify methods of educating citizens about these resources. | 4.a.1. Work with the Historic Commission and the BRVHPC to provide educational programs. |
| 5. Continue investigatory work to develop an accurate local and regional context for preservation planning. | 5.a. Encourage the nomination of historic properties for listing on the National Register. | 5.a.1. Prepare nomination forms on currently eligible properties and the Slatersville Historic District. |
| | | 5.a.2 Update the 1980 list of National Register eligible properties in the light of changes that may have occurred. |

X. BLACKSTONE HERITAGE CORRIDOR

This element exists because it is required that this plan reflect the goals and policies of Rhode Island state guide plan element 131, which can be viewed here: [Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan for the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor](#).

Speaking in terms of a watershed basis, the Blackstone river contains a tributary called the Branch river which begins in Oakland, RI through a convergence of the Clear river and Chepachet river. The Branch then runs northeasterly through Burrillville to North Smithfield before connecting with the Blackstone river at the Blackstone river gorge just west of St. Paul Street.

The presence of the Branch river here in Slatersville, along with its moderate elevation drops, made for an excellent opportunity to provide water power for the mills that took root here in the Town. Slatersville is significant because it represents the Nation's first planned mill village. Fast forward from the industrial revolution to present day, through the many economic cycles, land use changes brought about by dependence on the automobile, roadbuilding, and suburbanization, the village of Slatersville still retains many of its original characteristics.



Expanding outward further from a higher viewpoint, we can see that Slatersville is located within the southern portion of the Blackstone River Valley watershed. The Blackstone River Valley watershed extends from its headwaters in Worcester to Pawtucket and Narragansett Bay. The John H. Chaffee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (JHCBRVNHC), established by the United States Congress in 1986, includes twenty-four communities totaling over 400,000 acres. The Corridor was established to combat changes in land use for the sake of preserving these important places that are reminiscent of the birthplace of our

Nation's Industrial Revolution. Along with preserving aspects of the original mill neighborhoods, the Corridor established programs, education, tourism, activities and sites which all work together to tell the stories of our industrial heritage and the families and people who were prominent in all the mill villages throughout the valley.

Fast forwarding again from the establishment of the JHCBRVNHCC in 1986 to 2015, Congress again sought to improve upon a structure to ensure preservation of industrial stories and places by establishing the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park. The most inspiring way to communicate this subject is to include the actual act itself.

One Hundred Thirteenth Congress of the United States of America

AT THE SECOND SESSION

*Begun and held at the City of Washington on Friday,
the third day of January, two thousand and fourteen*

An Act

To authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2015 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of
the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

SEC. 3031. BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK.

(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to establish the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park—

- (1) to help preserve, protect, and interpret the nationally significant resources that exemplify the industrial heritage of the Blackstone River Valley for the benefit and inspiration of future generations;
- (2) to support the preservation, protection, and interpretation of the urban, rural, and agricultural landscape features (including the Blackstone River and Canal) of the region that provide an overarching context for the industrial heritage of the Blackstone River Valley;
- (3) to educate the public about—
 - (A) the nationally significant sites and districts that convey the industrial history of the Blackstone River Valley; and
 - (B) the significance of the Blackstone River Valley to the past and present of the United States; and
- (4) to support and enhance the network of partners in the protection, improvement, management, and operation of related resources and facilities throughout the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

- (1) NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR.—The term “National Heritage Corridor” means the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.
- (2) PARK.—The term “Park” means the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park established by subsection (c)(1).
- (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.
- (4) STATES.—The term “States” means—
 - (A) the State of Massachusetts; and
 - (B) the State of Rhode Island.

(c) BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK.—

- (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the States a unit of the National Park System, to be known as the “Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park”.
- (2) HISTORIC SITES AND DISTRICTS.—The Park shall include—
 - (A) Blackstone River State Park; and
 - (B) the following resources, as described in Management Option 3 of the study entitled “Blackstone River Valley Special Resource Study—Study Report 2011”:

- (i) Old Slater Mill National Historic Landmark District.
- (ii) Slatersville Historic District.
- (iii) Ashton Historic District.
- (iv) Whitinsville Historic District.
- (v) Hopedale Village Historic District.
- (vi) Blackstone River and the tributaries of Blackstone River.
- (vii) Blackstone Canal.

(3) ACQUISITION OF LAND; PARK BOUNDARY.—

(A) LAND ACQUISITION.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may acquire land or interests in land that are considered contributing historic resources in the historic sites and districts described in paragraph (2)(B) for inclusion in the Park boundary by donation, purchase from a willing seller with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange.

(ii) NO CONDEMNATION.—No land or interest in land may be acquired for the Park by condemnation.

(B) PARK BOUNDARY.—On a determination by the Secretary that a sufficient quantity of land or interests in land has been acquired to constitute a manageable park unit, the Secretary shall establish a boundary for the Park by publishing a boundary map in the Federal Register.

(C) OTHER RESOURCES.—The Secretary may include in the Park boundary any resources that are the subject of an agreement with the States or a subdivision of the States entered into under paragraph (4)(D).

(D) BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT.—On the acquisition of additional land or interests in land under subparagraph (A), or on entering an agreement under subparagraph (C), the boundary of the Park shall be adjusted to reflect the acquisition or agreement by publishing a Park boundary map in the Federal Register.

(E) AVAILABILITY OF MAP.—The maps referred to in this paragraph shall be available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service.

(F) ADMINISTRATIVE FACILITIES.—The Secretary may acquire not more than 10 acres in Woonsocket, Rhode Island for the development of administrative, curatorial, maintenance, or visitor facilities for the Park.

(G) LIMITATION.—Land owned by the States or a political subdivision of the States may be acquired under this paragraph only by donation.

(4) ADMINISTRATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall administer land within the boundary of the Park in accordance with—

- (i) this subsection; and
- (ii) the laws generally applicable to units of the National Park System, including—
 - (I) the National Park Service Organic Act (16 U.S.C. 1 et seq.); and
 - (II) the Act of August 21, 1935 (16 U.S.C. 461 et seq.).

(B) GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are made available to carry out this subsection, the Secretary shall prepare a general management plan for the Park—

- (I) in consultation with the States and other interested parties; and
- (II) in accordance with section 12(b) of the National Park System General Authorities

Act (16 U.S.C. 1a–7(b)).

(ii) REQUIREMENTS.—The plan shall consider ways to use preexisting or planned visitor facilities and recreational opportunities developed in the National Heritage Corridor, including—

- (I) the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center, Pawtucket, Rhode Island;
- (II) the Captain Wilbur Kelly House, Blackstone River State Park, Lincoln, Rhode Island;
- (III) the Museum of Work and Culture, Woonsocket, Rhode Island;
- (IV) the River Bend Farm/Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park, Uxbridge, Massachusetts;
- (V) the Worcester Blackstone Visitor Center, located at the former Washburn & Moen wire mill facility, Worcester, Massachusetts;
- (VI) the Route 295 Visitor Center adjacent to Blackstone River State Park; and
- (VII) the Blackstone River Bikeway.

(C) RELATED SITES.—The Secretary may provide technical assistance, visitor services, interpretive tours, and educational programs to sites and resources in the National Heritage Corridor that are located outside the boundary of the Park and associated with the purposes for which the Park is established.

(D) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—To further the purposes of this subsection and notwithstanding chapter 63 of title 31, United States Code, the Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements with the States, political subdivisions of the States, nonprofit organizations (including the local coordinating entity for the National Heritage Corridor), and other interested parties—

(I) to provide technical assistance, interpretation, and educational programs in the historic sites and districts described in paragraph (2)(B); and

(II) subject to the availability of appropriations and clauses (ii) and (iii), to provide not more than 50 percent of the cost of any natural, historic, or cultural resource protection project in the Park that is consistent with the general management plan prepared under subparagraph (B).

(ii) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—As a condition of the receipt of funds under clause (i)(II), the Secretary shall require that any Federal funds made available under a cooperative agreement entered into under this paragraph are to be matched on a 1-to-1 basis by non-Federal funds.

(iii) REIMBURSEMENT.—Any payment made by the Secretary under clause (i)(ii) shall be subject to an agreement that the conversion, use, or disposal of the project for purposes that are inconsistent with the purposes of this subsection, as determined by the Secretary, shall result in a right of the United States to reimbursement of the greater of—

(I) the amount provided by the Secretary to the project under clause (i)(II); or

(II) an amount equal to the increase in the value of the project that is attributable to the funds, as determined by the Secretary at the time of the conversion, use, or disposal.

(iv) PUBLIC ACCESS.—Any cooperative agreement entered into under this subparagraph shall provide for reasonable public access to the resources covered by the cooperative agreement.

(5) DEDICATION; MEMORIAL.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Congress dedicates the Park to John H. Chafee, the former United States Senator from Rhode Island, in recognition of—

(i) the role of John H. Chafee in the preservation of the resources of the Blackstone River Valley and the heritage corridor that bears the name of John H. Chafee; and

(ii) the decades of the service of John H. Chafee to the people of Rhode Island and the United States.

(B) MEMORIAL.—The Secretary shall display a memorial at an appropriate location in the Park that recognizes the role of John H. Chafee in preserving the resources of the Blackstone River Valley for the people of the United States.

Rather than attempt to further describe the present day successor to the BRVNH, which is the Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc., (BHC) a non-profit organization, please see their website [here:](https://blackstoneheritagecorridor.org/) <https://blackstoneheritagecorridor.org/> BHC will be an excellent partner for the Town of North Smithfield as we move forward into the future. As a matter of fact, as of March of this year, 2018, the Town Council has authorized



Slater Mill, Slatersville. A once-productive mill is renovated as upscale apartment housing.

signature of the Cooperative Agreement as described in the Congressional Act. Also, please see the following link to the National Park Service: <https://www.nps.gov/blrv/index.htm>

Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park

The village of Slatersville displays industrial heritage making it a prime candidate for designation as a national park within the Blackstone river valley. This federally-funded and managed park will welcome visitors seeking to learn more about the village’s industrial past. The park would also include resources associated with RIDEM’s Blackstone river state park and branch river, a tributary to the Blackstone. Park rangers and volunteers will be present at the new national park management office in Slatersville, leading regular park programs about the history of the area.

Stone arch bridge

The repair of the stone arch bridge represents a significant transportation improvement to the village. The walkways and vehicle lanes on the Stone Arch Bridge have been widened from 26 to 38 feet to facilitate improved access for those visiting the area (See Figure X. 1). The National Park Service will ultimately base itself out of the current public library or town hall building for strategic placement within the new park.

Figure X. 1.



Table X. 1.

| Goals | Policies | Actions |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Protect historic, cultural and natural resources | 1.a. Partner with the HDC, BHC, RIHPHC, and landowners to maintain historic character of sites and structures. | |
| | 1.b. Use the planning regulatory process as a tool to preserve built and natural features that contributed to our industrial past. | |
| 2. Build passive and active recreation using the natural resources | 2.a. Partner with BHC and RIDEM to leverage recreational development. | 2.a.1. Create more river access to the Branch river. |
| | 2.b. Identify key parcels for land protection around Slatersville Reservoir | 2.b.1. Expand the Blackstone river bikeway to and along the Branch River. |
| | 2.c. Promote conservation and parkland development along the Branch river. | 2.c.1. Accelerate development of the bike path link through the meadows site. |
| + | | 2.c.2. Explore access possibilities to the Blackstone Gorge via Harkness Road. |
| 3. Provide educational resources related to historic, cultural and natural resources. | | 3.a. Target individuals and professional groups which deal with local properties (i.e. realtors, etc.) for preservation education. |
| 4. Link economic development to industrial heritage. | 4.a. Work creatively with the free market to redevelop industrial sites. | 4.a.1. Consider mixed uses at the former ATP site on Great Rd. |
| | 4.b. Partner with NPS, BHC and BVT to promote tourism. | |

XI. ENERGY, NATURAL HAZARDS, AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Introduction

This element merges the subjects of energy, natural hazards, and climate change. The element speaks to the trends identified in statewide planning's comprehensive plan guidebooks number 12 (planning for natural hazards and climate change), and number 9 (planning for energy). A particular quote from handbook # 12, "Local land use planning is an exercise of the state's police power, which has been delegated to the municipalities through the Rhode Island General law. It is important for communities to explain the negative impacts to health, safety and welfare cause by natural hazards and climate change within their comprehensive plans, so that the community has a solid foundation from which policy changes can be made."

Statewide planning appropriately describes the interconnections between all three subjects related to energy, climate, and natural hazards. It is true that a community's existing and future land use pattern will have impacts on whether natural hazards are exacerbated. National Oceanic & Atmospheric Association data shows that the frequency of downpour precipitation events have been on the increase in the northeast. A logical outcome of knowing such information is to support the policy of not allowing housing in close proximity to riverine areas or areas of shallow water table. To a large degree, many of the natural hazards and vulnerabilities have been discussed within the town's Hazard Mitigation Plan which is incorporated as part of this comprehensive plan by reference.

Other connections are worthy of recognition such as climate, energy conservation and the town's land use and transportation system. It makes sense to not only improve circulation systems on roads that may be overburdened with traffic for the sake of improving travel convenience. By eliminating traffic control areas that are over capacitated in favor of traffic that is free flowing reduces greenhouse gas emissions while conserving fuel and energy.

Likewise, focusing on urban renewal of existing properties that may be historically significant not only reinforces community character, it presents an efficient form of land use that conserves energy. Take for example the Branch River Redevelopment Area and associated redevelopment plan. This plan is not only an excellent blueprint for future growth within the town, it serves to locate future growth efficiently along an existing, former mill neighborhood. At the same time, we must recognize that Branch River's buildout

and marketability potential is limited due to poor circulation access along Great Road. The redevelopment plan recognizes these circulations challenges by projecting level of service reductions. A way to solve this challenge is to introduce new access directly from the south and route 146 to Branch Village. This will not only serve to improve marketability of the plan, but ultimately improve traffic circulation, thereby reducing greenhouse gases and energy consumption. The growth center itself lies on a bus route affording opportunity for public transit which is another key way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Energy

Likewise, this element derives guidance from Statewide Planning Handbook #9 “Planning for Energy”. As such, particular connections are highlighted with respect to the community’s land use pattern and transportation system which impact energy consumption.

The town strives to encourage homeowners and businesses to lower their energy use through behind the meter efficiencies and or renewable energy product installations such as solar roof panels.

This Energy Element recognizes the connections between energy use and its land use pattern. For example, improving specific circulation patterns within town can result in energy consumption and atmospheric pollutant reduction. Another example can be the signalized intersection at Sayles Hill Rd and Route 146. Currently, the intersection causes backups in both directions along Route 146 as well as Sayles Hill Rd resulting in thousands of vehicles having to stop and go daily. Air quality could be improved if vehicles were able to travel freely through this area without restriction.

The town works to encourage land use patterns that are mixed use and compactly developed and or redevelopments where practical. Branch Village is an example of a redevelopment plan that is reflective of efficient land use.

North Smithfield is considering consolidation of its municipal departments into the former Kendall Dean elementary school which involves reconstruction and complete modernization of that building. This action is another example of redevelopment that involves modernizing what is currently a dated, inefficient building. Once the consolidation of municipal services is complete, an opportunity will arise to demolish and remove the former Bushee School in favor of a modern, energy efficient police station / public safety complex. The current location of the station is considered optimal because of its location

within an existing urbanized area, proximity to the City of Woonsocket for regional assistance, and it offers quick access to Route 146 which offers access to a large portion of the town's geography.

Economic development

Supporting renewable energy projects for both existing residential and commercial properties can only have positive impacts for economic development. Near-term benefits arise from property owners hiring workers for their buildings, and longer-term energy cost savings will increase the potential for disposable income which can support secondary benefit spending. Also, embracing renewable energy, especially as accessory use, allows inherent diversification of the energy mix thereby limiting the potential for interruption.

Climate and Natural Hazards

Planning for reduced energy consumption is one way that a municipality can plan for climate change mitigation. As discussed in the previous section above, the town's action of consolidating municipal departments will result in reduced energy consumption. Another example of how the town supports energy conservation can be seen in its commercial solar array ordinance, passed in 2017. The ordinance exempts rooftop solar systems from review and requires special use permit review for commercial solar arrays in all of the Town's zoning districts. This local policy is consistent with the state guide plan, which supports energy security, cost-effectiveness, and sustainability.

The photo (right) depicts grading to make way for a 2.5 mw solar array on the site of an abandoned town land fill site. The Town and its school system will receive 1.6 mw worth of power from this system over its 20 to 25-year life.

Due to the increased frequency of significant precipitation events, for a Town like North Smithfield, focus will remain on existing and proposed stormwater infrastructure. This is a priority identified in RIEC4's 2017 Annual Report of the Rhode Island Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council. The Town is anxious to develop a working relationship with RIDOT through their new Office of Stormwater in accordance with its Coordination of Local and State Planning (CLASP). A link to RIEC4 is here: <http://climatechange.ri.gov/state-actions/ec4/ec4-council/publications-reports.php> As the Town develops into the future, it will be important to continue supporting innovative stormwater designs in

conjunction with ordinances to guide development in a manner that prevents encroachment on flood zones.

See link to climate data, pages 29-33 of State Planning Guidebook # 12 Planning for Natural Hazards and Climate Change: <http://climatechange.ri.gov/state-actions/ec4/ec4-council/publications-reports.php>

Complimentary to the increased significant frequency of rain events is an increase in temperatures.

According to the statewide planning data, which again is NOAA data, the average annual temperature for Rhode Island for the period 1930 to 2013 has increased steadily along with the trend in number of days experiencing 90 degrees or greater from 1942 to 2012. Not surprisingly, these trends correlate to periods of drought increasing as



indicated on the Palmer Drought Severity Index for Rhode Island for the period 1930 to 2013. North Smithfield is home to substantial tracts of forests that are mixed with rural/suburban single-family housing developments underscoring the importance of drought monitoring.

With respect to the linkages between planning for natural hazards and climate change, several appropriate questions are posed within handbook # 12 with respect to relationship to land use. These questions will be contemplated by the Planning Board and other local boards depending on their expertise, for all developments, moving forward as development occurs: Will increasing density in a particular area cause more of the population, or special segments of the population, to become more vulnerable to natural hazards impacts? How do current and projected future land use patterns increase or decrease community vulnerability? Are there areas not yet developed that should remain permanently undeveloped? Are areas designated institutional and/or public appropriately located to ensure continuity of services in the event of natural hazards?

Consistency with the State of Rhode Island planning documents

The concepts presented in this element are consistent with State Guide Plan Element: Energy 2035. Clean energy framework aims to: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45% below 1990 levels, promote local and regional renewable energy; and as a Town, led by example. Reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Support alternative modes of transportation, promote sustainable development and land use practices.

North Smithfield has adopted zoning and siting standards for solar arrays, and it uses an expedited permit process for renewable energy facilities. Locally, solar arrays are allowed by special use permit in all zoning districts as minor land development projects.

The Town will do what it can in a way that is consistent with those milestones and goals found in the EC4 Annual Report, RI Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan of 2016, and the 2016 Clean Energy Jobs Report authored by Office of Energy Resources and CommerceRI. All three reports and more can be viewed here: <http://climatechange.ri.gov/state-actions/ec4/ec4-council/publications-reports.php>

Table XI. 1.

| Goals | Policies | Actions |
|--|--|---|
| 1. Reduce municipal energy use. | 1.a. Encourage homeowners and businesses to be energy efficient. | 1.a.1. Promote energy incentives. |
| | 1.b. Promote environmental sustainability through reduction of greenhouse gases. | 1.b.1. Consider allowing all accessory solar installations as a matter of by right vs special use permit. |
| 2. Promote sustainability and energy conservation. | 2.a. Support concisely-located land use growth. | |
| | 2.b. Encourage redevelopment initiatives. | 2.b.1. Implement the Branch River Master Plan. |
| | 2.c. Maintain and preserve alternative modes of transportation. | 2.c.1. Work with G&W to maintain the freight railroad spur that |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | services the North Smithfield Industrial Park. |
| | 2.d. Eliminate traffic/circulation deficiencies in favor of a freer flowing system that reduces greenhouse gases. | 2.d.1. Continue to work with local business stakeholders and RIDOT to improve constriction at Route 146 and Sayles Hill Rd. |
| 3. Minimize the Town's vulnerability and the detrimental effects of natural hazards | 3.a. Maintain communication between EMA staff, police, fire, administration and the residents. | |
| | 3.b. Preserve riverine areas from development in anticipation of increased flood events. | 3.b.1. Assist RIDEM by responding to public comment during the formal wetland application process as they occur. |
| | 3.c. Support RIDOT with respect to maintaining the town's numerous bridges to prevent against road closures. | |

XII. IMPLEMENTATION

The following program outlines the responsible party, cost, funding source, and timeframe for each recommendation. Implementation timeframes are slated to begin upon the Plan's adoption, unless otherwise noted.

The following acronyms are used in the program.

| | | | |
|--------|--|-------|--|
| AHC | Affordable Housing Committee | OWTS | Onsite Wastewater Treatment System |
| BHC | Blackstone Heritage Corridor | PB | Planning Board |
| BD | Building Department | PD | Planning Department |
| CIP | Capital Improvements Program | RD | Recreation Department |
| NRIC | Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce | RIH | Rhode Island Housing |
| CDBG | Community Development Block Grant | RIPTA | Rhode Island Public Transit Authority |
| CC | Conservation Commission | SD | School Department |
| DEM | Department of Environmental Management | TA | Town Administrator |
| DPW | Department of Public Works | TC | Town Council |
| DOH | Department of Health | TF | Trust Fund (affordable housing) |
| DOT | Department of Transportation | STIP | State Transportation Improvement Program |
| FD | Fire Department | WWD | Waste Water Department |
| RED | Real Estate Developer | WD | Water Department |
| HDC | Historic District Commission | NSRA | North Smithfield Redevelopment Authority |
| RIHPHC | RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission | LBOD | Library Board of Directors |
| HUD | Housing & Urban Development (U.S. Dept) | RC | Recreation Commission |
| EDC | Economic Development Commission | WRWC | Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council |
| NRICD | Northern Rhode Island Conservation District | Woon | City of Woonsocket |
| ZBR | Zoning Board of Review | | |

| LAND USE Policies and Actions | Responsible Party | Cost | Source | Time Frame |
|---|----------------------|--------|---------------------|---------------|
| 1.a. Promote low overall residential densities in those areas where municipal water and sewers are not currently available. | | | | |
| 1.a.1. Institute growth management controls by instituting controls such as building permit caps and impact fees (Review existing Town Code Chapter 10). | PD, PB, TC | 15,000 | Capital | 0-3 yrs. |
| 2.a. Establish residential densities and smaller lot frontages within or adjacent to village centers in a commensurate manner, where public water and sewer systems are available. 2.b. Ensure pedestrian links to village centers are made between proposed medium and high-density developments and existing commercial, recreational and town facilities. | | | | |
| 2.b.1. Require sidewalk design that includes a tree lawn separating sidewalks from roadways and including the planting of shade trees where practical. | PB, RED | 0 | private | ongoing |
| 2.c. Allow for differing road widths based on AASHTO defined road categories and build-out potential of the area. 3.a. Encourage redevelopment projects to promote land use recycling and efficiency. | | | | |
| 3.a.1. Consider mixed uses for the former ATP site. | PB, NSRA, TC, TA | 0 | | 0-3 yrs. |
| 4.a. Promote redevelopment and expansion within existing manufacturing areas. 5.a. Consider the development of office, commercial, light industrial and/or research and development activities in Branch Village consistent with its Redevelopment Plan. | | | | |
| 5.a.1. Introduce direct access to Branch Village from the Pound Hill Rd and 146 interchange to both make the project marketable and improve level of service to Great Road. | TC, TA, PD, PB | 80,000 | Capital & Grants | 0-3 yrs. |
| 5.b. Continue growth in nodes confined along the 146 corridor to preserve the rural character of Town. | | | | |

| | | | | |
|--|--------|---|---------|-----------|
| 5.b.1. Be forward thinking when evaluating development along 146 as if the existing signal at the Sayles Hill Road and Route 146 intersection was eliminated in favor of express lanes that benefit local regional traffic flow. | PB, ZB | 0 | private | 0-15 yrs. |
| 6.a. In the long term 20-year planning horizon after buildout of Branch Village, consider office, commercial, light industrial and/or research and development activities in the Whortleberry Hill area. | PB, TC | 0 | | 0-20 yrs. |
| 6.b. Consider downzoning portions of RA to REA (RRC) to maintain rural character in undeveloped areas. | PB, TC | 0 | | 0-5 yrs. |
| 7.a. Encourage EPA, DEM and land owners to monitor historically-polluted sites. | | | | |

| HOUSING Policies and Actions | Responsible Party | Cost | Source | Time Frame |
|--|-------------------|------|--------|------------|
| 1.a Promote affordable housing options to families and younger cohorts. | | | | |
| 1.a.1 Collaborate with Rhode Island Housing regarding homebuyer education. | RIH, PD, AHC | 0 | | 0-20 yrs. |
| 1.a.2 Consider housing for younger populations at the former Andrews Mill. | PB | | | 0-5 yrs. |
| 1.b. Maintain the existing housing stock to preserve community character. | | | | |
| 1.b.1 Create affordable homeownership opportunities in existing village areas in partnership with non-profit organizations using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. | PD, TC, Woon | 0 | grants | 0-20 yrs. |
| 1.b.2. Continue to expand the Town's home repair and home maintenance grant programs. | PD, TC, Woon | 0 | grants | 0-20 yrs. |
| 2.a. Identify Programs and Potential Locations for Affordable Housing Development. | | | | |

| | | | | |
|--|-------------|--------|---------|-----------|
| 2.a.1. Enact zone changes as recommended in the future land use map to achieve the 10% threshold. | PB, TC | 0 | | 0-15 yrs. |
| 2.a.2 Consider expansions of the medium to high density (RS40 and RU20) zone districts to promote infill and multi-unit deed-restricted housing. | PB, TC | | | 0-20 |
| 2.b. Promote increased housing density commensurate to that of existing village areas. | | | | |
| 2.b.1. Support infill development along with affordable housing in high density areas. | PB, ZBR, TC | 0 | | 0-20 yrs. |
| 2.c. Discourage increased housing density in areas not supported by public infrastructure. | | | | |
| 3.a. Use existing ordinances to promote affordable housing development. | | | | |
| 3.a.1. Explore and adopt a fee-in-lieu ordinance for the Town. | PB, TC, PD | 15,000 | Capital | 0-3 yrs. |
| 3.b. Identify Existing and New Resources for Affordable Housing Development. | | | | |
| 3.b.1. Establish a local Affordable Housing Land Trust Fund to maintain fee-in-lieu funds for affordable housing development. | TC, AHC | 0 | private | 0-20 yrs. |
| 3.c. Strengthen Partnerships and Build Community Support for Affordable Housing. | | | | |
| 3.c.1. Create a North Smithfield Affordable Housing Committee to monitor the implementation of the Affordable Housing Plan. | TC | 0 | private | 0-20 yrs. |

| ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Policies and Actions | Responsible Party | Cost | Source | Time Frame |
|---|----------------------|------|--------|---------------|
| 1.a. Work with RI Commerce corp., Northern RI Chamber, EDFRI, to further economic development initiatives. | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|----------------|--------|---------|-----------|
| 1.a.1 Undertake a local economic development strategic planning initiative to define a community economic vision and strategies to achieve this vision. | EDC, TA, PD | 10,000 | Capital | 0-5 yrs. |
| 1.a.2 Use local EDC to coordinate and oversee implementation of strategic plan. | EDC | 0 | | 0-20 yrs. |
| 1.a.3 Aggressively pursue State and/or Federal grant funds for economic development. | PD | 0 | | ongoing |
| 1.b Communicate regularly with the business community to understand how or if government has a role in growth opportunities. | | | | |
| 1.b.1 Initiate a business retention strategy involving periodic contact between the North Smithfield Economic Development Commission, Town staff, and the business community. | EDC, PD, TA | 0 | | 0-20 yrs. |
| 3.a Encourage private investment in the Town's existing commercial areas. | | | | |
| 3.a.1 Review the Zoning Ordinance as it pertains to industrial and commercial zoned areas and investigate the feasibility of implementing greater use flexibility in these zones along with design standards. | PD, PB, TC | 0 | | 0-5 yrs. |
| 3.b. Amend regulations that inhibit redevelopment and investment into historically-contaminated sites. | | | | |
| 3.b.1 Study the Aquifer Overlay Zone to reconcile existing groundwater contamination and consider build out in those areas. | TA, PD, PB, TC | 5,000 | Capital | ongoing |
| 3.b.2 Support tenants who expand or locate new businesses in Town with tax stabilization when requested. | TC, EDC, PB | 0 | | ongoing |
| 3.c. Encourage development and redevelopment of older retail and commercial areas along route 146 and 146A. | | | | |
| 3.c.1 Rezone sections of Quaker Highway and Route 146 to recognize the existing and likely business highway (BH) uses. | PB, TC, PD | 0 | | ongoing |

| | | | | |
|---|-------------------|------|--------|------------|
| | | | | |
| 3.c.2. Maximize the potential for development in Branch Village by providing designed and permitted access to route 146 via an entrance from the Pound Hill Rd. interchange. | PB, TC, PD | 0 | | ongoing |
| 3.c.3. Work with the private sector to expand sewer infrastructure to Branch Village. | PB, TC, PD | 0 | | 0-20 yrs. |
| 3.c.4. Continue developing Branch River Industrial Park and the Branch Village Revitalization Plan. | PB, TC, PD, NSRA | 0 | | ongoing |
| ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Policies and Actions | Responsible Party | Cost | Source | Time Frame |
| 4.a Partner with the National Park Service (NPS) and Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc. (BHC) to establish a presence in the Slatersville Historic District. | | | | |
| 4.a.1 Consider the existing library site, or Town Hall at 1 Main Street as the new home for the NPS Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park. | LBOD, TC, NPS | tbd | | 0-10 yrs. |
| 4.b Support historic preservation with which to promote destination-based tourism. | | | | |
| 4.c Support the community's agriculturally based businesses by providing technical assistance for available grants for purchase of development rights and investigate tax incentives for landowners who maintain active agricultural pursuits. | | | | |
| 4.c.1 Facilitate the economic viability of North Smithfield's remaining farms by supporting landowners under the Federal right to farm act. | PD, BD, ZBR, PB | 0 | | ongoing |
| | | | | |
| NATURAL RESOURCES Policies and Actions | Responsible Party | Cost | Source | Time Frame |
| 1.a. Limit development in environmentally sensitive and rural areas in accordance with zoning policy. | | | | |
| 1.a.1. Determine compatible land uses and develop land acquisition and management programs to identify open space and river corridors. | RD, RC, PD, TC | tbd | | ongoing |

| | | | | |
|--|--------------|-----|------------------|-----------|
| 1.a.2. Protect existing natural environments and mitigate impacts of proposed development on those environments. | PB, TC | 0 | | ongoing |
| 1.a.3. Require peer review of master plans for large developments. | PB | tbd | private | ongoing |
| 2.a. Encourage urban infill development as a means of protecting rural areas from development. | | | | |
| 2.a.1. Support the ZBR when practical to support infill from a dimensional and use perspective. | PD, PB | 0 | | ongoing |
| 2.b. Support integrated strategies to protect natural systems in rural areas while encouraging desirable growth adjacent to road systems of adequate carrying capacity. | | | | |
| 2.b.1. Coordinate with Economic Development initiatives to preserve large tracts of undeveloped land by allowing for growth along major arterial roadways. | EDC, PB, ZBR | 0 | private | ongoing |
| 2.b.2. Strive to permanently protect areas through fee simple or development rights purchase, or conservation easement protections. | TC | tbd | Capital & grants | 0-20 yrs. |
| 3.a Protect prime, undeveloped groundwater aquifers and recharge areas from excessive development. | | | | |
| 3.a.1 Investigate alternatives such as packaged wastewater treatment facilities to those developed areas impacting groundwater resources. | WWD, PB | tbd | private | 0-20 yrs. |
| 3.a.2. Encourage development in existing industrial areas where bmps can be implemented to protect water quality. | ZBR, PB, EDC | 0 | private | ongoing |
| 3.a.3. Require the use of properly designed and maintained OWTS especially in areas with highly permeable soils (generally associated with groundwater reservoirs); encourage DEM to remain vigilant in making sure that necessary OWTS maintenance contracts remain in place. | BD, PB, ZBR | 0 | | ongoing |

| | | | | |
|--|---------------------|-----|--------------------------------|-----------|
| 3.a.4. Develop better lines of communication between RIDEM and EPA regarding Superfund sites near the Slatersville Aquifer. | TA, PD | 0 | | ongoing |
| 4.a. Protect the Town's surface water resources with emphasis on the Slatersville and Woonsocket Reservoirs, and Blackstone watershed. | | | | |
| 4.a. Maintain strong enforcement of development regulations within reservoir drainage areas under the presumption that the town needs to improve water quality from the current B status. | PB | 0 | | ongoing |
| 4.a.2. Encourage the Town of Burrillville to consider land use and development impacts relating to downstream areas such as the Slatersville Reservoir. | PB, Burrillville | 0 | | ongoing |
| 4.b. Adopt and implement programs to protect natural resources and conservation areas through acquisition, conservation easements and other measures. | | | | |
| 4.b.1. Ensure that the timing of peak flows from new development is designed to minimize downstream flooding especially in flood prone watersheds such as Cherry Brook. | PD, PB, TC | tbd | Private, Capital, Grants | 0-20 yrs. |
| 4.c. Protect prime farmland and farmlands of statewide importance with emphasis on those areas actively used for farming. | | | | |
| 4.c.1. Recommend zoning changes to allow more low impact use that will keep farms economically feasible. | PB, TC | 0 | | 0-20 yrs. |
| 4.d. Protect forestland of statewide importance with emphasis on those areas actively in Farm, Forest, Open Space. | | | | |
| 4.d.1. Use a cooperative approach between the Town, State, and private organizations to identify, plan for, and protect valuable and ecologically sensitive forestland from development in critical areas. | DEM, RED, PB | 0 | | 0-20 yrs. |
| 4.d.2. Conserve and enhance forests to support water quality, forest products, water supply and wildlife habitat. | PB, DEM, PD | 0 | | 0-20 yrs. |

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| 5.a. Consider protecting natural resources for the benefit of local needs for the Town. | | | | |
| 5.a.1. Maintain the Town GIS and utilize it to identify environmentally sensitive areas and potential conservation areas and opportunities. | PB | 5,000 | Capital | 0-5 yrs. |
| 5.a.2. Encourage the practice of forest management planning to promote healthy forests. | PB, RED, DEM, NRICD | 0 | | ongoing |
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| SERVICES AND FACILITIES Policies and Actions | Responsible Party | Cost | Source | Time Frame |
| 1.a. Focus redevelopment in existing urban areas while preserving undeveloped, select rural spaces. | | | | |
| 1.a.1. Redevelop Kendall Dean School into a new Town Hall that will house municipal administrative functions. | TC, TA, PD, HDC | 4,000,000 | Capital | ongoing |
| 1.a.2. Redevelop ATP brownfield for mixed uses including library and senior center. | TC, PB, RED, PD, NSRA | tbd | | 0-5yrs |
| 1.a.3. Enhance tourism by locating National Park Service to either the existing library site, Memorial Town Hall, or former Andrews Mill. | TC, LBOD, PD, NPS, BHC, TA | tbd | | 0-5 yrs. |
| 2.a.1. Update the long-range Waste Water Facilities Plan for extending sewer services with emphasis on economic development, with private partners, including prioritization for Branch Village, and areas with onsite system failures. | WWD, TC, PB, DEM | | | ongoing |
| 2.a. Continue discussions with neighboring communities regarding the water system to ensure existing and future customers have safe, reliable drinking water. | | | | |
| 2.a.2. Examine the utilization of the town's abundant water resources to manage its own town-wide water system. | TA, PD, TC | tbd | | 0-5 yrs. |

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| 2.a.3. Work with private partners to expand water to Branch Village in accordance with the Redevelopment Plan. | TC, EDC, WD | tbd | | 0-5 |
| 3.a. Continue the practice of cleaning and inspecting catch basins at least twice per year. | | | | |
| 3.a.1. Implement the stormwater pollution prevention plan and spill prevention/protection plan at DPW. | DPW | tbd | | ongoing |
| 3.b. Promote educational materials related to the effects of stormwater and the natural environment. | | | | |
| 5.a. Maintain existing schools to serve educational needs. | | | | |
| 5.a.1. Work with the Town Council to prioritize, schedule, and budget 2017 master education and facilities plan. | SD, TA, TC | tbd | | ongoing |
| 5.b. Monitor projections to plan for enrollment changes. | | | | |
| 5.c. Coordinate recreational facilities between the schools and town programs. | | | | |
| 6.a. Monitor and seek innovative, low cost, low labor solutions to achieving recycling rate goals | PD | tbd | tbd | 0-5 yrs. |
| 6.a.1 Conduct curbside feedback via hangtag. | DPW | tbd | tbd | 0-5 yrs. |
| 6.a.2. Consider social media/email outreach along with local outreach at events. | DPW | tbd | tbd | 0-5 yrs. |
| 6.a.3. Research pay as you throw policies / ordinances. | PD | tbd | tbd | 0-5 yrs. |
| OPEN SPACE & RECREATION Policies and Actions | Responsible Party | Cost | Source | Time Frame |
| 1.a. Periodically review for recreational enhancements with the Recreation omission for inclusion in the Town's capital program. | | | | |
| 1.a.1. Implement Phase I and II of the proposed Pacheco Park expansion including construction of a multi-purpose field and three (3) tennis courts, walking trail, parking and new access road. | RC, DPW | tbd | | 0-5 yrs. |
| 1.b. Coordinate Town and school recreational facilities planning. | | | | |

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| 1.b.1. Continue to seek funding for acquisition of key parcels of land and for the development of the Branch River Greenway walking trail in Slatersville linking Pacheco Park, Slatersville Reservoir and Library Island Park and explore the possibility of linking this trail to the Blackstone River Bikeway. | PD, TC, BHC, DEM | tbd | DEM grants | 0-10 years |
| 1.b.2. As part of subdivision or land development approval, continue the option of requiring dedication of land for recreational and open space purposes or a fee in-lieu of dedication. | PB | | | ongoing |
| 1.b.3 Work in collaboration with Federal and State authorities to implement the Woonasquatucket Bikeway and complete the Blackstone River Bikeway. | DEM, WRWC, TC, BHC | | DEM grants | ongoing |
| 1.c. Coordinate local historic rehabilitation efforts with recreational planning as a component of the Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan for the Blackstone River National Heritage Corridor. | | | | |
| 1.c.1. Develop Trails/Greenway Plan connecting conservation and recreation areas. | RC, DPW, DEM, WRWC, TC, PD, TA | | DEM grants | ongoing |
| 2.a. Prioritize areas for conservation based on historical development patterns while redeveloping existing commercial areas. | | | | |
| 2.a.1. Preserve land based on criteria including but not limited to size, adjacent protected parcels, significant natural resources, rare or endangered species or habitat, significant cultural features, development potential, road access etc. | PB, TC, CC, LT | tbd | DEM grants | ongoing |
| 2.a.2. Work with the Land Trust and other organizations to protect land via conservation easements and land donations along with fee simple purchase. | LT, PD | | | ongoing |
| 2.b. Recognize the value associated with the town's impressive groundwater resources. | | | | |
| 2.b.1. Cooperate with the City of Woonsocket in the implementation of its <i>Water Quality Protection Plan</i> for the City's watershed and reservoir properties in North Smithfield. | Woon, DEM, TC, PD | | | 0-10 yrs. |

| CIRCULATION Policies and Actions | Responsible Party | Cost | Source | Time Frame |
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| 1.a. Promote traffic safety on new and existing roadways. | | | | |
| 1.a.1. Improve safety at West Acres interchange on Route 146 where 146 and 146A diverge/merge. (including south to north U-turn). | DOT, TC | tbd | | 0-5 yrs. |
| 1.b. Commit annual funding to a road and sidewalk capital improvement program as to avoid unnecessary bonding. | | | | |
| 1.b.1. In accordance with RIGL 45-23.1, create and adopt a Mapped Street Ordinance and official road map. | PD, PB, TC | 5,000 | Capital | 0-5 yrs. |
| 1.c. Collaborate with DPW, Police, and Fire to improve safety in problem areas through selective roadway alignments, and intersection improvements. | | | | |
| 1.c.1. Eliminate traffic congestion due to the signalized intersection at Route 146 and Sayles Hill Road through the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). | DOT, TC | tbd | | 0-15 yrs. |
| 1.d. Consider promoting modern roundabouts at appropriately suited intersections to reduce bottlenecks, enhance safety and promote air quality. | | | | |
| 1.d.1. Exercise repair strategy as described in the Pavement Management Study for North Smithfield. | DPW, TC | 300,000 | | 0-15 yrs |
| 1.d.2. Work with PRISM to maintain safe street lighting conditions. | PD, DPW | | | ongoing |
| 1.d.3. Consider a comprehensive pedestrian safety analysis along the entirety of Great Rd from School Street to Dowling Village. | TC | \$10,000 | | 0-5 |
| 2.a. Encourage and support the use of the Complete Streets concepts in the planning and redevelopment of transportation related infrastructure improvements. | | | | |

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| 2.a.1. Consider revising road standard to include a planter strip between curb and sidewalk to encourage a separation between pedestrians and motorists. | PD, PB | 2,000 | Capital | 0-5 yrs |
| 2.b. Ensure the subdivision process promotes pedestrian circulation where sensible. | | | | |
| 2.b.1. Require traffic studies for all major land development and subdivision plans. | PB | 0 | private | ongoing |
| 2.b.2. Develop, prioritize and implement a sidewalk plan. | PD, DPW, TA | | Capital | ongoing |
| 2.c. Continuously work with public transit agencies to improve and encourage use of the transit system. | | | | |
| 3.a. When examining development, be sensitive to carrying capacity and not overburdening the street systems. | | | | |
| 3.a.1. Consider a Scenic Roads Inventory and a Scenic Road Ordinance. | PB | 0 | | 0-5 yrs |
| 3.b. Confine industrial & commercial growth to the Route 146 corridor. | | | | |
| 3.b.1. Provide for direct access between Route 146 and Branch River Park. | PB, TA, TC, PD, DOT | 80,000 | Capital then private | 0-5 yrs |
| 3.c. Encourage access management to consolidate access points, increase capacity, and reduce delays. | | | | |
| 3.c.1. Consider a comprehensive traffic plan for 146A through Park Square. | TC | tbd | | 0-10 yrs |
| 3.d. Assist business interests with freight interests when reviewing projects near the railroad right of way. | | | | |
| 3.d.1. Work with G & W to facilitate freight railroad service to manufacturing areas. | TA, PD | | | ongoing |
| HISTORIC Policies and Actions | Responsible Party | Cost | Source | Time Frame |
| 1.a Review impacts of private and public projects involving cultural and historic resources. | | | | |

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| 1.b Encourage investment in historic properties by being flexible to repurposing of structure or site elements. | | | | |
| 2.a. Work under the National Park Service Agreement for all development within Slatersville and coordinate with RIDOT and RIDEM when necessary. | | | | |
| 2.a.1 Work with Blackstone Heritage Corridor and National Park Service on the installation of heritage signage. | PD, HDC, TA | 0 | | ongoing |
| 2.a.2. Obtain information from RIDOT to locate potential threats to archaeological resources from state road improvements. | PD | | | 0-20 yrs |
| 2.a.3 Evaluate expansion alternatives for the public library. | PD, TA, TC, LBOD, NSRA | | | 0-5 yrs |
| 2.a.4 Explore the potential of having a National Park visitor center in Slatersville. | NSRA, EDC, PD, TC, TA, NPS, BHC | tbd | | 0-8 yrs |
| 3.a. Adopt measures and policies to protect rural areas, with an emphasis on preserving rural character and agricultural values and features. | | | | |
| 3.a.1. Continue to periodically downzone select areas of Town to protect rural character, natural resources, and balance increased infill densities. | PB, TC, TA PD | | | 0-20 yrs |
| 3.a.2. Evaluate other potential options to protect agricultural lands, such as conservation easements through the purchase of development rights. | LT, PD, RED | | private | 0-20 yrs |
| 4.a. Identify methods of educating citizens about these resources. | | | | |
| 4.a.1. Work with the Historic Commission and the BHC to provide educational programs. | HDC, PD, BHC, NPS | | | 0-20 yrs |
| 5.a. Encourage the nomination of historic properties for listing on the National Register. | | | | |

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| 5.a.1. Prepare nomination forms on currently eligible properties and the Slatersville Historic District. | HDC | | | 0-20 yrs |
| 5.a.2 Update the 1980 list of National Register eligible properties in the light of changes that may have occurred. | HDC | | | 0-20 yrs |
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| BLACKSTONE HERITAGE CORRIDOR Policies and Actions | Responsible Party | Cost | Source | Time Frame |
| 1.a. Partner with the HDC, BHC, RIHPHC, and land owners to maintain historic character of sites and structures. | | | | |
| 1.b. Use the planning regulatory process as a tool to preserve built and natural features that contributed to our industrial past. | | | | |
| 2.a. Partner with BHC and RIDEM to leverage recreational development. | | | | |
| 2.a.1. Create more river access to the Branch river. | PD, RC, TC, DEM | tbd | grants | 0-10 yrs |
| 2.b. Identify key parcels for land protection around Slatersville Reservoir. | | | | |
| 2.b.1. Expand the Blackstone river bikeway to and along the Branch River. | PD, RC, TC, DEM | tbd | grants | 0-10 yrs |
| 2.c. Promote conservation and parkland development along the Branch river. | | | | |
| 2.c.1. Accelerate development of the bike path link through the meadows site. | PD, RC, TC, DEM | tbd | grants | 0-10 yrs |
| 2.c.2. Explore access possibilities to the Blackstone Gorge via Harkness Road. | PD, RC, TC, DEM | tbd | grants | 0-10 yrs |
| 3.a. Target individuals and professional groups which deal with local properties (i.e. realtors, etc.) for preservation education. | | | | |
| 4.a. Work creatively with the free market to redevelop industrial sites. | | | | |

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| 4.a.1. Consider mixed uses at the former ATP site on Great Rd. | NSRA, TC, TA, PD, PB | tbd | | 0-5 yrs |
| 4.b. Partner with NPS, BHC and BVT to promote tourism. | | | | |
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| ENERGY, NATURAL HAZARDS & CLIMATE CHANGE Policies and Actions | Responsible Party | Cost | Source | Time Frame |
| 1.a. Encourage homeowners and businesses to be energy efficient. | | | | |
| 1.a.1. Promote energy incentives. | TC, BD, PB, ZBR | 0 | | ongoing |
| 1.b. Promote environmental sustainability through reduction of greenhouse gases. | | | | |
| 1.b.1. Consider allowing all accessory solar installations as a matter of by right vs special use permit. | PB, TC | 0 | | 0-2 yrs |
| 2.a. Support concisely-located land use growth. | | | | |
| 2.b. Encourage redevelopment initiatives. | | | | |
| 2.b.1. Implement the Branch River Redevelopment Plan. | NSRA, PB, TC, TA, PD | tbd | | 0-20 yrs |
| 2.c. Maintain and preserve alternative modes of transportation. | | | | |
| 2.c.1. Work with G&W to maintain the freight railroad spur that services the North Smithfield Industrial Park. | TZ, PD, EDC | | | 0-5 yrs |
| 2.d. Eliminate traffic/circulation deficiencies in favor of a freer flowing system that reduces greenhouse gases. | | | | |
| 2.d.1. Continue to work with local business stakeholders and RIDOT to improve constriction at Route 146 and Sayles Hill Rd. | DOT, TC, TA, PD, RED | | | 0-15 yrs |

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| 3.a. Maintain communication between EMA staff, police, fire, administration and the residents. | | | | |
| 3.b. Preserve riverine areas from development in anticipation of increased flood events. | | | | |
| 3.b.1. Assist RIDEM by responding to public comment during the formal wetland application process as they occur. | PD, BD | | | ongoing |
| 3.c. Support RIDOT with respect to maintaining the town's numerous bridges to prevent against road closures. | | | | |