

Town of Westerly
Rhode Island

DEPARTMENT OF
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

OFFICE OF PLANNING



Westerly Town Hall
45 Broad Street
Westerly, RI 02891

The vision for the town of Westerly is to preserve Westerly's quality of life for all generations as a safe and friendly community with a distinctive heritage, extraordinary cultural and natural resources, and fiscally-sound government." – 2010 Comprehensive Plan

MEMORANDUM

To: Chairman Hall and Members of the Planning Board

From: Nancy Letendre, AICP, Town Planner/Administrative Officer
Benjamin Delaney, Principal Planner

Cc: Lisa Pellegrini, Director of Development Services
Bengtson & Jestings, LLP, Assistant Solicitor for Planning and Zoning

Date: June 2, 2020

Subject: General Descriptions of Mapped Figures

This memo is intended to provide a general description and basic information of the 24 mapped figures produced by New England Geosystems, LLC for the Town of Westerly's draft 2020 Comprehensive Plan. These figures, last revised on May 27, 2020, have evolved significantly since earlier versions produced by Mason & Associates, Inc. following significant review and comment by the public, the Planning Board, several other municipal boards and committees, municipal personnel (primarily those in the Department of Development Services), and the RI Division of Statewide Planning. For consistency between this memo and the draft Comprehensive Plan (as last revised on May 18, 2020), the descriptions provided have relied on text directly from the draft Plan with revisions made as necessary to reflect the most current information.

LUZ-M1 Existing Land Use

This figure presents land use/land cover classifications based on orthophotography (aerial photographs altered to seamlessly match up with other aerial photographs) taken in 2011 (while nearly a decade old, this is the most recent dataset available). As noted on this illustration, these human alterations result in there being no warranty related to spatial accuracy, reliability or completeness (only a professional land survey can provide this). This Mapped Figure is a contemporary visual which means it becomes less current and accurate over time. As one means to correct this aging, the Town, based on public comment, has updated conservation lands based on the information visualized in FLU-M1 and NAT-M6. Sources for this figure include the following:

- Land Use and Land Cover 2011, RIGIS, March 2017
- Conservation Lands
 - Private, RIGIS (Local Conservation Lands), February 2020
 - Public, RIGIS (State Conservation Lands), January 2019
- Additional Water Layer, RIGIS (Lakes and Ponds (1:5,000)), June 2017

LUZ-M2 Zoning

This figure is intended to show the Town's current division into zoning districts as established by the Zoning Ordinance in 1998 (with subsequent amendments and zoning changes incorporated). While the figure is believed to be accurate (subject to final verification currently in progress), it is important to note that the Town adopted the separate Electronic GIS Zoning Map as the official Zoning Map of the Town of Westerly effective July 1, 2019.

- Zoning, Town of Westerly/NEGEO, May 2018

LUZ-M3 Zoning Overlays

This figure is intended to depict all overlay districts established and currently in effect under the Town's Zoning Ordinance. The Aquifer Overlay District will be added to this figure at the conclusion of the Town's discussion with the RIDEM. Sources for this figure include the following:

- Bed & Breakfast Overlay, Town of Westerly, September 2019
- Granite Street Overlay, Town of Westerly, September 2019
- Wells Street Overlay, Town of Westerly, September 2019
- Historic Mill Overlay, Town of Westerly, September 2019
- Airport Overlay, Town of Westerly, September 2019

FLU-M1 Future Land Use

This figure serves as the official Future Land Use Map (FLUM), the community's visual guide to future planning. While similar to figures LUZ-M1 and LUZ-M2, this figure depicts only what the community envisions its land to be used for in the coming decade. These future land uses are broadly categorized from numerous existing and prospective land uses as they are interpreted from contemporary sources of information. As a simpler statement, consider that the Town's Zoning District Use Tables alone identifies well over 200 specific, individual land uses permitted across over 20 zoning districts while the FLUM is made up of only ten (10) future land use categories. This figure also affirms the consistency of the community's vision with the State Guide Plan, specifically Land Use 2025, by including the State-designated Urban Services Boundary. Sources for this figure include the following:

- Future Land Use
 - Zoning, Town of Westerly/NEGEO, May 2018
 - Future Land Use Changes, Town of Westerly, September 2019
- Conservation Lands
 - Private, RIGIS (Local Conservation Lands), February 2020
 - Public, RIGIS (State Conservation Lands), January 2019
- State-Designated Urban Services Boundary, RIGIS, June 2017

FLU-M2 Future Land Use (Local)

This figure is a direct copy of FLU-M1 with two notable differences. The first, likely more visually apparent change, is the absence of conservation lands being identified by their private and/or public restrictions. The second is that the State-designated Urban Services Boundary is replaced by the local urban services boundary (equivalent to the extent of the Town's public sewer district). Planning Staff recommends that the local urban services boundary be added to FLU-M1 and FLU-M2 deleted. Sources for this figure include the following:

- Future Land Use
 - Zoning, Town of Westerly/NEGEO, May 2018
 - Future Land Use Changes, Town of Westerly, September 2019
- Westerly Urban Services Boundary, Town of Westerly, September 2019

HAZ-M1 Flood Hazards

This figure depicts several notable components of the community's infrastructure, such as dams, emergency service providers, and evacuation routes, as they relate to flooding. The geographic areas prone to inundation from flooding are presented through two types – 100-year and 500-year events. These refer to flood-causing events (such as torrential rains) that occur based on their historical frequency. Sources for this figure include the following:

- Municipal Facility, RIGIS (City and Town Halls), July 2018
- Fire Stations, RIGIS, February 2017
- Dams, RIGIS, July 2018
- Schools, RIGIS, July 2017
- Hospitals, RIGIS, July 2018
- Police Station, RIGIS (Law Enforcement), July 2017
- Westerly Ambulance Corps, RIGIS (Emergency Medical Services), July 2018
- Evacuation Routes, Town of Westerly, September 2019
- FEMA Flood Zones, FEMA. March 2020 (Inland), July 2019 (Coastal Area)

HAZ-M2 Storm Hazards

This figure, like HAZ-M1, depicts several notable components of the community's infrastructure. Rather than the potential impacts of flooding, though, this figure visualizes the hazardous effects of a major storm event – tropical cyclones. In addition to the geographic areas of the Town which seek voluntary evacuation subject to a hurricane's intensity (ranging from Category 1 to Category 4), land that is subject to storm surge is also depicted. Sources for this figure include the following:

- Municipal Facility, RIGIS (City and Town Halls), July 2018
- Fire Stations, RIGIS, February 2017
- Dams, RIGIS, July 2018
- Schools, RIGIS, July 2017
- Hospitals, RIGIS, July 2018
- Police Station, RIGIS (Law Enforcement), July 2017
- Westerly Ambulance Corps, RIGIS (Emergency Medical Services), July 2018
- Evacuation Routes, Town of Westerly, September 2019
- Hurricane Evacuation Areas, RIGIS, July 2018
- Hurricane Surge Inundation, RIGIS, July 2018

HAZ-M3 Sea Level Rise Hazards

This figure visualizes the potential impacts of sea level rise (SLR) locally by presenting, through various 'call-outs' of specific coastal and estuarine areas, the community's susceptibility to permanent submergence in some neighborhoods due to one foot, three foot, and five foot increases in sea level. Sources for this figure include the following:

Sources for this figure include the following:

- Sea Level Rise, CRMC, April 2017

HCR-M1 Historic and Cultural Resources

This figure identifies all historic districts and individual sites within the Town that are currently included on the National Register of Historic Places (as well as the State Register of Historic Places). All burial sites known to the RI Historical Cemetery Commission are also presented. Sources for this figure include the following:

- National Register Historic Sites, RIGIS (Historic Sites), June 2017
- National Register Historic Districts, RIGIS, June 2017
- Historic Cemeteries, RIGIS, August 2019

INF-M1 Ground Water

This figure identifies various components of the Town's groundwater resources, including its aquifer, wellhead protection areas (portions of aquifers through which groundwater moves to a public [community] or private [non-community] well), reservoirs (significant subsurface water sources), recharge areas (areas intended to be protected for use as drinking water sources), and the boundaries of three (3) separate watersheds. Planning Staff recommends that the color used to identify watershed boundaries be revised to improve its visibility. Sources for this figure include the following:

- Community Wellhead Protection Areas, RIGIS, January 2019
- Non-Community Wellhead Protection Areas, RIGIS, January 2019
- Groundwater Reservoirs, RIGIS, July 2018
- Groundwater Recharge Area, Town of Westerly, September 2019
- Watershed Boundary, RIGIS (Watershed Boundary Dataset: HUC12), October 2019

INF-M2 Sewer and Water Infrastructure

This figure shows the geographic extent of two of the Town's most important infrastructure components – public water and public sewer service (collectively referred to as "urban services"). Planning Staff recommends that the existing local urban services boundary be added to this figure. Sources for this figure include the following:

- Public Water Service District, RIGIS (Water Supply Districts), August 2019
- Public Sewer Service District, RIGIS (Sewered Areas), June 2017

INF-M3 State-Designated Urban Services Boundary

This figure offers a different visualization of the State-designated Urban Services Boundary depicted in FLU-M1. Planning Staff proposes to include the local urban services boundary (equivalent to the extent of the Town's public sewer district) in this figure along with a new delineation of possible extensions of the local boundary (subsequently identifying areas where expansion of the existing sewer district could occur over the next decade). Planning staff will be working with the Utilities and Engineering Divisions of the Department of Public Works on these possible extensions. Sources for this figure include the following:

- State-Designated Urban Services Boundary, RIGIS, June 2017

NAT-M1 Water Resources

This figure presents the numerous surface water resources of the Town. These range from well-known water bodies and running waters, such as ponds, rivers, streams, and wetlands to less known, but equally important components, like floodplains and estuarine water quality areas (identifying the water quality of different segments of the lower Pawcatuck River and Little Narragansett Bay). Sources for this figure include the following:

- FEMA Flood Zones, FEMA. March 2020 (Inland), July 2019 (Coastal Area)
- Watershed Boundary, RIGIS (Watershed Boundary Dataset: HUC12), October 2019
- Wetlands, RIGIS, December 1993
- Coastal Waters, RIGIS, July 2018
- Estuarine Water Quality Standard Boundary, RIGIS (Marine Estuarine Waters: RI Integrated Water Quality Monitoring Assessment), July 2018

NAT-M2 Habitat Resources

This figure depicts the Town's two important portions of land (natural heritage areas and conservation opportunity areas) which together serve as the habitat for the greatest diversities of flora and fauna in the community. This figure influences decisions regarding land conservation and overlaps considerably with the

conservation lands shown on FLU-M1 and NAT-M6. These two are Sources for this figure include the following:

- Natural Heritage Areas, RIGIS, August 2019
- Conservation Opportunity Area, Town of Westerly, February 2015

NAT-M3 Salt Pond Region SAMP

This figure illustrates the local geographic areas under jurisdiction of the State's Salt Pond Region Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) The SAMP is itself divided into three major categories of land use related to the functioning of the natural environment surrounding and supported by the State's coastal salt ponds. From most to least impacted, the areas are (1) developed beyond carrying capacity, (2) lands of critical concern, or (3) self-sustaining lands. The areas within the SAMP are subject to development restrictions by the RICRMC in addition to local land use regulations. Sources for this figure include the following:

- Salt Pond Region SAMP, CRMC, April 1999

NAT-M4 Agricultural Soils

This figure presents all areas in Westerly which contain prime farmland soils and soils of Statewide importance. The locations of these soils are not limited to undeveloped areas as it is possible new agricultural operations may be established in the future. The figure also shows lands actively used for agricultural activity through inclusion of the agricultural land cover/land use areas depicted in LUZ-M1. Sources for this figure include the following:

- Prime and Statewide Farmlands, RIGIS (Soils), January 2019
- Agricultural Use, RIGIS (Land Use and Land Cover 2011), March 2017

NAT-M5 Ecological Communities

The ecological communities shown on this figure are classes (including wetland classes) introduced by the Rhode Island Ecological Communities Classification which contain simple descriptions of each ecological community. Developed land classes were grouped together to better contrast the community's existing built environment with its natural environment. Sources for this figure include the following:

- Ecological Communities, RIGIS (Ecological Communities Classification 2011), October 2011

NAT-M6 Conservation Lands

This figure offers a visual overview of all lands within the Town that are subject to a private and/or public conservation restriction. The restriction may be of legal record or, in cases of land trusts and other conservation organizations, may be inferred based upon that landholder's longstanding principles and internal mandates. Sources for this figure include the following:

- Conservation Lands
 - Private, RIGIS (Local Conservation Lands), February 2020
 - Public, RIGIS (State Conservation Lands), January 2019
- Wetlands, RIGIS, December 1993

NBH-M1 Neighborhoods

This figure depicts the (arguably unexpected) inventory of neighborhoods across the community as identified by attendants, stakeholders, and Town staff during a workshop meeting held at Westerly Library in summer 2015. Sources for this figure include the following:

- Neighborhood Boundary, Town of Westerly, September 2019

NBH-M2 Neighborhood Planning Areas

This figure is based upon the neighborhoods identified in NBH-M1. Using additional sources, such as fire districts, the US Census Bureau, historical maps, and additional public comments, the neighborhoods are consolidated into a smaller number of larger neighborhood planning areas. These neighborhood planning areas are used to facilitate the discussion of the Town's future land use and may additionally be used as guide in the implementation of various actions requiring area planning on a neighborhood level (particularly related to land use and housing). This approach is consistent with the type of place-based decision-making being requested by the community:

- Neighborhood Planning Area, Town of Westerly, September 2019

REC-M1 Land-Based Recreation

This figure depicts all land-based recreation sites available across the community as well as recreational bike routes, hiking trails, and scenic areas. Sources for this figure include the following:

- Land-Based Recreation Sites, Town of Westerly, September 2019

REC-M2 Water-Based Recreation

This figure depicts all water-based recreation sites available across the coastline and riverbanks of the community: Sources for this figure include the following:

- Water-Based Recreation Sites, Town of Westerly, September 2019

SAF-M1 Public Facilities

This figure shows all municipal facilities across the Town as well as the locations of other important community providers including emergency response, medical services, education, library services and social support. Sources for this figure include the following:

- Municipal Facility, RIGIS (City and Town Halls), July 2018
- Fire Stations, RIGIS, February 2017
- Dams, RIGIS, July 2018
- Schools, RIGIS, July 2017
- Hospitals, RIGIS, July 2018
- Police Station, RIGIS (Law Enforcement), July 2017
- Westerly Ambulance Corps, RIGIS (Emergency Medical Services), July 2018
- State Facility, RIGIS, August 2019
- Active Solid Waste, RIGIS, July 2018

TRANS-M1 Transportation

This figure presents the multiple modes of travel that offer access to, from, and across the community. This includes roadways, bike routes, air and rail services, boat launches and ramps, and public transit routes. Sources for this figure include the following:

- Boating and Fishing Access, RIGIS, July 2018
- Westerly State Airport, RIGIS (Land Use and Land Cover 2011), March 2017
- RIPTA Fixed Bus Stop, RIGIS, July 2018
- RIPTA Fixed Bus Route, RIGIS, June 2017
- Road Classifications, RIGIS (RIDOT Roads), November 2018
- Scenic Road, RIGIS (RIDOT Roads), November 2018
- Bike Path, RIGIS (RIDOT Bike Paths), August 2019

All Figures

In addition to the identified sources used in each figure above, the following sources are also included in all figures:

- River or Stream, NEGEO, July 2019
- Lake or Pond, NEGEO, July 2019
- Westerly State Airport, RIGIS (Land Use and Land Cover 2011), March 2017
- Major/Minor Roads, RIGIS (RIDOT Roads), November 2018
- Railroad, RIGIS, August 2019