

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN Roadmap

TOWN OF NARRAGANSETT, RHODE ISLAND

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Narragansett Comprehensive Plan • Roadmap

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. What is the Narragansett Comprehensive Plan?

The Narragansett Comprehensive Plan establishes a roadmap for land use and local government policy over the next 20 years. While the comprehensive plan is required by the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning Act (R.I.G.L. 45-22.2), it is first and foremost a policy document created with the public that describes a shared vision of the community at large. Goals and policies are established to help decision makers determine:

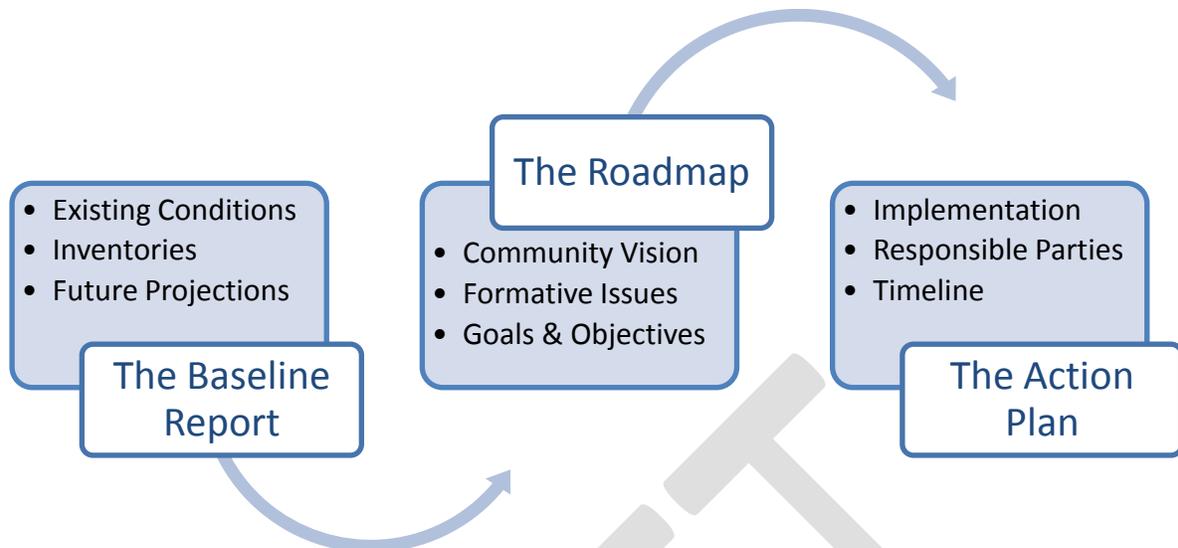
- How development looks and where it happens,
- How the Town can protect environmentally sensitive areas as well as important historic buildings and landmarks,
- How we drive, walk, and bike around town,
- How the Town can support business development, and
- How the Town can meet future demands on town services.

The Plan's most important goal is to protect the qualities in Narragansett that make it a great place to live!

The Narragansett Comprehensive Plan is made up of three volumes: *The Baseline Report*, *The Roadmap*, and *The Action Plan*. *The Baseline Report* was prepared at the onset of the Comprehensive Plan update process in 2013 with minor revisions prior to adoption. It is a snapshot of existing conditions as they relate to neighborhoods, parks, roadways, public services and facilities, the local economy, and historic and natural assets, among other things that define the quality of life in Narragansett. It includes inventories as well as projections of future needs and/or demands. This information is collected from federal, state and local data sources such as the U.S. Census, Rhode Island Department of Transportation, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, and the Narragansett Public Works Department. Verification and vetting of these data were done through town staff interviews, public meetings, outreach to key stakeholders, and review of existing reports and other documentation. The purpose of *The Baseline Report* is to assess local trends, identify needs, and provide the foundation for sound policy development moving forward.

This document, *The Roadmap*, is the primary policy document for the comprehensive plan. It begins by describing the community vision for Narragansett. It talks about the formative issues that will shape policy for each of the focus areas within the plan (e.g., Housing, Economic Development, etc.). These issues are identified during public meetings and workshops as well as interviews with town staff and other key stakeholders in town. Finally, *The Roadmap* lays out the framework for how the Town will reach its vision through established goals and objectives. It is the primary document used by decision makers and incorporates short, mid and long term action items.

The final volume, *The Action Plan*, details individual action items needed to meet goals and objectives. Responsible parties, such as town departments or boards and commissions, are identified along with implementation timeframes. Since the Comprehensive Plan has a 20 year outlook, action items are divided into implementation periods that are short term (to be completed within five years), mid-term (to be completed between five and 10 years), and long-term (to be completed in 10 to 20 years).



B. A Vision for Narragansett

In 1994, the citizens of Narragansett embraced the following vision:

*The vision of Narragansett's Comprehensive Plan is embodied in the Plan's primary goal statement as derived from community participation. This vision holds forth that **Narragansett's physical beauty, unique among New England coastal towns is a result of its seaside residential character, miles of beaches and craggy coastline, islands and peninsulas, open spaces, and the richness of its Native American, Colonial Plantation and Victorian resort heritage. This character must be protected, preserved and enhanced for the future well-being of the community.***

An efficient circulation system brings the Town within easy commuting distance of major employment centers. These attributes, together with a quality school system and the Town's seaside identity, make Narragansett very attractive for new housing and associated commercial and professional services. The very assets that make the Town such a desirable place to live and vacation, have been and will continue to be threatened by inappropriate development.

Protecting Narragansett's physical identity must go hand in hand with the desire to retain its fiscal stability. The Town must ensure that it is able to fiscally accommodate future growth without becoming insolvent or placing an unbearable financial burden upon its residents. This Plan seeks to protect Narragansett's assets by encouraging change that enhances these assets and discouraging change that detracts from the Town's character. The Town will assume a stewardship roll to ensure that the community's vision for the Town's future is realized.

The vision was carried forward when the Town updated the plan in 2005, and it continues to resonate with local residents today.

C. Since the 2008 Comprehensive Plan

Implementing the Comprehensive Plan is a continuous effort. Appendix D contains a review of the actions presented in the 2008 Plan and their status. As part of the update process, the Town reviewed what it said it would do in 2008, what was completed, and of those items that were not done,

determined if they were still relevant. Actions that still were relevant were carried forward into this plan and assigned a new timeframe for implementation. Below is a sample of actions the Town completed from the 2008 Comprehensive Plan:

- Undertake a planning process to address long-term space needs for the Police and Fire Departments by conducting a spatial study and developing options.
- Reduce pollution from “nonpoint” sources through innovative strategies by construct stormwater quality facilities in Narrow River (three major projects were completed since 2004).
- Adopt historic districts and effective historic district regulations by officially designating historic district in Pier/Ocean Road District.
- Undertake programs to prioritize local road maintenance needs by conducting study of conditions of local road system (completed in 2012).
- Encourage non-vehicular transportation modes by working with state to develop bike paths, pedestrian facilities, and hiking trails. On an ongoing basis the Town jointly seeks grants and assist volunteers with pedestrian projects with such groups as the Eagle Scouts and Friends of Canonchet.
- Restore and maintain The Towers building, Kinney Bungalow, Windmill at the Camp, Maintain physical appearance of farmhouse at Clarke Farm by reinvesting in revenue-producing public buildings. Retain historic appearance of town-owned buildings, if applicable. Work has been done on The Towers and Kinney Bungalow since 2008.
- A tree ordinance was adopted in 2007.
- Consider developing a multi-purpose outdoor recreation field by studying the use of unused recreational land (completed in 2011).

D. Guiding Principles

Throughout the Comprehensive Plan update process, either at public workshops or staff interviews, residents shared many common values. To ensure that they endure beyond the update process, they were used to develop “guiding principles.” Guiding principles are markers by which to evaluate goals, policies and actions of the Comprehensive Plan. They are also used by local decision makers to determine if they are moving towards the shared vision for the Town. They help answer the question “What should Narragansett be in the future?”

1. Maintain Local Character and Uniqueness

It is indisputable the passion locals have for Narragansett. Residents and visitors are attracted to its natural beauty and seaside character. Maintaining the look and feel of Narragansett as a coastal community is a very high priority. Its natural coastline, recreational areas, quiet residential neighborhoods, historic districts, and small businesses define Narragansett. With limited land for new development, development and redevelopment initiatives should be creative and complement the uniqueness of each neighborhood. While single family homes may be appropriate for some areas of town, creating true neighborhood centers require mixing commercial, office and residential uses where people can live, work, recreate, and socialize within an easy walk or bike ride.

2. Enhance the Year-Round Community

Narragansett has much to offer. In addition to its seaside charm, it has a high-ranking school system, comparatively low property taxes, and diverse municipal services, which includes an ever-growing library. The Town’s year-round population, however, has diminished in the past decade and many

commercial proprietors find it difficult to sustain their businesses because of the highly seasonal community. Encouraging year-round residency will strengthen community spirit and expand the customer base for existing and potentially new businesses, particularly in the non-summer months. One way to do this is to increase the number of available long-term rentals. Compared to other communities in Washington County, a significant portion of the Town's housing is rented on a seasonal basis. This is reflective of the Town's rich history as a summer tourist destination and as a short-term settling place for college students during the academic year, and each of these groups brings with it certain qualities that contribute to the Town's character. But potential new residents have difficulty finding 12-month rental options. The financial attractiveness of seasonal versus yearly rentals and the higher costs of purchasing a home in Narragansett are issues that need to be balanced and are addressed in this Plan.

3. Balance Protection of Natural Resources with Economic Growth

Narragansett is a coastal community where its natural resources greatly contribute to residents' quality of life, but also support and bolster the local economy, including tourism and the fishing industry. As economic development opportunities grow, natural resources should not be compromised. Careful management of the coastline, ponds, rivers, trails, and forested areas will maintain and enhance these resources to ensure healthy habitats and biodiversity. Management also includes public access to these resources to be enjoyed and appreciated. Educating and promoting the functions and values of the natural environment will lead to stewardship and responsible usage.

4. Reestablish the Town Center

Time and time again, residents and business owners have voiced their support of reestablishing the Pier as the town center. A distinctive town center makes you feel that you have arrived at Narragansett. Most traditional New England towns have a centralized area of commerce that includes a concentration of civic buildings and the natural place for this is around the Pier area, which at one point *was* its center. Reestablishing a town center touches on economic development, public services, housing, and transportation. Integrating all of these physical aspects into a town center can facilitate social cohesion and civic pride and give Narragansett a sense of place for local residents and visitors.

5. Recognize Changing Demographics

The age of Narragansett's population has shifted. The 30 to 45 year olds, mostly young families that lived in town in 2000, stayed, but a new generation did not take their place. As a result, the number of residents 45 and older rose, and those under 45 were lost. This triggers two objectives. First, the Town should recognize that in the future it will need to accommodate a larger senior population, but one that has different aspirations than previous generations. The Baby Boomers may be more active and interested in different programming and activities that typical senior centers have offered in the past. Further, many close to retirement were hit pretty hard by the Great Economic Recession of 2008, and may be working longer than they anticipated. Baby Boomers are also not interested in living in "55 and older" developments as they age, but part of the community, in smaller homes where they can walk to different destinations. Second, the Town's desire to enhance a year-round community also leads to attracting younger individuals and families that are looking for housing they can afford. Rhode Island's younger population is also becoming more culturally diverse. Households tend to be multi-generational and housing opportunities locally should reflect these needs.

E. Public Input and Outreach

Public input is a critical part of the comprehensive plan update process. The plan sets out a vision for the Town's future and is based on the needs of its residents. Understanding those needs is done through a public process, where information is shared with the public for verification and input. The public process also informs residents about the update. Outreach efforts help the public understand the role of the comprehensive plan and why they should care about what it says.

There are many different ways to reach out to the public and equally as many ways to get feedback and input from them. For this update process the Town held two public workshops, developed a project website, and conducted interviews with local stakeholders. The public could provide their comments and information at the public events as well as mail, email and phone calls. Town departments were also involved in the process and provided comments and points of discussion.

1. Public Workshop #1

The first public workshop was held on September 13, 2012. Its purpose was to identify priority issues in specific geographic areas of town. It opened with an overview of the Comprehensive Plan and the update process. Examples of the types of issues and activities that are generally addressed in the comprehensive plan were discussed as a way to educate the group about the role of the comprehensive plan and why it is important to the community. The topic areas presented were:

- Land Use
- Economic Development
- Community Services and Facilities
- Energy
- Natural Hazards
- Transportation and Circulation
- Housing
- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Natural Resources
- Open Space and Recreation

For the purpose of the Narragansett Comprehensive Plan and the exercise that evening, the town was geographically presented in three planning districts:

North End: from the town line with North Kingstown to Sprague Bridge,

Central Area: from Sprague Bridge to approximately Long Cove Camp Road east to Windmere Road, and

South End: Long Cove Camp Road east to Windmere Road south, including the Salt Pond islands and Jerusalem.

Around the room were six tables. Each planning district was represented by two tables. Participants were asked to count off and were assigned a planning district. After 20 minutes, they moved to another district's table. This repeated one more time to ensure that each participant visited a table for each planning district.

At each table, participants were asked to identify which comprehensive plan topic area was the first and second priorities for that planning district. A board listing each topic area was marked with a dot to tally the final results. Participants were then asked to explain why these were priority issues. Responses were recorded and reported back to the full group at the end of the evening.

The following summarizes the first and second priority issues. Further details of what was said and the issues raised are found in **Appendix A**.

North End: In the North End, the number one priority issues were related to land use followed by economic development and transportation/circulation. The top secondary issues were transportation/ circulation and natural resources.

Central Area: The top priority issues in the Central area were related to economic development followed by historic and cultural resources and natural features. The top secondary issues were land use and transportation/circulation.

South End: Economic development was the top priority issue for the South End, followed by housing. The top secondary issues were housing and natural resources.

2. Public Workshop #2

The second public workshop was held on January 24, 2013. Its purpose was to present the initial baseline data and findings and receive comments on it. It also allowed the public to talk about issues emerging for each topic area town-wide and prioritize them.

To help stimulate conversation, key pad polling was used for a “Did you know?” exercise, where participants were asked to answer questions about facts and figures presented in draft *The Baseline Report*. They were then showed a series of photographs that depicted different types of buildings and asked what parts of town this type of development might generally be most appropriate.

The participants then broke out into small groups and talked about topical issues. Each discussion was lead by a series of questions. Afterwards, each person listed what they thought was an issue for each topic. The group as a whole then chose the top two answers listed.

The following provides a summary of the priorities identified for each topic based on the questions presented. In some cases time did not permit prioritization of the issues. A full list of the issues raised and other details of the workshop are found in **Appendix B**.

Economic Development and Tourism: Existing commercial areas meet the economic development needs of the Town and should not be expanded. Most supported business that focused on healthcare services, and there was a strong voice for a local grocery store in the Pier. The group also suggested the development of a marketing package to attract new businesses and support existing establishments. It could include tax breaks, low interest loans and/or streamlining permitting. Ideas to expand the tourist season included coordination with the South County Tourism Council, local Chamber of Commerce and the Narragansett Historical Society.

Getting Around Town: Driving, Walking and Biking: The group talked about seasonal traffic, areas in need of crosswalks and sidewalks, and ways to improving biking. Some suggested more crosswalks on Ocean Road and sidewalks near Edgewater. More ways to improve bike safety were discussed, including “Bike Route” sides and bike lanes on roads with enough width. The group also talked about the challenges of parking in the Pier and if there were opportunities to have evening parking in the beach parking lot.

Energy: The group was in favor of the Town looking into ways town operations and facilities could be more energy efficient, starting with the energy audit done in 2012. Looking for funding from state and federal sources would be required for any implementation of actions.

Public Services and Facilities: The group focused on creating a town center with public open space. A multi-generational center with programming was also suggested. They also discussed ways to improve town services, such as expanding the library, increasing community and residential support to address student renter issues, and expanding (reinstating) shuttle service. It was suggested that improvements were needed to the condition of some town buildings, parks, roadways, and sidewalks.

Housing and Neighborhoods: The group saw the need to promote more owner-occupied units and increase year-round rentals.

Natural and Cultural Resources: The group identified other areas in town that had historical significance, including the Native American settlement north of Salt Pond Plaza. They felt that the Port of Galilee and the library were important cultural resources that needed support. In general, the group discussed the need to increase maintenance and protection of natural resources, including protection from pollutants, litter and trash, and dealing with erosion.

3. Project Website

The Comprehensive Plan Update project website (www.horsleywitten.com/narragansett) was a tool used to help explain the update process and get information out to the public. The website contained resources such as the 2008 Comprehensive Plan, the 2005 Affordable Housing Plan and the 2011 Economic Development Plan. Contact phone numbers and emails were provided if someone was interested in receiving emails about the project or had specific questions. Meeting announcements were posted as well as meeting summaries, presentations and handout materials. Draft documents of the comprehensive plan were also posted for public viewing and comment. A Call for Photos encouraged residents to submit pictures of what they loved most about Narragansett. These photos were posted on the website and used in materials that came out of the project (full credit was given to the photographer).

4. E-Blasts

A list of contact emails was used to send messages (e-blasts) about upcoming project events and updates on project progress. At each public event, names and emails were collected to build this contact list. People could also submit their email addresses via the project website.

5. Planning Board Working Sessions

A series of working sessions were held with the Narragansett Planning Board. These sessions reviewed overall goals and policies for each topic area of the comprehensive plan as well as draft sections of the plan itself. They were open to the public and the Planning Board took public comments and feedback on each discussion.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>
February 27, 2013	Goals and Policies: Housing and Economic Development
March 26, 2013	Goals and Policies: Natural Resources, Recreation and

April 30, 2013	Open Space, and Historic, Cultural and Scenic Resources Goals and Policies: Community Services and Facilities, Natural Hazards and Energy
May 28, 2013	Goals and Policies: Transportation and Circulation
June 25, 2013	Goals and Policies: Land Use
November 13, 2013	Draft Chapters: Housing and Economic Development
February 26, 2014	Draft Chapters: Transportation and Natural Resources
March 26, 2016	Draft Chapters: Community Services and Facilities and Recreation and Open Space
April 23, 2014	Draft Chapters: Land Use and Natural Hazards
May 27, 2014	Draft Future Land Use Plan
June 25, 2014	Draft Future Land Use Plan (continued)
July 23, 2014	Review of Complete Draft of <i>The Roadmap</i>

6. Interviews and Meetings

Interviews and meetings allowed individuals to focus on their areas of expertise. Town staff was interviewed to understand department operations and functions and how the comprehensive plan could help make their work more efficient and move important initiatives forward. Local boards and commissions were also involved in the update process, and similar discussions provided a wealth of information. Staff, boards, and commissions also provided feedback on draft materials.

Municipal Departments:

- Town Manager
- Department of Community Development
- Public Works Department and Highway Division
- Town Engineer
- Library Director and Board of Trustees Chair
- School Superintendent
- Fire Department
- Police Department
- Parks and Recreation Department

Boards and Commissions:

- Zoning Board of Review
- Affordable Housing Board
- Conservation/Tree Commission
- Harbor Management Commission
- Historic District Commission
- Land Conservancy Trust

The Narragansett Chamber of Commerce was also interviewed.

7. Town Council

The Town Council was kept informed of the update process. On May 20, 2013, a presentation was made before the Council as an update. Comments were received from the public at this time as well. The

Town Council also provided input on draft materials through joint workshops with the Planning Board. Joint workshops were held:

- August 25, 2014
- September 22, 2014
- March 23, 2015
- April 7, 2015
- May 11, 2015
- June 8, 2015

Based on comments received during the August and September 2014 workshops, the Roadmap document was updated. The subsequent meetings reviewed the revised document and additional input was provided.

Public comments on draft materials were also collected during these workshops.

8. Public Hearings

As part of the approval and adoption process, at least one public hearing is required with the Planning Board and one with the Town Council.

The Narragansett Planning Board held two public hearings: September 10, 2015 and October 15, 2015. After deliberations over public comments received in early 2016, further revisions were made to the draft Comprehensive Plan. On February 25, 2016, the Planning Board recommended to the Town Council that it be adopted.

The Narragansett Town Council held **two XX** public hearing(s): [May 9, 2016 and August 9, 2016. Final revisions were made to the plan based on written and oral public comments. The Town Council adopted the draft Comprehensive Plan as an ordinance on September 19, 2016.](#)

9. Public Comments

The Town accepted public comments throughout the update process. Most were received during public events, like workshops and Planning Board meetings as they review draft materials. Residents also sent emails and wrote letters expressing their concerns and offered ideas and examples of other communities with similar issues.

During the public hearing process, the Comprehensive Plan was posted for 30 days prior to the hearings for additional comments.

All comments and material received were reviewed and considered in drafting the Comprehensive Plan.

II. LAND USE

Where development happens, how it happens, and what it looks like are critical questions that are addressed in the **Land Use** Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The Town of Narragansett is nearly built out and most new development activities that take place in Narragansett will likely be in the form of infill or property renovations, both of which occur on a property-by-property basis. This condition poses a challenge, because Town officials will need to be mindful of how individual projects affect the broader context of neighborhoods and the community as a whole. Understanding how future development and redevelopment meet overarching town-wide goals, particularly when it comes to business growth and expansion, and meeting the housing needs of a population that is growing more diverse in the region and the state will be critical to managing the cumulative impacts of incremental change.

A. Formative Issues

- **Town Center:** The Town doesn't have a traditional "town center" like many New England seaside communities. The Pier as a "town center" is not meeting the needs of residents or the expectations of many visitors.
- **Sustainable Planning:** Land use intensities must reflect the natural capacity of the land as well as municipal infrastructure capacity.
- **Special Area Districts:** Specific areas in Narragansett require special attention to unique situations that impact how people access these areas, which ultimately determines a business's success.
- **Future Land Uses:** The Future Land Use Map illustrates how the Town sees land development patterns and conservation for the next 20 years.
- **Local Regulation Consistency:** Local land use regulations must be consistent with findings and action items in the Comprehensive Plan, including the Future Land Use Map.

B. Town Center

Traditional town centers are typically a community's center of government, commerce, and culture with a mix of retail and services to meet the needs of residents. They are surrounded by neighborhoods with both multi-family and single family homes, rented and owned, affordable to a variety of households with different incomes, and appealing to everyone from young professionals to retirees. Because they are the epicenter of daily life, communities will invest in a town center's infrastructure and services to meet demands. Developed with more compact neighborhoods and buildings that are closer together, walking is encouraged and parking is concentrated in a parking garage or public lot, or available on-street. Examples of successful local town centers that operate at different scales are downtown Westerly, Wakefield, Jamestown, Bristol, Wickford, Pascoag and downtown East Greenwich. Communities like Exeter, Richmond and Foster are planning for the creation of new town centers to help shape the future of these more rural communities.

Narragansett does not have a traditional town center that provides the sense of place many people associate with seaside New England communities. The Pier Area was at one point its town center, but over the past four decades, the vision for this area was influenced by private investment and moved away from its original purpose. The commercial development at Caswell Corner and the Salt Pond Plaza has significantly affected the Pier Area, drawing customers from smaller businesses to the larger "big-box" retailers in the shopping center.

At present, the area is not meeting the needs or expectations of residents, business owners, and visitors, but there are opportunities to build upon the inherent strengths of this area. Here you will find the Maury Loontjens Memorial Library and the Public Safety Complex where both the fire and police departments are headquartered. A few blocks to the west is Town Hall and the Pier Marketplace has commercial and office space available, as well as residences. The majority of the Pier Area has retained the traditional, walkable grid street pattern and has homes at a higher density than much of the Town, predominately single and two-family structures.

The Town Beach, The Towers, Casino Park, Veterans Park, and seawall give the Pier Area amazing potential to attract residents and businesses, but the connection between these amenities and the businesses in and surrounding the Pier Marketplace is stymied by design. The height and lack of view corridors to the ocean through the Pier Marketplace create a barrier. There is a lack of clear signage to direct people to businesses and people at local businesses to the beach and water views. Pedestrian ways are not obvious into and around the Pier Area. The inward facing businesses in the Pier Marketplace are not getting exposure to people walking along the shore or in the adjacent public spaces. The Town sponsors many events at The Towers (which is also rented by private parties), Casino Park, and Veterans Park. Residents and visitors come to the area for many reasons but the lack of visibility, and knowledge, of nearby service businesses limits their success and longevity.

Local residents are taking a grassroots effort to transform the Pier Area into a town center. This requires collaboration with private property owners and more effort to reach a shared vision for the Pier Area. Events are sponsored in the Pier Marketplace to promote the Pier Area as Narragansett's town center and show its potential. The Town has participated in these events and will use this momentum to develop a master plan for the Pier Area that will move policies forward that create a town center. More discussion is provided below, under Special Planning Districts.

C. Sustainable Planning

When we make land use decisions, we must consider the environmental, economic and social equity consequences of these actions, also referred to as the “three Es.” A sustainable approach to planning balances impacts so not one natural resource, or one neighborhood or one group of people, bears the burden of a decision. Sustainable planning supports development as long as it does not compromise the natural environment and is within its natural capacity to support the land use. This concept permeates the goals in **Natural Resources** and **Recreation and Open Space**, the business growth in **Economic Development**, the increase in biking and walking connections in **Transportation and Circulation**, and neighborhood support in **Housing**. The full body of policies in this Comprehensive Plan comes together as a cohesive, sustainable approach to growth in Narragansett that will maintain its unique character, protect its natural environment, allow its businesses to prosper, and open opportunities for anyone to live here.



1. Community Character

Narragansett has a distinct character as a unique seaside community and it is the Town's goal to protect and build on this character. Through its five historic districts, the Town ensures that renovation and construction within these designated areas are performed in a way that preserves the historic architecture consistent with that particular district (See **Historic, Cultural and Scenic Resources**).

Outside of designated districts, these protective tools are not used by the town; however, there can be opportunities to evaluate major development projects through a design review process, targeting highly visible and heavily traveled areas that could benefit from aesthetic improvements. The feasibility and content of design guidelines will be evaluated through implementation and can be done by incorporating guidelines and incentives in the Subdivision and Land Development and Zoning Regulations.

2. Neighborhoods

Narragansett's neighborhoods represent the social aspect of sustainable planning. They have distinct features and qualities that are important to protect. Each is unique and requires different approaches to maintain and enhance their character. One way to preserve neighborhood character is to develop guidelines and policies that encourage alternatives for new development or redevelopment that strengthen its character and support its residences. Guidelines and policies can address:

- Architectural style and building height: is it consistent with neighboring homes and the historic context?
- Density: is it consistent with the neighborhood?
- Access to services: is there a need for better access to services like health care, groceries, or other everyday needs? What is the primary way to reach these services? Is there a need for better connections to public transportation?
- Amenities: do residents have access to parks or other passive and active recreational areas? Are there walking and biking paths or the need for sidewalks?

An essential component of developing guidance and policies is the involvement of residents. Residents speak clearly to the issues and the needs of a neighborhood and impart an "everyday" perspective that is critical to understanding challenges and opportunities. They hold a sense of responsibility to ensure they and their neighbors have a high quality of life, and will support the Town's efforts that promote their vision and ideas.

3. Natural Environment

Sustainable planning also considers environmental impacts and works to reduce or eliminate adverse changes to natural systems. The Town currently implements several environmental zoning overlays to ensure that impacts are minimized or avoided and address wetlands, high water tables, coastal features, and floodplains. Projects of considerable size may also need more detailed evaluation than the Town's current regulations require. For example, the Town will want to consider the value of requiring environmental impact statements.

Over the years, the Town has worked to develop a town-wide Greenbelt system. The Greenbelt system is a network of undeveloped land that maintains its natural features and functions. It can include protected open space (public and private), conservation easements, recreation areas, and established buffers. The system is used by the Town for a variety of reasons, such as to:

- Separate residential and commercial clusters,
- Maintain water quality, wildlife habitat, and biological diversity,
- Preserve community identity and the sense of place,
- Protect scenic views and other sources of interest for local tourism, and

- Provide opportunities for trails or other passive recreation that links existing recreation and open space lands.

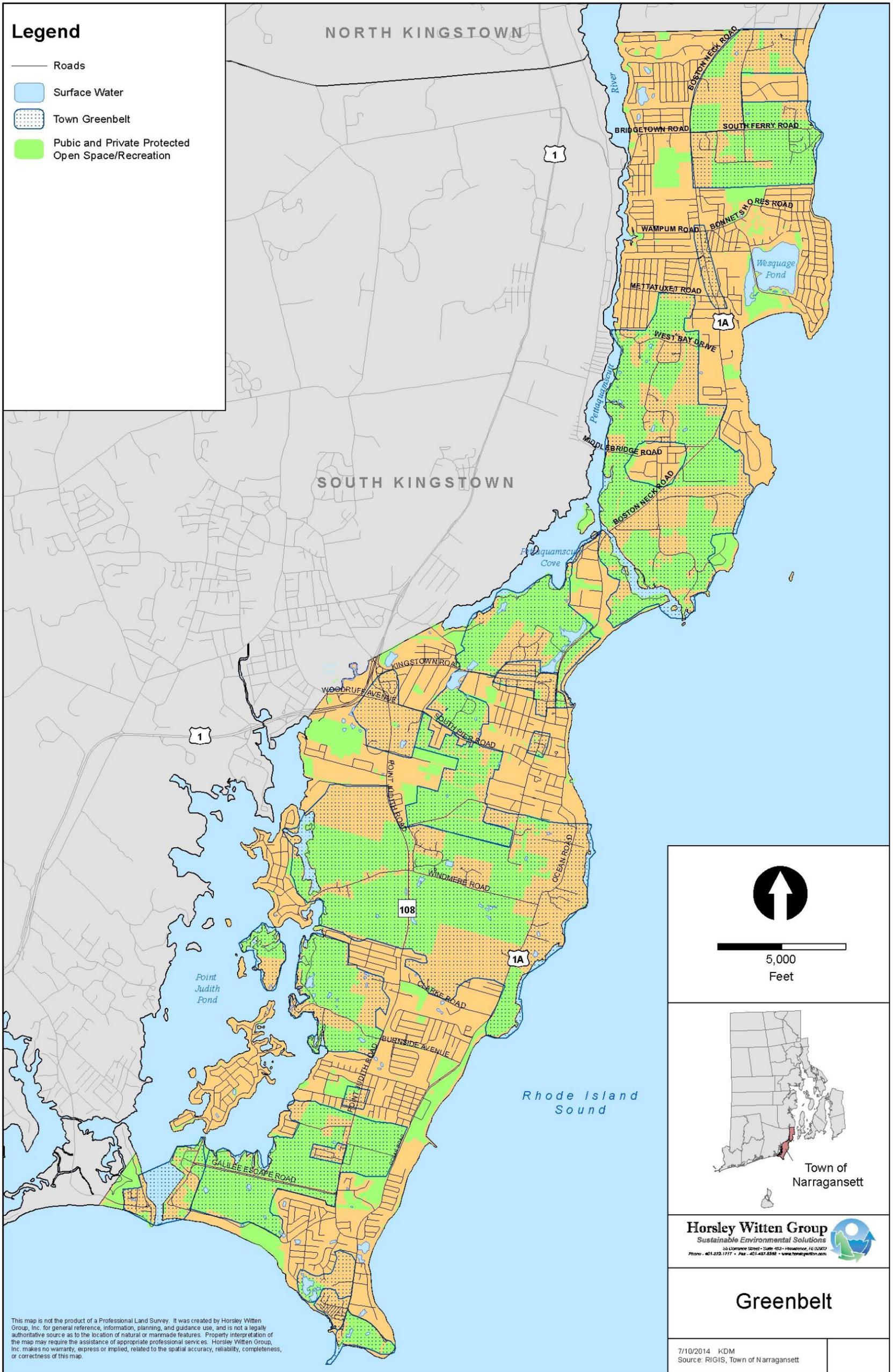
Map 1 shows the current progress of the Greenbelt system made through existing conservation strategies (see **Recreation and Open Space**). The Town will evaluate additional tools to protect natural areas within the designated Greenbelt. One possibility will be the feasibility of a transfer of development rights (TDR) program, which allows a property owner to sell the development potential of their property, thereby foregoing any future development, to another property owner, who would be able to increase the amount of development on their property. The former would be considered a sending area and the latter would be a receiving area, the foundation of every TDR Program. Over 200 TDR Programs have been established across the country to protect sensitive resources like farmland, wildlife habitats, historic resources, and scenic views. They have also been used to encourage development and reinvestment in particular areas of a community. A TDR Program in Narragansett would offer different opportunities and it will be necessary to analyze how it can be used to implement goals like enhancing its Greenbelt system. Further benefits can be protecting areas vulnerable to natural hazards, creating a town center, or increasing LMI housing units (see **Natural Hazards and Housing and Neighborhoods**).

The natural environment also has a limited capacity for new development or redevelopment and infrastructure investment may help the Town mitigate impacts from past development. For example, as discussed in **Community Services and Facilities**, providing centralized wastewater disposal to residential areas can address and prevent environmental health issues. The Town will continue to evaluate the need for sewer expansion and associated costs to the Town and homeowners.

Managing pollutants in stormwater is also essential to protecting and improving the health of natural environments. The Town already implements stormwater management initiatives through its EPA National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit. At the state level, in 2010, RIDEM published the *Rhode Island Stormwater Design and Installation Standards Manual*. This document promotes the use of low impact design (LID) techniques rather than hard infrastructure like pipes and outfalls. Where appropriate, the Town will look to update its current regulations and requirements for new development to reference the State Manual and promote LID for both private development and municipal projects.

Finally, the Town can promote more efficient energy design in private development and redevelopment projects. It is currently taking strides to make public buildings and operations more energy efficient (see **Community Services and Facilities**). Using guidance from the US Green Building Council for the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED),¹ the Town will consider incentives that encourage private property owners to use “green” building design elements, increase walking opportunities in their development, or incorporate renewable energy sources.

¹ <http://www.usgbc.org/leed>



Map 1. Narragansett's Greenbelt

4. Business Development

Economic development is the third prong of sustainable community planning. Most commercial and industrial areas in Narragansett are located along major roadway corridors with easy access to US Route 1. These areas have high visibility but should also be designed to maintain community character and avoid “strip” development. New commercial development that abuts residential neighborhoods should be evaluated based on its impact to residents, and design measures that protect those neighborhoods should be integrated into redevelopment proposals. Transitional commercial uses, those that are less intense, should be favored in these transitional areas. These might include businesses that generate light traffic, do not have evening business hours, or produce noise levels that are at or below regulated standards.

Areas for business expansion or new development will take place in existing areas zoned for commercial and industrial uses. As discussed in **Economic Development**, the Town will implement policies that promote and support business growth. The Town will also evaluate the fiscal impacts on the community from this new growth and determine which tools can help balance the costs of doing business, both for the private developer and the Town. Examples would include impact fees and growth rate permitting.

D. Special Planning Districts

Special Planning Districts are places in Town that require special attention to create a cohesive vision that will improve the quality of life for that neighborhood and capture unique opportunities. Many districts were identified during the update process by the public, elected officials, and town staff. Others have been carried forward from prior comprehensive planning efforts in Narragansett. By highlighting these areas, the Town anticipates that future work will take place with involvement from residents and businesses to develop a shared vision and/or specific strategies to address the unique circumstances that impact these areas. Special Planning Districts identified as part of the Comprehensive Plan update include:

- Galilee
- Boston Neck Road/South Ferry Road
- Boston Neck Road/Bonnet Shores
- Boon Street
- Pier Area
- Dillon Rotary/Caswell Corner

The following provides an overview of preliminary issues for each area identified during the planning process. Special Planning District boundaries are shown for illustration and it is anticipated that further refinement will take place as a part of implementing strategies to address challenges.

1. Galilee

Galilee is a unique and diverse place. At its center is an important commercial port that is home to the state’s largest commercial fishing fleet and the Block Island Ferry terminal, which transports passengers and freight to and from the island. Galilee is an important economic center for the town, the state, and the New England region. In 2010, Galilee ranked as the 4th largest fishing port in New England in dollar value of landings. The port contains 40 piers for commercial berthing that are managed by the State.

The commercial piers are immediately surrounded by businesses and services that support the commercial fishing industry.

Galilee is also a tourist destination. There are recreation and tourism uses that rely on access to the water, including private recreational fishing and boating excursions, a public boat ramp, Salty Brine State Beach, and Galilee Wildlife Management Area. Galilee also has a small retail area with souvenir shops and restaurants. Private parking lots primarily serving ferry passengers to Block Island, and to a smaller degree, the restaurants and beach also surround the area. There are also residences, both year-round and seasonal, within walking distance to the port.

The Galilee Special District plan was developed and adopted by the Town to support the commercial fishing port. It is based on the Galilee Master Development Plan developed by the State in 1996. The Special District Plan includes the Galilee zoning districts, which are intended to allow uses and development that support primarily commercial fishing and related activities, water-dependent uses, and ferry service in areas with direct access to the commercial piers. In the surrounding areas, zoning permits recreation, residences, retail, services, parking, and mixed uses. This diversity of uses is encouraged, but it is the goal of the Town that they do not compromise commercial fishing and related activities.

2. Boston Neck Road/South Ferry Road

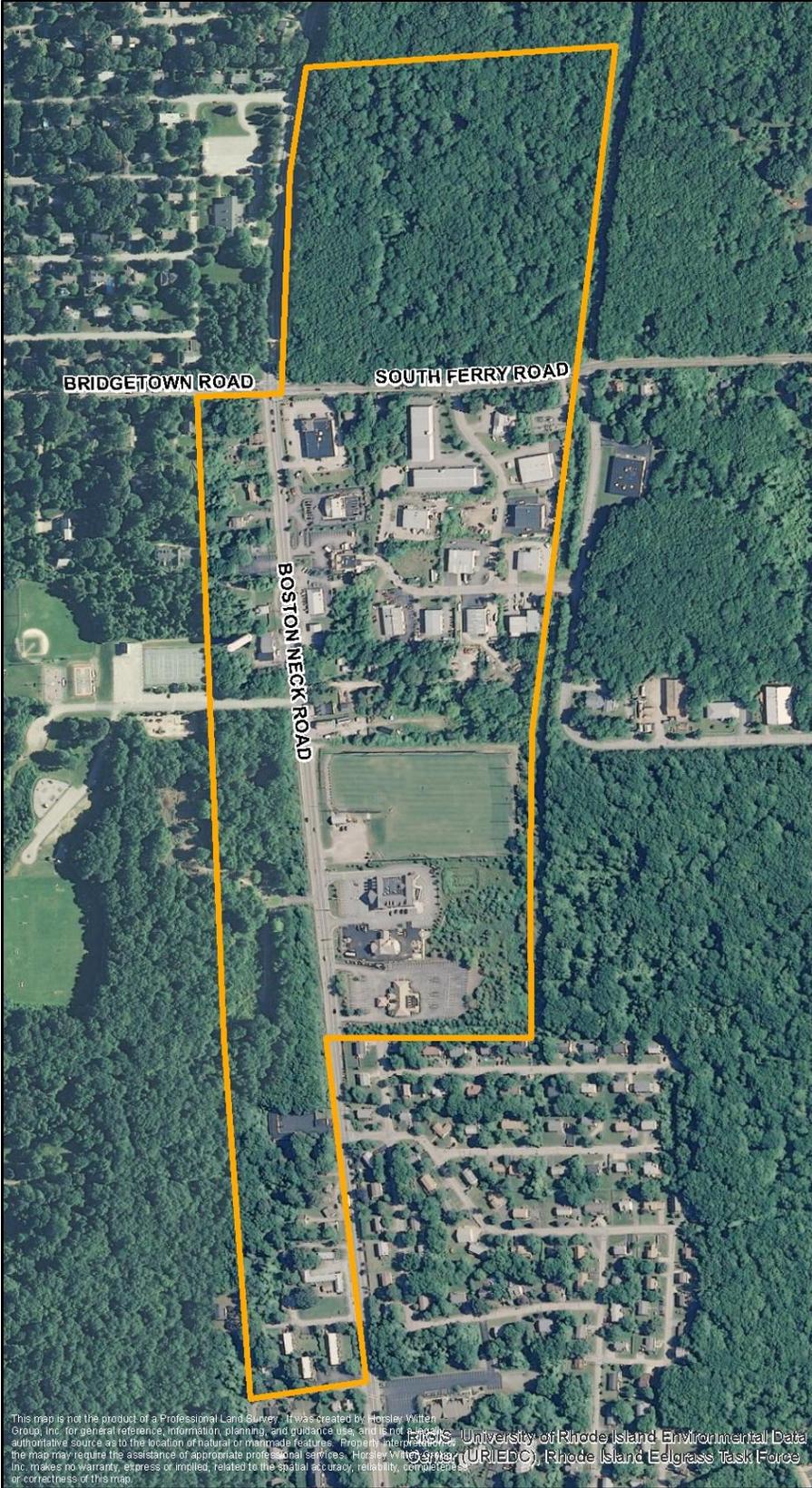
The Boston Neck Road/South Ferry Road Special Planning District (Map 2) is focused around the commercial and industrial uses in the vicinity of where these two roadways intersect, which are concentrated on the eastern side of Boston Neck Road. Boston Neck Road is a state-maintained arterial highway and coordination with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) will be essential for any roadway infrastructure improvements.

Preliminary issues identified in this area are:

- There is traffic congestion from commercial uses.
- There is traffic congestion from seasonal tourist traffic (via Bridgetown Road/Route 1).
- The area lacks continuous sidewalks and walking paths throughout.
- Biking along Boston Neck Road is not safe at times.
- Commercial development is too spread out.
- There are many driveways for commercial uses on Boston Neck Road.

Possible opportunities that should be explored:

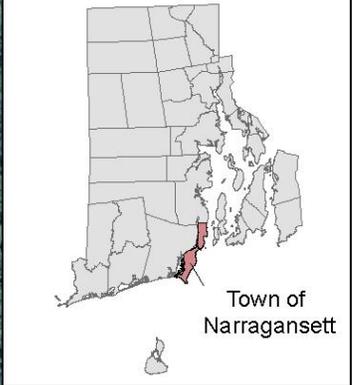
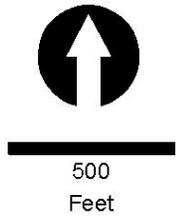
- Traffic congestion can be minimized with access management strategies, including but not limited to, shared driveways for businesses fronting on Boston Neck Road and auto and pedestrian connections between properties.
- Walking can be accommodated with safer pedestrian connections between the commercial uses and adjacent neighborhoods and park. This might include expanding sidewalks on both sides of Boston Neck Road and at the lighted intersection with Bridgetown Road. Add crosswalks and supporting indicators at strategic locations along Boston Neck Road.
- Sidewalks can be on both sides of Boston Neck Road.
- Commercial uses should be limited almost entirely to the eastern side of Boston Neck Road.



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Legend

Special Planning District
 Boston Neck Road/South Ferry Road



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**Special Planning District
 Boston Neck Road/
 South Ferry Road**

3/31/2014 KDM
 Source: RIGIS,
 Town of Narragansett

Map 2. Boston Neck Road/South Ferry Road Special Planning District

3. Boston Neck Road/Bonnet Shores

The Boston Neck Road/Bonnet Shores Special Planning District (Map 3) is another commercial area along Boston Neck Road extending from the Bonnet Shores Road intersection to Marian Avenue. In general, the area lacks a cohesive vision and development happens sporadically. Boston Neck Road is a state-maintained arterial highway and coordination with the RIDOT will be essential for any roadway infrastructure improvements.

Preliminary issues identified in this area are:

- Biking along Boston Neck Road is not safe in certain areas.
- Commercial development is too spread out in this area.
- There are many driveways for commercial uses along Boston Neck Road.

Possible opportunities that should be explored:

- Traffic congestion can be mitigated with access management strategies, including but not limited to, shared driveways off of Boston Neck Road and auto and pedestrian connections between properties.
- Walking can be accommodated with safer pedestrian connections between the commercial uses and adjacent neighborhoods and park as well as crosswalks and supporting indicators at strategic locations along Boston Neck Road.
- The Town can identify uses it would like to attract to this area and develop regulations to incentivize these types of businesses.

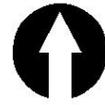


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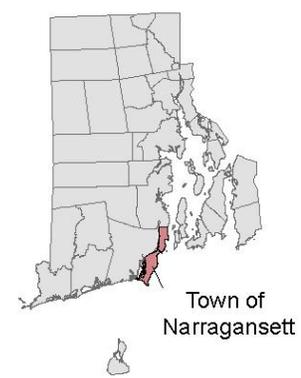
RIGIS, University of Rhode Island Environmental Data Center (URI/EDC) Rhode Island Estuary Task Force

Legend

Special Planning District
 Boston Neck Road/Bonnet Shores



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**Special Planning District
 Boston Neck Road/
 Bonnet Shores**

3/31/2014 KDM
 Source: RIGIS,
 Town of Narragansett

Map 3. Boston Neck Road/Bonnet Shores Special Planning District

4. Boon Street

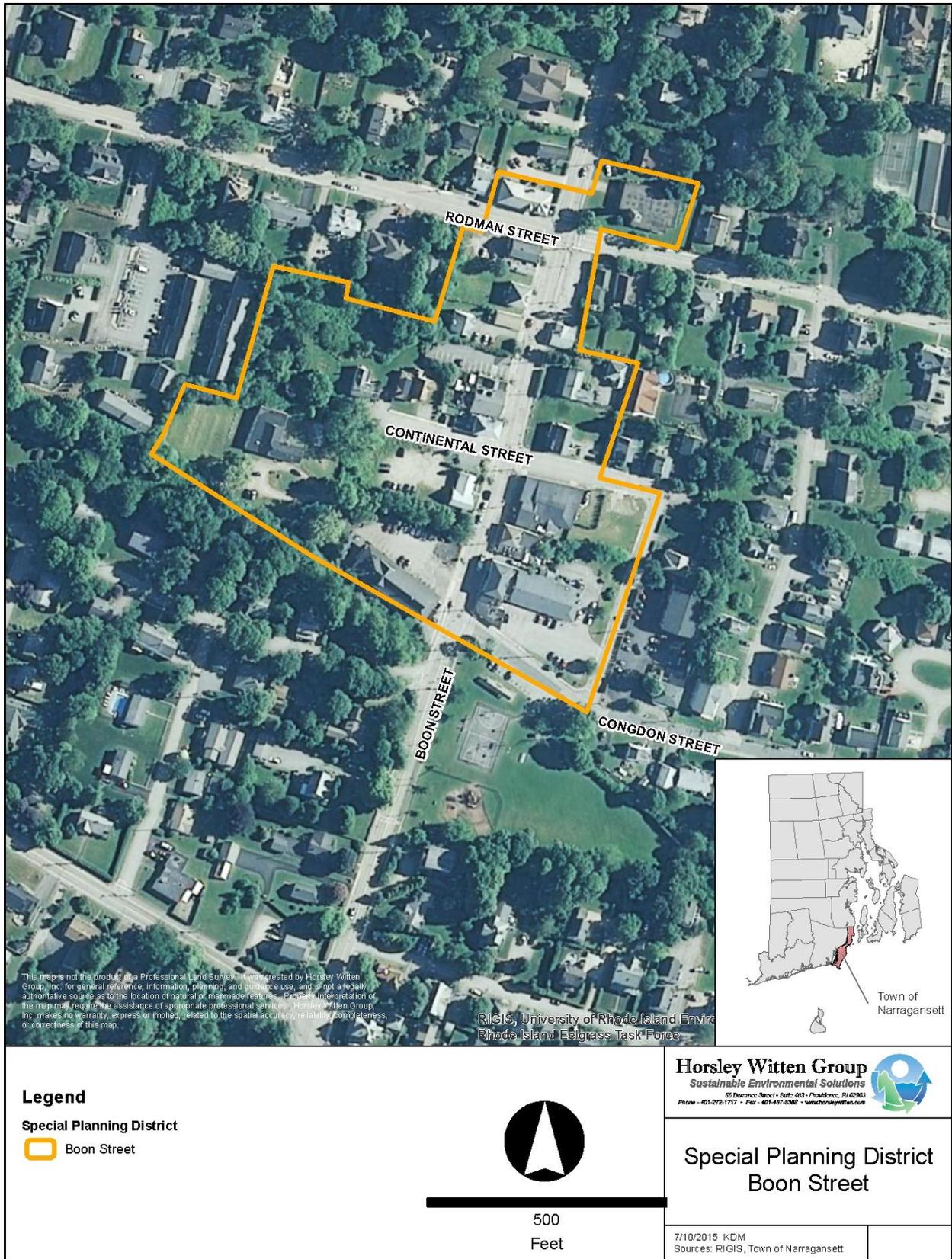
The Boon Street Special Planning District (Map 4) is in the vicinity of Rodman, Continental and Congdon Streets. It is a small area with a high concentration of different uses including restaurants, art galleries, shops, and residences that create a unique sense of place. Walking in the neighborhood provides visitors the opportunity to visit several shops in an environment that feels safe for pedestrians. At the intersection of Boon Street with Congdon Street, the Boon Street Park and Leroy Thompson Memorial Playground provide a diverse set of opportunities for neighborhood recreation.

Preliminary issues identified in this area are:

- Many of the existing buildings along Boon Street do not conform to the dimensional requirements of the General Business zoning district.
- Residential uses are not allowed in the General Business zoning district.
- Required setbacks and lot coverage requirements in the current zoning would greatly impact the aesthetics of the street by pushing buildings back from the sidewalk.
- There is limited parking for businesses.

Possible opportunities that should be explored:

- ~~Updating zoning to guide development and redevelopment~~ Study zoning options that enhances the character of the street. ~~Since many buildings and properties have more than one use, the zoning could allow this by right if specific requirements are met. The types of uses that would be allowed and performance standards that would have to be met will be determined with the residents and businesses.~~ The intent is to maintain the feel of the current neighborhood and protect it from inappropriate development proposals. ~~Performance standards could be related to site layout and design, lighting, parking, signs, or pedestrian access. By updating the zoning, property owners can have greater predictability in the permitting process (which helps retain financing); and because the uses and performance standards have already been vetted with the neighborhood, the residents can have some assurances in the process as well.~~
- Providing public parking or promoting shared parking among private entities, among other strategies, can enhance parking opportunities for businesses as well as the park.
- Reestablishing the Pier Trolley to serve this area as well as the Pier and other destinations should be evaluated, focusing on alternative financial support mechanisms.
- ~~Incentives can create apartments and units affordable to families or individuals with low to moderate incomes.~~
- Burying utilities can enhance the aesthetics of the neighborhood.
- There may be ways to strengthen linkages between the Boon Street commercial area and the Central Street Historic District.



Map 4. Boon Street Special Planning District

5. The Pier Area

The Pier Area Special Planning District (Map 5) focuses on recreating a town center that enhances Narragansett's seaside character. The focal point of the planning district encompasses Narragansett Avenue from Kingstown Road to Beach Street, Casino Park, Veterans Park, The Towers, and the Pier Marketplace. There are also important broader connections to the Sprague Park, the Town Beach, Canonchet Farm and nearby historic districts. The concentration of civic, residential, commercial, and recreational uses in the area give the Pier Area a great foundation for what could become a vibrant town center. Residents and businesses rally around this idea and the "Where's the Town" grassroots movement has invigorated community. The Town should build on this momentum [to create zoning and develop opportunities](#).

Preliminary issues identified in this area are:

- There is a visual and physical "disconnect" between the Pier Marketplace and the Town Beach and pedestrians walking along the seawall.
- Parking is limited.
- The area lacks a range of retail needed to serve the adjacent residential areas.
- During the summer, auto traffic congests the area.

Possible opportunities that should be explored:

- A common vision developed with larger property owners can improve the vitality of the area for local businesses year round.
- Wayfinding signs can guide visitors to area attractions and businesses.
- Trolley or shuttle service can alleviate traffic congestion.
- On-street parking can be managed with seasonal timed regulations and/or property owner permits.
- Design guidelines can enhance the aesthetics of new development and redevelopment projects.
- The bike path and linear park that connects to Canonchet Farm establishes a link to nearby open space and recreational opportunities.
- There are opportunities to connect to the Central Street Historic District and other historic features in the area, such as the Historic Towers and Seawall on Ocean Road.
- The current civic uses in the area can be keystones to town-sponsored events, including Town Hall, the library, Sprague Park, and public safety complex.



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RI GIS, University of Rhode Island Enviro
Rhode Island Seagrass Task Force

Legend

Special Planning District

 Pier Area



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Special Planning District
Pier Area

3/31/2014 KDM
Sources: RI GIS, Town of Narragansett

Map 5. Pier Area Special Planning District

6. Ted Wright Rotary/Caswell's Corner

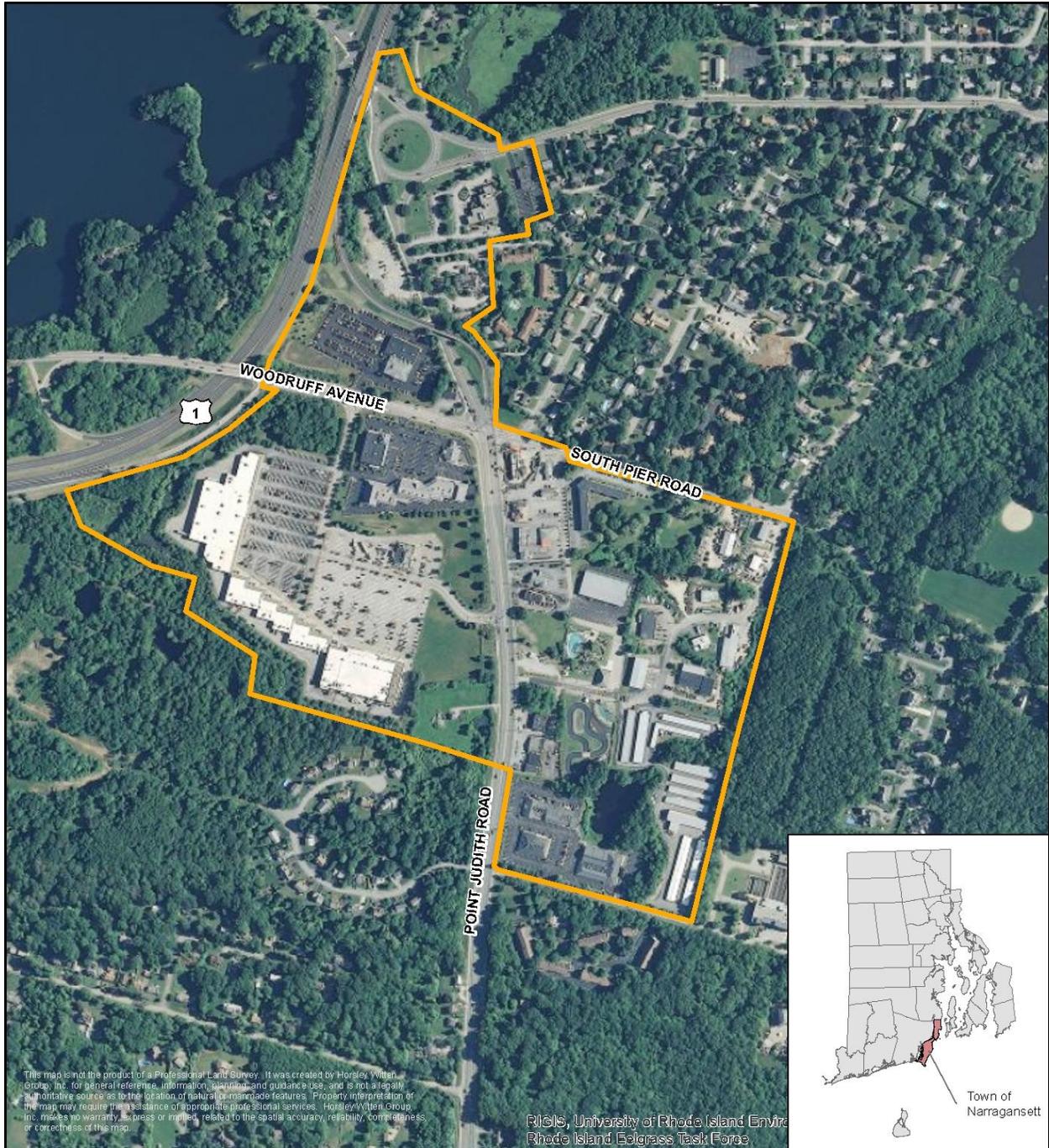
The Ted Wright Rotary/Caswell's Corner Special Planning District (Map 6) encompasses a variety of competing uses and creates a confluence of traffic trying to reach different destinations. At the intersection of Woodruff Avenue and Point Judith Road is Salt Pond Plaza, one of the Town's largest retail and commercial areas. Currently the Town's only supermarket, is here with office, retail and restaurants extending south along Point Judith Road. Nearby is also mini golf, a roller skating rink and driving range, among other recreational activities. This intersection also captures cars and transport trucks heading to and from the Port of Galilee via US Route 1. Point Judith Road is the primary route to the Port as well as the state beaches and parks. Walt's Way abuts this area, and is an industrial and commercial area. All of this activity generates the heaviest traffic in town, the most accidents and , is not pedestrian-friendly. There is very limited pedestrian activity.

Preliminary issues identified in this area are:

- Traffic congestion is from local traffic to commercial areas and the large numbers of visitors heading to Galilee and Block Island, state beaches and parks. It is the nearest intersection to state highway exit and entrance ramps providing vehicular direction east, south, north and west. It is the nearest intersection to travel to our adjoining neighbor South Kingston's business district.
- There are multiple driveways to commercial buildings that are in close proximity to each other.
- Traffic signal timing does not adequately address traffic backups during peak hours.
- Rhode Island Department of Transportation's storage facility increases truck traffic and could benefit from best management practices for stormwater.

Possible opportunities that should be explored:

- A RIPTA hub in Salt Pond Plaza could serve seasonal visitors heading south on Route 108 to destinations such as Galilee/Block Island Ferry or state parks and beaches, and reduce traffic. This requires cooperation with State and private property ownership.
- The area could benefit from access management strategies, including but not limited to shared driveways and service roads.
- Design guidelines could be used to provide improvements to parking areas and landscaping.
- A study of land use and circulation patterns would help in making land use decisions in the area to improve safety and traffic flow.
- The Walt's Way Industrial Area could be upgraded- for better site utility, roadway integration and aesthetics.



Legend

- Special Planning District
-  Dillon Rotary/Caswell's Corner



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**Special Planning District
Dillon Rotary/
Caswell's Corner**

7/10/2015 KDM
Sources: RIGIS, Town of Narragansett

Map 6. Dillon Rotary/Caswell's Corner Special Planning District

E. Future Land Uses

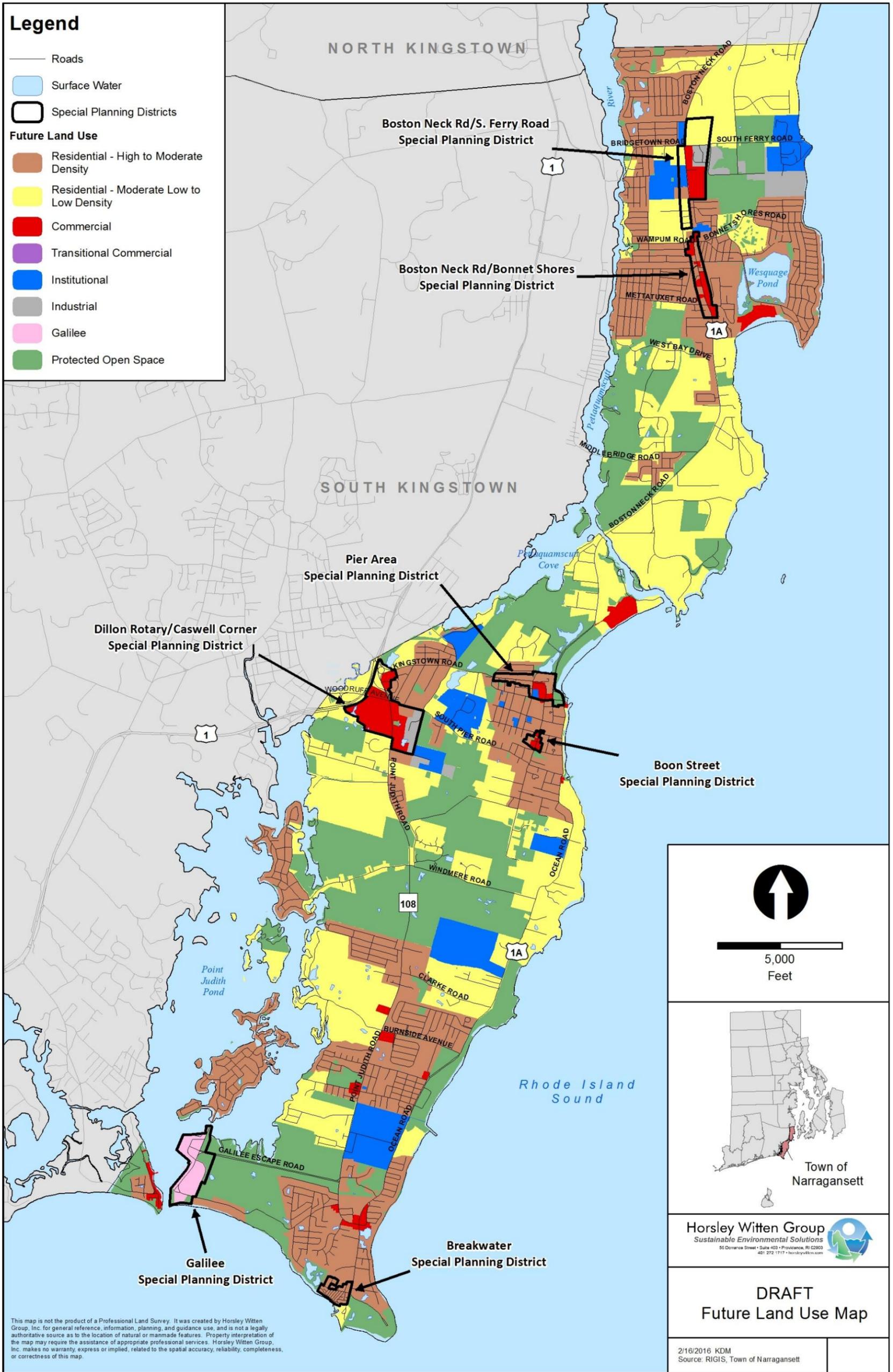
All land use decisions are made in accordance with the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). The FLUM illustrates desired land use patterns over the next 20 years. It shows general land use categories, indicating the type and intensity of the use. The FLUM is accompanied by land use descriptions that provide the intent of the land use categories as they relate to the policies throughout the Comprehensive Plan. The FLUM is not to be interpreted as a zoning map; however, state law requires that a town's zoning map must be consistent with the FLUM. In areas where it is not, a town must set a schedule to revise its zoning map for consistency between the two maps.

One of the challenges historically encountered by the Town in making land use decisions was interpreting the FLUM of the earlier Comprehensive Plan. The 2008 FLUM was similar to that of the 1994 FLUM, in that, in addition to general land uses, it also identified undeveloped areas by their land cover, such as forest, wetland or shrub land. In the 1994 plan, the accompanying land use descriptions noted that these lands "may in fact have the potential for development" and listed criteria by which they would not be developed, including marginal soils for onsite wastewater treatment systems, owner participation in the Farm, Forest and Open Space Program, and location in the Greenbelt system, where it could be acquired by the town or other non-profit entity with the intent of permanent protection. This language was missing from the 2008 plan and the connection between the 2008 FLUM and the descriptions of these areas required reference to the 1994 document.

The FLUM presented here provides a more typical and user-friendly tool. The 18 land use categories represented on previous FLUMs have been consolidated, primarily to remove the categories that describe land use cover. Some of these areas have been acquired and are now under permanent protection.

1. Future Land Use Map

The FLUM (Map 7) illustrates Narragansett's land use strategies and policies. The Town has determined the best locations for general land uses based on existing built and natural environments, residential and business needs, and public input through the planning process. The Special Planning Districts are also noted on the FLUM. More guidance regarding the intent of these districts is provided in the prior discussion.



Map 7. Narragansett Future Land Use Map

a) Residential – High to Moderate Density

Residential areas identified as high to moderate density are primarily the older neighborhoods in Narragansett and contain both single family and multi-family developments. The minimum required lot sizes in the associated zoning districts are 10,000 to 20,000 square feet; however, many neighborhoods contain legal non-conforming lots of less than 10,000 square feet. ~~Densities up to 5,400 square feet per acre are acceptable in these areas where the historic development pattern is reinforced.~~

Not all areas are serviced with sewers. Because these neighborhoods are mostly built-out, it is expected that land use activities will focus on redevelopment of existing properties and infill. The Town will look to maintain the existing character of these neighborhoods. Because of their existing higher density and proximity to natural features like Narrow River, Point Judith Pond, and Rhode Island Sound, polluted runoff is a serious issue and it is important to reduce impervious surfaces and increase natural areas and other green infrastructure applications to filter runoff before reaching water bodies.

For areas that do not have sewer service, the Town must be cautious in expanding uses and projects should be reviewed in the context of the entire area to consider the cumulative impacts of all uses on natural resources.

These residential designations are also more traditionally designed in that they are within walking distance to public transportation, municipal services, parks and recreation opportunities, and commercial areas. They pose opportunities to incorporate units that are more affordable, including deed restricted homes to help meet the Town's 10% low and moderate income (LMI) housing goal (see **Housing and Neighborhoods**). There may be opportunities to subdivide lots that are oversized for the area or add an accessory apartment to create a LMI unit. Several conditions must be met to make this work, including access to water service and sewer service and lot size, as well as meeting environmental thresholds. The Town has the discretion to review proposals on a case-by-case basis.

b) Residential – Moderate-Low to Low Density

Moderate-low to low density residential areas are typically single family homes. The minimum required lot sizes in the associated zoning districts are 40,000 to 80,000 square feet; however, some neighborhoods contain legal non-conforming lots that are considerably smaller. Not all areas have sewer service. Cluster or conservation design development is strongly encouraged in these areas to protect natural systems.

c) Commercial

Areas designated as Commercial are areas that will meet the needs of businesses and provide services to residents and visitors. Examples might be retail, restaurants, or services such as a laundromat or copy center. These uses typically generate high volumes of traffic. Commercial areas also include water-related or water-dependent businesses. Residential uses are not permitted in these areas.

d) Transitional Commercial

Transitional commercial areas are provided for commercial uses that will have minimal impacts on neighboring residents. They provide a transition between typical single family residential neighborhoods and commercial or industrial establishments. They may have lower traffic volumes, generate less noise, and have limited business hours. Examples might include child care facilities,

community centers, banks, or small-scale medical or professional offices. Residential uses may be allowed in larger, mixed-use complexes.

e) Industrial

Industrial areas are designated to meet the needs of manufacturers, research facilities, and more intense commercial businesses that support the Town's local economy. These uses are typically generators of noise and other impacts. Residential use is not permitted in these areas.

f) Institutional

An institutional use is a nonprofit or quasi-public use, such as a religious institution, library, public or private school, hospital or government-owned or government-operated structure or land used for public purpose. These areas in Narragansett typically include recreational areas managed by the Town or the State, the URI Bay Campus, and town facilities. Some institutional uses such as boarding schools may be permitted to have a residential component.

g) Mixed Use

~~Mixed Use, as the name suggests, allows for a range different uses rather than just a single use like residential or commercial. For example, a residence can be located on one property and a restaurant can be on the property next door. Mixed Use can also include different uses within a building or on the same site. An example of this is a three story building with retail on the first floor, office space on the second, and an apartment on the third. A property can also have two buildings with two different, but compatible, uses. By allowing residences closer to businesses and other uses, Mixed Use promotes neighborhood-scale development that encourages walking.~~

~~Areas designated as Mixed Use on the FLUM are places that already have this type of development because they existed before the adoption of the original zoning ordinance, and are now considered existing non-conforming with the current zoning. The intent of identifying these areas as Mixed Use is to reinforce the neighborhood's character. It's important to note that these areas are diverse and what Mixed Use looks like in each will be different. See *Special Planning Districts* for more discussion.~~

h)g) Protected Open Space

Protected recreation and open spaces are important resources that will be protected from development in perpetuity. Ownership of these lands includes federal, state or local government agencies, private individuals or estates, and non-profit organizations such as The Nature Conservancy or the Audubon Society of Rhode Island.

i)h) Galilee

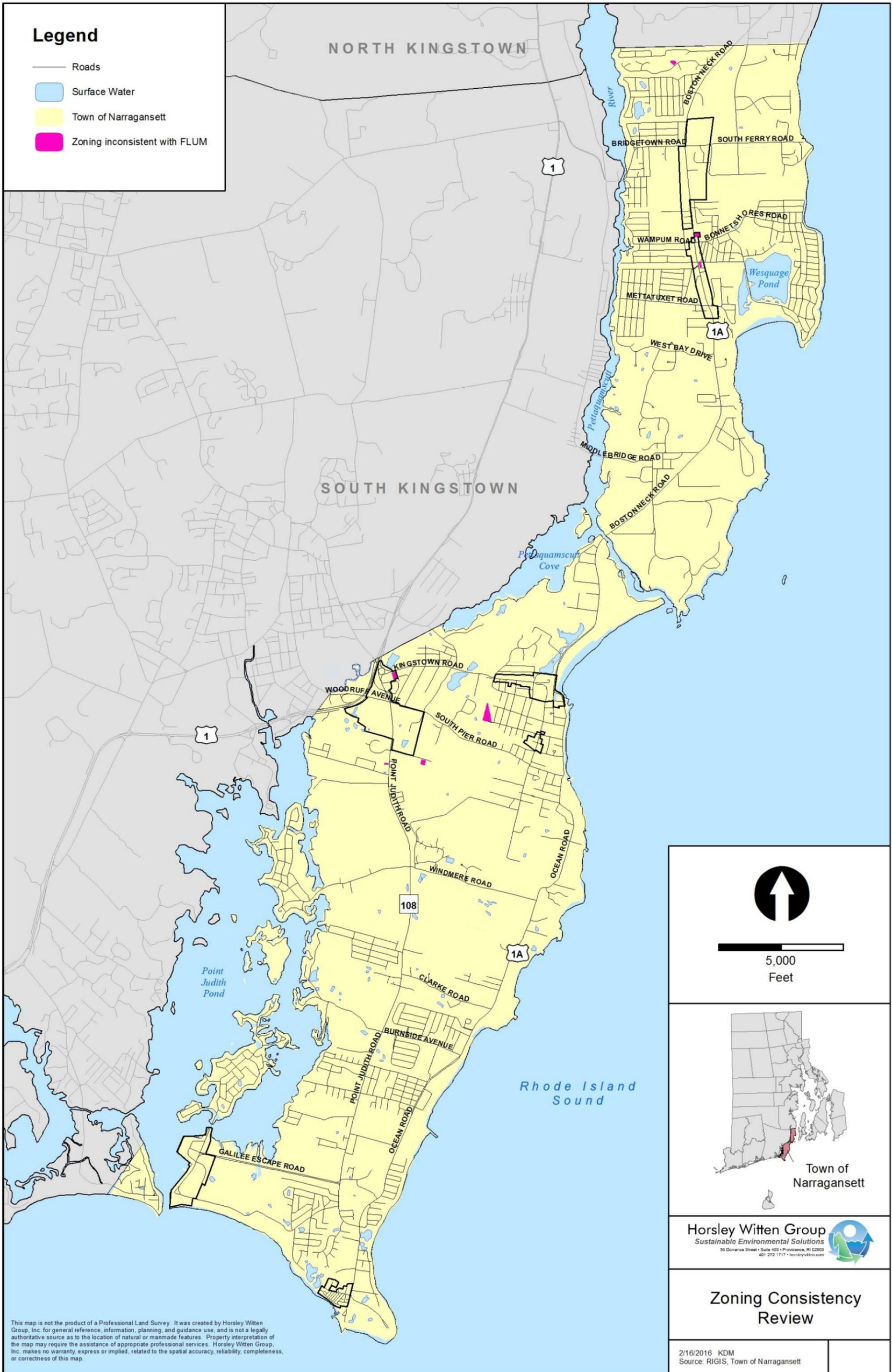
Galilee on the FLUM represents the Port of Galilee Special District. Galilee is the state's primary fishing port and includes tourist destinations such as the Block Island Ferry, restaurants, beach, and recreational boating opportunities. The district is to ensure that the commercial fishing industry is sustained and can grow while still supporting these other activities.

2. Local Regulation Consistency

The Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act, RIGL section 45-22.2-9(d), requires that the local zoning ordinance and map must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and

FLUM. In the development of the FLUM, the Town conducted an analysis of inconsistencies that existing between it and the current zoning map. They are shown in Map 8 and detailed in Table 1.

DRAFT



Map 8. Consistency Review between Future Land Use Map and Zoning Map

Table 1. Parcels requiring zone changes to be consistent with Future Land Use Map

Special Planning District	Plat-Lot	Street Address	Existing Zoning	Proposed Future Land Use	Reason for inconsistency
Boon Street	D-157	123 Boon Street	B-B	Mixed Use	Future Planning Vision
Boon Street	D-158	125 Boon Street	B-B	Mixed Use	Future Planning Vision
Boon Street	D-159	127 Boon Street	B-B	Mixed Use	Future Planning Vision
Boon Street	D-159-A	129 Boon Street	B-B	Mixed Use	Future Planning Vision
Boon Street	D-160	131 Boon Street	B-B	Mixed Use	Future Planning Vision
Boon Street	D-161	135 Boon Street	B-B	Mixed Use	Future Planning Vision
Boon Street	D-162-A	137 Boon Street	B-B	Mixed Use	Future Planning Vision
Boon Street	D-163	141 Boon Street	B-B	Mixed Use	Future Planning Vision
Boon Street	D-164	Boon Street	B-B	Mixed Use	Future Planning Vision
Boon Street	D-164-1	126 Boon Street	B-B	Mixed Use	Future Planning Vision
Boon Street	D-174	130 Boon Street	B-B	Mixed Use	Future Planning Vision
Boon Street	D-175	134 Boon Street	B-B	Mixed Use	Future Planning Vision
Boon Street	D-182	140 Boon Street	B-B	Mixed Use	Future Planning Vision
Boon Street	D-182-A	142 Boon Street	B-B	Mixed Use	Future Planning Vision
Boon Street	D-183	144 Boon Street	B-B	Mixed Use	Future Planning Vision
Boon Street	D-184-A	148 Boon Street	B-B	Mixed Use	Future Planning Vision
Boon Street	D-221	145 Boon Street	B-B & R-10	Mixed Use	Future Planning Vision
Boon Street	D-221-B	Boon Street	B-B	Mixed Use	Future Planning Vision
Boston Neck Road/Bonnet Shores	N-R 146-G	Boston Neck Road	R-10	Commercial	To be consistent with existing land use and area uses
Boston Neck Road/Bonnet Shores	N-H 300-A	961 Boston Neck Road	R-40	Commercial	To be consistent with existing land use and area uses
Boston Neck Road/Bonnet Shores	N-R 1124	965 Boston Neck Road	R-10	Commercial	To be consistent with existing land use and area uses

Special Planning District	Plat-Lot	Street Address	Existing Zoning	Proposed Future Land Use	Reason for inconsistency
Ted Wright Rotary/Caswell's Corner	O 107	350 Kingstown Road	R-10	Commercial	To be consistent with existing land use and area uses
Ted Wright Rotary/Caswell's Corner	O 108	NA (parking lot)	R-10	Commercial	To be consistent with existing land use and area uses
NA	P 292	Westmoreland Street	R-40	Industrial	To be consistent with area uses
NA	P 293	Westmoreland Street	R-40	Industrial	To be consistent with area uses
NA	N-K 3-15	101 Riverdell Drive	R-80	High-Moderate Density Residential	To be consistent with area uses
NA	H 37	155 Rodman Street	P	Moderate Low to Low Density Residential	To be consistent with existing land use

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F. Goals, Policies and Action Items

Goal LU1: Make local land use decisions in an open and transparent environment, based on sound planning principles and with the most accurate and available data.

Policy LU1.1: Ensure that the Comprehensive Plan reflects the Town's vision of its future and use it to guide land use decisions and the development of local regulations and policies.

- a. Make all land use decisions in accordance with the Future Land Use Map (FLUM).
- b. Amend zoning and subdivision regulations to be consistent with the FLUM and intent of the comprehensive plan.
- c. Review and update regulations in light of new legal developments.
- d. Continue to review and update the Comprehensive Plan in accordance with state planning initiatives.

Policy LU1.2: Support local boards and commissions in their ability to make sound land use decisions that are consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

- a. Continue to train boards and commissions.
- b. Improve computer access to regulations and land use data through the Internet and GIS.

Policy LU1.3: Support regional and statewide planning efforts as a way to increase local capacity to achieve the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

- a. Continue to cooperate with other towns in the South County region in protecting the positive image and amenities of the area.
- b. Work with the various state agencies in their planning efforts around the region, as well as those statewide that may have local impacts.
- c. Monitor new state rules and regulations as they related to Narragansett. Examples include CRMC Beach, Salt Ponds and Narrow River Special Area Management Plans (SAMPs).
- d. Coordinate with South Kingstown and North Kingstown on development planning and land use decisions for properties at the town borders.

Goal LU2: Promote sustainable growth that builds on Narragansett's distinct character as a unique seaside community, is within the natural capacity of the land, and provides a healthy quality of life.

Policy LU2.1: Promote the Pier Area as the town center.

- a. Undertake a more detailed study of issues and opportunities in the Pier Area and consider implementing special district plan for the area.
- b. Work with property owners to develop a cooperative relationship and shared vision of the Pier area.
- c. Review and update zoning to promote development of the Pier Area that supports the atmosphere as an historic seaside area.

Policy LU2.2: Promote residential development that strengthens neighborhoods, preserves open space, avoids sprawl and reinforces community character. (See Goals H1 and H2 as well as Policy ROS 1.1)

- a. Where there is a desire, work with residents to establish a future vision for their neighborhood and develop regulatory standards to meet that vision.

- b. Use building floor to area ratio (FAR) as a way to determine its effectiveness in maintaining the building scale in a neighborhood.

Policy LU2.3: Guide development to protect and enhance the Town's natural resources.

- a. Review and update existing Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision and Land Development Regulations to ensure adequate protection of water quality and wildlife habitats.
- b. Investigate strategies to obtain or transfer development rights from pre-existing, undersized lots in order to protect natural resources in designated Greenbelt areas.
- c. Consider sewer extensions to areas with a large number of pre-existing undersized lots to protect water quality.
- d. Continue to restrict development in Areas of Critical Concern identified in CRMC's Salt Pond and Narrow River SAMPs to low density residential use or acquire land as open space. Consider economic incentives for owners not to development in these areas.
- e. Revisit and update the regulatory triggers for requiring environmental impact assessments on large projects.
- f. Incorporate natural resource protection and enhancement in implementing the Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- g. Incorporate low impact development techniques into the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations.
- h. Review the Town's Zoning Ordinance (Section 7.7) Supplemental Drainage Requirements and other ordinances that require stormwater management and, where appropriate, incorporate by reference the Rhode Island Stormwater Design and Installation Standards Manual (2010).

Policy LU2.4: Build on the Greenbelt network that protects dedicated open space and enhances local development. (See Policy ROS2.2)

- a. Use the Greenbelt network plan to:
 - Buffer residential and commercial uses
 - Maintain water quality, wildlife habitat, and biological diversity
 - Preserve community identity and a sense of place
 - Protect scenic views and vistas
 - Provide opportunities for recreational opportunities
 - Protect property from natural hazards
 - Guide development in environmentally sensitive areas
- b. Establish priorities for acquisition of open space that creates the Greenbelt network.
- c. Develop strategies to build the Greenbelt network.
 - Greenbelt conservation cluster regulations
 - Transfer of Development Rights Program
- d. Review and update open space requirements for subdivision and land developments, including the existing Planned Residential District and cluster development regulations.

Policy LU2.5: Ensure that growth can be accommodated by existing or planned infrastructure and community services. (See Goals CSF7, CSF8 and CSF 10)

- a. Continue to extend sewers in accordance with the Wastewater Management Plan to developed residential neighborhoods where they are needed to address or prevent public health issues.

- b. Prohibit sewer line extension into undeveloped areas that are unbuildable without sewers, or carefully weigh the impacts of sewer extensions upon the environment, growth and related items.
- c. Continue to extend sewers to commercial areas where appropriate in order to facilitate the optimal development of commercially-zoned property.
- d. Consider the acquisition of land near or adjacent to existing community facilities if it would facilitate future expansion of those facilities.
- e. Continue to implement the Community Septic System Loan Program in areas where sewers will not be extended.
- f. Revise the zoning ordinance to ensure that stormwater runoff and drainage issues are adequately addressed to implement water quality requirements of the Town's NPDES Phase II permit and the Rhode Island Stormwater Manual, as revised.
- g. Establish policies for very high water users to ensure that usage is within the capacity of existing and future water availability.
- h. Promote water conservation via land policies for all residential users.

Policy LU2.6: Promote energy efficient design and "green" practices, such as guidance from the US Green Building Council for LEED, for commercial and residential development and redevelopment projects.

- a. Update Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision and Land Development Regulations to promote construction cost savings, energy conservation, reduced water consumption, and improved indoor air quality, among other driving principles of LEED.
 - Incorporate "green" building requirements and/or incentives.
 - Incorporate public transportation/carpooling (commercial).
 - Increase biking and walking links.
 - Encourage the use of renewable energy sources.
 - Require recycling programs (commercial).
 - Incorporate standards that reduce impervious surfaces.
 - Reduce parking requirements where warranted by industry standards or expert analysis.
 - Water conservation strategies.
- b. Identify opportunities and ways to encourage "green" building design into new construction.

Policy LU2.7: Guide business development to ensure that it maintains community character in existing commercial and industrial areas.

- a. Review zoning to clarify the function of each business zoning district. Consider adding new zoning categories to better regulate transitional areas between residential and heavy commercial or industrial areas.
- b. Resist establishing new business zones in high traffic areas that will not meet local needs or will detract from community character or way of life.
- c. Review commercial site plan requirements to maintain appropriate design standards that avoid "strip" development.
- d. Consider and implement tools, as appropriate, to manage fiscal impacts of growth (impact fees, growth rate permitting and the promotion of economic development).

Policy LU2.8: Maintain and enhance community character by pursuing development of secondary activity areas outside of the Pier.

- a. Develop design guidelines for new development, redevelopment and infill projects.
- b. Evaluate the implementation of a design review process for development or substantial renovation of major buildings (commercial, industrial, civic and multifamily residential).
- c. Investigate zoning for successful architectural design and variety. Consider incentives that could be offered.
- d. Target highly visible and heavily traveled areas for improvements in design to improve overall appearance and traffic patterns.
- e. Evaluate challenges and opportunities in Special Planning Districts and develop strategies to enhance the quality of life and business success in these areas. They include:
 - Boston Neck Road at South Ferry Road
 - Boston Neck Road at Bonnet Shores Road
 - Boon Street
 - Dillon Rotary/Caswell's Corner
- f. Establish requirements for different levels of review for either new development or redevelopment projects.
- g. [Evaluate zoning strategies that that can help maintain neighborhood character town-wide. Identify areas for a renewed Village Zoning Ordinance that promotes mixed use. \(See Policy H2.2 b.\)](#)

III. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development in Narragansett is a diverse and complex issue. From a regional perspective, Narragansett is a tourist hub that revolves almost exclusively around the amenities provided in the summer season. The increase in activity and visitation that occurs over the summer months provides an enormous injection of commerce and revenue for local businesses, but it also causes significant strain on local infrastructure and services. Much of this is focused in the Pier area. There is also the Port of Galilee, which is the focus of the Town's commercial and fishing industry. As the connecting port for the Block Island Ferry, it also serves as a major transportation hub. Narragansett is also home to the University of Rhode Island Bay Campus, where the university and its federal partners have office space and classrooms to perform international research related to marine science and technology.

A. Formative Issues

Participants at public forums and in discussions with municipal officials, numerous opportunities and challenges faced by the Town relative to economic development were raised.

- Protecting and Expanding the Seasonal Economy – The Town wants to expand economic opportunities for “shoulder” or “off” seasons.
- The Narragansett Brand – The perception of Narragansett from communities across New England and beyond is that it is a place only to visit in the summer.
- The Local Economy and the Tax Base – The commercial/industrial portion of the tax base is small and may be shrinking. The Town needs to retain existing businesses and promote expansion where appropriate.
- The Local Economy and Housing – The seasonal nature of Narragansett's economy and the presence of a significant college population drives a high demand for seasonal housing. Local economic development is therefore inextricably linked to the impacts of seasonal housing on Narragansett's neighborhoods.
- The Local Economy and Climate Change – Scenic resources and coastal recreation play a significant role in the local economy. The effects of climate change must be understood on a sophisticated level in order to anticipate impacts to the local economy.
- Enhancing the Performance of Local Economic Centers – Narragansett's local economy includes many unique places and districts that have equally unique opportunities and constraints.

B. Protecting and Expanding the Seasonal Economy

Perhaps the most prominent economic issue facing Narragansett is the seasonal nature of commerce in the community. While there is certainly a core of year-round business serving the needs of residents and students, anecdotal estimates suggest that, as a rule of thumb, 80% of local commerce occurs during a five-month tourist influx. This estimate clearly demonstrates the local business community's reliance on a seasonal economy not only for high profits during the summer months, but also for the ability to compensate for extended periods of little to no commerce during the off season. Because the local economy relies so heavily on summer season commerce, it is essential that the Town adopt policies that balance the need for revenue with the need to sustain those attractions that draw so many people to the area (see **Natural Resources**).

There are nearly 100 various points of access to the shoreline that contribute to Narragansett's high popularity for visitors who seek opportunities to swim, fish, surf, sail and play. Without doubt, the major contributors to Narragansett's summer season commerce are the Town Beach and the various State-owned and private beaches located throughout the Town. In 2011 the RIDEM reported an average of greater than 8,300 visitors to three State-owned beaches in Narragansett. Add to this figure over 5,000 daily visitors to the Narragansett Town Beach complex and the Town nets in excess of 13,000 visitors on an average summer day. Many of these visitors also stay longer and frequent our commercial shops, restaurants and other local cultural and recreational attractions such as the South County Museum.

In addition to protecting the resources that serve as the primary driver for the tourist economy, discussions with several local stakeholders including the Chamber of Commerce, municipal staff and residents articulate a need to extend this economic activity into what is commonly referred to as the "shoulder seasons", (late spring and early fall). The idea is to draw tourists or consumers into the area before and after the peak summer months for activities that may not focus on the ocean, but on other outdoor or niche business opportunities. Making these shoulder seasons economically productive requires policies that will encourage special events, market alternative attractions within the community, and generally represent the community as more than just a one day or one week summertime destination.

Another issue directly related to the seasonal economy is the opportunity and problem related to summertime traffic. Narragansett has two primary entry and exit roads that are used by tourists, beachgoers and other visitors: Boston Neck Road (Route 1A) and Point Judith Road (Route 108). Thousands of cars travel along these roadways each day going to and from the area beaches and other destinations. Boston Neck Road has a significant amount of commercial frontage in Bonnet Shores. Point Judith Road with direct access off of Route 1 has two commercial areas with the potential for expansion. Both areas serve tourists coming to visit the town in the summer with basic needs on their way to their destination and, likewise, visitors heading home may be looking for a place to eat, shop, buy ice cream, etc. It should be noted that both roadways, Boston Neck Road and Point Judith Road, have their own distinctive character and challenges. Numerous access driveways, particularly at Caswell's Corner on Point Judith Road, further impact the increased summertime traffic.

Similarly, once visitors reach the Town Beach or are enjoying the views from Veterans's Park, the Casino Courtyard, the Seawall or the Historic Towers, businesses located at the Pier or on Boon Street are within walking distance for thousands of potential customers spending the day near the Town Center.

While commercial establishments today clearly benefit from foot, bicycle and automobile traffic during the summer months, discussions with local officials and stakeholders during the Comprehensive Plan development process suggest that these areas may only be capturing a fraction of their full potential. An economic policy focus of the Town will be to examine site development, signage and circulation techniques that make businesses more visible to passing traffic and different modes of travel. It is the economic and planning policy of the Town to scrutinize site development in favor of increasing business visibility, increasing commercial access to sites, while balancing safety concerns, increasing traffic circulation, making businesses more visible and accessible to passing traffic and different modes of travel consistent with then-existing ordinances regulating landscaping and signage.

C. The Narragansett Brand

To the people who live in Narragansett, the town clearly has an identity as “home” and participants in the Comprehensive Plan development process spoke passionately about their perspective on Narragansett as a place rich with natural beauty, seaside character, and high quality of life. However, when considering issues of economic development, it is also important to understand how people outside of Narragansett view the community and the opportunities individuals and families might have during a visit, when considering a new home, or perhaps when considering opening a new business. While thousands of “day-trippers” come to visit Narragansett every sunny day of the summer, most see the visit to the beach as their only focus. The idea of Narragansett as more of a complete destination with shopping, dining, entertainment and other activities is not as prevalent in the tourist mindset and represents an economic opportunity not being captured. From a residential standpoint, Narragansett is seen by out-of-towners as a great place to visit, but perhaps a place that is a little “out of reach” or “out of the way” when considering a place to live year round or locate a business.

From an economic perspective this “brand” of Narragansett as a “place to visit in the summer” is one that needs to be expanded in order to provide more diverse and sustainable economic opportunities. Tools that are used for branding communities range from targeted marketing campaigns to more dispersed efforts like creating an image through special events and other attractions. This serves not only to promote the community, but also creates a more complete perspective for outsiders relative to the assets and opportunities within a given community. Economic policies for Narragansett related to its image will focus on opportunities to broaden visitors’ experience well beyond the beach.

D. The Local Economy and the Tax Base

As shown in *The Baseline Report*, the vast majority of Narragansett’s tax base is supported by residential use. In 2010, just 8% of annual real property tax yield was derived from non-residential use. This represents a decrease in the relative contribution from 12.8% when compared with the data from ten years prior. As Narragansett is almost entirely built out with residential development use, it is safe to assume that the majority of the property tax base will be derived from residential taxes into the foreseeable future. However, this does not imply that the Town should not strive to increase the commercial/industrial property tax yield. Increases in commercial and industrial property tax yield can help to stabilize the tax base and would result from a more comprehensive focus on business development throughout the community.

One of the biggest challenges associated with increasing the commercial tax base is the dramatic drop off of commerce during the “off-season.” Year round retail and service establishments in Narragansett face the reality of challenging “off-season” months where the flood of summer traffic diminishes to a small stream of more locally based customers. Other local businesses include the small but economically important collection of industrial uses such as those at the North Star Industrial Park, South Ferry Industrial Park, and the port of Galilee. While these industries are not affected as much by the seasonal tourist fluctuations, they do face pressures associated with “big picture” issues like fisheries management and globalization of many industrial sectors. Economic policies in Narragansett will need to encourage tools and partnerships that remove unnecessary roadblocks to the success of these year-round enterprises.

E. The Local Economy and Housing

Narragansett's seasonal economy and the presence of a high college student population are strong influences on the local housing market (see **Housing and Neighborhoods**). These forces create a sustained demand across several seasons for rental housing with tourists renting in the summer months and college students renting in the off-season. Beyond these seasonal pressures, high real estate values push the year-round ownership housing stock to be more expensive when compared with comparable stock elsewhere in the state. The market demands created by these forces have significantly shaped the business landscape in Narragansett as many businesses primarily focus on serving seasonal tourist demands. Further, the commuting patterns of residents demonstrate that most seek jobs outside the town, looking for the higher paying jobs that support their lifestyle. Community residents are not constrained by the cost of commuting.

While diversity of housing stock is not the only driving factor behind local business diversity and increased commerce, it is certainly part of the equation. Higher densities of housing strategically located in and around commercial areas provide a direct increase in localized market demand for basic services and goods. These housing strategies also simultaneously help to accomplish many of the basic housing goals for the community which include providing seniors with more opportunities to age in place, and providing more affordable housing for Narragansett's work force and first time home buyers.

F. Enhancing the Performance of Local Economic Centers

As with many other suburban communities, Narragansett has established small pockets of commercial and industrial uses around primary traffic routes and around places that served as traditional centers. In discussions with local officials, residents and business owners, there was a shared sentiment that the expansion of economic centers should not be a primary focus for local economic development. While some limited expansion of commercial districts could be appropriate, stakeholders felt that existing commercial districts are underperforming and could be enhanced. Some of the common themes that emerged in local discussions include:

- Expansion of the Town's commercial base, while limiting geographic growth, should focus on attracting small and mid-sized businesses that complement the Town's natural and historical character. Growing the Town "Brand" beyond restaurant and retail can be achieved through solicitation and assistance to professional office, medical and other office uses .. Growth may be obtained in town from new users from outside the Town moving into the Town. The Town should seek out, solicit and facilitate the location of service, technology and light industrial enterprises in Narragansett that offer highly paid employment opportunities.
- Existing circulation routes, parking configurations, and signage around the Pier area make it challenging for visitors to explore their options for shopping, eating and entertainment in this area.
- Boston Neck Road is one of the primary access/egress routes for residents and tourists. Site design, signage, curb cuts, and building density do not create a situation that encourages users to visit more than one store in a single stop.
- ~~Boon Street can build upon its current popularity as a local "village center" by infilling some of the retail/restaurant sites and adding a small amount of well-designed mixed use housing.~~
- The Salt Pond Shopping Center and other businesses at this Route 108 intersection are an effective auto-oriented shopping center that serves many important retail needs. The plaza can

benefit from design guidelines that create some site improvements and beautification during future redevelopment. Linking public transportation options can also boost the usage of this site (see **Transportation and Circulation**).

- The port at Galilee is a regional transportation hub, economic center, and cultural resource. The Town should continue to regulate the area in a way that balances the diversity of uses and protects the local fishing industry.
- The South County Hospital, located just over the Town line in South Kingstown, has grown into an economic generator in the past two decades, as evidenced by the construction of four nearby large medical office complexes. The Town should encourage the location and growth of this site and other medical facilities.
- The University of Rhode Island has a multi-faceted presence in Narragansett which includes the world-renowned Graduate School of Oceanography campus on Narragansett Bay. This facility in addition to the main campus located in Kingston, five miles away, generate economic activity through the conduct of instruction, research and housing and services to students and faculty.

Many of these ideas are not only important to Narragansett's economic development strategy, but also to the broader land use strategies applied to each area. The **Land Use** chapter of this Comprehensive Plan reinforces these ideas and, in some cases, explores them in more detail.

G. Agriculture and Resource Based Industry

In recognition of recent growth within the state's agricultural sector and, more importantly, recognizing the importance of cultivating local food, recent state legislation requires every city and town in Rhode Island to consider the role of agriculture in their local economy. Narragansett's geologic conditions, its proximity to the ocean, and the development trends over the past several decades collectively have removed most opportunities for conventional land-based farming.

There are active farming activities in Narragansett. Sunset Farm is Town-owned and managed by a farmer/caretaker with the Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust (NLCT). A caretaker manages the property, including livestock and produce grown onsite. NLCT also leases plots to residents with a community garden that is assisted by the resident farmer. The farm stand is open from July to November. Canonchet Farm, while no longer active farmland, incorporates a small barn and livestock for demonstrations and local, small-scale production. Other Town properties may have the potential for community gardens as well, and the Town will explore expansion of local farming activities.

However, Narragansett is still a center for extractive resource based food production such as seafood cultivation and harvesting businesses which operate on scales ranging from small individual shellfish farms to industrial scale fishing vessels. Therefore, when considering food production, policies related to shellfish cultivation and port-based fishing (out of Galilee) can significantly affect the economic viability and sustainability of these operations.

Outside of food production, Narragansett can also be mindful in its policies related to food processing, retail, and waste management. With regard to fishing, some processing takes place in Galilee and is essential to the viability of the fishermen who use the port. On the land-based side, policies should examine the potential for using public lands, parking areas, or other similar spaces as markets to increase access to local foods from the region. Finally, an often overlooked but growing piece of Rhode Island's food economy is waste management which should include compost development. These activities occur at scales as small as individual home compost bins to large scale facilities. Narragansett

will need to consider these potential economic opportunities moving forward and consider how local policies may or may not affect the town's ability to take advantage of new trends and industry.

H. The Local Economy and Climate Change

Narragansett, as a coastal community, has been impacted by the early stages of climate change. Historic records in Rhode Island show that average sea levels have increased nearly a foot since the early 20th century, and future predictions show this trend continuing. More dramatically, the size, frequency, and intensity of coastal storms are continuing to increase. As coastal storms continue to impact Narragansett, issues related to beach replenishment and beach migration could raise serious questions regarding the sustainability of the state and town beaches in their current form. Obviously, if there were to be significant losses or relocation of beach formations in Narragansett, this could impact the seasonal commerce that is so important to the local economy. While the "point of urgency" for these issues may be several decades away, it is important for the Town to begin considering these impacts to prepare future generations to make what may be very challenging and expensive decisions. In doing so, Narragansett has an opportunity to become a regional leader in economic policy that is explicitly geared toward climate change adaptation.

I. Goals, Policies and Action Items

Goal ED1 Support a diverse economy that meets the needs of residents and visitors

Policy ED1.1: Pursue strategies to maintain a strong tourist economy that is beneficial to the Town.

- a. Identify ways to connect visitors to local businesses.
- b. Develop ways to capture incoming and departing customers through site design.
- c. Partner with such groups as local realtors, property managers and the local chamber of commerce to develop strategies that bring awareness of local commerce and services for weekly renters.
- d. Partner with local businesses and associations to develop mechanisms that can increase overnight stays.
- e. Work with local hotels, restaurants and religious institutions to market Narragansett as a wedding destination.

Policy ED1.2: Explore opportunities to expand "shoulder season" commerce opportunities.

- a. Increase programming in open space and recreational areas around the Pier. Ensure that parking is adequately managed for events.
- b. Find ways to incorporate farmers markets and fish markets in locations where locals frequent.
- c. Work with the Historic Commission to develop and enhance historic tours in the shoulder seasons.
- d. Partner with local theater and arts organizations to schedule arts and culture events during the shoulder seasons.

Policy ED1.3: Support year-round businesses that serve our residents.

- a. Connect neighborhoods to commercial areas through improvements like walkways and signage.
- b. Explore tax and/or loan incentives including but not limited to tax increment financing or tax treaties, for year-round businesses for beautification, small business capacity building, expansion, or necessary repairs.

- c. Actively solicit new or expanded professional office, medical, and other high paying businesses in Town. Actively seek out, solicit, and facilitate the location of service, technology, and light industrial enterprises in Narragansett that offer highly paid employment opportunities.
- d. Integrate future library expansion with surrounding local businesses.

Policy ED1.4: Provide a fair, predictable, and timely local regulatory process that encourages investment in Narragansett.

- a. Establish an economic development coordinator as the business community liaison and first point of contact with the town in the regulatory process.
- b. Develop and package guidelines and checklists on local review process for businesses and developers.

Policy ED1.5: Maintain a housing stock suitable for all people. (See **Housing and Neighborhoods**)

Policy ED1.6: Pursue other business sectors that can diversify the local economy.

- a. Develop an approach to reach out to and attract new types of businesses that complement and support the existing business community and changing technology.

Goal ED2: Develop and maintain infrastructure conducive to local economic development

Policy ED2.1: Maintain important databases and indicators for commerce in the community.

- a. Complete an inventory of existing business and industry and develop a strategy to ensure that the inventory is maintained.
- b. Assess trends of commercial and industrial tax base over time in Narragansett.
- c. Track revenues seasonally to understand dynamics in the local economy.
- d. Estimate the impacts of different transient populations (e.g., week-long renters, students).

Policy ED2.2: Develop circulation systems that optimize access to local commerce.

- a. Evaluate existing signage and lighting around commercial areas and tourist attractions. Identify ways in which signage and lighting can improve visibility of local businesses.
- b. Study the feasibility of reconfiguring Ocean Road to include bike and pedestrian access.
- c. Increase bicycle signage, lanes and shared-lane markings for bikes in the Town’s commercial areas.
- d. Consider access management strategies that minimize curb cuts and maximize gateways.
- e. Evaluate ways to improve the pedestrian experience in the Pier Area to encourage pedestrian access to the business centers.

Policy ED2.3: Manage parking throughout the community to maximize access and aesthetic appeal.

- a. Develop detailed parking lot design standards.
- b. Consider maximum parking standards to complement existing parking requirements.
- c. Explore the use of a parking improvement district or dedicated circulation fund.
- d. Develop wayfinding signage system for parking areas.
- e. Consider the use of beach parking areas after hours to support local business activity and special events.

Policy ED2.4: Maintain lines of communication and important relationships with the business community.

- a. Establish a local network with the Chamber of Commerce, local industrial complexes, significant landholders in town, fishing community, and state agencies such as Commerce RI, CRMC and DEM.

Policy ED2.5: Ensure tax policies are attractive to potential new businesses.

- a. Review the Town's current tax policy.

Goal ED3: Capitalize on the economic opportunities specific to different areas of town.

Policy ED3.1: Develop tools that are tailored to commercial areas outside of the Pier.

- a. Develop economic and physical master plans for Boon Street, and other commercial special districts noted on the Future Land Use Plan.
- b. Examine opportunities for better internal circulation and access management for sites on Boston Neck Road.
- c. Continue to support Galilee as an important commercial fishing port for the region.

Policy ED3.2: Develop tools that are specifically tailored to the Pier area.

- a. Examine the open space restrictions for Casino Park to see if there may be opportunity to reprogram that area.
- b. Develop a physical master plan for the Pier area that explores:
 - Re-orientation or re-routing of traffic on Ocean Road.
 - Integration of different housing types.
 - Re-orientation of the Pier Village.
 - Identification of areas for mobile, temporary or interim uses.

Policy ED3.3: Explore more sophisticated "place-based" regulatory approaches for different districts.

- a. Continue to revisit zoning related to allowable uses, parking, dimensional standards and other requirements in specific districts to ensure there are no roadblocks to quality redevelopment.
- b. Explore the possibility of introducing form-based zoning elements on various streets in the Pier area
- c. Explore the potential application of design standards to commercial areas on Boston Neck Road, Boon Street, and at Woodruff Ave/Point Judith Road.
- d. Consider allowing housing types such as top of the shop and cottage style units into areas around the Pier, Boon Street and off the edges of Boston Neck Road commercial properties.
- e. Ensure existing zoning in Galilee supports commercial fishing industry uses and infrastructure capacity is maintained.

IV. COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Needs and demands for community services and facilities in Narragansett are driven by changes in population demographics, land development patterns (See **Land Use**) and natural hazards (See **Natural Hazards**). The Town's ability to meet these demands relies on available resources and capacity. While it is anticipated that the Town's residents will be growing older with a desire to "age in place," there are focused efforts by the Town to increase its vibrancy and diversity by providing opportunities to young adults and families through its housing policies (See **Housing and Neighborhoods**). The Town will have to meet the spectrum of needs demanded by these different age groups, whether through library programming, emergency response services, or the capacity of the local schools.

The Town's residential areas are close to being built out, and future housing development will likely be in the form of infill or replacement in existing neighborhoods (See **Land Use**). This implies that maintenance and upgrade of existing infrastructure (as opposed to expansion) will be a primary focus for the Town. New innovations and approaches to make these systems more efficient and sustainable will be in the Town's best interest.

Evaluating the current capacity of department staffing, municipal budgets, and funding of the Town's capital improvement program will lead to strategic decisions that support a high quality of life for all residents now and in the future.

A. Formative Issues

- **Municipal Administration:** Residents and business owners want a transparent, responsive government.
- **Schools:** After several years of decline, student population is stabilizing.
- **Public Safety:** The Town needs to optimize the Caswell Street Safety Complex to meet the needs of the Police and Fire Departments.
- **Maury Loontjens Memorial Library:** The role of the library in the community is expanding and it needs to grow to meet these demands.
- **Public Works:** Ongoing maintenance and provision of community services and facilities is a concern. The Department of Public Works, which is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the Town's transportation, storm water, and certain major building infrastructure, is working at full capacity.
- **Drinking Water:** The Town generally receives all of its potable water from outside the municipality and from aquifers that are stressed.
- **Wastewater Management:** Improvements and expansion of the sewer system will help to improve water quality, but also increase development pressure in environmentally sensitive areas.
- **Solid Waste Management and Recycling:** The Town needs to maximize its new residential recycling program to meet state-mandated recycling and diversion rate goals.
- **Stormwater Management:** The Town implements its Phase II Stormwater Permit, and can incorporate the State's new stormwater management manual into its local regulations to maximize the benefits of both "green" and "gray" infrastructure.

- Municipal Energy Consumption: The 2010 ESCO energy audit outlined energy efficient initiatives for municipal buildings and operations.

B. Municipal Administration

One of the primary goals of the Town is to provide its citizens with a high level of municipal services. Providing quality service requires the Town to invest in its technology and its workers. Technology is constantly adapting to make daily operations more efficient and user-friendly. The Town will continue to review new software and hardware that could potentially improve municipal operations, and offer employees appropriate training in delivery of these services.

Offering high level, quality service also requires monitoring of local processes and procedures to ensure that services are provided in the most efficient, timely and effective way possible. As new technology becomes available, and as workers obtain new skills, the Town should review the way it performs and look for opportunities to improve how services are delivered to the public.

Improving municipal services can also be accomplished by coordinating with neighboring communities. There may be opportunities for the Town to partner with North Kingstown or South Kingstown in delivering services. As discussed later in this chapter, the Town already has formal agreements for drinking water, solid waste management, and wastewater treatment, as well as informal arrangements for public safety support as needed. The Town has a formal agreement for police patrol with South Kingstown for the Jerusalem area of Narragansett. Narragansett will continue to explore other opportunities where sharing resources may be financially and logistically beneficial for the region.

The Town also aspires to have an open and transparent government, providing information to the public about government processes and procedures, decision making, and events and activities. The Town's website has become a critical tool in delivering information to local residents and businesses and it is updated regularly. The Town will ensure that the following information should be readily available to the public:

- Meeting announcements for municipal boards and commissions, including agendas and meeting minutes;
- Contact information of elected and administrative officials;
- Municipal finance and budget information;
- Public notifications;
- Municipally-sponsored events; and
- Other Town activities, including department programs and activities.

C. Schools

When schools and education are discussed in the Comprehensive Plan, the focus is on its physical infrastructure alone. Programming is addressed in the School Department System Plan. The Narragansett School Department has a Strategic Plan that outlines improvements needed to meet educational needs of students, teachers and the administration. By linking the school and education facility needs with the Comprehensive Plan, the Town can assess how it could meet those needs. For example, if there were a demand to build a new school, the Comprehensive Plan can assess demographics and land availability to determine the location of new facilities.

The School Department has made investments in all three school buildings and their associated fields and playgrounds, and makes a strong commitment to the continued maintenance and upkeep of its facilities and grounds through its Asset Protection Plan. Based on current capacity and projected student growth, the Town sees no need to close any of its existing schools or build new facilities. The Town sees future capital improvements related to updating and modernizing existing buildings. Examples include energy efficiency improvements, improving access to schools through walking and biking, and increasing access to technology that meet the advancement of educational services.

D. Public Safety

The primary goal of the Town's Police and Fire Departments is to provide the community with the highest level of police, fire and emergency response services. Future needs of the departments are primarily focused on equipment, apparatus and training. Both departments annually review their equipment and apparatus requirements. Department expenditures are proposed to the Town Council as part of the Town's Capital Improvement Program (CIP), where they are reviewed for funding against other municipal departments' projects. Staff training is provided through department budgets, which are also limited. Outside funding sources may need to be identified to ensure that the departments are able to respond to community needs.

The two departments are headquartered in the Public Safety Complex on Caswell Street and the building in its current state is at capacity and in need of certain code upgrades. The Town has completed a reuse study to determine how to optimize use of the facility and will take further action on its recommendations as appropriate. There may also be opportunities to renovate and/or expand the South End Fire Station. [There is a A bond referendum went](#) before the voters for November 2014 for \$2 million for critical code compliance issues and facility upgrades. [The renovations are 50% complete.](#)

Coordinating with North Kingstown and South Kingstown fire departments will help the three communities accommodate large, local events and situations that require additional capacity. Procedures can be established through inter-municipal Memoranda of Agreement. This type of agreement can also lead to other efforts in sharing common resources. One example for consideration is a regional dispatch for the three towns.

The Police Department responds to a fair amount of residential nuisance complaints in neighborhoods where student renters dominate. To ensure that the responses and resolutions are fair and equitable for all parties, the department should regularly review the municipal policies and ordinances and propose new solutions as needed. Open communication with landlords, tenants, and the University of Rhode Island will be the key to success in addressing neighborhood issues.

The Narragansett Emergency Management Agency is responsible for the Town's Emergency Operations plan and coordinates the volunteer Community Emergency Response Team. The Town's ability to respond to emergency situations is outlined in its Emergency Operations Plan, which should have periodic updates as needed. The Town will continue to coordinate with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA), as well as its neighboring municipal counterparts in meeting and responding to statewide and regional emergency situations.

E. Maury Loontjens Memorial Library

The Maury Loontjens Memorial Library is a thriving community facility that has an increasingly higher usage each year, but struggles to continue to provide adequate services to its users. In its current location, the role of the library continues to evolve with the increasing demands and changing needs of the community. It has become a focal point for access to information and it provides a variety of services for town residents as well as residents of RI through its participation with the statewide consortium (Ocean State Library). It provides meeting space for a variety of users including individuals and organizations. The library works to ensure that programming is diverse and accessible to all residents. There is an increased demand for existing programs as well as additional young adult and senior programming due to, the aging of the Baby Boomer generation. Space in the building is limited, and its staff believes it to be inadequate for the needs of the community. The library staff is developing a building program based on its March 2012 assessment, which includes strategies for expansion and for all aspects of the expansion funding sources. The library seeks to increase its reach and promote all it has to offer to the community. This goal, however, is frustrated by the shortcomings listed above. The library can also link with historic, cultural and recreational programs and special projects and events sponsored by the Town (See **Historic, Cultural and Scenic Resources** and **Recreation and Open Space**). The Library needs more parking.

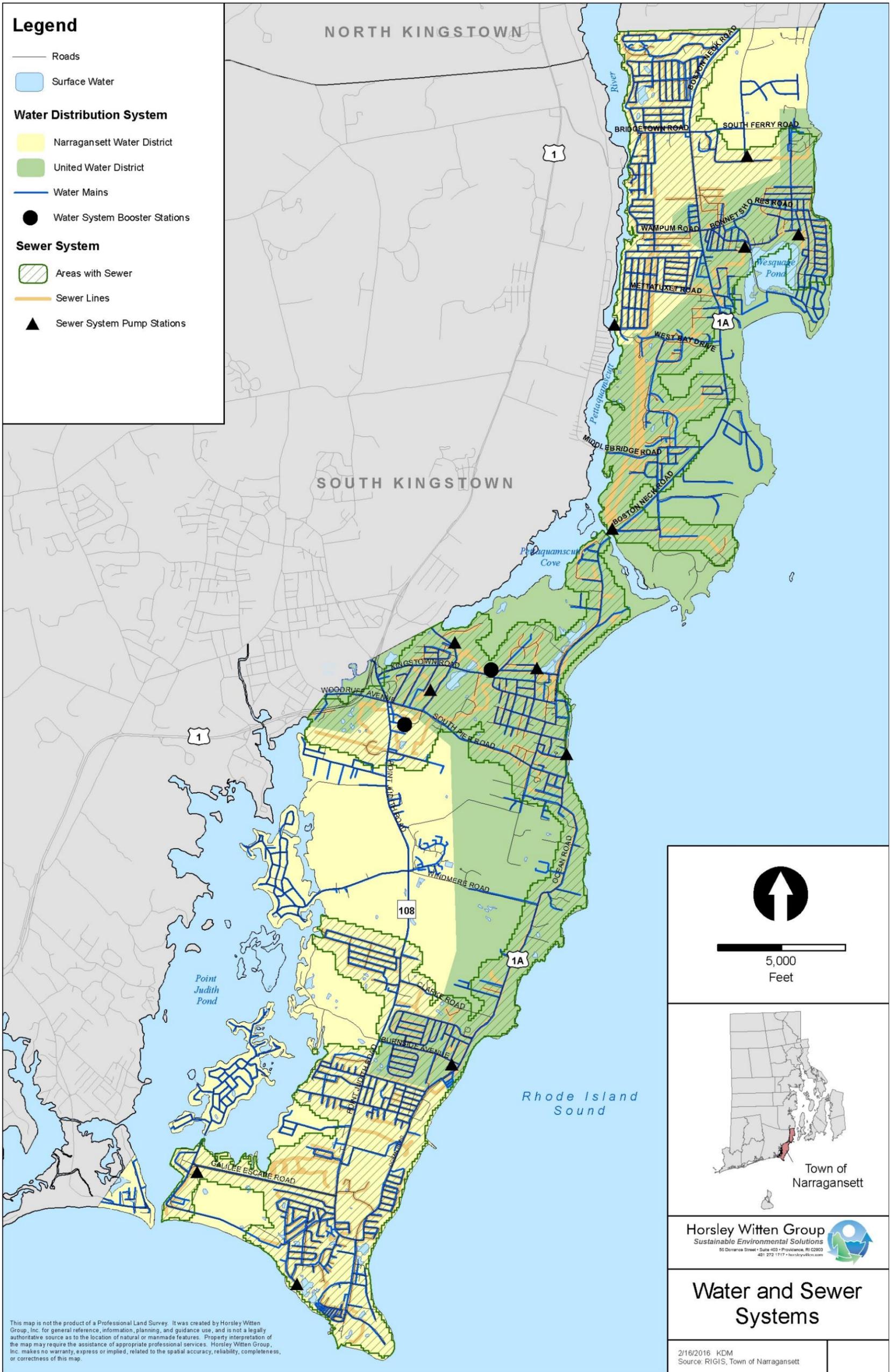
F. Public Works

The Public Works Department maintains municipal roadways, bridges, sidewalks, and buildings, among other public infrastructure and facilities. In order to provide a high level of service, the capacity of the department must be adequate in its facilities, staffing, and equipment. The current facility is not meeting the storage needs of the department and the Town will investigate ways to expand the building and storage potential. The department is also experiencing staffing constraints in meeting the demands for service and performing routine maintenance. The Town will continue to evaluate staffing capacity and determine the ability to fill vacant positions. To meet staffing needs, and on some occasions the need for equipment, there may be an opportunity to enter into a mutual aid agreement with North Kingstown and/or South Kingstown to share resources.

The Department has developed long-term improvement programs and resources to ensure the longevity of the Town's investments into its current infrastructure as well as new construction. Some examples include a Pavement Management Plan and local road construction handbook. This program is supported by the 2012 passage of a \$17 million bond referendum that calls for a multi-year implementation plan for road improvement projects. The Town lacks a tree maintenance schedule and has not replaced trees in the public right-of-way that have been lost to disease or damage. This is a priority for the Town that can be addressed through a variety of tools.

G. Drinking Water

The Narragansett 2007 Water Supply System Management Plan (WSSMP) provides the framework for the Town to promote the effective and efficient conservation, development, utilization and protection of the natural water resources that are used by the Town as drinking water. The Engineering Department/Water Division owns and operates existing water infrastructure (as shown in Map 9), but the Town does not have a potable water source. It relies on the Town of North Kingstown and United



Map 9. Water Distribution System and Sewer System of Narragansett

Water Company² for drinking water. Because of the dependency on outside sources, the Town must stay active in with these two entities to ensure that there is adequate supply and their groundwater resources are protected. Narragansett must continue to review the terms of its water agreements with North Kingstown and United Water Company.

The Water Division maintains the functionality of the municipal water system. Upcoming, short term projects include painting water tanks, and the Division continues to prioritize infrastructure improvements implementation through in the CIP. The Division annually evaluates its pricing structure for service to its customers to ensure that it supports the operations and capital costs.

The Town receives drinking water via its suppliers from sources that require careful resource management. Water purchased from United Water Company is sourced from the Chipuxet watershed basin. According to the Rhode Island Water Resources Board (WRB), peak water demands in the watershed exceed state resource protection goals.³ Water purchased from the Town of North Kingstown is sourced from the Hunt/Annaquatucket/Pettaquamscutt Aquifers (HAP). The HAP provides high quality water not only to North Kingstown and Narragansett, but also parts of Warwick and East Greenwich. The USGS reports that the high volumes of groundwater withdrawals during peak water demands can reduce streamflow in the HAP watershed basin, which impacts aquatic and riparian habitats.⁴

Because of the need for strategic resource management, the Town strongly supports conservation and wise use of drinking water supplies and through the Water Division, the Town implements water conservation techniques. It also supports the drought management activities of WRB and follows procedures as they are passed down through its suppliers: the Town of North Kingstown and United Water Company. The specific actions the town follows when a drought event is identified are detailed in the WSSMP. The Town also promotes water conservation to its customers and will continue its education program to residents and businesses about water-saving devices and proper lawn maintenance, among other techniques.

It is critical that the Town ensures that future development and redevelopment projects can be accommodated by existing and projected water supplies (See **Land Use**). The entire Town has access to water service, so the question will be if new projects can be supported by existing water supplies. Due to the amount of commercial and industrially zoned land, environmental constraints, and the conditions that must be met to expand sewer service (see Wastewater Management), it is reasonable to anticipate that limited industrial and commercial development will occur in the next five to ten years. According to the WSSMP, the demand by existing major water users, which include seafood processors, restaurants, laundries, car washes, and recreation, has remained consistent and it is expected to continue without great deviation. The Water Division will coordinate with North Kingstown and United Water Company to evaluate the potential water usage of proposed development and ensure that it meets projections.

The WRB is also conducting water availability and allocation studies within the watersheds that service the Washington County area. The Town will have an active role in this process.

² United Water Company also provides drinking water to the Town of South Kingstown.

³ http://www.wrb.state.ri.us/documents/Chipuxet_specific%20watershed.pdf

⁴ <http://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/fs063-01/pdf/fs06301.pdf>

H. Wastewater Management

The Engineering Department/Wastewater Division manages the wastewater/sewer infrastructure for the Town (also shown in Map 9). It implements the Town's 2007 Facilities Plan for Wastewater Management, which evaluated the present and future wastewater conveyance and treatment needs of the Town. The 2007 Facilities Plan includes estimated flows and costs related to providing sewer systems for specific neighborhoods, but it does not include a proposed implementation schedule. Rather, that part of the decision making process has historically been left to the sitting Town Council(s).

Future sewer projects will be evaluated in coordination with Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) and issues that would be examined would include density limitations and zoning revisions. Overall, the Town will be cautious in extending sewer service into sensitive environmental areas, and will rely on the existing zoning overlay districts to ensure that development meets performance standards and capacity of the land.

The 2007 Facilities Plan identifies areas where sewers are proposed to be extended. The entire North End is proposed as a future sewer service area, with the exception of Plat N-B West Passage. Similarly, the future service area encompasses the entire South End with the exception of Plat I-J Jerusalem. In addition, CRMC prohibits the installation of municipal or private sewers in areas of Critical Concern or Self-sustaining, as identified in CRMC's Narrow River Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) and Salt Pond Region SAMP⁵, unless specific conditions are met. In the Narrow River area, CRMC must also review and approve the extension of sewer lines and other wastewater infrastructure. These future sewer service areas are illustrated in Figure 1.

Wastewater treatment is performed at the regional Westmoreland Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) and the Scarborough Wastewater Treatment Facility. The Regional WWTF is operated by the Town of South Kingstown, and owed by South Kingstown, URI, and Narragansett. Each regional partner has a purchased percentage of capacity. As Narragansett has historically been the only partner in need of additional capacity, we have been leasing excess flow capacity from URI since the 1990s. This was determined to be more cost-effective than physically constructed new flow space that only one of the regional partners needed. However, recent improvements in reducing Inflow/Infiltration (I/I) within our system have allowed us to reduce the leased flow volume from URI by 50%. Efforts along this line will continue each year. Identifying inflow (unauthorized connections) and infiltration (unwanted groundwater or surface water) can be paid for with earmarked funds from new sewer connection fees.

The Engineering Department is also interested in being more innovative in managing wastewater. As technology improves and becomes more cost effective, there may be opportunities to apply new treatment techniques to the Scarborough facility that can improve the surrounding natural environment over existing conditions. Evaluating the feasibility of reusing gray water might be one opportunity.

⁵ <http://www.crmc.ri.gov/samps.html>

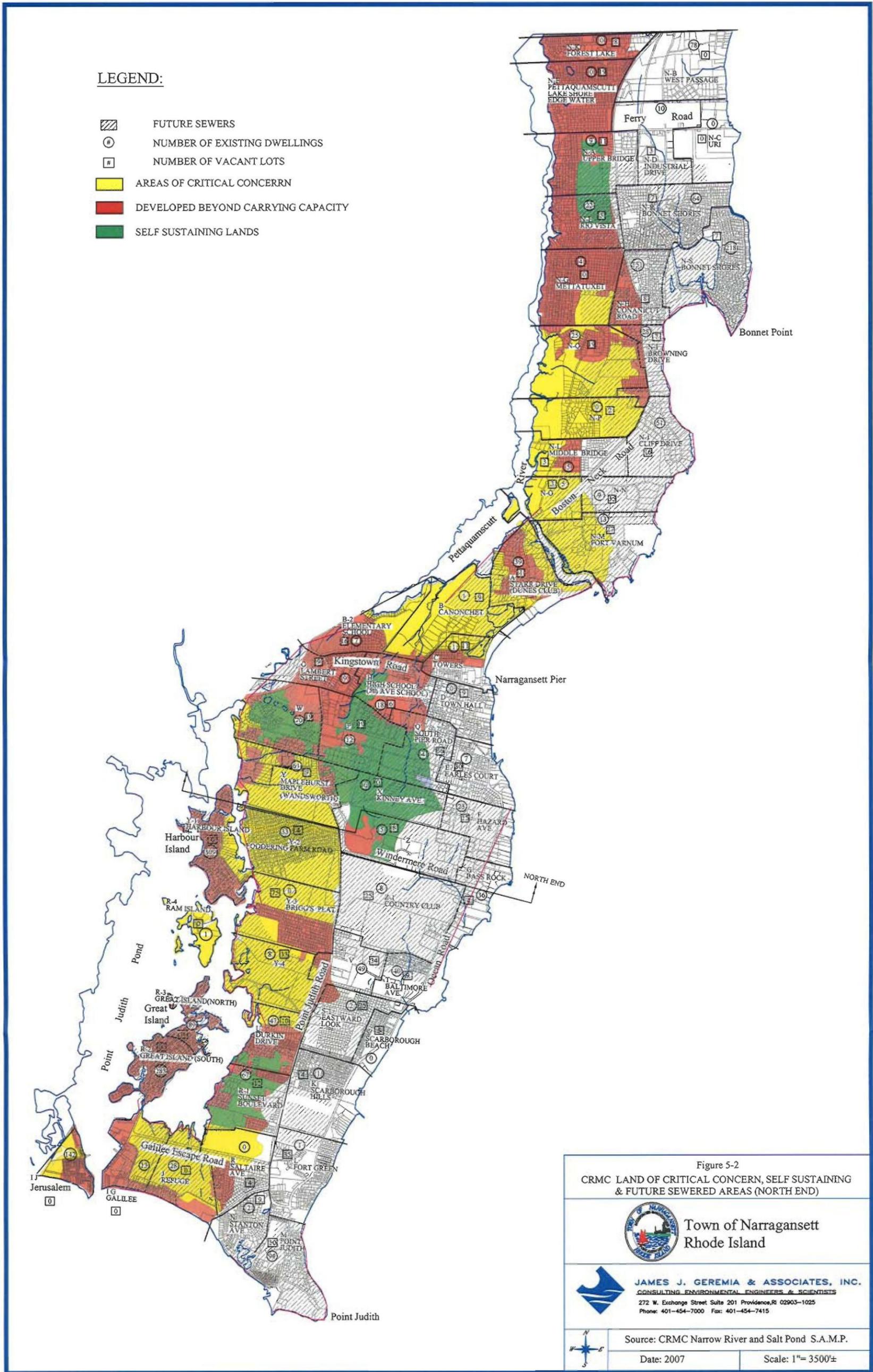


Figure 1. CRMC Land of Critical Concern, Self Sustaining Lands & Future Sewer Service Areas (Narragansett Wastewater Management Plan, 2007)

There are many residential areas that still rely on on-site wastewater treatment systems (OWTSs). The Town adopted the Narragansett Wastewater Management District to ensure that these systems are properly maintained and regularly inspected. The ordinance mandates septic tank pumping every four years. Currently the Town does not have the staff or funding to ensure that systems are maintained or inspected. With support from the Conservation Commission, residents can be educated about OWTS maintenance. The district can also be a vehicle for the Town to continue its loan program, funded through RIDEM's State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF), which assists residents in upgrading their OWTSs.

I. Solid Waste Management and Recycling

It is the Town's goal to reduce solid waste and maximize recycling opportunities for residents. The Town currently does not meet the State-mandated recycling rate of 35% and total diversion rate of 50%, and it is considering several strategies to meet these goals. The Town does not have its own transfer station, but uses the Rose Hill Transfer Station in South Kingstown. It is working with the Town of South Kingstown to develop improved strategies to more accurately allocate recyclables and diverted materials between the two towns resulting in more accurate calculation of Narragansett's mandated recycling and diversion rates..

The Public Works Department implements the Town's new residential recycling program. More public outreach needs to be done about the program to encourage more participation. The Town continues to evaluate the effectiveness of the recycling program to identify opportunities to for improvement that will result in achievement of the mandated recycling and diversion rates.

The Town's mandated recycling rate reflects the percentage calculated by dividing the total tons of bin recyclables plus yard debris, clothing and scrap metals divided by the total of these tons plus the tons of trash delivers to the Central Landfill. The mandated diversion rate expands to include all other materials, such as tires, mattresses, clean wood, motor oils and filters, etc., that were diverted from the landfill for reuse or recycling. There are opportunities outside of Town-sponsored venues for residents to reuse these and other items, such as charity donations and organized collection days sponsored by the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation at the state landfill in Johnston. The Town can support these diversion activities and increase their mandated diversion rate by developing municipally-sponsored and managed events and activities. One opportunity can be the development of a local composting facility for yard waste. This would require investigating a location and an operations and maintenance program. The Town also sponsors annual EcoDepot event to collect household hazardous materials and e-waste, and should consider expanding the event to add the collection of additional materials, such as shredded paper or collections of clothing and shoes by a charitable organization.

J. Stormwater Management

Stormwater management in Narragansett is primarily done through a closed pipe conveyance system. In accordance with federal and state law, the Town received a permit to discharge stormwater through this system in 2003 from RIDEM. The permit directs the Town to meet the requirements of US Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) implementation of Phase II of its National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) regulations. The Town prepared a Stormwater Management Program Plan (SWMPP), as required, and will implement six water quality control measures discussed in the SWMPP:

- Public Education and Outreach;
- Public Participation and Involvement;

- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination;
- Construction Site Runoff Control;
- Post-Construction Runoff Control; and
- Good Housekeeping and pollution prevention.

Implementing the SWMPP will reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff and improve the water quality of surface and groundwater. Because many of the roads in Narragansett are maintained by the State, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation will be an important partner in meeting water quality goals.

The Town can also address pollutants in stormwater through the use of low impact design (LID) techniques, or more “green” infrastructure, that support its existing pipe conveyance system, considered “gray” infrastructure. LID techniques focus more on using natural systems, such as rain gardens and bioswales, to filter pollutants out of stormwater before reaching a waterbody. It is important to recognize the diverse types of green infrastructure approaches and the multiple benefits they provide beyond improving water quality. They increase habitat, mitigate floodwaters, provide open space, and enhance aesthetics.⁶ In 2010, RIDEM published the *Rhode Island Stormwater Design and Installation Standards Manual*. It promotes the use of LID techniques rather than hard infrastructure like pipes and outfalls. The Town will update its current regulations and requirements for new development to reference the Manual and promote LID for both private development and municipal projects, as appropriate.

K. Municipal Energy Consumption

Reducing the energy consumption by municipal buildings and daily operations, and encouraging the use of renewable energy sources will help the Town meet future fiscal challenges, create jobs and protect the environment. Improvements can reduce maintenance and operating costs as well as capital costs. The Town can lead by example and support private investments of residents and businesses who are taking steps to be more energy efficient.

The 2010 ESCO energy audit prepared by Johnson Controls Inc. outlined initiatives the Town can take to be more energy efficient. Since 2013, the Town has implemented major lighting improvements at Town Hall, the Public Safety Building, the Scarborough WWTF, [Community Center](#), and DPW, as well as the complete boiler and controls system replacement and upgrade [here](#) at Town Hall [and a number of other town facilities](#). Pending projects ~~for 2014~~ include ~~lighting upgrades at the Community Center, and conversions from oil to gas for heat at a number of facilities~~ [a solar energy power generation project with South Kingstown and URI the two former Superfund sites \(Rose Hill Regional Landfill and the Plains Road Landfill\)](#). [The Engineering Department is also working to purchase streetlights from National Grid and convert them to LED.](#)

Increasing the use of renewable energy sources for municipal buildings and operations will require the Town to evaluate the feasibility of which would be most appropriate and how. The evaluation would consider type, location, construction costs, and operations and maintenance.

Installation and use of renewable energy such as wind and solar by private property owners in Narragansett needs to be in conformance with local zoning ordinances. The Town will evaluate its existing regulations to identify potential barriers and develop alternatives that allow residents and

⁶ USEPA, <http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/greeninfrastructure/index.cfm> (February 2014)

businesses to take advantage of these opportunities in ways that are appropriate for the surrounding neighborhoods (See **Land Use**).

L. Goals, Policies and Action Items

Goal CSF 1: Assure that current and future growth is served with facilities and municipal services that are coordinated, adequately funded, and well-maintained.

Goal CSF 2: Provide the Narragansett community with a high level of municipal administration.

Policy CSF 2.1: Provide the community with an efficient government that responds to changing needs.

- a. Upgrade software systems to improve municipal services and processes.
- b. Coordinate departments and establish intra-department communications.
- c. Identify opportunities to share resources with neighboring communities.
- d. Offer continuing education, training and refresher courses for municipal staff.

Policy CSF 2.2: Provide the community with a transparent and open government.

- a. Administer public notifications according to local and state requirements.
- b. Regularly update the Town's website with current information on municipal operations and activities:
 - Public meetings of governing boards and commissions, contact information of elected and administrative officials, financial and budgetary information, public notifications, municipally-sponsored events, and other Town activities, including department programs and activities.

Goal CSF 3: Ensure that school facilities and grounds are safe and productive environments for students and teachers.

Policy CSF 3.1: Retain the capacity and number of school facilities.

- a. Consider alternative, temporary educational and non-educational uses of school facilities that may not be currently occupied by classrooms. Evaluate short, mid and long-term actions.
- b. As demographic statistics become available, review and update short, mid and long-term classroom and facility needs.
 - Ensure that school core areas meet needs (e.g., cafeteria, kitchen, auditorium).

Policy CSF 3.2: Maintain and upgrade school buildings and grounds to ensure their long-term usability.

- a. Use the School Department's Asset Protection Plan to identify building and facility maintenance to sustain their long-term functionality.
- b. Continue to improve school buildings with energy-efficient systems, such as lighting, heating and cooling, window/exterior door replacement, etc. Use recent energy audit findings to prioritize projects, establishing short, mid, and long-term actions for the CIP.
- c. ~~Develop strategies to address school bus storage and maintenance. Pursue options to move the school bus fleet at Avice Street and identify viable reuse options.~~
- d. Evaluate strategies to improve pedestrian and vehicle flow at Narragansett Elementary School.

- e. Use the high school greenhouses to promote agricultural education for students and the community at large.
- f. Prioritize field improvements based on facilities assessment report. Incorporate into CIP.
- g. Equip school department buildings, to the greatest extent practicable, to meet current and future technology in educational services. Develop short, mid, and long-term strategies to meeting anticipated advances in teaching methods.
- h. Continue to apply for Safe Routes to School funds to improve access to schools for walking and biking.

Goal CSF 4: Provide the Narragansett community with the highest level of police, fire, and emergency response services.

Policy CSF 4.1: Ensure that the Police Department has the resources to provide prompt, efficient, and courteous services to the Narragansett community.

- a. Continue to evaluate municipal policies and ordinances that address residential nuisance complaints to ensure fair and equitable responses and resolutions.
- b. Seek continuing solutions to address the integration of the community with higher education student housing and ensure law enforcement services and protections are available and fairly implemented for all residents, youth, adult, student and seniors alike.
- c. Seek funding to address facility, program, and training demands that will increase the Police Department's ability to respond to community needs.

Policy CSF 4.2: Ensure that the Fire Department and Emergency Response Team have the resources to meet emergency and non-emergency calls.

- a. Continue to monitor firefighter facility and equipment needs.
- b. Develop a plan to address renovations and expansion at the South End Station.
- c. Continue to evaluate alternative sites for a new Fire Department Headquarters.
- d. Continue to update and implement the Apparatus Replacement Plan through the Town's CIP.
- e. Evaluate the potential of a regional dispatch for the long-term with North Kingstown and South Kingstown.
- f. Establish procedures with North Kingstown and South Kingstown to accommodate events that require additional emergency response resources.

Policy CSF 4.3: Ensure that the Narragansett Emergency Management Agency is able to meet the responsibilities of planning, response, recovery, and mitigation of natural and man-made disasters.

- a. Establish a schedule for periodic updates of the Town's Emergency Operations Plan, as necessary.
- b. Coordinate with FEMA, RIEMA, and other emergency response agencies.
- c.
- d. Integrate the Department of Public Works into the Emergency Response Plan and preparedness training.

Goal CSF 5: Provide the Narragansett community with library services that accommodate residents of all ages and abilities and meet state standards.

Policy CSF 5.1: Offer diverse programming that meets the needs of all residents.

- a. Link library with municipal historic, cultural, and recreational projects and programs, such as those of the Parks and Recreation Department, Historic Commission, Land Trust, etc.

- b. Evaluate opportunities to expand young adult programming.

Policy CSF 5.2: Ensure that all residents have access to library services and resources.

- a. Address requirements related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and bring current building up to code.
- b. Improve internet access to keep up with advances in communications technology and hardware to make the communication available.

Policy CSF 5.3: Ensure that the library facility is functional, adequately maintained, safe for all users, and adaptable to changing technology.

- c. Continue to work with private land owner adjacent to the Library to manage parking needs.
- d. Continue to move forward with the building program for a 25,000 square foot facility as outlined by the March, 2012 assessment that includes potential funding sources and strategies for expansion, whether onsite or in a new location. Consider expanding the functions of the Library to include that of a Community Center.
- e. Consider the benefit of including the senior community in all library related goals.

Goal CSF 6: Maintain an effective Public Works Department that can adequately address construction and maintenance of municipal infrastructure and facilities.

Policy CSF 6.1: Ensure that public works facilities, equipment, and staffing adequately meet the needs of the Town to provide a high level of service.

- a. Investigate ways to expand the building and storage potential for the Public Works Department at the Westmoreland Street facility (acquiring adjacent or nearby land).
- b. Continue to evaluate staffing capacity to meet demands of services, particularly routine maintenance.
- c. Inventory and assess department equipment and commit to a replacement program that can be incorporated into the CIP.

Policy CSF 6.2: Implement long-term improvement programs for roadways, bridges, sidewalks, municipal parking lots, and infrastructure in the public right-of-way, including storm drains.

- a. Continue to implement the Pavement Management Program by prioritizing street, sidewalk, curbing, and drainage improvements over the next 10 years.
- b. Implement the standard local road construction specification book.
- c. Establish a 10-year plan to replace street trees in the public right-of-way that have been removed because of damage or disease and, include a tree maintenance schedule that is funded in accordance with the State Urban Forestry Management Plan.
- d. Enter into a mutual aid agreement for Department of Public Works staff and equipment with North Kingstown and South Kingstown.

Goal CSF 7: Provide the Narragansett community with a sustainable supply of safe drinking water.

Policy CSF 7.1: Work with North Kingstown, South Kingstown and United Water of Rhode Island to ensure an adequate water supply for all three communities.

- a. Resolve long-term water agreements with United Water Company and the Town of North Kingstown.

- b. Encourage and support South Kingstown and North Kingstown in their efforts to protect the groundwater resources on which all three towns depend for drinking water.
- c. Evaluate potential long-term alternatives to increase inventory and storage of water to accommodate future development if needed.

Policy CSF 7.2: Maintain the functionality of municipal water infrastructure, including interconnections.

- a. Complete the Kinney Avenue and North End Tank Painting Projects.
- b. Prioritize infrastructure improvements for inclusion in the CIP.
- c. Evaluate annually the current pricing structure to ensure full support of operational and capital costs.

Policy CSF 7.3: Encourage the conservation and wise use of drinking water supplies.

- a. Continue to implement conservation techniques.
- b. Continue drought management activities with the RI Water Resources Board and water suppliers in neighboring towns.
- d. Continue the Town's educational program to teach residents and business owners about different water conservation techniques, such as water saving devices, proper lawn maintenance, etc.
- e. Ensure that new development and redevelopment activities can be accommodated by existing and projected water supplies. (See Policy LU 2.5)

Goal CSF 8: Ensure the proper treatment of wastewater to protect public health and the natural environment.

Policy CSF 8.1: Ensure the efficiency of the Town's wastewater treatment infrastructure by implementing the Wastewater Treatment Facilities Management Plan.

- a. Improve and extend sewage collection systems in existing developments in the South End (Point Judith Pond watershed) and North End (Narrow River and Wesquage Pond watersheds). Avoid extensions of lines which would stimulate overdevelopment in sensitive areas. (See Policy LU 2.5)
 - Evaluate capacity needs at treatment facilities to determine feasibility of extensions and further steps that may be needed to acquire needed capacity, as appropriate.
 - Review on a regular basis development potential in unsewered areas, particularly the Christian Brothers site south to Clark Road.
- b. Continue to install emergency connections for portable pumps at critical pumping stations.
- c. Identify inflow/infiltration projects that will reduce Narragansett's overall flow contribution to the Westmoreland Treatment Plant. Use earmarked funds from the new connection permit fee for implementation.
- d. Evaluate the use of innovative sewage treatment methods where it can be shown that there is a net improvement in the environment over the existing conditions.
- e. Evaluate the feasibility of reusing gray water from the Scarborough Wastewater Treatment Facility.

Policy CSF 8.2: Implement and enforce the Narragansett Wastewater Management District.

- a. Support the Conservation Commission in the development of an educational program for OWTS maintenance.

- b. Apply for SRF Program funds as needed to ensure a continuous funding resource for residents to upgrade OWTs.

Goal CSF 9: Reduce solid waste and maximize recycling.

Policy CSF 9.1: Encourage recycling town-wide to meet the State’s mandatory recycling rate currently set at 35% and total diversion rate of 50%.

- a. Revisit the calculation of recycling and diversion rates for South Kingstown and Narragansett at the Rose Hill Transfer Station.
- b. Increase public outreach and local knowledge on the Town’s municipal residential recycling program.
- c. Continue to build and enhance recycling opportunities associated with the Town’s residential recycling program.
- d. Investigate the development of a local compost facility.
- e. Continue to coordinate and develop diversion opportunities for residents, such as annual EcoDepot events to collect household hazardous wastes and collection of e-waste, as well as paper shredding and other specialized recycling opportunities.
- f. Look for ways to increase recycling opportunities in municipal facilities, such as the School Department and Parks and Recreation sites.
- g. Research ways to educate and incentivize commercial establishments to recycle, particularly large producers of recyclable materials.

Policy CSF 9.2: Continue to monitor obligations for the remediation efforts at the Rose Hill Regional Landfill and West Kingston/URI Disposal Area Landfill.

- a. Maintain financial obligations, as directed under the federal Final Consent Decree, to reimburse the State of Rhode Island for the remediation and ongoing operation and maintenance of the Rose Hill Regional Landfill.
- b. Maintain financial obligations, as directed under state mandate, for site remediation at the West Kingston/URI Disposal Area Landfill under the state landfill closure regulations.

Goal CSF 10: Manage the impacts of stormwater runoff and recognize the added benefits that can be gained from implementing a mix of gray and green stormwater infrastructure.

Policy CSF 10.1: Reduce illicit discharges and non-point source pollutants in local waterways.

- a. Implement Town’s Phase II Stormwater Permit and Stormwater Management Program Plan (SWMPP).
- b. As part of implementation, increase public outreach of the Town’s responsibilities under the Phase II permit and increase local knowledge about how residents and business owners can reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff.
- c. Implement stormwater infrastructure improvement projects as part of the Phase II compliance.
- d. Work with RIDOT to encourage the maintenance of storm drains on state roads in Narragansett, such as Route 108, Route 1, Sand Hill Cove Road, and the Galilee Escape Road.
- e. Investigate the feasibility of establishing a stormwater utility district as a stable source of funding for stormwater permit compliance efforts.

Policy CSF 10.2: Encourage the use of low-impact design (LID) techniques in municipal projects as a way to manage stormwater runoff and improve water quality.

- a. Develop strategies to dispose of materials from maintenance of SW infrastructure, such as basins, swales, etc. (dealing with invasive plant species).
- b. Consider and evaluate alternative approaches to “gray” infrastructure (pipes) such as LID techniques (bioswales, rain gardens, etc.) as part of upgrading the municipal stormwater infrastructure improvements.

Goal CSF11: Reduce energy consumption and encourage renewable energy use by both public and private users.

Policy CSF11.1: Increase energy efficiency of municipal buildings and operations to reduce energy consumption.

- a. Use the 2010 ESCO energy audit to continue to energy efficiency initiatives for municipal buildings and operations.

Policy CSF11.2: Increase renewable energy use for municipal buildings and operations.

- a. Evaluate the feasibility of municipally-managed renewable energy sources to power municipal buildings and operations in Narragansett (wind, solar, tidal), looking at possible locations, construction costs, maintenance and operations costs/needs.
- b. Work regionally with other Washington County communities to identify opportunities for investment in regional renewable energy projects.
- c. Actively participate in state initiatives that are investigating and promoting renewable energy.

Policy CSF11.3: Provide opportunities for residents and business owners to be more energy efficient and increase the use of renewable energy.

- a. Direct/link residents and business owners to energy efficiency and energy conservation educational materials as well as technical and financial resources of state and federal government agencies and utilities. Resources can address different renewable energy types and their benefits, ways residents/businesses can be more energy efficient in their day-to-day activities, etc.
- b. Conduct a study on the feasibility of providing a municipally-managed residential weatherization program.
- c. Draft zoning revisions and guidelines to allow for renewable energy infrastructure on private property.

V. NATURAL HAZARDS

The issue of natural hazards incorporates a wide range of phenomena, including storms, flooding, heat waves, drought, and tornados. Being a coastal community, Narragansett is most vulnerable to natural hazard events that produce coastal storm surges, flooding and high winds. These events would include severe storm events like Nor'easters, blizzards, hurricanes and other storms that have strong winds and heavy rain. There is a high cost generated from these storms because of loss and damage to public and private property. The community has moderate vulnerability to drought events.

In the long term, perhaps longer than the planning period of the Comprehensive Plan, the Town will be impacted by climate change. Climate change is expected to increase the number and duration of severe storms the region will encounter and cause extreme temperatures. And as climate change impacts the globe, sea levels are expected to rise. The combined impact of sea level rise and increased intensity of severe storms increases risks in the community.

In conjunction with the Narragansett Hazard Mitigation Plan (entitled *Strategy for Reducing Risks from Natural Hazards in Narragansett, RI: A Multi-Hazard Strategy*), the Comprehensive Plan contains land use policies that can attenuate the impacts of severe storms in the short term and climate change in the long term. *The Baseline Report* has shown areas most vulnerable to the impacts of storm surges and flooding, as well as sea level rise scenarios, showing areas that would be inundated with 1-foot, 3-foot and 5-foot sea level rise, as projected by the . While these scenarios may not happen in the next ten years, the Town needs to consider the loss of property due to sea level rise as well as properties that are continuously damaged during severe storm events.

A. Formative Issues

- Maintaining the Narragansett Hazard Mitigation Plan: The Town has recently updated its Hazard Mitigation Plan and incorporated considerations for the likely impacts from climate change and sea level rise.
- Protecting Public Infrastructure: The Town should continue to increase the resiliency of public infrastructure to natural hazards and climate change.
- Minimizing Impacts to Public and Private Property: The Town should evaluate and implement land use policies that minimize impacts to both public and private properties and reduce the likelihood of future damage, property loss and potential loss of life.

B. Maintaining Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Narragansett Hazard Mitigation Plan is an important document that is required to be consistent with other local plans and policies. It provides the Town with guidance before, during, and after major storm events and other natural hazards. The Plan has identified those hazard events most likely to impact the Town of Narragansett and evaluated areas most vulnerable to these hazards, including the impacts of climate change and sea level rise. These areas are highlighted in subsequent sections. The Plan also lists mitigation actions the Town should take to minimize its vulnerability to future natural hazard events. They complement and support this Comprehensive Plan.

To ensure that the Hazard Mitigation Plan is most effective in its purpose, the Town will review the plan every five years and after major storm events to ensure that its policies and approaches are still relevant and meet changing conditions. After these reviews, the Town will also look at the policies and action

items of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that they adequately address areas vulnerable to natural hazard events and climate change, and are consistent with proposed updates to the Hazard Mitigation Plan, as appropriate.

C. Protecting Public Infrastructure

It is the Town's goal to protect critical public infrastructure that could be impacted by natural hazard events and climate change. Long-term plans should evaluate projects that make infrastructure more resilient to these events. All of the Town's infrastructure (lifeline systems) is potentially vulnerable: roadways, electric and other above-ground utilities, wastewater treatment systems, and water system.

1. Roadways

Due to its geography, there are few roadways that lead into and out of Narragansett. The Town has established evacuation routes through its emergency preparedness policies. While some are state-maintained roads, the Town will work with state officials to ensure that on-going maintenance retains their integrity (See **Transportation and Circulation**).

Ocean Road and the seawall are particularly vulnerable. After Hurricane Sandy, a segment of the roadway was closed due to heavy damage from the storm. The Town will work with Rhode Island Department of Transportation to ensure the stability of the seawall along Ocean Road as well as the structural integrity of the roadway itself.

2. Utilities

Prolonged power outages after severe storms put many vulnerable populations at risk. The Town will evaluate the feasibility of burying above-ground utilities as a long-term investment. Areas that have a higher susceptibility to storm damage will be prioritized and potential funding mechanisms and sources will be evaluated.

3. Wastewater and Drinking Water Systems

The Town's wastewater and drinking water infrastructure are vulnerable to coastal surges and flooding associated with severe storms, but also to the long term impacts of sea level rise. As a priority, the Town will assess the most vulnerable components of its infrastructure, and determine ways to minimize the impacts to the community and the natural environment should it lose some or all the operational capacity. The Town's current facilities management plan already prioritizes improvement projects and may address many of these vulnerabilities (See **Community Services and Facilities**). [For example, the design of the Scarborough Wastewater Treatment Facility Flood-Proofing Project has incorporated the two-foot increase in sea level rise, as required by the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council \(CRMS\). Construction will to take place from 2016 to 2017.](#)

D. Protecting Natural Resources

It is the Town's goal to protect natural resources: 1) when they are detrimentally and negatively impacted by development activities, and 2) when they are threatened by natural hazard events and climate change. The Town's environmental overlays should be periodically upgraded as new information becomes available and regulatory standards should reflect the latest technology available. The Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan entitled, "Strategy for Reducing Risks From Natural Hazards in Narragansett, RI," should evaluate projects that make structures resilient to major storms, flooding drought etc. The hazard mitigation plan should address at minimum the following areas of concern:

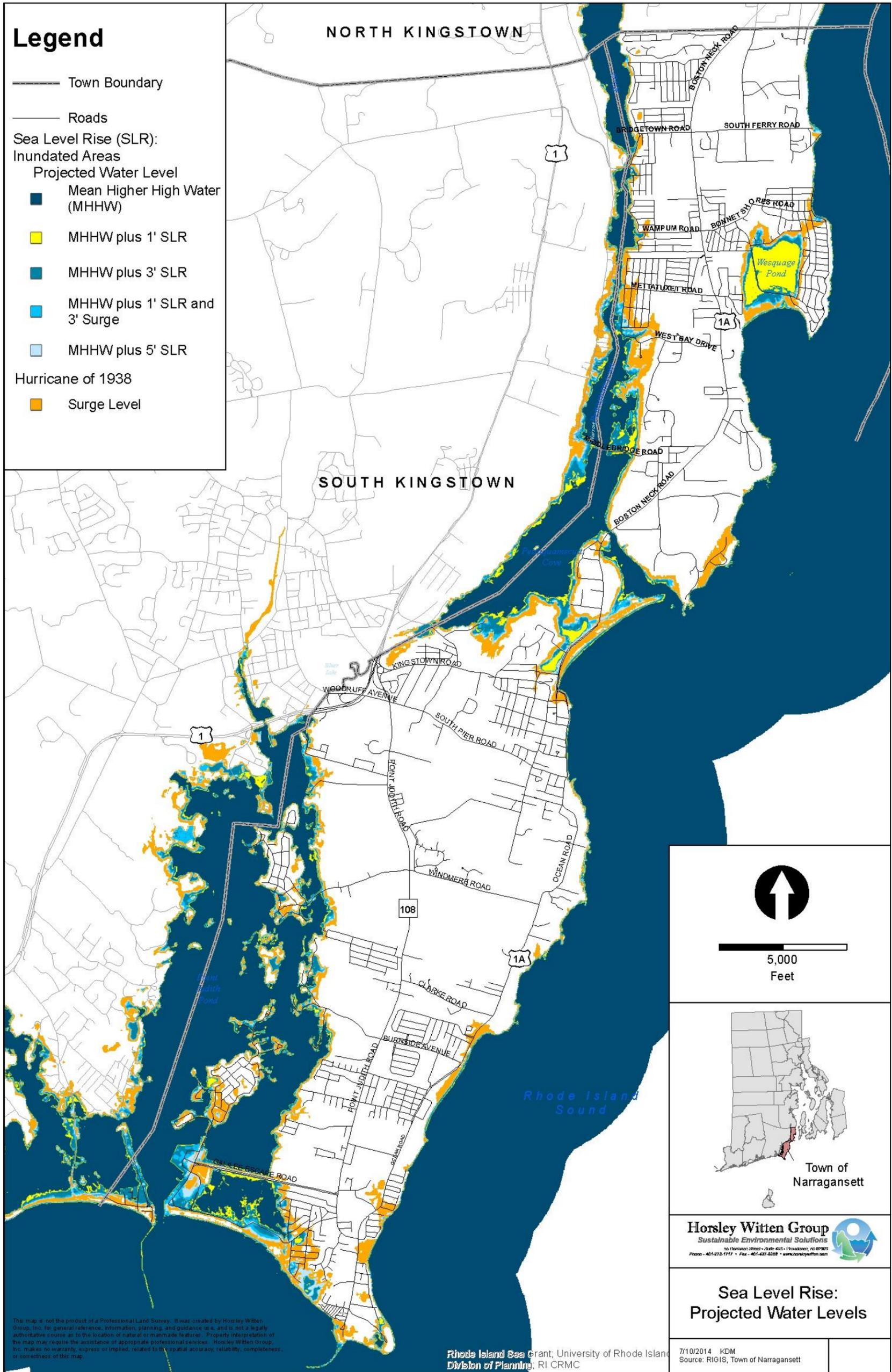
- a. Mitigation of Property and Critical Roads
- b. Beach Erosion
- c. Ocean Road Seawall and Route 1A
- d. Sanitary Sewer/Water Lines and Mains
- e. Narragansett Beach and Pavilion & other Low-lying Coastal Areas
- f. Great Island Bridge/ Lacy Bridge / Middlebridge
- g. Point Judith Pond Shoreline
- h. Tree Damage
- i. Galilee
- j. Sewage Treatment Facility
- k. Sewage Pumping Stations

E. Minimizing Impacts to Public and Private Property

Understanding and documenting natural hazard events and climate change data will help the Town monitor areas that are vulnerable, particularly low-lying and coastal areas in the floodplain or velocity zone. This information should be used and shared with local residences and businesses, and part of policies developed for applicable Special Planning Areas (See **Land Use**). Areas that are most vulnerable are (Map 10):

- Town Beach and Pier area.
- Low-lying areas along Narrow River and Pettaquamscutt Cove, dominated by residential uses, protected open space and recreational areas.
- Low-lying Sand Hill Cove residential neighborhoods.
- Jerusalem, which has residential and commercial uses.
- Low-lying areas adjacent to Point Judith Pond, dominated by protected open space, recreational areas and residences.
- Low-lying areas of Harbor Island and Great Island, dominated by protected open space and residences.
- Little Beach in Bonnet Shores.
- Low-lying residential neighborhoods in the Scarborough area.

Map 10 also shows sea level rise scenarios and areas that would be inundated with 1, 3 and 5-foot increases. It also shows areas inundated with sea level rise plus storm surge.



Map 10. Areas Vulnerable to Sea Level Rise

The Town will evaluate alternative strategies that can reduce or mitigate risks to public and private properties, particularly those that experience repetitive losses during severe storm events as well as those vulnerable to sea level rise. Different approaches will be more appropriate in different areas. While not an all-encompassing list, the Town will consider the following strategies:

- **Property Acquisition:** Working with the Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust, the Town can purchase or acquire vulnerable properties or adjacent land to protect them from development or redevelopment.
- **Transfer of Development Rights (TDR):** A TDR program would allow a property owner of a vulnerable property to transfer or sell their ability to develop to a property owner in an area that is higher and drier and has the environmental capacity to accommodate higher density development.
- **Flood-Proofing Structures:** The Town can make improvements to public facilities that are considered vulnerable to natural hazard events or sea level rise that would make them more resilient. This might include retrofitting structures or raising the elevation of primary floors.
- **Managed or Planned Retreat⁷:** Managed or planned retreat policies establish thresholds that trigger demolition or relocation of structures. These policies would include identifying areas where this approach would be the only solution because of costs or other factors, building standards that would allow the physical retreat of a structure, or relocation assistance to the property owner and/or buy-back programs.

F. Goals, Policies and Action items

Goal NH 1: Guide land use development and administrative practices to avoid or minimize the effects of natural hazard events and climate change to people, infrastructure and property.

Policy NH1.1: Monitor the implementation of the Narragansett Hazard Mitigation Plan.

- a. Review the Hazard Mitigation Plan every five years as required by the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency and after major storm events to ensure the plan's relevancy to changing local conditions. Update Hazard Mitigation Plan and Comprehensive Plan as appropriate.
- b. Review hazard mitigation planning and projects at special municipal meetings as natural hazard events are anticipated, as needed, and scheduled trainings.

Policy NH1.2: Protect critical public infrastructure that could be impacted by natural hazard events and climate change.

- a. Work with RIDOT to ensure the stability of the seawall along Ocean Road (Route 1A) and the structural integrity of Ocean Road and Boston Neck Road.
- b. Evaluate the feasibility of underground utilities as a long-term investment, prioritizing areas with higher susceptibility to storm damage. Consider potential funding sources for implementation.
- c. Enhance and maintain the Scarborough Wastewater Treatment Facility and other wastewater infrastructure in areas vulnerable to natural hazard events and climate change.
- d. Enhance and maintain drinking water infrastructure in areas vulnerable to natural hazard events and climate change.

⁷ Managed Retreat Strategies, NOAA: http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/initiatives/shoreline_ppr_retreat.html

Policy NH1.3: Minimize the risks to public and private property from natural hazard events and climate change.

- a. Evaluate and document new climate change data as they become available to monitor Town areas vulnerable to flooding and sea level rise.
- b. Connect residents and business owners to information about climate change and sea level rise, and how their lives and property may be impacted in the long term.
- c. Evaluate alternative strategies to reduce/mitigate risks to public and private properties that experience repetitive losses during storm events as well as areas vulnerable to sea level rise. Consider alternatives such as property acquisition, TDR, flood-proofing structures (e.g., retrofitting, elevation), or retreat.
- d. Continue to evaluate alternatives and feasibility of beach replenishment at the Town Beach.

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VI. TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

A community's transportation network is like its life support system. At its basic form, it moves people and goods. From a comprehensive view, it is a complex, efficient system that contributes to improved environmental quality, economic vitality, and access to housing, employment, recreation, and social opportunities for residents. Transportation systems also can influence, and be influenced by, adjacent land uses.

Narragansett's transportation network includes a variety of components, including roadways, bike paths, public transportation, sidewalks, and the ferry at the Port of Galilee. There is also an important freight corridor along Routes 1 and 108 to Galilee, which allows goods to be delivered to and from New Shoreham (Block Island). The transportation network in Narragansett is owned and maintained by either the Town or the State. These entities are responsible for maintenance and upkeep to ensure safe conditions for its users. The Town also ensures that the transportation needs of the community are met.

During discussions with residents and local officials, transportation and circulation were seen as two of the highest priority topics in the Comprehensive Plan. More than any other topic area, residents were able to identify concrete and specific challenges throughout the community and, in many instances, potential solutions. The ability to move pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, and boaters was discussed in its relationship to healthy residents, safe neighborhoods, environmental quality, and economic viability.

A. Formative Issues

- Traffic Congestion and Safety – Summer traffic and land uses contribute to congestion in tourist destinations like Narragansett. But these issues are exacerbated by design choices that create conflicts between different modes of transportation.
- Maintenance and Local Regulations – Narragansett recently approved funds to upgrade the conditions of its roadways, which will provide measurable benefits to the community. However, like many communities, resources for maintaining municipal roadways are stretched and the Town will need to continually evaluate its need for staffing and equipment. Local standards for transportation infrastructure are in need of re-evaluation.
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations – Pedestrian circulation around town, and especially at the Pier, is not planned or well-supported. Biking is an activity in which stakeholders showed great interest, but it was acknowledged that biking on local roadways can be challenging and dangerous.
- Complete Streets and Parking Management – The design of streets in Narragansett was historically performed to accommodate large volumes of summer time automobile traffic. While this is clearly an important issue, there is a recognized need to build in a more “complete” design perspective and, where appropriate, build in accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians. Similarly, the system for parking in Narragansett's busier districts should be revisited to optimize the use of land and increase access of visitors to local business.
- Public Transportation – The ability to access public transportation in Narragansett, as with most communities in South County, is limited. Nonetheless, stakeholders were able to identify several potential improvements to the existing bus service and to water-based transit, which creates unique policy needs for the Town.

B. Traffic Congestion and Safety

Traffic congestion issues in Narragansett are largely a function of the Town's geography. The circulation system consists of two major arterial roads running north-south (Boston Neck Road and Point Judith Road) and several major collector roads running east-west. Local streets are interspersed in between the major routes. The major routes provide local access throughout the Town and also function as primary carriers of freight traffic year-round, which is compounded with recreational traffic during the summer months. Traffic volumes along Narragansett's principal arterials are influenced primarily by seasonal traffic but also service a large volume of motorists from the Town's commuting population and freight transit. To help address seasonal traffic congestion caused by visitors to the beaches and the ferry from Galilee, especially on Point Judith Road, the Town could explore expanded shuttle service to between Galilee and other areas of Town.

Circulation and traffic issues can be identified in many specific areas and/or roadways in the community. The intersections with the highest number of accidents occur along Point Judith Road (Route 108) and Route 1. Both these roads carry large volumes of traffic and the accidents occur primarily at intersections where design is substandard to accommodate the volumes and movements of traffic generated in the summer months. There is a concentration of high accident intersections along Point Judith Road near the intersections with Route 1A, South Pier Road and Woodruff Road. This area has a high density of commercial land uses with multiple curb cuts which create conflicts between through traffic and traffic turning and entering. A variety of other improvements have been discussed to address traffic safety and congestion for specific areas. Improved traffic signal coordination, curb cut management, and shared driveways have been discussed along Boston Neck Road and elsewhere.

From a land use perspective, recreational use and commercial development directly impacts traffic volumes and can create problems with circulation. In order to maintain adequate traffic movement the traffic impacts from commercial development must be controlled. In particular, the Town has expressed interest in developing transportation improvements in coordination with land use changes at Caswell Corner, at the intersection of South Pier Road and Old Point Judith Road. An existing commercial driveway along South Pier Road (southeast quadrant of the intersection) could potentially be extended to provide a through connection to Old Point Judith road and improve vehicular circulation. See further discussion of these areas in **Land Use**.

As with all other systems in the community (natural and man-made), the transportation network of Narragansett has been impacted by natural hazards. Interestingly, the temporary changes to circulation along Ocean Road as a result of damage caused by Hurricane Sandy in October 2012 provided evidence of a potentially beneficial permanent change. In coordination with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT), the Town will explore the feasibility of making Ocean Road and Boon Street each one-way to improve traffic circulation in this area, or possibly an expansion of the promenade on the east side of the roadway.

C. Maintenance and Local Regulations

The Town initiated a roadway improvement program in 2012 to address the deteriorated condition of local roads. An inspection of the Town's 108 miles of roads revealed that more than a third of the mileage is failing and in need of either reconstruction or reclamation. Voters recently approved a \$17 million bond to fund a multi-year improvement program to increase the overall grade of the Town's roads. Through five phases, 34 miles of roadway (31.5% of total roadway miles in the Town) would be improved. With regard to roads under state jurisdiction, Town Council, Planning Board and staff should

continue to be actively involved in reviewing Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) items with RIDOT. This process should include collaborative planning between these groups and the community at large.

The Town has design standards for local road construction that could benefit from a critical review and potential updates. These standards could be modified to relate road pavement width, curbing, sidewalk requirements, and sub-base to functional classification and neighborhood character. The Town's Subdivision and Land Development Regulations currently provide for establishing road connections between adjacent subdivisions. This is an important safety provision as it provides a second means of entering or exiting a subdivision if one primary access is blocked. It also allows for continuance of public service functions such as trash collection and school bus routes. Inter-connections between subdivisions make it unnecessary for vehicles to re-enter major streets to access adjacent subdivisions and can result in reduced traffic volumes on arterial roads. Where opportunities present themselves, the Town can build these links. It will be important to highlight the community benefits of connecting subdivisions that have long been isolated in order to build consensus for this to be achieved.

The community has expressed interest in protecting the aesthetic quality of its scenic roads, particularly along undeveloped sections of Route 1A. Scenic portions along Old Boston Neck Road may also merit protection. More discussion of scenic resources is found in **Historic, Cultural and Scenic Resources**.

D. Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations

Increasing opportunities to walk and bike encourages residents to be more active and healthier. If it is easier to walk or bike from residential areas to retail or commercial areas, the number of vehicles on the road may be decreased. Residential areas should also be connected to schools, parks and natural areas to the extent practical (see **Housing and Neighborhoods** and **Recreation and Open Space**). Providing these types of opportunities improves quality of life and creates more opportunities for residents to interact with each other, building a greater sense of community.

There are several areas in Town that have opportunities to increase biking and enhance bike safety. Boston Neck Road/Route 1A is a designated signed bike route by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT). The William C. O'Neill Bike Path between Kingston Station in South Kingstown and Mumford Road in Narragansett is planned for expansion to Narragansett Town Beach. The extension is listed on the state's 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) as the South County Bike Path Extension and will receive an estimated \$1.55 million in federal dollars. The Town strongly supports the bike path extension and will work diligently to keep the project moving forward.

The large numbers of residents and visitors to the Town beaches increases pedestrian and bicycle activity in the vicinity of the Town Beach and Pier Area. A Pedestrian Safety Audit was conducted in 2012 to evaluate current conditions and identify potential improvements. The audit is found in **Appendix C**. While the study area is bound by the Town Beach and the Pier Marketplace, the perimeter building in this mixed use development facing the beach is limited to residential condominiums. Those who are not familiar with the area may not know about the businesses and restaurants on the other side or below the residences. Better wayfinding signs will increase visibility of these businesses and direct pedestrians from the beach and those walking along Ocean Road and Boston Neck Road to them (See **Economic Development**).

E. Complete Streets and Parking Management

Several mixed-use, compact centers exist within the Town, most notably Boon Street and the Pier Area, which have a higher concentration of pedestrian activity. The village character of these areas can be enhanced through a “Complete Streets” focus that places greater emphasis on pedestrian circulation and comfort, along with other modes including bicyclists and bus transit users (See **Land Use**). An overall parking strategy that encourages visitors to these areas to park, off-street if necessary, and then become pedestrians will further enhance the attraction of these places (See **Economic Development**).

A general lack of parking was identified in the vicinity of the Pier by those attending the Town’s public workshops. Seasonal parking demand may be best managed with an expansion of shuttle service between the beaches and ferry and remote parking lots, such as Town Hall, schools, and the community center.

F. Public Transportation

A small segment of the population currently uses bus service of the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) for commuting or other trips. The community expressed skepticism that bus ridership could be significantly increased. A large proportion of the population currently commutes to work by private automobile from Narragansett and these commuters may opt to use public transportation if bus service becomes more convenient and cost effective, e.g. through expanded availability of park and ride lots. One potential location is the Salt Pond Shopping Plaza. Initial outreach has been made with the property owner, and feasibility should be explored further. The Town has also expressed interest in improving bus facilities and amenities at this location. Passengers currently board at the Stop & Shop main entrance, which causes traffic congestion at times; the possibility of relocating the bus stop to a centrally located bus shelter has been raised, and any further study should be coordinated with RIPTA.

Variability in RIPTA’s bus schedule has been an issue with overall quality of service. RIPTA’s Five-Year Strategic Plan (2011) lists a South County local transit enhancement study in association with the Washington County Regional Planning Council. That initiative has not yet begun as of spring 2014, according to Jeffery Broadhead, Executive Director of Washington County Regional Planning Council. There is no active rail service in Narragansett. RIDOT is currently studying the feasibility of light rail service throughout Rhode Island. The feasibility of light rail service to Narragansett should be considered, perhaps as a seasonal transportation alternative.

Another area of demand is the need for local transit opportunities. The Town’s Community Center owns a bus that is used primarily for group field trips and excursions. This asset may have a broader range of usage for local trips to and from the Center as well as regularly scheduled stops around town and nearby Wakefield. Such a service would be open to all but would be targeted to the senior population. With only three RIPTA routes servicing parts of Narragansett, there is a clear need to supplement this service with better, reliable public transportation options for senior citizens.

The Town should institute, either directly or through third party providers Trolley Service for beach transportation, tourist and resident circulation to points of interest, including routes with regularly scheduled stops in both Narragansett and Wakefield, in coordination with local businesses and where appropriate, the Town of South Kingstown. Expansion of the use of the Community Center Bus should also be explored.

Currently from Galilee, Block Island is the only destination available by water-based transportation systems. The Block Island Ferry moves people and goods between Galilee and Old Harbor on Block Island.

There may be opportunities for additional water-based transportation/commuting services the Town may wish to explore with RIDOT and private vendors. A pier developed at Narragansett Pier or improvements to Pier 5 for this purpose should be investigated. Alternative destinations from Galilee may also be the subject of future study, including boat launch service to Jerusalem. Pursuit of a public/private initiative to provide service between Narragansett and such destinations as Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, Montauk, and New London should be an open and continual objective.

G. Goals, Policies and action items

Goal T1: Promote safe and efficient traffic circulation throughout the Town's transportation network.

Policy T1.1: Maintain existing infrastructure in a timely and cost-effective manner.

- a. Continue to encourage and cooperate with RIDOT to maintain and improve State roadways in the Town. Clarify ownership and maintenance responsibilities of roads on the federal aid system.
- b. Continue implementation of the multi-year pavement management program to maintain and rehabilitate local roadways. Consider expanding the management program to include other items such as sidewalks, curb ramps, sign replacements, and signal upgrades.
- c. Develop inventory of sidewalks and curb ramps and a plan for improvement program for deteriorated and non-ADA compliant locations.
- d. Establish annual monitoring and maintenance of pavement markings, signage, and traffic control devices, including repair and replacement of signs, trimming of overgrown vegetation, cleaning, and repainting crosswalks, center lane, and edge lines including bike lanes, and symbols and miscellaneous markings.

Policy T1.2: Pursue improvement projects to address safety deficiencies and congested areas.

- a. Coordinate with RIDOT to identify improvement projects that address high-accident and congested locations, and aggressively pursue funding.
- b. Initiate studies and/or safety audits to identify potential improvements for high-accident locations that are not part of ongoing or planned projects.
- c. Review recommendations of the Pedestrian Safety Audit (**Appendix C**) for the Pier Area and determine priorities for implementation.
- d. Encourage replatting and redesign of paper streets that do not meet current safety standards.
- e. Explore one-way circulation conversion for Ocean Road and Boon Street or expansion of the promenade on the east side of the roadway
- f. Explore potential signal timing modifications, queue management in cooperation with RIDOT:
 - Boston Neck Road at Beach Street
 - Boston Neck Road between South Ferry Road and Metatuxet Road
 - Woodruff Avenue at Route 1 off ramp
 - Point Judith Road from Woodruff Road to Salt Pond Plaza
- g. Explore opportunities for shared driveways or service roads along Point Judith Road, Boston Neck Road.

- h. Pursue interconnections between subdivisions, where appropriate. Appropriate locations are those in which connectivity can be enhanced without detrimental impact in terms of cut-thru traffic or a change in use of subdivision roads.

Policy T1.3: Explore multimodal projects that complete connections and promote safe interactions between motor vehicles and pedestrians and bicyclists.

- a. Explore and implement pedestrian and bicycle improvements at locations where high volumes of pedestrians are present, e.g., Narragansett Town Beach, Narragansett Avenue, Narragansett Towers, Boston Neck Road, Bonnet Shores and the intersection of Point Judith Road, and Ocean Road along with other major arterial intersections in order to connect bike and pedestrian desired lines.
- b. Continue to pursue and utilize the Safe Routes to School program to improve non-motorized connections and access to school campuses. Prioritize pedestrian improvements at key locations within one mile of schools, including sidewalks, crosswalks, and curb ramps.

Goal T2: Support a variety of transportation choices that contribute to a cleaner environment and a healthier community.

Policy T2.1: Integrate Complete Streets principles into all local transportation projects to better accommodate all users regardless of mode, age, or ability.

- a. Adopt a Complete Streets policy that applies to all new and retrofit projects in the Town.
- b. Provide information about the benefits of Complete Streets principles to the public and Town staff, and publicize successful projects that integrate the principles.
- c. Continually monitor performance of transportation projects to evaluate their benefits and impacts.

Policy T2.2: Promote walking and biking as attractive, practical choices for recreation and every day trips.

- a. Develop and implement a long-term sidewalk improvement program, building on the inventory developed for past and current Safe Routes to School projects.
- b. Develop a comprehensive Town-wide pedestrian and bicycle network, consistent with state plans, that includes off-street paths, on-street bike lanes, shared lane markings, and signed routes. Build on the Town's evolving trail system by establishing connections, as feasible, between existing trails on Canonchet, South Pier Road, at Whale Rock, and at Black Point. For signed bike routes, consider a scenic ocean route and a village-oriented route. Develop distinct wayfinding signage for each route. Prepare bike map handouts showing entire bike route and points of interest for placement at kiosks. Integrate shared or separate facilities for pedestrians and bicycles as appropriate.
- c. In conjunction with action item (c) under Policy 1.3 for Safe Routes to School programs, develop and implement a public education program about bicycle safety and bicyclists' and motorists' rights and responsibilities. Utilize multiple dissemination platforms, including Town website, newspapers, public television, and schools. Continue to offer bicycle safety curriculum in schools.
- d. Identify potential locations for bike racks and pedestrian bench installations, and increase the numbers of these amenities at key locations.
- e. Explore the potential for a community bicycle-sharing system, evaluating costs and possible public/private partnerships. Town will take the lead to develop and implement a pilot

program in cooperation with local businesses, using the Mystic, CT program (and others, as appropriate) as a model.

- f. Consider the implementation of bike lanes and signage on Route 1A.
- g. Advocate for the William C. O'Neill Bike Path extension to Narragansett Town Beach that is currently on the state TIP. Identify other potential locations for bike path extensions within Narragansett as future TIP projects.

Policy T2.3: Explore opportunities to expand access to high-quality transit service.

- a. Work with RIPTA to provide adequate curbside and streetside facilities for RIPTA bus operations, including clearly marked bus stops and bus stop amenities that enhance rider comfort and safety.
- b. Improve park and ride access to RIPTA bus service by coordinating with parking lot owners (e.g., Salt Pond Shopping Center) and with RIPTA to establish high-quality facilities for riders.
- c. In conjunction with sidewalk programs, identify missing links in pedestrian infrastructure between bus stops and residential areas with high transit usage, and implement improvements.
- d. Coordinate with RIPTA and RIDOT to identify and implement bus turnouts at appropriate locations, while balancing the needs of bus operations with general traffic flow. One location could be at Narragansett Town Beach.

Policy T2.4: Consider the land use-transportation connection for all future development decisions and plans in order to manage traffic demand and ensure multimodal access.

- a. Require traffic impact studies for new developments. For large-scale developments, implement peer reviews of traffic studies to be paid for by developer to ensure accuracy and completeness of studies. Ensure that the project's transportation mitigation is in scale with the size and consequential impact of the proposed project.
- b. Explore development impact fees or other mechanisms by which developers could contribute toward large-scale transportation improvements in lieu of providing specific infrastructure improvements as project mitigation.
- c. Implement appropriate land use controls and transportation design review standards to maintain the functional integrity of the existing road system. Review and update transportation design standards to incorporate complete street policies, and implement these changes into the land use controls.
- d. Consider livability issues in addition to mobility and safety issues when prioritizing transportation projects.
- e. Coordinate transportation improvements for the intersection of Point Judith Road (Route 108) and South Pier Road and the surrounding development with future land use recommendations, in order to improve safety and circulation throughout Caswell Corner. Explore the potential for connecting the existing driveway from South Pier Road to Point Judith Road to create a connection for enhanced circulation.
- f. Consider a study that will result in an access management plan for Boston Neck Road to establish policies that would ensure that new development and redevelopment do not degrade existing traffic conditions. Plan should review all modes and make recommendations to improve existing congestion conditions.

Goal T3: Develop a context-sensitive transportation network that enhances the unique characteristics of the Town’s neighborhoods and key attractions.

Policy T3.1: Ensure transportation projects are designed and constructed in harmony with the local community and preserve scenic, historic, and environmental values of the area.

- a. Continue to designate appropriate roads as scenic and develop and implement standards to maintain the scenic quality of designated roads. Adopt regulations for alterations and construction in scenic ROWs to preserve scenic quality.
- b. Develop processes for identifying potential locations for traffic calming measures and for selecting appropriate measures based on the needs of selected locations.

Policy T3.2: Integrate transportation infrastructure in multidisciplinary “placemaking” efforts for individual districts and destinations.

- a. Pursue transportation and streetscape improvements to Boon Street that enhance its [mixed-use village](#) character, in conjunction with economic development goals. Conduct parking utilization and turnover studies to inform parking management changes. Explore access to off-street parking lots to supplement on-street parking supply.
- b. Enhance pedestrian and bicycle amenities at the Pier, the Towers and Town Beach.

Policy T3.3: Provide transportation infrastructure that supports the economic activity of the Town’s shopping and tourist areas. (See Policy T3.4)

- a. Consider selecting Ocean Road between Town Beach and South Pier Road as a pilot location for enhanced traffic calming measures including the items identified in the Pedestrian Safety Audit (Appendix C), such as roadway neckdowns at crosswalks, potential textured or raised crosswalks, and bollards installed closer to the roadway to slow drivers.
- b. Evaluate potential parking management strategies for Galilee, Town Beach, and in the vicinity of the Pier to address perceived lack of parking supply. Implement appropriate measures such as variable pricing, shuttle service from parking, and other innovative best practices. Explore opening South Beach parking lot for evening parking for the Pier Area/Towers until 1:00 or 1:30 AM, and promote parking availability there with appropriate signage and possibly in The Towers brochure.
- c. Develop and implement transportation safety plans for large events such as firework displays, and provide alternative parking and shuttle options to reduce traffic
- d. Revisit the summer beach trolley service in the future.

Policy T3.4: Ensure that development around the Port of Galilee supports its use as a state-owned commercial fishing port and intermodal terminal.

- a. Explore multimodal transportation improvements for Galilee, including shuttle service, seasonal RIPTA service and parking management in conjunction with the ferry service.
- b. Monitor internal circulation of heavy vehicles to ensure movement of freight (to and from the ferry terminal as well as to and from commercial fishing piers and surrounding support businesses) is accommodated and efficient.

VII. HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Narragansett is a great place for families, retirees, and individuals alike. It offers a scenic, seaside location in close proximity to local employment and retail hubs like Quonset Business Park in North Kingstown, the University of Rhode Island in Kingston, and Main Street in Wakefield. Narragansett possesses a mix of characteristics attractive to families seeking a high quality of life, including great schools, low crime rate, and exceptional active and passive recreational opportunities.

When a community plans for housing, it considers its existing stock and how that meets the needs of residents today and into the future. Today, Narragansett is a predominantly residential community, and based on the very limited availability of developable land, Narragansett will remain a “bedroom community” into the foreseeable future. Because the Town is close to full build-out, future residential development will occur differently than it did even 20 years ago. Infill and redevelopment will provide the primary market opportunities for new homes, rather than the construction of brand new subdivisions. This is consistent with regional construction trends, which show that infill development continues to trend upward as the supply of vacant land decreases and the market demand for smaller homes continues to rise. This element of the Comprehensive Plan will consider these conditions, other conditions identified in *The Baseline Report* (e.g., demographics, etc.), statutory requirements, and the input of residents to shape future policies and housing strategies.

A. Formative Issues

At public forums and in discussions with municipal officials, participants discussed numerous opportunities and challenges faced by the Town relative to housing. Four major issues or themes emerged in these discussions:

- Seasonal Housing – The Town needs to balance the demand for year-round rentals with the desire of property owners to rent their properties seasonally.
- Neighborhood Character – Tearing down small cottage homes and replacing them with large homes that dominate the landscape is a problem in some older neighborhoods.
- Affordability - There is a shortage (and need) for affordable housing and starter homes. This is driven by the market and by demographic changes.
- Low and Moderate Income Housing – Most of the town is “built-out.” Therefore, an aggressive set of tools related to small infill opportunities and incremental increases to the stock of low and moderate income housing will be needed to meet the state mandated goal of 10%.

B. Seasonal Housing

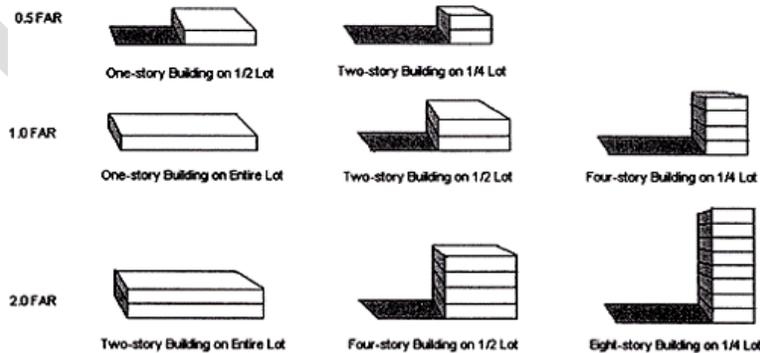
Consistently for the past 20 years, nearly one quarter of the Town’s housing stock has been rented seasonally. From June to August, homes are generally rented on a weekly basis to tourists, and from September to May, they are rented to University of Rhode Island (URI) students. There are many positive and negative implications and impacts of these transient residents on the community. On the positive side, summer renters support the tourist economy by frequenting local stores, visiting local tourist sites, and eating at local restaurants. Student renters also shop and eat locally and support local businesses during the “off season.” However, noise, property abuse, and overcrowding can occur with these rental properties and some problems have been documented. Many of these students have never lived on their own and may be unaware of their responsibilities as tenants. Enforcement and management efforts have been implemented and the Narragansett Police Department has increased

their efforts to limit the impact of students on neighborhoods. Coordination between URI, students, and the Town needs to continue in order to develop regulatory and programmatic solutions that will alleviate problematic situations. Also, developing incentives that promote year-round rental will create a sustainable population throughout the year, which can not only support local businesses, but support community life.

C. Neighborhood Character and Design

The demand for housing in Narragansett is high, particularly for properties on or near the water as well as those with water views. Some of the older neighborhoods in these areas began as summer colonies with modest homes built on smaller lots. These homes typically were not constructed for year-round living. Many do not meet today’s more sophisticated building codes. In many cases the original summer homes have been converted to year round living. Interest in these areas has also increased over the decades and the historic and older homes are being replaced with newly renovated or constructed structures , and smaller homes are replaced with larger, taller homes. These impact the original summertime-only character of the neighborhood. Higher structures block views and change the overall appearance and scale of the area.

Positive and responsible change occasioned by these activities can be accomplished through land use policies that promote consistency with and furthering of the neighborhood’s character. Land use policies ought consider limitation of building site coverage in environmentally sensitive areas, and encourage “green” but economically affordable design. The Town’s existing environmental overlay districts require development and redevelopment projects to meet performance standards that will reduce negative impacts on the natural environment. Another tool the Town has used with success is floor-area ratio (FAR)standard to maintain the density of a neighborhood. FAR is defined as the useable floor space of a building divided by the size of the lot. It is a way of measuring intensity rather than building coverage on the lot. Factors such as setbacks and height limitations must still be considered and applied in accordance with existing law. It is particularly helpful in managing lot coverage issues and building height exceedances. The illustration below shows how FAR can be applied. While FAR is a tool suggested for adoption by the Comprehensive Plan, it is not exclusive and may be also not apply to every development or property.



Example of how to calculate FAR (Source: Manteca, California Zoning Code)

The Town has used FAR standards with success in one area to manage improvements, modifications, alterations and reconstruction of single family homes and accessory structures. Breakwater Village Special District is an example. There may be other neighborhoods in Narragansett where FAR could be

considered in whole or in part to be applied to minimize environmental impacts and maintain neighborhood character.

Design guidelines are another tool to ensure high quality design and projects that are complementary and consistent with neighborhood character. Design guidelines can promote investment in an area, address unique development challenges, diversify housing options, make areas more walkable and easier to access, and encourage historic and cultural preservation. They must, however, be implemented cautiously in existing neighborhoods to avoid impinging on liberty, freedom of choice and expression. The most critical step in developing design guidelines is working closely with the residents (and businesses) of an area to ensure that their vision is captured. Clear descriptions along with illustrations are important to convey ideas and desired outcomes. Design guidelines can be implemented through a zoning overlay with incentives that encourage property owners to develop their projects with the vision of the neighborhood residents in mind. They can be part of the building permit process or development plan review.

Strengthening neighborhood design guidance can also incorporate connections to nearby community resources, such as schools, parks, and conservation areas. Encouraging more opportunities to walk and bike to these areas as well as adjacent neighborhoods and commercial areas helps support healthier lifestyles. Examples include bike and walking paths, sidewalks, and bike lanes on roadways. Providing the infrastructure for walking and biking also reduces the need to drive, and lowers transportation costs. Increasing access to public transportation also will reduce these costs. Land use policies for both residential and commercial development should include requirements for neighborhood connections and include infrastructure for walking and biking. The Town will evaluate existing neighborhoods for access deficiencies and develop plans to improve connections and access to resources.

D. Affordability

Narragansett, along with many communities in Rhode Island, strives to ensure residents have access to safe, affordable housing. The cost of a single family home in Narragansett is the highest in Washington County and averaged \$355,000 in 2011. A typical monthly housing payment for this home would be approximately \$2,427 and would require a household income of \$97,100.⁸ For 2010, Rhode Island Housing reported that rents in Narragansett were on average \$1,285 for a two-bedroom unit and \$1,722 for a three-bedroom unit, \$120 and \$190 more than the state average respectively. To afford these rents, a household would need an average income of \$51,400.⁹

As a result, many young professionals and young families appear to be priced-out and unable to purchase a home in town or unable to find year-round rentals. According to the American Community Survey (2010), between 30% and 40% of Narragansett homeowners were paying too much for housing, which includes utilities, insurance, mortgages, and fuel (households paying more than 30% of its income on housing is considered unaffordable). As a result, the inability for first-time homebuyers to find a reasonably-priced home and the limited opportunities to rent year-round have pushed young families and young professionals to look to other communities to live. From the year 2000 and 2010, the Town's population between the ages of 25 and 55 decreased by 50% (2010 U.S. Census).

⁸ HousingWorks RI calculates this using a 30-year mortgage at 4.69% interest (2010 average rate) with a 3.5% down payment, property taxes (state's average rate of \$16.44 per \$1,000 of the homes valuation), hazard insurance (\$75/month), and monthly mortgage insurance (1.15%/month).

⁹ HousingWorks RI Factbook, 2010. www.housingworksri.org

Another important demographic change is an increase in residents over the age of 55. As the baby boomer generation ages and retires, many will decide to stay either in their current homes or look for smaller, more affordable options. With the few year-round rental units and higher rents in Narragansett, staying in the community will be a challenge. Providing more affordable alternatives, including rentals, can give these individuals the opportunity to stay in Narragansett.

Increasing the diversity of housing choices in Narragansett will increase opportunities for families and young professionals to return to Narragansett as well as offer options for seniors to down-size and still remain in town. Building a stable, more diverse year-round population will also support local businesses and provide a reliable customer base throughout the year. Developing incentives to encourage more property owners to provide year-round rentals is one way Narragansett can effectively answer to a rising market demand. ~~New regulatory approaches should include village or mixed-use zoning, incorporating apartments above commercial properties, and creating affordable rental opportunities.~~

E. Low and Moderate Income Housing

In 2004, when the costs of homes and land in Rhode Island were steadily rising, the state acknowledged a shortage of affordable homes for residents with low and moderate incomes. To meet the need, the state legislature passed the Rhode Island Low and Moderate Income Housing Act (the Act). The Act requires every municipality to develop strategies that create opportunities for low and moderate income households, and mandates that each community have 10% of their housing stock dedicated to meet this need through subsidized affordable housing. The Act defines low and moderate income housing as:

“any housing whether built or operated by any public agency or any nonprofit organization or by any limited equity housing cooperative or any private developer, that is subsidized by a federal, state, or municipal government subsidy under any program to assist the construction or rehabilitation of housing affordable to low or moderate income households, as defined in the applicable federal or state statute, or local ordinance and that will remain affordable through a land lease and/or deed restriction for ninety-nine (99) years or such other period that is either agreed to by the applicant and town or prescribed by the federal, state, or municipal government subsidy program but that is not less than thirty (30) years from initial occupancy.” (R.I.G.L 45-53-3)

Low and moderate household incomes are based on household size and defined as those earning between 80% and 120% of the area’s median income, which is updated annually by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and reported by Rhode Island Housing. In 2012, the low and moderate income parameters for a family of four were between \$60,500 (low income) and \$90,700 (moderate income).¹⁰ To put this into perspective, below are reported average entry-level salaries of workers in Rhode Island in 2011 for select occupations.¹¹

Childcare worker	\$18,760
Home health aide	\$22,320
Bank teller	\$22,820

¹⁰ Rhode Island Housing, “2012 Rhode Island Income Limits for Low and Moderate Income Households,” available at http://www.rhodeislandhousing.org/filelibrary/HUD_2012_incomes.pdf

¹¹ Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, “Occupational Wage Report: 2011 Statewide,” available at <http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/oes/wagereport.htm>

Mental health counselor	\$28,300
High school teacher	\$44,470
Accountant	\$53,890
Registered nurse	\$61,420
Civil engineer	\$66,040

While these figures provide just a snapshot of typical salaries, they illustrate the potential difficulty that people working in these fields might have affording either rental or ownership property in Narragansett, where the average rents are \$120 to \$190 more than the state average and single family sales prices are the highest in Washington County.

Rhode Island Housing reports that in May 2011 there were 250 low and moderate income (LMI) units in Narragansett for families, the elderly, and populations with special needs. These units represent 3.5% of its 7,156 year-round housing units. Since that time, another 18 units have been constructed and 109 have been approved but not yet constructed. The Town is still well short of meeting the state-mandated goal of 10%, or 716 LMI units.

1. Existing Strategies to Create Low and Moderate Income Housing

Prior to 2014, the Town implemented several strategies to create LMI units to meet the demand for affordable units and the state-mandated goal of 10% LMI housing units with the oversight from the Narragansett Affordable Housing Board (NAHB). In 2014 the NAHB dismantled and oversight now lays with the Narragansett Affordable Housing Trust (see below).

a) Comprehensive Permit Process

According to the Act, applicants proposing to build projects with 25% or more of LMI units may submit to the local review board (the Planning Board) a single application for a comprehensive permit in lieu of separate applications to all applicable boards (R.I.G.L 45-53-4). The applicant must receive a letter of eligibility from Rhode Island Housing to do so.

To date, all development proposals with LMI units have been reviewed by the Town through the comprehensive permit process. It is anticipated that more proposals will be brought before the Town in this manner. The Town should investigate ways to develop standard criteria when reviewing proposals, making the process more predictable, while still recognizing that each has unique conditions.

b) Inclusionary Zoning

The Town's Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance requires developers to include LMI units in their proposed projects. Projects with six units or more are required to have 20% of the total number of housing units be dedicated as LMI units. The ordinance was adopted in 2008 and it has yet to be used. Efforts will be made to review the ordinance and develop new incentives that will make it more attractive to developers. One alternative could be fee in lieu of the units, which could be put into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (see below) and used to develop LMI units in areas that might offer better opportunities for residents, such as increased access to multiple transportation options or distance to needed services.

c) Accessory Units

Under the Affordable Accessory Dwelling Unit ordinance, the Town allowed, for a limited time, the rehabilitation and legalization of previously non-conforming accessory units as long as they were affordable. Only one unit was developed under this strategy and this ordinance has since expired. The Town should revisit this approach to enhance its desirability and use. Elements of the ordinance to consider for change include its applicability to new construction and a consideration of whether accessory units will be allowed outright in some areas or just as LMI units.

~~d) Village Zoning on Boon Street~~

~~Boon Street is an area that has great potential for the inclusion of affordable units. It has a mix of residential and commercial uses, including mixed-use buildings. In 2009, the proposed Village ordinance failed. It included incentives to include affordable units. As new development and redevelopment occurs on Boon Street this ordinance should be revisited for possible application along Boon Street. The applicability of a similar zoning ordinance in other mixed-use areas of Town may also be considered in the future.~~

e)d) Affordable Housing Trust Fund

The Affordable Housing Trust Fund has been established to accept funds as well as property to execute affordable housing policies and actions, but it has not been used to create LMI housing to date. The Narragansett Affordable Housing Trust (NAHT) oversees activities that will be implemented through the Fund. The Town will continue to look for ways to increase activity from the housing fund, including potential partnerships with the Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust.

f)e) Construction of Affordable Housing on Town Properties

The Narragansett Housing Authority provided oversight for the construction of LMI units on town property located on Coffey Avenue, Frances Avenue, Clark Road, and Fifth Avenue. Other opportunities may exist, and the Town should evaluate available town properties, or properties it can acquire, for the development of LMI units. This effort can benefit from and should be coordinated with the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

g)f) Development of Substandard Lots

In 2007, the Town began examining the possibility of unmerging substandard lots in an effort to develop LMI single family housing. Consensus regarding the details of this strategy was not achieved due to concerns over density and the long-term viability of the approach. The strategy should be revisited, considering different levels of density and the impact of these types of developments on neighborhoods.

2. **Considering New Strategies**

As the Town progresses in meeting the state-mandated goal, new policies and strategies to create LMI units should be considered. The Town is reaching its buildout capacity, which limits the amount of new construction that can take place. The development of LMI housing will have to become more creative and incorporate approaches that encourage infill and redevelopment of existing housing. Some approaches the Town will review include:

a) Infill and Conversion of Existing Units

The Town should explore tax incentives that would encourage infill in existing neighborhoods with LMI housing, as well as incentives to convert existing market-rate housing into LMI units.

b) Transfer of Development Rights

Transfer of development rights (TDR) is a tool that takes development that would occur in one area (sending area) and transfer it to another (receiving area). Typically, the sending area is an area the community wants to preserve or protect, such as floodplain, farmland, natural areas, or one that has historic features. The receiving area is a location that can accommodate increased density because of available public services such as water and/or sewer, or does not contain sensitive environmental resources. As a strategy to develop affordable housing, the Town may consider incentives for the construction of LMI units in receiving areas, particularly in areas of Town that have the greatest need for LMI housing.

c) Revolving Loan Program for Residential Improvements

A revolving loan program can provide financial incentives for existing homeowners to improve their properties in exchange for dedicating housing as LMI units. This approach is a modification of the Town's prior strategy to develop a tax incentive program for property owners who are willing to rehabilitate and convert existing rental apartment units into protected LMI units. As a revolving program, as funds are paid back, they can be reinvested in the community. The Town may want to target neighborhoods that show the greatest need for LMI housing and require affordability restrictions during the term of the loan.

d) Regional Coordination

The Town works cooperatively with the Washington County Community Development Corporation (WCCDC) to address regional affordable housing needs. The WCCDC is non-profit organization that assists in the development and management of affordable housing. This organization is a partner that can assist the Town in building local capacity to meet local demand and can be a tool in implementing prior strategies.

3. **Projecting LMI Unit Production**

Using the a combination of existing strategies to create LMI housing and implementing new approaches, the Town hopes to meet the demand for units that are affordable as well as the state-mandated goal of 10% of its housing dedicated for LMI households. Residential development is close to full buildout, and it is anticipated that an additional 1,004 year-round homes could be built on existing vacant or underutilized lots.¹² When or if these homes will be constructed is uncertain. The State and the New England region as a whole have been slow to rebound from the 2008 Economic Recession compared to the rest of the country. The number of building permits issued in Narragansett for residential development that peaked in the early 2000s gradually declined and has been less than 50 per year for the past three years.¹³ Conservatively, if it is assumed that this rate continues, it will take 20 years for the town to be fully built out, within the planning timeframe of this comprehensive plan. In that light,

¹² See "Land Use" in *Narragansett Comprehensive Plan Baseline Report*.

¹³ See Table 12 in *Narragansett Comprehensive Plan Baseline Report*.

the additional 1,004 year-round homes are considered when projecting LMI unit needs and meeting the mandated 10% goal.

Therefore, adding the projected new housing units that would be created on vacant and underutilized lots to the number of units reported in the 2010 US Census, the total number of year-round housing units projected at buildout is 8,160. As shown in Table 2, after considering the existing 250 LMI units, the Town needs an additional 566 units to meet the 10% goal.

Table 2. Projected Number of LMI Units Needed at Buildout Based on 10% Goal

2010 total year-round housing units	7,156
Additional year-round housing units projected to be built at buildout	1,004
Total projected year-round housing units	8,160
LMI units to meet 10% state-mandated goal	816
2010 LMI units	250
Additional LMI units needed to meet 10% mandated goal	566

The distribution of need among these 566 units was calculated in the *Narragansett Baseline Report*, and also shown in Table 3. A majority of the need is for families (41%), followed by the elderly and other populations with special needs. This latter group includes housing for singles, individuals with special needs and transient housing.

Table 3. Distribution of LMI Unit Needs by Household Type

Household Type	Proportional Need Projected	Number of LMI Units Needed at Buildout (816 to meet goal x CHAS %)	Existing Supply	Future Need
Elderly	30%	245	108	137
Family	41%	335	120	215
Other	29%	236	22	214
Total LMI Units		816	250	566

*Source: HUD 2000 CHAS Database, based on Washington County data

Based on these figures, the Town projected LMI unit development using its existing and proposed strategies. Table 4 details the number of units anticipated to be developed by strategy in five-year increments, and it is projected that it will take more than 50 years to meet the 10% goal. There are 109 LMI units currently being developed using the comprehensive permit process and it is anticipated that those units will be constructed within the first five-year timeframe ending in 2020. Overall, it is difficult to project which policies and strategies will gain momentum. Since the Economic Recession in 2008, the housing market did not really start to see improvement until 2012, and continued improvement is slow. Further, housing preferences are changing, and the desire for smaller units may drive certain policies over others in the next decade. Projected units were determined based on very conservative estimates, knowing that during the 10-year update of this plan (2025) numbers and strategies will be revisited. Therefore, the following assumptions were applied:

- No notable new construction will occur after 2035, the projected timeframe in which the Town will reach full buildout; therefore there will be less dependency on inclusionary zoning and comprehensive permits to produce LMI units.
- It will take several years for the NAHT to build enough funds to purchase land and develop LMI units.
- Developing housing for populations with special needs, such as persons with disabilities, will be incorporated with strategies identified for families as well. Wherever possible, the Rhode Island Developmental Disabilities Council promotes integrated living for persons with disabilities within a community as opposed to separate housing developments.¹⁴ Therefore, units for families are overestimated to accommodate this need.

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¹⁴ <http://www.riddc.org/5yrplan.shtml>

Table 4. Projected Construction of LMI Units by Strategy (2012-2050)

Strategy	2005	Current Units (2012)	Actual Construction by 2014	Projected Construction of LMI Units							Total	Need at Buildout
				2015-2020	2020-2025	2025-2030	2030-2035	2035-2040	2040-2045	2045-2050		
ELDERLY	110	108	0	7	10	25	35	45	55	65	242	245
Multi-Unit (Rental)	110	108	-	5	5	15	20	25	30	35	135	
Accessory Apartment (Rental)	-	-	-	2	5	10	15	20	25	30	107	
FAMILY	69	120	18	<u>114</u> 15	<u>43</u> 45	<u>43</u> 45	<u>38</u> 40	<u>36</u> 41	<u>52</u> 57	<u>52</u> 57	<u>396</u> 418	335
Inclusionary Zoning (Ownership & Rental)	-	-	0	2	5	5	5	0	0	0	17	
Unmerged Lots for Single Family (Ownership)	-	-	0	0	2	2	2	2	5	5	18	
Unmerged Lots for Multi-Family (Rental)	-	-	0	0	2	2	2	2	5	5	18	
NAHT Single or Multi-Family (Ownership & Rental)	-	-	0	0	0	5	5	5	10	10	35	
Accessory Apartments (Rental)	-	-	0	1	2	2	2	5	10	10	32	
Boon Street Village District (Rental)	-	-	0	1	2	2	2	5	5	5	22	-
Comprehensive Permit Process	-	-	18	109	20	15	10	0	0	0	172	
Transfer of Development Rights	-	-	0		2	2	2	2	2	2	12	
Infill and Conversion of Existing Housing	-	-	0	2	5	5	5	10	10	10	47	
Revolving Loan Fund	-	-	0		5	5	5	10	10	10	45	
SPECIAL NEEDS	25	22	0	0	3	5	10	10	10	10	48	236
Persons with Special Needs (Rental)	25	22	0	0	3	5	10	10	10	10	48	
TOTAL			18	<u>121</u>122	<u>56</u>58	<u>73</u>75	<u>83</u>85	<u>91</u>96	<u>117</u>122	<u>127</u>132	<u>686</u>708	816

F. Goals, Policies and Action Items

Goal H1: Maximize the benefits and minimize the costs of short-term renters without adding undue burdens to year-round residents and municipal resources.

Policy H1.1: ~~Ensure that all stakeholders have the ability to communicate concerns in an effort to develop resolutions for issues stemming from student renters.~~ Ensure a timely response to concerns related to student renter issues and a cooperative effort to develop resolutions.

- a. Evaluate current communication procedures to reach the public officials that administer municipal programs dealing with nuisances and local code violations. Determine any revisions, as needed, and work with town staff to implement revisions.

Policy H1.2: Reduce the impacts of student renters on the quality of life in local neighborhoods.

- a. Evaluate municipal regulatory and programmatic approaches that are designed to address the impacts of student renters and their effectiveness. Consider new approaches that might include assigning police detail in specific neighborhoods on Friday and/or Saturday nights.
- b. Investigate new ways to use the information in the existing rental property database.
- c. Continue to work with URI representatives to address neighborhood complaints associated with students.
 - Review the URI's off-campus housing policies and their effectiveness on minimizing neighborhood disturbances. Identify and collaborate on changes as needed.

Policy H1.3: Ensure that seasonal rentals do not unduly strain public services.

- a. Evaluate and document the positive and negative impacts of seasonal rentals (both student rentals from September to May and vacationers from June to August) on public services and facilities. Consider impacts to local public services (such as police, fire and rescue, water, and sewer services) as well as the social and economic impacts to local businesses and year-round residents.
- b. Identify long-term public service and infrastructure needs that may result from seasonal rentals. Determine if these needs can be met through capital improvements or require outside funding resources.

Policy H1.4: Ensure that rental properties meet local and state housing codes to maintain the health, safety, and welfare of occupants.

- a. Increase capacity to routinely inspect rental properties for housing code violations such as overcrowding, illegal parking and property maintenance. Avenues to consider are:
 - Inspect rental properties when complaints are received,
 - Inspect rental properties by neighborhood on a regular schedule, such as annually or biennial, or
 - Inspect rental properties as part of a neighborhood-based approach to code enforcement in areas where violations or complaints occur frequently.
- b. Consider the development of a Code Enforcement Task Force that evaluates progress towards improving living conditions in rental properties. The Task Force should be represented by property owners, landlords, tenants, Public Safety, Building Official, Zoning Official, and URI. The intent is to create a more proactive approach in addressing code enforcement, particularly where resources may be limited at the municipal level. The Task Force could focus on specific code violations that are prevalent in specific neighborhoods.

Policy H1.5: Maximize the benefits of seasonal rentals to the Town.

- a. Develop support from other communities and local legislatures for new state legislation that would allow municipalities to collect sales and use tax on seasonal rentals as appropriate.

Goal H2: Protect the unique character of Narragansett’s neighborhoods.

Policy H2.1: Promote high quality, energy-efficient residential design. (See Policy LU2.6)

Policy H2.2: Support residential infill and expansion that is sensitive to its surroundings and does not negatively impact a neighborhood’s character. (See Policy LU2.2 and LU2.8)

- a. Conduct architectural surveys of specific older neighborhoods and build on historic surveys as needed.
- b. Review and update subdivision regulations to incorporate guidelines that ensure infill is compatible to the surrounding neighborhood.

Goal H3: Provide residents with a high quality of life in safe, energy-efficient neighborhoods with many mobility options.

Policy H3.1: Ensure that every neighborhood has access to high quality recreational opportunities.

- a. Identify neighborhoods that do not have access to recreation or parks within a quarter mile (walking distance). Develop strategies to increase resources or establish links to access.
- b. Review and update subdivision regulations to increase recreation and/or open space.

Policy H3.2: Reduce the impacts to residential areas from neighboring, incompatible uses.

- ~~a. Evaluate the application of a renewed Village Zoning Ordinance to use mixed-use development as a transition between commercial and residential areas. (See Policy LU2.8 g.)~~
- ~~b.~~ a. Use the Greenbelt system to buffer residential areas from incompatible uses. (See Policy LU2.4)

Policy H3.3: Provide sidewalks in neighborhoods, as appropriate.

- a. Update subdivision regulations to encourage sidewalks in appropriate neighborhoods.
- b. Consider payment in lieu for waivers, where funds are placed in a dedicated “sidewalk fund” to be used to construct/repair sidewalks in other areas of town with a need.
- c. Evaluate neighborhoods for sidewalk installation. Prioritize those in close proximity to schools. (See Policy T2.2)

Policy H3.4: Ensure that neighborhoods have walking and biking connections to community resources such as parks, open spaces, schools, employment centers, and commercial areas as well as other adjacent neighborhoods. (See Policy T2.2)

- a. Update subdivision and land development regulations to encourage, where practicable, the creation of connections between neighborhoods as well as to commercial areas, schools, and recreational and open space resources.
- b. Identify the linkages (or lack of) between existing neighborhoods as well as to commercial areas, schools, and recreational and open space resources to identify opportunities for safe walking and bike routes.
- c. Apply for funding to build missing links.

Policy H3.5: Build links between neighborhoods and access to public transportation. (See Policy T2.3)

- a. Coordinate with the RIPTA and private transportation services as appropriate to increase accessibility to meet the need.

Policy H3.6: Encourage residents to be more energy efficient.

- a. Partner with local organizations that offer home improvement assistance to increase awareness of these programs to improve energy efficiency of homes.
- b. Consider establishing a municipal revolving loan program to replace heating systems, windows, exterior doors, etc.
- c. Promote state and federal programs that offer tax credits for installing renewable energy technology (solar water heaters, residential-scale wind turbines, etc.) on residential properties.
- d. Evaluate the feasibility of municipal tax credits for installing renewable energy technology (solar water heaters, residential-scale wind turbines, etc.) on residential properties.

Goal H4: Ensure long-term community sustainability by promoting diverse housing opportunities that are equitable and affordable for residents of all ages and incomes.

Policy H4.1: Encourage year-round rentals and homeownership to build a stable, year-round and diverse population.

- a. Evaluate the feasibility of municipal incentives to encourage property owners to rent to year-round tenants.
- b. Review the town's current tax policy. (See Policy ED2.5)

Policy H4.2: Use regulatory approaches to develop low and moderate income housing to meet the 10% state mandate.

- a. Revisit the Inclusionary Zoning ordinance to ensure that it is producing desired outcomes. Investigate using density bonuses to promote or allow for the development of affordable housing, except in areas designated by Rhode Island's Coastal Resource Management Council (CRMC) of critical concern or self sustaining lands zones.
- b. Revisit the proposed Lot Split Ordinance, which will allow existing "substandard lots of record" to be separated from the adjacent conforming lot if the substandard lot is developed with single family affordable housing.
- c. Consider incentives that would allow some existing affordable rental apartment buildings to be expanded, provided that some of the units are preserved as affordable family units.
- d. Revisit the Accessory Unit ordinance to make it more attractive to property owners.
- e. Evaluate the use of Transfer of Development Rights as a mechanism to create affordable housing.
- f. ~~Revisit the Village Zoning ordinance to assess its applicability to other areas of Town where mixed-use could be accommodated and incentives created to increase the development of affordable housing units.~~

Policy H4.3: Promote the construction, renovation and conversion of existing housing units as low and moderate income housing through local programs and incentives.

- a. Draft incentives to promote redesign of older platted subdivisions to a new layout which is more sensitive to environmental constraints as a way to create a new moderate/market priced subdivision opportunities.

- b. Seek funding from state and federal agencies for the construction of LMI housing, particularly as infill.
- c. Build reserves in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and develop programs that actively use the fund as a financial tool to support the development of affordable housing within the Town. Identify partners, such as the NCLT, to assist in program implementation.
- d. Develop incentives that encourage property owners to consider rehabilitating and converting their existing rental apartment units into protected affordable housing by:
 - Offering a reduction of property taxes;
 - Offering grant funds/low interest loans to rehabilitate units; and
 - Allowing additional units where it is appropriate.
- e. Meet, as needed, with state departments and local organizations to support existing group homes as well as promote the construction and or conversion of new special needs facilities.
- f. Investigate town properties that could be appropriate for the construction of affordable housing.
- g. Develop strategies to ensure that affordable housing development projects seeking a comprehensive permit through the State Affordable Housing Act have a predictable process and meet local environmental requirements and other community concerns.

Policy H4.4: Support local and regional boards, organizations, and associations in the advocacy and development of low and moderate income housing in Narragansett.

- a. Establish regular communication with the Narragansett Housing Authority.
- b. Identify ways the Narragansett Affordable Housing Trust can support the construction and rehabilitation of single family homes and multi-family buildings for both homeownership and rental opportunities for families.
- c. Participate in state and regional initiatives to advocate for affordable housing in Narragansett.
- d. Establish a supportive relationship with South County Community Action's Action Community Land Trust.
- e. Collaborate with the Washington County Community Development Corporation in the creation of affordable housing in the region and Narragansett.
- f. Establish supportive relationships with other organizations providing home ownership and rental opportunities for low/moderate income individuals and families.

VIII. HISTORIC, CULTURAL, AND SCENIC RESOURCES

Narragansett began as a seaside tourist destination for both the day-trippers looking to get the healing properties of the ocean air and the seasonal vacationers who built summer cottages to spend extended periods of time. The Town has evolved into a bedroom community, but it still has a strong tourism economy because of its historic and cultural resources that remind of us of its past and its scenic beauty. These features, along with its natural resources, create a sense of place and distinctiveness that make Narragansett unique. Residents are proud of its history and culture, and have worked to protect and enhance these features for enjoyment and education.

Through the public forums, residents discussed formative issues that impact the Town's ability to protect important historic, cultural, and scenic resources. Many issues revolve around resource identification and protection, awareness, and management. Residents recognize the work the Town has done in protecting important historic and cultural landmarks through designation and delineating districts and are in favor of continuing these efforts. Many of these properties and structures are also important recreation and open space resources, and a comprehensive and integrated approach to management is being proposed. There is also a concern that there is little awareness of the Town's history and residents believe there are opportunities to increase awareness and education as a way to build support for future initiatives by the town for resource protection and management.

A. Formative Issues

- Local Historic Districts and the National Register – Narragansett has successfully implemented a historic district program which is achieving its goals. The Town will consider expansion of these districts and the addition of new districts.
- Integrating and Connecting Resources – There are many historic sites and/or cultural resources that exist in a somewhat isolated fashion. Strategies to integrate or connect resources with each other or with other amenities such as parks and open space can strengthen their presence in the community.
- Awareness of Resources – Many residents and visitors are not aware of the number and diversity of historic resources in Narragansett. Strategies to increase awareness can increase protection, restoration and maintenance of these resources.
- Management and Administration – Narragansett's historic and cultural resources can only be maintained if there is a sustainable and diverse model for management and administration.
- Threats to Scenic Vistas – There are many scenic vantage points of the ocean, rivers, ponds and other natural features that contribute to Narragansett's character. New development, both vertical and horizontal, has the potential to block these views and vistas.

B. Local Historic Districts and the National Register

The Town has five successful historic districts: Sunset Farm, The Towers, Earls Court, Central Street, and Ocean Road. The purpose of these districts is to ensure that renovation and construction within these designated areas is performed in a way that preserves the historic features consistent with that particular district. The Narragansett Historic District Commission (NHDC) is the regulating authority and has worked with many property owners in both the mandatory and volunteer zones of the districts. Based on the success of the program, the NHDC sees future opportunities to expand the districts and develop incentives that would encourage more property owners to improve their properties. The NHDC

acquired Certified Local Government status through the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, which provides opportunities to increase local resources for preservation efforts.

The Town continues to make progress in preservation by designating historic homes and structures to the National Register of Historic Places as well as through local and state designation. Many properties still remain unprotected, including the Dunes Club, South Ferry Church, and Camp Varnum, which are eligible for historic designation on the National Register. Acquisition is an additional tool to protect properties, and some may be purchased by the Town in the future, or property owners can be encouraged to donate their property to the Town or dedicate an easement. Further investigations are required to identify available properties.

There are many unique features that may not necessarily be historic, but add to the culture of Narragansett. Examples include the South County Museum, URI's Narragansett Bay Campus, and Veterans Park. These resources offer venues for arts and cultural programming and exhibits that bring awareness to Narragansett's community. As the Town works with the organizations that manage these properties, they build relationships for further identification and capacity building opportunities.

C. Integrating and Connecting Resources

Because of Narragansett's historic and cultural links with the ocean and other scenic vistas, many of its historic and cultural features are linked with natural areas, open space, and recreational activities. Some examples include Fort Greene, the Point Judith Lighthouse and Nulman Park. However, there is still a further need to connect the Narragansett's historic and cultural resources in a more comprehensive system that will increase access and awareness. Creating an integrated network of open space and recreational resources with historic properties, cultural amenities, and scenic views will provide the Town with an opportunity to have a holistic approach to resource management. This type of planning should be performed in conjunction with other systemic planning issues such as attempts to increase walking and biking networks, as well as the preservation and extension of the Town's Green Belt (See **Land Use, Recreation and Open Space**, and **Transportation and Circulation**).

There are many common tools that can be used to meet the conservation, protection, and management goals for these resources. Some of these include land acquisition or easements, while others can include more innovative partnerships between the Town, residents, business owners and/or neighborhood groups. Regardless of the tools applied, integrating conservation programs can increase available resources as well as ensure that efforts are not duplicated by multiple municipal departments. A more integrated approach is therefore a more efficient approach and can save money for property acquisition, activities and events, or administrative resources where there is a central planning and organizing effort. Combining resources can also lead to opportunities to expand programming throughout the year, which attracts visitors during the winter months and bolsters local businesses during an otherwise quiet period in Town (See **Economic Development**).

D. Awareness of Resources

Building awareness of the Town's history and its cultural assets takes as much effort as preservation. Raising awareness increases local pride and acknowledgment by residents that these resources are important to the local quality of life and deserve protection. For example, residents take great pride in the seawall along Ocean Road between the Narragansett Town Beach and South Pier Road. During decent weather and any time of day, you will find people of all ages walking along the wall, sitting and watching the surf, or biking through the area. It is a cultural centerpiece with The Towers, Town Beach,

and Casino Park that attracts locals as well as visitors. Protecting the seawall and the views and connections it provides are important to the quality of life in Narragansett. By increasing local awareness of historic and cultural resources, the Town can build support for future preservation efforts that may require allocation of municipal fund or other resources. Local awareness also lends support for moving local preservation policies into the forefront.

The Town also has an opportunity to showcase these resources to the region and those planning to visit Narragansett. Linking historic and cultural resources with the Town's main attraction – its recreation and natural resources – can increase visibility. Using historic and cultural resources as an economic driver allows the Town to expand its partners in promoting preservation and provide a diverse range of activities for a variety of interests. (See **Economic Development**).

E. Management and Administration

The management and administration of historic, cultural and scenic resources involves both public and private entities. Within historic districts, private property owners are responsible for ensuring that the historic integrity of their property remains intact by following the guidance of the NHDC as empowered by the local zoning ordinance. Resources, including tax credits or low-interest loans, can be made available to property owners as incentives to maintain or improve their properties. The Town can partner with property owners through the use of the House Doctor Consultant (HDC) program, where the Town provides expert consultation on techniques to maintain or enhance the historic character of structures within the local historic districts. Private organizations, such as the Narragansett Historical Society, are also active in historic property management and protection. Looking for opportunities to increase their resources to meet objectives can be to the Town's advantage in preserving significant structures. Communication and, where appropriate, the sharing of resources will be critical for maintaining an efficient system for management and administration.

F. Threats to Scenic Vistas

The views and vistas from Narragansett roadways, parks, and open spaces are unlike those from any other community in Rhode Island. The many vantage points to the ocean, rivers, ponds, fields, farms, historic landmarks, and unique shoreline features draw visitors throughout the summer and serve as significant contributor to the local economy. Beyond the seasonal economy, scenic vistas in Narragansett are part of the year-round identity for residents and provide a unique backdrop to the high quality of life in town.

Threats to the scenic vistas that are such a big part of Narragansett's identity can come in many forms. In some cases, threats are small and incremental. As an example, the development of large homes in areas where the historic development pattern is dominated by small cottages can block views that have existed for other residents over many decades. It is important to note that, in these instances, local regulations enable the development of these homes and their construction is an exercise of the property rights associated with these parcels. The possibility of an increase in development restrictions for these areas would need to be considered carefully by residents and officials moving forward. In other cases, threats to scenic resources can be large and dramatic. Changes in global and local climate over the past decades suggest that the frequency and severity of coastal storms will continue to increase. The destruction caused by storms like Hurricane Sandy is a clear example of how factors outside of the Town's control can have an enormous impact on the ability to maintain scenic resources.

Narragansett will need to consider tools for protecting scenic vistas that address the full range of threats. A number of regulatory and/or planning tools can be explored, in cases where the town can potentially control the unintentional impacts of development. For example, scenic roadway designation through the Rhode Island Department of Transportation's Scenic Roadway Program can help give the town the leverage it needs to protect important views (See **Transportation and Circulation**). Local regulatory mechanisms, such as overlay districts, and incentive programs for private property owners to protect views across their properties are other alternatives that should be evaluated (See **Land Use**). With regard to the impacts of severe storms, the Town can continue to utilize state of the art hazard mitigation response mechanisms to fund and repair damages from these events (See **Natural Hazards**).

G. Goals, Policies and Action Items

Goal HCS1: Protect the local historic and cultural resources to retain the Town's sense of place and distinctive character.

Policy HCS1.1: Use local regulatory mechanisms to protect and enhance local historic and cultural resources.

- a. Determine the expansion of regulated areas of historic district zones following appropriate research and identification of historic properties.
- b. Modify the Town's zoning and subdivision regulations to promote preservation and enhancement of historic and cultural resources.
 - Modify the setback requirements within designated historic districts to more closely resemble the setback line of existing historic buildings.
 - Consider variable lot width and size zoning as an alternative to uniform lot frontages. This would vary the regularity of yard widths, setbacks, and lot sizes to break up frontage lot development patterns along rural roads and new subdivision roads.
 - Include specific language in permit standards, site plan review criteria and environmental impact statement requirements regarding information needed and design requirements for avoidance of impacts to historic resources, archaeological areas and districts.
 - ~~Investigate potential innovative adaptive reuse of large scale historic resources for mixed use or multi-family use in appropriate zones provided the historical setting and architecture is not adversely altered or affected (e.g. accessory apartments).~~
 - Modify subdivision regulations to encourage preservation of historic resources including appropriate site planning to preserve the integrity of estate buildings, farm buildings, archaeological sites, and their settings. Require cluster-type land development for large National Register eligible locations, archaeological sites or listed properties proposed for subdivision. Require that stone walls and other landscape features, either built or natural, be preserved and protected.
- c. Require placement of utilities underground for all state and municipal projects in areas that have been designated as historic or special districts and in designated scenic areas and areas with significant views.
- d. Evaluate the use of transfer of development rights (TDR) and other regulatory mechanisms or incentives to provide alternatives to the subdivision development of large historic estates and farms.
- e. Develop a stone wall protective ordinance.

Policy HCS1.2: Designate and, where appropriate, acquire important historic and cultural resources and plan for their protection.

- a. Nominate additional historic resources to the State and National Registers of Historic Places.
- b. Designate new historic districts for local historical district zoning which are comprised of the listed and eligible National Register resources and appropriate local resources which form a cohesive historic area.
- c. Develop and implement a public facility management plan which includes town-owned historic resources and provides for the preservation of these resources.

Policy HCS1.3: Support government agency and non-governmental organization programs that protect historic and scenic resources.

- a. Participate on the RI Advisory Commission on Historical Cemeteries to advocate the preservation of historical cemeteries.
- b. Support the Narragansett Historical Society, the South County Museum and other not-for-profit organizations wishing to promote historic preservation activities.

Policy HCS1.4: Encourage private property owners to maintain the historic qualities of their properties.

- a. Investigate property tax incentives for the certified rehabilitation of designated historic properties (e.g. State historic preservation tax credit and/or local property tax waivers).
- b. Promote a town-sponsored program for the purchase of historic facade easements which makes use of grant assistance from federal, state and foundation sources.
 - Promote a voluntary easement donation program first, then expand to easement purchase when funding allows.
- c. Promote a local revolving loan fund for certified rehabilitations of historic structures in cooperation with neighboring towns.

Goal HCS2: Promote the sustainable use of historic and cultural resources to increase awareness and access.

Policy HCS2.1: Combine economic development initiatives with historic preservation and open space-recreation initiatives. (See Policy ED1.2)

- a. Develop events and programs that highlight Narragansett's historic resources and draw visitors to the area, particularly during the "off season."

Policy HCS2.2: Increase access to and awareness of historic and cultural resources while still protecting their integrity and cultural significance.

- a. Consider publishing educational and promotional materials which describe Narragansett's historic and scenic resources.
 - A guide on successful historic rehabilitation design in Narragansett.
- b. Make connections between open spaces, historic districts, and the bike path through Narragansett using the abandoned Sea View Railroad rights-of-way and the William C. O'Neill Bike Path.

Goal HCS3: Enhance and protect the Town’s unique scenic views and vistas.

Policy HCS3.1: Maintain the scenic qualities of Narragansett through municipal programs.

- a. a. Acquire property by purchase or donation through active participation of the Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust.
- b. b. Identify scenic overlay districts or scenic resource zones that could protect important landscapes and structures that create distinctive views
- c. c. Designate scenic roads for protection from insensitive upgrade plans.
 - Develop a process to review town submissions under the State Division of Planning's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for scenic roads such that design standards are set early in the planning stages and based upon analysis of character-defining features of each road. The following roads, or portions thereof, should be considered among others for designation as scenic roads:
 - Point Judith Escape Road
 - Ocean Road
 - Point Judith Lighthouse Road
 - South Ferry Road
 - Old Boston Neck Road, North Road
 - Scenic 1A
 - Gibson Avenue
 - Route 1
 - Adopt regulations for alterations and construction along scenic roads to preserve character, including trees, stone walls, landscaping, culverts, and driveways.

Policy HCS3.2: Encourage private property owners to maintain the scenic views across their properties.

- a. Promote the use of scenic and open space easements.
- b. Promote a voluntary easement donation program first, then expand to easement purchase when funding allows.

IX. NATURAL RESOURCES

Taking a sustainable approach to natural resource management considers not only environmental quality issues, but also the social and economic roles these resources play in the community. Thriving natural resources serve a variety of functions that provide a community with many benefits. They offer aesthetic benefits, recreational opportunities, and ecological diversity. A healthy natural environment provides clean water, good air quality, and productive soils. It can also contribute to the local economy and absorb damaging impacts that storms and flooding may have on the built environment. Managing natural resources through the lens of sustainability also ensures that the integrity of resources are maintained and improved for future generations.

Participants at the Comprehensive Plan public workshop held on September 13, 2012 were asked to prioritize general areas of concern for the three Planning Districts. Natural resources were identified as important features that require attention in all districts. Many felt that resources were stressed from over-use and needed better management to ensure their protection and long-term sustainability. On the other hand, there was also the opinion that access to some resources should be improved in an environmentally responsible way that allows residents to enjoy and appreciate all the natural features that the Town is fortunate to have.

A. Formative Issues

- Protecting and Enhancing Environmental Quality – Narragansett is home to some of the most complex, fragile and important resources in the state, which are centered on its water resources. Maintaining surface water quality is not only important to protect wildlife habitat, but also to support the local economy (e.g., fishing industry, recreational boating, and swimming) as well as to every day quality of life for residents.
- Supporting the Local Economy – Narragansett’s local economy depends in large part on the influx of money from regional tourism. Tourism places stress on natural resources and the benefits of tourism need to be balanced with the capacity of different resources to withstand certain levels of use. Aquaculture operations represent a viable economic venture in the community, but operations will need to be well-managed in Point Judith Pond to protect the resource. On a much broader and more forward-looking level, migration of beaches needs to be better understood in order to anticipate economic and environmental impacts.
- Natural Hazards and Climate Change – Sea level rise and the increased intensity and number of severe storms due to climate change are anticipated to impact existing natural resources, such as wetlands and coastal features. Because this issue affects Narragansett more than most other Rhode Island communities, policies are required to anticipate the needs of the community moving forward.
- Opportunities for Partnerships – Environmental resources affect everyone, and many organizations and individuals have a strong stake in maintaining the well-being of Narragansett’s resources. The Town will need to be resourceful and strategic in creating partnerships to further these interests.

B. Protecting and Enhancing Environmental Quality

Environmental quality of the Town’s natural resources needs to be protected and enhanced, wherever and whenever possible. The natural resources discussed in this chapter are found on both public and private properties.

1. Impacts from Development and Land Use Activities

One contributor to the loss and degradation of natural systems is development and associated land use activities. If unplanned and unmonitored, development and redevelopment activities can result in loss of existing habitats. Land use activities can include construction and daily operations of industrial and commercial areas, and residential areas. Land use activities also include diverse recreational uses. The Town's natural resources, including water bodies, are popular places for hiking, boating, and swimming (see **Recreation and Open Space**).

The Town uses its Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision Regulations to manage where development occurs, how it occurs, and where different activities can take place (see **Land Use**). The purpose of the Environmental Overlay Zones (Narragansett Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 4) is to protect environmentally sensitive areas, such as floodplains, coastal wetlands and features, inland wetlands, and areas with high water tables, from impacts of land use activities. Periodic review of these regulations and updates ensure that their purpose is being met, and natural resources are not being compromised.

The Town also administers several programs that are designed to protect and enhance the natural environment, including wastewater management. These programs are discussed in **Community Services and Facilities**, and should be considered in decision-making processes regarding natural resource protection.

2. Impacts from Non-Point Source Pollution

Policies that address non-point source pollutants (stormwater that runs off the land) guide decisions about land use activities to protect local surface water resources. Runoff from developed areas can carry pollutants into nearby water bodies and impacts their water quality. Water quality influences the productivity of local ponds and wetlands, which are the nurseries for the fisheries that sustain the commercial and sport fishery industries out of Galilee.

According to the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM), Narragansett's water bodies are being impacted by non-point source pollutants as well as land use practices within their watersheds. Those of critical concern are Point Judith Pond and Narrow River.

Point Judith Pond: Point Judith Pond is a shared resource between the towns of Narragansett and South Kingstown. The pond and its surrounding environment support residential uses as well as recreational and commercial businesses. Its wetlands are nurseries for important fisheries that support commercial fishing at Galilee and sport fishing off the coast. There are also aquaculture facilities in the pond as well as recreational boating and private docks. Along the shores and on the small islands within the pond are land uses that also impact water quality through runoff or direct discharges. Balancing uses is important to protecting water quality and addressing them requires a comprehensive approach that minimizes impacts without compromising the use of Point Judith Pond as a vital recreational and commercial resource.

At the state level, the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) adopted the *Salt Pond Region Special Area Management Plan (SAMP)* in 1999. The SAMP recognizes the water quality issues in Point Judith Pond as part of the salt ponds region and notes that evidence shows degradation occurring as a result of existing residential sources of nitrogen and bacteria. The SAMP classifies lands impacting the water quality of the salt ponds and dictates policies and recommendations for land development. Guiding these policies and recommendations is a Land

Use Classification Map in the SAMP (Map 11). The map identifies most land in Narragansett abutting and in the vicinity of Point Judith Pond as either “Lands of Critical Concern” or “Developed Beyond Carrying Capacity.” Lands of Critical Concern are adjacent to sensitive habitats and are either undeveloped or developed at densities not exceeding one residential unit per 120,000 square feet. Lands that are Developed Beyond Carrying Capacity are developed at densities of one residential or commercial unit on parcels of less than 80,000 square feet, and frequently at higher densities of 10,000 square feet or 20,000 square feet per unit. Unless mitigated, this type of development results in higher nutrient loading and contaminated runoff. These classifications influence land use decisions made by the town (also see **Land Use**).

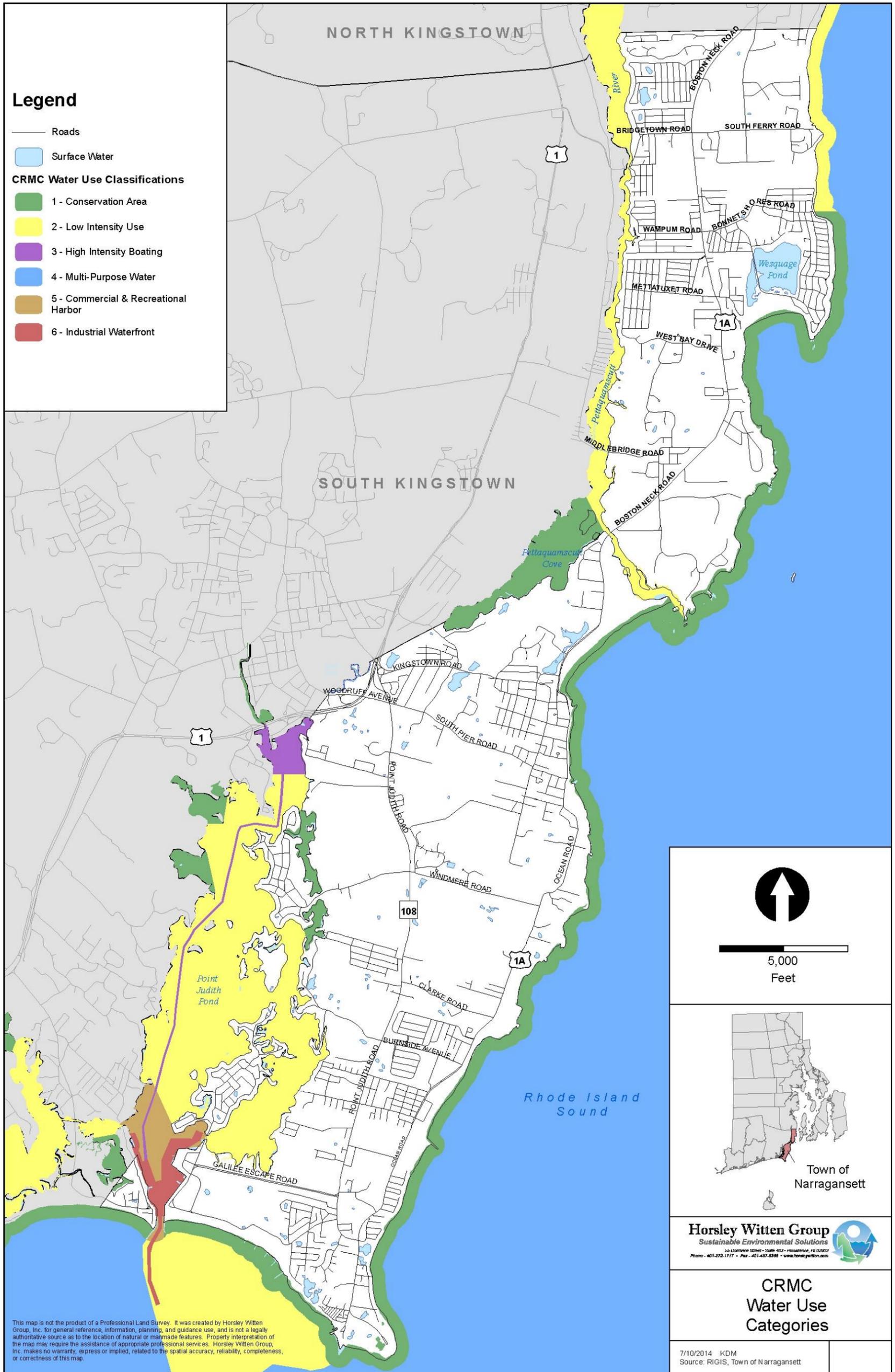
In 2006 RIDEM listed Point Judith Pond, including the upper pond, Billington Cove, Champlin Cove, and the Lower Saugatucket River, as an impaired water body (303(d) List) because the waters did not support their designated uses, including shellfish harvesting and primary recreation, due to fecal coliform bacteria. RIDEM developed a total maximum daily load (TMDL) plan in 2008 to restore water quality.¹⁵ The plan noted that significant water quality improvements would result from implementation of recommendations to the Saugatucket River. Working with the Town of South Kingstown and the State, Narragansett will support RIDEM and their efforts to improve water quality.

Narrow River: The water quality of Narrow River is impacted by stormwater runoff from adjacent neighborhoods. The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) adopted the *Narrow River SAMP* (1999) and promotes an ecosystem-based management approach to the Narrow River estuarine complex. It calls for a cooperative effort on behalf of RIDEM, CRMC, and the watershed towns to determine the impacts of stormwater runoff on the river, design mitigation, and upgrade existing direct stormwater outfalls. In 1992, the towns of Narragansett, North Kingstown, and South Kingstown, in cooperation with RIDEM, CRMC, and the Narrow River Preservation Association, completed a study and determined that “significant loads of nitrogen were coming into the River through stream flow and groundwater seepage in dry weather conditions, as well as from the expected stormwater flow during wet weather conditions.”¹⁶ According to the study, the main source of fecal coliform into the river was from stormwater outfalls in Narragansett. Since then, the Town has implemented best management practices (BMPs) to reduce pollutants into the river, particularly on Wampum Road, Conanicus Road, Mettatuxet Road, Montauk Road, and in the Edgewater neighborhood. Property owners are encouraged to implement small-scale BMPs, including the use of rain gardens and rain barrels, to reduce stormwater runoff from their properties.

Poor flushing has contributed to Narrow River’s sensitivity to non-point source pollutants. Other avenues the town can pursue to improve water quality in Narrow River include methods to improve flushing.

¹⁵ <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/benviron/water/quality/rest/pdfs/pjpond.pdf>

¹⁶ Narrow River Preservation Association, 2008. *A Guide to Living on the Watershed*, page 3



Map 11. CRMC Water Use Classifications

Management of non-point source pollution is done at the state level through permitting programs of CRMC and RIDEM as well as at the local level through municipal ordinances and programs. In 2010, RIDEM and CRMC jointly reissued the *Rhode Island Stormwater Design and Installation Standards Manual* (2010 Stormwater Manual).¹⁷ These agencies recognize that effective management of stormwater needs to address both the quantity of runoff as well as the quality. The manual requires the use of, to the maximum extent practicable (as defined), low-impact design (LID) techniques as the primary method to control stormwater runoff from new development, redevelopment and infill. Instead of altering a site to accommodate structural stormwater BMPs, LID uses the natural systems and terrain of a site to manage and treat stormwater. The manual provides guidance for planning, designing, and implementing these types of stormwater BMPs.

Non-Point Source Pollution refers to pollution that cannot be traced back to a single pipe. Examples include failing septic systems and stormwater runoff over land.

Through Section 7.7, Supplemental Drainage Requirements, of the Zoning Ordinance, the Town requires development projects to meet local and state stormwater requirements. The ordinance should be updated to reference the 2010 Stormwater Manual. Additionally, the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations should promote LID techniques, and be updated to reference the 2010 Stormwater Manual and reflect its requirements.

The Narrow River Preservation Association along with the Salt Pond's Coalition and URI Watershed Watch conduct extensive monitoring of water quality in the Narrow River and Point Judith Pond providing extensive data on nutrient loading, bacteria, dissolved oxygen, and other variables key to assessing non-point pollution and evaluating stormwater management projects and other remediation efforts. The Town should seek out assistance from the Narrow River Preservation Association and other conservation-focused organizations to assist in studying its major waterbodies and advocating for their protection.

The Town also implements the requirements of its Phase II Stormwater Permit. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Stormwater Phase II Rule establishes a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) program to reduce pollutants that are discharged into the Nation's waterways from these systems during storm events. The MS4 program was implemented in two phases. Phase I required operators of "medium" and "large" MS4s (systems serving urbanized areas with populations of 100,000 or more) to obtain a permit as a means to implement a stormwater management program to control pollutants discharged from the MS4. Phase II extended the coverage to "small" MS4s. Narragansett obtained its permit in 2013, and as part of that permit, drafted a Stormwater Pollutant Prevention Program Plan (SWPPP) that outlines how it will implement its stormwater program. More discussion about the Town's MS4 Permit and SWPPP and their implementation is provided in **Community Services and Facilities**.

C. Supporting the Local Economy

The Town's natural resources support the local economy through their recreational, tourism, agricultural and aquacultural uses. This makes them vital to the survival of local businesses and the diverse sectors they represent. The Town supports the sustainable use of natural resources for local industries such as commercial and recreational fishing, tourism, and agriculture. For more discussion on other ways the Town supports local businesses, see **Economic Development**.

¹⁷ <http://www.dem.ri.gov/pubs/regs/regs/water/swmanual.pdf>

1. Commercial Fishing

As the 4th largest fishing port in New England, the commercial fishing industry based in Galilee is dependent on the environmental quality of the region's coastal features and water bodies. Local water bodies, such as Point Judith Pond and Narrow River, and their associated wetlands, are nursing grounds for finfish and shellfish that support this sector. As discussed above, protecting these features from development and land use activities, including management of non-point source pollutants, will improve their environmental quality.

The 2007 Narragansett Harbor Management Plan (HMP) is a tool for the Town to protect these resources. It lays out a framework for the management of the Town's harbors and coastal water bodies to balance diverse uses and provide public access. While the Comprehensive Plan recognizes all the objectives of the HMP, the following HMP objectives relate specifically to environmental protection and enhancement of environmental quality that support commercial fishing:

- Safeguard and improve the water quality of the harbors and coastal waters to ensure their continued use for safe public contact recreation, recreational and commercial fishing activities and boating.
- Gain the proper balance between the preservation of the living resources of the harbors and the diversity and intensity of activities they support.
- Recognize the importance, historically and economically, of the local fin and shell fisheries, and take appropriate measures to prevent encroachment or impairment of these resources.
- Support the request for Point Judith Pond and the Pettaquamscutt River (Narrow River) to be added to the ISDA Coastal Pond Critical Resource Area, and advocate that these water bodies be added to the State's request for a federally designated No-Discharge Zone. All RI marine waters were declared no discharge in August of 1998.
- Support intergovernmental cooperation and coordination to enhance protection of the coastal resources and water bodies of Narragansett. Participation from municipal boards of the bordering towns, CRMC, and DEM would improve the promotion of these necessary protection efforts.

The Harbor Management Commission is currently drafting an update of the HMP in conjunction with local policy and decision makers to ensure that resources remain protected. Of interest is the growing shellfish farming industry in Point Judith Pond and its potential impact on water quality.

2. Tourism

The Town's natural resources not only make Narragansett a desirable place to live, but they also attract visitors, particularly those who want to be outdoors to experience nature and its scenic beauty. Beaches, waterways, and access to the shore are all drivers for the local tourism economy. These resources provide opportunities for diverse active and passive activities, such as sunbathing, hiking, kayaking, canoeing, photography, sailing, bird watching, and recreational fishing.

It is the Town's policy to promote the sustainable use of its natural resources to support its tourism economy. For resources within public lands, management and accessibility is addressed under **Recreation and Open Space**. Critical are the Town Beach and its dune system. The Town Beach is a major resource made up of the beach front, the dunes, the tidal ponds, the buildings, parking areas and bordering roadway. Long-term reclamation strategies to address beach erosion and sea level rise will be further discussed under **Natural Hazards**. Strategies include a beach replenishment program and the

evaluation of feasible alternatives to maintain the beach, considering, among others, sand sources, timeframes and costs.

The economic benefits of protecting resources on private lands can appear limited, but ecosystems are all interconnected and pollution does not stop at a property line. While enforcing existing environmental protection regulations for private development and activities, the Town must also recognize its potential to support resource-dependent local economic activities.

3. Agriculture

Important agricultural soils are limited in Narragansett, but those that exist are important for the current farming activities. Additionally, abandoned agricultural fields serve as habitat for certain bird species that use these areas for nesting grounds and migration resting stops. It should be noted that prime agricultural soils in Narragansett are primarily found in areas with high water tables which have limited development potential because of the need for onsite wastewater management systems. Existing, active farms are Sunset Farm and Canonchet Farm, both small scale operations owned by the Town of Narragansett. For more information about the role of agriculture in Narragansett, see **Economic Development** and **Recreation and Open Space**.

Through the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, the Town can require the identification of agricultural soils on a parcel being submitted for development. This will allow Town Staff to evaluate their significance as it relates to agricultural activities in Narragansett and advocate for their protection, as appropriate.

D. Natural Hazards and Climate Change

One of the important benefits of natural systems is minimizing the impacts of severe storms with high winds and rain (e.g., hurricanes, “Nor’easters”), particularly in coastal areas. Coastal features such as dune systems and wetland complexes absorb wind and water associated with storm surges and provide flood protection. The fact cannot be overemphasized that Narragansett is a coastal community and will experience some level of impact by severe storms community-wide. Some identifiable areas in Narragansett are vulnerable to storm surges and winds from coastal storms than others. These areas include low-lying properties on the immediate coast and those along Boston Neck Road, Sand Hill Cove, Salt Pond, Narrow River, Wesquage Pond and Ocean Road. Recent evidence of this vulnerability was the evidenced by damage to private property and public infrastructure during the record-breaking floods of March 2010, Hurricane Irene, and Hurricane Sandy. The Town’s Beach Sustainability Committee has undertaken an effort to study the impacts of storms and tides on the Town Beach facility. The Town should welcome and consider data studies and information from all sources that address these Natural Hazards. See **Natural Hazards** for more discussion on vulnerable areas and related policies.

Coastal areas in Narragansett are also vulnerable to sea level rise. Over time, as the coastline changes, natural systems will also change and migrate, and in some cases they will be lost. The issues that arise from these changes and the Town’s policies around them are also found in **Natural Hazards**.

E. Opportunities for Partnerships

Partnerships with neighboring communities, federal and state government agencies and non-governmental organizations can further the Town’s efforts in protecting and enhancing natural resources. There are many ways to work together, including chances to pool funding, coordinate volunteers, and hold special events to promote the importance of a healthy natural environment.

The Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust is a local governmental body working to protect open space, farm land, scenic vistas, wetlands and other critical habitats in an effort to preserve land for future public recreational and educational use and maintain access to coastal waters. They are an important group in coordinating efforts between the Town and its partners.

In the region, Narragansett is involved in collaborative efforts with North Kingstown and South Kingstown in addressing water quality issues in Narrow River. Equally, it works with South Kingstown to improve water quality in Point Judith Pond. Additionally, because the Town does not have its own potable water supply, but purchases water from both North Kingstown and South Kingstown, Narragansett works with these communities to protect groundwater resources that serve as drinking water supplies (also see **Community Services and Facilities**).

At the state level, RIDEM and CRMC also collaborate in meeting water quality standards. As previously mentioned, CRMC's regional management policies in the Salt Pond and Narrow River SAMPs provide additional oversight to guide activities within these coastal areas.¹⁸ These relationships are important in leveraging technical resources and expertise. RIDEM and federal agencies are also involved in acquiring open space to protect natural resources (also see **Open Space and Recreation**).

Additional partnerships with non-governmental organizations are also needed to expand local knowledge and involve the community. These include but are not limited to several larger non-profits such as The Narrow River Preservation Association, The Nature Conservancy and Audubon Society as well as local community groups like the Friends of Canonchet. All of these organizations play an important role in meeting demands to provide financial resources not only to acquire properties, but also to participate in maintenance and programming activities.

F. Goals, Policies and Action Items

Goal NR1: Protect and enhance the environmental quality of the Town's natural resources.

Policy NR 1.1: Ensure that natural resources are protected from impacts associated with development. (See Policy LU2.3)

- a. Provide economic incentives for owners not to develop, or limit development, in areas of critical environmental concern.
- b. Link Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust, RIDEM, and other conservation organizations with private property owners for acquisition of easements, fee simple donation, etc.

Policy NR 1.2: Support federal, state, and local agencies as well as non-governmental organizations in protecting natural resources.

- a. Work with CRMC in monitoring coastal activities in and on Point Judith Pond and in the implementation of the Salt Pond SAMP.
- b. Establish partnerships with Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust, Friends of Canonchet, Narrow River Preservation Association, Audubon Society of Rhode Island, and The Nature Conservancy, among others working in the region.

¹⁸ <http://www.crmc.ri.gov/samps.html>

Policy NR 1.3: Protect water resources and mitigate impacts from non-point sources of pollution.
(See Goal CSF10)

- a. Investigate methods to improve flushing in Narrow River.
- b. Work with the Town of South Kingstown to support RIDEM in addressing the impacts of upstream contributions of non-point source pollution on Point Judith Pond.
- c. Integrate stormwater management techniques and regulations identified in RIDEM's Stormwater Design Manual, as appropriate for Narragansett.
- d. Where socially and economically feasible, use natural systems (e.g. "green infrastructure") to treat stormwater runoff
- e. Play an active role with North Kingstown and South Kingstown in their efforts to protect groundwater resources that serve as drinking water supplies.
- f. Review water quality data developed each year by all sources available including but not limited to the Salt Ponds Coalition, Narrow River Preservation Association and the URI Watershed Watch.
- g.

Goal NR2: Ensure that the Town's natural resources contribute to the local quality of life.

Policy NR 2.1: Ensure that residents and visitors share access to natural resources, where appropriate. (See Policy ROS1.2)

- a. Integrate public access into management plans of public lands, as appropriate.

Goal NR3: Promote sustainable use of natural resources to support the local economy.

Policy NR3.1: Ensure the protection of natural resources while maintaining their accessibility for economic activities.

- a. Implement the Harbor Management Plan and update it periodically, but always within 10 years of any prior update, with new data, management techniques, and available technical and financial resources.
- b. Develop short term approaches to reestablish and protect coastal dunes.
- c. Continue to evaluate and establish long-term reclamation strategies to address the impacts of erosion and sea level rise on the Town Beach. Pursue funding and resources to help implement feasible strategies.
- d. Initiate a plan to cooperate and work with the State to establish long term resiliency plan for Boston Neck Road.
- e. Monitor the beach profile for continued sand replenishment, consider a plan for dune replenishment, and consider new materials, such as pervious asphalt, for the parking lot surfaces.
- f. Analyze the impact that sea level rise may have on the need to elevate Town beach structures.
- g. Coordinate with the State to ensure adequate maintenance of the Seawall and Boston Neck Road.
- h. Coordinate with state and federal sources to pursue dredging of the mouth of Narrow River and consider acceptability of the sand for beach replenishment.

X. RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

Parks and open space provide opportunities for people to be active, socialize with neighbors, and interact with nature. In Narragansett recreation and open space resources are unique and diverse. They include farms, forests, beaches, hiking trails, and deep sea fishing (See Map 12). They contribute greatly to the quality of life of Narragansett residents and play a significant role in the Town's tourism industry. The Town needs to think about how these resources connect to existing and future residential areas as well as how to provide and maintain high-quality facilities (see **Housing and Neighborhoods** and **Community Services and Facilities**).

Public recreational resources also attract visitors who support local businesses and contribute to the enjoyment of historic and cultural resources. New opportunities to expand the typical "summer season" with year-round investments and attractions can not only boost outside money spent in town, but residents can also benefit from the new activities (see **Historic, Cultural and Scenic Resources** and **Economy**).

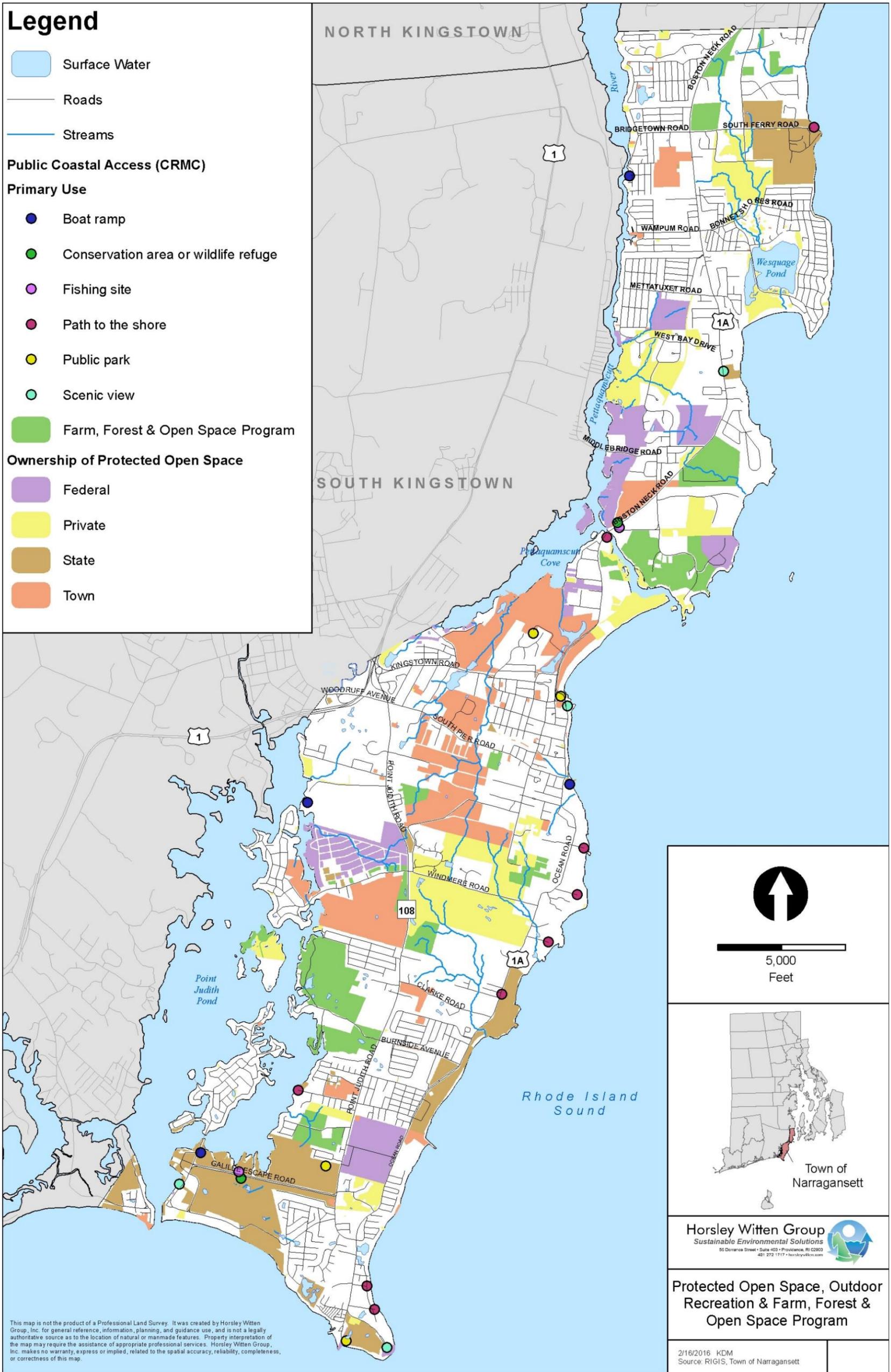
A. Formative Issues

- Changing Demographics: The types of recreation and open space resources and programming offered through the Town need to meet demands of the Town's aging population.
- Increasing Resources and Access: Residents support the acquisition of properties for open space and recreation. Access to many of the Town's recreational resources have been improved and programming is reviewed each year for new program initiatives for all age groups.
- Linking to the Economy: The Town's recreation and open space resources are the core of its seasonal economy.
- Managing Resources: Property management of municipal open space and recreational resources is a constant challenge. Maintenance partnerships with the public and community groups enhance maintenance of recreational sites.

B. Changing Demographics

As the Town plans for recreation and open space, it must consider the needs of current residents and anticipate the needs of future residents over the next 20 years. The Town's demographic trends analysis (see Baseline Report) indicates that the average age in Narragansett was 40 in 2010, and in the last 10 years, the number of school-aged children declined while the proportion of residents over the age of 50 increased. As the Town works towards building an economically and social diverse community, meeting the future recreation and open space needs of Narragansett residents will be two-fold.

First, the Baby Boomers make up a significant portion of the Town's population and as they enter retirement, recreational programming will need to adapt. The Town's recreation survey indicated that residents were looking for more programs and activities for residents over the age of 60. Nationally, the majority of Baby Boomers do not intend on moving to a new geographic area when they retire, but are interested in downsizing, and expect to maintain a part-time job or even start a new career. Some may be impacted by the recent economic recession, and continuing to work may not be a choice. Baby Boomers are also expected to live longer and lead healthier and more active lifestyles than their parents. These residents are interested in diverse recreational opportunities, travel, culture, and



Map 12. Protected Open Space, Outdoor Recreation, and Farm, Forest, and Open Space Program

Note to Planning Board: This is a new map.

technology. Programming needs to accommodate a variety of interests and scheduling constraints of the new “working” retiree.

Second, while population trends show that young families are leaving Narragansett, the Town’s housing policies include a focus on bringing them back (See **Housing and Neighborhoods**). The Town needs to link housing with recreation and open space resources, particularly playgrounds, ball fields, bike paths, and other facilities that support families.

As the Town moves forward in planning for recreational and open space resources, creating opportunities for multi-generational facilities can help meet many needs. While programming for seniors might be specific to that age group, there is great interest by seniors to have these activities integrated with other programming. Integration promotes interaction between age groups, sharing of experiences and increased quality of life. This requires new ideas for better and more efficient transportation infrastructure making travel and access to travel easier.

C. Increasing Resources and Access

There are some recreational needs not being met in the community, and increasing the number of available resources or improved access to existing resources can meet these needs. A discussion of unmet needs is provided in the Baseline Report. The Town will continue to seek opportunities to acquire properties or conservation easements through regulatory and programmatic approaches. Properties can be for the creation of developed recreational facilities (ball fields, courts, etc.) or open space to meet conservation needs (See also **Natural Resources**). The Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust is the municipal agency that leads land acquisition efforts. By promoting land and resource dedication in the local subdivision and land development regulations, recreational demands that will be added by new development and redevelopment projects can be proportionally increased. Design of new development and redevelopment should be performed in a way that new recreational facilities and/or open space resources are integrated with other resources on neighboring properties to create an integrated, greenbelt system town-wide. Tools such as cluster design or the Planned Residential District can be used (see **Land Use**).

Increasing access to parks and other recreational resources on the neighborhood level is important to maintain a high quality of life for residents. Most the Town-owned recreation facilities are located in the Central Area of Town. The North End, which has a high concentration of families and children, could benefit from additional resources and improved access to those that do exist. While there are significant recreational facilities located at Christofaro Park and some additional facilities in the Mettatuxet and Bonnet Shores neighborhoods, any significant future residential developments should be encouraged to include new recreational development. Formalized connections by walking paths and bike routes between residential areas and parks create safe environments and promote healthier, active lifestyles (See **Transportation and Circulation**). Coordination with neighborhood groups can build consensus around location and types of equipment or facilities that are in highest demand.

Being a coastal community, access to the shore is assumed to be part of everyday life, and the opportunities in Narragansett are diverse. There are opportunities to swim, boat, hike, fish, and observe. Conditions and level of accessibility will vary from one area to another, depending on size, environmental features, and safety. Some public access points owned and operated by the Town or the State, such as beaches and parks, are maintained through existing governmental programs and funding. Other sites, however, are not, such as the Narrow River access points adjacent to the Sprague Bridge,

and several roadway right-of-ways that terminate at the rocky shoreline off Ocean Road. The Narragansett Conservation Commission, through its Adopt-A-Spot Program, works with volunteers to enhance and maintain sites. As a way to make the most of limited resources, the Town should develop a ranking system of public access points in need of improvement. Additionally, the Town should establish a policy for signing these areas to educate the public to their potential safety hazards, particularly at Newton Avenue, Hazard Avenue and Bass Road.

Acquiring new properties can be challenging with limited budgets. The Town, along with the Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust, can identify potential funding sources to obtain municipal money. There are diverse recreational and open space resources in Narragansett on state properties as well, and the Town should actively involve itself with any type of development, establishing a protocol for an annual meeting, discussion or planning with regard to these assets. The Town must seek a venue and process to be cooperative with the State in developing recreational opportunities (and any opportunity) for residents. State and federal properties may also become available for purchase, and the Town should encourage all other governmental entities to favor local acquisition. Properties that are of interest to the Town are the Port of Galilee, Camp Varnum, URI Bay Campus, the lighthouse, Rose Nulman Park, Fort Greene, and Camp Cronin, which is owned by the City of Providence. Residents are also looking for year-round recreational opportunities, indoors or outdoors. The Town does not have many indoor facilities, but the Recreational Building at the Camp is the capital priority project for the Parks and Recreation Department. When completed, it can provide indoor recreational opportunities. The Community Center is small and primarily functions as a senior center during the day and provides meeting and rental space for private and nonprofit functions on week nights and weekends. An separate indoor gymnasium (to supplement those located in three schools) is a large expense, but should be considered. Coordination with neighboring communities may be one way to meet a regional need. Outdoor opportunities during the non-summer months could include a skating rink.

D. Linking with the Economy

The Town's public beaches, waterways, and parks bring visitors to the area and are therefore critical to the local tourism economy (See **Economic Development**). The Town provides a variety of outdoor experiences that can also be linked to its historic and cultural resources. When planning and developing management plans for these resources, Narragansett must take a sustainable approach and consider how these resources are accessed and used and integrate the concept of geotourism, visiting a place to enhance or sustain its environment, aesthetics, culture, heritage and well-being of its residents.¹⁹ The Rhode Island Geotourism Collaborative focuses on sustaining the places and experiences in Rhode Island that make it unique and give it a sense of place, such as recreation, open spaces, and historic and cultural features. The Town should utilize this resource and others like it to plan how its present and future recreation and open space resources can support geotourism in Narragansett.

In Narragansett, its distinctive recreation and open space features and properties, such as the Town Beach, Narrow River, The Towers, and Canonchet Farms, must be maintained to ensure that visitor demands are being met, but also to ensure that facilities are not overburdened and they can be enjoyed by future generations. These facilities, especially the Town Beach, are central to our summer tourist economy. Capacity of local resources to support activities must be sustained in an economically and environmentally sound way and access is equitable. Integrating economic development into existing

¹⁹ <http://www.visitrhodeisland.com/geotourism/what-is-geotourism/>

management plans is one way to ensure that resources are managed properly, but also to promote their use to the public and increase accessibility. The Town Beach Enterprise Fund must be adequately funded to anticipate major capital expenses. While this fund is a sustaining fund whose balance carries forward from year to year, the fees that serve as its main source of funds must be reviewed periodically to ensure sufficient balance is available to cover anticipated expenses. Leveraging or bonding this fund for such purposes should be an available tool to the Town.

E. Managing Resources

To give residents a higher quality of life, and meet the expectations of visitors, the Town needs to ensure that the quality of recreation and open space resources remains high. This requires property management and regular maintenance that enhances and sustains environmental quality and user experiences. Coordination for maintenance and management of parks and open space needs to be clearly articulated among the municipal departments and roles and responsibilities should be clearly identified. A long-range program will establish the development, use, and maintenance of existing and proposed new facilities with appropriate funding to ensure its implementation. Incorporating maintenance and scheduled improvements into the Capital Improvement Plan and help manage expectations and resources.

The athletic fields assessment conducted by Gale Associates (2011) for the School Department also included an evaluation of municipally-maintained fields. Fields at Christofaro and Sprague parks were both considered overused and conditions were fair to poor; however, recent funding and maintenance services have been increased over the past two years, which have greatly improved the fields, courts and lighting at Sprague Park, Christofaro Park and George C. Park. Neighborhood residents or community groups can be great partners and have been solicited to take an active interest in parks they use the most. The town should continue to evaluate the high demands on these fields and look at the feasibility of increasing the number of fields available in the future.

The Town has development management plans for its larger parks and open space resources, including Christofaro Park, Bridgepoint Commons, Canonchet Farms, Sunset Farms, The Camp, and The Towers. These plans discuss uses and public access into the properties, which may include walking trails and boat docks. They also address areas where access should be limited to protect a resource's functionality. Localizing vehicle parking, mowing schedules, and seasonal access are all ways to protect resources while still allowing the public to experience an area's beauty. Monitoring the success of existing management plans and periodic updating should be done to ensure that objectives are being met and to identify any new opportunities that may arise. For municipal properties that lack management plans, the Town should continue to pursue their development. Some of these properties include Sprague Park, The Town Beach, Veterans Park, and Gazebo Park. The Town is currently drafting a Strategic Plan for the Town Beach.

One way to approach property management is to create a comprehensive and integrated plan that includes historic and cultural resources (See also **Historic and Cultural Resources**). All of these resources are interrelated and add value to each other. Managing together provides consistency and allows the Town to leverage resources with partners across the board.

F. Building Partnerships

As municipal budgets become more limited, Towns are looking to other resources, in-kind and financial, to assist in developing and maintaining recreational facilities and open space resources. Many

properties in Narragansett with public access are owned and managed by both governmental agencies, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services and the RIDEM, and non-governmental organizations like The Nature Conservancy and Rhode Island Audubon. Local groups, such as Friends of Canonchet and Narrow River Preservation Association, also cooperate with the Town in outreach, planning, and monitoring efforts. The Parks and Recreation Department also uses the gymnasiums of the School Department extensively and also works with The Prout School, River Bend Athletic Club and Monsignor Clarke School for other gymnasium and recreational needs. These partners provide additional resources to acquire and protect important resources.

G. Goals, Policies and Action Items

Goal ROS1: Provide residents and visitors with high-quality recreational facilities and open space resources that meet diverse needs and changing demands.

Policy ROS 1.1: Provide neighborhood-based recreational facilities to all areas of Town. (See Policy H2.1)

Policy ROS 1.2: Promote increased public access to the shore.

- a. Use the Conservation Commission's Adopt-a-Spot program to maintain and develop new coastal access sites and connect with historic and cultural resources.
 - Study all of the town's platted, unaccepted town roads that terminate at a coastal access point.
- b. Develop a rights-of-way plan that ranks coastal access ways in need of improvements. Develop plans for these areas and a schedule and estimated cost of improvements.
- c. Develop a public boat ramp in an area that provides safe and easy access to the ocean in order to relieve boating pressure on Narrow River and Point Judith Pond.
- d. Work with RIDOT, USFWS and others to improve public access to the Narrow River in the vicinity of the Sprague Bridge.
- e. Develop expanded facilities and programs only if all safety consideration have been addressed and are implemented simultaneously with the Plan.

Policy ROS 1.3: Increase opportunities for year-round use of recreational and open space resources as a way to increase economic opportunities.

- a. Develop opportunities for more indoor and outdoor recreational activities and ensure there are no zoning barriers in districts where these uses would be appropriate.
- b. Incorporate economic development objectives into property management plans.
- c. Identify off-season recreational uses of recreation and open space resources, including activities and events, to promote use year-round.
- d. Work with the Chamber of Commerce and South County Tourism Council to develop a geotourism package that highlights how residents and visitors to Narragansett and the region can experience what makes Narragansett unique.

Policy ROS 1.4: Meet the diverse recreational needs of residents of all ages through strategic planning and cooperative approaches.

- a. Develop multi-use recreational complexes for new facilities rather than isolated single purpose recreational facilities.
- b. Continue to work with the School Department to expand opportunities to share recreational

resources.

- c. Continue coordination with area arts organizations, museums, historical societies, and other interest groups for programming, gymnasium and other recreational needs.
- d. Work with adjacent towns and URI to explore the need and feasibility for a regional sports complex with pools, ice rink, gymnasium, track, etc.
- e. Complete a master plan for the Middlebridge property.

Policy ROS 1.5: Work with governmental and non-governmental partners to ensure that local recreational and open space needs are met while still satisfying demands of regional visitors.

- a. Coordinate with the State of Rhode Island and South County Tourism Council in recreational planning to ensure that state policies are developed in concert with town policies.
- b. Support the establishment of a regional nonprofit South County Land Trust.
- c. Establish communication with federal and state officials regarding the potential town acquisition of federally-owned and state-owned open space and recreational lands as they become available.

Goal ROS2: Promote the development and acquisition of recreational facilities and open space resources as an integrated system.

Policy ROS 2.1: Link parks, open spaces, scenic points, adopt-a-spots and overlooks with the Town's circulation system of walkways, trail systems, and bike paths. (See Policy HCS 2.2)

- a. Identify gaps between resources and neighborhoods. (See Policy H2.1)
- b. Identify and secure funding to build connections
- c. Increase bike safety through bike path development, striping, signage and, where possible, roadway shoulder improvements. (See Policy T2.2)
- d. Continue the planning and implementation of recreational trails town-wide.

Policy ROS 2.2: Use a variety of regulatory and programmatic approaches that promote the dedication and acquisition of park land, natural areas, and open space. (See LU 2.4)

- a. Encourage the dedication of open space and recreational lands in new, larger subdivision approvals with a reasonable and legally defensible district based recreational land/fee assessment. At a minimum, the exaction should be based upon a no net loss in existing town-owned recreational and open space land per person. District based fees must be placed in special accounts established for that purpose and not in the general fund.
- b. Promote the use of the Planned Residential District floating zone and cluster zoning as a means to guide new subdivision development to preserve the natural areas that are integrated with resources on adjacent properties.

Policy ROS 2.3: Support municipal efforts, including those of the Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust, in its endeavors to acquire and manage historic, cultural, recreation and open space properties.

- a. Use the Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust (NLCT) to promote a voluntary easement donation program, expanding to easement purchase when the land warrants and funding allows.
- b. Acquire historic and open space easements through the NLCT. Historic buildings on these properties may be sold, in turn, to private parties with preservation easements, enabling the Land Trust to recoup expenses.
- c. Develop programs that enable the Town to purchase agricultural lands or their development

- rights.
- d. Develop incentives that encourage voluntary gifts of conservation easements that protect current private open space lands, including but not limited to, those registered with the Farm, Forest and Open Space Program.
 - e. Catalogue restrictive easements and covenants on open space lands within new and existing developments so that an easily accessed record of open space dedications is retained and available to decision makers and the public.
 - f. Monitor acquired easements with support from NLCT.
 - g. Encourage the acquisition or preservation of marshlands through easements.

Policy ROS 2.4: Maintain recreational and open space resources to ensure their functionality and usefulness.

- a. Develop master plans for the Town's major recreational and open space properties, including, but not limited to, The Camp, Sprague Park, Veterans Park, Gazebo Park, the Town Beach (in progress), and the Middlebridge Road property.
- b. Implement a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to schedule in a phased and systematic manner acquisition and development of recreational and open space facilities within the financial capabilities of the Town. Integrated action items of property master plans.
- c. Coordinate with all town departments, including Parks and Public Works, the School Department, and Community Development, to clarify roles and responsibilities and create a long range program for the development, use and maintenance of existing and proposed new facilities.
- d. Develop partnerships with local community groups and any appropriate boards and commissions to identify cooperative efforts in the maintenance of recreational sites.
- e. Review existing municipal property management plans to document implementation, ensure consistency with the comprehensive plan, and update as needed to meet changing needs: Sunset Farms, Bridgepoint Commons, Canonchet Farm, and The Towers.