

TOWN OF WESTERLY, RHODE ISLAND

COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

2020 – 2040

DRAFT

JULY 20, 2020

REDLINE UPDATED THROUGH SEPTEMBER 14, 2020



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Town of Westerly extends its sincere thanks to the many residents, community advocates, business leaders, stakeholders, and staff who have participated in the creation of this Comprehensive Plan. The sharing of your knowledge and experiences and the volunteering of your skills and time has been instrumental to the future we have envisioned herein.

Town Manager J. Mark Rooney

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Lisa Pellegrini, Director of Development Services

Nancy E. Letendre, Esq., AICP, Town Planner

Nathan Reichert, Zoning Official

Benjamin R. Delaney, Principal Planner

Alyse Y. Oziolor, Principal Planner

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Faith Bessette-Zito

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James J. Federico, III

John Armstrong

Salvatore Zito

Gina T. Fuller

Nancy N. Richmond

Catherine DeNoia

LEGAL COUNSEL

Atty. Scott Levesque, Bengtson & Jestings, LLP

CONSULTANTS

Mason & Associates, Inc.

New England GeoSystems

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Part I
COMMUNITY LAND USE | Vision, Strategies, & Implementation

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Chapter 1
THE VISION

Section 1.1 – Preamble

The 2020 Comprehensive Plan (Plan) was the subject of a public hearing held by the Westerly Planning Board on June 2nd, 9th and 23rd, 2020. On July 21, 2020, the Westerly Planning Board approved the Plan for submission to the Town Council with a recommendation that the Plan be adopted as an ordinance. The Town Council, following its public hearing on [date(s)], took official action to incorporate the Plan into the Code of Ordinances as Chapter 10. The Westerly Planning Board's approval and the Town Council's adoption of this Plan signify that the vision, goals, policies, and actions will best serve and protect the public interest over the next decade, or two. ~~-~~For more information on public engagement see Section 2.~~2~~3 of this Plan.

Section 1.2 – Introduction

This Plan for the Town of Westerly (the Town) is the community ~~land use~~land-use program that will guide all ~~land use~~land-use and physical development in Westerly from now to the end of 2040. The primary objectives of this Plan are to achieve an appropriate balance between conservation and development and to establish a resilient community in all functions – from water supply maintenance to economic development. Managing growth and protecting cultural and natural resources are complex and delicate tasks. This Plan intends to ensure that both are accomplished in a way which enhances the quality of life for all residents. The Town encourages growth which recognizes its assets and enhances opportunity while at the same time maintaining Westerly's cherished sense of place. It is important to all residents, property owners, and local businesses that the Town's vision, goals, policies, and actions are aligned with contemporary local needs and its longstanding aim to protect and preserve the natural environment upon which all aspects of the community rely.

This Plan also looks to the future in anticipation of the community's ever-changing needs and environment. New aspects of land use in the twenty-first century require new approaches to zoning, urban design, building construction, infrastructure, and economic activity. Unlike the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, each component of this Plan incorporates resiliency and aesthetic standards.

The goals, policies, and actions of this Plan express the commitment of the Town to its general aim of balance between the built and natural environments. This Plan was developed by the Westerly Planning Board with considerable input and support from the Town – both as a municipal corporation and as a collective of its private citizens. This Plan represents the policies and objectives of the citizens of Westerly.

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Section 1.3 – Vision

This Plan aims for Westerly to be a community which celebrates its history and traditions, values the practices of conservation and preservation, and strives for a prosperous future for its citizens and businesses. It maintains and builds upon its predecessor – the 2010 Comprehensive Plan.

> *The vision for the Town of Westerly is to preserve and enhance its quality of life for all generations as a safe, resilient, and compassionate community with a healthy environment, a distinctive heritage, extraordinary cultural and natural resources, a strong, stable, equitable economy, and a responsible and publicly-engaged government.*

This Plan is the device by which all future proposals and initiatives – whether for conservation, development, or resiliency – shall be measured. Each proposal or initiative will be evaluated based on whether it advances the vision of the future as expressed in this Plan. This Plan itself is a document that changes only upon careful evaluation and with the deliberate intent to ensure that the needs and conditions which affect the public interest require adjustments in public policy. While the Plan is not a fluid document, the need for regular and disciplined evaluation of its progress and appropriateness is integral to realizing the vision for the future of Westerly.

In developing this Plan, an important set of values evolved that complements the vision and will influence the conservation, development, and resiliency efforts of Westerly for the next two decades. These values are described below to assist readers in understanding this Plan and further guide how to implement the vision of this Plan successfully and appropriately. These values are intended to be examined, as applicable, during any official review or consideration by the Town that requires a positive finding of consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Each is written as a "policy" item followed by its implications as part of this Plan's implementation. When addressing each of the general purposes of the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations and the purposes of the Zoning Ordinance, Town officials and staff shall be guided by the following values:

1. **Protect the integrity of the Town's existing residential development pattern with limited changes to density.**
   Residential districts shall reflect the actual development patterns in the community which the Plan intends to preserve. In areas vulnerable to flood hazards or sea level rise, in the aquifer protection or recharge area, contain suburban sprawl. Increase residential density in areas with public sewer and water by providing more options for multi-family development, including apartments and multi-family structures of 2 to 4 units, to meet the needs of low- and moderate-income households.

2. **Focus on redevelopment and revitalization of industrial districts and mill villages.**
   Mill villages and industrial districts shall retain traditional character and include a mix of uses.

3. **Permit commercial uses through innovative development regulations and techniques.**
   Commercial sprawl shall be avoided. Instead, integrate new commerce and maximize the development potential in existing commercial districts. Provide for shared or maximum parking requirements. Provide incentives to develop outparcels for single tenant retailers in the parking lots of strip malls. Continue to break down silos and be flexible with where businesses locate (e.g. "medical retail" moving into strip malls).

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4. **Preserve Westerly's waters, open space, and natural resources.**
   The conservation and protection of coastal waters, freshwater ponds, rivers, wetlands, scenic viewscapes, and environmentally sensitive lands, including beaches, shall be addressed when considering potential future growth.

5. **Protect and expand critical public services, especially public water supply quality and availability and wastewater treatment facilities.**
   Water supply protection and potential expansion, and protection by berm or otherwise, of the Town's wastewater treatment plant are highly important issues for immediate consideration.

6. **Maximize traffic safety and mobility by maintaining local road surfaces, introducing traffic calming tools where appropriate, and re-engineering traffic patterns with related storm water infrastructure.**
   Development shall not outpace the capacity of roadways and related storm water controls. Traffic safety can be enhanced by the installation of ~~speed bumps and other~~ traffic calming tools.

7. **Limit automobile traffic through support of commuter rail, Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) and other public transportation service, and establishment of local pedestrian and bicycle networks where public safety concerns can be met.**
   Take full advantage of Westerly's strategic location on the Northeast Corridor (NEC), protect, and diversify transportation assets, and connect neighborhoods and commerce with recreational and healthy aging opportunities.

8. **Promote diversity in the type and the vitality of locally owned businesses.**
   New businesses will take on different forms (e.g. telecommuting, virtual reality, artificial intelligence), need different types of spaces (e.g. home offices, incubators, co-ops), and different infrastructure (e.g. telecommunications, broadband).

9. **Encourage a range of viable housing options for all income and age groups.**
   Units that cost less because they are small and efficiently designed, such as micro-apartments, and in many cases do not come with a parking space, are an underappreciated, but potentially important, component of the housing market benefiting the middle-income workforce, as are multi-family homes and other shared-living spaces.

10. **Support ~~critical~~ institutions such as Westerly Public Schools, Westerly Hospital, emergency responders, ~~Westerly Library, and the strong volunteer spirit that exists in~~and numerous and diverse public-private partnerships and non-profit organizations throughout Westerly.**
    People choose to live where their children can receive a good education, where they have access to quality healthcare, where they feel safe, and where they can participate in and contribute to community activities. The missions, functions, and vision of these institutions ~~and others need to be supported~~are intended to support the entire community.

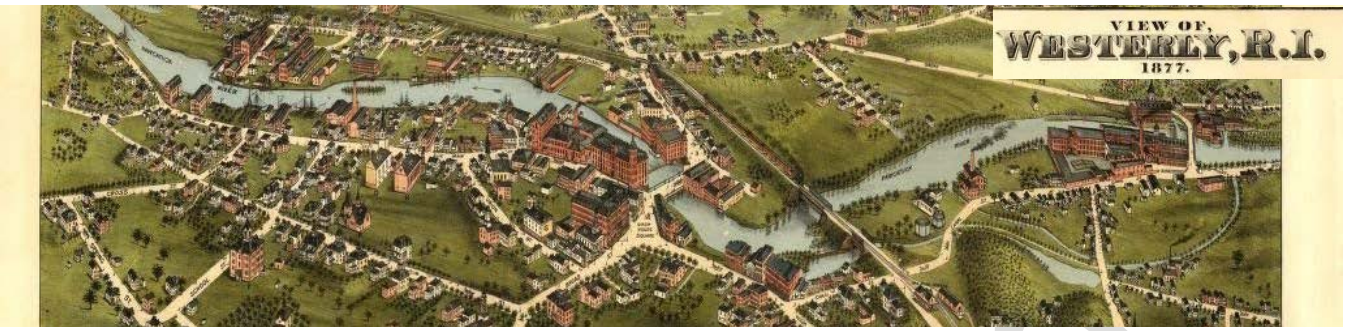
11. **Explore the role this Comprehensive Plan should play in identifying local health issues and promoting the long-term health of the community as well as ensuring emergency preparedness.**
    Inventory public health topics such as recreation, public safety, clean water, active transportation, emergency transportation, living conditions, mental health, substance abuse, food security, infectious diseases, etc. Explicitly include public health related goals, objectives, and policies in future planning to include age-friendly and ability-friendly considerations.

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12. **Implement the Plan while maintaining the sound financial condition of the Town government.** The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) shall be consistent with this Plan and will serve the following functions:
    a. Orderly and efficient provision of facilities and services through long-range capital facilities planning;
    b. Address deficiencies, if any, to accommodate desired future growth and development;
    c. Maintain adopted level of service standards through sound and timely investment in the Town's ~~capitol~~capital resources and to the extent financially possible in any given fiscal year; and,
    d. Budget maintenance expenditures and operating costs for all facilities and services, and project such costs out ~~four~~ five years in the ~~Capitol~~Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) required each fiscal year.

The future vision for the Town is entirely consistent with *Land Use 2025*, prepared by the Statewide Planning Program, Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Planning in April 2006, which articulates a robust vision for the State of Rhode Island's future that includes a strong economy, a healthy environment, and a rich quality of life. *Land Use 2025* is the guide to all planning and development in the State. In Section ~~2.6~~2.9 of this Plan, the Town of Westerly describes its long-term priorities and relates them directly to the goals of *Land Use 2025*.

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Chapter 2
OVERVIEW

Section 2.1 – Purpose and Intent

Rhode Island General Law (RIGL) §45-22.2, the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act, requires each municipality in the State to adopt and maintain a comprehensive plan. State law requires that the Plan provide the basis and rationale for all long-term physical development decisions of the municipality. Consistency between local ~~land-use~~ land-use regulations and the Plan also avoids conflicting requirements, as well as reactive ~~land-use~~ land-use regulations and decisions. According to RIGL §45-22.2-5(b), all municipalities must:

> "prepare, adopt, amend, and maintain comprehensive plans, including implementation programs, that relate development to land capacity, protect natural resources, promote a balance of housing choices, encourage economic development, preserve and protect open space, recreational, historic and cultural resources, provide for orderly provision of facilities and services, and are consistent with the goals, findings, intent, and other provisions of this Chapter and the laws of the state."

Further, RIGL §45-22.2-6(b) specifically states a comprehensive plan is to be "internally consistent in its policies, forecasts, and standards" and shall include assessments and discussion in those planning areas enumerated in that same section.

This Plan satisfies the State mandate from 1992 and is the most recent reiteration of long-range comprehensive planning in the Town which first began in the 1960s. It is also the third Comprehensive Plan to be adopted by the Town since the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act's passage in 1988. The first Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1992 and amended in 2007 through an update of its data as well as its goals, policies, and actions. Three years later, it was repealed and replaced by the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. With the adoption of this Plan by the Town Council, the 2010 Comprehensive Plan is also repealed and replaced.

> **The 2020 Comprehensive Plan is intended to satisfy the requirements of the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act, as amended through 2016, and the Standards and Guidance Manual, as amended through 2018.**

Through the Town Council's incorporation of this Plan into the Code of Ordinances as Section 10 under Part I, Administrative Legislation, this Plan becomes not only an official statement of Westerly's future direction and the guiding document for future capital improvements, but also is legally binding on all future land-use decisions made within its jurisdiction. After approval by the Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning for consistency

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with the goals, findings and intent of State ~~land use~~ land-use policy, other State agency activities and projects will also be required to adhere to the terms and conditions outlined in this Plan.

This Plan is intended to be an appraisal tool against which all future ~~land use~~ land-use proposals and initiatives will be measured. Each ~~land use~~ land-use application, policy initiative, and capital transaction that comes before the Town Council, Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Town personnel will be evaluated based on how each proposal advances or detracts from the Vision for the future of Westerly expressed in Chapter 1, and further iterated in Section 2.8 – The Future, as well as the goals, policies, and actions of this Plan.

Section 2.2 – Summary of the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan Ordinance for the Town of Westerly consists of five parts:

- **Part I – Community Land Use | Vision, Strategies & Implementation**
- **Part II – Inventory & Analysis**
- **Part III – Mapped Figures**
- **Part IV – Glossary**

Part I introduces the Town of Westerly's Vision, documents local characteristics and land use, housing, the natural environment, economic development, and provision of services. It reveals policy priorities for conservation, development services, and infrastructure needs, and maintains and builds upon the 2010 Comprehensive Community Plan's vision. Land Use and Implementation, two definitive components of the Comprehensive Plan, are showcased in Part I. "Land Use" demonstrates the interrelationship between the competing uses, capacity of land, and the availability of facilities and services to changes in demographics, population density, and building intensity. "Implementation" provides well-defined structure for the Community's Vision through goals, policies, and actions, developed based on broad public input and a thorough inventory of the Town's assets and characteristics described in Part II.

Part II of this Plan contains important background information and citations to support the priorities and policies this Plan sets out. This part is central to this Plan's development and provides empirical data on recent and existing conditions addressing all planning areas required by the State, as approved in January 2016. Part II consists of nine (9) Chapters, as outlined below, addressing those planning areas required by the State.

Chapter	Title	Planning Area(s)
1	Sustainable Natural Resources	Natural Resources, Agriculture, Water Supply
2	Open Space and Recreation	Natural Resources, Recreation
3	Historic and Cultural Resources	Historic and Cultural Resources
4	Housing Opportunities	Housing
5	Economic Vitality	Economic Development, Agriculture
6	Services and Facilities	Services and Facilities, Energy
7	Infrastructure and Energy	Services and Facilities, Energy, Water Supply
8	Transportation Network	Transportation
9	Natural Hazards and Resiliency	Natural Hazards and Climate Change

Part III of this Plan includes ~~T~~the mapped figures ~~are collected and included in *Part III* of this Plan~~, with general descriptions of each map provided and referenced to the planning area in focus. These mapped figures visually describe planning policy and may be used for information, guidance, and illustrative purposes. However, as noted on each map, no warranty can be made relating to spatial accuracy, reliability, or completeness of the

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mapped figures, as none were the product of a professional land survey. Similarly, each mapped figure is a contemporary visual, which means it may become less current or accurate over time.

A wide collection of datasets made available from various Town departments, including the Assessment Department, the Department of Development Services, the Information Technology (IT) Department, and the Department of Public Works (DPW), were used to produce these mapped figures, as well as data obtained from the Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS). Datasets are layered and included within each map to create visualizations that can be relied on to make inferences. The mapped figures included in this Plan meet the mapping standards set forth in the *Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning Standards Guidance Handbook #15: Mapping for Comprehensive Plans*, approved by the Rhode Island State Planning Council in January 2016, including titles, legends, and distinguishable symbology.

Part IV is a glossary of acronyms and planning terms and concepts.

Section 2.3 – Public Engagement and Plan Development

In the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act, the State establishes a series of goals which provide overall direction and consistency for State and municipal agencies in the comprehensive planning process. One of these goals is:

> "To encourage the involvement of all citizens in the formulation, review, and adoption, or amendment of the comprehensive plan."

Public engagement is an essential cornerstone of land-~~ ~~use planning. The primary obligation of professional planning is to conscientiously attain the concept of the public interest through continuous and open discussion. Opportunities for public engagement have been provided throughout the development of this Plan, with meaningful impact made by citizens and stakeholders on the policies and programs that may affect those same citizens and stakeholders.

During the initial stages of this Plan's development, a newly constituted Comprehensive Plan Citizens Advisory Committee (CPCAC), with the support of the Office of Planning, created a work plan and schedule for 2015, including target dates for public meetings of the CPCAC and its several subcommittees. Visioning sessions and policy discussions began when the consultant, Mason & Associates, Inc., was retained. Town staff and the consultant prepared for and attended no fewer than twenty (20) public meetings, including four public workshops with the full CPCAC, weekly and/or biweekly coordination meetings with topical subcommittees, Town staff, and public officials, a day-long stakeholder's review workshop and overview of the Comprehensive Plan, a stakeholder meeting specifically to discuss housing and social service needs of the community, and a joint Town staff-public workshop addressing natural hazards.

In August 2015, the CPCAC revised the goals, policies, and actions contained in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan and began the consideration of new ~~land-use~~land-use policies in answer to the new expectations of the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act and in anticipation of the release of standards and guidance from the Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning.

Mason & Associates, Inc. was re-engaged in December 2015 and there was a substantial increase in the scope of professional planning services required to produce a re-write of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. The result was the release of a first draft in June 2016. This coincided with the State's release of its standards and guidance manuals (*Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning Standards Guidance Handbook Series,* approved by the Rhode Island State Planning Council in January 2016). A copy was also submitted to the Rhode Island Statewide

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Planning Program for initial review and comments from State agencies. Public meetings of the CPCAC and a first-tier review of the draft resumed in July 2016 and concluded in February 2018.

As per the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act, Planning Boards have the sole responsibility for performing all those actions necessary to prepare a comprehensive plan for a municipality. The Westerly Planning Board began its review of the draft in October 2017 with some initial discussion. Upon the conclusion of the CPCAC's review, the Planning Board resumed its direct preparation of the Comprehensive Plan. In 2018, the Planning Board convened no fewer than ten (10) public workshop meetings reviewing the draft goals, policies, and actions. Simultaneously, the Department of Development Services engaged in discussion of the core elements of the plan (i.e. historic and cultural resources, housing, and economic development) with the Zoning Board of Review, Architectural Review Board (ARB), and the Economic Development Commission (EDC). As this second-tier review progressed, comments received from the CPCAC and State agencies were considered and incorporated into the draft.

The Department of Development Services assumed the coordination and preparation of the draft in February 2019. Over the next several months, the core elements of the Plan were completed. The Department of Development Services concluded the data update and collection, writing and editing, and the update and regeneration of the mapping. During this period, other municipal departments and stakeholders provided their comments and recommendations as well.

In Spring 2019, the Town began the process of certification within the newly established State of Rhode Island's Municipal Resilience Program. In August 2019, the Department of Development Services organized a Community Resilience Building (CRB) Workshop led by The Nature Conservancy in partnership with the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank. This facilitated discussion was well attended by community stakeholders and engaged professionals. The CRB's Risk Matrix, the assessment of the climate vulnerabilities outlined in the October 2018 *State of Rhode Island State Hazard Mitigation Plan*, prepared by the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA), and the results of the CRB workshop have informed the resiliency policies in this Plan and initiated a series of discussions regarding sea-level rise and resiliency throughout the community.



A survey of Westerly businesses was conducted by the EDC during August and September of 2019. The EDC solicited input from businesses on how the Town could best provide support for economic growth and development. Survey cards were mailed to the addresses on file with the Town Tax Assessor for the 1,507 "Businesses with Taxable Assets." Seventy-one businesses (5%) responded to the survey and, although the sample size was relatively small, the respondents represented 16 industries and a geographical dispersion which coincided with the business population.

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The questions were a mix of 28 closed and open-ended questions including business challenges, satisfaction levels, town services, and recommended prioritization of resources. The survey results provided the following potential areas of focus:

- Build a year-round economy
- Attract and develop a skilled work force
- Promote Westerly and proactively attract new business
- Protect the Westerly "charm"
- Maintain and improve roads and sidewalks
- Address the need for additional parking in the downtown business district
- Manage stormwater and drainage
- Simplify business entry to Westerly
- Improve communication with the business community

The Comprehensive Plan supports these initiatives and has considered them in developing specific action items for economic vitality.

In October 2019, Comprehensive Plan preparation included a facilitated work session involving members of the business community in the evaluation of the draft 2020 Comprehensive Plan's economic development actions. The Development Services Team, consisting of seven (7) Town staff members, led twenty-seven (27) residents and business owners in a discussion of strategies for continued "Economic Vitality" and preparation for action implementation.

The Planning Board took an active role in the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan, with the public release of the official working draft on November 4, 2019. The document was posted on the Town's official website and open for public comment through February 14, 2020. Arrangements for public input also included a Planning Board public work session on November 21, 2019. The Town Council held its own work session on December 2, 2019 and received public input from individual residents and organizations including the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce, Westerly Land Trust, Winnapaug Golf Course, and former CPCAC Chair, Gail Mallard.

At the Westerly Planning Board's direction, the Department of Development Services edited the draft Comprehensive Plan, incorporating changes from public comments. The document published on the Town's official website on February 24, 2020 was intended to be the penultimate draft. The Planning Board's public hearing was planned and advertised to be on March 24, 2020, but the Covid-19 Pandemic halted all public gatherings except those essential for the conduct of emergency services. During this delay, more attention was given to incorporating public comments and fine-tuning illustrations.

The Planning Board began a public hearing on June 2, 2020 that concluded on June 23, 2020. At the Board's direction, the Department of Development Services edited the draft to incorporate changes from public comments and Board consensus. The Planning Board deliberated on the final document at its regular business meeting on July 21, 2020. The Board forwarded its recommendation of the ~~land use~~land-use policies and activities for the period of 2020 to 2040 to the Town Council for consideration and adoption as an ordinance of the Town. The Planning Board advised:

> The Town Council held a work session on the Comprehensive Community Plan | 2020 – 2040 on [date]. The Town Council [began/conducted] the final public hearing on [date], during which time it received the Planning Board's recommendation and entertained public testimony. At the Town Council's direction, the Department of Development Services edited the draft to incorporate changes from public comments and Town Council consensus. The Town Council voted on [date] to incorporate the Plan into the Code of Ordinances as Chapter 10. With the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan document by the Westerly Town Council, the 2010 Comprehensive Plan was repealed and replaced.

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Section 2.4 – Using the Plan

The adoption of this Plan commits to a coordinated and inspirational vision for the future of Westerly. Its success will be evident in its committed use by elected and appointed officials, appointed members of public bodies, municipal staff, residents, ~~and~~ businesses, public-private partnerships, and non-profit organizations.

- Elected officials will use this Plan to align their priorities with the community's vision of the future as described in this Plan and should use this information in adopting local codes and ordinances that support this Plan's goals. This Plan provides both background information and leverage for elected officials to fulfill their legislative responsibilities and to dedicate financial and administrative support to implement the specific actions identified within this Plan.
- Local boards and commissions will assess the desirability of development applications by their conformity to this Plan, adopt policies and procedures that actively assist those initiatives in furtherance of the Plan's goals, and develop budgets and/or investment alternatives that are consistent with those described in the Plan.
- Municipal staff will use this Plan when interpreting legislative mandates and regulations, making administrative decisions, enforcing development-related codes, and establishing priorities for work efforts. This Plan provides an overarching framework for developing individual and team objectives, as well as a context for the many daily decisions that are made in providing services to the citizens of Westerly.
- Finally, residents, ~~and~~ businesses, public-private partnerships, and non-profit organizations will use this Plan as a reference when making residential or commercial location choices, supporting programs to preserve cultural and natural resources, appealing for financial or legislative support, and evaluating the effectiveness of local government and elected officials.

Section 2.5 – Consistency in ~~Land Use~~Land-use Regulation

This Plan contains the public policies that the Town arrived at through detailed study and analysis and codified after public hearing and adoption, in accordance with the Town Charter and State law. Consistency with this Plan is a requirement of all local ~~land use~~land-use regulations and all subsequent land development actions. There must also be internal consistency between the goals, policies, and actions within this Plan.

Consistency in ~~land use~~land-use regulation between the state and municipal governments provides coordination through uniform standards and review procedures, which guide administration and decision-making processes. The consistency doctrine is also applied to ~~land use~~land-use policies and priorities through standards and a uniform procedure for the review and approval of municipal comprehensive plans and state guide plans and their consistency with overall State goals, objectives, standards, and applicable performance measures. The result is mutual consistency between State actions and programs, municipal comprehensive plans, and municipal policies and actions.

Consistency with this Plan is not a discretionary matter. State law mandates that a municipality achieve consistency between all local development regulations, including its land development and subdivision regulations, comprehensive plan, capital improvement program, and zoning ordinance. The standard by which a ~~land use~~land-use decision or Town action is evaluated is not merely general consistency with the comprehensive plan. To find consistency, all local ~~land use~~land-use regulations and all subsequent actions must be in basic harmony with the priorities and purpose of the comprehensive plan - expressed in the vision and

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values articulated in Section 1.3 and further iterated in Section 2.8 of this Plan. In addition, the goals, policies, and actions of the comprehensive plan must be construed such that they can be reconciled with each other.

A ~~land use~~land-use regulation is consistent with the comprehensive plan if the aspects of development allowed are not in conflict with or detract from the vision, and instead advance or assist in moving forward the vision, values, goals, objectives, policies, land uses, densities, and intensities directed by the comprehensive plan. To achieve consistency with the comprehensive plan, a land development regulation, new or existing, must regulate the subject aspects of development in a way that not only does not conflict with the relevant provisions of the comprehensive plan, but also implements applicable provisions of the comprehensive plan.

Section 2.6 – Land Use and Zoning

~~Land use~~Land-use planning in the Town of Westerly is a deliberative process that requires collaboration between regulators, like Town and State agencies, and consumers, such as developers, businesses, and residents. ~~Land use~~Land-use planning is effective when incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance. The ~~land use~~land-use planning process, in the spirit of serving the public interest, is guided by the goals, policies, and actions of this Plan.

The current use of land in Westerly is illustrated in the 2011 Land Cover (LUZ-M1) figure, so named for the year in which the orthophotography was captured to produce this most recent land cover/~~land use~~land-use dataset . The ~~land use~~land-use classifications in the dataset were based on the same Anderson Level III coding as preceding datasets and indicate the most apparent use of property within the Town as identified from the 2011 orthophotography (visit the RIGIS website for a more in-depth description of this dataset or any other datasets made available). As noted on this illustration, no warranty can be made relating to spatial accuracy, reliability, or completeness of the data, as it was not the product of a professional land survey. This mapped figure is a contemporary visual which means it may become less current or accurate over time.

Subsection 2.6.1 – State ~~Land Use~~Land-use Policy

The intent of *Land Use 2025* is to eliminate sprawl and protect the natural resources of the State. To achieve this goal, it encourages an urban/rural model that concentrates new development into established areas and selective growth centers. Further, it identifies an Urban Services Boundary (USB) within which areas that either provide public sewer and water or are planned to do so in the near future reside, and where higher density and infill development might be considered. *Land Use 2025* encourages the conservation of natural resources through cluster development, conservation development, and/or transfer of development rights in areas that have development potential.

The four goals articulated in *Land Use 2025* provided a constant touchpoint for the development of this Plan and the vision of Westerly's future. These goals include:

1. Build the Greenspace and Greenways System
2. Achieve Excellence in Community Design
3. Develop First-class Supporting Infrastructure
4. Implement the Vision

In Section ~~2.6~~2.9 of this Plan, the Town describes its long-term priorities and relates them directly to the goals of *Land Use 2025*.

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Subsection 2.6.2 – Evolution of Existing Westerly Zoning

The Town of Westerly last comprehensively updated its Zoning Ordinance in 1998, though numerous amendments have been adopted since. The Zoning Ordinance is a critical tool for controlling the type, density, and appearance of development within the Town. The Town implements the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan through the diligent application and enforcement of the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance, as adopted, codified and, from time-to-time, amended by the Westerly Town Council, should be consulted for the permitted uses and the physical forms associated with development in each of the various zoning districts.

The Town recognizes that a comprehensive update of Chapter 260 of the Town Code - the Zoning Ordinance - is needed. Housekeeping changes such as proofreading errors and the removal of duplications will improve the document. The incorporation of changes made to RIGL since 1998 will ensure consistency with legal authority and process requirements. The Department of Development Services anticipates a full transition to online submissions of land development applications during the term of this Plan, which may require special state enabling and subsequent zoning ordinance changes.

Modern conceptual code amendments are also suggested, including:

- Shared parking and parking maximums,
- Form-Based Code,
- Affordable-by-design housing, and
- Transit-oriented development (TOD).

For convenient reference in this Plan, datasets were provided by the IT Department to illustrate existing zoning districts on the figure **Zoning (LUZ-M2)**. This illustration follows the zoning district classifications described in the 1998 Zoning Ordinance but is not the official Zoning Map. A separate figure, entitled **Zoning Overlays (LUZ-M3)**, also presents all Overlay Districts.

Westerly's land development and subdivision regulations deal specifically with land disturbance activities, the development of land into subdivisions, and large-scale development projects. Land development regulations include specifications for landscaping, parking lots, rights-of-way, and other design considerations. Following the approval of this Plan, the land development regulations will be revisited by Town staff and consultants to ensure best practices for infrastructure and environmental protection are considered in all development.

Today's concerns over aging infrastructure and tomorrow's concerns regarding natural hazards and sea level rise must be considered in the discussion of regulatory changes. Findings of the Planning Board relative to subdivisions and land development projects must demonstrate that the development is consistent with the adopted comprehensive plan. This consistency is a valuable tool for communities, who can set their vision for the future in their comprehensive plan and then implement it through the Planning Board.

Subsection 2.6.3 – Official Westerly Zoning Map

The Official Zoning Map, as occasionally amended by official action of the Town Council, has been used for all planning and zoning related reviews and approvals to date. The Town's Official Zoning Map had, until recently, been a black and white rendering since its adoption in 1998.

The document entitled "Town of Westerly, R.I. — Official Zoning Key Map Sheets 1 - 188; Scale 1-inch equals 1,200 feet, Date: October 16, 1998, Cherenzia and Associates, LTD", has been available in the Town Clerk's Office since its adoption. The black and white rendering with cross hatching and unevenly weighted lines was the official record of the zoning district boundaries in 1998. Unable to update the Zoning Map itself, all zoning

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changes from 1998 through September 2015, were recorded in the "Table of Zoning Map Amendments" – *Attachment 12* to Chapter 260 of the Westerly Code (Zoning Ordinance).

Beginning in 2018, the Zoning Office undertook an analysis of the 1998 Zoning Ordinance update. Considering modern Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping tools, the 1998 map was extremely imprecise. New GIS electronic mapping tools presented a means by which the Town can clearly communicate the exact Zoning District assigned to a property. A Zoning Map update commenced. The "Official Zoning Map, Town of Westerly, Rhode Island, July 1, 2019," has been adopted and is considered an integral part of the Zoning Ordinance.

Effective July 1, 2019 the Town Council approved revisions to §260-16 of the Zoning Ordinance, titled "Zoning Map," and adopted electronic GIS zoning map as the official zoning map of the Town of Westerly. The new online map is extremely accurate, accessible to the public online, and incorporates all Zoning Map changes made between 1998 and 2019. The electronic version of the Zoning Map is to be immediately updated by the Town Clerk, Zoning Official and IT Department, thereby maintaining an accurate real time Zoning Map in perpetuity.

The Zoning Ordinance now provides that:

- the location and boundaries of zoning districts, including zoning overlay districts, shall be prepared and administered in a digital format;
- the zoning map shall be available for viewing and on file in the Town Clerk's Office in digital and hard copy, such as paper, format;
- the zoning map shall also be available for viewing on the official Town of Westerly website.

In the event of a conflict between the digital and hard-copy formats of the zoning map, the digital zoning map shall govern.

Figure **Zoning (LUZ-M2)** is an illustration based on the same GIS data that is available online. This mapped figure is not a survey or a boundary plan. As an illustration, it is designed to meet the mapping standards set forth in the *Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning Standards Guidance Handbook #15: Mapping for Comprehensive Plans,* approved by the Rhode Island State Planning Council in January 2016, including titles, legends, and distinguishable symbology.

Section 2.7 – Community Character

Perhaps more than anything else, a comprehensive plan is intended to encourage the preservation of a community's unique values and character while setting forth the vision, goals, policies, and actions that will guide that community in shaping its future. This section addresses the makeup of the Town of Westerly, its history, the specific character of its constituent neighborhoods, and the concerns and aspirations of its citizens.

Maintaining the character of Westerly is important to the future of this special place. The combination of features and characteristics of the various neighborhoods make Westerly unique from other towns, which is an important reason why people want to visit and reside here. The same river and oceanfront that served Westerly's earliest residents, today provide some of the biggest challenges to the sustainability and vitality of the quality of life developed here.

Residents want to preserve the strong identity that is deeply felt by inhabitants and visitors, and they value the diverse built and natural assets of the community. Residents also recognize the importance of economic development and employment opportunities, as well as housing for all income and age levels.~~,~~ All of these considerations are made in an era when changes in climate bring additional challenges. The key to achieving these goals is to balance potentially competing needs through careful planning for new residential and commercial development and redevelopment of underutilized areas while providing for public health and safety, environmental resiliency, and community well-being into the future. This approach would allow the Town

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to maintain the quality and vitality of locally based businesses and provide housing that will allow residents to live, work, and retire in the community while preserving small-town charm.

Building on the existing character and composition of the Town, the design for the future of Westerly should offer an organized, functional, and attractive place to live, work, and visit. However, achieving this vision will require careful planning and decisions that reinforce the best aspects of the community's character. The objective is to allow Westerly to grow and prosper while maintaining the quality of life that all enjoy.

Subsection 2.7.1 – Community Make-up and Concerns

The citizens of Westerly have long held a strong affection for their community. They see it as a special place with a character all its own. This character is rooted in its spectacular location along the Pawcatuck River and the Atlantic Ocean, as well as the charm and heritage of its historic, urban neighborhoods and its tranquil, rural areas.

Westerly was first inhabited by the Mohegan, Narragansett, and Pequot tribes. During this extended period, the area was named Mishquamicuk (anglicized as Misquamicut), or "land of red fish," in reference to the Atlantic salmon, which were once prevalent in the land's surrounding waters and which today appear on the Town's seal. Diversification of the population began in the seventeenth century with English colonization. Immigrant families who came to work in the Town's mills and quarries during its industrial boom in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century further diversified the population. Many families who vacationed and summered along the shoreline also came to permanently take residence in the Town. Despite the range of its origins, the local citizenry remains united in the pride they feel for the elements that give the Town its special character.

There is universal appreciation of the architecturally and aesthetically significant downtown core. Centered around beautiful Wilcox Park, the Downtown is bounded by Broad Street, Canal Street and High Street – all with largely preserved nineteenth and early twentieth century streetscapes and the ambiance of community of an earlier age. Its sensitive renovation in the late twentieth century has become a source of great civic pride. Westerly's shoreline communities, including magnificent beaches (the first open-ocean beaches along the New England coast as one travels east from New York) and marine waters are enjoyed by beachgoers as well as boaters and fishers. Together with their largely residential architectural treasures (which are another source of pleasure and pride for the residents of the Town), most Westerly residents speak of the Town as a place where they feel comfortable and safe. However, residents share great concern regarding over-development and climate change, which could erode the landscapes of the community and potentially threaten the overall quality of life in the Town.

Housing opportunities and the limited availability of employment for area residents continue to be concerns. There is a recognition that commercial sprawl has turned a significant portion of Route 1, including Granite Street, Franklin Street and Post Road, into a generic commercial arterial strip which lacks character. There is a strong desire to reverse this trend and refocus development that promotes a sense of place and a reflection of small-town charm. Traffic and congestion during the summer months regularly clogs the gateways into the Town, and parking is an issue in Downtown and other popular destinations such as the commercial waterfronts along Bay Street in Watch Hill and Atlantic Avenue in Misquamicut. While Route 78 is advantageous to the mitigation of traffic congestion downtown during the summer season, it physically divides several of Westerly's neighborhoods. The perception is that Route 78 also diverts commerce from downtown ~~in the longer off-season~~throughout the year.

Residential development, particularly in shoreline communities, raises concerns about the loss of open space and scenic views, as well as the degradation of the salt ponds. There is concern that over-utilized and/or unregulated development will erode the environmental integrity of the shoreline and salt ponds. Residents of

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the Town have expressed widespread commitment to the preservation of open space and the protection of the Town's natural resources within eco-sensitive areas. Natural hazards continue to be a major concern for the Town due to historical experience with significantly destructive hurricanes and tropical storms, such as the Great Hurricane of 1938, Hurricane Carol in 1954, Hurricane Bob in 1991, and Superstorm Sandy in 2012. Other major flooding events not associated with hurricanes or tropical storms have also substantially impacted the Town, such as the Great Rhode Island Flood of 2010.

Subsection 2.7.2 – Climate

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) places the Town of Westerly within the humid continental climate zone, described as having mild to warm summers and cold winters. Recorded temperatures are indicative of this, ranging from an average temperature of 30 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) in January to an average temperature of 72.2°F in July, based on data collected from 2000-2019 (NOAA Online Weather Data). Mean annual precipitation in Westerly totaled 43.96 inches during the same time period. While major storm events do not often occur in the area, Westerly has been impacted by several tropical cyclones, blizzards and nor'easters, including the Great New England Hurricane of 1938, Hurricane Carol in 1954, the Blizzard of 1978, the Great Rhode Island Flood of 2010, and Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

Climate change will impact Westerly's natural environment and the infrastructure on which residents and commerce depend. As the south coast of Rhode Island experiences warmer air and water temperatures, there is the potential for more extreme weather events such as droughts, intense precipitation, severe storms, and flooding. The local economy and government services need to prepare now for the challenges to come. Increasing rates of sea level rise, shorter winters and longer summers, and less snowfall and ice coverage will affect residents' and visitors' experiences in the Town. Climate change has the potential to pose significant risks to Westerly's water, wastewater, surface transportation, and energy infrastructures and utilities. Protection of the natural environment and the health, welfare, and economic well-being of the community is essential to the Town's vitality.

Subsection 2.7.3 – Sustainable Development

Characteristics of a site or area can present significant difficulties in construction and long-term viability, even if an intended use is permitted by local zoning. Environmental factors (e.g. hazardous waste, pollution and flooding, erosion) have always been a consideration in land-use planning. Sustainable development is a concept which measures the relationship between population, resources, environment, and economy. The ability of a community to sustain a population and activity at a certain quality of life is influenced by both social and economic development and the natural environment.

Sustainable development meets the needs of the current community without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their needs and enjoy the benefit of development. The effective and sustainable use of land involves a matching of site conditions with the specific requirements and potential impacts of different land uses. Significant costs to the environment, and society in general, may result where land is used for purposes that it is not physically capable of sustaining. Failing to use land within its capability may have serious consequences. Common environmental concerns occurring both on and off-site include foundation instability, flooding, soil erosion and sedimentation, contamination and eutrophication (degradation resulting from increased nutrient inputs) of water bodies, and release of acid solutions ~~from acid sulfate soils~~resulting from drought, dredging, and/or draining of wetlands and river channels, especially in saline coastal waters~~, and high maintenance costs~~. High maintenance costs may also be incurred if land is used outside its capability.

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Subsection 2.7.4 – Sustainable Tourism

Tourism related industries have been a hallmark of Westerly for over a century. Tourism has been and will continue to be a major economic driver for the community. This Plan supports protecting assets such as beautiful beaches, natural habitats, and renowned resorts while expanding enjoyment for tourists and identifying initiatives that help expand the "season." This Plan introduces sustainable and diversified tourism. The concept of "sustainable tourism" is that tourism should support the Town, rather than the Town supporting tourism. If the Town is made better for its residents, it will be better for tourists too. Sustainable tourism provides a low impact on the environment and local culture, while helping to generate future employment for residents. Long-term sustainability requires a suitable balance between environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development.

This Plan seeks development that is a positive experience for local people, local businesses, tourism companies, and tourists themselves. Authentic places attract ~~high value~~ tourists seeking a variety of unique experiences – not the same restaurants, shopping, and activities as everywhere else. If ~~high value~~ tourists come, other tourists will come too. Consequently, it is important to maintain, through regulation and other means, Westerly's scenic quality – an authentic downtown, riverfront, barrier beaches, and New England village commercial districts.

Subsection 2.7.5 – Westerly Neighborhoods

In addition to its notable Downtown, Westerly is comprised of several distinct communities, each with its individual character and history. Like Downtown, several of these communities are designated as Historic Districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Several communities are also serviced by fire districts that provide local quasi-municipal functions funded by special district real estate property taxes. Each community takes great pride in their individual character. For instance, twenty years ago, the Weekapaug Foundation for Conservation developed and successfully implemented a process of establishing a greenway around Weekapaug through the acquisition of land and securing limitations on development rights.

Figure **Neighborhoods (NBH-M1)** is a record of Westerly's local neighborhoods as identified through the involvement of residents, neighborhood association representatives, and Town staff. A total of 29 neighborhoods were recognized. Using available information through RIGIS, the Town's land evidence records and other maps and information, these neighborhoods evolved into the 19 Neighborhood Planning Areas indicated figure **Neighborhood Planning Areas (NBH-M2)**. These Neighborhood Planning Areas are used to facilitate the discussion of the Town's future land use. Neighborhood planning is described in Section 3.6.

Downtown Westerly and Surrounding Area

Downtown Westerly has developed as the commercial and civic center of the Town. This area is divided into four neighborhoods which include Downtown and Main Street, Wilcox East, Granite Street and State Street, and the North End. The Downtown and Main Street area is anchored by a green core, Wilcox Park, and is defined by commercial streets (Broad Street, High Street and Main Street) and a residential roadway (Grove Avenue) that surround it. Along Broad Street are significant late nineteenth and early twentieth century eclectic masonry structures, including Christ Church, Westerly Library, the Town Hall and Municipal Court House, a US Post Office, and the headquarters of the Washington Trust Company. The former Industrial Trust Bank building and the Ocean Community Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) located on High Street, the United Theatre (currently undergoing restoration), and the Martin House (also known as the former Savoy Hotel) on Canal Street are also located in this area. Along High Street, two-story brick commercial buildings have storefronts with office and/or residential space above. Other significant structures downtown include the Westerly Armory and Westerly Train Station on Railroad Avenue. Main Street, which runs from Broad Street and the Pawcatuck

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Bridge to Beach Street and Margin Street, is largely commercial; however, redevelopment of a significant portion of the area has been discussed in the past through such initiatives as the Westerly KeepSpace program. Recent attention has been given to revitalizing the Pawcatuck River corridor, connecting neighborhoods through public riverfront access while encouraging investment in the community.

Wilcox East, located on Granite Hill, to the east of Wilcox Park, also contains a mix of professional and residential uses with an active neighborhood association. Stately nineteenth century houses line both sides of Elm Street and include Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, and Second Empire structures. Similar styles of residential structures are also situated along Margin Street. Outside of these locations, the area surrounding the central core of downtown from the railroad on the north to Wells Street on the south and from the Pawcatuck River on the west to Granite Street on the east, is primarily nineteenth century and early twentieth century small lot, single and multi-family residential homes, identified by two- and three-story large frame structures. A significant number of the buildings are close to the street or infringe on standard setbacks and are primarily zoned as high density residential. While the zoning district allows for a variety of housing types, some of the more traditional residential architecture in this area would not be allowed within the current zoning code because the existing development configurations exhibit setbacks that are smaller than the code allows. The street pattern in the core area generally consists of irregular grid arrangements.



Generally, north of the Northeast Corridor (NEC) is considered the North End, a late nineteenth century neighborhood which became the home of successive waves of European immigrants who came to Westerly to work in the textile mills and granite quarries. The former ~~v~~Village of Stillmanville once extended over the Pawcatuck River (the Stillmanville Bridge still exists today) into the ~~v~~Village of Pawcatuck in Stonington, Connecticut. Today, its portion in Westerly has been largely supplanted by the North End, as well as the southern extent of the Potter Hill area. In recent years, the Town, together with multiple private and public funding sources, has made a concerted effort to revitalize the North End while preserving its historic character. These efforts are most visible on Pierce and Pond Streets, where there have been many restorations of buildings and landscapes.

Mill Villages

Along the northern bounds of Westerly, bounded by the Pawcatuck River as it flows west and south, are the mill villages, which developed as distinct clusters of workforce housing, each with its own iconic mill – Bradford, Potter Hill, and White Rock. Typical land uses in the mill villages include industrial, residential, open space, vacant land, and undevelopable land. These areas have a significant number of nineteenth and early twentieth century structures.

Most homes in these neighborhoods are two or two-and-a-half story single-family or duplex structures. Zoning in this district varies between low, medium, and high density residential, industrial, and open space/recreation. As in downtown, some of the existing traditional and residential architecture in this area would not be allowed by the current zoning code because existing development configurations exhibit setbacks that are smaller than the current code allows. The street pattern in this area includes concentrations of irregular grids surrounded

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and connected by winding roads. While not defined by its own mill, the Boombridge neighborhood also shares some of these characteristics due to its location between White Rock and Potter Hill.

Shore Communities

Along Route 1A are the coastal communities of Avondale, Chin Hill, Haversham, Misquamicut, Sea Glen, Shelter Harbor, Watch Hill, Weekapaug, and Weekapaug Terrace. Each area exhibits its own distinctive character, but all have the common element of an above-average concentration of seasonal and summer homes. Two of these areas, Watch Hill and Misquamicut, attract particularly large concentrations of visitors to their shoreline commercial areas each summer. In recent years, large areas of farmland surrounding these communities have been preserved from subdivision and development by the Westerly Municipal Land Trust (WMLT), as well as by the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, the Weekapaug Foundation for Conservation, and the Westerly Land Trust (WLT).



Avondale, situated along the Pawcatuck River just north of Watch Hill, was primarily a fishing and boat-building village originally named Lotteryville. This area, which is predominantly residential with several interspersed boatyards and marinas, continues to retain its quaint waterfront character. To the west of Avondale, lie the neighborhoods of Chin Hill and Sea Glen. Bounded by the southern extent of the Dunn's Corners area to the east, Chin Hill and Sea Glen are residential neighborhoods largely developed in the 1980s and 1990s with a small number of tourist and recreation-oriented businesses.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Watch Hill transformed itself first into a colony of grand hotels and, soon after, a community of large summer cottages, mostly in Shingle Style, Arts and Craft, and Colonial Revival. However, an eclectic mix of Norman and Mediterranean designs are also interspersed throughout this area. Watch Hill's Bay Street has always been a vibrant commercial center along Watch Hill Cove at the estuary of the Pawcatuck River and Little Narragansett Bay. Napatree Point, which extends westward from the village, is a 1.5-mile barrier beach containing the Napatree Point Conservation Area and is enjoyed by summer beach-goers and naturalists who know it as one of the prime shore bird and migratory bird preserves in New England. Watch Hill's Flying Horse Carousel is arguably the oldest "merry-go-round" in the US and Watch Hill Lighthouse has served as a beacon at Watch Hill Point since the colonial era.

Misquamicut, once known as Pleasant View, is located between Watch Hill and Weekapaug, and lies between the Atlantic Ocean and Winnapaug Pond. Its principal roadway, Atlantic Avenue, contains a mix of uses, including residential, commercial, and mixed developments, and includes three prominent beaches: Misquamicut State Beach, Wuskenau Beach, and Westerly Town Beach. Residential lots within Misquamicut are small, and many of its mid-twentieth century structures are generally modest in size. However, existing houses in this highly desirable area are frequently being renovated or replaced. New or renovated structures are frequently constructed larger and completed for year-round occupancy. Many of these properties are in flood zones and are being built more resiliently to varying heights above base flood elevations.

Weekapaug and Shelter Harbor are primarily residential, except for an inn located in each community. Haversham, which lies between Weekapaug and Shelter Harbor, is entirely residential. Weekapaug surrounds the western end of Quonochontaug Pond and meets the Atlantic Ocean at Weekapaug Point and along its barrier beach, extending east towards Charlestown. Haversham and Shelter Harbor lie along the northern shore

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of Quonochontaug Pond. The predominant architectural character of the residential structures within Weekapaug is Shingle Style while the architecture of Shelter Harbor, which was developed in the early twentieth century as a music colony, is more eclectic in character.



Downtown Periphery

To the east of Tower Street and Granite Street (Route 1) are the Boiling Springs, Indian Hills (not to be confused with the Indian Plantations development in the Dunn's Corners neighborhood), and Tower Street neighborhoods. These areas are all largely residential with businesses lining Post Road (Route 1). At the juncture of Granite Street and Franklin Street, the roadway becomes more intensely commercial with larger structures and developments. This commercial area, which includes small pockets of residential development, is bounded to the east by Airport Road (so named because it is adjacent to Westerly State Airport [WST]) and Route 78.

South of Granite Street and State Street are the neighborhoods of East Avenue, Riverbend, and the Yacht Club. These areas lie between the Pawcatuck River and Mastuxet Brook and have built environments which serve as a transition between the urban character of downtown and the coastal character of the shore communities.

The central portion of the Town (located north of Route 1 and east of Route 78) is a largely undeveloped area dominated by Chapman Pond and Aguntaug Swamp (also called Chapman Swamp or Crandall Swamp), one of the largest freshwater wetland complexes in Rhode Island. While the northern segment of Pound Road is lined by numerous homes, much of this centrally located neighborhood is either preserved for habitat protection or impacted by wetlands that prohibit development. A small concentration of state and municipal facilities exists in an area north and west of Chapman Pond and east of Route 78.

Dunn's Corners (Route 1 Corridor)

North of Shore Road and many of the previously mentioned coastal neighborhoods, commercial strip development straddles the Post Road segment of Route 1 like the sprawl that has inundated portions of other historic East Coast communities. Based on typical post-World War II development, this area does not exhibit characteristics of the rest of the Town. Typical land uses in the Route 1 corridor include commercial and residential uses interspersed with vacant properties. The area consists of residential subdivisions and small shopping centers, including several local and national retail stores, small businesses, and motels. Residential structures consist of predominantly single-family and condominium development. Typical architectural styles of residential structures range from modern to post-modern to new urbanism styles. Commercial structures typically are consistent with national trademark forms commonly referred to as "box stores" and others typically associated with small scale strip developments.

Residential subdivision housing units are consistently set slightly back from the street. Commercial structures are typically set back a considerable distance from the street with large parking areas in front of the structure. Zoning in this area includes medium and high density residential and highway commercial. Road patterns in this area are winding and feature a substantial number of cul-de-sacs. Most minor roads are connected to Route 1 but do not have interconnectivity with other minor roads.

Along Dunn's Corners-Bradford Road, one of only two major roads in this area leading to Bradford from Post Road, there are some sparse residential developments and the Town's largest concentration of remaining

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working farmland. The other major road in this area is Route 91 (Westerly-Bradford Road) which connects downtown to the rural areas to the east. This entire area presents environmental challenges for development and has the lowest zoning density in Westerly. Neighborhoods in this area include McGowan Corners and Woody Hill.

Subsection 2.7.6 – Regional Considerations

Westerly's identity as a resort community began in the 1830s with the building of the first of several grand hotels in Watch Hill. These attracted a clientele from as far away as the Midwest. Initially, these visitors arrived by train at Stonington and from there by ferry. By the early 1880s, when the first major farm tract in Watch Hill was subdivided for building sites, Westerly's transition to a location for summer homes began. At about the same time, a substantial summer community was established in Weekapaug, and shortly thereafter, a simpler one was established at Pleasant View (today known as Misquamicut). The Westerly State Airport was established as a state-owned airport in 1939, according to AirNav, LLC, and is a regional asset for local businesses and residents. Notably, it provides corporate aviation service and public passenger service and creates a clear nexus between Westerly and Block Island, a popular vacation destination for the region. The airport may also aid in emergency preparedness as a possible alternative evacuation method and/or supplier of necessary goods. Westerly's position as a regional tourist destination remains a large contributor to the local economy.

Westerly today is also an important center in southern Rhode Island for commercial and professional services, the arts and education. In addition to jobs in Town, some residents commute to New London, Groton or the metro-Providence area or use technology to become self-employed or to work remotely from their company's location. In the future, jobs that require advanced training and specialized skills are likely to become a bigger share of the employment mix. To achieve continuing economic growth, Westerly will need to focus on providing quality education at all levels and actively encouraging companies with high-value jobs to locate here. Westerly will also need to work to improve commuting opportunities so that residents have access to employment located in other areas of Rhode Island and neighboring states.

The accommodation services industry will continue to be an important part of Westerly's economy. Visitors who come to enjoy beautiful beaches and other amenities bring an important source of jobs and income, and they also bring increased traffic and other stresses on the Town during the summer. Maintaining a balance among the competing needs of seasonal residents, year-round residents, and short-term visitors will be an important key to continuing a high quality of life in Westerly.

This Plan encourages regional solutions that take advantage of opportunities to improve economic competitiveness, infrastructure, transportation, communications, and emergency preparedness. To accomplish this goal requires collaboration and cooperation among all neighboring governments and Westerly. The Town desires to work in partnership to coordinate future development efforts with existing infrastructure and resiliency planning on a regional basis.

The Town coordinates with the Town of Stonington in Connecticut on issues of mutual interest, such as water quality concerns within the Pawcatuck River, downtown Westerly-Pawcatuck revitalization, shared water systems, the Westerly Train Station, emergency management, and economic development. The Town will continue to support coordination of municipal services with Stonington, including the identification of areas where improved coordination between the State of Rhode Island and State of Connecticut will leverage state and federal funding opportunities.

The Town will continue to identify resources and programs of mutual benefit with neighboring Rhode Island communities, such as Hopkinton and Charlestown, for recreation, leisure, and quality of life. The Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA) is one of Westerly's regional partners in land and water preservation.

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Through WPWA, Westerly is united with other municipalities in southern Rhode Island and southeastern Connecticut on common causes.

Section 2.8 – The Future

As stated in the preceding chapter, this Plan envisions Westerly as a safe, resilient, and compassionate community that has preserved and enhanced its quality of life, its distinctive heritage, and its extraordinary cultural and natural resources for all generations. The Plan also requires dedication to a strong, stable, equitable economy and a responsible and publicly engaged government. Looking forward to 2040 evokes an image of what the future holds.

A Vision for Westerly

- Westerly will remain a unique and special place, retaining its distinctive neighborhoods, history, traditions, and natural beauty, while growing in a way to meet its residents' needs for a vibrant place to live, raise and educate families, and work.
- Westerly will have contained sprawl, blight, sign pollution, and the development of housing and commercial space~~e~~ will have been thoughtfully managed to meet the needs of residents of all generations and will have~~to~~ promoted a prosperous economy with as little impact on the natural environment as possible.
- Downtown Westerly will be a welcoming and attractive gateway for visitors arriving by public transportation or otherwise, a premier cultural center for all, continue its legacy as an Historic District and Arts Center, ~~premier center for people, culture, and transportation,~~ and will be well-connected to all neighborhoods through its public spaces, programs, events, and services of community-wide interest.
- Westerly will have secured its water supply for the twenty-first century and carried out its extensive programs of infrastructure maintenance and revitalization, including water, sewer, and stormwater management systems, while maintaining and upgrading of town facilities in a timely fashion.
- The shoreline, Pawcatuck River, salt ponds, and greenspace will remain Westerly's trademarks, with public rights-of-way carefully managed and maintained both to ensure accessibility and to sustain their uses while preserving their health and natural beauty for future generations to enjoy.
- Westerly will have achieved a condition of economic and physical resilience to natural and man-made events.

Section 2.9 – Long-term Priorities

Protecting Open Space, Scenic Viewscapes, and Important Land Features

Since the adoption of Westerly's Comprehensive Plan in 1992, substantial areas of open space have been acquired for preservation and recreation. Public/private and non-profit entities have been active and successful in the purchase/dedication of lands for open space and, in some cases, the purchase of development rights.

Most recently, 433 acres in Bradford, known as the Lucey properties, was acquired for passive recreation, open space, and aquifer protection. This parcel is contiguous with the state-owned Woody Hill Management Area (722 acres) and the non-profit Westerly Land Trust's Wahaneeta Preserve (84 acres), thus creating Westerly's first green belt – extending more than 12,000 contiguous acres. The Town of Westerly also purchased 41 acres on Springbrook Road within a wellhead protection area. This purchase was also associated with restrictions placed on the adjacent White Rock Quarry concerning mining practices so mining operations would not adversely affect

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the Town's wellheads (located near this land). This land purchase was funded through the Westerly Water Department, requiring a minor increase in town water fees.

Federal, state, and local government contributions to future acquisitions are likely to be reduced or eliminated in the current economic and political climate. Therefore, the Town, private and non-profit organizations will continue to use traditional methods of property acquisition as well as other strategies to achieve its objectives without taxpayer dollars.

Proactive approaches at the earliest stages of the regulatory process, rather than reactive responses at later time, have been valuable in achieving the Town's desired objectives.

All Town entities involved in ~~land use~~land-use regulations and permitting will remain cognizant of newer ~~land use~~ regulatory alternatives, consider their implementation and be flexible in their use so the development authorized also protects important greenspace and greenway systems.

Long-term Priority Continued from the 2010 Comprehensive Plan

The Town of Westerly must employ and support a full array of public, charitable, private, and multi-sector strategies to acquire and/or otherwise protect areas of open space and important natural land features.

Additional Long-term Priority for 2020-2040

The Town of Westerly must promote physical resiliency by conserving areas of open space and important natural land features.

While great achievements have been made in the acquisition of open spaces and natural resource areas of significant importance, it is equally imperative that these lands are conserved for years to come. Projections have become increasingly certain that Westerly, like nearly all other coastal communities world-wide, must be prepared for sea level rise (SLR) and more frequent and intense storm events.

Westerly's salt marshes are its most productive ecological natural communities, yet as sea level rise accelerates, the salt marshes are lost. Open space must be available for salt marshes to migrate inland as sea level rises, and not just for the twenty-year term of this Plan. Maintaining undeveloped lands in their natural state will be one of the most effective actions for the Town to undertake and support over the next two decades.

Healthy Places through Greenspace Connections and a Multi-Modal Transportation Network

As noted above, while more needs to be accomplished, great strides have been achieved in the protection of open space, ~~and~~ important land features, and public right-of-way access to both the shore and the Pawcatuck River. However, there has been little progress in access to these areas by means other than automobiles. If the last twenty years has created a culture of open space acquisition and protection, the challenge of the next twenty years is the creation of a greenspace system of connections and access other than by automobiles. Alternative multimodal transportation in the Town could include walking, biking, public transit (trains and buses), water taxis, and private boats.

The public outreach which occurred in relation to the 2010 Comprehensive Plan indicated widespread support for the creation of biking and walking trails and paths. The State of Rhode Island's initiatives to create such facilities for the East Bay and South Kingstown–Narragansett have been largely successful. While the 2010 Comprehensive Plan called for the establishment of such facilities generally, it prioritized the creation of a discrete specific scenic coastal loop. A component of this proposal~~,~~ is the Misquamicut ~~Eco-Trail~~multi-use path, which would ~~to~~ connect the sidewalks on the east and west side of the state beach along the road, ~~would re-establish sidewalks on the portion of Atlantic Avenue abutting Misquamicut State Beach and involve the construction of~~

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~~parallel-running bike paths~~ with opportunities for small areas to observe Winnapaug Pond and learn more about it through interpretive signage. The project is in active discussion between the Town and State agencies as of January 2020.

In the development of this Plan, the value placed on integrating walking and biking remains strong, as long as public safety concerns can be met. Other concepts proposed are:

- Require 'multi-modal transportation analyses' for development projects to include pedestrian, bicycle, public transportation, water access, shared motor vehicle, ~~it,~~ and private motor vehicle ~~assessments~~access.
- Pass a Complete Streets resolution, a Smart Growth policy, that directs the Town's Department of Development Services and Engineering Department to routinely design an entire right of way to enable safe access for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation. ~~stating the intent to build and maintain complete streets that consider pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and motor vehicle shared use.~~

Long-term Priority Continued from the 2010 Comprehensive Plan

The Town of Westerly must connect greenspace, recreational land, and commercial areas by means and methods other than automobiles.

Additional Long-term Priority for 2020-2040

The Town of Westerly will empower and improve opportunities for the public to voice their values, ideas, and concerns regarding transportation choice and the impact on health.

While Westerly continues to integrate bike lanes and sidewalks into its street system, a second focus will be on programs that provide transportation assistance to healthy food outlets, active recreation opportunities, and other social and health service agencies. Residents strongly associate themselves with the neighborhoods in which they reside. Personal health and lifestyle habits influence where people choose to live. Neighborhood Plans will open areas within Westerly to small-scale, context-sensitive mixed –use development and recreation opportunities that support a healthy lifestyle

Achieving Excellence in Community Design

The Zoning Ordinance, adopted in 1998 to implement the 1992 Comprehensive Plan, initiated development plan review (DPR) by the Planning Board for all uses other than one- and two-family homes. It also introduced general development standards. Since then, refinements and additional provisions have been added.

In October 2006, development standards for the Shore Commercial-Watch Hill (SC-WH) zoning district elevated DPR to include context sensitive standards. The entire area of that district is within the Watch Hill Historic District – listed in the NRHP. The Zoning Ordinance provides standards that are intended to reflect the character-generating elements of the historic district for the Planning Board to apply in its DPR of proposed development in Watch Hill. There are five other Westerly neighborhoods listed in the NRHP. Excellence in design requires a study of each of these areas and the development and adoption of standards for each, as was achieved in the SC-WH district.

DPR has been a very useful development tool for the Town. The Planning Board, joined by the ARB in 2010, has made effective use of DPR to initiate improved design within the public realm. Serving in an advisory capacity to the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Review, the ARB provides comments and improvements in site design, function, and aesthetics on all commercial, industrial, institutional, and multifamily residential developments during DPR.

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Currently applied on a site-by-site basis, the scope and the standards to be applied in DPR need to be revisited. As with earlier initiatives, the limits of public support and acceptance may pose a challenge. However, the character of Westerly is already substantially defined by existing structures and uses, many of which are facing challenges that require redevelopment, renovations, and revitalization. There is an opportunity for achieving more than excellence in community design.

Additional Long-term Priority for 2020-2040

The Town of Westerly will achieve excellence in community design through the application of context sensitive development standards and best practices.

DPR is a method to preserve the Town's natural environment, enhance its built environment, improve its visual character, and sustain a high quality of life through review of plans for new development and redevelopment of existing uses. DPR is context sensitive and utilizes best practices. High standards of design, landscaping (including landscaped parking lots), improved community appearance, preservation and protection of environmental quality, buffering and screening of conflicting land uses from other land uses and from public streets, and traffic and pedestrian safety are goals to be achieved through development plan review.

Vital Neighborhoods

The successful revitalization of the historic Westerly downtown and the enhanced development of the Downtown Revitalization Area, which encompasses and surrounds it, will require a spirit of cooperation, creativity, and flexibility. Transforming the appearance of the commercial corridor to a distinctive, inviting, safe, commercial, professional, and residential area reflective of the Town's character will require its own study and solution.

In this Plan, the Town maintains its commitment to the revitalization of Downtown. The existing character of the Town's other constituent neighborhoods ~~and the need to evaluate~~ require the evaluation of each neighborhood's specific needs before redevelopment and revitalization can occur ~~requires individual small-area plans~~.

Long-term Priority Continued from the 2010 Comprehensive Plan

The Town of Westerly must make the Downtown, the traditional core of Westerly, the focus of its redevelopment and revitalization efforts.

Additional Long-term Priority Continued for 2020-2040

The Town of Westerly must preserve the unique character and importance of each constituent neighborhood and evaluate opportunities for redevelopment and revitalization in each.

Westerly contains six (6) neighborhoods listed in the NRHP. This Plan identifies nineteen (19) Neighborhood Planning Areas in total. Excellence in design requires a study of each of these areas and the development and adoption of standards for redevelopment and revitalization for each. The character of Westerly is already substantially defined by existing structures and uses, many of which are facing challenges that require redevelopment, renovations, and revitalization.

Recent experience should be a strong signal that Westerly officials appreciate both the values and challenges presented in neighborhood revitalization. Westerly officials will work cooperatively to achieve preservation of iconic places while using the means at their disposal to accommodate the financial challenges such undertakings present. The North End Neighborhood Revitalization Plan was designed on key planning concepts that included recommendations for a range of affordable housing options, comprehensive code enforcement, improved neighborhood amenities, and the integration of a broad array of social services to support the needs of North

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End residents. Through a series of neighborhood revitalization plans, the Town of Westerly intends to apply these same concepts to other areas of Town.

This Plan recommends small area plans for each of the Town's neighborhoods. Small area plans cover a specific geography (neighborhood, corridor, or district) that often has a cohesive set of characteristics. The preservation of the unique character of each Neighborhood Planning Area and recognition of its distinct values requires thoughtful evaluation and community engagement to inform the Town's choices and efforts for redevelopment and revitalization.

Maintaining and Developing Exceptional Public Infrastructure

Achieving the future vision of Westerly requires that the Town maintain and further develop first-class supporting infrastructure in critical areas such as water, sewer, stormwater, and facilities. While outside of their direct control, municipal officials must also lead the coordination, planning, and implementation of private utilities (electricity, telecommunications, gas, and alternative energy) with respect to capacity and supply, as the Town addresses its own infrastructure issues, including maintenance, repair, and replacement. This effort also requires ongoing coordination with adjoining communities. The repair and extension of public sidewalks is also essential to connecting the areas of greenspace and greenways of the Town. ~~Giving priority to the Downtown Revitalization Area and its streetscapes (hardscapes and softscapes) is essential for achieving the future vision for this area, but these same considerations must be made in other planning areas as well.~~

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan's priority of maintaining and developing high quality infrastructure and coordination of private utilities is still relevant to this Plan. However, based on the Town's experience with natural hazards, storm surges, and future conditions anticipated to result from climate change, this priority has taken on even more significance.

Long-term Priority Revised for 2020-2040

The Town of Westerly must maintain and develop first-class supporting infrastructure that will be resilient when the community is faced with weather hazards, the effects of climate change, and other catastrophic events.

There is an important connection between the capital improvement program (CIP) and the effective implementation of this Plan. The Town's approach to the budgeting for capital improvements, maintenance expenditures, and operating costs must be consistent with ~~land use~~land-use policies and development needs of the community, as well as fiscally and operationally responsible.

The Westerly Planning Board has a legal responsibility to review the Town's capital improvement requests annually and meet with the Town Manager and Finance Director to review Department plans for the budgeting of both capital improvements and maintenance expenditures as outlined in each year's CIP. The Planning Board's interaction with the Finance Department and involvement in the CIP process is required for:

- Orderly and efficient provision of facilities and services through long-range capital facilities planning,
- Incorporating new technological advancements into facilities and services,
- Addressing deficiencies, if any, to accommodate desired future growth, and
- Training personnel in the skills and knowledge needed to maintain adopted level of service standards.

Risk assessment and mitigation must become a regular part of this discussion. Prioritization of action items needed to build community resilience and development of a variety of finance options to address those needs are critical steps in protecting the Town's residents and economic vitality. The Town of Westerly's participation in the State's Municipal Resilience Program, Resilient Rhody, has kicked off this initiative. This Plan requires the Town

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to establish a new protocol for the development of the CIP, which will allow the Town to maintain and develop first-class supporting infrastructure that is resilient.

Potable Water

The availability of a high quality and abundant municipal water supply for industrial and domestic use and fire suppression is essential. Achieving this goal requires protection of the water supply sources. Continued concentration on the maintenance and enhancement of the water distribution systems is essential. The prioritized program of assessment and replacement of the mechanical and distribution elements of the system needs to remain at the forefront. The vulnerability of the municipal water supply and private wells to climate hazards must be part of any assessment. Point source and non-point sources pollutants must be identified, and water quality issues must be reconciled.

Wastewater

In addition to the public health aspects of the municipal sewer system, the availability of a properly functioning system enables development to be concentrated and greenspace to be protected. For example, the amount of land preservation at Champlin Woods at Winnapaug Pond could not have been achieved without the availability of municipal sanitary sewers. If Downtown Westerly is to be a centerpiece of future development, adequate treatment capacity and transmission line integrity are necessary. Similarly, adequate sewer capacity is essential to economic development, affordable and LMI qualified housing development, redevelopment, and retrofitting of underutilized structures and property throughout the community.

For Westerly, the first step toward achieving a first-class wastewater system is actually two-fold: berming the existing wastewater facility to protect it from catastrophic weather events and eventual climate change and a firm commitment to eliminate the excessive stormwater and groundwater infiltration into the system. The certainty of future flooding and sea level rise makes it essential that the capacity of existing sewer treatment be evaluated to avert catastrophe. Construction of the additional components of the sewer treatment plant needed to improve its design capacity and identification of potential areas of system expansion need to be part of a periodically updated facilities plan. This plan will enable the Town to be ready to obtain any and all federal, state, and/or private funds available for such purposes. It will also allow these needs to be part of the Town's prioritized long-term capital investment program of maintenance and future expansion of the municipal sewer system.

Stormwater

The Town of Westerly contains an aged stormwater drainage network that requires routine maintenance, repairs, and improvements. The network consists of structures, channels, underground pipes, historical stone culverts, and detention/retention basins that collect, treat, and carry stormwater runoff to various points of discharge. Due to a lack of historical mapping for the stormwater drainage network, the Town has had difficulty with maintaining the existing network and identifying areas of deficient drainage infrastructure and sources of bacterial contamination. Mapping of the town-wide stormwater drainage system will create a documented inventory of drainage assets, help to provide a systemic program for routine maintenance activities, and identify areas where further investigation, repairs, or improvements are needed. The Town also looks to improve the stormwater drainage system and incorporate green infrastructure best management practices for the purpose of reducing bacterial loadings from stormwater discharges to surface water to comply with State regulatory criteria. Identifying portions of the stormwater network that are failing, insufficient, or in need of improvement will enable the Town to create a priority list and identify available funding opportunities.

Solid Waste Disposal

Capacity at the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC) facility in Johnston is limited and the State encourages cities and towns to reduce waste generation and recycle more to meet its 35% recycling rate and 50% overall diversion rate goals. Because municipalities are charged by the ton to dispose of municipal waste at the

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facility, reducing waste brought to the landfill saves the community money. Less waste in the landfill reduces the likelihood of environmental impacts such as groundwater contamination. Many of the everyday items that are thrown away from homes, schools, hospitals, and businesses can be recycled or reused, including product packaging, grass clippings, furniture, clothing, bottles, food scraps, newspapers, and appliances. The Town needs to reduce waste generation and increase recycling in not only municipal operations, but also among residents and businesses. Currently, the number of households that use the transfer station is not tracked and commercial and residential trash is collected in the same fashion. Hopkinton residents also utilize the Westerly transfer station. According to the RIRRC 2019 Municipal Summary, the actual total solid waste received from Westerly (and Hopkinton) yielded a recycling rate of ~~39.6~~32.1% ~~(above the State goal)~~ and an overall diversion rate (all items diverted from the landfill) of ~~42.2~~33.3% ~~(below the State goal)~~ in 201~~6~~9. ~~Both rates were improvements from prior years. The Town intends to continue this trend.~~Other services under consideration are the recycling of food scraps, composting, and new outreach programs. Westerly continues to push towards improved recycling numbers and an overall diversion rate of over 50%.

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Chapter 3
LAND USE AND ZONING

Land is a limited and precious resource. ~~Land use~~Land-use planning and regulations seek to find an appropriate balance among the rights of property owners, their neighbors, and protection of this valuable resource. ~~Land use~~Land-use planning and regulations determine the appearance of a community, what uses will be allowed, and how those uses will be arranged to best meet the needs of the community. This chapter examines the physical characteristics of the land in Westerly, how the land is currently being used, and the environmental qualities and constraints affecting the land. The analysis of existing conditions forms the basis for the future ~~land use~~land-use plan for the community, the goal of which is to strike the appropriate balance between conservation and development and focus on resiliency. Land policies that protect, preserve, rehabilitate, and redevelop existing built resources will address the vison of this Plan while maintaining a friendly and safe community that has preserved its quality of life for all generations, protected its distinctive heritage and extraordinary cultural and natural resources, and dedicated itself to a vital economy.

This Plan seeks to maintain the distinctions between urban and rural development patterns within the Town. To that end, growth is encouraged within the Town's ~~u~~Urban ~~s~~Services Boundary. ~~area to include areas~~ This is more than a "boundary" in the traditional sense of the word. More than a boundary on a map, it is a strategy that focuses new growth and redevelopment, as well as public and private investments, where services are already available and will be maximized. The Town's Urban Services Boundaries include areas in Potter Hill, Indian Hills, Ledward Avenue, Shore ~~Drive~~ Road, ~~Weekapaug Terrace,~~ and other areas along Route 1. Figure **Future Land Use (FLU-M1)** provides an illustration of potential sewer service extensions. The Town desires to continue a dialogue with developers and their neighbors regarding future programing of sewer service as a capital improvement.

The Urban Service Boundary, as shown on the figure **Future Land Use (FLU-M1)**, is characterized by having a full array of utilities, including public water and sanitary sewer systems. Higher density development is found within these areas. In areas outside of the Urban Service Boundary, Westerly neighborhoods are distinctly rural. Neighborhoods including Bradford, much of Dunn's Corners, Haversham, and Weekapaug rely on ~~private wells and~~ on-site wastewater treatment systems (OWTS). Development at a much lower density is encouraged in these areas that are home to critical resources such as the Town's public drinking water supply. In addition to local regulation, land use and development in substantial areas of Westerly is also subject to other state regulatory authorities (e.g., Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management [RIDEM] and Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council [RICRMC]), as well as federal regulatory authorities such as the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

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Section 3.1 – Existing Land Use

This existing ~~land-use~~land-use inventory was completed using RIGIS data contributed by RIDEM, the Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program, and Photo Science, Inc. and is visualized in figure **2011 Land Cover (LUZ-M1)**, This mapped figure combines the existing land uses in Westerly into the following broader ~~land-use~~land-use categories: Agriculture, Commercial, Community Facilities, "Conservation, Recreation and Open Space", Industrial, Residential, Vacant, and Water.

These categories combined contain an area of approximately 30.3 square miles (19,381.4 acres). Land cover is an oversimplification of categories of uses and not a true snapshot of actual physical occupation of land by use. For example, the table does not include conservation lands acquired after 2011. The land cover analysis however does provide an adequate view of the overall development pattern of the community.

The following table presents a more visual presentation of information provided in the following subsections:

Table 1. Existing Land Cover, 2011

Land Cover	Area (acres)	Percent of Land Total
Agriculture includes active farmlands (croplands, pastures, and orchards) and idle farmlands (abandoned or inactive croplands, pastures, and orchards)	656	3.5%
Commercial includes all commercial uses consisting of retail, services, and professional uses	543	2.9%
Community Facilities include schools, places of religious worship, government buildings, community safety facilities, hospital, the airport, railroads, roadways, other transportation uses, public utilities, and the transfer station	642	3.4%
Conservation, Recreation, and Open Space includes cemeteries, developed recreation uses, brushlands, meadows, forests, and beaches	10,221	54.1%
Industrial includes manufacturing and quarrying operations	332	1.7%
Residential includes all residential uses	5,483	29%
Vacant includes vacant land, visible wetlands, sandy areas, rock outcrops, and transitional (urban open) areas	1,021	5.4%
Land Total	18,898	100%
Water includes all open water bodies with the exceptions of Winnapaug and Quonochontaug ponds	484	-

Source: RIGIS Land Use and Land Cover (2011) dataset

Subsection 3.1.1 – Agriculture

The agricultural land cover category includes four (4) large and several small actively farmed lands within the Town. Agricultural covers include croplands, pastures, vineyards, dairies, and orchards. There are 656 acres of actively farmed land in Westerly, which accounts for 3.5% of the combined total land area. The largest concentration of agricultural land is located along Dunn's Corners-Bradford Road, just east of the central portion of the Town. There are also several areas of farmland along Shore Road and additional farmland can be found west of the airport. In the northern portion of the Town, several smaller areas of land are currently used for agriculture. Zoned low-density residential, these areas could potentially be developed. Under Rhode Island's ~~land use~~land-use policy, however, the preservation of farmland is encouraged. About 129.6 additional acres of active farmland are being conserved through acquisition of development rights or conservation easements. Most of the farmland so preserved is in the southern portion of the Town.

Subsection 3.1.2 – Commercial

Westerly has 543 acres of commercially developed land cover, or 2.9% of total land area in the Town. Large scale development is located predominantly in two areas:

- Along the Route 1 corridor (Granite Street and Franklin Street) from Tower Street to Route 78 (Westerly Bypass or Veteran's Way)
- Around the intersection of Route 1 (Post Road), Dunn's Corners-Bradford Road, and Langworthy Road

There is also a defined historic downtown bounded by the Pawcatuck River and encompassing portions of Main Street, Broad Street, High Street, Canal Street, and Railroad Avenue. Two other substantial mixed-use commercial areas exist along the shore; one is on Bay Street in the Watch Hill neighborhood and the other is on portions of Atlantic Avenue in the Misquamicut neighborhood. Smaller commercial areas are scattered throughout the Town.

Vacant and under-utilized parcels within the existing Commercial Highway and General Commercial zoning districts require a plan for sustainable future buildout.

Subsection 3.1.3 – Community Facilities

Community facilities include schools, places of religious worship, government buildings, hospitals, and areas dedicated to the transportation network, public utilities, and landfills. Altogether, these uses cover 642 acres, or 3.4% of the Town's land area. Westerly State Airport is the largest of these areas, while other facilities of significance include the Westerly Transfer Station (located between Westerly Bypass [Route 78] and Chapman Pond), the Northeast Corridor rail line, Westerly Bypass itself, and electrical transmission lines.

Subsection 3.1.4 – Conservation, Recreation & Open Space

This ~~land use~~land-use category accounts for 10,221 acres of land, or 54.1% of the Town's land area, and includes cemeteries, developed recreation uses, brush lands, forests, and beaches. The largest single conservation area is the Woody Hill Management Area. Other land has been acquired and preserved by private conservation organizations and fire districts. There are four (4) golf courses in the Town, eight (8) marinas, and two (2) yacht clubs. Continued investment in parks and other open space for recreation will yield long-term recreational opportunities and ensure public health.

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Subsection 3.1.5 – Industrial

Industrial uses include manufacturing establishments, sand and gravel extraction, and quarrying operations. There are 332 acres of land dedicated to industrial uses in Westerly, making up 1.7% of total land area. Most of this area is made up of quarrying operations. The largest of these areas are White Rock and the lower portion of Potter Hill, while additional operations are present in Bradford. Manufacturing operations are in the Airport Industrial Park, Bradford, and along Canal Street and Beach Street. Industry changes from the historical use of mills to mixed use with more flexibility and variety have provided new opportunities for redevelopment.

Subsection 3.1.6 – Residential

Residential land use occupies 5,483 acres of land representing 29% of the Town's land area. Residential development is primarily concentrated in the western and southern portions of the Town. There ~~is also a pocket~~ are also several areas of residential development in Bradford. The highest densities of residential development are found south and west of Westerly Bypass, which developed as an extension of the historical town center. Along the southern shore area, much of the residential development is a combination of year-round and seasonal housing, with an increasing trend toward year-round use. The greatest density along the shore is in Misquamicut, between Little Maschaug and Winnapaug Ponds. Low-density development is prominent in the Northeast quadrant of Town, outside of the sewer service area. Residential development borders~~is scattered among~~ many acres of conservation land, open space, and agricultural lands.

Subsection 3.1.7 – Vacant and Abandoned

Vacant land as land cover is a catch-all category. Along with land classified as abandoned, without use, or falling within the provisions of Westerly Code Chapter 95 (Commercial and Residential Properties Real Estate Non-Utilization Tax), or attached to another land use, this category also includes land with severe constraints to development such as wetlands, inland sandy soils, and rock outcrops. Over five percent (5%) of land in the Town, 1,021 acres, falls into this vacant category. Vacant land that is not preserved and has development potential is located north of White Rock, and ~~south of~~ in Bradford and Dunn's Corners, surrounding the Woody Hill Management Area. Mostly zoned low-density residential, the family estates are also important for their conservation value.

Subsection 3.1.8 – Water

Areas classified as water include open water bodies other than Quonochontaug and Winnapaug Ponds, the Pawcatuck River, and Little Narragansett Bay. These water bodies cover 484 acres within the Town. The largest of these areas are the inland freshwater Chapman Pond (with contiguous wetlands in Newton Marsh and Aguntaug Swamp) and Maschaug Pond, a saltwater body near the coastline. Unsuitable as a drinking water reservoir, these water bodies are essential as natural stormwater management infrastructure and as the site of critical habitat areas.

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Section 3.2 – State ~~Land Use~~Land-use Policy

A brief description of State ~~land use~~land-use policy provides context for the new direction of Town of Westerly's land development planning.

In April 2006, the Rhode Island Department of Administration completed *Land Use 2025*. The goal of *Land Use 2025* is to eliminate sprawl and protect the natural resources of the State. The plan encourages an urban/rural model for the State that concentrates new development into established areas, together with some rural centers, and identifies urban service boundaries. Within the urban service boundaries are areas that either provide public sewer and water or are planned to do so in the near future, and where higher density and infill development might be considered. The Town of Westerly's existing ~~land use~~land-use pattern follows this core-periphery pattern encouraged by State policy, at a microscale.

In *Land Use 2025*, a number of villages around the State were identified as potential "Growth Centers." However, *Land Use 2025* notes, "The 'Centers' depicted are for illustrative purposes and are not intended to designate specific geographic boundaries." According to a 2002 annual report by the Governor's Growth Planning Council entitled *Growth Centers: Recommendations for Encouraging Growth and Investment in Economically and Environmentally Sound Locations in Rhode Island*, "*Growth centers are dynamic and efficient centers for development that have a core of commercial and community services, residential development, and natural and built landmarks and boundaries that provide a sense of place.*"

Chosen by the State as a rural center for sustainable redevelopment, Bradford neighborhood consists of the historic Bradford Mill, a diverse and affordable housing stock, and some neighborhood businesses, as well as waterfront property on the Pawcatuck River. Bradford is a diverse community and has seen significant residential growth in the last half-century. Comprised of both longstanding and new neighborhoods (e.g. Historic Village of Bradford, Woody Hill, McGowan Corners, Pound Round, Fieldstone Estates, Capalbo Drive, and Church Street), Bradford is also a beautiful ecological and wooded wildlife sanctuary conserved by public and private entities. Bradford, formerly Niantic (and even another name before that), was renamed during the Industrial Revolution when a fabric manufacturing company from Bradford, England, developed the local mill village. Quarrying was also prominent in years past as well as "Main Street" businesses (now called North and South Main Streets) and a railroad connection. Potential growth opportunities in Bradford include new homes and businesses, a revitalized job center at the Historic Mill property, integrating into existing recreational facilities the capacity for more age-friendly and ability-friendly activities, and the reintroduction of community services. The Historic Bradford Mill property is a brownfield and has no municipal wastewater system. Reinvestment in Bradford as a village with a mix of redevelopment and new uses is very possible due to existing access to natural gas and public water, despite the need to improve sewer service to the area. ~~if public infrastructure can be improved and coordinated with redevelopment.~~

In an era of fiscal constraint, the State has targeted much of its infrastructure and redevelopment grant funding towards locally designated Growth Centers, which, in turn, could help Westerly revitalize mill villages and include affordable housing. Low- and moderate-income housing development by non-profit organizations and public agencies also rely on state and federal financing, which favor development within these locally designated Growth Centers. This Plan recognizes the need to research Bradford as a potential Growth Center. Through that process, the Town of Westerly, guided by input from residents of Bradford, will determine which of several redevelopment strategies would most serve the needs of the Bradford neighborhood and the community at large.

The preservation and expansion of agriculture are goals of the State. State guidance on agriculture as both a consumptive use of land and as a contributor to the local economy requires municipalities to look at agriculture and the components that contribute to the agricultural system – production, processing, distribution, purchasing, marketing, retailing, and agritourism. The goals and policies of the State support the importance of planning for,

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preserving, and supporting agricultural land and operations. Agriculture is an industry and a source of economic activity. Often, farmers supplement their income through on-farm activities that cause people to make a special trip to the property, adding farms to the state's robust inventory of places that visitors and tourists can experience.

Land Use 2025 describes a future with efficient use of energy, the availability of energy-efficient transportation options, and the development of sustainable energy resources. *Energy 2035*, the Rhode Island State Energy Plan, published in 2015 by the Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Planning, looks to a future in which energy service improvements are found in the electrical, thermal, and transportation sectors. The Resilient Rhode Island Act of 2014 has set two (two) carbon emission reduction goals for the State that are within this Plan's twenty(20)-year timeframe – 90% of 1990 emission levels by the end of 2020 and 45% of 1990 emission levels by the end of 2035.

Section 3.3 – Existing Zoning

Westerly adopted its first Zoning Ordinance in 1925 after receiving authority to do so from the Rhode Island General Assembly in 1922. Westerly's last comprehensive update of its Zoning Ordinance was enacted in 1998. There have been multiple additions since, including the Affordable Housing Amendment in 2007. The Zoning Ordinance establishes permitted uses, minimum lot sizes, minimum front, side, and rear setbacks for principal and accessory buildings, maximum building heights, maximum building and lot coverage, and minimum floor areas. The Zoning Ordinance is a critical tool for controlling the type, density, and appearance of development within the Town.

As its provisions evolved over the years, minimum residential lot sizes increased. New minimum lot sizes and setbacks consistent with those lot sizes were provided even for already developed land. For example, residential properties in the Misquamicut area were allowed to be developed with predominant lot sizes of 6,000 square feet. Over time, the Zoning Ordinance increased the minimum lot size to 10,000 square feet with required building setbacks appropriate to that size. The result was the creation of substantial areas of predominately non-conforming lots and buildings and an increase in the dimensional variances necessary to permit reasonable use of the land. This situation continues today, with the added controversy of building height restrictions in the age of base flood elevation (BFE) requirements and sea level rise.

The 1998 Zoning Ordinance attempted to control residential development by creating multiple zoning districts that reflect a variety of densities without reflecting the level of development that historically occurred prior to zoning. These changes may have been influenced by aging infrastructure. It also provided larger lot sizes for areas not developed, reflecting the availability or lack of municipal water and/or sewer and natural constraints upon the land.

Similarly, there were only two (2) commercial zoning districts prior to the 1998 Zoning Ordinance. This zoning did not reflect the unique issues presented by commercial development in discrete areas of the Town. The 1998 Zoning Ordinance established nine (9) commercial districts, and three (3) industrial districts. In addition to these districts, there are nine (9) overlay districts (three [3] of which are reserved) created to protect natural and cultural resources, reduce hazards, and permit certain types of prescribed developments which would otherwise not be allowed. Table 2 on the next page, generated from the information that produced the figure **Zoning (LUZ-M2)**, presents a breakdown of the existing zoning districts by land area.

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Table 2. Zoning Districts, 2019

Zoning District	Acreage	Percent of Total Area
HDR-6 (High-Density Residential)	890.3	4.5%
HDR-10 (High-Density Residential)	399.0	2.0%
HDR-15 (High-Density Residential)	1,246.6	6.2%
MDR-20 (Medium-Density Residential)	1,597.7	8.0%
MDR-30 (Medium-Density Residential)	2,860.9	14.3%
LDR-40 (Low-Density Residential)	977.1	4.9%
LDR-43 (Low-Density Residential)	682.2	3.4%
RR-60 (Rural Residential)	4,066.8	20.4%
All Residential	12,720.6	63.6%
DC-I (Downtown Center)	39.5	0.2%
DC-II (Downtown Center)	36.6	0.2%
NB (Neighborhood Business)	43.6	0.2%
MC (Marine Commercial)	15.6	<0.1%
SC-G (Shore Commercial-General)	81.9	0.4%
SC-WH (Shore Commercial-Watch Hill)	25.7	0.1%
P-15 (Professional)	136.1	0.7%
HC (Highway Commercial)	306.0	1.5%
GC (General Commercial)	76.2	0.4%
All Commercial	761.2	3.8%
ORAT (Office, Research, Assembly, and Technology)	113.8	0.6%
LI (Light Industrial)	613.9	3.1%
GI (General Industrial)	1,003.0	5.0%
All Industrial	1,730.7	8.7%
OS/R (Open Space and Recreational)	3,973.7	19.9%
CR (Commercial Recreational)	759.1	3.8%
All Recreational	4,732.8	23.7%
PUD (Planned Unit Development)	21.5	0.1%
All Other	21.5	0.1%
Total	**19,966.8**	**100%**

Source: New England GeoSystems, 2019

It should be noted that zoning districts do not necessarily reflect current or future use. For example, there may be farmlands within the RR-60 zoning district that are restricted from being developed by a conservation easement.

Subsection 3.3.1 – Residential Districts

Residential zoning districts make up 63.6% of the land area within the Town. There are eight (8) defined residential districts ranging from rural low density (1 unit per a minimum 60,000 square foot lot size) to high density (1 unit per a minimum 6,000 square foot lot size). These districts provide for uniform development throughout Town. Increases to these specific density guidelines can be achieved only through inclusionary zoning requirements and the Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Comprehensive Permit process. Restrictions on multi-family dwellings combined with dimensional requirements result in a very low number of new residential dwelling units.

HDR-6 (High-Density Residential)
The HDR-6 zoning district, requiring a minimum 6,000 square feet per lot, consists of approximately 890 acres (or 4.5% of the total land area within the Town) and is also intended primarily for areas of existing residential development. This zoning district is designed for areas where existing densities are high, at or near saturation, and include a variety of housing styles. However, due to zoning constraints HDR-6 is predominantly single-family. This zone covers established neighborhoods around the core of the Westerly's urban area that are serviced by public water and sewer.

HDR-10 (High-Density Residential)
The HDR-10 zoning district, requiring a minimum 10,000 square feet per lot, consists of approximately 400 acres (or two percent of the total land area within the Town) and is also intended primarily for areas of existing residential development. This zoning district is designed for areas where existing densities are high, close to saturation, and include a variety of housing types – single-family, and historically two- and three-family. However, under the current zoning requirements this development type is prohibited. Primarily located in areas surrounding Winnapaug Pond (including Misquamicut), these areas are typically served by public water but not by sewer.

HDR-15 (High-Density Residential)
The HDR-15 zoning district, which consists of approximately 1,250 acres (or 6.2% of the total land area within the Town), is intended primarily for areas of existing residential development. This zoning district is designed for areas where existing densities are moderately high and typically situated on the outer edges of the Town center. The district permits a variety of housing types with a minimum lot area of 15,000 square feet per dwelling unit and are mostly served by public water and sewer.

MDR-20 (Medium-Density Residential)
The MDR-20 zoning district, which consists of approximately 1,600 acres (or 8% of the total land area in the Town), is generally intended for single-family neighborhoods adjacent to high density areas and designed to conform to existing development patterns rather than encourage major expansion beyond defined neighborhoods. Most areas within this district are connected to municipal water but not to municipal sewers and carry a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet. The largest areas zoned MDR-20 are located broadly around Dunn's Corners Elementary School and between Ashaway Road and Potter Hill Road. Other properties in the MDR-20 zoning district exist in Avondale, Bradford, and Shelter Harbor.

MDR-30 (Medium-Density Residential)
The MDR-30 zoning district, requiring a minimum 30,000 square feet per lot, consists of approximately 2,860 acres (or 14.3% of the total land area in the Town) and is generally intended for single-family neighborhoods adjacent to high-density areas. This zoning district is designed to conform to existing development patterns rather than encourage major expansion beyond defined neighborhoods. Most areas within this district are connected to municipal water but not to municipal sewers. While most of the residential areas in Bradford are characterized by this Zoning District, the MDR-30 zone is also located mainly along Post Road (Route 1), Shore Road (Route 1A), and Watch Hill Road (also Route 1A).

LDR-40 (Low-Density Residential)
The LDR-40 zoning district, which consists of approximately 980 acres (or 4.9% of the total land area in the Town), prescribes standards and densities that are intended to preserve the open character of the area and thereby to protect the business of agriculture. While the intent of the district is to protect agriculture, very little of the zone is used for agriculture. Residential use in this district is restricted to a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet and much of the LDR-40 zone is located north of Route 1 (Post Road) and east and north of Route 78 (Westerly Bypass).

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LDR-43 (Low-Density Residential)
The LDR-43 zoning district, which consists of approximately 680 acres (or 3.4% of the total land area in the Town), is in residential areas of Watch Hill comprised predominantly of large single-family homes on large lots that are served by municipal water but not by municipal sewer systems. The 1-acre minimum (43,560 square foot) lot size is designed to preserve the existing character of the neighborhoods.

RR-60 (Rural Residential)
The RR-60 zoning district, requiring a minimum 60,000 square feet per lot, consists of approximately 4,070 acres (or 20.4% of the total land area in the Town) in residential areas characterized by very low-density development and comprised mostly of land that is currently used for agriculture, contains wetlands or other severe soil constraints, or maintains some other sensitive environmental characteristics. The rural residential districts are designed to protect many of the Town's most valuable natural resources and preserve their rural characteristics. It is important to note that within the watershed of the salt ponds, a maximum density of one (1) dwelling unit per two (2) acres is required by the CRMC's *Rhode Island's Salt Pond Region Special Area Management Plan* (SAMP). Rural Residential-60 is designed for those areas which do not have access to municipal sewers or municipal water.

Subsection 3.3.2 – Commercial Zoning Districts

There are nine (9) commercial zoning districts that collectively occupy 3.6% of the land area within the Town of Westerly. These districts vary by types of uses permitted, lot sizes, and setback requirements and are also scattered through different areas of Town.

DC-I and DC-II (Downtown Center)
The DC-I and DC-II zoning districts, which consist of approximately 40 and 37 acres (each less than half of one percent of the total land area within the Town), respectively, are intended for areas comprising the downtown business core and immediately surrounding areas characterized by mixed-uses, high-density residential uses, and retail shops. The Downtown Center zones are intended to preserve the distinct character of the downtown, which has unique characteristics related to its historic industrial origins, particularly regarding the preservation of historic buildings and facades.

NB (Neighborhood Business)
The Neighborhood Business zoning district, which consists of approximately 45 acres (or less than half of one percent of the total land area within the Town), is intended for areas characterized by small retail and personal service operations that are surrounded by residential areas. Properties in this district are small and the districts themselves are scattered around the Town, with most of them in the urban core.

MC (Marine Commercial)
The MC zoning district, which consists of approximately 15 acres (or less than half of one percent of the total land area within the Town), is intended to establish an area dedicated to marine (water-dependent) and marine-related uses. Uses proposed for the portion of the Pawcatuck River designated as Class 3, High-Intensity Boating, in the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Plan (CRMP), are consistent with that program. The district is located on the river side of Margin Street between Greenman Avenue and Clark Street.

SC-G (Shore Commercial - General)
The SC-G zoning district consists of approximately 80 acres (or less than half of one percent of the total land area within the Town). This zone is intended to promote the use of waterfront locations for servicing local and seasonal businesses and water-related activities. The district also provides for both direct and indirect access to the water by the general public. The zone is intended to allow uses in a manner that limits their impact on

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abutting residential areas. Most of these areas are located along the coast between Misquamicut and Weekapaug. Some of these areas are not located on the water but on Routes 1 and 1A.

SC-WH (Shore Commercial- Watch Hill)
The SC-WH zoning district, located at the western end of the Watch Hill area, primarily along Bay Street, consists of approximately 25 acres (or less than half of one percent of the total land area within the Town). This district is intended to promote the use of specific waterfront locations for tourist and seasonal businesses and water-related activities. The zone is intended to allow uses in a manner that limits their impact on abutting residential areas. Since this district is located entirely within a federally designated historic district, any new construction must undergo additional review to ensure it conforms in style and bulk with existing structures and unique character.

P-15 (Professional)
The P-15 zoning district, which consists of approximately 140 acres (or less than one percent of the total land area within the Town), is intended to establish areas within which the Town encourages a concentration of professional office and related uses, as well as residential use and mixed-use developments. Property in this district often serves as a transitional area between more intensely developed commercial districts and residential districts. The Town will consider the expansion of the P-15 zoning district in lieu of certain Overlay Districts.

HC (Highway Commercial)
The HC zoning district, which consists of approximately 300 acres (or 1.5% of the total land area within the Town), is intended for areas that are primarily motor vehicle-oriented due to their location along major roadways. An objective of this commercial zoning category is to address existing traffic safety problems associated with excessive curb cuts and to prevent further traffic problems from occurring with future development. This district is located along Route 1 (Franklin Street, Granite Street, and Post Road). The Town will reconsider the use of HC zoning district in areas along Route 1 that are served by sidewalks.

GC (General Commercial)
The GC zoning district, which consists of approximately 75 acres (or less than half of one percent of the total land area within the Town), is intended for areas of historic commercial activity outside of the Downtown districts. Minimum lot sizes are smaller than the Highway Commercial District and the Downtown Center 2 District. These areas are located throughout the Town.

Subsection 3.3.3 – Industrial Districts

Industrial districts make up 6.2% of the Town's land area, and much of the land in these districts is protected by conservation easements. There are three (3) industrial districts that vary in intensity and type of use:

ORAT (Office, Research, Assembly, and Technology)
The ORAT zoning district, which consists of approximately 115 acres (or less than one percent of the total land area within the Town), is designed to provide for office, research, assembly, and technology uses that do not require extensive infrastructure, sewer, water, or site development or present a threat to sensitive environmental resources. The ORAT zone is a subcategory of the industrial district, which contains the General Industrial (GI) and Light Industrial (LI) zones as well. Uses covered by the ORAT zone could be incorporated into LI or GI uses; thus, the ORAT zone has become obsolete and should be absorbed into the other industrial district zones. There are two (two) areas in the ORAT zoning district; one located on Canal Street and the other west of Westerly Airport. Many of the current uses on these properties are inconsistent with the ORAT zoning district. Such uses include agricultural land and single-family residential, as well as municipal utility facilities, vacant lots, and open space. This Plan calls for the properties that are appropriately zoned ORAT, based on future uses for the site, to

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be incorporated into an LI district, while properties that are not suited for an industrial use should be considered for re-zoning into a more appropriate use category, such as Open Space/Recreation (OS/R).

LI (Light Industrial)
The LI zoning district, which consists of approximately 615 acres (or 3.1% of the total land area within the Town), is designed for areas that have historically been reserved for industrial development in proximity to businesses and residences and that would be incompatible with more extensive industrial use. There are two (2) LI locations in the urban core north of Railroad Avenue and Oak Street. Additional LI zones, including the largest tract, are in Bradford.

GI (General Industrial)
The GI zoning district, which consists of approximately 1,000 acres (or 5% of the total land area within the Town), is intended for industrial and manufacturing uses that must be segregated because of their incompatibility with other land uses and is designed to provide for the infrastructure and operational requirements necessary for such uses. Stone quarries, landfills, the airport, and large factories are uses currently located in the GI zoning district.

Subsection 3.3.4 – Recreational Districts

Special districts are those districts which do not fall into any of the previous categories. These districts protect areas for parks and open space or dedicate areas for commercial recreation. Over one third (34%) of the Town's area falls into one of these zoning districts.

OS/R (Open Space and Recreation)
The Open Space and Recreation zoning district, which consists of approximately 4,000 acres (or 19.9% of the total land area within the Town), is intended for areas in use as open space and recreation. This district covers a variety of uses including the Town's well fields, major parks and recreation areas, portions of the barrier beaches, and cemeteries. These districts are scattered across the Town. Aside from parks and cemeteries, nearly all of these land areas are protected through deed restrictions and/or conservation easements held by state, town, and non-profit institutions.

CR (Commercial Recreation)
The Commercial Recreation zoning district, which consists of approximately 760 acres (or 3.8% of the total land area within the Town), is intended for areas that have historically been reserved for commercial recreational facilities and in the future may include residential uses in order to ensure their continued vitality, as an economic sector. These areas include the three (3) golf courses along Route 1A, ~~(including the portion of Post Road shared with~~ Route 1~~)~~, a fourth course on Ocean View Highway, and the Westerly Yacht Club.

Subsection 3.3.5 – Other Districts

The Rhode Island Zoning Enabling Act of 1991 specifically permits modern zoning tools such as planned development. Planned development districts become mapped for a particular area of land by a zone change granted in conjunction with approval of a master plan of development for that particular area of land. Planned development districts include requirements and regulations specific to that land. While Westerly once had a process for Planned Unit Development (PUD), it was repealed in 1998 because of the mixed-use possibilities in such districts and political sensitivities at that time. The planned developments that are identified on the existing zoning map are not mixed-use but entirely residential communities. Developed during the period that the PUD provision existed, an increase in residential density allowed under the former PUD ordinance was chosen over the permitted mix of uses. Currently, approximately 20 acres (or less than half of one percent of the total land area within the Town), remain zoned as PUD, all of which has already been built out using developable land.

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This Plan calls for the areas zoned PUD to be incorporated into an appropriate residential district designation based on the existing density (HDR-6 or HDR-15).

The current Zoning Ordinance also has an option for Planned Resort Facilities Development. The Planned Resort Facilities concept is intended to recognize the Town as a tourist resort area and permit the growth of the industry, provided that such facilities are located on substantial tracts of land so as to minimize any impact on neighboring property. This type of planned development has not yet been used. The concept of planned resort development will be revisited as part of this Plan's implementation, as a strategy to promote longer stays and a more active beginning and end to the tourist season.

Subsection 3.3.6 – Zoning Overlays

Overlay zoning is a regulatory tool that creates a special zoning district placed over an existing base zone(s). The overlay district can share common boundaries with the base zone or cut across base zone boundaries. Figure **Zoning Overlays (LUZ-M3)** is as illustration of the currently adopted zoning overlay districts. Overlay zoning districts are incorporated into the "Official Zoning Map, Town of Westerly, Rhode Island, July 1, 2019."

Overlay zoning also identifies special provisions that apply to development in addition to those in the underlying base zone. These special provisions include types of uses and specific development standards. Westerly's overlay zoning districts are described in Article X of the Zoning Ordinance. This Plan calls for revisiting the standards and boundaries of each Overlay district.

Section 3.4 – Buildout Analysis

A potential capacity analysis was performed based on the current land cover that estimates the amount of development that could occur based on a set of assumptions. This analysis is limited to the amount of new development that can occur on developable vacant and agricultural land. Such development includes infill and redevelopment possibilities based on zoning density allowances and to the extent that natural resource constraints are not present.

The analysis was performed using a GIS program. The current zoning layer was combined with the land cover layer so that the resulting layer had attributes of both existing land use and existing zoning districts. A constraints layer consisting of existing developed land, wetlands, floodplain, and all land under permanent conservation was created. Wetlands and watercourses, ~~A~~a 50-foot buffer ~~for~~surrounding wetlands, a 200-foot buffer from the shoreline and the Pawcatuck River, any other applicable ~~100-foot or 200-foot~~ regulatory buffers, ~~riverbank, wetland,~~ and areas with severely constrained soils were considered undevelopable and removed from the calculation. The constraints layer was combined with the zoning/land-~~-~~use layer and the constraint areas were removed.

The GIS program was used to calculate the areas of each polygon within this combined layer. The areas remaining are considered *potentially developable and suitable to new development*. These areas were summarized by land cover and zoning district. Based on the zoning district, calculations were performed on the resulting areas to establish the potential number of residential units, commercial space, and industrial space that could be developed. The Open Space/Recreation and Commercial Recreation Districts are considered unavailable for future development and have been excluded from this analysis.

The methodology used for this analysis has limitations. The method does not account for the possibility of new residential development in non-residential zoning districts, such as apartments on the second floor of businesses (so called mixed-use). The method assumes wetlands mapped by the state and federal government are accurate, even though actual wetland boundaries on a lot can only be determined through on-site

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investigation. It is assumed that new development will occur at the maximum density allowed by zoning, although lower density development might occur in response to market needs. Despite these limitations, the method is considered suitable for estimating potential new development magnitude and location.

The results of the capacity analysis are summarized in Table 3. The number of residential units presented are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 3. Buildout Analysis, 2016

Zoning District	Undeveloped "Suitable" Area (acres)	Residential Units	Commercial Space (square feet)	Industrial Space (square feet)
RR-60	912.91	487	-	-
LDR-43	92.69	46	-	-
LDR-40	344.84	275	-	-
MDR-30	733.39	395	-	-
MDR-20	248.26	171	-	-
HDR-15	113.52	196	-	-
HDR-10	0.01	0	-	-
HDR-6	61.90	298	-	-
Residential Subtotal	2,507.52	1,868	-	-
P-15	10.41	-	108,837	-
NB	2.31	-	24,164	-
DC-1	-	-	-	-
DC-2	-	-	-	-
GC	1.80	-	23,551	-
HC	21.34	-	278,854	-
MC	0.03	-	0	-
SC-G	3.82	-	36,576	-
SC-WH	-	-	-	-
Commercial Subtotal	39.72	-	471,981	-
ORAT	0.64	-	-	7,267
LI	45.16	-	-	393,399
GI	223.94	-	-	2,731,360
Industrial Subtotal	312.43	-	-	3,132,026
Total				

Source: Mason & Associates, 2016

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Subsection 3.4.1 – Residential Buildout

Estimated numbers of residential units per zoning district are based on the minimum lot area per unit permitted in each of the residential zoning districts. The following calculations were used for residential districts:

RR-60	Area÷60,000 = Residential Units
LDR-43	Area÷43,560 = Residential Units
LDR-40	Area÷40,000 = Residential Units
MDR-30	Area÷30,000 = Residential Units
MDR-20	Area÷20,000 = Residential Units
HDR-15	Area÷15,000 = Residential Units
HDR-10	Area÷10,000 = Residential Units
HDR-6	Area÷6,000 = Residential Units
Any District in CRMC SAMP	Area÷87,120 = Residential Units

The build-out analysis estimates that, under the existing Zoning Ordinance, approximately 1,868 additional residential dwelling units can be built in Westerly. With an average of 85 new dwelling units being constructed per year since 2000, it is estimated that the year by which residential build-out is likely to occur is 2038.

The 2010 Plan recommended that the residential zoning districts within the Town remain essentially unchanged. This recommendation considered the rate of growth that occurred in the 10-year period following the adoption of the current Zoning Ordinance map and text. During the 10-year period of January 1, 1999 to December 31, 2008, 1,266 residential dwelling units were constructed. The Ordinance marked a significant departure from prior ordinances which had allowed, as of right, duplex buildings, including units with unlimited bedrooms, on lots that did not require twice the land area as required for a single-family home. There was significant community concern expressed with respect to these provisions. The Ordinance responded with provisions that:

- Limit the districts in which duplex buildings are allowed;
- Require a special use permit in the residential district in which they are allowed; and
- Require twice the land area as necessary for a single-family home.

These provisions resulted in only 31 duplex buildings with 62 units being built in the 10-year time period. During the 10-year period from January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2015, 851 residential dwelling units were constructed, including 29 duplex buildings accounting for 58 units.

Simultaneously, the 1998 Zoning Ordinance adopted new regulations with respect to multi-family dwellings. The regulations allow for the number of bedrooms in a multi-family complex to reflect the predicted number if the site were built out as single-family homes. Yet, the ordinance also limits each individual unit to two bedrooms. Studies suggested the number of school age children would be relatively small in such complexes. The number of two-bedroom units constructed in the 10-year period from January 2006 to December 2015 was 208, or more than 24.2% of new housing stock.

Despite the increase of 858 dwelling units, the total public-school population in the community has dropped from 3,436 in October 2006 to 2,908 in October 2015 – a 15.4% decline. Current and projected enrollment suggests this trend will continue, falling 7.3% between fiscal years 2012 and 2022. Beyond 2022, however, a

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comparison of fourth grade (Class of 2024) and first grade (Class of 2027) enrollments in the 2015-2016 academic year (217 students and 216 students, respectively) suggests enrollment may have stabilized.

It is therefore deemed unnecessary to further change the zoning districts or the regulations applicable within each district to control future growth. Comparison of the estimated additional residential unit capacity (1,868 units) and the historic building growth over the last 10 years (858) demonstrates a relatively small capability for growth under the traditional subdivision development approach.

This Plan's recommendation with respect to generally not increasing density is a deliberate attempt to responsibly limit residential sprawl. However, the Plan encourages future growth, including residential density intensification through Neighborhood Plans where public utilities and infrastructure are in place. Mixed-use and in-fill development at increased densities, together with revitalization and retrofitting of existing properties, are all strategies identified for use with the Neighborhood Plan application.

With school enrollment ~~stable~~potentially stabilizing this decade, and as new information becomes available and disaggregated, Town officials must address the future implications for services required by an overall aging population and the interaction of social and economic factors. Eventually an increase in the number of families will be required to keep a vital economy functioning. Housing, health care and education for future generations must be planned.

Subsection 3.4.2 – Commercial Buildout

The commercial districts did not specify a floor area ratio or maximum building coverage. Maximum impervious surface was used to control the size of buildings. This analysis assumes that half of the impervious surface specified in the Westerly Zoning Ordinance is used for building and half for parking. The summarized areas were multiplied by half of the maximum allowable impervious surface percentage in that zone to estimate the amount of commercial building space. The following calculations were used on commercial districts:

P-15	(30.0%) Area = Commercial Space
NB	(30.0%) Area = Commercial Space
HC	(37.5%) Area = Commercial Space
DC	(50.0%) Area = Commercial Space
DCII	(25.0%) Area = Commercial Space
SC-G	(27.5%) Area = Commercial Space
SC-WH	(27.5%) Area = Commercial Space
MC	(37.5%) Area = Commercial Space
GC	(37.5%) Area = Commercial Space

The build-out analysis estimates a total of 471,981 square feet of commercial space over 39.72 acres can be added in the Town. This coverage includes commercial space with current land zoned Neighborhood Business (NB; 24,164 square feet), Highway Commercial (HC; 278,854 square feet), and Professional (P-15; 108,837 square feet) and excludes Commercial Recreation (CR) and Shore Commercial-General (SC-G). This Plan recognizes that Westerly has historically been the regional center for commercial and professional services. Sufficient area exists to continue in that role, though a notable decrease in available commercial space compared with the analysis used in the 2010 Plan should be considered.

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This Plan specifically provides that this district should not be enlarged. The existing commercial areas are underutilized and in need of redevelopment. It is intended that a limit on the amount of commercial development and revised development standards for new commercial development on vacant property will control commercial sprawl. By such limitation it is also intended that renewed interest in renovation, restoration, and redevelopment of existing Highway Commercial properties will be achieved.

Subsection 3.4.3 – Industrial Buildout

Maximum impervious surface was used to control the size of buildings in the industrial districts. This analysis assumes that half of the impervious surface specified in the Westerly Zoning Ordinance is used for building and half for parking. The summarized areas were multiplied by half of the maximum allowable impervious surface percentage in that zone to estimate the amount of industrial space. The industrial space assumes only one floor of development. The following calculations were used on industrial districts:

GI	(35.0%) Area = Industrial Space
LI	(25.0%) Area = Industrial Space
ORAT	(32.5%) Area = Industrial Space

Available industrial land is extremely limited. Additionally, areas that have the infrastructure available for industrial development and are also isolated enough to be compatible with existing residential development are not apparent. The lack of industrial land also means that Westerly must participate in regional economic development initiatives. New job opportunities in the region not only provide job opportunities for Westerly residents but also for the larger regional population. Such opportunities contribute to the vibrant commercial and professional service sectors in Westerly. Town officials necessarily must therefore encourage the expanded use of underutilized industrial facilities provided that doing so is consistent with environmental considerations.

There are three large industrial parcels zoned General Industrial (GI) or Light Industrial (LI) that are currently operated as granite quarries. These parcels – in White Rock on Old Hopkinton Road and in Bradford – have been excluded from this analysis since they are unlikely to be developed for other uses during the timeframe of this Plan.

The build-out analysis estimates a total of 3,132,026 square feet of industrial space over 312.43 acres can be added in the Town. This estimate includes commercial space with current land zoned Light Industrial (393,399 square feet), General Industrial (2,731,360 square feet), and ORAT (7,267 square feet).

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Section 3.5 – Upgrading Westerly's Regulatory Climate

In recent years, numerous property owners, business owners, and developers, as well as municipal staff, have experienced inefficiencies within the 1995 Development Regulations and the 1998 Zoning Ordinance that have impeded the viability and progress of various development, redevelopment, and expansion projects. Inconsistencies between various sections of these local laws, the rigidity of dimensional and parking requirements, a significant absence of definitions, and insufficient policy guidance have added unnecessary obstacles to development without leading to outcomes in the public interest as intended.

A survey of local businesses conducted in summer 2019 by the Town, through its Economic Development Commission (EDC), and in partnership with the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce, brought further attention to inefficiencies of major components of the local regulatory climate (including review by boards and administrative processing). Informal feedback received from frequent application filers was consistent with the results of the 2019 business survey. The last major update to zoning and development regulations occurred over two (2) decades ago. Despite best efforts of the Town to amend and revise zoning requirements and administrative practices, the inefficiencies in the regulatory process and unintended consequences of new development and redevelopment persist.

This Plan recognizes that inconsistencies and inefficiencies in land development are results of a more fundamental and systemic issue. Since the adoption of its first Zoning Ordinance in 1925, the Town of Westerly has used "conventional zoning." This approach to zoning, widely adopted by local governments throughout the 20th century, primarily focuses on separating and prohibiting land uses. At its inception, conventional zoning was largely successful in limiting many concerns of the time. In the modern era, though, the community has increasingly found conventional zoning to impede, rather than strengthen, the viability of great development and redevelopment projects. Westerly, as a result, has lost out on opportunities that could otherwise diversify its economy, grow its customer and tax bases, and add to its sense of place.

In an exploratory phase of research conducted as part of this Plan, form-based code (modernized zoning) has been identified as a major regulatory tool that can potentially reposition Westerly as a more applicant- and business-friendly local government. Modernized zoning's focus on streamlining processes and yielding outcomes that benefit public interests aligns particularly well with where respondents to the 2019 business survey felt the Town should prioritize its efforts for supporting economic vitality in the future:

- Supporting a year-round economy,
- Attracting new business in general,
- Protecting scenery and natural resources, and
- Protecting Westerly's heritage and character.

Going forward, the Town intends to undertake a significant drive for public engagement to ensure it receives the right answers to numerous questions on how zoning, development regulations, and related policies should be optimized within the next few years. Some of these questions include:

- What resources can the Town commit to modernize its local regulatory climate?
- In addition to surveying existing conditions, what secondary factors define community character?
- What additional environmental and design standards should be incorporated beyond physical form, if any?
- How should the modernized regulatory climate be implemented?
- What steps can be taken to encourage business investment in Westerly?
- What steps can be taken to encourage green industries and businesses in particular to locate and/or remain in Westerly?

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- What steps can be taken to encourage pop-ups, start-ups, and leases that are conducive to such businesses?

Throughout this process, to determine next steps, the Town will clearly communicate with residents, stakeholders, and others to provide transparent information in a diverse range of outreach activities - a pivotal service that will enhance everyone's trust and confidence in this endeavor.

Section 3.6 – Future Land Use

This Plan recognizes the need for both preservation and development and the importance of establishing a balance between them, while also placing a heavy emphasis on rehabilitating and revitalizing existing buildings in order to preserve open spaces and views to the extent possible. Included among its goals are maintaining Westerly's character and heritage and preserving open space and irreplaceable natural resources. The Plan also calls for increased economic vitality and environmental resiliency, including the maintenance of homes, jobs, and services needed by current and future generations. It acknowledges the need for balance among the various aspects of Westerly, which include a home to year-round and seasonal residents, a tourist economy and new industries, and a regional service, transportation, and retail center.

In this section, some of the major characteristics of the Comprehensive Plan are reviewed with an emphasis on how the vision, goals, policies, and actions will affect future land use, transportation, infrastructure, and services and with a focus on the first 10 years of this Plan's implementation.

The Comprehensive Plan should be viewed holistically because, taken together, its various elements reinforce each other and present a comprehensive and coherent view of Westerly's ~~land use~~land-use policy. After the implementation plan goals are achieved, another group of actions will be developed for the next 10 years. In this way, Westerly will move steadily and incrementally towards achieving the long-term goals, policies, and actions outlined in this Plan.

Subsection 3.6.1 – The Future Land-Use Categories

The figure **Future Land Use (FLU-M1)**, a visual **guide** to future planning. It is NOT identical to the Zoning District Map. It is a map of what the community wants to have happen, not a prediction of what will happen. The FLU-M1 brings together most, if not all, of the elements of the Comprehensive Plan, such as natural resources, economic development, housing, and resiliency. The community assesses the various scenarios and reviews the vision, goals, policies, and actions when creating the FLU-M1. The Map has been modified from the previous "FLUM" included within the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. There are both existing conditions and proposed development that have led to recommended classification changes. The specifics of the proposed changes are discussed throughout this Chapter.

Existing Zoning, illustrated by figure **Zoning (LUZ-M2)** further defines each of the land-use categories by including several corresponding districts. This material is organized in Table 4.

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Table 4. Existing Zoning Districts within Future ~~Land Use~~ Land-Use Categories

Future ~~Land Use~~ Land-Use Category	Corresponding Existing Zoning Districts
Low-Density Residential	Rural Residential (RR-60)
	Low-Density Residential (LDR-43)
	Low-Density Residential (LDR-40)
	Notes: *Intended for residential, agricultural, and open space conservation*
Medium-Density Residential	Medium-Density Residential (MDR-30)
	Medium-Density Residential (MDR-20)
	Notes: *Intended for residential and open space conservation*
High-Density Residential	High-Density Residential (HDR-15)
	High-Density Residential (HDR-10)
	High-Density Residential (HDR-6)
	Notes: *Intended for residential single family and multi-family*
Mixed-Use Commercial	Downtown Center I (DC-1/DC-I)
	Downtown Center II (DC-2/DC-II)
	Neighborhood Business (NB)
	Professional (P-15)
	Notes: *Intended to expand uses permitted in mixed-use commercial zoning districts to allow multi-family development together with retail, dining, artisan, civic, and service uses.*
Commercial	General Commercial (GC)
	Highway Commercial (HC)
	Commercial Recreation (CR)
	Note: *Intended for areas of commercial and professional services outside of the Downtown districts and in motor-vehicle oriented US Route 1.*
Coastal Commercial	Marine Commercial (MC)
	Shore Commercial – General (SC-G)
	Shore Commercial – Watch Hill (SC-WH)
	Note: *Intended for the use of waterfront locations for servicing local and seasonal businesses and water-related activities.*
Industry	General Industrial (GI)
	Light Industrial (LI)
	Office, Research, Assembly, and Technology (ORAT)
	Note: *Intended for diverse types of Industry – both small and large scale.*
Conserved Land	Rural Residential (RR-60)
	Open Space/Recreation (OSR)

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Future ~~Land Use~~ Land-Use Category	Corresponding Existing Zoning Districts
Conserved Land	Notes: *Intended to capture land protected from development through conservation restrictions, and/or can be used for small scale recreation, agriculture, or left untouched to provide protection of water quality, natural resources, and wildlife habitat, consistent with the restrictions in place.*
Agriculture	Rural Residential (RR-60)
	Open Space/Recreation (OSR)
	Notes: *Intended for farms and farm enterprises and low-density residential development associated with farm operations.*
Recreation	Commercial Recreation (CR)
	Open Space/Recreation (OSR)
	Notes: *Intended to capture active and passive, public and private recreation areas.*

Consistency with *Land Use 2025* is achieved when the Comprehensive Plan's FLUM aligns with the residential densities suggested by the State. Areas inside the Urban Services Boundary are expected to have higher residential density due to the presence of existing services, facilities, and infrastructure. In areas outside of the water and sewer service areas, a community balances development and conservation, considers natural hazards and special resource concerns (such as groundwater and natural resource protection), and contains a lower level of residential density. The Town of Westerly's FLUM is expected to be consistent with the minimum and/or maximum residential densities outlined in *Land Use 2025*. This comparison is illustrated in Table 5~~6~~ below. Specific changes to the DC-1, NB, P-15, and the CR zoning districts are anticipated in this Plan. Possible changes in residential density will be a part of the Plan's implementation and noted in Table ~~6~~5 as "to be determined."

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Table ~~6~~5. Overview of Zoning and Future Land Use Consistency

Zoning District	Future Land Use	Future Land Use Residential Density	*Land Use 2025* Residential Density
Rural Residential (RR-60)	Low-Density Residential	≤0.73 du/ac	Non-Urban Developed (≤1 du/ac)
Low-Density Residential (LDR-43)		≤1 du/ac	Non-Urban Developed (≤1 du/ac)
Low-Density Residential (LDR-40)		≤1.09 du/ac	Non-Urban Developed (≤1 du/ac)
Medium-Density Residential (MDR-30)	Medium-Density Residential	≤1.45 du/ac	Urban Development (≥1 du/ac)
Medium-Density Residential (MDR-20)		≤2.18 du/ac	Urban Development (≥1 du/ac)
High-Density Residential (HDR-15)	High-Density Residential	≤2.9 du/ac	Urban Development (≥1 du/ac)
High-Density Residential (HDR-10)		≤4.36 du/ac	Urban Development (≥1 du/ac)
High-Density Residential (HDR-6)		≤7.26 du/ac	Sewered Urban (≥5 du/ac)
Downtown Center (DC-1)	Mixed-Use Commercial	To be determined	Sewered Urban (≥5 du/ac)
Downtown Center (DC-2)		≤7.26 du/ac	
Neighborhood Business (NB)		To be determined	
Professional (P-15)		To be determined	
General Commercial (GC)	Commercial		
Highway Commercial (HC)			
Commercial Recreation (CR)			
Marine Commercial (MC)	Coastal Commercial		
Shore Commercial - General (SC-G)			
Shore Commercial - Watch Hill (SC-WH)			
General Industrial (GI)	Industry		
Light Industrial (LI)			
Office, Research, Assembly, and Technology (ORAT)			
Rural Residential (RR-60)	Conserved Land	≤0.73 du/ac	Conservation/Ltd. Dev. (≤0.25 du/ac)
Open Space/Recreation (OS/R)			
Rural Residential (RR-60)	Agriculture	≤0.73 du/ac	Non-Urban Developed (≤1 du/ac)
Open Space/Recreation (OS/R)			
Commercial Recreation (CR)	Recreation	To be determined	
Open Space/Recreation (OS/R)			

Subsection 3.6.2 – Inconsistencies

Pursuant to guidance offered in Section 13.8 of the R.I. Comprehensive Planning Standards Manual (revised June 14, 2018), after identifying any inconsistencies that exist between the existing zoning districts and the Future Land Use Map (FLU-M1) and land-use categories, propose resolutions by selecting and discussing one of the following options:

a. Propose to change the zoning of a particular area to an existing zoning district that is consistent with the future land-use designation, giving a brief description of the zoning district that includes allowed uses; or

b. Propose the creation of a new zoning district that would achieve consistency with the future land-use designation, and the application of the new district to the inconsistent area, giving a brief description of the zoning district that includes the expected allowed uses.

The following provisions do both.

Several inconsistencies were identified between the current Zoning Ordinance, the official Zoning Map (effective July 1, 2019), and the FLUM. These inconsistencies are depicted on the figure **Future Land Uses Inconsistent with Existing Zoning (FLU-M2)**. As such, changes to zoning district designation, ~~land use~~land-use policy, and ~~land use~~land-use regulations are proposed in this Plan and are intended to be implemented within the next 1-5 years.

Changes to zoning districts:

- Lands in several zoning districts are protected in perpetuity by conservation easements. The zoning of these parcels is intended to align with the ~~land use~~land-use values being conserved (i.e. low intensity agriculture, passive recreation, natural habitat protection). The FLUM includes the Category of Conserved Land, intending to capture land protected from development through conservation restrictions, and/or land that can be used for small scale recreation, agriculture, or left untouched to provide protection of water quality, natural resources, and wildlife habitat, consistent with the restrictions in place with the existing zoning district designation for these parcels.
- An Airport Overlay District has been developed as required in RIGL §1-3-5(1), which states that municipalities shall establish an airport hazard area to specify appropriate ~~l~~land uses with restricted heights for buildings and trees. This Overlay is now included on the Official Zoning Map and is illustrated on Figure **Zoning Overlays (LUZ-M3).**
- Those properties originally zoned and approved as Planned Unit Development (PUD) have been incorporated into the category of high-density residential appropriate to the existing residential density on the FLUM. Zone changes for these parcels will follow.
- ORAT-zoned properties will be addressed individually to assess the appropriate zoning for each lot, given the current inconsistency in use within this zone.

Changes to ~~land use~~land-use policy and regulations include:

- Eco-friendly development methods such as conservation development and cluster development have not been readily used due to the insignificant number of properties that qualify. These subdivision options are proposed for deletion from the zoning ordinance and replacement by performance standards designed for resiliency.
- Regulations required by the Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) near the Salt Ponds and for water quality protection will be included in the Westerly Zoning Ordinance.
- The Town shall modernize the Zoning Ordinance, development regulations, and related policies to better recognize existing conditions of the built environment and will incentivize greater public investments in community character in new development and redevelopment projects.
- The PUD development tool will be replaced by other mixed-use development options.
- The ORAT development tool will be incorporated in Light Industrial (LI) development.

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- The Town will migrate to an electronic filling and broader administrative review process for development applications and permitting. ~~Having c~~Conversion~~ted~~ to online permitting has already occurred for building and inspections, with zoning ~~is~~ soon to be added, followed by planning.

Table ~~7~~6. Overview of Zoning Inconsistencies with Future ~~Land Use~~Land-use

Figure FLU-M2 Reference	Street Address	Map & Lot	Existing Zoning	Future Land Use	Reason Inconsistent	Proposed Zoning
1	172 East Ave	107-088	ORAT	Agriculture	General farming not permitted in ORAT.	Agriculture
2	308 Shore Rd	132-053	MDR-30	Agriculture	General farming not permitted in ORAT, MDR-30, nor OS/R.	Agriculture
3	Shore Rd	132-088A	OS/R	Agriculture	General farming not permitted in OS/R.	Agriculture
	Shore Rd	132-089				
	9 Noyes Neck Rd	133-001				
4	Brightman Way	141-193	MDR-30	Agriculture	General farming not permitted in MDR-30.	Agriculture
5	50 Second St	152-109	OS/R	Agriculture	General farming not permitted in OS/R.	Agriculture
	117 Shore Rd	152-109B				
6	117A Moorehouse Rd	082-020	OS/R	Low-Density Residential	Single family not permitted in OS/R.	RR-60
7	11 North Main St	015-005	HDR-15	Mixed-Use Commercial	Mixed-use development not permitted in HDR-15, MDR-30, nor GI.	NB
	9 North Main St	015-006				
	2 North Main St	015-015				
	6 North Main St	023-033				
	8 North Main St	023-034				
	10 North Main St	023-035				
	14 North Main St	023-036				
	16 North Main St	023-037				
	20 North Main St	023-038				
	26 North Main St	023-039				
	28 North Main St	023-040				

Figure FLU-M2 Reference	Street Address	Map & Lot	Existing Zoning	Future Land Use	Reason Inconsistent	Proposed Zoning
7	350 Bradford Rd	023-002	MDR-30	Mixed-Use Commercial	Mixed-use development not permitted in HDR-15, MDR-30, nor GI.	NB
	2 Vars Ln	023-007				
	37 North Main St	023-019				
	2 Country Rd	023-023				
	15 North Main St	023-030				
	13 North Main St	023-031				
	7 North Main St*	015-007*	GI			Permit mixed-use development in LI/Permit limited light industrial uses in NB
	5 North Main St*	015-008*				
8	34 Canal St	046-001	GI	Mixed-Use Commercial	Mixed-use development not permitted in GI, HDR-6, nor LI.	Permit mixed-use development in LI/Permit limited light industrial uses in NB
	38 Canal St	046-002				
	40 Canal St	046-003				
	42 Canal St	046-004				
	28 Canal St	056-032				
	30 Canal St Rear	056-033				
	57 Pierce St	046-081	HDR-6			Rezone HDR-6 to NB
	55 Pierce St	046-082				
	53 Pierce St	046-084				
	43 Pierce St	046-088				
	41 Pierce St	046-089				
	42 Pierce St	046-091A				
	50.5 Pierce St	046-094				
	52 Pierce St	046-098				
	54-58 Pierce St	046-099				
	30 Pierce St	047-048				
	32-34 Pierce St	047-049				
	36 Pierce St	047-050				
	40 Pierce St	047-051				
	176 High St	047-076				
	8 Pierce St	047-077				
	10 Pierce St	047-078				
	12 Pierce St	047-079				
	14 Pierce St	047-080				
	20 Pierce St	047-081				

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Figure FLU-M2 Reference	Street Address	Map & Lot	Existing Zoning	Future Land Use	Reason Inconsistent	Proposed Zoning
8	35 Pierce St	047-083	HDR-6	Mixed-Use Commercial	Mixed-use development not permitted in GI, HDR-6, nor LI.	Rezone HDR-6 to NB
	4 Pearl St	047-084				
	29 Pierce St	047-085				
	27 Pierce St	047-086				
	25 Pierce St	047-087				
	23 Pierce St	047-088				
	21 Pierce St	047-089				
	17-19 Pierce St	047-090				
	13-15 Pierce St	047-091				
	11 Pierce St	047-092				
	9.5 Pierce St	047-093				
	9 Pierce St	047-094				
	7 Pierce St	047-095				
	5 Pierce St	047-096				
	1 Pierce St	047-097				
	44 Pierce St*	046-091*				
	14 Industrial Dr	046-029	LI			
	16 Industrial Dr	046-030				
	24 Industrial Dr	046-031				
	8 Shady Ln	046-133				
	23 Industrial Dr	046-134				
	17 Industrial Dr	046-136				
	26 Friendship St	046-137				
	32 Friendship St	046-138				
	36 Friendship St	046-139				
	46 Friendship St	046-140				
	50 Friendship St	046-140A				
	41 Friendship St	046-141				
	31 Friendship St	046-142				
	62-64 Pleasant St*	046-032*	Split Zoned LI/ HDR-6			
9	140 Main St*	066-047A*	Split zoned HDR-6/ DC-2	Mixed-Use Commercial	Mixed-use development not permitted in HDR-6.	DC-2
	148 Main St*	066-048*				
	150 Main St*	066-049*				
	196 Main St*	076-044*				

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Subsection 3.6.3 – Residential Density and Neighborhood Planning

The buildout analysis for Westerly under current zoning indicates a capacity of an additional 1,868 housing units. With an average of 85 new dwelling units being constructed per year since 2000, it is estimated that the year by which residential buildout is likely to occur is 2038 - within the twenty (20)-year time-period addressed in this Plan. At buildout in the year 2038, the total number of year-round housing units in the Town is projected to be 14,188. There is also a projected population increase of 3% (to 23,466) within the same time frame. Based on estimated population growth, the Town of Westerly will need more than 16,000 housing units by the year 2040. Unable to accomplish the quantity of housing units that is projected for the Town's population in the year 2020, the Town of Westerly has committed in this Plan to review each Neighborhood Area and identify methods to provide context sensitive residential development at higher densities, where appropriate.

The 2010 Plan recommended that the residential zoning districts within the town "remain essentially unchanged from what was in place in 1998." No changes have been made and the current Zoning Ordinance limits the districts in which duplex buildings are allowed, requires a special use permit for a temporary accessory family dwelling unit, and does not provide for the thrifty development of land. There are restrictions in the zoning ordinance with respect to multi-family dwellings and disincentives for affordable by design housing.

It is no longer necessary to further change the zoning districts or the regulations applicable within each district to control future growth. Comparison of the estimated additional residential unit capacity (1,868 units) and the historic building growth over the last 10 years (858) demonstrates a relatively small capability for growth through the traditional subdivision and land development approach.

> ***The Town of Westerly recognizes the need to address residential density based on the unique qualities and needs of discreet planning areas. As a result, any change in residential density ~~shall~~ should be addressed through future neighborhood-based zoning district changes.***

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan called for the adoption of conservation development regulations for major subdivisions as an alternative subdivision methodology. The recommendation was for all applications for major subdivisions be required to include cluster development, conservation development, and conventional subdivision as alternatives for consideration by the Planning Board. Conservation development in areas of low-residential density is still used across the State. However, in Westerly, these eco-friendly solutions to over-development are of little consequence with a limited number of opportunities and even less market interest in this type of development.

The 2010 Plan's recommendation with respect to generally not increasing density is laudable for its attempt to responsibly limit residential sprawl. As a more holistic approach, this 2020-2040 Plan encourages sustainable growth, including residential density intensification, through neighborhood plans where the public utilities and infrastructure are in place. Mixed-use and in-fill development at increased densities together with revitalization and retrofitting of existing properties are all strategies identified for use through Neighborhood Planning. Allowing 2- to 4-unit multi-family development and multi-family residential apartments to be integrated into areas will assist in providing needed housing options for elderly, single individuals, and small families.

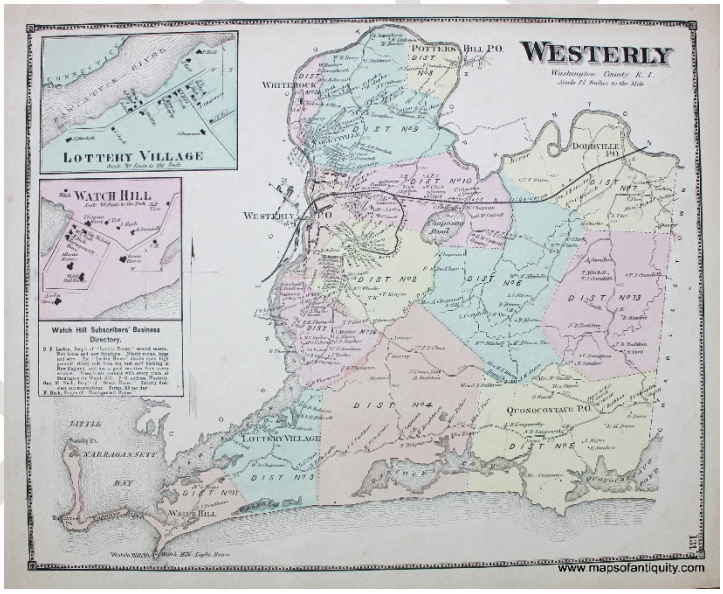
Figure **Neighborhoods (NBH-M1)** shows 29 local neighborhoods as identified through the involvement of residents, neighborhood association representatives, and Town staff. Using available information through RIGIS, the Town's land evidence records and other maps and information, these neighborhoods evolved into the 19 Neighborhood Planning Areas indicated on Figure **Neighborhood Planning Areas (NBH-M2)**. These Neighborhood Planning Areas are used to facilitate the discussion of the Town's future land use.

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Subsection 3.6.4 – Neighborhood Planning

A typical neighborhood plan describes a vision for the future of a small area within a community. An effective neighborhood plan will create detailed goals and strategies for reaching that vision. The plan provides the neighborhood and the larger community with valuable information about the neighborhood's needs, priorities, and desired outcomes. For example, the 2003 North End Neighborhood Revitalization Plan describes a vision of a "human-scaled" walkable neighborhood. Through several goals and strategies, the North End Plan proposes an affordable, safe, and welcoming neighborhood. When published, the Plan provided neighborhood residents and the Town of Westerly with an overview of the North End's needs, priorities, and desired outcomes through locally relevant, and therefore more dependable, data.

Ideally, a neighborhood plan is created by the people who live, work, and interact in that neighborhood. The North End Plan originated as a venture of the grassroots North End Crime Watch and attracted a wide range of interested residents, including neighborhood leaders and Town officials, who offered a broad array of concerns and suggestions. If the planning process has been truly inclusive, there are many benefits of neighborhood planning, such as increased citizen involvement, the development of leadership amongst neighbors, and an increase in knowledge about the neighborhood and about local decision-making processes and procedures. The results of every small area plan will be different based on the unique needs of that neighborhood and the stakeholders involved.



Neighbors, sometimes through a neighborhood organization, implement the plan actions and, when required, work to get the plan's recommendations acted upon by other appropriate parties. A neighborhood plan may lead to the development of new Town policies or regulations, but Zoning and other regulatory changes are not always necessary to bring about the changes a neighborhood desires. In the years since its publication, the undertaking of many actions by resident North Enders has resulted in a greater quality of life, new community spaces, improvements to circulation routes, and community association. The Greater North End Community Development, Inc. (GNECD) organizes community events, such as historic walking tours, supports local businesses by developing an area map, and provides access to community resources, and opportunities for volunteering. One of GNECD's goals is the rehabilitation of existing properties in the North End.

A neighborhood plan might be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan at the request of the neighborhood organization or residents. If incorporated by the Town Council as part of this Plan, the small-area plan can be used by the Town of Westerly to determine if development proposals and land-use changes are in accordance with the neighborhood's articulated shared vision for the future. Projects and programs identified in the plan can be submitted for inclusion in the Capital Improvement Program and the Town's budget process. Neighbors, elected officials, and staff can use it as a framework to guide their efforts and track progress. It can also be an

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informational tool, providing guidance to those deciding whether they want to live or invest in the neighborhood.

With the 2003 North End Neighborhood Revitalization Plan as an example, the Town of Westerly has committed to focusing its future land-use development through neighborhood planning. By addressing the characteristics of smaller areas within the Town, the specific character of each constituent neighborhood can be retained. Maintaining the character of Westerly is important to the future of this special place, and that same character is a reason why people want to visit and reside here. Residents strongly associate themselves with the neighborhoods in which they reside. Neighborhood Plans will open areas within Westerly to small-scale, context-sensitive mixed –use development and recreation opportunities that support a healthy lifestyle and maintain community character. Whether Downtown revitalization, Bradford or White Rock redevelopment, better utilization of the Route 1 corridor, or the resiliency of Watch Hill, the vision, needs, priorities, and desired outcomes of each constituent neighborhood requires individual small-area plans.

Additionally, Westerly includes the preservation of historic buildings, neighborhoods, and villages as part of its Vision. In order to realize this vision in a time of increased concern about sea level rise, Westerly recognizes the need to develop design guidelines to protect these historic buildings, neighborhoods, and villages. Like our neighboring community to the east, Newport, Westerly will look to develop design guidelines and applicable regulations to allow for the potential elevation and removal from harm's way our most historic and vulnerable buildings and neighborhoods.

Subsection 3.6.54 – Affordable Housing

RIGL 42-128.2 requires the provision of affordable housing and in providing such housing that Towns optimize the use of public resources. Westerly has adopted its own Affordable Housing Ordinance, which can be found in the Zoning Ordinance §260-50 "Affordable Housing." Aspects of both of these laws are incorporated in the following overview and in the subsequent Table 7 "Land-Use Provisions."

The difficult economic conditions of the State and region impacted development in Westerly well into the 2010s. In the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, projecting future housing development beyond five (5) years was difficult because the speed of Rhode Island's economic recovery relied on many factors. Home sales remained low and unemployment rates high and the State continued to struggle with its budget. All these factors influenced overall public and private investment in the State and its communities, including the housing market. However, it was anticipated that the economy would eventually improve and development opportunities and interest in the region would increase.

In the planning period of this Plan, the future of residential development will require an increasingly robust review in support of affordable housing production as the Town approaches buildout (likely to occur around 2038). New homeowners of single-family houses will continue to take up residence in Westerly, taking advantage of new additions to the housing supply along with a loosening resale market. Multi-family development will also continue, spurred by an aging population less interested in or capable of maintaining their homes as well as a general decrease in interest amongst young adults in homeownership.

The rental housing stock in Westerly often provides numerous residents a more affordable alternative to owning a home and is largely concentrated within the Town's Urban Services Boundary. There are many benefits to this location, including its walkability to Downtown Westerly (a major local employment center), connection to municipal utilities, and greater accessibility to social services. At the same time, however, there are also challenges due to aging, and sometimes neglected, housing in this area. Likewise, household densities in some

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of these neighborhoods have grown to exceed the number of housing units originally constructed – resulting from the conversion of single-family homes into multi-family structures, sometimes without appropriate application to the Town for review and approval.

Subsection 3.6.~~5~~6 – Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Production Plan

RIGL 45-53 requires the provision of affordable, accessible, safe, and sanitary housing for low- and moderate-income citizens, both individuals and families. The law requires that an "equal consideration shall be given to the retrofitting and rehabilitation of existing dwellings" and "assimilating low- and moderate-income housing into existing and future developments and neighborhoods." The law also requires that 10% of year-round housing options be qualified as low and moderate income. This mandate is discussed in the production plan found in Part II, Chapter 4 of this Plan.

The Town projected that, with the use of production strategies set out in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan for low- to moderate income (LMI) households, 528 units would be created by 2032. To date, however, the rate of production of affordable housing units for LMI occupants to achieve that goal has fallen short. Since 2012, there has been a net decrease of seven (7) affordable housing units in comparison to a projected increase of 99 units between 2012 and 2017 in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. A loss of deed-restricted affordable housing in Bradford and the prolonged impact of the Great Recession in the local and state economies are the primary factors of this disappointing number. With the review of strategies for LMI housing production undertaken as part of this Comprehensive Plan update, the Town expects many additions to the affordable housing stock.

In fulfillment of RIGL and comprehensive planning requirements of the State, an LMI housing production plan to meet a **deficit of ~~877~~ 883** affordable LMI housing units is included in Part II, Chapter 4. Table 4-18 in that chapter lists the projected number of affordable units that could be created by the Town's proposed LMI housing strategies for the next twenty (20) years. The **total projection** of affordable units from these strategies over twenty (20) years is **1,066 units**, well over the ~~877~~ 883 required to meet the State's 10% threshold.

An effective housing production plan for Westerly will ensure that the different types of residents with cost-burdened households are each provided a fair and representative proportion of affordable housing units to be constructed through the 2020s and 2030s. It is the underserved segment of Westerly's current households that must be targeted, including both family and other non-family households. This Plan embraces several strategies for the rehabilitation and production of units for renter households at or below 80% Housing Urban Development (HUD) Area Median Family Income (HAMFI). These strategies are intended to ensure that low- and moderate-income households continue to be 60 to 66% of total renter-occupied units.

The Town's Zoning Ordinance not only adopts the comprehensive permitting process, but also provides for increased density intended to aid in the production of qualified low- and moderate-income housing units as previously described. Density bonuses available to developers that apply under this ordinance range from 20% to 66%. The Town's municipal infrastructure resources and utilities will be ~~assembled~~ assessed when necessary to allow the development of LMI housing by Comprehensive Permit.

Subsection 3.6.~~6~~7 – Commercial and Industrial Development

This Plan prohibits the expansion of commercial and industrial zoning districts, with the exception of the airport industrial zone, and encourages redevelopment of existing under-utilized commercial and industrial space, particularly in the Route 1 corridor. The buildout analysis estimates a total of 471,981 square feet of commercial space over 39.72 acres and 3,132,026 square feet of industrial space over 312.43 acres can be added in the Town.

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Reuse and revitalization of existing commercial and industrial space as an alternative to new development is one of the themes of this Plan. For example, the Plan calls for modification of zoning ~~land use~~land-use regulations to support adaptive reuse of vacant and underutilized industrial and commercial buildings and associated areas in Town. This Plan also calls for the Town to work with existing commercial property owners in the Route 1 corridor to enhance landscaping and green space through incentives such as reductions in required parking area.

The Plan envisions that downtown will continue to be a focal point for commercial, artistic, and civic activities. Walking to and through downtown will be facilitated by providing good pedestrian connections through densely-built neighborhoods and non-residential districts through public projects with a goal of having a town-wide network of connected sidewalks and trails, a portion of which will be near downtown. Efforts shall be made to revitalize the Pawcatuck River corridor to connect neighborhoods through public riverfront access and encourage investment in the community. This Plan also calls for obtaining financial support from multiple sources for the continued revitalization of Downtown Westerly (particularly the DC-I zoning district) and its surrounding areas (primarily the DC-II zoning district) and modification of ~~land use~~land-use regulations to complement this effort. This Plan calls for the Town to promote the use of artist tax benefits and encourages cultural and performing arts as bases for economic development. This Plan recognizes the need to coordinate with the Towns of Stonington, Hopkinton, and Charlestown on issues of mutual interest, which include Pawcatuck River water quality and shared economic development initiatives such as investment in the Pawcatuck River greenway project.

Westerly has been a tourist destination for years and this Plan has several actions that will help sustain tourism-related industries. It calls for a program to proactively work with owners of existing lodging facilities to encourage rehabilitation and the updating of facilities to extend tourist use. There is also a need to evaluate the mix of accommodations in Westerly to determine whether the markets for seasonal vacationers, year-round visitors, and business travelers are being adequately served. This Plan calls for an ordinance that accommodates the needs of hospitality and tourism industry employers to provide housing for their seasonal employees while not discouraging the hiring of residents and protecting the interests of affected neighborhoods. This Plan requires review and revision of the planned resort development provision in the Westerly Zoning Ordinance as a strategy to promote longer stays by visitors while limiting impact on local neighborhoods. No changes to the existing industrial zones are proposed in the Plan except to encourage revitalization and reuse of existing industrial space.

Subsection 3.6.~~7~~8 – Natural Resource Protection, Open Space, and Outdoor Recreation

Protecting and enhancing Westerly's natural resources and open space is an important, longstanding goal of the Town. Land that is currently protected open space will remain protected. This Plan calls for adding to existing open space through development of a systematic prioritized plan, including potential funding alternatives. This Plan also contains several actions related to stormwater and sediment control and an action regarding the use of renewable energy, all of which will help to protect the environment.

Open space and recreation lands are crucial to Westerly in several ways. The provision of both passive and active open space supports the Town's largest economic sector - tourism and recreation. Westerly's economic dependence on natural resource-based tourism and outdoor recreation makes natural resource protection critical. The uniquely rural and coastal nature of the Town and its natural resources requires a balance between developed active recreational areas, such as playing fields, golf courses, event venues, and harbors, and undeveloped passive recreational areas, such as fishing sites, kayak and canoe launches, and hiking trails.

Maintaining a large percent of open space and recreation land ensures that a portion of Westerly will remain undeveloped and identified as either rural or coastal. Open space for recreation purposes is important not only

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for the protection of significant natural resources but to provide access to these valuable natural spaces. Open areas set aside for either passive or active recreation provide a community focus for residents and become the setting for organized programs and activities. Open space and recreation and its relation to natural resource protection is an important consideration in future acquisitions of open space and a requirement of resiliency planning.

The use of a River Corridor Overlay District is suggested to protect, preserve, and enhance the outstandingly remarkable values of the Pawcatuck River, a nationally recognized Wild and Scenic River. The purpose of the overlay district would be to assess the impacts of development on the River, assure safe public access to the River, preserve the natural, historical, and cultural resources, protect water quality, and achieve long-term resiliency planning. The River Corridor of the Pawcatuck River would include the six (6) or more tributaries that also enter the Pawcatuck River along the way to the ocean – the resource most vulnerable to further development within the corridor. A good benchmark to compare the River Corridor Overlay District to is found with the Town of Woonsocket zoning regulations. Westerly has reserved a section for the River Corridor Overlay District in the current Zoning Ordinance.

Subsection 3.6.~~8~~9 – Agriculture

Agriculture as a category of land use focuses on farm production and agritourism. Farm production is dependent on site-specific conditions. The most important factor for consideration is the suitability of the land for agricultural uses. In the inventory and assessment of natural resources, this Plan has identified important agricultural soils (see the Natural Resources Part II Chapter 1, which includes a description of the agricultural soils depicted on figure Agricultural Soils (NAT-M4). The locations of these soils were not limited to undeveloped areas, as possible new agricultural operations, such as farms, may be established in the future on land which may currently be used residentially. NAT-M4 also shows lands actively used for agricultural activity through inclusion of the land cover/~~land use~~land-use dataset on RIGIS, based on spring 2011 orthophotography.

Farming operations can cause disturbances for abutting residences, even without farm retail, and agritourism commercializes agricultural uses even more. An assessment of the proximity and density of housing in relation to agricultural activities should be made in any assessment before "Agriculture" is introduced as its own ~~land use~~land-use category. With this assessment, the Town could incorporate agriculture into its pattern of future land uses more effectively. Farming practices can also produce a variety of agrochemicals, including fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides, as well as animal wastes, that may result in deterioration of water quality if sited too close to water resources.

Agriculture is also essential for a locally based community food system that offers healthy, affordable products for the benefit of residents, businesses, and the environment. In an area where food security can be affected by natural hazards – crop destruction, disruption in food delivery – expansion of permitted community food system activities that accommodate food production, processing, distribution, and consumption locally is beneficial.

Subsection 3.6.~~9~~10 – Economic Development

Westerly is home to more than 1,500 business that operate within nearly all industries and sectors of the regional and national economy. The local business community has a well-documented history of activism and ensuring the vitality of small businesses. While welcoming regional chains and national franchises, Westerly – through the Town's EDC, the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce, business associations, and individual companies – has always valued small businesses as the primary engine for employment and economic growth.
This Plan remains committed to ensuring the vitality of commercial assets throughout the community. Following its adoption, the Town will undertake numerous regulatory improvements to modernize the permitting of

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redevelopment and revitalization efforts. Simultaneously, municipal staff, working with the same partners noted above, will begin working to enhance its sense of place and quality of life – investments that will attract new clients, new potential employees, and new connections. This Plan anticipates regulatory reform, incentives, and other tools to create the appropriate conditions for equitable, robust economic activity. While respecting its natural environment and recognizing that Westerly must be a regional leader in resiliency due to its unique geographic location, the Town will also continue to promote its beaches, open spaces, and historic places to residents and visitors alike.

Subsection 3.6.1~~0~~1 – Transportation, Infrastructure, and Services

Since future land use is necessarily linked to transportation, infrastructure, and services, major actions in this Plan related to these issues are briefly included here for completeness.

- An important set of recommendations in this Plan relate to improving the area around the train station and increasing its use. This Plan specifies evaluating parking, safe access, and redevelopment planning at and near the railroad station. This Plan also calls for increased use of Westerly Station, which could improve rail connections for visitors and residents.
- Regarding infrastructure, this Plan asks the Town to pursue all available state and federal funding opportunities to improve the Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) capacity consistent within its existing design and secure this system's longevity through resiliency planning. Within current capacity, this Plan specifies that any expansion of sewer service should be carefully prioritized based on environmental protection and economic development.
- The Town has made significant improvements to the water distribution system in recent years; however, there is still a need to improve the security of the water system.
- This Plan also supports continuation of the program to meet other infrastructure needs, such as roadway maintenance, sidewalk replacement, and stormwater control.
- ~~In recent years,~~ Westerly residents have funded the construction of a new middle school and renovated the high school. The school facilities plan provides a program for elementary school improvements – an ongoing discussion. The importance of a strong school system to the Town is recognized in this Plan.
- Throughout its transportation system and within its infrastructure and services, there is an increasing importance for the Town to promote the use and consumption of renewable, rather than finite, energy sources. This Plan seeks to continue improvements by the Town while also calling for a review of ordinances to reflect advances in energy use available to residents and businesses and alleviate potentially burdensome regulations.
- Although the Town of Westerly fulfilled its statutory obligation to control hazards to aviation in the vicinity of the Westerly State Airport (WST), the struggle to define a long-term plan for WST persists. This Plan seeks a dialogue with the FAA, Rhode Island Airport Corporation (RIAC), and elected State officials on the role of WST in Westerly and requires adequate and appropriate public involvement as part of future planning for WST.

Subsection 3.6.1~~1~~2 – Westerly Public Schools (WPS)

There is nothing more important to student success than quality and caring teachers led by outstanding principals. Yet the atmosphere in which students learn and the facilities within which professionals teach must be advantageous to teacher and student success. 21st Century education is more than the transfer and memorization of rote learning of the past. Both industry and higher education require graduates who have learned softer skills of collective and collaborative real-world problem solving and who have benefitted from

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hands-on experiential learning. Facilities must provide students with the space to work together to clearly identify problems, available resources to first recognize and then tackle challenges, and the tools to develop initial strategies for addressing problems, innovating, and evaluating outcomes.

It is widely recognized that young professionals seeking to raise their families in a community seek out quality schools by assessing the value (real or perceived) placed on education by the community at large. Westerly Public Schools (WPS) is engaged in the work of moving from good to great. *All* Westerly public-school students shall have access to high-quality instruction delivered by well-trained and committed professionals. Ample and up-to-date instructional materials and the latest instructional technologies shall be provided. Quality and safe facilities support shall be in place to support high-quality teaching and learning. A community that values education reflects its commitment to education through its investments. We can be that district that attracts young families, that contributes to the raising of property values and growth of the tax bases, and that anchors a true sense of pride in Westerly.

The Westerly School Department seeks to be the premier elementary and secondary education provider in the region. The WPS vision is to feature top-flight academics and unmatched opportunities in the visual and performing arts. Achieving that vision requires thoughtful, strategic, and high leverage improvement efforts with community support for facilities planning.

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Section 3.7 – Land-~~-~~Use Goals, Policies, and Actions

Westerly's existing development pattern, which is consistent with *Land Use 2025*, shall generally continue. Such pattern reinforces the Urban Services Boundary, which distinguishes between the Town's western/central urban, suburban coastal, and eastern rural areas. The Town encourages growth that recognizes its assets and enhances opportunity while at the same time maintaining Westerly's cherished sense of place.

The vision for the Town of Westerly is to preserve and enhance its quality of life for all generations as a safe, resilient, and compassionate community with a healthy environment, a distinctive heritage, extraordinary cultural and natural resources, a strong, stable, equitable economy, and a responsible and publicly-engaged government.

Preserving the character of the community, and on a smaller scale each of its neighborhoods, is a key element of the Town's Vision. Action on the vision includes improved opportunities for the public to voice their values, ideas and concerns on the topics of housing, recreation, services, business, infrastructure, and transportation. Resiliency in all parts of the community and in all facets of land use, including through conserving areas of open space and important land features, is ~~being put to use~~applied in each planning area. The following g~~G~~oals and p~~P~~olicies reflect the Town's Vision.

GOAL LUZ-1	Preserve the predominant residential character of Westerly, while providing open space, commercial, industrial, and recreational land uses to serve the needs of residents and businesses.
Policy LUZ-1.1	Emphasize the redevelopment of underutilized parcels in areas with adequate infrastructure and access to public services.
Policy LUZ -1.2	Ensure future development is compatible with adjoining land uses, the natural environment, available or planned community services, and existing historic and cultural features.
GOAL LUZ-2	Develop a planning framework that prepares the community for extreme weather events and impacts of sea level rise, storm surge, and flooding.
Policy LUZ-2.1	Identify specific areas impacted by these threats and assess and understand the economic and social risks and the role of land use in mitigation ~~or~~ of risk.
Policy LUZ -2.2	Lead a responsible public and private response to extreme weather events through preparation and education on public health and safety protocols.
Policy LUZ-2.3	The Town shall design and implement capital project plans and improvements while considering the land-~~-~~use implications of such investments within the context of economic development, natural hazards, and ~~threats~~future community needs.

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The Town of Westerly desires to preserve the unique character and importance of each constituent neighborhood area and will evaluate opportunities for redevelopment and revitalization in each. Each Neighborhood plan will involve the area residents and businesses, reflect their values, and address their ideas and concerns and will be tailored to provide a plan for housing, recreation, services, infrastructure, and transportation. The Implementation element (Chapter 4 of Part I) contains all the information on implementation schedule, priorities, responsibilities, partners, and action types. ~~Table 8 provides a summary of those implementation actions that require the amendment of local land uselandland-use regulations as specified in the Section 4.2.~~

Table 7 provides a summary of those implementation actions that require the amendment of local land-use regulations as specified in the Section 4.2.

Table ~~8~~7. Land-~~ ~~Use Provisions

Area of Regulation	Related Policies and Actions	Timeframe	Responsible ~~Agency~~Party
	POLICY NAT-1.1: Provide long-term conservation of natural resources.		
Resilient Westerly Development Plan	ACTION NAT-1.1.C: Implement the Salt Pond Region SAMP	MT 5-10 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
Aquifer Protection Standards	ACTION NAT-1.1.E: "… [expand] the Aquifer Protection Overlay District (APOD) and ordinance amendments." ACTION NAT-1.2.D: Revise the Zoning Ordinance to update the classification of uses permitted in special flood hazard areas and the APOD.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
River Corridor Overlay District Standards	ACTION NAT-1.2.E: Establish a River Corridor Overlay District to complement the Pawcatuck River's federal designation as Wild and Scenic.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
Development Regulations	ACTION NAT-1.2.G: Amend regulations to provide conditions and standards that protect and create sustainable use of natural resources as part of the ~~land-use~~land-use decision-making process.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
	POLICY REC-1.1: Enhance recreational programming to serve all demographics.		

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Area of Regulation	Related Policies and Actions	Timeframe	Responsible ~~Agency~~Party
Recreation	ACTION REC-1.1.B: Revise the Zoning Ordinance to update the classification of uses for both indoor and outdoor recreation permitted in the CR, OSR, and PD zoning districts.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
	POLICY REC-2.1: Promote and enhance access to and use of waterways for recreation.		
Downtown Development Plan	ACTION REC-2.1.B: Implement the Downtown and River Center parking/park/kayak launch plans.	MT 5-10 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
	POLICY HCR-1.2: Achieve the objectives of historic preservation standards and guidelines to promote the unique characteristics of Westerly's neighborhoods and its overall sense of place.		
Downtown District Standards	ACTION HCR-1.2.A: Revise the uses and design review standards of the DC-I and DC-II zoning districts to better unify with the historic districts along the riverfront.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
Historic Mill Overlay District Standards	ACTION HCR-1.2.B: Revise the uses and design review standards of the Historic Mill Overlay District to better incorporate associated village development.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
River Corridor Overlay District Standards	ACTION HCR-1.2.D: Establish a River Corridor Overlay District to complement the Pawcatuck River Greenway initiative.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
	POLICY HSNG-1.1: Continue towards achieving the State requirement for a minimum of 10% of the total year-round housing stock to be subsidized, deed-restricted, and occupied by LMI households.		
LMI Housing Production	ACTION HSNG-1.1.A: Revisit the inclusionary Zoning Ordinance based on State law changes, market trends, incentives, and new ~~land use~~land-use policies, and amend accordingly.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)

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Area of Regulation	Related Policies and Actions	Timeframe	Responsible ~~Agency~~Party
LMI Housing Production	ACTION HSNG-1.1.F: Upon publication of the 2020 HUD Census Data, revisit residential buildout and realign density bonuses awarded through Comprehensive Permits with prevailing needs.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
	POLICY HSNG-1.2: Assure current and future residents that a broad range of opportunities to live in the community will be available.		
Live-Work Opportunities	ACTION HSNG-1.2.E: Adopt regulations that incorporate live-work housing in downtown neighborhoods.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
Accessory Units	ACTION HSNG-1.2.F: Amend Zoning Ordinance to broaden the availability of accessory dwelling units and streamline permitting.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
Housing Opportunities Plan	ACTION HSNG-1.2.H: Upon publication of the 2020 HUD Census Data, revisit residential buildout and apply the polices of this Plan to create new housing opportunity strategies.	MT 5-10 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
Mixed-Use Development	ACTION HSNG-1.2.I: Develop standards for achieving a mix of residential uses into mixed use districts.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
	POLICY HSNG-1.3: Promote the development and rehabilitation of integrated affordable-by-design housing throughout the community.		
Housing Affordability	ACTION HSNG-1.3.E: Adopt regulations that incorporate residential units that are affordable by design, such as micro-lofts, micro-apartments, and studios, including in downtown.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
Multi-Family Housing	ACTION HSNG-1.3.G: Revise zoning ordinance to encourage family rental units (of 1 to 3 bedrooms) designed in 2- to 4-unit structures.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)

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Area of Regulation	Related Policies and Actions	Timeframe	Responsible ~~Agency~~Party
	POLICY ECON-1.1: Focus on unique features and existing community assets to draw new investment.		
Resort Development Plan	ACTION ECON-1.1.D: Review and revise the Zoning Ordinance with strategies to promote longer stays by visitors and tourists while limiting impact on local neighborhoods.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
	POLICY ECON-1.2: Encourage regulatory reform, incentives, and other tools to create the appropriate conditions for equitable, robust economic activity.		
Context Based Zoning	ACTION ECON-1.2.A: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to incorporate beneficial elements of form-based code (FBC) appropriate to the existing built environment.	MT 5-10 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
	POLICY ECON-1.3: Ensure that new economic development opportunities preserve community assets and character.		
Downtown District Standards	ACTION ECON-1.3.A: Revise the Zoning Ordinance to expand and broaden uses permitted in the DC-I, DC-II, LI, and NB zoning districts at an appropriate scale for Downtown Westerly and its surrounding, historic neighborhoods.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
Commercial District Standards	ACTION ECON-1.3.B: Revise the Zoning Ordinance to expand and broaden uses within the GC, GI, HC, MC, ORAT, P-15, SC-G, and SC-WH zoning district boundaries to reduce commercial sprawl and promote better utilization of existing district.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
	POLICY ECON-2.1: Promote a locally-based community food system that offers healthy, affordable products for the benefit of residents, businesses, and the environment.		

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Area of Regulation	Related Policies and Actions	Timeframe	Responsible ~~Agency~~Party
Food System Plan	ACTION ECON-2.1.A: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to expand permitted community food system activities that accommodate the production, processing, distribution, and consumption of locally- and regionally-sourced products.	MT 5-10 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
	POLICY ECON-2.2: Encourage knowledge-based industries that attract telecommuting and work-from-home opportunities.		
Live-Work Housing	ACTION ECON-2.2.C: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to encourage home-based businesses and work-from-home opportunities.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
	POLICY SF-1.1: Support the mission and activities of organizations and businesses that provide services to veterans, families, elderly persons, those of low- and moderate-income, those experiencing homelessness, and those with special needs.		
Commercial District Standards	ACTION SF-1.1.C: Through changes to zoning, provide incentives for mixed commercial and professional services in redevelopment within the HC zoning district. ACTION SF-1.1.F: Attract more organizations and jobs in the human services sector by improving mixed use and development regulations.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
	POLICY INF-1.1: Enhance the resiliency of Westerly's water system by developing programs and projects that improve maintenance and provide protection and redundancy.		
Development Regulations	ACTION INF-1.1.A: Amend the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to provide standards that align infrastructure demands associated with new development and redevelopment with capacity.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)

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Area of Regulation	Related Policies and Actions	Timeframe	Responsible ~~Agency~~Party
	POLICY INF-1.4: Improve stormwater drainage treatment and conveyance systems.		
Aquifer Protection Standards	ACTION INF-1.4.C: Identify detrimental land uses in the existing Aquifer Protection Overlay District (APOD) and revise ~~land use~~land-use regulations to mitigate negative environmental impacts and limit new development of detrimental land uses in this area.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
Reduce Impervious Surface	ACTION INF-1.4.D: Revise the Zoning Ordinance and Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to reduce the amount of impervious surface allowed in new development and redevelopment projects.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
	POLICY NRG-1.1: Encourage the development of and residential access to renewable energy resources.		
Private Energy Generation	ACTION NRG-1.1.D: Revise the Zoning Ordinance and Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to encourage the installation of on-site renewable energy generation facilities in new developments and redevelopment projects.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
Commercial Energy Generation	ACTION NRG-1.1.E: Review current regulations to further allow renewable energy generation in appropriate areas of the community.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
	POLICY NRG-2.1: Ensure all existing and future energy infrastructure is planned, constructed, and adequately monitored to avoid negative impacts to the local environment and the community's quality of life, including public health.		

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Area of Regulation	Related Policies and Actions	Timeframe	Responsible ~~Agency~~Party
Hazard Mitigation	ACTION NRG-2.1.B: Amend the Zoning Ordinance and Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to require the incorporation of elements for reducing surface solar heat conduction and wind velocity, such as by increasing the area(s) of proposed greenscapes and/or avoiding the use of thermal-conductive impervious materials.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
	POLICY TRANS-1.1: Enhance the efficiency and resiliency of Westerly's multi-modal transportation system.		
Parking Requirements	ACTION TRANS-1.1.I: Review and revise off-street parking regulations in the Zoning Ordinance to incorporate automobile parking maximums based on need, the inclusion of bicycle parking minimums, and access to transit.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
	POLICY TRANS-1.2: Promote Amtrak service as a travel option for residents and visitors.		
Transportation Plan	ACTION TRANS-1.2.C: Through Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) regulatory changes, promote, enhance, and develop the conditions for increased ridership on the Northeast Regional line to and from Westerly Station.	LT 10 years+	Development Services (Planning Board)
	POLICY TRANS-2.1: Ensure traffic safety, including means of ingress and egress and particularly pedestrian and motor vehicle operator safety, is considered in the review of all future development plans.		
Transportation Plan	ACTION TRANS-2.1.A: Through TOD regulatory changes, promote walkability and require safe, comfortable pedestrian movement within all new construction and redevelopment projects, particularly residential, commercial, and mixed uses.	LT 10 years+	Development Services (Planning Board)

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Area of Regulation	Related Policies and Actions	Timeframe	Responsible ~~Agency~~Party
Development Regulations	ACTION TRANS-2.1.B: Revise the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to require all future traffic impact analyses conducted as part of application submissions to examine pedestrians and bike riders/cyclists in addition to automobiles. ACTION TRANS-2.1C: Revise the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to incorporate road design standards as a requirement for the approval of all new public and private street creations and for any opening of existing paper streets.	ST 1-5 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
	POLICY RES-1.2: Anticipate new development, redevelopment, structural elevations, and, if necessary, retreat from coastal shorelines and riparian zones in especially vulnerable areas.		
Resilient Westerly Development Plan	ACTION RES-1.2.D: Determine changes needed to the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinance for better protection of infrastructure within the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) and areas under regulation by the Shoreline Change SAMP.	MT 5-10 years	Development Services (Planning Board)
Note: *See Section 4.2.* ST = Short-Term MT = Mid-Term LT = Long-Term			

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Chapter 4
IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

Section 4.1 – Goals, Policies & Actions

At the heart of this twenty (20)-year Plan is a well-defined structure of goals, policies, and actions developed based on broad public input and a thorough inventory of the Town's assets and characteristics described in Part II. The various goals give clear direction as to the type and extent of conservation and development the community desires. Goals are long-term and may take a decade or more to achieve.

Specific actions have been developed to implement each policy and achieve associated goals. The actions are focused and measurable. Responsibilities and timeframes have been assigned to the actions to make it possible to track progress and determine degree of completion, ensuring accountability for future success of this Plan. It is anticipated that new actions will be developed during the required five (5)-year plan update to replace those that have been successfully implemented.

The purpose of this section is to codify the Town of Westerly's statement of public policy, to direct the Town and all actors seeking town permits or approvals towards conservation and development in a manner consistent with this Comprehensive Plan. In the series of tables that follow, each planning area is assigned Goals, Policies, and Actions that align with the Town of Westerly's vision. A key to the abbreviations used to identify each item is included here.

Abbreviation	Long Form
NAT	Natural Resources
REC	Recreation
HCR	Historic and Cultural Resources
HSNG	Housing Opportunities
ECON	Economic Vitality
SF	Services and Facilities
INF	Infrastructure
NRG	Energy
TRANS	Transportation Network
RES	Hazard Mitigation and Resiliency

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Section 4.2 – A Process for Implementation

The effectiveness of the Town of Westerly Comprehensive Plan will be highly dependent on the timeliness and quality of the Plan implementation. Implementation is the process that turns strategies and plans into actions and outcomes. Implementation is required to accomplish strategic objectives and goals. A statement which defines and schedules the specific public actions to be undertaken in order to achieve the goals and objectives of each component of the comprehensive plan. Implementing your strategic plan is as important, or even more important, than your strategy. The implementation program details the timing and schedule of municipal actions required to amend the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map to conform to the Comprehensive Plan. The following tables assign each ACTION item with an implementation horizon, a responsible ~~agency~~party, and one or more partners.

The **implementation horizon** identifies the timeframe in which the action will be executed and is organized into three (3) terms:

- Short-term (ST) - Some major actions will be accomplished in a relatively short period of time (less than five years) since they will signal early success and are critical to the overall implementation of the Plan,
- Mid-term (MT)- Many other actions will be implemented in a five (5) to ten (10) year term because they may require further study, coordination with others, or involve the commitment of financial resources beyond the time frame of the current capital improvement program and associated fiscal budgets, and
- Long-term (LT) - A few actions are long-term in nature or will require continuous attention over the twenty (20)-year horizon of this Plan but beyond the ten (10) year term of this Plan.

The **item type** classifies actions as a zoning ordinance or subdivision regulation amendment, a program, policy, or plan, or as an infrastructure item. The **responsible** ~~agency~~ party is the administrative division or public body of the Town government that will be primarily accountable for the successful completion of an action. A **partner** is a person, group, organization, agency, or other entity that can fall within the public, quasi-public, private, and/or non-profit sector and has resources, such as expertise, staff, time, or funding, which the responsible ~~agency~~ party may be permitted to utilize.

A working version of the implementation program that includes even further detail and columns ~~may~~ will be used to assist the Town in implementing this Plan and for progress updates. Additional columns may include available funding, implementation progress, and details necessary to implement action items.

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Natural Resources

To achieve the component of the Westerly stated VISION of preserving and enhancing **"quality of life for all generations"** with **"extraordinary .. natural resources",** this plan has identified the following Goals and Policies, which will be followed up with specific actions for the protection of natural resources.

		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
GOAL NAT-1	Westerly's natural resources will be available for the future enjoyment of its residents and visitors.				
Policy NAT-1.1	Provide long-term conservation of natural resources.				
Action NAT-1.1.A	Support the local land trusts in the acquisition of open space and, when applicable, trail creation and maintenance.	Ongoing	~~Subsidy Endorsement~~Grant Support	Town Council	Recreation Department
Action NAT-1.1.B	Provide annual training opportunities to ~~land use~~land-use decision-makers on natural resource protection and management.	Ongoing	Training	Town Council	Statewide Planning Nature Conservancy
Action NAT-1.1.C	Implement the Salt Pond Region SAMP.	MT 5-10 years	Zoning & Regulation Amendments	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	RICRMC Statewide Planning
Action NAT-1.1.D	Protect and conserve existing rural settings and wildlife and aquatic environments to preserve local biodiversity and natural beauty through the continuation of conservation efforts.	Ongoing	Program	Town Manager (Conservation Commission) Harbor ~~Management~~Manager	Recreation Department Statewide Planning
Action NAT-1.1.E	Protect the quality of potable water within the Pawcatuck Basin's local recharge area, including through expansion of the Aquifer Protection Overlay District (APOD) and ordinance amendments.	ST 1-5 years Ongoing	Zoning & Regulation Amendments; Study	Dept Public Works (Utilities) Dept Development Services (Enforcement)	Dept Public Works (Eng) (Utilities) Pawcatuck River stakeholders
Action NAT-1.1.F	Control non-point source pollution through rigorous enforcement of stormwater management, soil erosion and sediment controls, and illicit discharge regulations.	Ongoing	Enforcement	Dept Public Works (Eng)	Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
Action NAT-1.1.G	Designate and monitor key locations to confirm targeted pollutants are being reduced in non-point source pollution areas, following environmental assessments.	Ongoing	Program	Dept Public Works (Eng)	Recreation Department (Recreation Board)
Action NAT-1.1H	Develop marine spatial plan for coastal waters and Little Narragansett Bay so that marine habitats and species are not impacted, critical habitats such as submerged aquatic vegetation (eelgrass) and salt marsh are protected, and the aesthetics and navigability of these water bodies are not compromised. See Part II, Chapter 1, Subsection 1.4.1 for additional information about the marine spatial plan.	ST 1-5 years	Program	Dept of Development Services	Watch Hill Conservancy, Neighborhood Groups,
Policy NAT-1.2	Ensure the sustainable use and management of natural resources.				
Action NAT-1.2.A	Promote and encourage the utilization of voluntary conservation methods for conserving farmlands and forested areas zoned for residential use.	Ongoing	Policy	Town Council	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)
Action NAT-1.2.B	Maintain the Town's water rights on land in the neighboring Town of North Stonington, Connecticut through a new Memorandum of Agreement.	Ongoing	Policy	Town Council	Town of North Stonington

		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
					Dept Public Works (Utilities)
Action NAT-1.2.C	Fund the design and reengineering of the Westerly Public Schools' bus refueling station to mitigate pollution of groundwater or relocate the facility to a location outside the APOD.	ST 1-5 years	Facilities	Dept Public Works (Eng)	Westerly Public Schools
Action NAT-1.2.D	Revise the Zoning Ordinance to update the classification of uses permitted in special flood hazard areas and the APOD.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	
Action NAT-1.2.E	Establish a River Corridor Overlay District to complement the Pawcatuck River's federal designation as Wild and Scenic.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning & Regulation Amendments	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Recreation Board Recreation Department
Action NAT-1.2.F	Investigate the expansion of the public wastewater system in targeted commercial and industrial areas for new development or redevelopment, in conjunction with future improvements to the WWTF.	ST 1-5 years MT 5-10 years	Study Facilities	Dept Public Works (Utilities)	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)
Action NAT-1.2.G	Amend regulations to provide conditions and standards that protect and create sustainable use of natural resources as part of the ~~land use~~land-use decision-making process.	ST 1-5 years	Regulation Amendments	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Conservation Commission Dept Public Works
Action NAT-1.2.H	Develop and adopt coastal greenway regulations, green infrastructure, and other soft stormwater control methods and implement in the development review process for projects in proximity to the Pawcatuck River and in the shore communities.	ST 1-5 years MT 5-10 years	Study Regulations	Dept Public Works (Eng)	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)
Action NAT-1.2.I	Bring in technical assistance and grant funding for the restoration of impaired waterbodies and aquatic habitats, including the Little Narragansett Bay and Winnapaug Pond.	ST 1-5 years	Program	Recreation Department (Recreation Board)	Dept Development Services
Action NAT-1.2.J	With stakeholder engagement, develop a marine spatial plan for Little Narragansett Bay, the Salt Ponds, and the Atlantic coastal waters. Ensure competing uses in these areas do not have a detrimental impact on fisheries and ecosystems.	ST 1-5 years	Program	Dept Development Service	Watch Hill Conservancy, Neighborhood Groups

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Recreation

To achieve the component of the Westerly stated VISION of preserving and enhancing **"quality of life for all generations"** with a healthy environment, this Plan has identified the following Goals and Policies, which will be followed up with specific actions for recreation.

		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
GOAL REC-1	Recreation will increase in value as an essential component of Westerly's quality of life and attractiveness.				
Policy REC-1.1	Enhance recreational programming to serve all demographics.				
Action REC-1.1.A	Expand recreational programming to meet changing demands and occur year-round by aggressively pursuing a variety of funding sources (i.e. grants, sponsorships and donations) and prepare a formal assessment of recreational programming needs in the Town.	Ongoing	Program	Recreation Department	Dept Development Services, Dept Public Works, Westerly Municipal Land Trust
Action REC-1.1.B	Revise the Zoning Ordinance to update the classification of uses for both indoor and outdoor recreation permitted in the CR, OSR, and PD zoning districts.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Recreation Department (Recreation Board)
Action REC-1.1.C	Create partnerships with recreation departments in surrounding communities that will share resources and strategies for the provision of recreational programming.	Ongoing	Administrative Program	Recreation Department (Recreation Board)	Other Towns
Policy REC-1.2	Enhance recreational facilities to serve all demographics and be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant.				
Action REC-1.2.A	Implement the 2017 Westerly Athletic Facilities Master Planning Site Analysis and Evaluation.	ST 1-5 years	Facilities	Recreation Department (Recreation Board)	Dept Public Works (Highway) Dept Development Services
Action REC-1.2.B	Install new, accessible, ADA-compliant walking trails at the Bradford Preserve, Cimalore Field, Craig Field, and Gingerella Sports Complex.	ST 1-5 years	Facilities	Recreation Department (Recreation Board)	Westerly Municipal Land Trust, Dept Public Works (Highway)
Action REC-1.2.C	Produce a Recreation Facilities Master Plan for town beaches and waterways.	MT 5-10 years	Study	Recreation Department (Recreation Board)	Dept Development Services
Action REC-1.2.D	Prepare a plan for ongoing improvements ~~for existing~~ to playgrounds and facilities for community recreation.	ST 1-5 years	Study	Recreation Department (Recreation Board)	Dept Public Works (Highway)
GOAL REC-2	Increased investments in open space will yield long-term recreational opportunities and ensure public health.				
Policy REC-2.1	Promote and enhance access to and use of waterways for recreation.				
Action REC-2.1.A	Maintain public rights-of-way to the Pawcatuck River and shoreline that have been designated by the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) and the Town through signage, permanent boundary markers, vegetation controls, and regular inspection.	Ongoing	Facilities	Dept Public Works Harbor ~~Management~~Manager	Dept Development Services (Eng)
Action REC-2.1.B	Implement the Downtown and River Center parking/park/kayak launch plans with connections up river to Potter Hill and Bradford.	MT 5-10 years	Study Zoning Amendments	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Recreation Department Dept Public Works (Highway)

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		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
Action REC-2.1.C	Create a parking, kayak launch, and program plan for Winnapaug Pond.	ST 1-5 years	Facilities	Recreation Department (Recreation Board)	Dept Development Services, Engineering, Dept Public Works
Policy REC-2.2	Foster awareness and appropriate use of and access to local natural resources for recreational purposes.				
Action REC-2.2.A	Establish a consistent, reliable funding source and criteria matrix for the acquisition and maintenance of open space for recreation.	MT 5-10 years LT 10 years+	Program	Recreation Department (Recreation Board)	Dept Development Services
Action REC-2.2.B	Assess the open space and recreational values of land contiguous to and within the greenway system established in the Bradford, Dunn's Corners, and Woody Hill neighborhoods.	MT 5-10 years	Study	Town Council (Westerly Municipal Land Trust)	Westerly Municipal Land Trust
Action REC-2.2.C	Develop a plan to connect recreational areas for the bicycling public, including new bicycle routes, bike rack, and signage at each recreational area, and encourage biking through an educational campaign.	MT 5-10 years	Program	Recreation Department (Recreation Board)	Dept Development Services

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Historic and Cultural Resources

To achieve the component of the Westerly stated VISION of preserving **"a distinct heritage, extraordinary cultural … resources",** this plan has identified the following Goals and Policies, which will be followed up with specific actions for historical and cultural resources.

		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
GOAL HCR-1	Westerly's identity and cultural heritage will be preserved and enhanced through reinvestment in its historic assets.				
Policy HCR-1.1	Promote Westerly's history and heritage to residents and visitors.				
Action HCR-1.1.A	Investigate the installation of educational and interpretive signage and exhibits in historic places and in public and civic spaces as a method of generating interest and improving visitor experience.	MT 5-10 years	Study	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Dept Development Services, Neighborhood Groups, Watch Hill Conservancy
Action HCR-1.1.B	Study the concept of housing tourism (i.e. the showcase of historic residences and bed-and-breakfasts).	MT 5-10 years	Study	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Dept Development Services
Action HCR-1.1.C	Update and expand the Town's historic resource survey and documentation, including existing historic districts.	ST 1-5 years	Administrative	Dept Development Services	Rhode Island Historic Preservation & Heritage Commission, Westerly Public Schools, Watch Hill Conservancy
Action HCR-1.1.D	Evaluate options for the preservation of iconic landmarks and historic and cultural assets, including relocation.	MT 5-10 years	Study	Town Council Town Manager	Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Commission, Watch Hill Conservancy
Policy HCR-1.2	Achieve the objectives of historic preservation standards and guidelines to promote the unique characteristics of Westerly's neighborhoods and its overall sense of place.				
Action HCR-1.2.A	Revise the uses and design review standards of the DC-I and DC-II zoning districts to better unify with the historic districts along the riverfront.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Architectural Review Board
Action HCR-1.2.B	Revise the uses and design review standards of the Historic Mill Overlay District to better incorporate associated village development.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Architectural Review Board
Action HCR-1.2.C	Investigate an Historic Overlay District as a vehicle for implementing traditional historic preservation standards and guidelines for façade alterations, scale, landscaping, streetscaping, lighting, and signage.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Architectural Review Board, Watch Hill Conservancy
Action HCR-1.2.D	Establish a River Corridor Overlay District to complement ~~the~~ Stonington's Pawcatuck River Greenway initiative.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Architectural Review Board

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		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
Action HCR-1.2.E	Provide the Architectural Review Board greater involvement with the creation and implementation of architectural, urban design, and historic preservation review standards.	Ongoing	Policy	Town Council	Dept Development Services
GOAL HCR-2	Westerly's overall attractiveness and quality of life will be elevated by the continued vitality of historical and cultural investment.				
Policy HCR-2.1	Protect and promote scenic views, streetscapes, parks, rivers, major bodies of water, and natural and human-made landscapes.				
Action HCR-2.1.A	Identify cemeteries and burial grounds at risk from natural and human-made conditions.	MT 5-10 years	Study	Town Manager (Conservation Commission)	Rhode Island Historical Cemetery Commission
Action HCR-2.1.B	Establish and maintain a municipal register of areas and structures of historical or architectural significance, historical landscapes, and public art, especially in those areas that are under the threat of climate change impacts.	MT 5-10 years	Administrative	Dept Development Services	Conservation Commission Information Technology
Policy HCR-2.2	Encourage educational and artistic opportunities within and for the community to strengthen the connections between people and places to maximize their shared values.				
Action HCR-2.2.A	Collaborate with and support community partners in pursuit of contemporary artistic and cultural opportunities and institutions.	ST 1-5 years	Partners	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce
Action HCR-2.2.B	Support cultural and artistic events that celebrate and showcase Westerly's local heritage and identity.	Ongoing	Program	Town Council & Town Manager	Finance Board
Policy HCR-2.3	Seek welcoming and human-scaled public spaces and streetscapes that shape the Town's identity and improve its living conditions.				
Action HCR-2.3.A	Develop streetscaping standards and guidelines to guide improvements to public spaces.	MT 5-10 years	Study	Town Manager Town Council	Dept Public Works (Highway), Dept Development Services
Action HCR-2.3.B	Provide the proper resources necessary to maintain and make better use of the Town's public spaces, including sidewalk furniture, pocket parks, memorials, public art, bike racks, etc.	Ongoing	Administrative	Town Council Town Manager	Dept Public Works (Highway) (Facilities)
Action HCR-2.3.C	Promote, through form-based zoning, the design and construction of new physically integrated and connected places in targeted areas.	ST 1-5 years	Program	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	

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Housing Opportunities

To achieve the component of the Westerly stated VISION of preserving and enhancing **"quality of life for all generations"** through **"a safe, resilient, and compassionate community with a healthy environment"** and **"a strong, stable, equitable economy,"** this Plan has identified the following Goals and Policies, which will be followed up with specific actions for housing.

		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
GOAL HSNG-1	A broad range of integrated, inclusive, age-friendly, and affordable housing options town wide will securely meet the needs of all households and individuals in the community.				
Policy HSNG-1.1	Continue towards achieving the State requirement for a minimum of 10% of the total year-round housing stock to be subsidized, deed-restricted, and occupied by LMI households.				
Action HSNG-1.1.A	Revisit the inclusionary zoning ordinance based on State law changes, market trends, incentives, and new ~~land use~~land-use policies, and amend accordingly.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	State of RI, Housing Network
Action HSNG-1.1.B	Work with the Westerly Housing Authority to developed and maintain a database of deed-restricted, subsidized affordable housing units owned and monitored by them.	ST 1-5 years	Administrative	Dept Development Services	Westerly Housing Authority,
Action HSNG-1.1.C	Identify parcels most suitable for development of qualified LMI units by comprehensive permit and pre-qualify for development consistent with this Plan.	ST 1-5 years	Administrative	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	
Action HSNG-1.1.D	Partner with Community Housing Land Trust of RI to reestablish monitoring of LMI units.	ST 1-5 years	Administrative	Dept Development Services	Community Housing Land Trust
Action HSNG-1.1.E	Include LMI qualified units in neighborhood revitalization, residential rehabilitations, and new construction.	ST 1-5 years	Program	Dept Development Services	Westerly Revolving Fund
Action HSNG-1.1.F	Upon publication of the 2020 HUD Census Data, revisit residential buildout and realign density bonuses awarded through comprehensive permits with prevailing needs.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	
Action HSNG-1.1.G	Encourage the use of the comprehensive permit for the development of housing where 50% or more of the units qualify as LMI, with restricted sales price or rental rates for a period of at least 30 years.	Ongoing	Program	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Affordable housing developers
Policy HSNG-1.2	Assure current and future residents that a broad range of opportunities to live in the community will be available.				
Action HSNG-1.2.A	Continue to support initiatives providing housing and housing-related assistance for persons experiencing homelessness and persons with special needs.	LT 10 years+ Ongoing	Subsidy Endorsement	Town Council	Westerly Housing Authority
Action HSNG-1.2.B	Continue to work with public agencies and private non-profit and for-profit entities in creating integrated affordable housing opportunities, family, transitional, and cooperative housing.	LT 10 years+ Ongoing	Administrative	Dept Development Services	Westerly Housing Authority
Action HSNG-1.2.C	Adopt a tax credit for property owners undertaking substantial rehabilitation of blighted properties restricted to affordable housing.	MT 5-10 years	Tax credit program	Town Council	Finance Department, Tax Assessor, Westerly Revolving Fund

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		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
Action HSNG-1.2.D	Develop and implement a program to focus and coordinate integrated affordable housing initiatives and funding, with priority given to existing housing over new construction.	MT 5-10 years	Program	Dept Development Services	Westerly Revolving Fund
Action HSNG-1.2.E	Adopt regulations that incorporate live-work housing in downtown neighborhood.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	
Action HSNG-1.2.F	Amend Zoning Ordinance to broaden the availability of accessory dwelling units.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	
Action HSNG-1.2.G	Develop and implement a program within the town government to focus on and coordinate affordable housing initiatives.	ST 1-5 years	Program	Town Council	Dept Development Services
Action HSNG-1.2.H	Upon publication of the 2020 HUD Census Data, revisit residential buildout and apply the polices of this Plan to create new housing opportunity strategies.	MT 5-10 years	Zoning Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	
Action HSNG-1.2.I	Develop standards for achieving a mix of residential uses into mixed use districts.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	
Action HSNG-1.2.J	As part of neighborhood planning effort, conduct public forums/working meetings that address local housing needs.	ST 1-5 years Ongoing	Administrative	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	
Action HSNG-1.2.K	Identify appropriate measures of communication and information sharing regarding affordable housing opportunities within the community.	ST 1-5 years	Administrative	Dept Development Services	
Action HSNG-1.2.L	Identify opportunities to add living quarters for seasonal employees.	ST 1-5 years	Administrative	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	
Policy HSNG-1.3	Promote the development and rehabilitation of integrated affordable-by-design housing throughout the community.				
Action HSNG-1.3.A	Work to eliminate unsafe and non-compliant housing and improve housing conditions through enforcement of minimum housing requirements and building code compliance.	Ongoing	Enforcement	Dept Development Services, Minimum Housing Officer, Building Officer	State, Westerly Police Department
Action HSNG-1.3.B	Coordinate with regional, state, and federal agencies to leverage local resources by bringing expertise and funds to community initiatives that support affordable housing in line with community objectives	MT 5-10 years	Program	Dept Development Services	State agencies, Dept Housing and Urban Development, Non-governmental organizations
Action HSNG-1.3.C	Establish a formal partnership with a local revolving fund to increase the availability of municipal resources for residential rehabilitation projects.	ST 1-5 years Ongoing	Partner	Town Council	Westerly Revolving Fund, Finance Department
Action HSNG-1.3.D	Create neighborhood plans that coordinate preservation and/or revitalization of existing residential structures with affordable housing strategies.	MT 5-10 years	Program	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Neighborhood Organizations

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		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
Action HSNG-1.3.E	Adopt regulations that incorporate residential units that are affordable by design, such as micro-lofts, micro-apartments, and studios, including downtown.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning & Regulation Amendments	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	
Action HSNG-1.3.F	Modernize the eligibility and processes of municipal property tax exemptions to promote and increase greater owner-occupied housing affordability.	ST 1-5 years	Tax Exemption	Town Council	State of RI
Action HSNG-1.3.G	Revise zoning ordinance and land development regulations to encourage family rental units (of 1 to 3 bedrooms) designed in 2- to 4-unit structures.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	
Action HSNG-1.3.H	Improve the existing review, approval, and permitting process to facilitate more efficient and effective construction and completion of development.	ST 1-5 years	Administrative	Dept Development Services	State of RI Information Technology
Action HSNG-1.3.I	Develop and implement context sensitive design guidelines for reconstruction and infill to assure new development is compatible in massing and scale with the existing neighborhood context.	MT 5-10 years	Program	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Architectural Review Board

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Economic Vitality

To achieve the component of the Westerly stated VISION of preserving and enhancing **"quality of life for all generations"** through **"a strong, stable, equitable economy,"** this plan has identified the following Goals and Policies which will be followed up with specific actions to ensure a vibrant and resilient economy.

		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
GOAL ECON-1	A place-based approach to economic development will attract broad opportunities for all participants in the local economy.				
Policy ECON-1.1	Focus on unique features and existing community assets to draw new investment.				
Action ECON-1.1.A	Create neighborhood plans through significant public engagement.	Ongoing	Program	Dept Development Services	Neighbor Groups
Action ECON-1.1.B	Undertake a comprehensive study of key economic trends and projections for tourism-related industries.	ST 1-5 years	Study	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce, Southern Rhode Island Tourism Council
Action ECON-1.1.C	Continue to approve public subsidies to institutions with missions and actions that address the needs of local businesses consistent with the policies in this Plan.	Ongoing	Policy	Town Council	Finance Board
Action ECON-1.1.D	Review and revise provisions of the Zoning Ordinance as a strategy to promote longer stays by visitors and tourists and to encourage year-round economic opportunities.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Property Owners
Action ECON 1.1.E	Develop a comprehensive marketing plan for Westerly targeting developers and potential new businesses.	ST 1-5 years	Program	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Business Owners, Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce,
Action ECON 1.1.F	Create a marketing strategy for the Riverfront area in concert with the Town of Stonington, CT, and their Economic Development Commission.	ST 1-5 years	Program	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Business Owners, Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce,
Action ECON 1.1.G	Develop an overall marketing strategy for Mill Villages that clearly articulates the town's vision and attracts investors and commercial businesses to these areas.	MT 5-10 years	Program	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)
Policy ECON-1.2	Encourage regulatory reform, incentives, and other tools to create the appropriate conditions for equitable, robust economic activity.				
Action ECON-1.2.A	Amend the Zoning Ordinance to incorporate beneficial elements of form-based code (FBC) appropriate to the existing built environment.	MT 5-10 years	Zoning Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Economic Development Commission Architectural Review Board
Action ECON-1.2.B	Explore opportunities to create financial incentives for redevelopment, such as tax stabilization agreements (TSAs) and tax increment financing (TIF).	MT 5-10 years to LT 10 years +	Tax Agreements	Town Council	Finance Board

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		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
Action ECON-1.2.C	Modify permitting and approval processes to enhance the efficiency of regulatory review.	ST 1-5 years	Administrative	Dept Development Services	Information Technology Town Manager State of RI
Action ECON 1.2.D	Develop an overall strategy for Downtown that clearly articulates this plan's vision and attracts investors, commercial businesses, and residents.	ST 1-5 years	Program	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Business Owners, Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce,
Action ECON 1.2.E	Support the development and implementation of changes that allow for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) at and/or near the train station.	MT 5-10 years	Program	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)
Action ECON 1.2.F	Support the development and implementation of a strategy for commercial corridors that clearly articulate the town's vision and attracts investors and commercial businesses to these areas.	MT 5-10 years	Program	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)
Action ECON 1.2.G	Support the development and implementation of town ordinances to sustainably allow for the future buildout of our commercial corridors.	MT 5-10 years	Program	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)
Action ECON 1.2.H	Support the development and implementation of a revised Historic Mill Village Overlay District to provide for the sustainable future buildout of these assets.	ST 1-5 years	Program	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)
Policy ECON-1.3	Ensure that new economic development opportunities preserve community assets and character.				
Action ECON-1.3.A	Revise the Zoning Ordinance to expand and broaden uses permitted in the DC-I, DC-II, LI, and NB zoning districts at an appropriate scale for Downtown Westerly and its surrounding, historic neighborhoods.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	
Action ECON-1.3.B	Revise the Zoning Ordinance to expand and broaden uses within the GC, GI, HC, MC, ORAT, P-15, and SC-G zoning district boundaries to reduce commercial sprawl and promote better utilization of existing district.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	
Action ECON-1.3.C	Collaborate with other influencers on the restoration of the barrier beaches and Salt Pond shoreline access to safeguard both natural and economic value.	ST 1-5 years	Partnership	Town Council	Various Conservation Partners Dept Development Services (Planning Board)
Action ECON-1.3.D	Support the development and implementation of a downtown parking strategy and zoning ordinance changes to expand parking availability while also protecting the character and charm of Westerly.	ST 1-5 years	Program	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)

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		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
Action ECON-1.3.E	Support programs and financing of road and sidewalk maintenance and improvement.	Ongoing	Program	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Dept of Public Works
Policy ECON-1.4	Encourage the creation and retention of high-quality, well-paying workforce opportunities.				
Action ECON-1.4.A	Investigate and pilot new planning tools for existing commercial and industrial areas to enhance business activity and increase local job opportunities.	MT 5-10 years	Study	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce
Action ECON-1.4.B	Support growth in the trades, professional, and general services needed for the maintenance and renovation of residential property year-round by removing barriers to mixed-use and light industrial development.	ST 1-5 years	Administrative	Dept Development Services	Economic Development Commission
Action ECON-1.4.C	Study and plan for community characteristics needed to ensure Westerly as a tourist-friendly town is also a good candidate for full-time relocation by families.	MT 5-10 years	Study	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Dept Development Services, Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce
Action ECON-1.4.D	Work with local, State and Federal agencies, publicize the use of the train station, and connected bus stops to increase ridership and expand the routes and/or places (i.e. Train stop at Green Airport) that they serve.	MT 5-10 years	Program	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Amtrak, RIPTA, Stonington
GOAL ECON-2	Diversification of local industries will create a more sustainable economic base for the community and the region.				
Policy ECON-2.1	Promote a locally-based community food system that offers healthy, affordable products for the benefit of residents, businesses, and the environment.				
Action ECON-2.1.A	Amend the Zoning Ordinance to expand permitted community food system activities that accommodate the production, processing, distribution, and consumption of locally- and regionally sourced products.	MT 5-10 years	Zoning Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Westerly Land Trust, Farmers, Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce
Action ECON-2.1.B	Establish opportunities for the public to learn about agriculture with special emphasis on urban agriculture in coordination with the School Department, WEC, and social service agencies.	MT 5-10 years	Partnership	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Westerly Land Trust, Southern Rhode Island Conservation District
Policy ECON-2.2	Encourage knowledge-based industries that attract telecommuting and work-from-home opportunities.				
Action ECON-2.2.A	Establish the infrastructure necessary for high-quality telecommunications on which knowledge-based industries rely.	MT 5-10 years	Facilities	Dept Public Works (Facilities)	Economic Development Commission, Purchasing
Action ECON-2.2.B	Establish opportunities for the public to learn about new technologies and computer skills in coordination with the School Department, WEC, and social service agencies.	MT 5-10 years	Program	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Westerly Public Schools, Westerly Education Center

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		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
Action ECON-2.2.C	Amend the Zoning Ordinance to encourage home-based businesses and work-from-home opportunities.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Economic Development Commission
Policy ECON-2.3	Foster entrepreneurial activities in the community.				
Action ECON-2.3.A	Identify and pursue new industries, markets, products, services, and processes compatible with community assets and character.	MT 5-10 years	Study	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce
Action ECON-2.3.B	In partnership with the OCCVC, prepare and implement a strategic plan to guide the future development of tourism-related industries.	ST 1-5 years	Partnership	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce
Action ECON-2.3.C	Create a program to attract businesses that maintain family image, diversify offerings, encourage extended stays, and provide an economy of local residents.	MT 5-10 years	Program	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce
Action ECON-2.3.D	Plan for the sustainable future buildout of commercial corridors within commercial zones.	MT 5-10 years	Study	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Economic Development Commission
GOAL ECON-3	Sustain a local economy that is resilient to natural and human-caused disasters.				
Policy ECON-3.1	Anticipate the impact of catastrophic events on the local economy.				
Action ECON-3.1.A	Update the Hazard Mitigation Plan to incorporate a cost analysis for the upgrading and maintenance of the services and facilities that the local economy is most dependent on.	ST 1-5 years	Study	Town Manager	Emergency Management, Dept Public Works (Eng)
Action ECON-3.1.B	Develop an economic action plan for catastrophic events to ensure a foundation for rebuilding that sustains the local economy through the recovery process.	MT 5-10 years	Study	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Various Partners
Policy ECON-3.2	Reduce the burden of climate change impacts on municipal finances and the local and regional economies.				
Action ECON-3.2.A	Work with relevant Federal and State agencies on shared objectives and guiding principles, such as those identified in Resilient Rhody to reduce the burden of climate change impacts on the local economy and municipal finances.	MT 5-10 years	Partnership	Town Manager Town Council	Federal and State Entities
Action ECON-3.2.B	Evaluate and, if required, update the Town's emergency permitting system for effective post-disaster administration.	ST 1-5 years	Administrative	Dept Development Services	Economic Development Commission
Action ECON-3.2.C	Review the Town's procedures and responsibilities to ensure its readiness to and accountability for responding to catastrophic events.	Ongoing	Administrative	Emergency ~~Management~~Manager	Westerly Police Department, Fire Districts, Dept Public Works (Highway)

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		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
Policy ECON-3.3	Ensure economic resilience and sustainability through smart city and strong town strategies.				
Action ECON-3.3.A	Quantify the value of all property and resulting tax revenue that would be impacted by increased flooding, SLR, and storm events.	ST 1-5 years	Administrative	Tax Assessor~~s~~	Tax, Dept Development Services, Watch Hill Conservancy
Action ECON-3.3.B	Publicize the incentives available for business and residents to undertake adaptation and resiliency measures for their properties.	ST 1-5 years	Administrative	Dept Development Services (Economic Development ~~Services~~Commission)	Dept Development Services, Information Technology

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Services and Facilities

To achieve the component of the Westerly stated VISION of preserving and enhancing **"quality of life for all generations"** through **"a safe, resilient and compassionate community"** with a **"responsible and publicly-engaged government",** this plan has identified the following Goals and Policies which will be followed up with specific actions for government services and facilities.

		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
GOAL SF-1	Westerly will provide services critical to the community's continued health, safety, and well-being.				
Policy SF-1.1	Support the mission and activities of organizations and businesses that provide services to veterans, families, elderly persons, those of low- and moderate-income, those experiencing homelessness, and those with special needs.				
Action SF-1.1.A	Continue as an active partner in Age-Friendly Westerly through town staff participation in planning and programing for aging residents.	LT 10 years+ Ongoing	Policy Services	Town Council	Age-Friendly Westerly, Recreation Department, Dept Development Services
Action SF-1.1.B	Align human services activities of the Town with the activities of social service agencies based on demographic changes and constituents' needs to maximize opportunity to improve community health, safety, and well-being.	LT 10 years+ Ongoing	Policy Services	Town Council	Age-Friendly Westerly, Police Department, Recreation Department, Dept Development Services
Action SF-1.1.C	Through changes to zoning, provide incentives for mixed commercial and professional services in redevelopment within the HC zoning district.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	
Action SF-1.1.D	Continue to approve public subsidies to institutions with missions and actions that address the needs of the community consistent with the policies in this Plan.	Ongoing	Subsidies	Town Council	Finance Board, Town Manager
Action SF-1.1.E	Collaborate in obtaining grant funding to support services that align with this Plan.	Ongoing	Endorsements	Town Council	Finance Department
Action SF-1.1.F	Attract more organizations and jobs in the human services sector by improving mixed use and development regulations.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	
Action SF-1.1.G	Identify and document the needs of veterans, families, elderly, and individuals with special needs and improve existing programs and facilities to meet these needs.	MT 5-10 years	Study Program	Town Council	Age-Friendly Westerly, Westerly Housing Task Force, Dept Development Services
Action SF-1.1.H	Publicize the opportunities to volunteer, including the citizens emergency response team, and develop ways to match interest and skills with options.	ST 1-5 years Ongoing	Program	Town Manager	Information Technology, Town Clerk
Policy SF-1.2	Ensure continuous improvement to municipal programs, services, facilities, and the local government's interaction with human services organizations.				
Action SF-1.2.A	Base school facility decisions on long-range student population forecasts, capacity and condition of facilities, neighborhood context, operating costs, and societal concerns.	ST 1-5 years Ongoing	Administrative	Westerly Public Schools	Town Council, Finance Board, Town Manager

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		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
Action SF-1.2.B	Coordinate the expertise of Town and Westerly School District personnel to improve school facilities and address school safety and security.	Ongoing	Administrative	Town Manager	Westerly Public Schools, Town Council
Action SF-1.2.C	Improve collaboration between the Recreation Department and Westerly School District on recreational programming for children and young people and facility management.	ST 1-5 years Ongoing	Program	Recreation Department	Westerly Public Schools
Action SF-1.2.D	Advance the Town's technological capabilities across all municipal departments and the school district for greater productivity, accessibility, and coordination.	ST 1-5 years MT 5-10 years	Facilities	Information Technology	Finance Department, Westerly Public Schools, Purchasing
Action SF-1.2.E	Train ~~land use~~land-use decisionmakers on the impact of development on community provided services and facilities.	Ongoing	Training	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Dept of Public Works
Action SF-1.2.F	Redesign the process used annually for the capital improvement program (CIP) to ensure that all of the critical functions of the CIP are employed and adopted level of service standards are maintained.	ST 1-5 years	Administrative	Town Manager ~~,~~Town Council	Finance Department Dept Development Services
Action SF-1.2.G	Continue to improve municipal application procedures and the availability and delivery of information for applicants and the public.	Ongoing	Facilities	Information Technology	Finance Department, Town Clerk, Dept Development Services, Purchasing
Action SF-1.2.H	Maintain and exceed the achieved 35% recycling rate through increased enforcement, educational programs, and special events that highlight the benefits.	Ongoing	Enforcement	Dept Public Works (Facilities)	
Action SF-1.2.I	Meet and exceed a 50% trash diversion rate by reducing solid waste generation and increasing recycling and composting opportunities for municipal operations, residents, and businesses.	ST 1-5 years Ongoing	Program	Dept Public Works (Facilities)	
Action SF-1.2.J	Publicize the Town's recreation programs to increase youth and senior participation.	Ongoing	Administrative	Recreation Department	Recreation Board
Action SF-1.2.K	Continue to provide Town officials and staff with training in human services and the social sciences.	Ongoing	Program	Human Resources	Town Manager, Purchasing, Dept Development Services
Action SF-1.2.L	Publicize the Town website's *Notify Me* tool to increase the number of individuals subscribed to digital Town notifications.	Ongoing	Administrative	Information Technology	
Action SF-1.2.M	Establish a user-friendly digital service that provides the public with quick, easy access to the Town's services and information while offering high-quality customer/citizen service.	Ongoing	Administrative	Information Technology	Human Resources, Purchasing
Action SF-1.2.N	Upgrade emergency services radio network to digital along with wireless infrastructure upgrades to reduce impacts of wind-related communication interruptions.	ST 1-5 years	Facilities	Westerly Police Department	Dept Public Works (Utilities), Information Technology
Action SF-1.2.O	Improve use and awareness of evacuation routes across municipality via educational outreach, better mapping of alternative routes and closures, enhanced understanding of flood impacts, and installation of early warning systems.	ST 1-5 years Ongoing	Program	Emergency ~~Management~~Managert	Westerly Police Department, Dept Public Works (Highway)

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Infrastructure

To achieve the component of the Westerly stated VISION of preserving and enhancing **"quality of life for all generations"** through **"a safe, resilient and compassionate community"** with a **"responsible and publicly-engaged government",** this plan has identified the following Goals and Policies which will be followed up with specific actions for sustainable infrastructure.

		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
GOAL INF-1	Sustainable infrastructure will be in place to ensure water quality, efficient wastewater treatment, and effective stormwater management.				
Policy INF-1.1	Enhance the resiliency of Westerly's water system by developing programs and projects that improve maintenance and provide protection and redundancy.				
Action INF-1.1.A	Amend the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to provide standards that align infrastructure demands associated with new development and redevelopment with capacity.	ST 1-5 years Ongoing	Regulation Amendments	Dept Development Services Dept Public Works (Eng)	Jacobs, C & E Engineering, State
Action INF-1.1.B	Prepare a *Source Water Protection Plan* to reduce or eliminate existing and potential risks to the drinking water quality of the public water system.	ST 1-5 years Ongoing	Program	Dept Public Works (Utilities)	State
Action INF-1.1.C	Assess the current condition of all active well sites and the possibility of physical damage or contamination by either man-made or natural hazards. Create a monitoring and maintenance program to ensure long-term viability.	ST 1-5 years	Study	Dept Public Works (Utilities)	State
Action INF-1.1.D	Review the adequacy of security measures providing protection to wellheads, pump stations, and water tanks and take appropriate actions to address any security concerns identified.	ST 1-5 years	Study	Dept Public Works (Utilities)	
Action INF-1.1.F	Study existing and projected effects of drought on local public health and safety, economic activity, and environmental resources in preparation for a drought response plan.	MT 5-10 years	Study	Dept Public Works (Utilities)	Dept Development Services
Action INF-1.1.H	Review and revise local regulations and provide for enforcement for the long-term protection of water quality.	MT 5-10 years	Enforcement	Dept Public Works (Utilities)	Dept Development Services (Utilities), State
Action INF-1.1.I	Continue annual communications from Utilities Division informing residents about actions they can take to improve water quality.	Ongoing	Program	Dept Development Services (Utilities)	
Action INF-1.1.J	Reduce undesirable chemicals in the municipal well system.	Ongoing	Program	Dept Development Services (Utilities)	Dept Development Services, Department of Health
Policy INF-1.2	Ensure high-quality wastewater treatment and prioritize improvements to the Wastewater Treatment Facility.				
Action INF-1.2.A	Prepare and adopt a sewer service expansion plan providing environmental protection, accommodating economic development, and allowing multi-family housing development.	ST 1-5 years	Study	Dept Public Works (Utilities)	Jacobs

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		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
Action INF-1.2.B	Pursue available state and federal funding to improve the wastewater treatment system.	Ongoing	Budget	Dept Public Works (Utilities)	Dept Development Services, Jacobs
Action INF-1.2.C	Test sewer lines for groundwater infiltration on an annual basis.	Ongoing	Administrative	Dept Public Works (Eng and Utilities)	Dept Development Services
Policy INF-1.3	Improve stormwater drainage treatment and conveyance systems.				
Action INF-1.3A	Prioritize stormwater treatment and conveyance systems for repair and replacement based on age and condition and incorporate green infrastructure.	ST 1-5 years MT 5-10 years	Study	Dept Public Works (Eng)	Dept Public Works (Highway), Dept Development Services
Action INF-1.3.B	Reduce groundwater infiltration into wastewater treatment system with facility upgrades and a grey water program.	MT 5-10 years LT 10 years+	Facilities	Dept Public Works (Engineering and Utilities)	Dept Public Works (Highway), Dept Development Services
Action INF-1.3.C	Identify detrimental land uses in the existing Aquifer Protection Overlay District (APOD) and revise ~~land use~~land-use regulations to mitigate negative environmental impacts and limit new development of detrimental land uses in this area.	ST 1-5 years	Study, Zoning & Regulation Amendments	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	State, Dept Public Works (Utilities)
Action INF-1.3.D	Revise the Zoning Ordinance and Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to reduce the amount of impervious surface allowed in new development and redevelopment projects.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning & Regulation Amendments	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Dept Public Works (Eng)
Action INF-1.3.E	Revise the Stormwater Management Ordinance to require green infrastructure in new private and public projects during road creation or improvement, installation of pedestrian rights-of-way (including sidewalks), and surface parking areas.	ST 1-5 years	Administrative	Dept Public Works (Eng)	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)
Goal INF – 2	Proactive management and maintenance of all physical assets under the town's control, including buildings, roads, and land.				
Policy INF-2.1	Maintain a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that is consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and provide timely implementation.				
Action INF-2.1A	Adopt an adequate operational and maintenance budget for all municipal infrastructure.	ST 1-5 years	Budget	Town Council	Finance Department, Finance Board, Dept Public Works
Action INF-2.1.B	Program for new and improved infrastructure to ensure water quality, efficient wastewater treatment, and effective stormwater management.	ST 1-5 years MT 5-10 years	Program	Dept Public Works	State, Dept Development Services
Action INF-2.1.C	Create orderly and efficient provision of infrastructure facilities and services through long-range capital facilities planning consistent with this Plan.	ST 1-5 years MT 5-10 years	Administrative	Dept Public Works	Finance Board, Finance Department
Action INF-2.1.D	Address deficiencies, if any, to accommodate desired future growth and development.	Ongoing	Administrative	Dept Public Works	

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		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
Action INF-2.1.E	Establish electronic infrastructure to increase access to high-quality internet and Wi-Fi communications for businesses, government, schools, and ~~Westerly Library~~organizations that support the public.	ST 1-5 years	Technology	Information Technology~~,~~ Dept Public Works (Facilities)	Purchasing
Action INF-2.1.F	Develop strategies to address potential SLR, storm surge, and other climate changes on Westerly's infrastructure.	ST 1-5 years MT 5-10 years	Study	Dept Development Services	Dept Public Works, Emergency Management, State
Action INF-2.1.G	Continue to improve the Town's GIS data on existing water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure.	Ongoing	Technology	Information Technology Dept Public Works	New England GeoSystems (NEGEO)

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Energy

To achieve the component of the Westerly stated VISION of preserving and enhancing **"quality of life for all generations"** through **"a safe, resilient and compassionate community"** with a **"responsible and publicly-engaged government",** this plan has identified the following Goals and Policies which will be followed up with specific actions for renewable energy and energy conservation.

		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
GOAL NRG-1	Renewable energy generation will be increasingly available to the community.				
Policy NRG-1.1	Encourage the development of and residential access to renewable energy resources.				
Action NRG-1.1.A	Seek partnerships with other organizations to facilitate renewable energy initiatives.	Ongoing	Policy	Town Council~~,~~ Town Manager	
Action NRG-1.1.B	Support RIRRC in any undertaking of a waste-to-energy program.	Ongoing	Policy	Town Council~~,~~ Town Manager	Dept Public Works (Facilities)
Action NRG-1.1.C	Study the suitability of integrating wind energy systems within the municipality as part of a strategic energy plan.	ST 1-5 years	Study	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Public Safety
Action NRG-1.1.D	Revise the Zoning Ordinance and Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to encourage the installation of on-site renewable energy generation facilities in new developments and redevelopment projects.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning & Regulation Amendments	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Providers
Action NRG-1.1.E	Review current regulations to further allow renewable energy generation in appropriate areas of the community.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning Amendments	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Providers
Policy NRG-1.2	Continue to reduce Westerly's dependence on fossil fuels.				
Action NRG-1.2.A	Review capital improvement requests to include steps towards carbon reduction.	Ongoing	Administrative	Dept Public Works (Facilities)	Finance Board
Action NRG-1.2.B	Consult the State of Rhode Island, the State of Connecticut, and neighboring municipalities on technological advances in the generation of electrical power for compatibility with the community and potential incorporation into municipal regulations.	ST 1-5 years	Study	Dept Public Works (Facilities)	Purchasing
Action NRG-1.2.C	Through facility improvements and fleet replacement, decrease the overall annual volume of greenhouse gas emissions produced by municipal facilities and vehicles.	ST 1-5 years Ongoing	Program	Dept Public Works (Facilities and Highway)	Purchasing, Westerly Public Schools
Action NRG-1.2.D	Achieve at least 15% of the Town's total municipal thermal energy consumption being sourced from renewable energy by 2035 by including alternative energy technology in all municipal capital projects.	ST 1-5 years Ongoing	Program	Dept Public Works (Facilities)	Purchasing, Westerly Public Schools
Action NRG-1.2.E	Review and revise regulations to limit the amount of land disturbance during site development and construction to protect carbon sinks, such as forests and fields.	ST 1-5 years	Administrative	Dept Public Works (Eng)	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)

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		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
GOAL NRG-2	Westerly will use energy resources efficiently to mitigate climate-related quality-of-life and public health impacts and reduce energy consumption.				
Policy NRG-2.1	Ensure all existing and future energy infrastructure is planned, constructed, and adequately monitored to avoid negative impacts to the local environment and the community's quality of life, including public health.				
Action NRG-2.1.A	Require re-vegetation, specifically the re-planting of trees, of properties disturbed through development of energy infrastructure to protect carbon sinks, such as forests and fields.	Ongoing	Policy	Dept Public Works (Highway)	Purchasing
Action NRG-2.1.B	Amend the Zoning Ordinance and Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to require the incorporation of elements for reducing surface solar heat conduction and wind velocity, such as by increasing the area(s) of proposed greenscapes and/or avoiding the use of thermal-conductive impervious materials.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning & Regulation Amendments	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	State
Action NRG-2.1.C	Pursue local agricultural production and food availability to reduce the community's energy consumption.	Ongoing	Program	Dept of Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)
Policy NRG-2.2	Reduce energy consumption across all municipal facilities and public infrastructure.				
Action NRG-2.2.A	Publicize State-level and non-profit programs which assist qualifying applicants in home weatherization activities to improve energy efficiency.	Ongoing	Program	Purchasing	Dept Development Services
Action NRG-2.2.B	Adopt a strategic energy plan in accordance with Energy 2035, the Rhode Island Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan, and RIIB requirements, with assistance from a qualified energy consultant.	MT 5-10 years	Program	Dept Public Works (Facilities)	Town Council, Town Manager
Action NRG-2.2.C	Pursue opportunities to provide publicly accessible electric charging stations and local government workplace charging through the Electrify RI Program.	ST 1-5 years	Facilities	Dept Public Works (Facilities)	Dept Development Services
Action NRG-2.2.D	Investigate both the costs and benefits of electric charging stations to commercial development.	ST 1-5 years	Study	Dept of Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Dept Development Services
Action NRG-2.2.E	Require all newly constructed municipal buildings and public schools to be LEED-certified.	Ongoing	Program	Dept Public Works (Facilities)	Purchasing, Westerly Public Schools
Action NRG-2.2.F	Require all new fixtures and appliances used in municipal buildings and public schools to be Energy Star© rated.	ST 1-5 years Ongoing	Facilities	Dept Public Works (Facilities)	Purchasing, Westerly Public Schools
Action NRG-2.2.G	Purchase hybrid and/or electric vehicles (EVs), including public school buses, to replace existing fossil fuel-powered vehicles.	ST 1-5 years Ongoing	Program	Dept Public Works (Highway)	Purchasing, Finance Department

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Transportation Network

To achieve the component of the Westerly stated VISION of preserving and enhancing **"quality of life for all generations"** with **"a healthy environment"** and **"a strong, stable, equitable economy,"** this plan has identified the following Goals and Policies which will be followed up with specific actions for government services and facilities.

		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
GOAL TRANS-1	Residents and visitors will have access to a high-quality, multi-modal transportation network that includes options for travel by air, land, and water.				
Policy TRANS-1.1	Enhance the efficiency and resiliency of Westerly's multi-modal transportation system.				
Action TRANS-1.1.A	Adopt a complete streets program to be phased in through future pavement resurfacing and road reconstruction projects and provide for long-term and continued reinvestment.	MT 5-10 years	Program	Dept Development Services ~~and~~ Dept Public Works (Eng)	Dept Public Works (Highway), Westerly Police Dept
Action TRANS-1.1.B	Motivate residents living in close proximity to downtown to walk or bike as a means to conserve parking spaces for other residents and visitors travelling to downtown from further distances.	ST 1-5 years	Program	Dept Development Services ~~,~~Dept Public Works (Highway)	Department of Transportation, Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce
Action TRANS-1.1.C	Study the establishment of active transportation (walking and cycling) infrastructure within existing municipal rights-of-way.	MT 5-10 years	Study	Dept Development Services~~,~~ Dept Public Works (Eng)	Recreation Department, Dept Public Works (Highway)
Action TRANS-1.1.D	Pursue, with RIPTA, the opportunity for a transit mobility hub, the expansion of the Flex-bus route, the inclusion of Misquamicut State Beach on the existing seasonal beach, and special event bus service.	MT 5-10 years	Partnership	Dept Development Services	Rhode Island Public Transit Authority, Misquamicut Business Association, Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce
Action TRANS-1.1.E	Collaborate with the regional neighboring towns in Rhode Island and Connecticut to thoroughly study the feasibility and projected outcomes of connecting additional transportation networks, such as an off-street bike path.	MT 5-10 years	Partnership Study	Town Council	Recreation Department, Towns Dept Development Services
Action TRANS-1.1.F	Pursue the remediation of 14-18 Canal Street (Assessor's Map 56, Lots 26 and 27) for potential use as a public parking lot.	ST 1-5 years	Policy	Town Manager~~,~~ Town Council	Dept Development Services
Action TRANS-1.1.G	Incorporate appropriate, non-auto-dependent ~~land use~~land-use patterns in future neighborhood plans.	Ongoing	Program	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Westerly Police Department, Dept Public Works (Eng)
Action TRANS-1.1.H	Through small area planning, seek better non-automotive connections between neighborhoods and key locations for satisfying daily errands and common personal needs.	Ongoing	Program	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Westerly Police Department, Dept Public Works (Eng)
Action TRANS-1.1.I	Review and revise off-street parking regulations in the Zoning Ordinance to incorporate automobile parking maximums based on need, the inclusion of bicycle parking minimum, and access to transit.	ST 1-5 years	Zoning & Regulation Amendments	Dept Development Services (Planning Board))	

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		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
Action TRANS-1.1.J	Research, identify, and apply appropriate strategies that provide public access to the coast and the Pawcatuck River.	ST 1-5 years	Study	Dept Development Services~~,~~ Harbor ~~Management~~Manager	Conservation Commission
Action TRANS-1.1.K	Coordinate with RIDOT to better identify Route 216 and Route 91 as bicycle routes with proper signage.	MT 5-10 years	Partnership	Dept Development Services Dept Public Works (Highway)	Rhode Island Department of Transportation
Policy TRANS-1.2	Promote Amtrak service as a travel option for residents and visitors.				
Action TRANS-1.2.A	Collaborate with RIDOT, RIPTA, Amtrak, and other relevant agencies to augment the use and role of Westerly Station within Downtown and the surrounding region.	MT 5-10 years	Partnership	Dept Development Services	Rhode Island Department of Transportation, Rhode Island Public Transit Authority, etc.
Action TRANS-1.2.B	Pursue a public-private partnership to provide high-quality redevelopment, and revitalization within a half-mile radius of Westerly Station that is vibrant, compact, and pedestrian-oriented.	MT 5-10 years	Study Partnership	Dept Development Services	Westerly Education Center, State
Action TRANS-1.2.C	Through TOD, promote, enhance, and develop the conditions for increased ridership on the Northeast Regional line to and from Westerly Station.	LT 10 years +	Zoning & Regulation Amendments	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	
Action TRANS-1.2.D	Work with RIDOT and Amtrak to establish monitoring and maintenance of all pedestrian access areas of Westerly Station, including the underpass.	ST 1-5 years	Partnership	Town Manager~~,~~ Town Council	Rhode Island Department of Transportation
Action TRANS-1.2.E	Seek a feasibility study on extending MBTA's Providence line and/or ConnDOT's Shoreline East to Westerly Station.	LT 10 years+	Study	Town Manager~~,~~ Town Council	Dept Development Services
Action TRANS-1.2.F	Encourage ridership by disseminating information about local Amtrak service.	ST 1-5 years	Administrative	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce
Action TRANS-1.2.G	Collect Amtrak ridership statistics to monitor, study and subsequently determine the nature and extent of TOD appropriate to Downtown Westerly.	Ongoing	Administrative	Dept Development Services	
GOAL TRANS-2	Transportation in and around Westerly will ensure safe, efficient, and equitable travel which enhances the quality of life for both residents and visitors.				
Policy TRANS-2.1	Ensure traffic safety, including means of ingress and egress and particularly pedestrian and motor vehicle operator safety, is considered in the review of all future development plans.				
Action TRANS-2.1.A	Through TOD regulatory changes, promote walkability and require safe, comfortable pedestrian movement within all new construction and redevelopment projects, particularly residential, commercial, and mixed uses.	LT 10 years+	Zoning & Regulation Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Westerly Police Department, Dept Public Works (Eng)

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		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
Action TRANS-2.1.B	Revise the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to require all future traffic impact analyses conducted as part of application submissions to examine pedestrians and bike riders/cyclists in addition to automobiles.	ST 1-5 years	Regulation Amendments	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Dept Public Works (Eng)
Action TRANS-2.1.C	Revise the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to incorporate road design standards as a requirement for the approval of all new public and private street creations and for any opening of existing paper streets.	ST 1-5 years	Regulation Amendments	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Dept Public Works (Eng)
Policy TRANS-2.2	Ensure that the municipal transportation system, including, but not limited to roads, bridges, and culverts, effectively and resiliently meets the community's needs.				
Action TRANS-2.2.A	Increase enforcement of snow and ice removal from sidewalks to meet ADA standards to the greatest extent feasible and revise the Sidewalk Snow Removal Ordinance to include childcare centers, post-secondary schools, senior centers, and any place that serves as an emergency shelter and/or warming center.	ST 1-5 years	Enforcement	Westerly Police Department	Dept Public Works (Highway)
Action TRANS-2.2.B	Establish a program to prioritize and replace all remaining curbs at intersections with ADA-compliant ramps.	Ongoing	Program	Dept Public Works (Eng)	Dept Public Works (Highway)
Action TRANS-2.2.C	Identify unsafe intersections for submission as potential projects to be funded through the State Transportation Improvement Program.	ST 1- 5 years	Program	Dept Public Works (Eng)	Dept Development Services, Westerly Police Department, Dept Public Works (Highway)
Action TRANS-2.2.D	Develop an implementation plan to standardize and increase the use of marked crosswalks and install new sidewalks and clear trails in ~~densely built~~ residential neighborhoods, commercial centers, and within the vicinity of schools, child care centers, civic institutions, and Westerly Train Station.	ST 1-5 years	Program	Dept Public Works (Eng)	Westerly Police Department, Dept Public Works (Highway), Dept Development Services
Action TRANS-2.2.E	Partner with local organizations to improve public health, community engagement, and mobility independence, particularly for seniors and youth.	Ongoing	Partnership	Dept Development Services (Economic Development Commission)	Age-Friendly Westerly
Action TRANS-2.2.G	Seek better and more accessible traffic data collection to improve the Town's future transportation planning and related decision-making.	ST 1-5 years	Administrative	Westerly Police Department	Dept Public Works (Highway)
Action TRANS-2.2.H	Consult with the State on potentially transformative impacts on traffic flow and safety from advances in motor vehicle autonomy.	Ongoing	Study	Westerly Police Department	Dept Public Works (Eng), Rhode Island Department of Transportation
Policy TRANS-2.3	Employ best practices to maintain a balance between Westerly State Airport's activities and quality of service and the quality of life in surrounding neighborhoods.				
Action TRANS-2.3.A	Work with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), RIAC, and elected State officials to ensure adequate and appropriate public involvement takes place as part of future planning for WST.	ST 1-5 years	Partnership	Town Manager~~,~~ Town Council	Dept Development Services, Rhode Island Airport Corporation, Federal Aviation Administration

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		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
Action TRANS-2.3.B	Develop a long-term plan that defines the future of WST and surrounding property, including public safety, emergency management, and economic benefits.	MT 5-10 years	Program	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Town Council, Rhode Island Airport Corporation

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Natural Hazards and Resiliency

To achieve the component of the Westerly stated VISION of preserving and enhancing **"quality of life for all generations"** through **"a safe, resilient and compassionate community"** with a **"responsible and publicly-engaged government",** this plan has identified the following Goals and Policies which will be followed up with specific actions for resiliency.

		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
GOAL RES-1	Westerly will be a resilient community, prepared for immediate and long-term environmental threats.				
Policy RES-1.1	Prioritize and protect at-risk municipal structures, property, and utilities.				
Action RES-1.1.A	Include floodplain management criteria in any future decisions by the Town to acquire or sell property located within the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) or 500-year floodplain.	ST 1-5 years Ongoing	Program Administrative	Town Council~~,~~ Town Manger	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)
Action RES-1.1.B	Work with the State of Rhode Island, the State of Connecticut, the Town of Stonington, the Town of North Stonington, and USACE to re-engineer and prevent potential failure of bridges in the event of a flood.	Ongoing	Administrative	Town Council~~,~~ ~~t~~Town Manager	Emergency Management, Dept Public Works (Highway), State
Action RES-1.1.C	Work with utility companies in identifying and replacing utility infrastructure that is determined to be vulnerable to natural hazards.	ST 1-5 years MT 5-10 years	Study	Dept Public Works	National Grid, etc.
Action RES-1.1.D	Identify and pursue grant opportunities to mitigate the vulnerability of existing utility infrastructure, such as requiring the installation of utilities underground in new developments to avoid damage from high winds and/or falling trees.	ST 1-5 years	Administrative	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Dept Public Works
Policy RES-1.2	Anticipate new development, redevelopment, structural elevations, and, if necessary, retreat from coastal shorelines and riparian zones in especially vulnerable areas.				
Action RES-1.2.A	Require design and construction in strict conformance with building code requirements and hazard mitigation strategies in the floodplain.	ST 1-5 years Ongoing	Enforcement	Dept Development Services	State
Action RES-1.2.B	Adopt regulations reinforcing CRMC requirements and conditions to protect and preserve existing native vegetation in vulnerable areas.	MT 5-10 years	Regulations	Dept Development Services	Recreation Department
Action RES-1.2.C	Replace native vegetation on publicly owned open space properties within the SFHA where missing, damaged, or lost due to storm surge, beginning with the barrier beach/dune restoration.	MT 5-10 years Ongoing	Program	Dept Public Works	Recreation Department
Action RES-1.2.D	Determine changes needed to the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinance for better protection of infrastructure within the SFHA and areas under regulation by the Shoreline Change SAMP.	MT 5-10 years	Zoning & Regulation Amendment	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Dept Public Works
Policy RES-1.3	Prepare for the occurrence of extreme weather events and develop mitigation policies and procedures that best reduce fiduciary risk.				

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		IMPLEMENTATION HORIZON	ITEM TYPE	RESPONSIBLE ~~AGENCY~~PARTY	LIKELY PARTNERS
Action RES-1.3.A	Comprehensively study existing and future land uses in areas most vulnerable to coastal erosion and storm surge and, with robust public engagement, evaluate alternatives to mitigate risk.	ST 1-5 years MT 5-10 years	Study	Emergency ~~Management~~Manager	Dept Development Services, Planning Board, State, Watch Hill Conservancy
Action RES-1.3.B	Discuss, as a community, how best to curtail new development in the Coastal Barrier Resource System (CBRS), and all areas directly exposed to the Atlantic Ocean, in order to maintain natural resources that attract tourists and seasonal renters, while best providing for the safety of residents and visitors.	ST 1-5 years MT 5-10 years	Public Outreach	Emergency ~~Management~~Manager	Dept Development Services, Planning Board
Action RES-1.3.C	Establish a protocol to pre-position public works forces and/or equipment prior to anticipated flood events to better remove flood debris as it is accumulating.	ST 1-5 years	Administrative	Emergency ~~Management~~Manager	Dept Public Works
Action RES-1.3.D	Pursue completion of the action outlined in the Hazard Mitigation Plan and update the Plan at least every five years, as needed, and after every major natural hazard event which impacts the community.	ST 1-5 years MT 5-10 years	Administrative	Emergency ~~Management~~Manager	Dept Public Works, Dept Development Services, etc.
Action RES-1.3.E	Establish a Resilience Committee to strategically plan for and operationalize more economic, social, ecological, and infrastructure resilience across the municipality.	ST 1- 5 years MT 5-10 years	Administrative	Emergency Manager~~ment,~~ Town Council	Dept Public Works
Action RES-1.3.F	Dredge Winnapaug Pond and western Quonochontaug Pond in an ecologically responsible manner and use soils for local salt marsh restoration and beach nourishment projects.	Ongoing	Program	Dept Development Services	Army Corps of Engineers, State
Action RES-1.3.G	Develop a priority map for the preservation of natural areas across the municipality that are not currently protected and will enhance resilience and plan for their acquisition.	ST 1- 5 years	Study	Dept Development Services (Planning Board)	Conservation Commission
Policy RES-1.4	Improve the water quality and navigability of the Pawcatuck River and Little Narragansett Bay.				
Action RES-1.4.A	Secure funding and remove the Potter Hill Dam.	ST 1- 5 years	Study	Dept Development Services	National Conservation and WP, Recreation Department
Action RES-1.4.B	Propose local and State legislation requiring any new bridges and/or bridge replacements crossing the Pawcatuck River to include decks that fully span the River between abutments and avoid any structural need for piers or piles.	ST 1-5 years	Legislation	Town Manager~~,~~ Town Council	State Representatives
Action RES-1.4.C	Repair the Stillmanville Bridge and remove the Stillmanville Dam as a combined construction project.	~~ST 1-5~~MT 5-10 years	Facility	Town Manager~~,~~ Town Council	Water and Sewer, WP, Stonington

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Part II

INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

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Chapter 1
SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCES

The meandering Pawcatuck River separates Westerly from Hopkinton and North Stonington, Connecticut, to the north and Stonington, Connecticut, to the west. Westerly's eastern border with Charlestown is a straight-line running north/south for about 4.6 miles. The Town has a coastline on the Block Island Sound of the Atlantic Ocean for approximately nine (9) miles between Napatree Point (the westernmost point on mainland Rhode Island [RI]) and the Charlestown border. The Town's size is approximately 31.5 square miles. Its southwestern maritime border, also the New York-Rhode Island state border, extends from Little Narragansett Bay into Block Island Sound.

The topography rises from sea level along the beaches to the Town's highest elevation, Mount Moriah (249 feet), in the northwestern corner of the Town. On the west side of the Town, the elevation of Downtown Westerly rises from approximately 10 feet along the River to 155 feet near Westerly High School. At the center of the Town is a large wetland area, including Aguntaug Swamp, that is among the largest cedar swamps in Rhode Island. Chapman Pond, a freshwater pond located directly north of the wetland, is approximately 180 acres in size and 30 feet above sea level. Woody Hill, in the eastern portion of the Town, rises to 200 feet.

Section 1.1 – Watersheds

It is important to consider water resources and management from a watershed perspective because water is not confined to political boundaries. Most of Westerly's water supply comes from the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed. The coastal region, in the south of Westerly, contains three additional watersheds. Each is associated with one of the three major salt ponds located there: Maschaug Pond, Quonochontaug Pond, and Winnapaug Pond.

The Charlestown Moraine is the most significant geological structure in southern Westerly and southern Rhode Island. The moraine travels west to east from Orient Point on Long Island, across Westerly, and eastward to the Town of South Kingstown. This elevated plateau was deposited 19,000 years ago as the glacial ice sheet of the last glacial period retreated northward. The Charlestown Moraine acts as a local divide, resulting in water falling to the south of the moraine draining into the salt ponds and water falling to the north of the moraine draining into the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed and from the watershed into Little Narragansett Bay. The wellheads that supply the public water for the Town of Westerly source exclusively from the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed. It is a sole source aquifer, meaning the Town has no other surface or groundwater reservoir source to obtain potable water from.

The Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed encompasses approximately 300 square miles in southeastern Connecticut and southwestern Rhode Island. Within the watershed, seven (7) major rivers and their tributaries drain to a common outlet – the Pawcatuck River and Little Narragansett Bay. These rivers, along with lakes, ponds, wetlands, and streams, serve as important wildlife habitats, recreational resources, and water supplies for agricultural production. Significant groundwater resources lie under the watershed and are the sole source of drinking water for people within it. Groundwater and surface waters are interconnected, and the watershed is noted for having some of the highest-quality groundwater and surface water in the area.

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In March 2019, the watershed became the first federally-designated Wild and Scenic system in the State. The designation originates from the 1968 Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and is intended to preserve certain rivers, found to have outstanding natural, cultural, and/or recreational value, through appropriate use and development. Several organizations are active in the stewardship of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed. These include the National Park Service (NPS), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Rhode Island Rivers Council (RIRC), the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM), Save the Bay, University of Rhode Island (URI) Watershed Watch, and the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA). The stewardship of the river is guided by Wood-Pawcatuck Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Plan which was adopted by the 12 watershed towns and the State of Rhode Island, including the Town of Westerly. The plan was a major component of the federal designation of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Wild and Scenic Rivers. Wood-Pawcatuck Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council has become an active partner in water quality and water conservation actions of the Town. The Council has access to financial, scientific, and engineering resources that the Town will need to protect the Town's water supply and natural environment. The salt pond region along the coast includes 45 square miles around the nine (9) coastal salt ponds of southern Rhode Island lying within the towns of Westerly, Charlestown, South Kingstown, and Narragansett. Maschaug Pond, Winnapaug Pond, and Quonochontaug Pond are coastal lagoons (shallow, productive embayments separated from the ocean by barrier spits) that provide important ecosystem and habitat functions. They are an important factor in the quality of life for Westerly residents and are a prime recreational attraction for both residents and visitors in the region. The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (RICRMC) is responsible for the management, protection, and enhancement of resources within the salt pond watersheds and along coastal waters. Other organizations locally active in the stewardship of the salt pond watersheds include the Salt Ponds Coalition and Save the Bay.

Section 1.2 – Surface Water

Rivers, streams, freshwater ponds, freshwater and coastal wetlands, coastal waters, and salt ponds make up the surface waters of the Town. The Pawcatuck River flows along the entire northern and western boundaries of the Town. Other named streams include Aguntaug Brook, Mastuxet Brook, McGowan Brook, and Perry Healy Brook. Chapman Pond, in the north central section of Westerly, is the Town's largest freshwater pond. Other named freshwater ponds include Dr. Lewis Pond, Long Pond, Spring Pond, No Bottom Pond, and Mickill Pond. Freshwater wetlands are scattered throughout the Town as a result of the area's glacial past and resultant soils and topography and along the Pawcatuck River. Aguntaug Swamp (also known as Chapman Swamp or Crandall Swamp) is one of the largest freshwater wetland systems in the State. Coastal wetlands include salt marshes and any contiguous freshwater or brackish wetlands. Coastal waters border the entire southern shoreline of the Town and include the tidal portion of the Pawcatuck River. In addition to the salt ponds noted previously, there is also Little Maschaug Pond located immediately east of Maschaug Pond.

Figure **Surface Water Resources (NAT-M1)**, along with the lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, and wetlands included on many other maps in this Plan, also presents the major watershed boundaries and the estuarine water quality standard boundaries (RIDEM identifies seawaters on a class system ranging from SA to SC). The five categories of water use as established by RICRMC and the Special Resource Protection Waters (SRPWs) within the Town are also shown.

Section 1.3 –Water Quality

Preserving and improving water quality are vital to Westerly's natural resources. High-quality drinking water supplies are also critical for public health and wellbeing. Habitat areas are also essential to biological diversity, which enhances water quality. As a practical matter, both drinking water supply and habitat quality contribute to the maintenance of water quality at the highest possible level. Furthermore, good water quality is necessary for recreation, since contact with polluted waters is a health risk.

Water quality is affected by both point and nonpoint sources of pollution. Point source pollution originates from a specific place or location, such as a discharge pipe from a factory. Nonpoint source pollution originates over a

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widespread area of the landscape and may include waterfowl, pet waste, malfunctioning septic systems, soil erosion, leaking underground fuel storage tanks, stormwater runoff, fertilizers, pesticides, agriculture, and road salt. Point-source discharges, as well as comprehensive management of nonpoint source discharges, are controlled by local authorities in conjunction with the United States (US) Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), RIDEM, and other federal and state agencies. Increasingly, these and other stakeholders believe many problems can and should be addressed locally through ~~land use~~land-use planning, education, and, where appropriate, regulation.

Subsection 1.3.1 – Domestic Wastewater Stressors

Domestic wastewater contains high levels of carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, some synthetic organic chemicals, and heavy metals. These elements can all affect aquatic habitat and groundwater quality. Nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus may stimulate growth of algae in coastal ponds and in the Pawcatuck River that can eventually lead to declining levels of oxygen and adverse impacts on habitat (a process called eutrophication). WPWA monitors dissolved oxygen levels in the rivers quarterly to evaluate these impacts. Synthetic organic chemicals and heavy metals in wastewater are toxic to humans and other living organisms. Domestic wastewater also contains bacteria, viruses, and medical/drug residue, which may threaten human health if viable microorganisms enter drinking water. Industrial wastewater can have the same contaminants as domestic sewage; however, concentrations of synthetic organic chemicals and heavy metals may be much higher in industrial waste.

Westerly has a municipal sewage collection and treatment system that serves nearly half of the Town's residents. The rest of the Town is served by on-site wastewater treatment systems (OWTS), more commonly known as septic systems. It is expected that these systems will continue to be the primary source of wastewater disposal for areas outside the current sewer district into the foreseeable future. Proper function and treatment of a septic system depends on existing soil characteristics as well as on proper system maintenance. RIDEM regulates septic systems and has established minimum standards for siting, design, and installation of these systems.

The typical lifespan of a septic system is 20 to 30 years and many existing septic systems have outlived their usefulness. Additionally, many of these systems in Westerly and their predecessors, cesspools (a type of wastewater treatment that RIDEM considers to be substandard), were installed prior to RIDEM's current minimum standards. Improperly designed or failing systems can contribute pollutants in the form of nitrates, excessive nutrients, and fecal coliform bacteria to nearby surface waters or groundwater.

The Rhode Island Cesspool Act of 2007 (Rhode Island General Law [RIGL] §23-19.15) went into effect on June 1, 2008 and required a phasing out of all cesspools that present the highest risks to public health and/or the environment – primarily, cesspools located in close proximity to tidal water areas and public drinking waters - by 2013. In Westerly, this Act affected any cesspools located within 200 feet of the shoreline or within 200 feet of a public drinking water well. Funding options were made available to qualified property owners in 2018 to repair/replace failing septic systems/cesspools through the Community Septic System Loan Program (CSSLP). Two (2) applications have been approved as of the date of this Plan's publication. In addition, any property that has an active cesspool and is being sold must have the septic system upgraded within one (1) year of sale of the property.

Subsection 1.3.2 – Wellhead Protection

The primary issue facing the quality of Westerly's water supply is the lack of protective measures to ensure its integrity. Westerly's water supply comes primarily from groundwater wells located in White Rock, with additional capacity from wells in Bradford and Aguntaug Swamp. Westerly wells also provide water to 11 businesses and approximately 1,500 homes in Connecticut. Westerly's zoning code permits commercial, manufacturing, and high-density residential uses over much of the aquifer. This permission presents a substantial risk of contamination from exposure to potentially hazardous waste spills, leaking underground storage tanks (LUSTs), and road salt runoff.

Protection of groundwater quality is facilitated through the protection of the source water supply. Source water protection areas, such as wellhead protection areas and aquifer recharge areas, have been identified by the State.

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However, protection strategies for the source water supply are accomplished through local plans, ordinances, and development standards related to wellhead protection areas, aquifer recharge areas, and other critical areas. Special considerations should be taken to further protect the areas within the community wellhead protection areas by strengthening ~~land use~~land-use regulations to minimize the risk of contamination.

State agencies involved in the protection of groundwater and drinking water include RIDEM, the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH), and the Rhode Island Water Resources Board (RIWRB). RIDEM administers the *Groundwater Quality Rules*, which classifies the State's groundwater and establishes groundwater quality standards for each classification. This regulation also includes the State's wellhead protection program. RIDOH is responsible for ensuring proper operation and maintenance of the public water systems to ensure a safe drinking water supply. RIDOH is also responsible for the Source Water Assessment Program. RIWRB is an executive board within the State government charged with managing the proper development, conservation, and utilization of the State's water resources.

Groundwater reservoirs, groundwater recharge areas, and wellhead protection areas are delineated by RIDEM. These areas are critical for the protection of drinking water quality. Groundwater reservoirs contain the highest potential yield of drinking water. Recharge areas include surface lands that drain into the groundwater reservoir. A wellhead protection area (WHPA) is the portion of an aquifer through which groundwater moves to a well. The Town of Westerly operates 12 water supply wells at seven (7) pumping stations. Town wells are located in three (3) separate WHPAs: the Bradford and Crandall WHPAs, which are located entirely within Westerly, and the White Rock and Noyes Avenue WHPA, which includes two (2) separate subareas (both extending into Stonington, Connecticut). The RIWRB requires a Water Supply System Management Plan (WSSMP), which must include a water quality protection component. A WSSMP must be updated every 5 years. In addition, the water supplier must conduct water quality testing and submit the results to RIDOH.

Subsection 1.3.3 – Stormwater Management

During a rain event, rainwater either infiltrates into the ground or runs across it. As areas become more developed, a larger amount of stormwater can run off paved surfaces, roofs, compacted soils, and lawns, rather than soaking into the ground. As stormwater drains into local waterways, it carries sediment and pollutants, including fertilizers, pesticides, road salt, oil, heavy metals, and pathogenic bacteria and viruses, with it. Large stormwater flows within streams and rivers causes erosion and degradation of riparian habitats. Stormwater management can help reduce these effects.

Phase I and Phase II of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), administered by the EPA, require the control of polluted discharges from large construction sites, certain industrial activities, and operators of municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s). These requirements include the establishment of a stormwater management program that is intended to improve water bodies by reducing the quantity of pollutants that can enter storm sewer systems during storm events. They also require the use of best management practices (BMPs) intended to reduce the negative impacts of stormwater. RIDEM implements the NPDES stormwater requirements through the Rhode Island Pollution Discharge Elimination System (RIPDES) Stormwater Program. In order to address requirements of RIPDES, as well as requirements of the NPDES Phase II permitting process, the Town of Westerly continually implements its Phase II MS4 Storm Water Management Program Plan (SWMPP).

Westerly has a Stormwater Management Ordinance (*Westerly Code* Chapter 224) that establishes minimum stormwater management requirements and controls. Its stated objectives are:

- to minimize increases in stormwater runoff to reduce flooding, siltation, increases in stream temperature, and stream bank erosion, and maintain the integrity of stream channels;
- to minimize increases in nonpoint source pollution caused by stormwater runoff from development, which would otherwise degrade local water quality; and

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- to reduce stormwater runoff rates, soil erosion, and nonpoint source pollution through stormwater management controls and to ensure that these management controls are properly maintained and pose no threat to public safety.

The Town of Westerly Department of Public Works (DPW) maintains the existing stormwater system on public streets and public properties, while private landowners and homeowner associations maintain stormwater management systems on private properties. Funding for stormwater system management is limited but continues to be adequate to provide for routine system maintenance. Catch basins and storm drains are cleaned routinely and the system generally appears to be functioning as designed. The Department of Public Works maintains a list of Town-wide drainage issues and works with the Engineering Division to develop plans that incorporate best management practices (BMPs) to remedy the drainage issue while improving water quality. Stormwater network maintenance, repairs, and improvements are also conducted in conjunction with the Town's annual road resurfacing program. The Town actively seeks out grant opportunities for stormwater projects to improve water quality within the existing stormwater network.

The Town's Zoning Ordinance includes general development standards for erosion and sediment control (Westerly Code §260-89), which require installation and maintenance of control measures and BMPs to control erosion and sedimentation for non-agricultural land development. In addition, the Town's Land Development and Subdivision Regulations include design and improvements standards for bioretention and stormwater management (Westerly Code §A261-30.1). These regulations require the construction of bioretention areas (including green infrastructure [GI], such as rain gardens and grass swales) to reduce the volume and velocity of stormwater runoff and increase pollutant filtering and groundwater recharge.

Generally, RIDEM has jurisdiction for almost all projects in Westerly that trigger regulatory requirements for stormwater. CRMC has jurisdiction for stormwater requirements under the Red Book (650-RICR-20-00-1.3.1(F)) only when a project is located on a shoreline feature or the 200-foot contiguous area, or triggers one of the jurisdictional watershed activities as defined in the Salt Pond SAMP (reference 650-RICR-20-00-3). The CRMC's regulatory jurisdiction is specified in the Westerly Zoning Ordinance at § 230-53(D).

In addition to the RIPDES stormwater permitting programs, the RIDEM and CRMC implement the requirements of the RI Stormwater Management, Design, and Installation Rules for development and redevelopment projects meeting certain criteria. The purpose of these rules is to provide standards for planning, designing, and installing effective stormwater BMPs to effectively manage the impacts of stormwater and prevent adverse impacts to water quality, habitat, and flood storage capacity. These rules require a stormwater management site plan for review by State and local government.

Subsection 1.3.4 – Flooding

Westerly is subject to damage from flooding of both inland surface waters and from coastal storm surges. Development in wetlands and floodplain areas can reduce the land's natural ability to store floodwaters. Hurricanes, tidal flooding, and nor'easters (which appear in the winter and spring more regularly than do hurricanes in summer and autumn), all cause severe coastal flooding and erosion. These hazards are thoroughly documented in the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan 2017 Update. In October 2013, an amendment to Section 980 of the Salt Pond Region Special Area Management Plan (SAMP), illustrated on Figure **Salt Pond Region SAMP (NAT-M3)**, became effective, which permitted the use of experimental coastal erosion control methods within the Misquamicut Headland (these methods are also permitted within the Matunuck Headland in South Kingstown) until October 2019.

Westerly participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by adopting and enforcing floodplain management ordinances to reduce future flood damage. As of this Plan's publication, Westerly is a participant in the Community Rating System (CRS) program and has achieved a Class 7 rating - the highest class rating in Rhode

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Island. The CRS is a voluntary program that recognizes and encourages a community's efforts to exceed the NFIP minimum requirements for floodplain management. The CRS program emphasizes three goals:

- the reduction of flood losses,
- facilitating accurate insurance rating, and
- promoting the awareness of flood insurance



In exchange for undertaking these activities, the NFIP makes federally-backed flood insurance available to homeowners, renters, and business owners in these communities at a reduced rate.

In addition to providing flood insurance and reducing flood damages through floodplain management regulations, the NFIP identifies and maps the nation's floodplains. Within Westerly, there are three (3) general zones of high flood risk. Zone A and Zone AE areas are within the one-percent (1%) annual chance floodplain (more commonly known as a 100-year flood) and Zone V areas are also within the one-percent chance floodplain but have additional hazards associated with wave action. For properties with federally-backed mortgages, mandatory flood insurance purchases apply for developments within zones A, AE, and V. Maschaug Pond, Quonochontaug Pond, and Winnapaug Pond, their surrounding lowlands, Napatree Point, Sandy Point, and the coves in Little Narragansett Bay are particularly vulnerable to storm surge. This vulnerability was evident in the aftermaths of historic flooding in spring 2010 and Hurricane Sandy in October 2012.

In August 2017, WPWA and consultant Fuss & O'Neill completed the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Flood Resiliency Management Plan (Wood-Pawcatuck Flood Resiliency Plan). The document was also prepared in partnership with several stakeholder organization and all watershed communities, including the Town of Westerly. As part of its efforts for Wild and Scenic designation, WPWA worked to identify a range of approaches and efforts to protect and restore numerous natural resources within the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed. In the plan, conclusions led to recommendations under five (5) primary categories – dams and impoundments, culverts and bridges, floodplains and river corridors, wetlands, and stormwater. Each recommendation is also prioritized. Several recommendations fall within or along the Town's geographic boundaries. Among the high-priority considerations are removal of the Potter Hill Dam and projects for 15 restoration sites along the Pawcatuck River. The active participation of the WPWA within the community and the Town's planning efforts to ensure the implementation of this Plan's goals, policies, and actions will further the community's and region's resiliency to future flood events within the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed.

Subsection 1.3.5 – Lakes, Freshwater Ponds, Rivers, and Streams

While water quality in the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed is generally described as excellent, there are threats actively eroding the environmental quality of the watershed, and much of the Pawcatuck River in Westerly is listed as impaired. Monitoring on the Pawcatuck River and its tributaries suggests the River is threatened by elevated lead levels, which may occasionally exceed EPA's National Recommended Aquatic Life Criteria. Elevated nutrients, particularly nitrate levels, have also been measured in the Pawcatuck River. Fecal coliform bacteria are another important nonpoint source contaminant, originating from some agricultural land uses, wild animals, and failing septic systems. Several measurements are routinely taken in the watershed to assess the health of aquatic communities. Results of the assessment tests indicate several rivers and streams within the watershed are stressed, including portions of the Pawcatuck River.

A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study, known as the "Implementation Plan for Pawcatuck River Bacteria TMDL: Downtown Westerly (Phase I)," dated August 2018 and prepared by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB), predates the watershed plan or the Wood-Pawcatuck Resiliency Study. The introduction of the report states, "This TMDL

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Implementation Plan was developed for the Town of Westerly to address the goals of the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) focused on bacteria impairments and developed for the Pawcatuck River and Little Narragansett Waters. The TMDL was completed in 2010 by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) and approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) later that year. The goal of this plan is to enable the Town to identify, prioritize, and implement water quality improvements in a cost-efficient manner."

The federal Clean Water Act (CWA) requires states to prepare a list of water bodies that do not meet water quality standards for ensuring that water is healthy for such uses as fish and wildlife habitat, domestic and agricultural water supplies, and recreation in and on the water. All water bodies identified on the list must attain water quality standards within a reasonable period, either through a TMDL study (also known as a water quality restoration plan) or another pollution control mechanism. Within and in the proximity of Westerly, the Rhode Island 2016 Impaired Waters Report, Final (March 2018) included the Pawcatuck River and Tributaries (broken into three segments – from the Bradford Dyeing Association [BDA] wastewater treatment facility [WWTF] discharge point to Meeting House Bridge [Route 3], Meeting House Bridge to Pawcatuck Bridge [Route 1], and Pawcatuck Bridge to Pawcatuck Rock [tidal]), Chapman Pond, and the Perry Healy Brook and Tributaries. TMDL studies and BMPs are used to return water bodies to a healthy condition. The Town of Westerly has been awarded a New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC) Grant to create a TMDL Implementation Plan and a new watershed plan in conjunction with the Wood-Pawcatuck Flood Resiliency Study. This Plan has been created and is a major step towards the Town becoming eligible to apply for funding available through the CWA.

Since 1988, the WPWA has sponsored volunteer monitoring of a significant number of water bodies in the watershed, including Chapman Pond in Westerly, as part of the URI's Watershed Watch Program. Results of testing have shown that Chapman Pond has moderate to above average levels of phosphorus, giving it a eutrophic classification.

Chapman Pond was included in the 2016 Impaired Waters Report due to lead and non-native aquatic plants. The impairments can generally be traced to the surrounding land uses, including an adjacent road salt storage facility and the inactive former landfill. In June 2015, the Town received a grant to remove invasive species from Chapman Pond. Identified invasive species are scheduled for systematic removal.

Subsection 1.3.6 – Coastal Waters and Salt Ponds

In the salt pond region, failing or sub-standard septic systems have been identified as the single most important nonpoint source of bacterial and nutrient contamination to coastal waters. The tidal portions of the Pawcatuck River and Little Narragansett Bay are also listed as impaired water bodies in Connecticut as a result of elevated bacteria levels. Currently, the direct harvesting of shellfish is prohibited at all times in Little Narragansett Bay due to pollution closures. Shellfishing is also not permitted in the tidal portions of the Pawcatuck River, from the Pawcatuck Bridge to the mouth of the River at Rhodes Point. This reach is assessed as partially supporting aquatic life. The tidal portions of the Pawcatuck River and Little Narragansett Bay were the subject of The Pawcatuck River Estuary and Little Narragansett Bay: An Interstate Management Plan**,** which was adopted in 1992 through a coordinated effort between the State of Connecticut, the State of Rhode Island, the Town of Stonington, and the Town of Westerly. While much of the plan is now outdated, its general recommendations for management remain relevant.

Oxygen levels are very low because of nutrient over-enrichment (eutrophication). Metals and pathogens are also threats in the upper tidal reach. Much of the bottom of Little Narragansett Bay is now covered in a thick macroalgal mat, sometimes referred to as Black Mayonnaise. This blanket of algae gives off a foul odor when exposed to air and creates low-oxygen zones that suffocate eelgrass, oysters, and scallops. In some places, this decaying organic matter is several feet thick and the mat appears to be spreading. The University of Connecticut (UConn) and URI have both been studying this algae formation, which is thought to result from fertilization of coastal waters by runoff from the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed. This outbreak has attracted the attention of Save the Bay and Rhode

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Island's congressional delegation. The Westerly WWTF is a relatively minor loading source in comparison to the nonpoint source inputs (urban runoff, storm sewers, etc.) along this stretch of the shoreline.

The salt ponds are considered valuable components of the coastal wetlands. Quonochontaug Pond (733 acres) is the largest of the three (3) major coastal salt ponds within the Town, though only its western most third is in Westerly (its eastern two-thirds are located within Charlestown). It is particularly sensitive to threats of nonpoint source pollution due to prevalent soil types that result in slow permeability and high runoff rates. Restricted tidal flow in the western third can result in depleted oxygen levels and, in some coves, higher bacteria levels. Bacterial water quality surveys of the pond from 1977 to present indicate somewhat higher coliform counts adjacent to developed areas, although overall bacterial water quality remains good. Although there is limited data, it appears the total average nitrogen concentration is increasing with time. The most recent Aquatic Health Index from the Salt Ponds Coalition continued to show elevated levels of dissolved inorganic nitrogen in Westerly's portion of the pond.



The second largest of the three salt ponds is Winnapaug Pond (446 acres), generally surrounded by the Misquamicut and Weekapaug neighborhoods. Dense development in these two areas has produced high runoff rates and, in some cases, stormwater drainage carries effluent from failing septic systems. Safe shellfishing limits for bacteria have been exceeded in the pond. The most recent Aquatic Health Index from the Salt Ponds Coalition indicated elevated concentrations of Chlorophyll-a and dissolved inorganic nitrogen in its western half and elevated dissolved inorganic nitrogen in its eastern half.

The smallest of the three major saltwater ponds, Maschaug Pond (42 acres), is unique because it is completely landlocked (between Misquamicut and Watch Hill). Major storm events have periodically resulted in influxes of salt water and regular monitoring of the pond does not take place.

The Watch Hill Conservancy and Save the Bay actively monitor Little Narragansett Bay, the salt ponds, and the coast, as "king tides", coastal storms, and sea level rise continue to impact the shoreline and water quality. These organizations cover the cost of data collection and contribute documentation and water quality samples to Watershed Watch at the University of Rhode Island and RI MyCoast – an initiative of the RICRMC to document the effect that extreme tide events have on our state's beaches, coastal waterways, private property, and public infrastructure. These studies will continue in an effort to mitigate shoreline erosion, street flooding, and infrastructure damage, as well as protection of upland habitats where salt marsh migration is likely to occur.

Subsection 1.3.7 – Groundwater

The Town of Westerly withdraws water from the Bradford and Westerly aquifers through six (6) large community supply wells: Bradford Wells II and III, the Crandall Well, and the three (3) White Rock Wells. The total combined pumping capacity of these wells is 7.43 million gallons per day (MGD), with 5.41 MGD (72.8% of the total combined pumping capacity) coming from the White Rock Wells.

The quality of the Pawcatuck River Basin's groundwater is generally considered good to excellent with only isolated sources of contamination. Hazardous waste spills have been documented in the Crandall and White Rock and Noyes Avenue wellhead protection areas. In a 2015 area study of the Town and surrounding area, Environmental Data Resources, Inc. (EDR) found 26 Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) sites in the study area, several of which were located within Westerly's aquifer recharge and wellhead protection areas.

Elevated levels of nitrates and bacteria, which can result from failing septic systems, have been detected in the water supply area. Research conducted by URI has estimated septic systems account for more than 50% of all nitrogen entering the watershed as recharge groundwater. The White Rock and Noyes Avenue wellhead protection areas have previously experienced chemical contamination events from fuel spills. The wells in the system have also exhibited elevated levels of sodium, most likely a result of winter road salting.

Section 1.4 – Water Resources Management and Protection

Entities responsible for regulatory management and protection of surface waters include RIDEM (responsible for surface water quality, groundwater quality, stormwater management, on-site wastewater wetland regulations, and point source discharges through its Office of Water Resources), RICRMC (responsible for preservation, protection, development, and restoration of coastal areas, including coastal wetlands), and the Town of Westerly (Department of Public Works Utility and Engineering Division).

While not a regulatory body, Rhode Island Rivers Council (RIRC) has the authority to designate local watershed councils. In this capacity, it has designated the WPWA as the watershed council for the Pawcatuck Watershed. The Salt Ponds Coalition is the designated watershed council for the salt pond watersheds. These watershed councils have the authority and standing to present testimony in all State and local administrative proceedings that impact waterbodies and water quality. The primary guides for the protection and restoration of water quality and aquatic habitats are State Guide Plan Element 721, Rhode Island Water 3030, and State Guide Plan Report #121, Water Quality 2035.

Primary objectives for the Wood-Pawcatuck Sub-basin (the portion of the larger Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed that includes Westerly) include, in order of importance:

1. Preservation of its quality as the State's premier freshwater recreational resource
2. Maintenance of wildlife habitat quality
3. Keeping groundwater quality high
4. Preservation of agriculture

The Town of Westerly endeavors to integrate water quality planning with ~~land use~~land-use planning and with planning for activities such as recreation and habitat preservation. Broader objectives are to protect drinking water supplies, foster the creation of greenways, and provide for the clean-up of the Pawcatuck River.

Subsection 1.4.1 – Management and Protection of Coastal Waters and Salt Ponds

RICRMC is responsible for the management, protection, and enhancement of coastal areas. The regulatory authority of the RICRMC includes activities conducted on a coastal feature, the 200-foot area contiguous to a coastal feature, and areas extending to three (3) nautical miles offshore. In addition, natural coastal features, such as coastal beaches, dunes, barriers, coastal wetlands, bluffs, and salt ponds, all have an extended contiguous area of 200 feet from their inland borders under the authority of RICRMC.

RICRMC administers the Coastal Resources Management Program (CRMP/Red Book), which includes specific regulatory requirements for buffers, setbacks, subdivisions, recreational docks, barrier beach development, beach replenishment, and any other activities that occur within RICRMC's jurisdiction. This regulation is important for the protection of USFWS Coastal Resources Barrier System (CRBS) sites in Westerly and the Westerly shoreline, classified by NOAA as essential fish habitat. Special protections are provided to the shore off Napatree, which is classified by the CRMC as an "Area Designated for Preservation" because of its regional importance as winter sea duck habitat.

In partnership with RIDEM, ~~it~~ RICRMC is also responsible for implementing the Rhode Island Coastal Non-Point Pollution Control Program (RICNPCP). Other management programs of RICRMC include the Rules and Regulations Governing the Protection and Management of Freshwater Wetlands in the Vicinity of the Coast (wetlands are

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discussed later in this chapter) and Special Area Management Plans (SAMPs). The SAMPs are ecosystem-based management strategies designed to address a diversity of issues on a watershed scale. The Salt Pond Region SAMP was the first SAMP developed by RICRMC. It focuses on managing the potential development of the salt ponds watersheds and establishes regulatory standards to protect and improve saltwater pond water quality. It also identifies pollution sources, wildlife habitat, and prudent development strategies to effectuate restoration and preservation of salt pond resources.

In addition to state and federal agency oversight, the Town of Westerly is dedicated to protecting the coast and its nearshore environments, as these features define much of the community character of the Town and provide critical wildlife habitats. To effectively manage these resources, Westerly will explore *marine spatial planning* for Little Narragansett Bay, the Salt Ponds, and the south shore. Marine spatial plans would identify compatible uses and may lead to new zoning policies to protect coastal resources, similar to what is already being done for land-based resources in the Town. The State of Connecticut is developing a similar plan for all of Long Island Sound, known as the Blue Plan, and this document could provide guidance in developing Westerly's marine spatial plan. The Town will partner with several organizations and community members that value the coastal environment, some of which include the Watch Hill Conservancy, Save the Bay, the Salt Ponds Coalition, the Weekapaug Fire District, local yacht clubs and marinas, and fishermen.

Subsection 1.4.2 – Management and Protection of Non-Coastal Surface Waters

RIDEM, through its Office of Water Resources, is responsible for the protection of surface water quality inland of coastal areas through enforcement of the RI Stormwater Management, Design and Installation Rules. The Office maintains regulations regarding groundwater quality, stormwater management, on-site wastewater treatment, and wetlands.

Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA) is active in the stewardship of surface water in the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed and developed the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Action Plan of 2020-2023. Achievements of the WPWA include the identification and prioritization of opportunities to protect and restore riparian corridors, participation in the development of the South County Greenspace Protection Strategy in 2003, and leading a successful effort to have the rivers of the watershed federally designated as Wild and Scenic in 2019. WPWA, with the consultancy of Fuss & O'Neill, also prepared the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Flood Resiliency Management Plan in 2017. This document summarized the findings of an extensive study of the watershed and offered recommendations that have been incorporated into this Plan.

Subsection 1.4.3 – Management and Protection of Wellheads

Wellhead Protection Plan

The management of WHPAs is facilitated through the Rhode Island Wellhead Protection Program, which requires municipalities and large water suppliers with one or more groundwater sources to inventory potential pollution threats in the wellhead protection areas and develop a wellhead protection plan. Wellhead protection plans must include, at minimum:

- a pollution threat assessment,
- identification of protection strategies,
- coordination with neighboring states, communities, and water suppliers (where appropriate), and
- a procedure for implementing the chosen strategies.

In 2003, URI and RIDOH completed assessments of all public water supplies in the State, including the Town of Westerly Water District. Westerly's results were published in the report Westerly Source Water Assessment by URI Cooperative Extension in cooperation with RIDOH and is available for review at the DPW facility on White Rock Road. A 2001 Water Supply System Management Plan (WSSMP) assessment addressed the second requirement

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by identifying known and potential sources of pollution in drinking water supplies and ranking their susceptibility to future contamination. A more current version of this plan was completed in 2015.

General protection strategies have been identified in the Westerly Source Water Assessment report and protection strategies specific to Westerly are presented in the 2015 WSSMP. Recommendations focus on protection measures that can be implemented through local plans, ordinances, and development standards because municipal decision makers have primary authority over land use and the responsibility to control associated impacts. Protection strategies specific to Westerly presented in the 2015 WSSMP include the adoption of a wastewater management district, a public education program, land acquisitions along the Pawcatuck River, and strengthening of Westerly's aquifer protection ordinance to prohibit new underground storage tanks for either hazardous materials or home heating oil.

The final two (2) requirements of a wellhead protection plan must still be completed by the Town. These requirements include the identification of which protection strategies will be implemented for the protection of the groundwater supply and the development of an implementation procedure for the chosen strategies, as well as the coordination with neighboring states, communities, and water suppliers. In addition, changes to the Zoning District Use Tables are also required.

Protective Radii Around Wellheads

The Town addresses RIDOH's requirement of an inner protective radius around public water supply wells in its Water Ordinance, specifically the section regarding the protection of public water supply wells (*Westerly Code* §251-27). The Water Ordinance defines a 400-foot radius around public water supply wells located in the Town, in which any development that would change the State of the area (i.e., dwellings, barns, etc.) and/or the introduction or deposit of contaminating substances (e.g. liquid or solid waste, stormwater drainage, pesticides, etc.) are prohibited. The 2015 WSSMP indicates that the Town owns and controls the land around each wellhead and that the Town has acquired land within the 400-foot radius.

Aquifer Protection Overlay District

One source water protection tool is a groundwater overlay zoning district. The value of such an overlay district depends on the permitted uses and performance standards required within the overlay district. Both Stonington, Connecticut, and Westerly have established groundwater zoning overlay districts in their respective zoning codes.

The Aquifer Protection Overlay District (APOD) adopted by the Town of Westerly was designed to encompass the three (3) WHPAs as well as the identified aquifer recharge areas within the Town. However, the footprint of the overlay district does not fully correspond to the footprint of the current RIDEM WHPAs and GAA classified groundwater (see Figure 4-3 Source Water Protection). By ordinance, Westerly prohibits gas stations, dry cleaners, photo processing, other high-risk land uses in the overlay district and requires an Aquifer Protection Permit for other land uses that pose an elevated risk. The permit application requires more detailed information to be provided about the proposed project by the applicant. Westerly's ordinance does not include performance measures. The Town of Stonington has a Groundwater Protection Overlay District in its zoning code that prohibits the siting of high-risk land uses and new underground storage tanks in groundwater protection areas. It also includes performance measures.

Acquisition of open space lands in the APOD began in 1989 with the acquisition of a 229-acre Town Forest. Since 1991, the Town's Utilities Division has acquired several properties in the vicinity of the Bradford well field. In 2004, the Westerly Land Trust (WLT) purchased the 500-acre Grills Preserve, which is comprised almost entirely of stratified drift aquifer adjacent to the Pawcatuck River, and the Crandall Farm, 423 acres surrounding the Town well.

Tables 1-1 through 1-4 below provide a general overview of the information presented above:

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Table 1-1 Salt Ponds Water Quality, Management, and Protection

Resource		Water Quality	Issues	Stressors	Management and Protections
Salt Ponds	Maschaug	Unknown	• Unknown	• Failing or substandard septic systems • Stormwater runoff • Urban development	• CRMP • RI Nonpoint Source Management Program • Rules and Regulations Governing the Protection and Management of Freshwater Wetlands in the Vicinity of the Coast • Salt Pond Region SAMP • RI Nonpoint Source Management Program • OWMP
	Quonochontaug	Good	• Increasing bacteria • Increasing nutrients • Low dissolved oxygen		
	Winnapaug	Somewhat impaired	• High bacteria • High nitrate concentrations		

Table 1-2 Pawcatuck River Water Quality, Management, and Protection

Resource		Water Quality	Issues	Stressors	Management and Protections
Pawcatuck River	Lower	Impaired	• High lead levels • High heavy metal pollutants • High bacteria • Low dissolved oxygen • No shellfishing	• Bradford Mill Sewage Treatment Facility • Stormwater runoff • Failing septic systems • Agricultural pollution	• Federal Clean Water Act §303(d) • CRMP • List of Impaired Waters • River Policy and Classification Plan • The Pawcatuck River Estuary and Little Narragansett Bay: An Interstate Management Plan • URI Watershed Watch
	Upper	Impaired	• High bacteria • Elevated lead • High nitrate concentrations		

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Table 1-3 Aquifer Water Quality, Management, and Protection

Resource		Water Quality	Issues	Stressors	Management and Protections
Aquifers	Ashaway	Good	• Localized contamination • High nitrate concentrations • High bacteria • Hazardous material spills	• Urban development • Failing septic systems • Road salt	• Rules and Regulations for Groundwater Quality • Rules and Regulations Establishing Minimum Standards Relating to Location, Design, Construction and Maintenance of On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems • RIDEM establishes footprint of groundwater reservoirs, groundwater recharge areas and WPAs • RI Wellhead Protection Program • OWMP • Wastewater Facilities Plan • WSSMP • Westerly Source Water Assessment
	Bradford	Good			
	Westerly	Good			

Table 1-4 Coastline Water Quality, Management, and Protection

Resource		Water Quality	Issues	Stressors	Management and Protections
Coastline	Town-wide	Unknown	• Erosion and habitat degradation • Climate change	• Urban development	• CRMP

Section 1.5 – Agriculture

Agriculture in Westerly is valued for its provision of fresh food, economic contributions, and its role in the maintenance and protection of open space and rural character. According to the Town's Assessment Department, there are four (4) large-scale traditional working farms within the Town:

- Everbreeze Farm | 56 Dunn's Corners-Bradford Road (Assessor's Map 101, Lot 2),
- Hillandale Farm | 26 Haversham Road (Assessor's Map 134, Lot 3A-1),
- Manfredi Farms | 77 Dunn's Corners-Bradford Road (Assessor's Map 92, Lot 1), and
- Ocean Breeze Farm | 9 Noyes Neck Road (Assessor's Map 132, Lot 88A and Map 133, Lot 1).

Agricultural activity occurs on several other parcels within the community. These farms raise chickens, cows, goats, horses, pigs, sheep, and other livestock for several agricultural products include meat, dairy, fiber, vegetables, fruits, starches, herbs, flowers, hay, and compost. Organic farming is increasing in popularity locally, as consumers demonstrate a willingness to pay increased prices to know where and how their food is grown. Many local farmers sell wholesale, and local grocers, restaurants, and florists have begun working with local farmers in community-supported agriculture programs that benefit both the farms and the retailers. Although agriculture is highly valued, it does have the potential to negatively affect water quality and aquatic habitats if conservation practices are not used to protect these resources. More information on the economic impact of the local agricultural sector can be read in the Economic Vitality chapter.

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Subsection 1.5.1 – Aquaculture

According to RIDEM, aquaculture in the State has nearly doubled in the past few years and coastal salt ponds have been one of the major focuses for this industry. Westerly's salt ponds are nearly ideal environments for shellfish cultivation, with the eastern oyster being the largest crop. CRMC is the primary permitting agency for marine aquaculture. There are 13.35 acres of aquaculture in Winnapaug Pond between two (2) lease holders. This Plan recognizes that to support aquaculture, good water quality is needed. While aquaculture is a basic economic activity for the community and has favorable growth potential, the activity also has the potential to interfere with other uses of the salt ponds. Aquaculture tracts become off limits to recreational users and displace public uses of coastal pond waters. Also, where aquaculture would pose navigational hazards, threaten wildlife, or pose an obstacle to resiliency efforts, it is discouraged. Westerly needs to evaluate the trade-offs associated with aquaculture expansion to balance the economic benefits of aquaculture against potential recreational losses, preservation and conservation efforts, and the public safety concerns involved in resiliency objectives.

Subsection 1.5.2 – Farmland Soils

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) classifies all soil, including prime farmland soils and farmland of State-wide importance, within the US and compiles the information in soil surveys. When prime and important farmlands are lost to commercial, industrial, or residential uses, agricultural activities become relegated to other soils that may be more erodible and prone to drought, less productive, or less easily cultivated. Of the 65 soil types within Westerly, 18 types (covering 2,212 acres, or 11% of the Town of Westerly) are considered prime farmland. An additional 11 soil types (covering 2,008 more acres, or 10% of the Town) are considered farmlands of State-wide importance. Three of the four farms noted in Section 1.5 are located on prime farmland and/or farmland of State-wide importance.



Figure **Agricultural Soils (NAT-M4)** indicates all areas in Westerly that contain prime farmland soils and soils of State-wide importance, as identified through soils data provided by the Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS). The locations of these soils were not limited to undeveloped areas, as it is possible new agricultural operations may be established in the future on land currently used residentially. The map also shows lands actively used for agricultural activity through inclusion of the land cover/land-use RIGIS dataset, based on spring 2011 orthophotography. Rhode Island's Farmland Preservation Act (RIGL §42-82) allows the State to identify and acquire development rights in order to maintain farming, productive open space, and groundwater recharge areas. Three of the four farms noted above have been protected from future development through the purchase of agricultural development rights. Another farm, Silver Farm, is protected by agricultural development rights but is not in active farming use.

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Section 1.6 – Natural Habitats and Vegetation

Westerly's natural landscapes provide the basic sources of food, water, space, and cover necessary for its native species to survive. Beyond this though, the natural environment is a significant factor in our own lives, from basic oxygen production to stress reduction to artistic inspiration in traditional and digital mediums.

Subsection 1.6.1 – Wetlands

Wetlands perform valuable ecological functions by removing nutrients, pollutants, and sediments from surface water runoff, recharging water supplies, reducing shoreline erosion and flood risks, and providing fish and wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, aesthetic benefits, sites for research and education, and commercial fishery benefits.

RIGIS maintains a geographical database of wetlands in Rhode Island that are classified according to the *Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States*, based on their overall wetness and the characteristics of their soils and plants. The most abundant freshwater wetland type in the Town of Westerly, and within the State, is forested wetlands. These wetlands are dominated by the presence of woody vegetation 20 feet or taller in height. Westerly has approximately 2,905 acres of forested wetlands (approximately 15% of the Town). Additionally, there are approximately 608 acres of scrub-shrub wetland (3% of the town), 151 acres of freshwater emergent wetlands (less than one percent of the Town), and 303 acres of estuarine emergent wetlands (less than two percent of the Town). Figure **Ecological Communities (NAT-M5)** uses a dataset contributed by Photo Science, Inc. to RIGIS that is based on the orthophotography captured in spring 2011. The ecological communities shown on this map are classes (including wetland classes) introduced by the *Rhode Island Ecological Communities Classification* in October 2011 which contains simple descriptions of each community. Developed land classes were grouped together to better highlight non-developed ecological communities but are shown in greater detail in Figure **Land Cover 2011 (LUZ-M1)**.

Legislation to protect and regulate the use of wetlands exists at both the federal and State levels of government. RIDEM regulates non-coastal wetlands through the Rules and Regulations Governing the Administration and Enforcement of Fresh Water Wetlands Act. Non-coastal wetlands include bogs, floodplains, ponds, marshes, riverbanks, rivers, streams, and other areas as defined in the regulations. Coastal wetlands are regulated by the RICRMC under authority of RIGL § 46-23-6, as well as through the CRMP and the Salt Pond Region SAMP. The RICRMC addresses coastal wetlands, including salt marshes and coastal freshwater or brackish wetlands contiguous to salt marshes. RIDEM and RICRMC prohibit filling of, or other alterations, to wetlands. RIDEM and RICRMC both require permits for and evaluate all proposed projects that may alter the natural character of wetlands and their functions and/or values. Westerly does not have any municipal wetland regulations or requirements.

In addition to government regulation, some of the best protection for wetlands has been provided through acquisition and conservation easements by private and public land protection programs. Nearly all mapped figures, including those referenced in this chapter, show the location of wetlands. Figure **Conservation Lands (NAT-M6)** offers a visual overview of private and public conservation lands in respect to wetlands. Approximately 1,356 acres (34% of total wetlands) fall within these conservation areas. These areas include State and Town-owned lands as well as private and public land trust holdings. The purposes of the acquisitions include preservation of open spaces, habitat conservation, agricultural land preservation, recreation, and wellhead protection. The wetlands will still be affected by ~~land use~~land-use activities within the conservation land as well as by adjacent land uses.

In 2005, the RIRC published Establishment of Riparian and Shoreline Buffers and the Taxation of Property Included in the Buffers: A Report to the Governor, President of the Senate and Speaker of the House. The report outlined a series of recommendations for the improved protection of riparian and shoreline buffers. Some of the recommendations relevant to the development of this Plan include:

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- Private land owners, watershed councils, land trusts, and municipalities are encouraged to protect critical riparian areas through the following programs:
  - Land conservation and acquisition
  - Flexible urban development standards and tax incentives to encourage restoration of riparian vegetation during the redevelopment of urban parcels
  - Conservation development strategies
- Provide tax incentives to encourage protection of buffer areas
- Designation by municipalities of riparian buffer corridors as open space land in their community comprehensive plans, which would open up the opportunity to provide temporary buffer protection through the Farm, Forest, and Open Space Act.
- Promote education as to the importance of buffers and the tax benefits of donating conservation easements
- Seek state bond monies through RIDEM for riparian buffer restoration

In an effort to monitor and assess the ecological health of freshwater wetlands, and to address some of the concerns included in RIRC's 2005 report, RIDEM initiated the Rhode Island Freshwater Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Plan in 2006. The goal of wetland monitoring and assessment is to improve wetland protection and management by understanding the cumulative impacts of human activities on wetland condition. This RIDEM program is in the development phase and the wetland monitoring and assessment activities are being implemented by RIDEM in partnership with the Rhode Island Natural History Survey (RINHS). Table 1-5 below provides a general overview of the information presented above:

Table 1-5 Wetlands Water Quality, Management, and Protection

Resource		Water Quality	Issues	Stressors	Management and Protections
Wetlands	Town-wide	Unknown	• Unknown	• Stormwater runoff • Urban development	• List of Impaired Waters • RI Freshwater Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Plan • CRMP • Rules and Regulations Governing the Protection and Management of Freshwater Wetlands in the Vicinity of the Coast • Salt Pond Region SAMP

Subsection 1.6.2 – Buffer Zones

Buffer zones (vegetated areas adjacent to rivers, streams, ponds, wetlands, and coastal waters) are important landscape features that help to prevent erosion and control the transport of sediment into adjacent wetlands and water bodies. Buffer zones are valuable for removing pollutants and excess nutrients from surface water runoff and, in some cases, from the underlying groundwater. They also provide valuable wildlife habitat. Residential and commercial development removes considerable areas of vegetation from the landscape and increases impervious areas. The cumulative effects of many individual non-vegetated areas can result in increased sedimentation to surface waters and less removal of pollutants from surface and groundwater. RIDEM and RICRMC have programs in place to protect riparian buffers. RIDEM is finalizing revised wetland regulations that require a buffer of 200 feet outward from the edge of a river, stream, or drinking water supply reservoir and 100 feet outward from all other wetlands. For coastal areas, RICRMC policy requires coastal buffer zones for certain new or improved residential development and proposed commercial and industrial development.

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Subsection 1.6.3 – Terrestrial Habitats

Trees and woody shrubs are an essential component of wildlife habitat for their production of nuts, seeds, fruits, twigs, buds, and foliage for consumption by herbivorous wildlife. In addition, trees and shrubs themselves provide protection and shelter for insects and other prey animals that are consumed by many other forms of wildlife. The diversity and pattern of forests is one of the primary factors determining which types and where wildlife live in a terrestrial environment. The structure and form of the vegetation in the forest, and other early successional habitats, is the critical component of habitat for wildlife. Few wildlife species live exclusively in terrestrial upland. Most utilize adjacent wetlands in some way that may include a source of drinking water, a travel corridor, or an escape cover when under threat by predators.

Forested conservation areas in Westerly include the Town Forest, Riverwood, Grills Preserve, Bradford Preserve, Newton Swamp Management Area, and Woody Hill Management Area. Management and planning efforts for the conservation of terrestrial habitat include those discussed under Subsection 1.6.1 as well as in the next chapter.

Subsection 1.6.4 – Barrier Beaches, Sandy Beaches, and Dunes

The southern coast of Westerly includes several wetlands, rocky shores, bluffs, salt ponds, barrier beaches, and dunes. The barrier beaches are narrow strips of land that occur parallel to the coastline and are separated from the mainland by a coastal salt pond or tidal wetland feature. They are comprised of unconsolidated materials, mostly sands and gravel, and contain a vegetated dune. These habitats are dynamic and can change in shape and extent with each tide and storm event. Vegetation is generally sparse and scattered along elevated portions of the beach. The trapping of windblown sands by dune grass or artificial fencing contribute to the growth and development of dunes. The Salt Pond Region SAMP explains that the natural cyclical patterns of sand placement on beaches and dunes is dynamic. Attempts to stabilize their shapes are not feasible, desirable, nor appropriate.

The Shoreline Change SAMP was approved in June 2018 and provides guidance and tools for State and local decision makers to plan for, prepare for, absorb, recover from, and successfully adapt to the impacts of coastal storms, erosion, and sea level rise. This Plan supports and reinforces the Shoreline Change SAMP by applying the research, tools, and strategies presented in the SAMP to future coastal ~~land use~~land-use decisions in Westerly.

Major beaches in Westerly:

- Sandy Point
- Napatree Point
- East Beach
- Maschaug Beach
- Misquamicut State Beach
- Westerly Town Beach
- Wuskenau Beach
- Dunes Park Beach
- Quonochontaug Beach
- Fenway Beach
- Weekapaug Inn Beach

The coastal areas are highly valued for their recreational opportunities, as places to establish residences, and for the habitat functions they provide. These values are often conflicting, which presents challenges for the management and protection of these resources. The preservation of this land as public or private open space has the benefits of providing public recreation opportunities and protecting the visual character of the area for residents, while also conserving critical wildlife habitat and minimizing economic losses associated with storm damage. Barrier beaches, however, have proved difficult to police and maintain, and, with several notable

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exceptions, there have not been enough funds available for appropriate walkover structures, foredune zone management, beach replenishment, and education.

Sandy Point is a 35-acre barrier island in Little Narragansett Bay that is managed as a wildlife refuge by the Avalonia Land Conservancy. Prior to the Great New England Hurricane of 1938, Sandy Point was the westernmost extent of Rhode Island's mainland. Since 2015, Sandy Point is actively monitored by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as part of the National Refuge System. Napatree Point is largely managed as the Napatree Point Conservation Area by the Watch Hill Fire District and the Watch Hill Conservancy in cooperation with the USFWS for protection of the federally-threatened piping plover. Maschaug Beach, owned by the Misquamicut Club, is also managed in cooperation with USFWS for piping plover protection.

The Lathrop Wildlife Refuge and Winnapaug Salt Marsh conservation area on the northern shore of Winnapaug Pond are managed by the Audubon Society of Rhode Island. ~~and~~ Misquamicut State Beach and Westerly's two public beaches are located on the heavily-developed barrier that forms the southern side of Winnapaug Pond. Dunes Park and Watch Hill private beaches are accessible to the public. The Quonochontaug barrier within Westerly includes conservation areas managed by the Weekapaug Fire District, the Weekapaug Foundation for Conservation, and the Nopes Island Conservation Association. Fenway Beach is managed by the Weekapaug Fire District.

Subsection 1.6.5 – Sand Dunes and Dune Grass

Sand dunes form between the shrub zone and the beach. A sand dune is created whenever sand blown by the wind can be trapped by plants and debris. Older dunes are more stable and are termed "secondary dunes," usually existing between the shrub zone and the higher, newer dunes termed "primary dunes." Sand dunes provide a first line of defense against the effect of high winds, storm surge, inland flooding, and beach erosion, serving to protect interior land. Sand dunes also provide habitat to a variety of wildlife, shore birds, insects, and plants, some of which may be threatened or endangered. Their protection is in the best interests of both property owners (coastal and inland alike) and residents/visitors seeking to enjoy the beaches while preserving them into the future.

In some of Westerly's beaches, dune fences are erected to assist in creating and maintaining this unstable resource. While dunes erode due to wind and wave action, especially during storms, they can quickly rebuild if vegetation remains in-tact. As a fragile natural resource, the largest threat to their existence is often human foot traffic, which degrades dune vegetation. This threat can be ameliorated by designating paths over the dunes and educating the public. Migration of dunes landward will also be essential to combatting sea level rise, and maintaining proper distance between coastal structures and the dunes is essential to ensuring that migration can occur. While technically under the jurisdiction of the RICRMC, Westerly is committed to protecting these natural resources.

Subsection 1.6.6~~5~~ – Bluffs and Rocky Shores

In addition to beaches and dunes, Westerly's south shore is characterized by areas of coastal bluffs and rocky shores. Two (2) areas of coastal bluffs include Watch Hill, where more than a mile of low-profile bluffs extend east toward Maschaug Pond, and at Weekapaug Point (often referred to as the overlook or the lookout). Small areas of rocky shoreline occur at Napatree Point, Watch Hill Point, and Weekapaug Point.

Subsection 1.6.7~~6~~ – Rare Species and Unique Habitats

The Town of Westerly covers an area with many varied habitats ranging from barriers, salt water and brackish ponds, tidal marshes, freshwater wetlands, rivers and streams, upland fields, and woodlands. A number of valuable water resources in the watershed provide unique habitats for numerous rare and endangered species. About 70% of Rhode Island's globally rare species (generally found at fewer than 100 sites worldwide) and 63% of the State rare species and natural community occurrences (such as rare plants and animals) are found within the Pawcatuck Watershed. RIDEM's Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program (RINHP) tracks the State's rare species and natural communities of conservation concern. The RINHP has developed lists of species, both plant and animal, considered

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to be endangered or threatened at the federal level, endangered or threatened at the State level, or of special concern in the State. These data sources are used to prioritize land protection activities throughout the public and private sectors. The RINHP has identified several sites in Westerly that are natural communities of conservation concern and where rare species are known to exist.

Figure Habitat Resources (NAT-M2) also shows the significant Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) that exist in Westerly, as contributed to RIGIS by RIDEM in spring 2016. NHAs are areas where there have been notably dense numbers of observations of one or more species deemed rare, threatened, or noteworthy species by the State and/or federal governments.

The RI Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) was first adopted by the RI DEM and approved by the USFWS in 2005. RI DEM, with assistance from the RI Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and the University of Rhode Island, published a 10-year revision in 2015. The 2015 RI WAP is a comprehensive plan that provides direction and coordination of wildlife conservation efforts. Top ranking rare and vulnerable habitats in the Region are abundant and healthy in Westerly, for example Maritime Herbaceous Dunes and Maritime Shrubland. The WAP database on habitat condition is an important resource regarding habitat vulnerability. Benefits that the RI WAP brings to the state include: a comprehensive approach to wildlife conservation; millions of dollars in matching funds for the conservation of non-game species and their habitats; new local and regional partnerships; and increased support for statewide conservation priorities.

Subsection 1.6.8~~7~~ – Pawcatuck River

The Pawcatuck River and its tributaries support 40 species of freshwater, anadromous (living in salt water and entering freshwater to spawn), and catadromous (living in freshwater and entering salt water to spawn) fish including striped bass, white perch, smelt, alewives, shad, Atlantic salmon (federally listed as endangered), and wild and stocked populations of brook trout. Fish passage restoration projects have restored anadromous alewife, American shad, sea-run brown trout, and rainbow smelt to the river. Small returns of adult Atlantic salmon have also been achieved.

As noted earlier in the chapter, the Pawcatuck River is federally designated as a Wild and Scenic river, along with the other six (6) rivers of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed. In 2014, the National Park Service (NPS) had preliminarily found the watershed to be likely eligible based on a reconnaissance survey, and a cooperative agreement with WPWA was signed the following year to facilitate a three (3)-year study of eligibility. A Wild and Scenic Study Committee then began meeting in December 2015 and the *Wood-Pawcatuck Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Plan* was adopted in June 2018.

Subsection 1.6.9~~8~~ – Aguntaug Swamp

Aguntaug Swamp is one of the largest freshwater wetlands in Rhode Island, at approximately 2,000 acres, and contains one of the most extensive stands of Atlantic white cedar in the state, along with a great diversity of wetland vegetation. It also contains marsh, bog, and open water habitats. The boundaries of Aguntaug Swamp include Chapman Pond, Phantom Bog, and the Pawcatuck River.

Aguntaug Swamp is important as a groundwater resource and flood control area for the Pawcatuck River. A variety of mammals, amphibians, waterfowl, and other water birds frequently utilize the swamp and Chapman Pond, including several rare species. Bird species nesting here include osprey (federally protected), bitterns (listed as endangered and threatened by the State), and herons (listed as a species of concern by the State).

Subsection 1.6.10~~9~~ – Coastal Environment

Salt ponds provide important ecosystem and habitat functions. These include prime habitat for over 100 species of fish, shellfish, and birds that utilize the salt ponds at some stage in their life cycle. Many species found elsewhere in the State are present in the salt ponds region and many are dependent upon the salt ponds' specialized habitats, such as salt marsh and brackish wetlands. The most populous species are quahogs, oysters, and flounder.

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Unfortunately, habitat fragmentation within the watersheds of each has impacted many of these species and resulted in declining populations.

Shorebirds are one group that depends significantly on salt ponds. Documented nesting of the previously mentioned piping plover occurs at several sites along the south shore, including Maschaug Pond and Napatree Point. The National Audubon Society has designated several Westerly sites as a global priority~~ly~~ ~~i~~Important ~~b~~Bird ~~a~~Area (IBA) because of their importance to migratory shorebirds.

USFWS maintains lists of bird species classified as Nongame Migratory Bird Species of Management Concern in the continental United States. Species from this list occurring in the salt ponds region include the seaside sparrow, northern harrier, American bittern, and black rail. The first three (3) species are listed as rare species by the State. Waterfowl, including plovers, ducks, and geese, are common inhabitants of the salt ponds and use the area most heavily during migration and wintering periods. The American black duck is considered a species of concern by the USFWS. Overall, numbers of waterfowl recorded during counts made within the past five (5) years are less than historical accounts made prior to the current level of development, which includes such alterations to the natural environment as breachways, a modification that has affected the food supply for many birds.

Many mammal species can be found within the diverse habitats of the salt ponds region as well. These include meadow voles, white-footed mice, rabbits, chipmunks, squirrels, skunks, bats, red and gray fox, raccoons, muskrat, minks, ermines, fisher, martin, river otters, white-tailed deer, coyotes, and a small but increasing winter population of seals.

The Napatree Point Conservation Area (hereafter Napatree Point) includes 86 pristine, unsullied acres of beach and coastal habitat. A popular public beach, open year- round, it is managed by the Watch Hill Fire District and preserved by a conservation easement with a local non-profit organization, the Watch Hill Conservancy. Napatree Point extends approximately 1.3 miles west into Little Narragansett Bay, forming a protective harbor and habitat for numerous species of fish, crab, shore birds, insects, fauna, and eel grass. It serves as an important resting area for migratory birds and is considered a "living laboratory" by the University of Rhode Island's Coastal Resources Institute. Napatree has been formally designated a global priority IBA by the National Audubon Society, a Climate Demonstration Site by the University of Rhode Island, and is informally considered a Dark Sky Site. It should be noted here that Maschaug Pond and Beach are also designated as a global priority IBA and stretches of this beach are maintained by another local non-profit organization, the East Beach Association.

Subsection 1.6.11~~0~~ – Habitat Protection

The main threat to wildlife habitat is the development of land for human uses. Natural threats such as cyclones and invasive species can also contribute to the loss of quality wildlife habitat. The clearing of land for construction and development destroys native vegetation and its natural moderating effects, resulting in increased velocity and quantity of water runoff. Wetland filling and alteration impacts the ecological function of the remaining wetlands. Construction of breachways and associated dredging have changed the ecology, chemistry, and biology of the salt ponds by increasing the rate at which sand accumulates within them and altering their salinity and flushing characteristics.

Numerous regulations and planning documents have been developed with the goal of protecting wildlife habitat. Many of these have already been discussed in previous sections of this chapter. Regulations at the State level include the RIDEM and RICRMC wetlands regulations mentioned in the Wetlands section of this chapter. Regulations specific to the Westerly area include RICRMC's Salt Pond Region SAMP. Within the SAMP, policies to protect fish and wildlife habitat include prohibiting the disturbance of winter flounder spawning grounds during the spawning season (between the months from December through May) and prohibiting the alteration or disturbance of piping plover habitats during nesting. Planning efforts at the State and watershed level include the Rhode Island Freshwater Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Plan, the Rivers Policy and Classification Plan (RPCP), and the South County Greenspace Protection Strategy (discussed further in Chapter 2).

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Chapter 2
OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

With regard to open space and recreation, *Land Use 2025* poses a series of questions to be addressed when setting and implementing goals and policies that specifically relate to open space and recreation.

The Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act defines open space as:

> "Any parcel or area of land or water set aside for public or private use or enjoyment or for the use and enjoyment of owners and occupants of land adjoining or neighboring such open space; provided that the area may be improved with only those buildings, structures, streets, and off-street parking, and other improvements that are designed to be incidental to the natural openness of the land."

Therefore, open space may be either permanently protected or subject to public or private use (e.g., golf course, land enrolled in the Farm, Forest, and Open Space Program, public park, agriculture, etc.). This Chapter uses the terms "conservation" and "Conserved Land" to distinguish those lands that are permanently protected from development. Open space for recreation may mean development for 'active' recreation, which includes constructed facilities, and/or 'passive' recreation, which involves existing natural resources and can be engaged in at sites that are undeveloped or minimally developed. The Town of Westerly has both land and water areas of local and regional significance providing residents and visitors with both access and enjoyment of open space.

While *Land Use 2025* establishes a framework for open space and recreation planning, *A Greener Path* and *Ocean State Outdoors* assess more specific State-wide needs and provide specific goals and policies which municipalities may address in their comprehensive plans.

Several selected accomplishments toward achieving the 2010 Plan's recommended actions for Open Space and Recreation include:

- Acquisition and protection of several hundred acres town-wide by the Town and several non-profit organizations including:
  - the Town Forest
  - the Lucey properties (through a $3 million bond in 2006 and $1.3 million bond in 2014)
  - properties along Canal Street, Harbor Drive, and Shetland Drive
- Purchase of an additional boat to patrol Westerly's shoreline and river
- Provision of picnic facilities at Cimalore Field, Gingerella Sports Complex, and Craig Field
- Creations of Rotary Park, Wuskenau Beach, and a community center
- Clearing of hiking trails and provision of signage at the Town Forest
- Upgrades to school and municipal playground facilities
- Hiring of a Program Coordinator in the Recreation Department
- Increasing activities made available at the Westerly Senior Citizens Center

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Continued open space preservation efforts and recreation facility improvements are encouraged and assisted by the Recreation Department, the Recreation Board, the Westerly Municipal Land Trust (WMLT), the Conservation Commission, and numerous private and non-profit partners.

Section 2.1 – Existing Open Space For Conservation

Open space in Westerly is a part of the community's character and is essential to the protection of natural resources and recreational facilities for residents and visitors. WMLT and the Conservation Commission both provide the Town Council with recommendations for conservation, but the Town has not had a consistent funding source for the purchase of open space for its passive recreational needs. WMLT has relied solely on the passage of municipal bonds for its funding. The following subsections provide an inventory of existing open space, regional conservation plans and strategies, and available preservation tools which will assist in the management of these resources.

In Westerly, there is a demonstrated need for balance between the protection of and provision for natural resources and development pressures. Responding to the Town's open space preservation needs are a variety of public and private organizations which have together protected over 5,000 acres, translating into about 26% of the Town's total land area. No less than 58% of these conserved lands combined were publicly accessible (a specific percentage could not be determined because some properties had limited, rather than full, public access but further information regarding these limitations was not available). Figure Conservation Lands (NAT-M6) includes all existing conservation areas permanently protected, including local 'conservation intents' in which property owners have made efforts to protect their land from future development. Table 2-1 below illustrates the breakdown of conservation lands between public and private owners.

Table 2-1 Conservation Land by Owner

Owner	Acreage	Percentage	Public Access Acreage
State of Rhode Island	975.1	19.4%	975.1
Town of Westerly	792.1	15.8%	580.9+
Westerly Municipal Land Trust	476.4	9.5%	419.6+
Public Ownership Subtotal	2,243.6	44.7%	1,975.6+
Audubon Society of Rhode Island	95.5	1.9%	86+
Avalonia Land Conservancy	38.8	0.8%	38.8
H. C. Moore Foundation	31.5	0.6%	31.5
Memorial & Library Assoc. of Westerly	14.5	0.3%	14.5
The Nature Conservancy	119.8	2.4%	0+
Nopes Island Conservation Association	4.1	<0.1%	4.1
Shelter Harbor Fire District	93.5	1.9%	0
Watch Hill Conservancy	4.8	<0.1%	0
Watch Hill Fire District	61.1	1.2%	0
Weekapaug Fire District	51.8	1.0%	0
Weekapaug Foundation for Conservation	108.9	2.2%	19.8+
Westerly Fire District	1.7	<0.1%	0
Westerly Land Trust	1687	29.6%	1057
Other Private	663.3	13.2%	0
Private Ownership Subtotal	2,774.6	55.3%	932.6+
Total	5,018.2	100%	2,908.2+

Source: New England GeoSystems, 2019

Many properties are also subject to one or two easement owners and many easements also list more than one participant, reflecting funding and contingent succession of financial or operating responsibility. These documents are matters of public record that can be researched and accessed through the Town's land evidence records.

Open space is scattered throughout the Town but is more largely concentrated in the eastern and northern portions of Westerly. All of these areas are accessible to the public. One of the largest contiguous open space land masses in Rhode Island, held in preservation by multiple organizations, is on the eastern border of Westerly. Here, more than 1,300 acres of land act as a natural greenway system for animal migration and habitat. The organizations that own the properties that create this greenway are:

Owner	Area	Acres
State of Rhode Island	Woody Hill Management Area	±820
Westerly Land Trust	Wahaneeta Preserve	±75
Westerly Municipal Land Trust	Lucey Properties	±490

The Lucey properties were both acquired through the passage of municipal bond referendums from the Lucey farm located at McGowan's Corners. The first bond was passed as an open space and recreation bond in 2006 and led to the establishment of the Bradford Preserve. The second bond was passed as a passive recreation bond in 2014. Other lands that are contiguous with this Greenway System but not held in perpetuity as recreation or open space include 61 acres owned by the Narragansett Indian Tribe. This Plan calls for an assessment of both the conservation and recreation value of the land contiguous to the Greenway Systems.

A substantial amount of open space exists on the four (4) golf courses in the Town: the Shelter Harbor Golf Club (closed membership and partially located in neighboring Charlestown), the Misquamicut Club (closed membership), the Weekapaug Golf Club (semi-closed membership), and the Winnapaug Country Club (open membership). The Shelter Harbor Golf Club and Weekapaug Golf Club are both preserved through conservation easements. Although they contain areas of open space, the four golf courses are recognized as commercial recreational enterprises and their zoning designation is Commercial Recreation (CR).

Coastal open space, accessible to the public, includes the Misquamicut State Beach, the Town's two beaches, the Weekapaug Fishing Area, Napatree Point Conservation Area, and several beaches owned by fire districts. The Audubon Society of Rhode Island and WLT maintain large areas of open space along Shore Road on the northern shore of Winnapaug Pond, just north of Shore Road is WLT's Dr. John Champlin Glacier Park and Winnapaug Farm Preserve.

Open space preservation in Westerly has a variety of purposes, including agricultural land protection, water supply protection, habitat protection and recreation. Integral to ensuring continued open space protection in Westerly are land acquisitions. Acquisition types include fee simple ownership, agricultural development rights, conservation easements, and recreation easements. Property acquisitions have been proven to be an economic benefit to local communities (recreation, tourism, reduction of costs associated with storm damage) and they also help preserve community character and scenic viewpoints. Consistent reliable funding for open space acquisition, such as through a real estate transfer tax, should be considered.

Section 2.2 – Regional Conservation Plans and Strategies

As Westerly considers its future open space preservation needs, it is important to consider how these needs fit into the regional framework. In achieving regional goals for open space conservation, there is a need to understand the limiting factors such as road widths, traffic constraints, topography, existing environmentally sensitive areas, and availability of funds.

For the Town to achieve what is proposed in the State's Greenspace and Greenways System, it needs to:

- Continue efforts to obtain open spaces along the Pawcatuck River

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- Initiate a greenways project along the Town's coastal border
- Preserve greenspace along the coast and in the central portion of the Town

South County Greenspace Protection Strategy was completed in 2003. Although it remains a preservation resource, it should be updated with a more contemporary reference to current open space policies and strategies of RIDEM. Priorities identified in the composite maps include: five (5) primary destination points in Westerly (Bradford Landing, White Rock, Westerly Center, Watch Hill and Weekapaug), heritage areas along the Town's coastal edge and along the Pawcatuck River, a large natural resource zone in the central portion of town and heritage areas within natural resource zones near White Rock, Bradford Landing, Weekapaug, Watch Hill, and Chapman Pond. Other priorities identified on the Westerly maps include heritage corridors, natural resource corridors, bike trails, hiking trails, and water trails.

Section 2.3 – Conservation Tools

Several tools are available to the Town to help it preserve and maintain open space as development occurs, including the Farm, Forest, and Open Space Act, funding sources, and State/regional guides to development practices.

Table 2-2 Conservation Tools for Open Space

Tool	Description
Farm, Forest, and Open Space Act tax incentive program	Helps preserve properties for farming, forested land, or open space. As property owners face increasing economic pressures to convert to more profitable land uses, this program enables land owners to have their land assessment based on its current use, not its value for development. This is a tool that has been utilized in Westerly. As of autumn 2019, 66 properties were enrolled in this program.
Funding sources for land acquisition/protection	Funding sources for land acquisitions are a critical tool for preservation. Funding sources include direct or matching funds from various entities including RIDEM, Champlin Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, the Lattner Family Foundation, open space bonds, and others.
Rhode Island Conservation Development Manual[2]	Provides a 10-step process for planning and design of creative development projects. The manual is a response to increasing development pressures and resulting suburban sprawl. Like the goals of cluster development, the manual utilizes conservation development as a technique to preserve open space in a community.
South County Watersheds Technical Planning Assistance Project[1]	An effort by several groups, including RIDEM, Rhode Island Rural Lands Coalition, and South County Planners, to prepare a comprehensive review of the best possible solutions nation-wide and present how they can be applied locally. The result of the project was several documents to help plan for growth, including the South County Design Manual, model zoning ordinances, strategies to promote farming and forestry, a Transfer of Development Rights study, and a Development Site Assessment Guide.

[1]Town of Westerly Assessment Department

[2] RIDEM provides several guides for environmentally-sensitive development.

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Section 2.4 – Recreation

The Recreation Department (established in 2001 as a result of a recommendation in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan), manages and administers improvements for all Town~~the~~ recreation areas and facilities – including Westerly Town Beach and Wuskenau Beach ~~Facility~~ – with the involvement of DPW's Buildings and Grounds Division and a volunteer Recreation Board. The seven-member Board meets once monthly and advises both the Planning Board and the Town Council on the planning, organization, and promotion of recreational resources in Westerly. The Recreation Director reports to the Recreation Board on municipal recreation efforts and other matters.

Figures **Land-Based Recreation (REC-M1)** and **Water-Based Recreation (REC-M2)** show the Town's existing public non-water and water-based recreation sites, boat launches and ramps, bike routes, hiking trails, and scenic areas. The recreation sites included are those on the most up-to-date State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) Inventory of Facilities as contributed by RIDEM.

At the beginning of 2017, the Town of Westerly engaged BSC Group, Inc. to develop a master plan for publicly-owned recreation and athletic facilities. The "Westerly Athletic Facilities Master Planning Site Analysis and Evaluation," dated September 2017, is the tool for town staff and the Recreation Board or the Westerly School Department to use for assistance with planning and management of facilities for active recreation and athletics.

There are eight (8) public facilities reviewed and discussed in the Master Plan:

1. Bradford Preserve
2. Cimalore Recreation Complex
3. Craig Field Recreation Complex
4. Gingerella Sports Complex
5. Westerly Youth Football Field
6. Rotary Park
7. Westerly Middle School
8. Westerly High School

These facilities were individually evaluated in the report. The report analyses the context, circulation, zoning, soils, and field evaluations for each facility. Other fields and athletic facilities do exist within the Town but are not covered under the scope of this report since they are not town-owned or maintained. They include Airport Road Field (State-owned), elementary school playgrounds, and the Trombino Sports Complex (privately-owned).

Global policies suggested by BSC Group, Inc. to guide recreational facility improvements include the following:

1. Upgrade facilities to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility needs.
2. Ensure equivalent facilities for boys and girls to meet Title IX requirements.
3. Upgrade athletic facilities to include multiple athletic fields, improve lighting, and replace aging and/or outdated infrastructure.
4. Promote community sports programming in multi-court facilities by replacing single tennis and basketball court facilities in favor of multiple courts of the same type at a given facility (i.e., consolidate uses to create recreational hubs or hotspots).
5. Include green initiatives in future planning.
6. Explore the possibility of converting irrigation systems from city water to wells to reduce maintenance budgets.
7. Install more durable and lower maintenance surfaces in high wear areas of playgrounds.
8. Create new amenities and programs to adjust to changing recreational demands and trends.

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Subsection 2.4.1 – Municipal Land-Based Facilities

There are several outdoor, non-water-based public facilities which serve Westerly's active recreation needs. These include the Bradford Preserve, Bowling Lane Playground, Cimalore Field, Craig Field, Gingerella Sports Complex, Rotary Park, and a basketball court and tennis court on Narragansett Avenue (see Tower Street School Community Center in Table 2-4). Additionally, the Town maintains the State-owned Airport Field. In addition to these facilities, it should also be noted the Town owns a 230.4-acre property along the Pawcatuck River known as the Town Forest. Although this property is categorized as habitat protection land, it also contains approximately three miles of trails for nature walks and environmental education. The table below presents the Town's facilities in slightly more detail:

Table 2-3 Municipal Land-Based Recreation Facilities

Facility	Location	Description	Figure REC-M1 Reference
Bradford Preserve	Bradford Road	2 lacrosse fields and cross-country/hiking/mountain biking trails	1
Bruce Ladd Memorial Dog Park	Larry Hirsch Lane	Dog park	2
Bowling Lane Playground	Bowling Lane	1 playground	3
Cimalore Field	Wilson Street	1 baseball field, 2 basketball courts. 1 playground, and 4 softball fields	4
Craig Field	Mountain Avenue	1 softball field, 1 basketball court, and 1 playground	5
Gingerella Sports Complex	White Rock Road	1 basketball court, 1 playground, 1 skate park, 8 soccer fields, and 1 tennis court	6
Westerly Youth Football Complex	60 Old Hopkinton Road	1 football field, 1 practice field	7
Rotary Park	Airport Road	2 playgrounds, 6 tennis courts, and 2 volleyball courts; walking trail	8
Recreation Department	15 Church Street	Administrative offices, multi-use gymnasium, 1 baseball field, 1 basketball court, 2 tennis courts, 2 playgrounds	9

Source: Town of Westerly, 2019

Generally, the Town's recreation facilities are in fair condition. Much of the infrastructure is aging and in need of repair and upgrades. Replacement of dated and damaged amenities, including parking areas, press box buildings, bleachers, and lighting would improve public benefit and safety of these facilities. Installation of new light fixtures in some of these parks will improve safety, reduce potential vandalism, extend usability of these sites, reduce maintenance, and increase energy-efficiency. Drainage issues noted on some athletic fields, tennis and basketball courts, and parking areas should be addressed to reduce long-term infrastructure deterioration and land erosion. Addition of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible walking paths would also provide broad benefits to some of the larger park areas. Rather than providing single basketball and tennis courts within a park, multiple courts of the same kind should be concentrated in specific parks, allowing for more programmed sporting events to occur at these parks.

Many of the natural turf athletic fields are in poor condition due to overuse and drainage concerns. To reduce demand on existing natural turf fields, it is estimated that an additional 3 or 4 youth fields and 2 natural turf multi-purpose fields would be needed. Some of these additional fields may be constructed through expansion of facilities

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at Gingerella Sports Complex. Additional athletic field needs may be met through the acquisition of additional land to construct natural turf fields or conversion of existing athletic fields to synthetic turf to increase the intensity of use permitted. Most notable in need of relief are the Westerly High School athletic fields, which receive intensive play throughout the year and would benefit majorly from conversion to synthetic turf. Suitable land for expansion of facilities is sparse; thus, conversion to synthetic turf may be the most effective way to reduce maintenance and increase play time on these fields.

Implementation of infrastructure upgrades identified in the 2017 master plan is currently ongoing and additional funding to complete additional recreational facility goals is being pursued.

Subsection 2.4.2 – School District Land-Based Facilities

The Westerly School Department works in conjunction with the Recreation Department to provide and optimize the recreation opportunities available for the entire Westerly community. School recreational facilities are available to the public while not in use by the schools. Table 2-4 details some information regarding the available recreation resources at Westerly Public Schools. The property at 15 Church Street, the former Bradford School, also includes outdoor recreation fields and playground.

Table 2-4 School District Land-Based Recreation Facilities

Facility	Location	Description	Figure REC-M1 Reference
Dunn's Corners Elementary School	8.5 Plateau Road	1 basketball court, 1 general field, 1 gymnasium, 1 paved playing area, and 1 playground	10
~~Tower Street School Community Center~~	~~93 Tower Street~~	~~1 general field, 1 gymnasium, and 1 playground (1 basketball court and 1 tennis court adjacent)~~	~~11~~
Springbrook Elementary School	39 Springbrook Road	1 basketball court, 1 general field, 1 gymnasium, and 1 playground	11~~2~~
State Street Elementary School	35 State Street	1 general field, 1 gymnasium, and 1 playground	12~~3~~
Westerly High School	23 Ward Avenue 15 Highland Avenue	2 general fields, 2 gymnasiums, 1 multi-sport fields, and 1 track	13~~4~~
Westerly Middle School	10 Sandy Hill Road	1 baseball field, 1 gymnasium, and 1 multi-sport field	14~~5~~

Source: Town of Westerly, 2019

Excluding the Transportation and Bus Garage, the six (6) public school facilities in Westerly are located on approximately 111 acres and include a variety of recreation opportunities. Parent-teacher organizations (PTOs) and school administrations facilitate the construction of new or updated playground facilities at the schools. As the table above shows, each school facility has at least one outdoor field and indoor gymnasium. While priority is given to school team sports, non-school youth and adult leagues also use school gyms. Demand for the gyms is primarily focused on the high school and middle school facilities.

The Westerly High School and Westerly Middle School athletic facilities were assessed in the 2017 recreational facilities master plan. As noted in the Subsection 2.4.1 above, "Municipal Facilities," the Westerly High School athletic fields are currently overused and in need of improvements, such as installation of synthetic turf playing

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surfaces, to keep up with the intensive recreational demands. Middle School athletic facilities are consistent with other recreational facilities in the Town, exhibiting some drainage concerns, outdated infrastructure, and limited ADA-accessibility. Other school district facilities are owned and maintained by the school district and have not been assessed for future needs.

Subsection 2.4.3 – Quasi-Public Land-Based Facilities

Quasi-public facilities within Westerly include privately-owned facilities available for public use. The most significant of these, Wilcox Park, is open from dawn to 9:00 P.M. and serves as a central feature in the heart of Downtown Westerly (for more information on Wilcox Park, see the Historic and Cultural Resources chapter). Some of these facilities listed as quasi-public have user fees but are open to the public.

Table 2-5 Quasi-Public Land-Based Recreation Facilities

Facility	Location	Description	Figure REC-M1 Reference
Camp Quequatuck	Boy Scout Drive	4.5 acres containing 3 camp sites and 1 general field	15~~6~~
Grills Preserve	198 Bowling Lane	482 acres containing cross country/walking trails	16~~7~~
Ocean Community Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)	95 High Street	1 fitness center, 2 gymnasiums, 1 playground, 2 swimming pools, and 1 tennis court	17~~8~~
Washington Trust Skating Center	61 Main Street	Skating rink (winter)/Sand court (summer)	18~~9~~
Westerly Senior Citizens Center	39 State Street	12,500 square foot center containing activity room, cafeteria game room, and lounge	19~~20~~
Wilcox Park	44 Broad Street	Arboretum containing benches, a fountain, 5 monuments, a pond, and walking paths	20~~1~~

Source: Town of Westerly, 2019

These quasi-public facilities are not Town-owned or managed; therefore, they have not been included in the above-mentioned recreational master plan.

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Subsection 2.4.4 – Private Land-Based Facilities

There are a variety of private facilities, listed in Table 2-6, that provide recreational opportunities in Westerly. A substantial amount of open space exists for recreation. The four golf courses in town are recognized as commercial recreational enterprises and their zoning designation is Commercial Recreation (CR). Several other private facilities serve as home to several sports groups such as the Paul E. Trombino Sports Complex, home to Westerly National Little League.

Table 2-6 Private Land-Based Recreation Facilities

Facility	Location	Description	Figure REC-M21 Reference
Misquamicut Club	60 Ocean View Highway	1 golf course and 7 tennis courts	212
Pond View Racquet Club	252 Shore Road	5 tennis courts	223
Shelter Harbor Golf Club	1 Golf Club Drive[1]	1 golf course	234
Shelter Harbor Inn	10 Wagner Road	Outdoor Paddle Club	245
Trombino Sports Complex	Moorehouse Road	3 baseball fields and 2 softball fields	256
Weekapaug Golf Club	265 Shore Road	1 golf course	267
Weekapaug Tennis Club	24 Chapman Road	8 tennis courts	278
Winnapaug Country Club	184 Shore Road	1 golf course	289

Source: Town of Westerly, 2019

These private facilities are not Town-owned or managed; therefore, they have not been included in the above-mentioned recreational master plan.

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Subsection 2.4.5 – Regional Facilities

An important consideration when addressing the recreation facilities in Westerly is identifying the surrounding recreation facilities which serve the region. These include Barn Island Wildlife Management Area (Stonington, Connecticut), Burlingame State Park, Ninigret Park, Quonochontaug Breachway, a river/cultural corridor, and a state bike route. Below are brief descriptions of these facilities.

Table 2-7 Regional Recreation Facilities

Facility	Description
Barn Island Wildlife Management Area	A 1,013-acre wildlife conservation area located in Stonington (directly across from Watch Hill Harbor on Little Narragansett Bay) managed by the State of Connecticut. The wildlife conservation area has the largest public boat launch on the Pawcatuck River/Little Narragansett Bay waterway.
Burlingame State Park	A state park located in Charlestown featuring 3,100 acres of rocky woodlands and 755 campsites surrounding Watchaug Pond.
Ninigret Park	A 227-acre public park in Charlestown, on Route 1A, with four (4) tennis courts, a 0.9-mile bicycle course, basketball courts, a Kid's Place Playground, Frisbee disc golf course, recreational fields, a beach, a spring fed pond, and the Ninigret Park Frosty Drew Nature Center and Observatory.
Quonochontaug Breachway	A popular public boat launch and fishing area located in Charlestown.
River/Heritage Corridor	The state's Greenways map identifies a River/Heritage Corridor along the Pawcatuck River north from Westerly's downtown and continuing into Charlestown and Hopkinton.
Southern Rhode Island Green Trail	An on-street, state-designated bike route along Route 91 beginning in Bradford and continuing into Hopkinton, Richmond, and Charlestown.

Source: Town of Westerly, 2019

These regional facilities are not Town-owned or managed; therefore, they have not been included in the above-mentioned recreational master plan.

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Subsection 2.4.6 – Water-Based Facilities

Westerly's water-based recreation facilities, in either Town, State or Private ownership, are key features in the Town's recreation system. Bounded by water on three sides, the Town has numerous riverfront and coastal properties which serve as recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. Public waterfront facilities in Westerly include beaches, marinas, and boat launches and are identified below:

Table 2-8 Publicly Accessible Water-Based Recreation Facilities

Recreation Site	Location	Description	Figure REC-M2 Reference
Westerly Town Beach	365 Atlantic Avenue	Sand beach	1
Wuskenau Beach	311 Atlantic Avenue	Sand beach	2
Dunes Park Beach	Atlantic Avenue	Block Island Sound	3
East Beach	Bluff Avenue	Block Island Sound	4
Maschaug Beach	Ocean View Highway	Block Island Sound	5
Misquamicut State Beach	257 Atlantic Avenue	~~Block Island Sound~~Sand beach	6
Napatree Point	Fort Road	Block Island Sound and Little Narragansett Bay	7
Quonochontaug Beach	Sand Trail	Block Island Sound	8
Sandy Point	Sandy Point	Little Narragansett Bay	9
Watch Hill Beach	151 Bay Street	Block Island Sound	10

Source: Town of Westerly, 2019

In addition to the water-based recreation facilities in the table above, there are also restaurants and clubs on Atlantic Avenue which provide direct customer access to the beach.

A recreational facilities master plan, similar to the 2017 plan created by BSC Group for land-based facilities in Westerly, is needed for water-based facilities such as town beaches to assess future needs for these assets.

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Section 2.5 – Water Access

Other important water-based facilities are access points for boating and fishing. The following tables list the available water access points in Westerly (Table 2-9) and rights-of-way designated by RICRMC that provide public access to the coast (Table 2-10).

Table 2-9 Recreational Boating and Fishing Facilities

Recreation Site	Public Access	Location	Description	Figure REC-M2 Reference
Watch Hill Yacht Club	Yes	21 Bay Street	Watch Hill Cove	11
Avondale Boat Yard	Yes	47 Avondale Road	Pawcatuck River	12
Bradford Landing Fishing Area (DEM)	Yes	Bradford Road	Pawcatuck River	13
Chapman Pond (DEM)	Yes	Larry Hirsch Lane	Chapman Pond	14
Cove Edge Marina	Yes	93 Watch Hill Road	Pawcatuck River	15
Frank Hall Boat Yard	Yes	3 India Point Road	Pawcatuck River	16
Gray's Boat Yard	Yes	91 Watch Hill Road	Pawcatuck River	17
Main Street Boat Ramp (DEM)	Yes	99 Main Street	Pawcatuck River	18
Lotteryville (Roger Hall) Marina	Yes	25 Avondale Road	Pawcatuck River	19
Pier 65	Yes	65 Margin Street	Pawcatuck River	20
Shelter Harbor Fire District	No	9 Rossini Road	Quonochontaug Pond	21
Viking Marina	Yes	19 Margin Street	Pawcatuck River	22
Watch Hill Boat Yard	Yes	13 Pasadena Avenue	Colonel Willie Cove	23
Watch Hill Fire District Docks	Yes	Bay Street	Watch Hill Cove	24
Weekapaug Fire District	No	4 Wawaloam Drive	Quonochontaug Pond	25
Weekapaug Yacht Club	No	23 Spray Rock Road	Quonochontaug Pond	26
Westerly Marina	Yes	23 Margin Street	Pawcatuck River	27
Westerly Yacht Club	No	1 Watch Hill Road	Pawcatuck River	28

Source: Westerly Harbor Management Plan, 2019

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Table 2-10 RI CRMC-Designated Rights-of-Way

RI CRMC Designation Number	Location	Water Accessible	Figure REC-M2 Reference
A-2	Bluff Avenue	Block Island Sound	29
A-3	Manatuck Avenue	Block Island Sound	30
A-6	Atlantic Avenue (1)	Block Island Sound	31
A-7	Atlantic Avenue (2)	Block Island Sound	32
A-8	Atlantic Avenue (4)	Block Island Sound	33
A-9	Atlantic Avenue (5)	Block Island Sound	34
A-10	Atlantic Avenue (6)	Block Island Sound	35
A-11	Atlantic Avenue (~~12~~7)	Block Island Sound	36
A-12	Atlantic Avenue (8)	Block Island Sound	37
A-13	Atlantic Avenue (9)	Block Island Sound	38
A-14	Avondale Road	Pawcatuck River	39

Source: RICRMC Annual Designation of Public Rights of Way to the Tidal Areas of the State Report, 2017-2018

Figure **Westerly Harbor Management Plan Rights of Way to the Shore (REC-M3)** shows the existing Town- and State (RI CRMC)-designated rights-of-way (ROW) to the shore, per the descriptions in the Westerly Harbor Management Plan, and the RI CRMC Rights-of-Way to the shore online GIS map. Table 2-11 below provides a list of these Town- and State-designated ROWs.

Table 2-11 Town- and State-Designated Rights-of-Way to the Shore

Designation No. (Depicted on Figure REC-M3)	Town or RI CRMC Right-of-Way	Location	Water Accessible
1	Town	Avondale Road (CRMC A-14)	Pawcatuck River
2	Town	Waters Edge Road North	Foster Cove
2A	Town	Waters Edge Road South	Watch Hill Cove
3	Town	Fort Road	Watch Hill Cove
4	Town	Bluff Avenue (CMRC A-2)	Block Island Sound
5	Town	Everett Avenue	Block Island Sound
6	Town	Niantic Avenue	Block Island Sound
7	Town	Manatuck Avenue (CRMC A-3)	Block Island Sound
8	Town	Atlantic Avenue	Block Island Sound
9	Town	Atlantic Avenue	Block Island Sound
10	Town	Atlantic Avenue (CRMC A-13)	Block Island Sound
11	Town	Atlantic Avenue (CRMC A-11)	Block Island Sound
12	Town	Atlantic Avenue (CRMC A-6)	Block Island Sound
13	Town	Atlantic Avenue (CRMC A-7)	Block Island Sound
14	Town	Atlantic Avenue West	Block Island Sound
14A	Town	Atlantic Avenue East	Block Island Sound
15	Town	Spray Rock Road	Block Island Sound
~~16~~	~~Town~~	~~Spray Rock Road~~	~~Block Island Sound~~
~~17~~	~~Town~~	~~Spray Rock Road~~	~~Block Island Sound~~

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Designation No. (Depicted on Figure REC-M3)	Town or RI CRMC Right-of-Way	Location	Water Accessible
A-2	RI CRMC	Bluff Avenue	Block Island Sound
A-3	RI CRMC	Manatuck Avenue	Block Island Sound
A-6	RI CRMC	Atlantic Avenue (1)	Block Island Sound
A-7	RI CRMC	Atlantic Avenue (2)	Block Island Sound
A-8	RI CRMC	Atlantic Avenue (4)	Block Island Sound
A-9	RI CRMC	Atlantic Avenue (5)	Block Island Sound
A-10	RI CRMC	Atlantic Avenue (6)	Block Island Sound
A-11	RI CRMC	Atlantic Avenue (7)	Block Island Sound
A-12	RI CRMC	Atlantic Avenue (8)	Block Island Sound
A-13	RI CRMC	Atlantic Avenue (9)	Block Island Sound
A-14	RI CRMC	Lotteryville Marina/ Avondale Road	Pawcatuck River

Sources: Westerly Harbor Management Plan 2016, Revised October 28, 2019
RICRMC Annual Designation of Public Rights of Way to the Tidal Areas of the State Report, 2017-2018

Maintenance of these public access points is a priority for the Town of Westerly and will be implemented through regular inspection and clear identification through permanent boundary markers, vegetation control, signage, and public information.

Section 2.6 – Recreation Programming Providers

~~Most~~ Many programs sponsored by the Recreation Department have been~~are~~ seasonal, such as summer playground camps, watersports, and indoor basketball ~~at several Town-owned playgrounds~~. ~~Many programs, especially those requiring indoor recreation facilities, are~~ These programs are also sponsored in conjunction with private organizations to provide a wider variety of recreation options for residents. ~~Most~~ Many team sports are provided by private organizations and supported by the Town, with teams, such as the Westerly Youth Soccer and Lacrosse Associations, ~~and~~ the Connie Mack Baseball League, and Westerly Peewee Football, using Town facilities.

Participation in Town programs has continued to increase since the Recreation Department was established in 2001 with thousands of residents now participating. One of the programs with the largest participation numbers is the Town's Tunes on the Dunes program offered in midsummer at Westerly Town Beach. The Blues on the Beach and Monday Night Jamz concerts have grown to between 2,000 and 3,000 attendees.

The Westerly School Department provides two key programs in Westerly – Westerly Community Education and Enrichment and After School Enrichment. The Westerly Community Education and Enrichment Program provides a variety of adult classes such as educational, hobby, yoga and workforce training classes funded through tuition fees.

After School Enrichment, also tuition-based (except for students in the Free and Reduced-Priced Meals program who pay reduced tuition only for full-day programs), is offered mainly to elementary school students and runs twice a week, for five weeks, three to four times a year. The program has provided classes for students to learn special activities or skills ranging from martial arts to basket weaving and beach combing. During school recesses in February and April, the programs also provide extended full-day sessions. In addition to classes for elementary school students, there are also programs offered for older students including a program for high school students with the local radio station and a lacrosse program for middle school-aged students.

While it is not a public entity, Ocean Community YMCA provides additional recreation opportunities in Westerly (as well as in Wyoming in Richmond and Mystic in Stonington, Connecticut) for both members and non-members. Programs include aquatics, arts and enrichment, health and wellness classes, yoga programs, sports classes, and

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teen programs. The YMCA also offers a center for teens to socialize after school and on weekends and an after-school program for Westerly's elementary school students which uses Westerly public school facilities.

The Westerly Library provides numerous community programs as well, such as book discussions, art gallery receptions, and various special events. Information on the library's services is included in the Services and Facilities chapter and its local significance is discussed in the Historic and Cultural Resources chapter.

A formal assessment of future recreational programming needs, including adaptation to changing demographics and recreational trends, is necessary to form clear goals for the future of recreational programming in the Town. Securing funding to complete this analysis will be the first step toward creating a clear plan for adapting the current recreational programming to a changing population. Creating partnerships with nearby towns will help grow recreational programming through shared resources and visions.

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Chapter 3
HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The area of modern-day Westerly was first settled by Algonquians several centuries prior to the beginning of documented history by European colonists in the 1630s. During this time, and until the 1660s, the area was called Misquamicut (anglicized from its original Narragansett) for its red fish, referring to the Atlantic salmon which were once found in large numbers and appear on the Town's seal.

Westerly was permanently settled in 1661 and incorporated as a municipality in 1669. Over the years, it grew to become a hub of commerce and recreation in southern Rhode Island. Downtown Westerly is bordered by the Pawcatuck River on the west and roughly bounded by Oak Street and Railroad Avenue to the north, Tower Street, Granite Street, and Franklin Street to the east, and Wells Street to the south. Beyond its downtown, the Town also has a collection of distinct commercial centers, coastal communities, and mill villages along the Pawcatuck River and Block Island Sound which provide glimpses into the Town's historic past. These neighborhoods include Avondale, Bradford, Misquamicut, Potter Hill, Shelter Harbor, Watch Hill, Weekapaug, and White Rock.

Section 3.1 – Historic Places

There are seven (7) neighborhoods in the Town listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP):

- Bradford Village
- Downtown Westerly (including a later amendment)
- Main Street
- the North End
- Perry Homestead
- Watch Hill
- Wilcox Park

Within each historic district are structures and sites deemed to be contributing to the historic character of the public realms within each, yet they do not bear an individual designation. Some of these buildings include the following:

- Lanphear Livery Stable
- Watch Hill Lighthouse
- Westerly Old Town Hall
- Granite Theatre
- United Theatre
- Westerly Station

These buildings are identified in the various inventories prepared as part of the NRHP listing application process. A further 11 areas have been determined to be either eligible for NRHP listing or recommended for nomination

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or for further study by the responsible state agency, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC).

In 1978, RIHPHC developed *Historic and Architectural Resources of Westerly, Rhode Island: A Preliminary Report* as a tool to identify and record properties of historic and architectural significance in the Town. In addition to this Town-specific survey, RIHPHC has prepared several State-wide surveys including a historic landscapes survey, an outdoor sculpture survey, a historic bridges survey, an engineering and industrial sites survey, and an archeological survey. Sites in Westerly have been identified in each. An updated and broader discussion of Westerly's historic neighborhoods, the *Westerly Preservation Report*, was prepared for the Westerly Preservation Society in 2006.

In addition to the historic districts, there are nine (9) properties in the Town that have been listed individually on the NRHP. These include:

- Babcock-Smith House
- Flying Horse Carousel
- Former Immaculate Conception Church (now the George Kent Performance Hall of the Chorus of Westerly)
- Lewis-Card-Perry House
- Nursery Site RI-273
- Ram Point
- US Post Office (Broad and High Streets)
- Westerly Armory
- Weekapaug Inn



Figure **Historic and Cultural Resources (HCR-M1)** identifies all historic districts and sites currently listed on the NRHP. In addition to the NRHP, Westerly also includes two (2) sites in the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and two (2) in the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER). Westerly Station and the Babcock-Smith House are both documented in the HABS, and the HAER includes White Rock Bridge and the Northeast Corridor (NEC), a segment of which passes through the Town. The documentation of Westerly's segment of the NEC includes Westerly Station and the railroad itself as well as the High Street bridge.

There are 49 known cemeteries in the Town of Westerly as well as an unknown number of additional burial sites, including some listed in the Rhode Island Cemeteries database at unknown locations. Protection for these resting places is ensured through Chapter 137 of the Town's Code of Ordinances. Under the adopted regulations, any plan to alter a burial site may only be permitted by the Town Council following a public hearing. If any burial site is discovered during building activities, the discovery must be reported to the Building Official and activity must cease until further notice is given.

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Section 3.2 – Regulatory Protection

The Town is not a certified local government and has not enacted historic district zoning to-date due in part to an absence of public consensus on the matter. Other means to protect historic and cultural resources, however, have been enacted by the Town Council. The most prominent case of this is the Development Plan Review process in the Shore Commercial-Watch Hill (SC-WH) zoning district. Section 260-45(F)(1) of the Zoning Ordinance states:

> "If the building is in a Historic District, the recommendations of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission shall be incorporated in the Administrative or Planning Board review."

The legal definition of Historic District in the Section 260-9 of the same ordinance states:

> "One or more historic sites and intervening or surrounding property significantly affecting or affected by the quality and character of the historic site or sites and has been registered, or is deemed eligible to be included, on the state register of historic places pursuant to RIGL 45-22.2-4."

In 2006, the Town Council enacted an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, proposed by the Watch Hill Conservancy, which strengthened preservation efforts by establishing architectural design standards within the SC-WH zoning district. The standards are applicable to all Development Plan Review applications and were most recently amended in July 2017. The success of the amendment was considered in part due to the SC-WH zoning district lying entirely within the nationally-registered Watch Hill Historic District and being a commercial rather than residential zoning district. In 2009, the Watch Hill Conservancy published *Watch Hill Style* with the intent that it would be used to influence those planning new construction in Watch Hill to emulate the architectural traditions of the village.

In support of the design standards enacted for the SC-WH zoning district and the examples contained in *Watch Hill Style*, the Watch Hill Conservancy also provides initial free design services to those planning new construction in the Watch Hill Historic District.

Additionally, with respect to the large area of the Town within the jurisdiction of RICRMC, either due to its proximity to the coast or by virtue of being located within the Salt Pond Region SAMP, additional protection also exists in the permitting process. RICRMC's Section 220, Areas of Historic and Archaeological Significance, C. Policies states:

> "The Council shall require modification of, or shall prohibit proposed actions, subject to its jurisdiction where it finds a reasonable probability of adverse impacts on properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Adverse impacts are those which can reasonably be expected to diminish or destroy those qualities of the property which make it eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The Council shall solicit the recommendations of the Historical Preservation Commission regarding impacts on such properties."
>
> "Prior to permitting actions subject to its jurisdiction on or adjacent to properties eligible for inclusion (but not actually listed in the National Register of Historic Places), and/or areas designated as historically or archaeologically sensitive by the Historical Preservation Commission as the result of their predictive model, the Council shall solicit the recommendations of the Commission regarding possible adverse impacts on these properties. The Council may, based on the Commission's recommendations and other evidence before it, including other priority uses of this Program, require modification of or may prohibit the proposed action where such adverse impacts are likely."

As an incentive for property owners to maintain the historic character of designated historic structures and to encourage the owners to obtain historic designation for structures not already so designated, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) exempts historic structures from floodplain management requirements of NFIP if they maintain their historic designation. However, Westerly is interested in preparing design standards

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that would allow historic properties to be elevated to protect these structures from flood hazards and sea level rise, similar to what is being done in Newport, RI.

Section 3.3 – Funding Assistance

As of 2019, RIHPHC does not operate any programs for eligible historic property owners in Westerly. Previously, the 2010 Comprehensive Plan noted the success of the State's tax credit program prior to its elimination of funding in 2008 and recommended the Town should advocate for its restoration. The program was reopened in 2013 and offered credits of 20% to 25% of costs for approved rehabilitations. The Homeowner Tax Credit program for the maintenance and repair of historic houses was suspended in 2011.

After the completion of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, RIHPHC also became involved in Superstorm Sandy Disaster Relief grants and State Preservation grants. The first of these was a direct response to the destructive impact of Superstorm Sandy in 2012. Grants were awarded to Lanphear Livery Stable ($52,368) and Watch Hill Lighthouse ($447,500), both in Watch Hill, as well as a multi-town (Charlestown, Narragansett and Westerly) survey of archaeological sites ($477,847). All three projects received approval from the National Park Service (NPS). The State Preservation Grant program included awards for two Westerly properties in 2016: the Babcock-Smith House ($11,734) and the Westerly Armory ($24,750).

Section 3.4 – Community Accomplishments and Opportunities

Several preservation projects focusing on structures throughout the Town have been recently completed or are underway to strengthen Westerly's historic character. In 2010, the Victorian-era Ocean House was reopened after a major replication project approved by RIHPHC, in conjunction with a panel of historic architectural consultants it convened that saw the original structure demolished in 2005. The rebuilt resort hotel replicated the original footprint and incorporated more than 5,000 artifacts and furnishings salvaged from the original. The Lanphear Livery Stable, a historical livery at 1 Bay Street in Watch Hill, was completely renovated over a three-year period beginning in 2015 and now contains office space, apartments, a gallery, and a boutique shop. Adaptive restoration, approved through the granting of a zoning variance by the Town, preserved the Dr. John Champlin House at 9 Granite Street for use as an office building.

A museum is currently maintained by the Watch Hill Lighthouse Keepers in a renovated former service building on the property and the Old Town Hall may possibly be reopened in the future. Revitalization efforts for the Granite Theatre and George Kent Performance Hall, both former churches, now allow both buildings to provide enhanced performance space.

It is expected that preservation efforts such as these will continue. WLT has an urban initiative which has included the acquisition of properties on Canal Street, High Street, and Main Street for renewal projects, such as a 13 million dollar renovation of the United Theatre (originally opened in 1926 and closed in the 1980s) and a portion of the adjacent property to include space for a cinema, live performances, offices, rehearsal rooms, event spaces, and a public television station. The Westerly Revolving Fund has also purchased existing historic mixed-use structures at 6 Beach Street and 134 Main Street for rehabilitation.

National Register listing and a Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), administered by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), have been used to rehabilitate low and moderate-income housing in the Town's North End.

Westerly's abundance of historic resources has not gone unnoticed. In 2002, the Town was designated one of the "Dozen Distinctive Destinations" by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Each year between 2000 and 2011, the Trust selected 12 "unique and lovingly preserved communities" in the US as Distinctive Destinations. The designation recognizes the community's efforts to preserve the historic and scenic assets of Westerly, which the Trust called a "quintessential New England beach town." The Town was also designated a Preserve America

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Community in 2004, which recognized the Town's appreciation of its heritage as an economic and educational asset and provides eligibility for Preserve America grants when funding is made available.

Section 3.5 – Community Institutions and Events

Westerly's growth and development over the centuries, with support from numerous citizens and organizations, makes it a community of great cultural wealth for the benefit of its residents and visitors throughout the year. This abundance is anchored primarily around Downtown Westerly, the product of an urbanization campaign which took place at the turn of the twentieth century. Along with the high concentration of its historic, architecturally diverse structures and its mix of uses, Downtown Westerly is also the location of the Westerly Arts and Entertainment District.

From 2005 until the early 2010s, Downtown Westerly was designated as one of nine arts and entertainment districts State-wide to offer certain tax incentives to artists living and working in the district who produce original and creative works in a broad range of forms, including writings, paintings, sculptures, films, and many others. This was later extended to the entire State to be consistent with the State-wide sales tax exemption on the sale of original art pieces in art galleries. In 2011, the Westerly Regional Arts Partnership (WRAP) was formed with the mission to provide arts advocacy and promote Westerly as a destination for the arts. WRAP states its membership is open to all workers in the creative economy, referring to the economic system culminating between the arts, business, culture, and technology.

At the municipal level, the Town has designated the Granite Street Overlay District (See §60-58, Code of Ordinances), comprised of properties with frontage on Granite Street between Grove Avenue and Tower Street, to allow artistic and photo studios (as well as professional offices) in the residential district by special use permit.

There exists a variety of non-profit cultural institutions and events which are equally important to the community and its tourist industry. The largest of the cultural non-profits include the Memorial and Library Association of Westerly, the Westerly Chorus, and WLT. The Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce (OCCC) also contributes, with events that include Virtu Arts Festival, Riverglow and Summer Pops.

The Memorial and Library Association of Westerly owns and operates the Westerly Library, itself built as a Civil War memorial, and the surrounding 14-acre Wilcox Park. The park was originally designed in 1898 by Warren Manning, a protégé of Frederick Law Olmsted, and is considered perhaps the single most character-generating feature of the Town. Although Westerly is a medium-sized community, its library collection is the second most actively used in the State.



The Chorus of Westerly, located at the George Kent Performance Hall (the former Immaculate Conception Church registered on the NRHP), was established in 1959 and offers its patrons several events throughout its seasons while providing musical education programming throughout the year. The most popular of these events is the Summer Pops concert held annually in June in Wilcox Park since 1981.

The Granite Theatre (owned by Renaissance City Theatre, Inc.) is a handsomely restored Greek Revival Church that sits at the foot of Granite Street in Downtown Westerly. This renovated building began as a church originally organized in 1843 as the Christian Chapel in Westerly. The Colonial Theatre provides year-round indoor productions offering local and regional theater-goers artistic entertainment. Colonial Theatre's programming is incorporated into the school curriculum, and provides the outdoor theatrical series, Shakespeare in the Park, annually in July and August. It

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should also be noted that the Westerly Band, established in 1852, is the oldest continuously active civic band in the United States. It performs in several parades and at various events throughout the year, including the Summer Pops concert.

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Chapter 4
HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

This chapter, guided by the *State Housing Plan* and the *Rhode Island Five Year Strategic Housing Plan*, provides a framework for developing the policies and implementation strategies to meet the requirements of the State while preserving and enhancing Westerly's quality of life. This chapter provides an analysis of housing trends, and along with the other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan, helps to inform and define strategies to:

- Promote a diversity of housing types and affordability,
- Protect history and heritage of neighborhoods,
- Prevent displacement of residents that sometimes follows gentrification,
- Promote sound water protection and watershed management,
- Support the best use, maintenance, and improvement of the housing stock,
- Identify locations for new housing units, and
- Promote sensible neighborhood development and growth management.

The availability, variety, and affordability of housing is a major factor in the livability and prosperity of a community. The diversity of the housing stock in terms of the mix of unit types, as well as ownership and rental opportunities, are important factors that can help to identify problems and opportunities in the local housing market. These existing housing characteristics serve as a basis for recommendations to guide housing in the community over the next 20 years.

The inventory and analysis included in this section is primarily based on data from the 2010 US Census and 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, with supplemental information from other local, State, and federal government agencies, private institutions, and non-profit organizations.

Table 4-1 Housing Overview

Facility	2000	2010	2017
Total housing units	11,292	12,320	12,695
Occupied housing units	9,402	9,666	9,796
Owner-occupied	63.8%	65.4%	62.4%
Renter-occupied	36.2%	34.6%	37.6%
Single-family residences	7,607	7,434	6,508
Median assessed value	$149,900	$312,400	$285,300

Sources: 2000 US Census, 2010 US Census, 2006-2010 ACS five-year estimates, and 2013-2017 ACS five-year estimates

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Section 4.1 – Demographics

The Town of Westerly had a year-round population of 22,626 in 2017, which represented a 1.48% decrease from 2000. While population trends over this period are slightly negative, the overall population base can be considered stable. Among major demographic categories, the most notable changes since the turn of the century appears to have been in age distribution.

Table 4-2 Demographic Overview, 2000-2017

Population	2000		2010		2017	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	22,966	100%	22,787	100%	22,626	100%
Sex						
Female	11,889	51.8%	11,874	52.1%	12,295	54.3%
Male	11,077	48.2%	10,913	47.9%	10,331	45.7%
Age						
Ages 17 years old and under	5,406	23.5%	4,787	21.0%	4,128	18.2%
Ages 18-34 years old	4,543	19.8%	3,936	17.3%	4,639	20.5%
Ages 35-44 years old	3,883	16.9%	2,881	12.6%	2,356	10.4%
Ages 45-54 years old	3,043	13.3%	3,777	16.6%	3,053	13.5%
Ages 55 years old and over	6,091	26.5%	7,406	32.5%	8,450	37.4%
Race						
American Indian and Alaska Native	130	0.6%	158	0.7%	197	0.9%
Asian	457	2.0%	567	2.5%	635	2.8%
Black or African American	164	0.7%	222	1.0%	222	1.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	3	0.0%	0	0.0%
White	21,857	95.2%	21,171	92.9%	21,112	93.3%
Some Other Race	77	0.3%	204	0.9%	210	0.9%
Two or more races	281	1.2%	462	2.0%	250	1.1%
Ethnicity						
Hispanic or Latino (any race)	270	1.2%	651	2.9%	518	2.3%

Sources: 2000 US Census, 2010 US Census, and 2013-2017 ACS five-year estimates

Subsection 4.1.1 – Population Size and Age Characteristics

The Town of Westerly had an estimated year-round population of 22,626 in 2017, reflecting a 1.48% decrease in population over the 17-year period starting in 2000, and a 0.7% reduction over the 7-year period from 2010. This local trend contrasted with State and county trends which show population over the same period increased at rates of 0.75% and 2.14%, respectively. Table 4-3 below shows population trends for these geographies.

Table 4-3 Populations, 2000-2017

Geography	2000	2010	2017
Town of Westerly	22,966	22,787	22,626
Washington County	123,546	120,554	126,190
State of Rhode Island	1,048,319	1,052,567	1,056,138

Sources: 2000 US Census, 2010 US Census, and 2013-2017 ACS five-year estimates

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According to population projections prepared by the Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program in 2013, Westerly's population is expected to increase to 23,518 in 2035 before dropping slightly to 23,466 in 2040. The projected 2040 population would therefore represent an overall increase of 3.7% from 2017. Similarly, population growth State-wide would be 1.32%. Washington County, however, is expected to experience continued residential development that results in a 12.7% increase in overall population.

Table 4-4 Population Projections, 20175-2040

Geography	2017	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Town of Westerly	22,626	22,876	23,186	23,417	23,518	23,466
Washington County	129,190	132,639	137,074	140,719	143,643	145,660
State of Rhode Island	1,056,138	1,049,177	1,061,796	1,070,677	1,073,799	1,070,104

Source: Rhode Island Population Projections 2010-2040, 2013, 2013-2017 ACS five-year estimates

As indicted in Table 4-2 above, the aging of the population of the Town is a significant factor in the demographic change occurring locally and has occurred simultaneously with rising housing costs. As can be calculated from Table 4-5 below, the population of those 65 years old and over grew by 300+ people from 2000 to 2010, and, according to 2013-2017 ACS estimates, in 2017 older populations made up 21.0% of the total population of the Town. The percentage of the State's population for those aged 65 years and older for the same period is 16.1%.

According to a June 2016 report on aging prepared by the State, by 2040 there will be a 100% increase in persons aged 74 to 84 and a 72% increase in persons aged 85 and over. For the range of ages between 65 and 85, this cohort could increase by as much as 73% by 2040. As Westerly's older population as a percentage of the total population (21.0%) is higher than the State's (16.1%), it can be projected with reasonable certainty that over one quarter of Town residents will be in this age group by 2040. This growth can be contributed to several factors, including greater life expectancy, the growing trend of aging-in-place, decreasing family sizes, and the loss of young people in the community. With respect to this last factor, the population under 20 years old made up about one-fifth of the population, according the 2013-2017 ACS estimates, but experienced a decrease of 1,241 people between 2000 and 2017, continuing a consistent downward trend represented by a 21% loss in this population over the 17-year period.

Table 4-5 Age Composition of the Total Population, 2000-2017

Age Group	2000		2010		2017	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0-19 years old	5,902	25.7%	5,206	22.8%	4,661	20.6%
20-34 years old	4,047	17.6%	3,517	15.4%	4,106	18.1%
35-44 years old	3,883	16.9%	2,881	12.6%	2,356	10.4%
45-54 years old	3,043	13.3%	3,777	16.6%	3,053	13.5%
55-64 years old	2,176	9.5%	3,165	13.9%	3,706	16.4%
65-74 years old	1,802	7.8%	2,035	8.9%	2,505	11.1%
75-84 years old	1,504	6.5%	1,401	6.1%	1,332	5.9%
85+ years old	609	2.7%	805	3.5%	907	4%
Total	22,966		22,787		22,626	

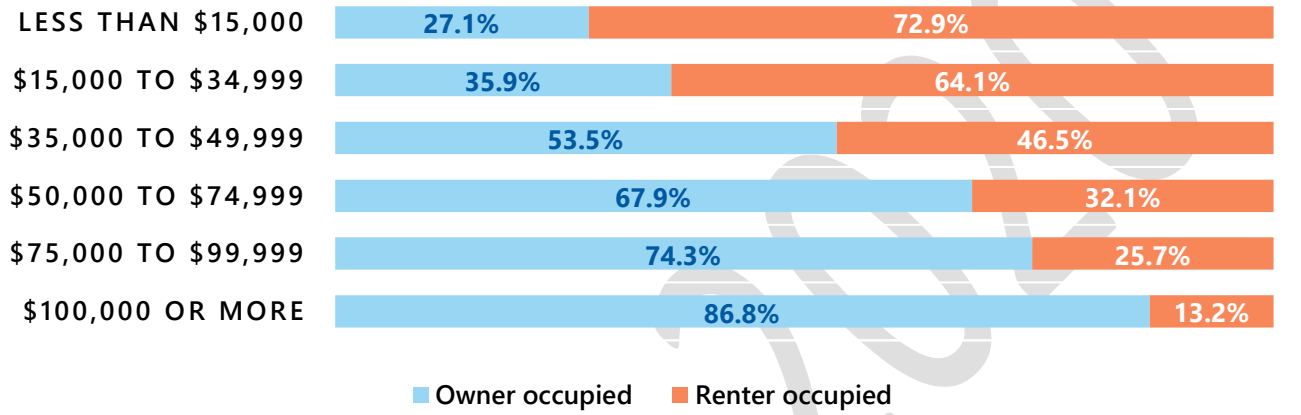
Sources: 2000 US Census, 2010 US Census, and 2013-2017 ACS five-year estimates

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Subsection 4.1.2 – Income Characteristics

Based on 2013-2017 ACS estimates, Westerly's median household income (MHI) within the past 12 months was $63,507 compared to Washington County's MHI of $77,862. The elevated number of elderly persons living on fixed incomes contributes to Westerly's lower median household income. Figure 4-1 below indicates that households with higher incomes generally own their home, while those with lower incomes are primarily renters. Many of Westerly's lower-income homeowners are elderly with limited incomes and, according to 2013-2017 ACS estimates, 19.1% of all Westerly residents aged 65 years and over rented rather than owned the home they lived in.

Figure 4-1 Owner- and Renter-Occupied Households by Income Group, 2017



Source: 2013-2017 ACS five-year estimates

From the 2000 US Census to the 2010 US Census, the average household size fell slightly from 2.4 to 2.3 persons, primarily due to an increase in one- and two-person households. The number of non-family households (households which may have only one individual, or two or more individuals who are not related) has grown from 3,272 (34.8%) in 2000 to 3,589 (37.1%) in 2010 down to 3,577 in 2017 (36.5%) while single-parent families increased from 23% in 2000 to 25.9% in 2010 down to 24.6% in 2017.

Section 4.2 – Housing Availability

Between 2000 and 2010, the number of total housing units in Westerly increased by 9.1% to 12,320 housing units. This metric was slightly below Washington County's 9.5% increase. Of the Town's total, 78.5% were occupied, and 65.4% of all occupied housing units were owner-occupied. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of owner-occupied units in the Town increased by 5.5%. In the same period, vacancy rates in Westerly for homeowners increased from 1.2% to 2.4%. State-wide, the homeowner vacancy rate increased from 1% in 2000 to 2% in 2010 and has held generally stable, according to 2017 ACS estimates (1.7%).

Subsection 4.2.1 – Year-round Occupied Housing

In 2017, the Town had 2,899 vacant housing units, of which 2,047 (70.6%) were seasonal. These seasonal housing units alone made-up 16.1% of the total 12,695 housing units within the Town. It is important to note that most of these units are characterized by the US Census Bureau as vacant because they are only occupied by owners for specific time periods (such as summer) and/or for specific events (such as weekends and holidays). Vacant in the traditional sense of a year-round absence of any occupants, regardless of season or occasion, totaled 852 housing units within the Town. Using Westerly's 2017 average household size of 2.28 people, and assuming all 2017 seasonal housing units are occupied, Westerly can be estimated to experience a seasonal population increase of 4,667 people each summer. Based on the 2017 population projections mentioned above, this increase results in an estimated seasonal high population of 27,543 people in 2020. It is likely that this number is greater, however,

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due to the likelihood that visiting families are a larger size and considering short-term rental units at hotels and other places of accommodation. If using the average household size of neighboring Connecticut (2.55), a popular origin for seasonal residents, and adding accommodations to the year-round and seasonal housing units, the seasonal high population would be approaching 30,000.

Subsection 4.2.2 – Housing Types

Of all existing housing units counted within a structure in 2017, 3,948 (31.1%) of Westerly's households resided within multi-family structures. Of these units, 3,202 (81.1%) were located within structures containing between 2 to 9 units. Between 2010 and 2017 multi-family unit count accelerated at a rate of 12.10% over the period, the number of single-family units for the same period increased by 3.61%. Single-family structures, however, continue to be the dominant residential type, making up more than 68.3% of Westerly's housing units, down slightly from 2010, when 70.10% of residential units were single family. Even though the multi-family residential unit count trended upward over this 7-year period, the over-whelming majority of development and construction activity was for detached single-family homes. Further to this point, the local construction market is fueled, in part, by demand for seasonally occupied second homes, which is a driver for single family home construction.

Table 4-6 Housing by Structure Type, 2000-2017

Structure Type	2000		2010		2017	
	Units	Percent	Units	Percent	Units	Percent
1 unit, detached	7,269	64.4%	8,134	68.1%	8,171	64.4%
1 unit, attached	338	3.0%	235	2.0%	500	3.9%
2 units	1,698	15.0%	1,611	13.5%	1,604	12.6%
3 or 4 units	1,045	9.3%	994	8.3%	1,195	9.4%
5 to 9 units	357	3.2%	372	3.1%	403	3.2%
10 to 19 units	144	1.3%	151	1.3%	198	1.6%
20 to 49 units	45	0.4%	30	0.3%	160	1.3%
50 or more units	380	3.4%	364	3.0%	388	3.1%
Mobile home	16	0.1%	54	0.5%	76	0.6%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	11,292	100%	11,945	100%	12,695	100%

Sources: 2000 US Census, 2006-2010 ACS five-year estimates, and 2013-2017 ACS five-year estimates

The Town has issued 510 permits for new housing construction between January 2010 and December 2019. Of these permits, all but 28 permits have been for single-family homes.

Table 4-7 Residential Building Permits by Structure Type, 2010-2019

Building Type	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Single-Family	51	57	48	73	56	43	46	32	42	34	482
Two-Family	1	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	9
Multi-Family	1	3	1	5	1	4	2	0	1	1	19
Total	53	62	50	79	58	47	48	32	45	36	510

Source: Town of Westerly, 2019

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Section 4.3 – Rental Housing

In the Town of Westerly, the phrase "meeting local housing needs" means a long-standing commitment to the preservation of its traditional rental housing stock. In reviewing Table 4-8(a) below, the number of year-round, renter-occupied housing units in the Town trended upwards by 3% from 2010 to 2017, representing 37.6% of the overall year-round housing stock.

Table 4-8(a) Renter-Occupied Housing Units, 2000-2017

Structure Type	2000		2010		2017	
	Units	Percent	Units	Percent	Units	Percent
Total Occupied Units	9,402	100%	9,666	100%	9,796	100%
Renter-occupied Units	3,403	36.2%	3,344	34.6%	3,680	37.6%

Sources: 2000 US Census, 2010 US Census, and 2013-17 ACS five-year estimates

For purposes of the foregoing discussion regarding meeting the threshold income requirements needed for consideration to occupy LMI housing, it is important to understand the distribution of family sizes prevalent in the community. In 2017, single-person households were the predominate household category at 44.2%, while two-person households made up the next highest percent among all household sizes at 29.2% (Table 4-8(b)).

Table 4-8(b) Renter-occupied Household Size, 1999-2017

Renter-Occupied Household Size	1999		2010		2017	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1 person	1,451	42.6%	1,422	46.8%	1,628	44.2%
2 person	976	28.6%	833	27.4%	1,075	29.2%
3 person	473	13.9%	298	9.8%	473	12.9%
4 person	304	8.9%	381	12.5%	305	8.3%
5 person	39	1.1%	59	1.9%	183	5.0%
6 person	38	1.1%	0	0.0%	16	0.4%
7 person or more	27	0.8%	47	1.5%	0	0%
Total	3,408		3,040		3,680	

Sources: 2006-2010 and 2013-2017 ACS five-year estimates

Westerly's average household size is 2.28 people. This data, when taken in consideration with the above-mentioned factors, supports not only evaluating HUD Area Median Family Income (HAMFI) qualification for four person households, but two person households need to be evaluated as well. Tables 4--9(a) and 4--9(b) below provide this data for consideration.

Income level statistics for renter-occupied units are available from the 2000 US Census, the 2006-2010 ACS estimates, and the 2013-2017 ~~American Community Survey (~~ACS~~)~~ 5-year estimates. They are presented in Tables 4-9(a) and 4-9(b) below.

Data in Table 4-9(a) indicate 81.4% of rental households are at or below 80% of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 HAMFI for the **four-person family** traditionally used for analysis purposes. In comparing the closest-fitting income level, not less than 184 households in Westerly were low-income in 1999, increasing to 284 households in 2017, an increase of 34.8% over the period, which demonstrates raising need for affordable housing in the community.

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Table 4-9(a) Renter-Occupied Four-Person Household (HH) by HAMFI Value, 1999-2017[1]

HAMFI Category	1999		2010		2017	
	Income Level	Percent of HAMFI	Income Level	Percent of HAMFI	Income Level	Percent of HAMFI
HAMFI	$52,900	100%	$78,400	100%	$80,300	100%
Extremely Low HAMFI	$16,050	30%	$23,500	30%	$24,600	30.6%
Very Low HAMFI	$26,750	50%	$39,200	50%	$40,150	50%
Low HAMFI	$42,800	80%	$62,700	80%	$64,250	80%
	Number of HH's	**Percent of Total HH's**	**Number of HH's**	**Percent of Total HH's**	**Number of HH's**	**Percent of Total HH's**
Renter-occupied Households	3,403	100%	3,040	100%	3,680	100%
Four-Person Households	304	8.9%	381	12.5%	305	8.3%
Extremely Low HAMFI	*75*	*24.7%*	*103*	*27.0%*	*119*	*38.9%*
Very Low HAMFI	*133*	*43.7%*	*197*	*51.7%*	*158*	*51.9%*
Low HAMFI	*184*	*60.5%*	*264*	*69.2%*	*248*	*81.4%*

Sources: 1999, 2010, and 2017 HUD Income Limits, 2000 US Census, 2006-2010 ACS five-year estimates, and 2013-2017 ACS five-year estimates

[1] Italicized text indicates minimums based upon the closest fitting income group to each HAMFI value.

Data in Table 4-9(b) indicate 65.5% of rental households are at or below 80% of the FY 2017 HAMFI for the **two-person family**, which is the most representative sample household size in the community. In comparing the closest-fitting income level, not less than 427 households in Westerly were low-income in 1999, increasing to 704 households in 2017, a 64.9% increase over the period. This dramatically rising trend accentuates the need for this type of affordable housing in the community.

Table 4-9(b) Renter-Occupied Two-Person Household by HAMFI Value, 1999-2017[1,2]

HAMFI Categories	1999		2010		2017	
	Income Level	Percent of HAMFI	Income Level	Percent of HAMFI	Income Level	Percent of HAMFI
HAMFI	$42,800	100%	$62,800	100%	$64,300	100%
Extremely Low HAMFI	$12,850	30%	$18,800	30%	$19,300	30.6%
Very Low HAMFI	$21,400	50%	$31,400	50%	$32,150	50%
Low HAMFI	$34,250	80%	$50,200	80%	$51,400	80%
	Number of HH's	**Percent of Total HH's**	**Number of HH's**	**Percent of Total HH's**	**Number of HH's**	**Percent of Total HH's**
Renter-occupied Households	3,403	100%	3,040	100%	3,680	100%
Two-Person Households	976	28.6%	833	27.4%	1,075	29.2%
Extremely Low HAMFI	*128*	*13.1%*	*144*	*17.3%*	*293*	*27.3%*
Very Low HAMFI	*339*	*34.7%*	*295*	*35.4%*	*558*	*51.9%*
Low HAMFI	*427*	*43.7%*	*576*	*69.2%*	*704*	*65.5%*

Sources: 1999, 2010, and 2017 HUD Income Limits, 2000 US Census, 2006-2010 ACS five-year estimates, and 2013-2017 ACS five-year estimates

[1] Italicized text indicates minimums based upon the closest fitting income group to each HAMFI value.

[2] HAMFIs of two-person families used as closest fit for most recent average renter-occupied household size (2.05 persons)

The Town of Westerly has developed or participated in several programs and initiatives to ensure the continued preservation of its robust rental housing stock:

- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**
  The Town has had a 25-year history of housing rehabilitation financed by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds in designated neighborhood revitalization target areas, such as Bradford and the North End. In 2017, nine (9) residential structures received funding for rehabilitation work through a CDBG set-aside program.

- **Westerly Revolving Fund (WRF)**
  In response to objectives outlined within the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, the Town's 2012 CDBG application requested and received approval to establish a Town Housing Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Fund. As a result, in 2013, the community based non-profit corporation known as the Westerly Revolving Fund (WRF) was established as a separate fund for housing rehabilitation for Westerly's historic multi-family neighborhoods. Most the Town's rental housing is located in the older neighborhoods that surround the downtown and historic mills along the Pawcatuck River. The WRF provides advocacy, lending, and technical assistance to property owners looking to renovate existing structures when they are not able to secure adequate funding from traditional sources. The WRF will help to address: the significant need for housing rehabilitation now and in the future, the LMI status of households, and the difficulties faced by property owners when trying to obtain conventional rehabilitation loans. The Town program will offer rehabilitation loans, with repayment options suitable to LMI properties while making individual considerations of circumstances. The new program will aim to help with emergency repairs and upgrades of multi-family housing to keep properties financially viable and to preserve the Town's rental housing stock.

- **North End Neighborhood Revitalization Plan**
  The North End Neighborhood Revitalization Plan, while nearing two (2) decades old, was designed on key planning concepts, which included recommendations for a range of affordable housing options, comprehensive code enforcement, improved neighborhood amenities, and the integration of a broad array of social services to support the needs of North End residents. Through a series of neighborhood revitalization plans, the Town of Westerly intends to apply these same concepts to other areas of Town.

Section 4.4 – Housing Conditions

The quality, function, safety, and general state of housing units has significant impact on the well-being of residents, as well as on the livability, desirability, beauty, character, uniqueness, and economic development of the community. Neglect, deterioration, demolition, architectural deterioration, and an aging housing stock are all issues related to housing conditions. The Town of Westerly encourages improvements in the quality of housing conditions through neighborhood plans and with the involvement of housing industry partners. The quality of the region's housing stock has declined over time. Now, it is time to focus attention on the upgrading and improvement of pre-1970 housing. Houses in decline due to the age of their electrical and plumbing systems are significantly more likely to be converted to non-residential uses, become vacant, or become permanently lost from the inventory of housing options.

The quality, safety, and general state of housing units has significant impact on the well-being of residents and on the livability and desirability of a community. Neglect, deterioration, abandonment, and foreclosures are all issues related to housing conditions. Housing conditions can be addressed by neighborhood involvement and the further development and implementation of neighborhood plans.

With the local economy and housing markets gradually recovering from the last economic downturn, investment in the Town's existing housing inventory is encouraged. The Town of Westerly is focused on: rehabilitation

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programs supported by a future revolving loan fund, modernizing the eligibility and processing of municipal tax exemptions, and adopting a property tax credit process for owners undertaking the substantial rehabilitation of blighted properties that would be restricted to affordable housing initiatives. These efforts are well placed to be an integral part of a neighborhood revitalization and improvement effort. Even still, the Town of Westerly needs more tools to effectively address housing quality and to get ahead of such issues as aging plumbing and electrical systems, flood and wind damage, and demolition due to neglect.

Older homeowners should have the ability to retrofit their homes to accommodate their future needs and ageing-in-place as opposed to relocating. Households can increase their investment with environmentally sustainable improvements and property owners can reduce their insurance costs by utilizing new reconstruction techniques certified by the Insurance Institute of Business and Home Safety (IBHS).

Subsection 4.4.1 – Age of Housing

In 2000, Westerly had a housing stock that was relatively newer than the State but older than that of Washington County and most other comparable communities. The median year for homes built in the Town was 1965, compared to 1958 in the State and 1971 within Washington County.

There has been varying interest in the development of new multi-family units, particularly for seniors. Existing multi-family units are composed disproportionately of Westerly's older housing stock. As previously mentioned, 16.1% of all housing units were for seasonal use, according to the 2017 ACS. This statistic is reflective of the Town's continuing status as a shoreline resort community. A review of available town data for Residential Housing Types by Year and Structure Type indicates the overwhelming majority of two-family and multi-family structures were built prior to 1940, with 55.8% and 86.3% falling into this category, respectively. There was a resurgence of sorts during the 1980's, when two-family structures were being built; 210 structures were brought onto the tax rolls during this decade, representing 22.8% of all the two-family housing stock in the ŧTown.

Table 4-10 - Number of Residential Housing Types by Year and Structure Type

	Single-Family			Two-Family			Multi-Family			Total	
Time Period	#	% Single-Family	% of Total	#	% Two-Family	% of Total	#	% Multi-Family	% of Total	#	%
2010 or later	482	5.7%	5.0%	9	1.0%	0.1%	19	6.4%	0.2%	510	5.3%
2000-2009	891	10.6%	9.2%	10	1.1%	0.1%	1	0.3%	0.0%	902	9.3%
1990-1999	949	11.3%	9.8%	36	3.9%	0.4%	1	0.3%	0.0%	986	10.2%
1980-1989	1,228	14.6%	12.7%	210	22.8%	2.2%	3	1.0%	0.0%	1,441	14.9%
1970-1979	1,095	13.0%	11.3%	36	3.9%	0.4%	2	0.7%	0.0%	1,133	11.7%
1960-1969	1,038	12.3%	10.8%	28	3.0%	0.3%	2	0.7%	0.0%	1,068	11.1%
1950-1959	1,019	12.1%	10.6%	47	5.1%	0.5%	7	2.3%	0.1%	1,073	11.1%
1940-1949	405	4.8%	4.2%	31	3.4%	0.3%	6	2.0%	0.1%	442	4.6%
1939 or earlier	1,325	15.7%	13.7%	513	55.8%	5.3%	258	86.3%	2.7%	2,096	21.7%
Total	8,432	100.0%	87.4%	920	100.0%	9.5%	299	100.0%	3.1%	9,651	100.0%

Source: Town of Westerly 2020

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Subsection 4.4.2 – Quality of Housing

During the decades of a thriving construction market for new single-family homes and the subsequent decline in construction through the recent economic recession, there has been no measurable increase in home improvement spending. These events having taken their toll on the quality of the region's housing stock. As previously stated, it is important for the Town to focus attention on upgrading and improving its existing housing stock, with emphasis being placed on the condition of blighted properties and those that pre-date 1970.

Rhode Island Affiliates of Habitat for Humanity are active in both new construction and the substantial rehabilitation of existing properties. Habitat for Humanity ReStores, located in Charlestown, also provides discounted used and surplus furniture and building materials. Other organizations, including Rebuilding Together, Inc., Veterans Affairs Regional Loan Center, and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Office, assist local low-income, elderly, and disabled homeowners.

Initiatives the ~~t~~Town has taken, along with those provided for herein, will allow the Town of Westerly to more effectively address housing quality and help homeowners address issues such as aging plumbing and electrical systems, flood and wind damage, and the threat of demolition due to neglect.

Subsection 4.4.3 – Property Maintenance Code Enforcement

The State Housing Maintenance and Occupancy Code establishes minimum standards governing utilities and facilities and other physical conditions essential to make dwellings safe, sanitary, and fit for human habitation. Enforcement of these conditions and proper maintenance of housing as a public health and safety matter is delegated to local government. In the Town of Westerly, the Property Maintenance Code Official within the Department of Development Services is the applicable enforcement officer. In order to ensure that no violations exist, routine inspections of suspect and blighted properties are often made while new construction or renovation work is in progress. For existing structures, the Property Maintenance Code Official enforces State Codes designed to safeguard buildings and their contents from hazards. Most property maintenance code violations involve sanitation due to accumulation of rubbish or garbage. In 2019, the Town had 433 cases regarding property maintenance code violations at residential properties. A majority of these cases (67%) occurred at homes owned by a Westerly resident (as determined by the owner's ZIP Code).

The Certificate of Apartment Occupancy (CAO) is one tool that can be utilized for the code enforcement of non-owner-occupied residential units, as used in the State of Connecticut. The main purpose of the CAO is to provide renters with the same protections as homebuyers, by allowing for an inspection process that is municipally-sanctioned and prohibits the renting of units that are found to be sub-standard. The CAO process requires that owners of rental units register each unit with the municipality, usually through the building or housing code office. As each unit is vacated, subsequent rental cannot occur until the unit is inspected and determined to be code compliant, safe, and sanitary, which allows for identification and correction of any housing code violations. The CAO is issued upon confirmation of compliance and the unit may then be rented, which ensures that the tenant is getting a unit that conforms to all state and local housing code requirements. Registration and inspection of each unit are subject to a fee to help offset the administrative cost to the municipality. However, the Town of Westerly may need to seek legislative authority to enact a local ordinance and enforce a strategy such as this.

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Section 4.5 – Housing Affordability

Escalating housing prices and rental rates have an impact on the desirability of Westerly as an attractive community for both year-round and seasonal residents. These prices, however, also have a direct impact on housing affordability. Affordable housing needs stem from residents who pay more than 30% of their income for housing costs, which causes a significant financial burden. Of the total number of households in Westerly, 4,564 or 46.6% had household incomes less than 80% HAMFI, according to 2013-2017 ACS estimates. This percentage is greater than the State's minimum 10% threshold for subsidized housing and is indicative of a greater need for affordable housing, whether by subsidy, deed restriction, or by design. Identifying opportunities to further integrate housing into existing buildings and neighborhoods would also help to meet these needs.

There are many factors limiting affordable housing availability in Rhode Island, most, if not all, of which are pertinent within the Town of Westerly as well. The Town has been experiencing the following influences on this sector of the housing market:

- Limited land available and suitable for development
- High land and construction costs
- High sale prices
- Low vacancy rates
- Deterioration of older housing stock
- Elimination of year-round housing stock by conversion to seasonal or second homes
- Elimination of funding through federal and state housing programs

Subsection 4.5.1 – Housing Costs

Through the early part of the previous decade (2000-2006), high and rising property values reflected the desirability of Westerly as an attractive community for both year-round and seasonal residents. Prior to the housing and credit market crashes around 2008, the housing market was characterized by vibrant construction activity in both new homes and renovations. These factors, as well as strong value appreciation of assessed homes, combined with rising property taxes and energy costs, has significant impacts on affordable housing availability.

With the economic downturn beginning in 2007, construction activity immediately began to fall in 2008 and has been focused almost entirely on single-family units since. According to the Statewide Multiple Listing Service (MLS) data provided by Rhode Island Living, single-family and multi-family median sale prices have also not yet recovered to pre-recession values, despite a more recent upward trend. According to the 2019 HousingWorksRI Fact Book, the household income needed to affordably own the median-single family home price in Westerly was $92,445. The 2013-2017 ACS estimated income for owner households in Westerly is $82,326, indicating a gap of $10,119 in annual income exists, which further demonstrates the difficulty of reasonably affording a home in the Ttown. High and rising rent continues to be an issue impacting both the Town and the State. The 2019 HousingWorksRI Fact Book found the average monthly rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Westerly was $1,463 per month. This cost was $309 greater than the Westerly-Hopkinton-New Shoreham, RI HUD Metro Area's Fair Market Rent (FMR) of $1,154 for FY2020. Assuming no more than 30% of annual income was spent on rent alone (excluding related expenses), a renter household would need an annual income of $58,520 to afford the average two-bedroom apartment's rent. However, the 2013-2017 ACS's median household income estimate for renter households was only $32,083. Thus, an income gap of $26,437 existed for a renter household to affordably lease their home.

Subsection 4.5.2 – Home Values

An analysis of housing in Westerly, from the standpoint of its market value as determined by the Westerly Tax Assessor's Office through revaluations in 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2018, shows the volatility of property values in Westerly over the last decade. Table 4-11 below summarizes the 2003, 2006, and 2009 revaluations for single-family homes in Westerly categorized by fire district. Over these six (6) years, the value among the range of

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single-family homes located in Westerly increased from a Town-wide average of $248,050 in 2003 to $311,150 in 2009, a 25.4% increase. At a sub-municipal level, total valuation of single-family homes ranged from an 18% increase in Shelter Harbor Fire District to a 34.5% increase in Bradford Fire District. Single-family homes in two (2) other fire districts, Watch Hill and Weekapaug, had average assessed values in excess of $1.5 million. These outlying values were due to their districts' characteristics as coastal villages with high numbers of second homes and seasonal populations. In the 2006 revaluation, which represented the peak assessed value within this time period, there was a difference in assessed value of more than $1.6 million between the fire districts with the lowest (Bradford Fire District) and highest (Weekapaug Fire District) median values.

Table 4-11 Median Values of Single-Family Homes, 2003-2009

Fire District	2003		2006		2009	
	Homes	Median Value	Homes	Median Value	Homes	Median Value
Bradford	425	$173,000	434	$244,300	440	$232,750
Dunn's Corners	1,670	$266,450	1,723	$365,900	1,743	$340,500
Misquamicut	536	$352,500	558	$499,800	565	$465,400
Shelter Harbor	151	$556,800	155	$713,200	160	$657,050
Watch Hill	208	$1,249,100	210	$1,727,300	217	$1,670,300
Weekapaug	112	$1,331,000	118	$1,908,800	126	$1,700,500
Westerly	3,816	$220,600	3,899	$301,800	3,931	$275,400
Town-wide	6,918	$248,050	7,097	$336,700	7,182	$311,150

Source: Town of Westerly, 2019

The 2009 revaluation provided a major source of evidence that the general economic downturn beginning in 2008 had taken effect locally. For example, 57% of houses sold in 2008 were sold for less than their assessed value, and 83% of houses sold for less than their assessed value in the first half of 2009.

The Great Recession's protracted effects in Westerly were (and in some cases still are) evident in the overall decrease in average total property values as recorded within the 2012, 2015, and 2018 revaluations in Table 4-12 below. In 2012, the median value had fallen by 15.3% from the 2006 revaluation to $285,100. The most recent revaluation, in 2018, was the first since 2006 to show median assessed value increased Town-wide and in all fire districts from the preceding full revaluation year.

Table 4-12 Median Values of Year-round Single-Family Homes, 2012-2018

Fire District	2012		2015		2018	
	Homes	Median Value	Homes	Median Value	Homes	Median Value
Bradford	475	$209,800	495	$204,900	497	$231,000
Dunn's Corners	1,758	$313,000	1,774	$305,300	1,803	$339,500
Misquamicut	584	$432,950	583	$421,900	586	$481,600
Shelter Harbor	162	$597,300	164	$585,900	164	$655,650
Watch Hill	222	$1,597,300	222	$1,632,200	222	$1,767,650
Weekapaug	131	$1,623,800	133	$1,452,700	133	$1,795,800
Westerly	4,014	$251,100	4,063	$242,500	4,105	$272,400
Town-wide	7,346	$285,100	7,434	$275,600	7,510	$309,600

Source: Town of Westerly, 2019

Table 4-13 below summarizes changes in median single-family home values over four (4) time periods, all ending in 2018. In the decade passing from January 2009 to December 2018, the median value of a single-family home in Westerly was ultimately stagnant, decreasing by less than one percent. Values of single-family homes trended upwards through the six (6) year period from 2012 to 2018, with the data suggesting that home values were appreciating more rapidly during the last three (3) years of that period. Even with the increased rate of home value appreciation during this period, the average home value in 2018 was still lower than the values in 2006. The rapid rate of home value appreciation heading into the later part of 2018, however, is a leading indicator that pressure on housing affordability will continue to increase.

Table 4-13 Percent Changes in Median Values of Single-Family Homes, 2006-2018

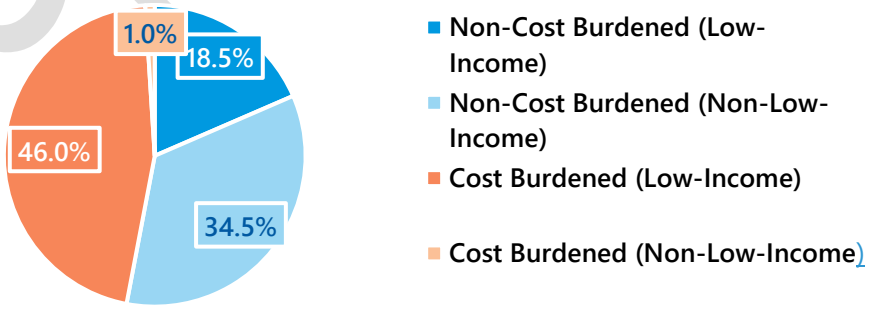
Fire District	2006-2018	2009-2018	2012-2018	2015-2018
Bradford	-5.4%	-0.8%	10.1%	12.7%
Dunn's Corners	-7.2%	-0.3%	8.5%	11.2%
Misquamicut	-3.6%	3.5%	11.2%	14.2%
Shelter Harbor	-8.1%	-0.2%	9.8%	11.9%
Watch Hill	2.3%	5.8%	10.7%	8.3%
Weekapaug	-5.9%	5.6%	10.6%	23.6%
Westerly	-9.7%	-1.1%	8.5%	12.3%
Town-wide	-8.1%	-0.5%	8.6%	12.3%

Source: Town of Westerly, 2019

Subsection 4.5.3 – Cost Burden and Unmet Affordability Needs

Affordable housing needs are determined from demographic data available from a variety of sources, which include the US Census Bureau and the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) database, among other sources (it should be noted that, while CHAS data is a product of the US Census Bureau, in partnership with HUD, and there are no known suitable alternatives for providing this housing data, its estimates can often be subject to higher margins of error at the local government level). The unmet need for affordable housing can be calculated based on the current number of LMI units and the demand for LMI units based on the data available. In addition to LMI production goals (to be discussed later, which are based on current housing stock), the specific needs of the low- and moderate-income populations are also evaluated based on the availability and distribution of the affordable housing types that should be targeted. Figure 4-2 illustrates the extent to which housing cost burdens are felt by renter-occupied households in Westerly.

Figure 4-2 Housing Cost Burden for Renter-occupied Households by Income, 2016



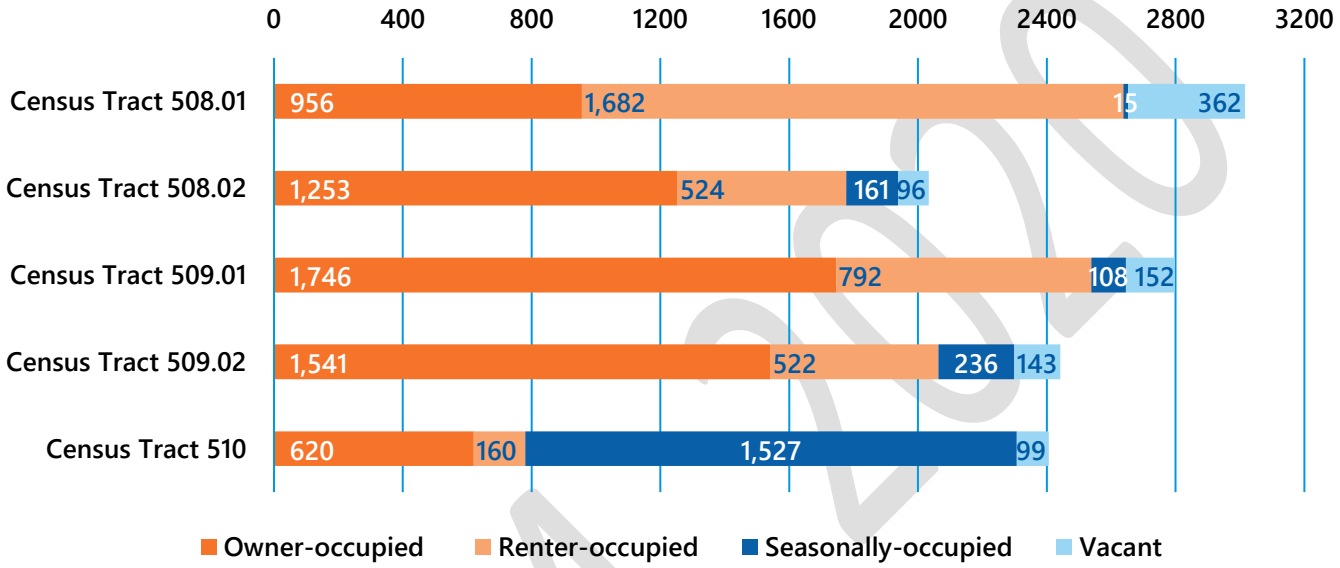
Source: 2012-2016 CHAS Data Query Tool

Among the four (4) categories shown in Figure 4-2, a plurality (46%) of Westerly's renter households earn 80% HAMFI and spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs (CHAS Data Query Tool, 2012-2016). Further,

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almost half (47%) were cost burdened because of their monthly rent. As previously noted, the average two-bedroom apartment in Westerly costs $1,463 per month to rent, requiring an income $26,437 greater than the median income of local renter households. While there are many factors causing this situation that are present across the State and region, a unique and likely additional consideration is the comparatively stronger market demand for vacation homes in Town. This phenomenon is visualized in Figure 4-3 below, which presents the Town based on its five (5) Census Tracts. Census Tract 510 encompasses the coastal portion of the Town that is south of Route 1A, from Avondale to Shelter Harbor.

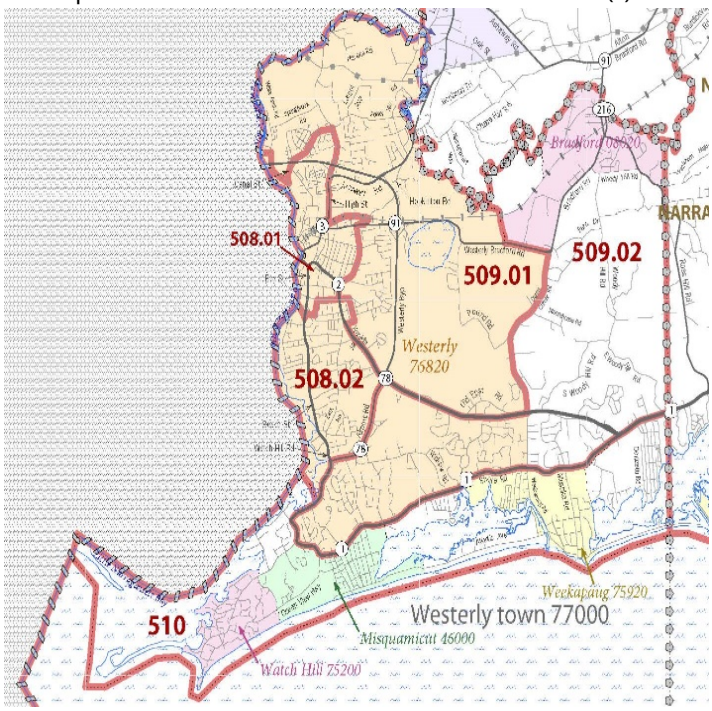
Figure 4-3 Housing Unit Occupancy by Census Tract, 2017



Source: 2013-2017 ACS five-year estimates

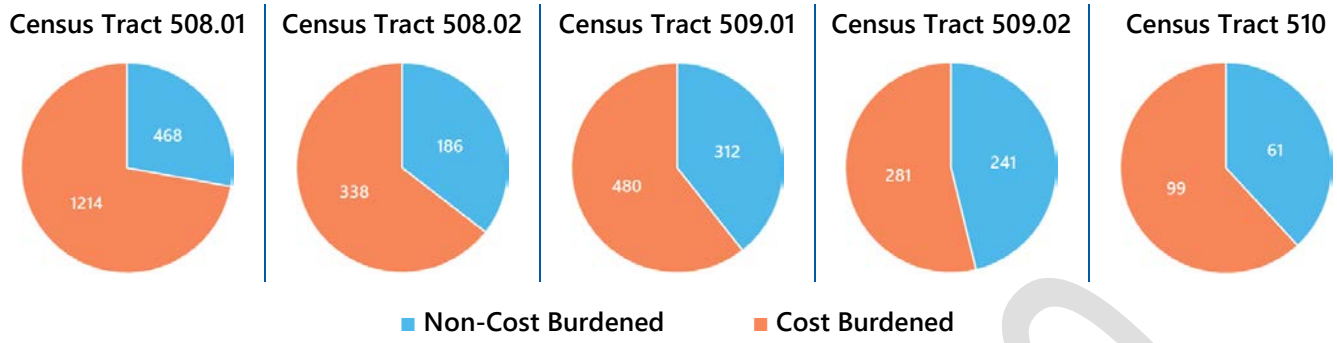
Seasonal rentals potentially contribute to a diminished year-round stock of affordable homes by disrupting potential long-term rentals. This occurs in cases where a landlord imposes a nine-month restriction for their unit(s) to be vacated and rented at higher cost in the summer, when demand is increased.

Rental housing is most concentrated in Census Tract 508.01, incorporating Downtown Westerly and its surrounding area, and decreases further west (to Census Tract 509.02) and south (to Census Tract 510). Overall, there are positive correlations between the percentage of renter-occupied housing units and several characteristics common in urbanized areas, such as greater racial diversity and a larger young adult (18 to 34 years) population. The 2010 US Census data and ACS 2013-2017 estimates also support this conclusion, which is experienced in Westerly as well. Regardless of prevalence, however, Figure 4-4 below shows a majority of renter households in all Census Tracts experience cost burden. The range falls from just over half (53.8%) in Census Tract 509.02, to nearly three-quarters (72.2%) in Census Tract 508.01.



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Figure 4-4 Cost Burdened Renter-Occupied Households by Census Tract, 2017

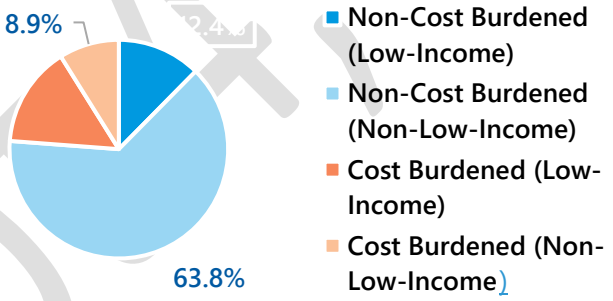


Source: 2013-2017 ACS five-year estimates

The 2019 HousingWorksRI Fact Book identified that an owner household required an income of over $92,000 to afford the median price of a single-family home in Westerly, $328,250. Just four (4) years previously, the 2015 Fact Book identified that an owner household required nearly $10,000 less ($80,252). This substantial increase outpaced inflation. Sales of existing multi-family housing units have been fairly stable within the same period of time, while the median sale price has comparatively grown without interruption, from $284,500 to $328,250.

In contrast to renter households, Figure 4-5 below illustrates that cost burdens experienced by owner households in Westerly were far less common. Just under 15% of all owner households were those that earned less than 80% HAMFI and paid more than 30% of their incomes towards housing costs. More than three-quarters did not experience cost burden.

Figure 4-5 Housing Cost Burden for Owner-occupied Households by Income, 2016



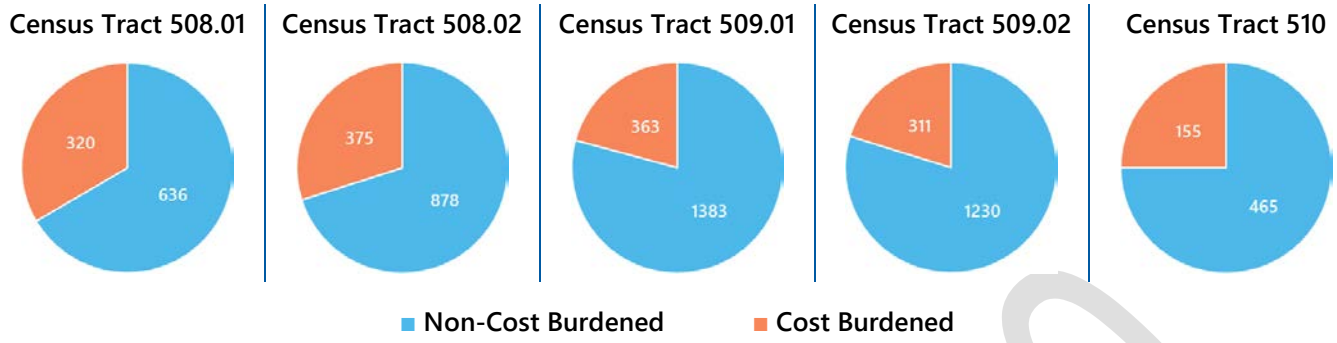
Source: 2012-2016 CHAS Data Query Tool

The prevalence of owner-occupancy, like renter-occupancy, was also shown in Figure 4-3. While Census Tract 508.01 is predominantly comprised of rental units and Census Tract 510 is mostly made up of seasonal homes. The remaining Census Tracts are largely owned and occupied year-round. The comparably high portions of owner-occupied dwellings in these tracts may be influenced by the time period in which their general development occurred (mid- to late-twentieth century).

Figure 4-6 below presents another inverse of what is experienced by renters. There are no Census Tracts that have a majority of cost burdened owner-occupied households. Additionally, the difference between the majority (non-cost burdened) and minority (cost burdened) appears to also be greater than renter-occupied households. The prevalence of cost burden was greatest in Census Tract 508.01, at 33.5%, and was least in Census Tract 509.02, at 20.2%.

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Figure 4-6 Cost Burdened Owner-Occupied Households by Census Tract, 2017



Source: 2013-2017 ACS five-year estimates

Subsection 4.5.4 – Residents with Disabilities

Disability is defined by federal law as "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities," which may include "walking, talking, hearing, seeing, breathing, learning, performing manual tasks, and caring for oneself." In a summary of the National Health Interview Survey taken in 2018, the National Center for Health Statistics identified 16.3% of adult Americans experienced some level of difficulty in their physical functioning, measured by their ability to walk a quarter mile. Based on this information, actual housing needs of persons with physical disabilities can likely be considered significantly greater than the number of people dependent on a mobility device, such as a wheelchair or cane.

The estimates provided by the 2013-2017 ACS indicated that, locally, the population having one or more disability totaled 2,821. ~~This made up~~ just over 12% of the Town's total population. Disabilities, ranging from most to least prevalent, included ambulatory difficulty (1,355), hearing difficulty (859), independent living difficulty (851), cognitive difficulty (833), self-care difficulty (419), and vision difficulty (320). Persons aged 65 years old and over made up 62.5% of the disabled population, indicating that disabilities are a notable concern with aging.

The ACS provided economic data for the population with a disability status only at a national, state, and county level. It is nonetheless reasonable, based on available earnings and employment estimates, to conclude that persons with disabilities experience the same level of need, if not greater, for affordable housing as persons with no disabilities in Westerly. In recent years, non-profit organizations, including Westerly Area Rest and Meals, Inc. (WARM) and Operation Stand Down RI (OSDRI), have worked to address this issue. In these two cases, an additional 16 housing units restricted specifically to households with a person experiencing a disability were added to Westerly's housing supply between 2013 and 2015.

Subsection 4.5.5 – Residents Experiencing Homelessness

The National Health Care for the Homeless Council notes there is no one legal definition for homelessness. In specifically discussing housing needs in Westerly, however, this Plan recognizes a portion of the HUD definition as being reflective of the most common forms of homelessness in the Town. This group include individuals "who [lack] a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence" and individuals and families "living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including hotels and motels paid for by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations, congregate shelters, and transitional housing)."

The National Coalition for the Homeless and the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless (RICH) both identify a lack of affordable housing as a primary contributor to homelessness. In its 2019 State of Homelessness Report, RICH counted 4,390 individuals State-wide who were experiencing homelessness in either a shelter or transitional housing. It also reported that 26 of the State's 2,083 identified callers seeking shelter were from Westerly. This

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number represented only 1.2% of the total, but made up the second highest number, almost a quarter (23.2%) of identified callers in Washington County.

As noted in an earlier section, WARM provided housing specifically for several households with disabilities. This service was done as part of its greater mission for serving those in need. The WARM Center, located on Spruce Street in Westerly since 1990, provides one of the three emergency shelters in Washington County. It often operates near or at full capacity (approximately 80 individuals) but is also aware of additional people experiencing homelessness outside the WARM shelter. To further assist individuals experiencing homelessness and/or a housing crisis, the WARM Shelter offers 19 beds (13 for males and 6 for females) and five (5) rooms of long-term transitional housing through its WARM-Up program, with 13 families additionally being served by the Harvest Homes program. WARM also offers supportive housing in its Section 811 project (completed in 2014), which includes six (6) one-bedroom apartments located on Spruce Street and two (2) two-bedroom units provided on Pierce Street.

Section 4.6 – Affordable Low-and Moderate-Income Housing

The Rhode Island Comprehensive Housing Production and Rehabilitation Act of 2004 (General Laws 45-128-8.1) and the Rhode Island Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Act (General Laws 45-53; LMI Act) are the origin of the 10% requirement. Each municipality must have at least 10% of its year-round housing stock be "affordable" with the further provision that the units be at least partially subsidized by the federal, State, or local government and subject to other restrictions to assure they will remain affordable for a minimum of 30 years. The LMI Act also provides a process for the review and approval of eligible LMI housing developments known as a "comprehensive permit."

As of 2019, 12 communities have met the comprehensive permit process. Six (6) communities currently have more than 10% LMI housing, as defined by the Act, while another six (6) communities are "exempt" under an alternative calculation for municipalities having at least 5,000 occupied rental units where those units comprise 25% or more of all housing units and have at least 15% of their rental units affordable to LMI persons.

As of this Plan's adoption, 5.~~22~~14% (~~542~~ 536 units) of Westerly's year-round housing supply was subsidized and deed-restricted affordable for LMI households (RI Housing Tabulation, July 2020) and the composition of its housing tenure did not meet the exemption. Table 4-14 below provides a full listing of the Town's LMI housing.

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Table 4-14 LMI Housing Inventory, ~~2019~~2020

Population Served	Development	Tenure	Location	Total Units
Elderly	Babcock Village	Rental	Cross Street	150
	Chestnut Court	Rental	Chestnut Street	50
	Merchant's Village	Rental	Clark Street	99
	Park View	Rental	Park Avenue	60
Elderly Subtotal				359
Family	Arlington Street	Rental	Arlington Street	2
	Covington Court	Ownership	Covington Court	5
	Bowling Lane	Ownership	Bowling Lane	1
	Fairview Drive	Rental	Fairview Drive	2
	Gardner Street	Rental	Gardner Street	1
	Grove Avenue	Rental	Grove Avenue	3
	Joseph Street	Rental	Joseph Street	2
	Kent Avenue	Ownership	Kent Avenue	1
	Knight Street	Ownership	Knight Street	1
	Knight Street	Rental	Knight Street	3
	Lewis Lane	Rental	Lewis Lane	4
	Lilac Street	Ownership	Lilac Drive	1
	Lilac Street	Rental	Lilac Drive	1
	Merchant's Village	Rental	Clark Street	16
	Pierce Street	Ownership	Pierce Street	2
	Pierce Street	Ownership	Pierce Street	1
	Pierce Street	Rental	Pierce Street	1
	Pierce Street Habitat	Ownership	Pierce Street	2
	Pierce Street North End	Ownership	Pierce Street	2
	Pierce Street North End	Rental	Pierce Street	2
	Pond Street	Ownership	Pond Street	1
	Pond Street	Rental	Pond Street	1
	Roma I	Rental	Byron Drive	22
	State Street	Rental	State Street	2
	Summer Street	Rental	Summer Street	2
	Sunrise Drive	Rental	Sunrise Drive	2
	Thomas Lane	Ownership	Thomas Lane	1
	Westminster Street	Ownership	Westminster Street	2
	Spinnaker Landing	Ownership	Post Road	9
	North Glen Townhouses	Ownership	Pierce Street	10
	Fieldstone Estates	Ownership	Fieldstone Way	7
Family Subtotal				112~~0~~
Special Needs	Group Home beds	-	-	34~~42~~
	Spruce Street	Rental	Spruce Street	5
	Westerly Court	Rental	Beach Street	10
	Spruce Street 2013	Rental	Spruce Street	6
	Pierce Street OSDRI	Rental	Pierce Street	10
Special Needs Subtotal				~~73~~65
Total				~~542~~536

Source: RI Housing Tabulation, ~~2019~~July 2020

Subsection 4.6.1 – LMI Unit Approvals

The Town adopted its Affordable Housing Plan in 2004, shortly after the passage of the Rhode Island Comprehensive Housing Production and Rehabilitation Act. In it, the Town proposed several strategies to develop certified LMI units. With the assistance of an Affordable Housing Committee, the Town adopted several new sections to the Zoning Ordinance to establish the regulatory framework determined necessary to implement the State law locally. These included:

- Affordable Housing (§260-50),
- Inclusionary Zoning (§260-50.2),
- Comprehensive Permits (§260-50.3),
- Municipal Affordable Housing Fund (§260-50.4), and
- Historic Mill Overlay District (§260-57).

To date, 150 LMI units in single- and multi-family structures have been proposed under one or more of these affordable housing amendments with about half (74) ultimately completed and a further 21 in various stages of construction. Unfortunately, despite undergoing some level of review, 55 proposed LMI units were not ultimately completed due to various factors (often related to economic feasibility). All affordable housing projects proposed ~~since~~ from January 2004 to October 2019 are listed in Table 4-15 below:

Table 4-15 LMI Unit Production, January 2004 – October 2019

Development	LMI Units Proposed	LMI Units Completed
66 Pierce Street	2	2
69 Pierce Street	2	2
Westerly Court	10	10
6 Lilac Drive	2	2
48 Pierce Street	2	2
71 Pierce Street	2	2
79 Pierce Street	2	2
6 Lewis Lane	2	2
Napatree Point Condominiums	2	0 (project abandoned)
Spinnaker Landing	10	9
Covington Court	4	4
Fieldstone Estates	13	7
Iroquois Hills	33	0 (project abandoned)
North Glenn	10	10
Westerly Heights	4	0 (project abandoned)
Brown Building (1)	16	0 (project abandoned)
WARM Shelter	6	6
OSDRI	10	10
White Rock Inn	4	4
Merchants Village Expansion	5	0 (in progress)
South Drive	6	0 (in progress)
Brown Building (2)	3	0 (in progress)
Total	**150**	**74**

Sources: Town of Westerly Department of Development Services, 2019

Westerly's preceding comprehensive plan, in support of State and local efforts, was very clear about the continued need for affordable housing and not necessarily, nor exclusively, meeting that demand through new single-family construction. The Town continues to aspire to strategies that preserve its existing housing stock as affordable:

- Developing and implementing a program to focus and coordinate affordable housing initiatives and funding as an integral part of Westerly's efforts in neighborhood revitalization and rehabilitation, with priority given to existing housing over new construction.
- Targeting neighborhoods for revitalization efforts through the development of neighborhood plans and linking implementation of these plans with affordable housing strategies.

While certain concepts have remained constant over time, approaches that are new to this Plan include:

- Supporting the development of a variety of housing types so that residents can continue to live in Town even as their housing needs change,
- Supporting the development of LMI housing where 50% or more of the housing units have a restricted sales price or rental amount for a period of at least 30 years,
- Planning all residential projects with the intent of preserving and improving the character of existing neighborhoods and being well-integrated with neighborhood or district features,
- Establishing programs to assist LMI owner-occupants of residential properties to repair and maintain their houses so that they can continue to reside in their homes, and
- Continuing a community-based housing rehabilitation program.

These considerations are particularly made with respect to the Town's projected approach to buildout at the end of this Plan's planning horizon. While the buildout analysis is discussed in Chapter 3 of Part I of this Plan, land remaining available for development is already increasingly scarce and generally subject to environmental constraints to development. Increased housing density in established neighborhoods that are built out is impractical and may adversely affect neighborhood character as well as environmental integrity. Compliance with parking requirements alone will result in increased impervious surfaces and an increase in surface water runoff resulting in the need for investment in improved drainage facilities.

In fulfillment of RIGL and comprehensive planning requirements of the State, an LMI housing production plan is included is in this Plan with strategies for attaining the State's 10% threshold. To begin this analysis, Table 4-16 below presents that, at the time of buildout, the Town would face a deficit of ~~877~~ 883 affordable LMI housing units.

Table 4-16 Existing and Projected LMI Housing Deficits

Housing Type	Units	Percentage
Total Non-seasonally occupied, 2010	10,430	100%
State-mandated LMI	1,043	10%
Total LMI, ~~2019~~2020	~~542~~536	5.1~~2~~%
LMI Deficit	507~~1~~	~~4.8~~9%
Total Non-seasonally occupied, 2017	10,648	100%
State-mandated LMI	1,065	10%
Total LMI, ~~2019~~2020	~~542~~536	5.0~~1~~%
LMI Deficit	529~~3~~	5.0~~4.9~~%
Total Non-seasonally occupied, Buildout[1]	14,188	100%
State-mandated LMI, Buildout	1,419	10%
Total LMI, ~~2019~~2020	~~542~~536	3.8%
LMI Deficit	~~877~~883	6.2%

Sources: 2010 US Census, 2013-2017 ACS five-year estimates, RI Housing Tabulation, July 2020, and Town of Westerly, 2019

[1] Buildout is discussed in Part I, Chapter 3, Land Use and Zoning

The Town endeavors to address factually supported estimates of housing needs based on actual market statistics unique to the Town.

Subsection 4.6.2 – Meeting Local Housing Needs

The Town of Westerly believes it exceeds the overall contribution of affordable housing anticipated under the Act through its robust stock of sustained year-round rental housing. The Town also recognizes that State approval of its Plan is dependent upon its compliance with the mandate for a 10% LMI production plan. While the Town provides a 10% LMI plan in this chapter, it is also advancing its local cause for housing needs by pursuing a statutory alternative to the 10% requirement.

During the 2016 session of the Rhode Island General Assembly, the Town pursued legislative changes that would provide Westerly an exception to the ~~Low and Moderate Income Housing~~LMI Act as an urban community that is meeting affordable housing needs through its continued commitment to the provision of rental units for residents who earn less than or equal to 80% HAMFI. House bill No. 8014A and Senate bill No. 2876A were proposed to change the threshold requirement for low- or moderate-income rental units in a community to 12% where there are at least three thousand (3,000) rental units occupied year-round. This proposed legislation did not garner support of the House of Representatives or the Senate and was postponed indefinitely in April 2016.



The US Census Bureau and HUD work together to make available data that tracks the extent of housing problems and housing needs in communities, particularly for low income households using CHAS data. CHAS data for Westerly are provided in the table at the end of this chapter.

Unfortunately, these estimates must be used with caution, as most of the estimates have a margin of error greater than 25%, as shown on the official CHAS table. These tables include almost all the data provided by the CHAS and, in many cases, the margin of error (MoE) is several times the estimate, as shown. Rhode Island Statewide Planning says of these estimates: "An estimate with a margin of error greater than 25% of the estimate should be used only if there are no suitable alternatives, and with the understanding that its accuracy may be less than desired." The Town of Westerly will be seeking a more suitable alternative to the estimate of housing need provided by the CHAS most probably in the form of direct surveys to its residents. However, in the meantime, the discussion of housing need will proceed based on the information provided to the Town.

According to CHAS data and 2013-2017 ACS data, Westerly had 2,104 renter-households at or below 80% of the HAMFI. In the most densely populated renter-occupied areas of Town, Census Tracts 509.02 and 508.01, 53.8% and 72.2% of renter-households, respectively, experience cost burden (in excess of 30% of income) trying to maintain a household. Conversely, it was far less common for an owner-occupied household in Westerly to have experienced costs burdens. Of this cohort, 15% of owner-occupied households experienced cost burden. This data indicates that there is a near-term demand for more affordable rental housing, whether meeting the mandated definition or otherwise. The most consistent finding in Westerly's CHAS and 2013-2017 ACS data is that nearly one-third of households pay too large a percentage of their gross monthly income towards housing.

In terms of proportionality, as shown in Table 4-17 below, the CHAS indicates Westerly's current foremost need is for single units targeted towards the family population with another third for residents in the category with special needs (such as single-bedroom elderly, living assistance, handicapped, and communal living). The existing housing supply is providing much of the needed housing for seniors.

Subsection 4.6.3 – Projected Affordable Housing Production

An effective housing production plan for Westerly will ensure that the different types of residents with cost-burdened households are each provided a fair and representative proportion of affordable housing units to be constructed through the 2020s and 2030s. It is the underserved segment of Westerly's current households ~~which~~ that must be targeted, including both family and other non-family households. Table 4-18 shows the number of

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units intended to serve each household type that should be constructed each five-year period between 2020 and 2040 in order to achieve a fair, thoughtful, and appropriate demographic balance. Units approved since the implementation of the Affordable Housing Plan of 2004 but not yet constructed is the starting point in 2020.

Table 4-17 Affordable Housing Production Projections by Household Type, 2020-2040

Population	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	Supply needed
Elderly	30	10	10	10	7	67
Families	20	65	65	65	46	261
Special Needs*	5	40	50	50	26	171
Total	**55**	**115**	**125**	**125**	**79**	**499**

Sources: Town of Westerly; CHAS

In the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, the first action item towards the Town's goal of maintaining a broad range of housing options states "Review housing and demographic data regularly to determine whether stated goals are being met and revise, as necessary, to achieve goals." Data collection work has been completed to give the Town a clear picture of the current affordable housing makeup in the Town.

This data has provided a significant opportunity to respond to the Town Council's suggestion that a legislative exemption to the 10% requirement of the Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Act be pursued. This data analysis will also assist the Planning Board in their recommendations to the Town on the implementation of this Plan. This data will be used as the basis for discussions and recommendations on planning issues such as residential density and services and facilities for Westerly's neighborhoods and planning areas.

Subsection 4.6.4 – Housing Opportunities through Affordable Rental Units

The Town of Westerly is meeting housing needs through its substantial contribution to the rental market. The Town of Westerly has developed several programs and initiatives to ensure the preservation of its robust rental housing stock. Actions in the 2010 Plan included:

> "Action 5.5: Develop and implement a program to focus and coordinate affordable housing initiatives and funding as an integral part of Westerly's efforts in neighborhood revitalization and rehabilitation with priority given to existing housing over new construction, and;
>
> Action 5.16: Target neighborhoods for revitalization efforts through the development of neighborhood plans and link implementation with other affordable housing strategies."

The number of year-round renter-occupied housing units in the Town of Westerly has been consistent from 2000 to 2017 at approximately 3,400 units on average, or 33% of the entire year-round housing stock. In 2000, approximately 2,060 renter households in Westerly were reported to be at or below 80% HAMFI. That number increased in 2017 to 2,412 renter households.

Since 2000, renter households at or below 80% HAMFI have made up 60 to 66% of total renter-occupied units. Approximately 20% more of the available rental units are occupied by residents with incomes between 80% HAMFI and 120% HAMFI. Of the 3,680 renter occupied units in Westerly, 498 (or 13.5%) are LMI-qualified, allowing the local regulatory environment to provide more than 3,183 rental units without subsidy or income restrictions. As mentioned above, 2,412 households in Town have incomes that are at or below 80% HAMFI. Assuming each unit contains a household, this number in and of itself exceeds, by more than 226%, the state mandated LMI requirement for 2017 of 1,065 total units. While recognizing that cost burden on household~~er~~s also needs to be considered, an initiative to survey residents to determine cost burden in excess of 30% of household income is a part of this Plan.

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This Plan embraces several strategies for the rehabilitation and production of units for renter households at or below 80% HAMFI. These strategies are intended to ensure that low- and moderate-income households continue to be 60 to 66% of total renter-occupied units. Data by census tract demonstrates that Westerly exceeds the overall contribution of affordable housing anticipated under the LMI Act through its robust stock of sustained year-round rental housing. However, housing conditions remain a problem.

The Town of Westerly is approaching build-out; the remaining land available for development is scarce and generally has environmental constraints to its development. Redevelopment within established neighborhoods will be required to continue to serve the community's housing needs.

Subsection 4.6.4 –Strategic Production Plan for LMI Qualified Units

Strategy 1: Inclusionary Affordable Housing

This strategy of Inclusionary Affordable Housing relies on private sector development and affects single-family subdivisions, multi-family residential developments, and mixed-use projects. This market-based tool for producing affordable housing without using tax dollars has produced thousands of housing units across the United States. Its purpose is to integrate affordable housing in developments throughout communities by requiring developers to set aside a certain percentage of housing units that are affordable to residents with incomes up to 80% of the area's median income.

Westerly's approach is to use mandatory inclusionary zoning when for-profit developers propose market-rate housing in residential zoning districts. Mandatory inclusionary zoning also applies when for-profit, market-rate housing is proposed for mixed-use development located in commercial or professional zoning districts, or when adaptive re-use of a historic mill contains market-rate housing. In all cases, the Town's incentive-based approach will offer for-profit developers a density bonus for market rate units for a required percentage of 30-year (minimum) deed-restricted units for low- and moderate-income households earning 80% or less of median income. This strategy also applies to non-profit entities whose residential development projects contain market rate units.

Strategy 1.1 Inclusionary Zoning

To provide more affordable homeownership opportunities, the Town adopted an Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance requiring all new developments with five (5) or more residential units in any zoning district to set aside 20% of the total units in the development as LMI restricted (Section 260-50.2). A density bonus equal to the percentage of qualified LMI units in the development is also provided. Qualifying LMI units, under RIGL §45-53-3, require a minimum 30-year commitment by the developer, enforced by deed restriction, that the units be sold or rented to low- or moderate-income households and monitored by a certified agency.

For cases in which it may not be feasible to develop the affordable units on site, Section 260-50.4, as adopted, allows the developer the option of paying a fee-in-lieu, which is deposited in the Town's Municipal Affordable Housing Fund. Following a change in State law on the administration of the funds from the fee-in-lieu, the Town of Westerly must revisit this option. Other options include providing the LMI ~~U~~units elsewhere. This decision is at the sole discretion of the Planning Board.

Moving forward in this Plan, inclusionary zoning is still considered a productive strategy. The Town's inclusionary zoning provisions should be reviewed and revised to produce the type of housing for which there is the strongest need (such as family rental units and single-occupant households). The Planning Board should revisit the inclusionary zoning ordinance to evaluate the density bonuses offered and their impact on neighborhoods and environmentally sensitive sites.

There are approximately 2,105 undeveloped buildable acres in the RR-60, LDR-40, MDR-30, and HDR-15 zoning districts. To account for land required for other strategies, it is assumed that 60% of the undeveloped buildable land is developed as residential under the current zoning requirements and

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mandatory inclusionary zoning ordinance. This strategy, based on these assumptions, **may provide up to 268 LMI units.**

Strategy 1.2 Comprehensive Permit Ordinance

The Town passed a Comprehensive Permit Ordinance (Section 260-50.3, Amended 9-24-2007 by Chapter 1616) in compliance with the State mandated "fast track" review and approval process developments that include affordable housing units. Local approvals are given to qualified projects contingent on State approvals and a substantial density bonus is provided. Yet the "fast track" became the "slow lane" when the General Assembly shortened the review period for other major land development projects and subdivisions in 2017.

Per the ~~Low- and Moderate- Income Housing~~LMI Act (RIGL §45-53-4), comprehensive permits are only available for proposals in which at least 25% of the housing to be developed is deed-restricted for occupancy by low- or moderate-income households. The LMI Act also requires that all low- and moderate-income housing units proposed are integrated throughout the development. As a state mandated housing production strategy, a comprehensive permit application must produce qualified LMI units. There is no off-site or fee-in-lieu option. A so called "municipal subsidy program" need only include dimensional relief for the project to qualify as LMI. In Westerly, very rarely is an increase in density requested because of the limited carrying capacity of most undeveloped parcels.

Examples of developments that have been approved through this process include:

- Westerly Courts, Beach Street – 10 units, all LMI (South County Mental Health)
- North Glen, Pierce Street – 10 units, all LMI (RI Housing and Washington County Community Development Corporation [WCCDC])
- Spinnaker Landing, 222 Post Road – 42 units, 10 LMI
- Pleasant Street Courts, Covington Court – 17 units, 4 LMI
- WARM Shelter, 54-56 Spruce Street – 6 units, all LMI
- Fieldstone Subdivision, Fieldstone Way – 52 units, 13 LMI
- Iroquois Hill, Iroquois Avenue – 86 units, 33 LMI (abandoned during appeal process)

In the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, the Town identified the need to review the Comprehensive Permit Ordinance. As with the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance, the Town was concerned with its limited application except on marginal properties in need of dimensional relief or engineering compromises. Adverse impacts pertaining to impervious lot coverages, design, and disturbance of the natural environment are also concerning.

An alternative to the current regulations would be to incorporate more appropriate guidelines to ensure quality development with minimal impacts on the community. The approval of projects before they have been reviewed by state or federal agencies, particularly considering the development on environmentally sensitive land, continues to remain a concern. The Town does not consider this a desirable planning approach, particularly in the Pawcatuck River and Salt Pond Region Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) areas along the coastline, which the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (RICRMC) has determined are already "built beyond carrying capacity." Areas within the RR-60 zoning district surrounding Newton Marsh, Chapman Pond, and Aguntaug Swamp (all of which is protected land ~~in~~ overlying an aquifer and is predominantly freshwater wetlands) are also of concern for these types of development.

The Town's Zoning Ordinance not only adopts the comprehensive permitting process, it also provides for increased density intended to aid in the production of qualified low- and moderate-income housing units, as previously described. Density bonuses available to developers that apply under this Ordinance range from 20% to 66%. However, concerns continue with applications for residential development at these rates. The density increases allowed by the Ordinance do not take into consideration the location or carrying capacity of a property for development. The Town's municipal infrastructure resources and utilities should be assembled to allow the development of LMI housing by Comprehensive Permit. Changes to the existing

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density bonus in several districts are discussed here. The relevant issues vary by zoning district and development site characteristics, which are briefly discussed below:

- **HDR-6 | 66% density bonus (an increase from 20%)**
  The HDR-6 zoning district is densely populated, with some of its area in the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), where historic settlement patterns used the rivers in a very different manner than we do today. This zoning district is also within the Urban Services Boundary (USB), an area which is serviced by both public water and sewer, logical prerequisites to support additional residential development. The HDR-6 zoning district is predominantly rental units and small single-family residential homes on small lots. Increased density in the HDR-6 zoning district is restricted by dimensional and parking requirements, limiting the potential for multi-family development. Zoning revisions will be contemplated to allow duplexes and triple-deckers in neighborhoods where this historical development pattern already exists.

  There are approximately 62 total undeveloped buildable acres in the HDR-6 zoning district. This undeveloped, buildable land **may support approximately 310 units** under the current zoning requirements. However, multi-family residential may be created by an increase in density through the comprehensive permit process. A single lot of 6,000 square feet may be redeveloped from a single-family to a duplex. A conservative number of LMI qualified units, from a combined new development and redevelopment with the 66% density increase, is **155 units in the HDR-6 zoning district.**

- **HDR-10 | 0% density bonus (a reduction from 66%)**
  The HDR-10 zoning district is located within the Salt Pond Region SAMP area, which RICRMC has determined to be already "built beyond carrying capacity" and where state regulations require 87,120 square feet per dwelling unit. The 2016 buildout analysis forecasts a maximum of six (6) units that can be developed in this entire district, thereby making the comprehensive permit density bonus impractical for this shoreline community. This zoning district is serviced by public water and private septic systems and, with the continued threat of storm surge and sea level rise, additional residential development should be discouraged. There are 0.01 undeveloped buildable acres in the HDR-10 zoning district outside this SAMP, which cannot support any further additional residential development.

- **HDR-15 | 50% density bonus**
  The HDR-15 zoning district is not contiguous and is located in various areas spread out across the Town; however, the district is primarily located in areas of existing development with relatively low constraints to development. This district can be found in areas as diverse as East Avenue, neighborhoods along the Pawcatuck River, Springbrook Road (abutting the White Rock Quarry), and Bowling Lane. In this district, vacant land may likely be impacted by freshwater wetlands, and any land suitable for development most likely represents limited lots for in-fill through rear-lot and minor subdivisions. This zoning district is serviced by both public water and sewer and is considered able to support some additional residential development in select areas. Increased density in the HDR-15 zoning district is restricted by dimensional and area requirements, limiting the potential for multi-family development.

  There are approximately 113 total undeveloped buildable acres in the HDR-15 zoning district. This undeveloped land may support **approximately 197 units** under the current zoning requirements with the available density bonus. To account for land required for inclusionary zoning and due to constraints to development, it is assumed that 30% of the undeveloped buildable land in this residential zone remains for this strategy. A conservative number of LMI qualified units, from new development within the HDR-15 zoning district, is **98.**

- **MDR-20 | 33% density bonus**
  The MDR-20 zoning district is scattered across the Town as well and is located in areas predominantly serviced by public water and private septic systems. With further study, the Town

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may be able to identify available sites appropriate for the development of multi-family affordable housing in select areas within this zone. Where this zoning occurs in the jurisdiction of a SAMP, this density bonus is not practical, given RICRMC regulatory requirements in these areas.

There are approximately 248 total undeveloped buildable acres in the MDR-20 zoning district, with about 186 acres outside the SAMP. The 186 acres of undeveloped land may support **approximately 93 units** under the current zoning requirements, but the capacity for an increase in density through the comprehensive permit process appears limited by the carrying capacity of the ~~built environment~~land. Reducing the possibility of introducing multi-family housing by another 30%, the number of **LMI units likely is 37.**

- **MDR-30 | 50% density bonus**
  The MDR-30 zoning district is predominantly located within the neighborhoods of Boombridge, Potter Hill, Bradford, and Dunn's Corners, where public water is available but no sanitary sewer.

  There are approximately 733 total undeveloped buildable acres in the MDR-30 zoning district. This undeveloped land may support **approximately 550 units** under the current zoning requirements, but the capacity for an increase in density through the comprehensive permit process is limited by wetlands and other hydric soils. Reducing the possibility of increased housing density by another 70%, the number of **LMI units is approximately 165.**

- **LDR-40 | 33% density bonus**
  The LDR-40 zoning district is in areas located on both sides of Route 91 and at McGowan's Corners, as well as in White Rock. Some areas in this zoning district may be serviced by municipal water and other areas will require private wells; however, there is no municipal sewer service in this zoning district~~,~~; therefore, new developments will require private septic systems. Carrying capacity is also limited by wetlands and other hydric soils. To account for these limitations, the possibility of increased housing density has been limited to 30% of the land area available.

  There are approximately 345 total undeveloped buildable acres in the LDR-40 zoning district, and 30% represents about 103 acres of available land. While the undeveloped land may support **approximately 345 units**, a 33% density bonus over 103 acres results in **34 LMI units** possible in this zone.

- **LDR-43 | 0% density bonus (a reduction from 33%)**
  LDR-43 zoning district consists entirely of the Watch Hill area, a coastal neighborhood just outside the Pawcatuck River and Salt Pond Region SAMP jurisdictions. This district has been exempted from affordable housing under the Ordinance. Watch Hill is an area of beauty and charm enjoyed by seasonal residents and visitors. LMI units in a remote part of Town that lacks year-round visitation and little public infrastructure is not practical. There are approximately 93 total undeveloped buildable acres in the LDR-43 zoning district.

- **RR-60 | 37% density bonus**
  The RR-60 zoning district is somewhat scattered and located in the northeast (Bradford), northwest (Springbrook), and southeast (Haversham) parts of Town. Some of the district also includes and surrounds Newton Marsh, Chapman Pond, and Aguntaug Swamp, all of which is protected land in an aquifer and is predominantly freshwater wetlands. Increased residential development in an aquifer area and adjacent to ponds creates negative impacts on water quality. The Haversham area has historically been farmland maintained by conservation easements. Haversham and those areas along Quonochontaug Pond zoned RR-60 are not appropriate for increased density, as they are located in the Salt Pond Region SAMP and characterized as lands built beyond carrying capacity, according to RICRMC. In this zone, parcels will need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if these areas can accommodate additional densities.

  There are approximately 912 total undeveloped buildable acres within the RR-60 zoning district. To account for land required for other uses, such as agriculture and constraints to development, it

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is assumed that 20% of the undeveloped buildable land remains in this residential zone for this strategy. Therefore, the undeveloped land will support **approximately 124 units** under the current zoning requirements, and with the 37% density bonus accredited to qualified applications, an additional **46 LMI units.**

This strategy, based on the assumptions discussed above, could provide up to **535** LMI units over the next 20 years.

Moving forward in this Plan, comprehensive permitting of qualified LMI units is still considered a productive strategy. The Town should apply geographic information systems (GIS) and other planning tools to collect data and information on the overall potential for future residential development in the Town and identify parcels most suitable for development under comprehensive permits. The Town should realign density bonuses with the prevailing need and encourage family rental units (of 1 to 3 bedrooms) designed in 2- to 4-unit structures. The Town should consider changes to the comprehensive permit process that would facilitate efficient and effective reviews of these types of applications. Sometimes considered "friendly comprehensive permits," a negotiated or collaborative process can be a vehicle to meeting local housing needs. This more flexible approach can ensure that all low- or moderate-income housing units are consistent in quality of construction and design with market rate units, have appropriate site plan design, and reasonably address local impacts.

Strategy 1.3 Mixed Residential & Commercial Use

Westerly's zoning permits mixed residential and commercial use in some non-residential zoning districts, including Neighborhood Business (NB), Highway Commercial (HC), General Commercial (GC), Professional Office (P-15), and Downtown Commercial (DC-I & DC-II). This type of use is defined as:

The use of any structure or group of structures on single or contiguous multiple lots of record for a combination of residential and nonresidential purposes, pursuant to § 260-64. Section 260-64 provides additional guidance on mixed residential and commercial land development. However, other provisions place housing goals in conflict with economic development on mixed-use parcels.

The mixed-use ordinance, in an effort to diversify the tax base and preserve employment opportunities, places a maximum limit on the number of residential units allowed in such developments. It also states that housing should always be considered a secondary or ancillary use in commercial zoning districts. As such, a residential component would not be required for any proposed development comprised exclusively of commercial, retail, or office uses currently permitted by zoning. It also recommends that the minimum 20% affordable housing component be mandatory if residential units are to be proposed as part of a commercial development (that is, meeting the Zoning Ordinance's definition of mixed residential and commercial use).

Specific Dimensional Regulations and Design Standards have been established for mixed residential and commercial use, such that retail and commercial uses always remain paramount, and not placed in a secondary role to residential uses. Buildings in the Downtown Center zone, for example, are allowed to be taller to include residential components, since they historically reflect the traditional characteristics represented within these zones (i.e., 50 feet in DC-I vs. 35 feet in HC). This allowance led to alternative provisions for a planned development zoning district, also unsuccessful.

This Plan recognizes that quality housing and a range of housing options attract new families and create economic development. The Town of Westerly will be reviewing its regulations of mixed-use development and intends to integrate residential and commercial uses as part of neighborhood planning.

There are approximately 36 total buildable acres in the Neighborhood Business (NB), Highway Commercial (HC), General Commercial (GC), Professional Office (P-15), and Downtown Commercial (DC-I & DC-II) zoning districts, of which 24.6 are undeveloped. When mixed residential and commercial uses, under the current zoning requirements, are combined and applied to portions of available undeveloped land,

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approximately 20 residential units could be developed. Based on these assumptions, this strategy may **provide up to 4 LMI units** within mixed-use developments on undeveloped acres.

These zoning districts also include approximately 40 acres subject to redevelopment. The redeveloped parcels, under the current zoning requirements and with a residential component, will support 48 units. Based on these assumptions, this strategy may **provide up to 10 LMI units** in mixed-use development on redeveloped parcels.

For strategies that are currently being used to develop affordable LMI-qualified units, it is estimated that these rates will accelerate over time. Also included in this Plan are action items to review, update, or develop Town ordinances for inclusionary zoning, mixed use, affordable-by-design, and accessory dwelling units, which will lead to enhanced production of LMI units. Similarly, it is anticipated that non-profit and public agencies will continue to invest in the production of LMI qualified housing units in Westerly at a consistent rate.

The remaining strategies are not expected to begin at least until 2025.

Strategy 2: Affordable Housing by Non-Profit & Public Agencies

Non-profit organizations and public agencies are encouraged to pursue affordable housing as site-specific opportunities present themselves. Since 2004, the comprehensive permit process has been used successfully for the approval of LMI qualified housing by non-profit and public agencies.

Westerly works with non-profit 501(c)(3) corporations for the purpose of creating affordable housing to meet regional needs. A board of directors with representation from each participating municipality works to define programs and activities and identify and secure funding resources. Creation of additional local community development corporations (CDCs) specific to the geographic boundary of Westerly alone is not recommended because the Town is already home to the Westerly Housing Authority and the Greater North End Community Development, Inc.

The Town of Westerly will continue to work with non-profit organizations and public agencies to target housing to local needs of the population and to ensure consistency with the goals of this Plan. Since there are only limited amounts of state or federal financial subsidies available to non-profit and public housing agencies, a collaborative and negotiated process should be explored.

In such a collaboration, the Town will utilize, to the extent possible, either the inclusionary zoning ordinance or the comprehensive permit processes example of density bonus and incentives. In particular, the Town has identified one parcel for such collaboration with Habitat for Humanity which may produce a duplex with **2 LMI units**. It is possible to review and pre-qualify lots of a size appropriate to multi-family development where 100% of the units are to be LMI restricted. This strategy requires additional study before its overall effectiveness can be determined.

Strategy 3: Historic Mill Adaptive Re-Use & Mill Village Revitalization

This comprehensive strategy calls for adaptive re-use of historic mills for mixed-use or residential purposes, designating state-sanctioned growth centers to target infrastructure and redevelopment grant funding, and leveraging private-sector financing through use of historic preservation tax credits should the program become available again in the future.

Strategy 3.1 Historic Mill Overlay District

In 2011, the Town adopted its Historic Mill Overlay District, which allows for the redevelopment of existing mills into multi-use structures and encourages renovation and adaptive re-use of historic mills. In addition to promoting affordable housing, these zones can also accommodate commercial, retail, or office use where such mixed-use is deemed appropriate. One of the objectives is also to retain their historic

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architecture while adapting obsolete or underutilized structures to 21st century needs. Since 2011, there has not been much redevelopment.



Westerly has historic mills located in White Rock and Bradford within the Historic Mill Overlay District. Each mill is surrounded by residential dwellings of various densities, some of which were originally constructed to house mill employees. It is fair to say that the historical decline of the Town's manufacturing base has led to a deterioration of these mills and the neighborhoods surrounding them as well. This Plan calls for a detailed study and recodification of the Historic Mill Overlay District and will incorporate mixed residential, commercial, and industrial development into neighborhood plans using this ~~land use~~land-use tool. While affordable housing will be a key component of this district, a conservative prediction regarding qualified **LMI is 45.**

Strategy 3.2 Locally Designated Growth Center

In *Land Use 2025*, a number of villages around the State were identified as potential "Growth Centers." However, *Land Use 2025* notes, "The 'Centers' depicted are for illustrative purposes and are not intended to designate specific geographic boundaries." According to a 2002 annual report by the Governor's Growth Planning Council, Growth Centers *"...are dynamic and efficient centers for development that have a core of commercial and community services, residential development, and natural and built landmarks and boundaries that provide a sense of place."*

In an era of fiscal constraint, the State has targeted much of its infrastructure and redevelopment grant funding towards locally-designated Growth Centers, which, in turn, could help Westerly revitalize mill villages and include affordable housing. Low- and moderate-income housing development by non-profit organizations and public agencies also rely on state and federal financing, which favor development within these locally-designated Growth Centers.

This Plan recognizes the need to research Bradford as a potential Growth Center. Through that process, the Town of Westerly will determine which of the several redevelopment strategies described would most serve the needs of the Bradford neighborhood and the community at large. However, given the size of the Bradford mill site, and the likelihood that a majority of the property could be used for rental housing, it is likely that up to 40% of that property would be residential units. It is estimated that redevelopment may yield up to 5 units per acre, for a total of 50 residential units. Based on these assumptions, this strategy may **provide up to 48 housing units** in a mixed-use style development on these redeveloped parcels. With inclusionary zoning being the only tool applicable in this area, a total of **9 LMI units** can be presumed viable.

Strategy 4: Downtown Arts District Affordable Housing Demonstration Project

In Westerly, the term "struggling artist" is not an exaggeration. Many artists earn little income in the early stages of their career, and finding affordable housing is one of the most serious problems they encounter. By developing a demonstration project providing affordable housing specifically geared toward low-income artists, Westerly has an opportunity to use the incentives provided by the General Assembly to attract artists into its Downtown. RIGL §44-18-30(b) allowed Downtown Westerly to be one of the first designated areas in the State to offer tax incentives for artists who live and work in specific districts. This law states:

> "The arts and culture are a significant asset for Rhode Island, one that generates revenue through increased tourism and economic activity; creates jobs and economic opportunities; revitalizes

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communities adding to quality of life and property values; and fosters creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship."

Two types of tax incentives target artist housing:

1) For artists who live and work within a specified district, any sale of work created within the district is exempt from state sales tax; and
2) For artists who live and work within a specified district, any income they receive from the sale of work they have created within the district is exempt from state personal income tax.

It is noteworthy that Westerly's Downtown Arts District is contained fully within a historic district, which, as noted above, offers additional state and federal tax credits for certified rehabilitation projects. Furthermore, Strategy 5 below outlines a proposed local rehabilitation tax credit, which also could be used to assist this endeavor.

In early 2004, a group of artists, arts administrators, and housing professionals met to discuss affordable artist housing, particularly artist living/work exhibition/performance space, resulting in a coalition led by Rhode Island Citizens for the Arts, the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts (RISCA), and the Housing Network of Rhode Island (HNRI). RISCA had made a three (3)-year funding commitment to this effort by awarding $15,000 annually to the Housing Network of Rhode Island for the purpose of hiring a consultant to manage this process, including developing an affordable artist housing demonstration project.

The ArtSpace project in Norwich, Connecticut, and Hygienic Arts in New London could be models for inspiration and for the Town to approach the State-wide artist's housing coalition in search of opportunities that may exist in downtown Westerly's Arts District, including available properties, grant funding, and tax incentives focusing on potential living/work spaces over existing storefronts.

By implementing this strategy, it is estimated the live/work arrangements for artists could yield **5 LMI housing units** in our downtown district.

Strategy 5: Local Rehabilitation Tax Credits and Revolving Loan Fund

By bundling together two related programs, it is believed the incentive to individual property owners would be substantial enough to result in creation of additional affordable housing units.

Strategy 5.1 Local Rehabilitation Tax Credits

In 2010, it was recommended that Westerly adopt a tax credit for property owners undertaking substantial rehabilitation of existing structures if they are willing to keep rehabilitated or new housing units affordable for at least 30 years for persons earning 80% or less than HAMFI. A recommended minimum threshold is an investment of at least $20,000 in building code or safety improvements (including lead paint removal) for a resultant property tax credit for 20% of the cost of improvements up to a maximum of $5,000 to be spread over a period of five (5) years. If used in conjunction with other state or federal tax credits described above, or with grants that may be available from RI Housing or the CDBG program, LMI qualifying units might be produced. Since affordable units created through this strategy are contained within existing structures, they would not require additional infrastructure or zoning changes.

Strategy 5.2 Revolving Fund

In conjunction with a tax credit, the Town considered establishing a revolving fund, which would provide short-term, low interest loans for renovations. Upon repayment of the loan, the capital can then be loaned to another project. By targeting this effort in a concentrated area, such as the North End, a revolving fund can have a tangible and highly visible impact on neighborhood revitalization. This strategy is consistent with the overall goal of the Comprehensive Plan to preserve existing historic apartment housing in the Town's traditional neighborhoods.

Many communities seed a revolving rehabilitation loan program with CDBG funds and use it to address a variety of housing improvements including heating systems, lead-based paint, and emergency repairs. The Town could design a program that focuses on low- and moderate-income homeowners and tenants for

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rental properties. To target these neighborhoods, programs can prioritize multi-family and historic buildings and have affordable housing incentives and requirements.

The private Westerly Revolving Fund (WRF) was incorporated in 2013 and was seeded by private donations and seeking to reproduce the success of the Providence Revolving Fund. The rehabilitation of new units with the associated LMI restrictions will provide **2 LMI units** through this program in the next 5 years.

Strategy 6: Neighborhood Revitalization

Westerly's traditional neighborhoods are Bradford, Downtown, North End, White Rock, Wilcox East, and State Street. These neighborhoods contain an estimated 2,500 rental apartments that have provided de facto (but not rent-controlled or deed restricted) affordable residences to the Town, as well as Washington and New London counties. They are all serviced by public water, with five (5) of the neighborhoods serviced by public sewer. Built mostly between 1840 and 1917, these neighborhoods contain a variety of single- and multi-family housing options near commercial and industrial uses. They are also near community facilities and public amenities with infrastructure such as sidewalk networks.

Unfortunately, the well-integrated mix of land uses and housing types may mask some of the problems facing these neighborhoods. It is well accepted that the overall financial strength of Westerly is based on property values within the beach areas. The households in the six (6) traditional, multi-family neighborhoods, however, have lower incomes and require additional social services more often. Westerly Public Schools reported in spring 2017 that more than half (53%) of the students enrolled at Springbrook Elementary School and more than one-third (38%) of the students enrolled at State Street Elementary School are eligible for free or reduced price lunch. Other issues facing these neighborhoods include a large number of absentee landlords, some vacant, underused commercial and professional units, and debris-strewn areas, all of which have led to deteriorating and blighted properties.

Neighborhood revitalization is a comprehensive approach that involves more than affordable housing and should include land use, infrastructure, urban design, and community building. Addressing each neighborhood with a Neighborhood Revitalization Plan can guide reinvestment and help to create affordable housing into these neighborhoods through the rehabilitation of existing structures and increase in rental units for LMI eligible households.

To begin the revitalization process, the following could be explored:

- Develop incentives to target the development of LMI units in the Town's traditional neighborhoods as rental units.
- Rehabilitate key landmark structures as important stabilizing factors for traditional neighborhoods and important additions to the LMI supply.
- Expand the role of the Westerly Housing Authority to oversee the development, ownership, and management of rehabilitated properties in traditional neighborhoods.
- Pool and coordinate housing funding from all appropriate sources, including Comprehensive Permits and Inclusionary Zoning ordinances, CDBG funds, Neighborhood Opportunities Program and Building Better Community funds, and HOME funds.
- Research the legislation and implementation of a registry of non-owner-occupied rental housing units to create a local requirement that, as each unit is vacated, it cannot be rented again until it is inspected and given a CAO. This process will ensure such units are code compliant, safe, and sanitary.

~~Implement changes to the zoning code that allow accessory dwelling units to be located on property where owner-occupied single family and multi-family residential structures currently exist.~~Investigate opportunities and interest of property owners in converting excess portions of existing residential buildings/homes, and/or commercial buildings with opportunity for mixed uses, into LMI and/or affordable housing rental units.

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Neighborhood revitalization is linked with Strategy 5 to take advantage of the Revolving Loan Fund and other programs that support housing rehabilitation. This Plan's policy to use Neighborhood plans as a tool to revitalization will benefit the Historic Mill Villages.

In May 2003, the Town adopted the North End Revitalization Plan. This plan encourages for-profit affordable housing development, since it was expected that at least 80% of the units developed in this area would actually be sold to middle income households who must qualify for conventional mortgages. The expectation was the re-establishment of a property-owning middle-class community in a neighborhood currently dominated mostly by absentee landlords. To date, several goals of the North End Revitalization Plan have been met but the intent to re-establish increased property ownership remains unmet. The absentee landlord situation has meant that housing choice is limited to rental units and a degradation in the conditions of those units.

At the time of the creation of the North End Revitalization Plan, it was believed that a similar strategy would also work in the White Rock, Potter Hill, and Bradford sections of the Town. The concept of small Area Planning needs to be tailored to the characteristic assets and needs of a neighborhood. This can be accomplished only with broad participation in the planning process from people who live and work there.

However, provided this strategy was implemented in conjunction with Strategy 5 above, and applied successfully across the entire renter-occupied housing stock of 3,680 units during the 20 year planning horizon, upwards of **160 additional housing units could be converted from their current non-credited LMI status to state qualified LMI units.**

Strategy Summary

Table 4-18 below lists the projected number of affordable units that could be created by the Town's proposed LMI housing strategies for the next twenty (20) years. **The total projection of affordable units from these strategies over twenty (20) years is 1,066 units, well over the ~~877~~ 883 required to meet the State's 10% threshold.**

Table 4-18 Projected Number of LMI Units Created by Proposed Strategies, 2020-2040

	2025	2030	2035	2040	Total
Strategy 1.1	15	36	92	125	268
Strategy 1.2	150	125	145	115	535
Strategy 1.3	5	9	0	0	14
Strategy 2	2	0	0	0	2
Strategy 3	20	20	20	20	80
Strategy 4	2	1	1	1	5
Strategy 5.1	0	0	0	0	0
Strategy 5.2	0	2	0	0	2
Strategy 6	40	40	40	40	160
Total	234	233	298	301	1,066

In further support of the strategies outlined above, the Town sees the following as viable over the next five (5)-year period: allowing the rehabilitation of and the expansion to existing multi-family buildings and applying the density formulas outlined herein as a mechanism to produce more affordable housing units. These two approaches are related, and it is expected that programs will be developed in the near term. Affordable units created under these approaches will be relatively small at first but will increase as the programs grow.

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For strategies that are currently being used to develop affordable LMI-qualified units, it is estimated that these rates will continue at near the same level. With the Town's proposed revisions to the Inclusionary and Comprehensive Permit ordinances, projections are considered aggressive, but achievable, for these strategies. It is anticipated that non-profit and public agencies will continue to invest in the production of LMI qualified housing units in Westerly at a consistent rate.

The remaining strategies are not expected to begin at least until 2025. Mill redevelopment is estimated to create 80 LMI units over the full 20-year timeline. Interest in redevelopment of historic mills is greatly influenced on incentives offered both locally and State-wide, and it is anticipated that these units could start to become available in year 5, increasing over the 20-year planning horizon. The rate at which these units will be developed will vary, but for the purpose of this Plan, it is assumed that they will be phased in by a developer consistently for mill projects over the planning horizon. The Downtown Arts District is a demonstration project and would only be applicable to one five-year period. Small elderly housing complexes are proposed, but until demand is quantified, it is expected that one project per five (5)-year period will be proposed. Finally, a municipal tax credit program will be drafted in the next five (5) years, which could develop **2 LMI units per year**, depending on the incentives offered. The CAO initiative will need local, as well as legislative support, for enactment.

The Town of Westerly will continue to participate in state efforts to meet housing needs through the adoption and implementation of a housing production plan for certified LMI housing units.

As part of the 2018 update of this Comprehensive Plan, the Town reviewed and revisited the success of its affordable housing strategies. The following list illustrates the changes made from the 2004 LMI production strategies to those adopted as part of the current LMI production plan:

- The Town's interest in establishing a revolving loan fund has advanced as a result of ongoing discussions with the WRF, a non-profit organization which has been successful in housing rehabilitation activity since its creation in 2013. Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs) will be sought as primary seed money for the loan's future establishment.
- Modification of the Zoning Ordinance to allow accessory apartments in commercial zoning districts has been eliminated as a strategy due to the incompatibility of small-scale housing units within the context of large commercial structures. However, a robust allowance of accessory apartments in residential zones is recommended as part of this Plan.
- The establishment of an Affordable Housing Overlay District has been eliminated as a strategy in favor of pursuing affordable housing production incentives on a town-wide basis.

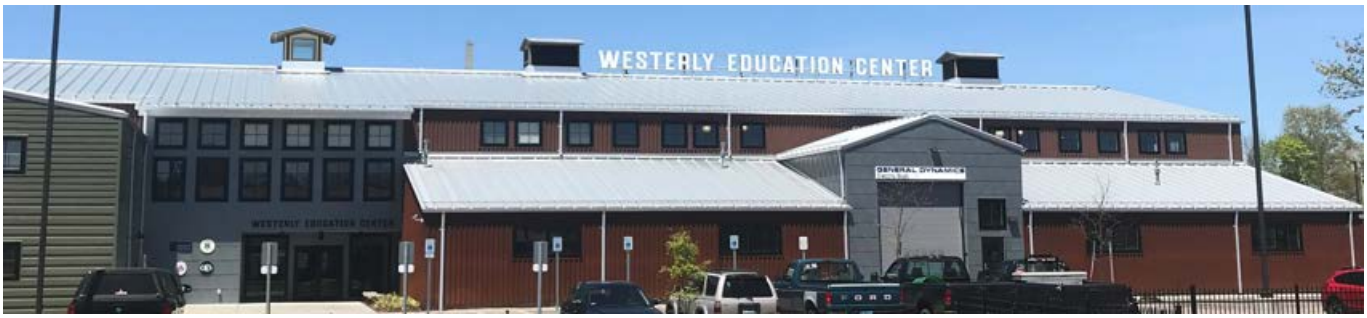
Some strategies proposed in 2004 have yet to be implemented and the Town will continue to move this forward as part of this Comprehensive Plan's LMI production plan. These strategies include:

- While all historic mills in the Town are currently occupied or in a state of significant disrepair, interest in the revitalization of these structures and the mill villages which surround them remains.
- Despite the decreased competitive edge of the local arts community district due to tax incentives for the arts community being expanded state-wide, affordable housing for local artists continues to be in demand.

Since 2004, the availability of federal and state subsidies has severely declined. During the same period, the market's interest in new construction burdened by deed restrictions has also declined. None-the-less, the Town of Westerly continues to press forward with its efforts to meet the state's LMI housing mandate.

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Chapter 5
ECONOMIC VITALITY

The Town of Westerly, due to its location in southwestern ~~of~~ Rhode Island, is part of a much broader urban area that encompasses well over 30 million people and generates more than $2 trillion in economic output. While it benefits significantly from its overlapping inclusion in both the Ocean State and southeastern Connecticut economies, Westerly also sits at the juncture of two of North America's largest and most influential regional markets – Boston and New York. This position within the North East regional market is an asset which can be exploited.

Fishing and hunting served as the primary occupations for Westerly's native and early European settlers until the turn of the nineteenth century. With the industrial era's birth in northern Rhode Island in the 1790s, opportunities to work on railroads, in textile mills, and at shipbuilding yards spread across Westerly soon after. While these enterprises grew steadily, the discovery of fine-grained, blue-white granite in several locations had arguably the most accelerated and celebrated development of any industry in the Town. Quarrying operations attracted waves of European immigrants and several business tycoons from New York and the Midwest throughout the 1800s. The growth in population and wealth culminated around a series of urbanization and beautification projects at the turn of the twentieth century. The attractiveness of the community became an increasingly important asset as the granite industry declined and the twentieth century progressed. While nearly all major business activity from the 1800s to the 1920s was generated by the quarries and the mills and shipyards along the Pawcatuck River, several inns and hotels in the coastal villages of Misquamicut, Watch Hill, and Weekapaug were concurrently setting the foundation for the Town's modern economic cycle. Accommodations and other tourism-based industries have since grown considerably over time and Westerly now welcomes several thousand beachgoers and seasonal residents each summer.

While hospitality, entertainment, and commercial recreation are major focuses of the local economy in the summer season, year-round support from other industries grew to various strengths between the 1970s and the 2000s as commercialization and early computer-based technologies expanded business opportunities. Westerly's economic development was tested by small downturns in the early 1980s and early 1990s but quickly rebounded. The economy continued growing steadily until 2007. Like all other municipalities in the State and region, economic vitality in Westerly was greatly impacted by the Great Recession that took place in Rhode Island and southeastern Connecticut from the late 2000s to the early 2010s.

This chapter provides a summary of current local and regional economic development initiatives, a local and regional employment overview, the size of the labor force, and industries of employment, ~~and o~~Occupation types of residents, resident income, and business activity are included in this section. The information serves as the basis for identifying the appropriate goals, policies, and actions to foster continued and improved economic vitality, resiliency, and equity.

Rhode Island-based employers of local significance include the State, URI, General Dynamics/Electric Boat (EB)'s Quonset Point facility, and a diversified group of employers in the health care, financial services, education,

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defense, and manufacturing sectors. The Washington Trust Company, headquartered in Westerly, is the only local entity consistently listed among Rhode Island's largest employers.

Due to its geographic location, Westerly's economy is also vitally linked to southeastern Connecticut. Economic engines of the area include Mystic Seaport and Aquarium, two Casinos, Davis-Standard in Stonington, EB's facilities in Groton and New London, Naval Submarine Base New London in Groton, and Pfizer in Groton. These entities all provide well-paying, skill-based research and technical jobs and serve as the primary customers for several small, complementary businesses.

Westerly itself is primarily a town of small employers. Sectors of significance in Westerly's economy include health care, hospitality, retail, manufacturing, banking, finance, service industry, the arts, the schools, textiles, printing, and construction.

Section 5.1 – Regional Economic Overview

Over 80% of Rhode Island's workers identified by the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (RIDLT) are employed within the State. Their range of primary activities often reflect the industries identified as State strengths in *Rhode Island Rising*. These include:

- Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting;
- Manufacturing;
- Transportation and warehousing;
- Professional and technical services;
- Health care and social assistance;
- Accommodation and food services; and
- Educational services

According to RIDLT's 2026 Occupational Outlook, Rhode Island employment in 2026 is projected to reach 550,700, an increase of 30,400 (5.9%) from 2016 employment. This growth is attributed to the increased demand for the products and services provided by the Accommodation & Food Services, Health Care & Social Assistance, Professional, Scientific & Technical Services, and Retail Trade sectors. Many of these businesses will be discussed for their local economic contributions later in this chapter.

Rhode Island earns its designation as the "Ocean State" from its miles of coastline along Narragansett Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. A tourism satellite account prepared by IHS, Inc. to gauge the size of Rhode Island's tourism-based industries in 2013 found that over 19 million visits were made to the State. Of these visits, over nine million – almost half – originated from more than fifty miles (50 mi) away. Tourism comprised 5.3% of the gross State product and generated 9.6% of total employment in Rhode Island in 2013.

The defense industry is another significant economic area, particularly for southern Rhode Island. According to a June 2014 report on the influence of defense contracts on Rhode Island's economy, 6.2% of the state's total employment and $1.9 billion in household income could be attributed to US Department of Defense. Many of these employers contributing to this impact in the State are also present in New London County, Connecticut.

The Resilient Rhode Island Act was enacted by the State in 2014 and is meant to ensure Rhode Island and its economy will be resilient against climate change by offering a framework to plan for and manage anticipated impacts through adaptation, mitigation, and design. To do this, the Resilient Rhode Island Act targets reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from all economic sectors and authorizes the use of economic diversification, among other actions.

Westerly's economy is also vitally linked to southeastern Connecticut through both its local history and geographic location. The 2005-2009 ACS estimated about one-third (33.7%) of all workers aged 16 and over in Westerly were employed outside Rhode Island. While this fell slightly to 30.9% (3,723), in 2013-2017 ACS estimates, Westerly continues to be one of only two municipalities in Rhode Island that fall outside the Providence-Warwick New

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England City and Town Area (NECTA). NECTAs are very similar to metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) but they are used only in New England and are geographically composed of municipalities rather than counties.

Electric Boat (EB), a subsidiary of General Dynamics Corporation, is a major defense contractor for the US Navy. The company was established in 1899 and designs, constructs, and provides lifecycle support for several classes of undersea warships. While headquartered in Groton, Connecticut, EB also has locations in Middletown and North Kingstown, as well as New London, Connecticut. EB's involvement in the Columbia Class program (formerly the Ohio Replacement program) comes at a time of generational turnover in the company. To keep pace with these changes, EB has projected hiring several thousand new employees from 2016 to 2031 with peaks occurring in 2018 and 2023. Recognizing Westerly as an important source of this future workforce and its central position between its regional locations, EB established itself as an anchor tenant of the Westerly Education Center (WEC). The educational facility, completed in 2017 and administered by the RI Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner, contains multiple shared-use classrooms and an approximately 14,500 square foot hands-on training center. As of summer 2019, over 4,000 people have received education at WEC.

Other national security-related employers with a regional presence include the US Coast Guard and the US Navy themselves. The US Coast Guard Academy in New London and the Naval Submarine Base New London in Groton together employ over 1,500 civilians and several thousand military personnel. The Naval Undersea Warfare Center Newport Division, part of the Naval Station (NVASTA) Newport in Newport, with an employee base of over 3,300 civilians, is the largest federal activity in Rhode Island in personnel and payroll.

Sizeable portions of Westerly's labor force are also employed at Foxwoods Resort Casino in Ledyard, Connecticut (420 employees), which is owned and operated by the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, and Mohegan Sun in Uncasville, Connecticut (employment data unavailable), which is owned and operated by the Mohegan Tribe. Both resorts feature several gaming, entertainment, and hospitality facilities, as well as numerous retail shops and restaurants. Along with providing employment to Westerly residents, these casinos also support Westerly's position as a prime location for visitors. Other major nearby attractions in southeastern Connecticut include the Mystic Aquarium and Mystic Seaport in Stonington, Connecticut.

A research facility for Pfizer, Inc., located in Groton, Connecticut, is a major healthcare industry employer for Westerly workers. The facility employs a labor force from numerous communities and assists in the research and development of healthcare products, medicine, and treatments. Another notable Connecticut-based healthcare employer, the Yale-New Haven Health System (YNHHS), will be discussed further on.

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Section 5.2 – Local Economic Overview



Westerly is home to over 1,500 businesses – a clear indication that the local economy is composed primarily of small business establishments thatwhich play an active role in the community and receive strong support from the public, economic development advocates, and the Town. As noted earlier in this chapter, only one business – the Washington Trust Company – is among Rhode Island's largest employers. With so many firms and enterprises in operation, several industries are represented in the local economy.

A 2018 report by the Westerly Economic Development Commission (EDC) recognized strong fiscal management as an asset of the Town, along with other advantages including:

- a low municipal tax rate,
- increasing diversification in the local economy, and
- a strong year-round business community.

The 2018 report looked forward to achieving the EDC's own objectives of attracting and retaining a qualified workforce through projects including creating housing opportunities, reducing barriers to small business, a Town prospectus and marketing, researching development opportunities for a manufacturing center, a mobile transit hub, and renewable energy generation.

The EDC functions as an advisory board to the Town, assisting in the development of the Town's economic development strategy, its implementation, and to help with initiatives to maintain and enhance the economic vitality of Westerly. The EDC has assisted the Planning Board with the development of economic development goals and objectives that consider the proper role for Westerly's waterfront, tourism, commercial development, downtown revitalization, and industrial development for inclusion in this Comprehensive Plan. The seven member EDC, consisting of local residents and business owners, meets regularly to discuss the challenges and opportunities for business owners and advise the Town on best steps to help the overall business environment.

The Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce (OCCC) has over 700 members and is a leading advocate for local businesses in promoting Westerly through numerous large-scale events, tourism marketing, business start-up assistance, incubator space, and various programs. Their gift certificate program generates over $260,000 annually for the local economy. Independent "economic impact studies were conducted in 2017 showing Virtu Art Fest generated $6.6. million, the Pawcatuck Duck Race generated $755,000, and Riverglow generated $1.8 million. In 2013, the Town of Westerly was awarded the distinction of "Main Street Matters", an international contest sponsored by Benjamin Moore. The OCCC spearheaded the campaign that resulted in 29 downtown buildings being painted for free (valued at $125,000). Downtown Westerly received national recognition and publicity, benefitting the local businesses.

In 2019, Tthe Chamber of Commerce billboard underwent a $24,000 renovation enhancing its appearance. Through the sign, the OCCC continues to provide support to small businesses and free advertising space to non-profit organizations and for Town milestone events such as the Westerly 350th Anniversary.

Three other business associations are also active in Town: the Misquamicut Business Association (MBA), Watch Hill Business Organization (WHBO), and Westerly-Pawcatuck Downtown Business Association (DBA).

Subsection 5.2.1 – Health Care

Health care and social assistance was the second largest industry in Westerly in 2018, with 106 units, an average employment of 1,752 workers, and total wages of nearly $78.6 million. By 2026, Rhode Island is projected to have more than 30,400 new employees working for hospitals, medical centers, and other care facilities. Demographic trends, the growing elderly population in particular, will fuel strong growth in this industry until at least 2024, according to Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (RIDLT) projections, and likely well beyond this date.

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Westerly Hospital, established in 1925 and currently operated by YNHHS, is a major institution and local employer at the core of Westerly's economy. It was also the largest single private employer in fiscal year (FY) 2014-2015 with 638 employees (130 of which are primary and specialty physicians). Westerly Hospital was acquired by the Lawrence & Memorial Corporation in June 2013 and later in 2017 became part YNHHS. The main building is a 125-bed acute care facility and additional services are based in Westerly and Hopkinton. In autumn 2019, the hospital opened its first Smilow cancer unit in Rhode Island. The addition includes both infusion rooms for chemotherapy and biotherapy as well as examination rooms.

The May 2016 opening of the South County Health Medical and Wellness Center in Westerly, which has been marketed as a 'one stop shop' for medical needs, further indicates the strength of the local healthcare sector in Westerly and ~~is~~ staffs several dozen employees. For more information on the Medical and Wellness Center and Westerly Hospital, please visit the chapter on Services and Facilities.

Subsection 5.2.2 – Finance

The Washington Trust Company, the largest State-chartered bank in Rhode Island and the oldest community bank in the United States (established in 1800), is headquartered in Downtown. It is a $3.8 billion corporation owned by Washington Trust Bancorp, Inc. The bank employs 585 people company-wide with approximately 300 employees in Westerly. It is one of Rhode Island's largest employers and has been recognized by Providence Business News as one of the "Best Places to Work" in the State for five consecutive years. This institution has 21 branches (three of which are located in Westerly and 20 within Rhode Island) and 26 office locations, including three offices in Connecticut and one in Massachusetts. Its extensive operations center is in the Westerly Airport Industrial Park.

The Westerly Community Credit Union (WCCU), a full-service financial organization, has served over 17,000 members in Rhode Island and New London County since 1948. They employ over 65 employees and maintain four branch offices located in Westerly, Richmond, and South Kingstown, Rhode Island, as well as a mortgage office in Newport. A non-profit corporation, the WCCU is a cooperatively-owned, state-chartered, federally-insured community financial organization whose field of membership includes all individuals who live or work in the State of Rhode Island or New London County. Recently awarded first place as the fastest growing and most innovative company in Rhode Island by Providence Business News, the WCCU is also very active in the community it serves. Known for its commitment to youth and area schools, WCCU sponsors and runs several programs teaching financial literacy and ~~have~~ has been an active school sports booster since 1984.

Other regional and national financial institutions have an established presence in Westerly, indicating confidence in the Town's economic vitality.

Subsection 5.2.3 – Westerly State Airport and the Airport Industrial Park

Westerly State Airport, "WST," offers regularly scheduled commercial flights to and from Block Island Airport solely via New England Airlines. Airport tenants additionally include charter companies, aviation maintenance companies, and substantial private aircraft during the summer, which is primarily connected to tourism. Fifteen (15) businesses are based at the airport and space has recently been designated for a future restaurant. ~~–~~Westerly Airport Association operates WST and produces several community events at the airport annually. Expanding the airport has never been proposed. However, maintaining full use of all runways as originally designed and installed is required to maintain optimum safety for the traveling public.

~~The most recent economic impact study update for the airport from 2016, estimated that the airport generated economic activities of approximately $16 million for the State of Rhode Island.~~ With the March 2019 launch of the "General Aviation Strategic Business Plan" initiative, the Town looks forward to working with RIAC and ensuring~~e~~ public involvement in defining the future of WST. The three key components of the ten-year strategic master plan for WST is intended to include a facilities (building) plan, airfield (pavement management) plan, and a business (economic development) plan allowing the Town of Westerly to focus on the WST's place in the community~~;~~.

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contemplating compatible land use with airport operations, and considering the direct economic benefits of the airport for Westerly.

An industrial park adjacent to the airport is serviced by municipal water and sewer, natural gas, and large-capacity electrical service, and has convenient access to Interstate 95 via Route 78. Expansion in the industrial park is limited due to the airport and surrounding residential neighborhoods. Within the industrial park, 14 of the 15 existing parcels (90.5% of the park's approximately 55 acres) are already developed. This Plan recognizes that with the extension of sewer and the ready availability of water, this area ~~a~~is one of few opportunities for growth of industrial zoned property.

Subsection 5.2.4 – Manufacturing

Westerly manufacturers play an important role locally by employing hundreds of workers and significantly contributing to the grand list, regionally by supplying quality products and supporting charitable causes, and internationally by their generous humanitarian efforts.

Westerly has a long and significant history of textile manufacturing and finishing. Today, two of the once numerous textile facilities continue to operate. The Moore Company is headquartered in Westerly and produces materials including performance fabrics and narrow elastic through its two subsidiaries, Darlington Fabrics, and the George C. Moore Company. Uniforms for the National Football League are made of these products. Griswold Textile Print Inc. also operates as a fully operational hand-printed fabric mill in the White Rock neighborhood.

The Airport Industrial Park is a hub of productivity for Westerly manufacturing activity. Ametek SCP Inc. is an electronics manufacturer~~. They~~ that specializes in custom electrical and optical connectors used in harsh environments such as undersea for the US Submarine fleet and in oil fields. Rol-Flo Engineering Inc. engineers and manufactures custom designed form-rolling tools for the fastener industries worldwide. The automotive and aerospace industry utilize their products. They are a supplier of flat forming dies with customers in over 20 countries. US Extruders is the newest manufacturing facility in town, operating as single screw plastic extruders and creating high performance screws. 3P Inc. manufactures thermos/vacuum formed parts and custom components. Maxson Automatic Machinery Company continues its rich tradition as an industry innovator in the design and manufacture of rotary cutting and sheet handling equipment. In 2016, Ivory Ella consolidated its three Connecticut locations and established a singular facility headquartered in Westerly. This internationally recognized manufacturer of printed "elephant themed" apparel and products incorporates social responsibility principles by donating 10% of profits to Save the Elephants in Africa and other charities. To date, over $1.7 million has been donated to sustain the elephant population and sustain their habitats.

Subsection 5.2.5 – Consumables

Hauser Chocolatier manufactures fine quality truffles and assorted chocolates. They began in Bethel, CT in 1985 and relocated to Westerly in 1990. They have grown and acquired two other businesses and expanded their offerings to include chocolate lace, candies, sauces, and pies. With 22 ~~F~~full ~~T~~time ~~E~~employees and ~~C~~capitalizing on the growing demand for authentic tourism experiences, the facility has undergone physical improvements that allow visitors to learn about the process of creating chocolate from the growth of the cocoa bean to the creation of a chocolate bar. Guests may view the production process, sample the specialty goods, and patronize the retail store. Bake Fresh Foods is a wholesale manufacturer of cupcakes and pastry items supplying many private label lines. Grey Sail Brewing of Rhode Island established in Westerly in 2012 as a craft beer brewery and later acquired the historic adjacent property to open a tap room. In 2019, they expanded their building and operations to include a distillery.

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Subsection 5.2.6 – Local Government

The Town of Westerly, through its various municipal departments and its School Department, is a significant employer for the community and its neighbors. The approved FY2019 budget provided for 745.1 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions with 192 in non-school municipal departments and 562.6 in the School Department. Staffing is examined carefully during the annual budget process to ensure the Town maintains the capacity to deliver quality levels of service in key functional areas such as education, public works and utilities, public safety, finance, and administration. School employment levels have increased slightly over the past several fiscal years arguably due to a growth in services provided to students. At the same time, non-school employment levels have fallen slightly due to the consolidation of certain departmental functions between the School Department and municipal departments. The Town also provides part-time seasonal employment in support of recreational opportunities, maintenance of infrastructure, and public safety.

Subsection 5.2.7 – Tourism

Visitors, primarily from Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and other northeast locations, are attracted to Westerly each summer to enjoy its seven miles of beaches in Misquamicut, Watch Hill, and Weekapaug and to experience the numerous events and local attractions throughout town (for more information on these attractions, see the Historic and Cultural Resources chapter). WQ Economics reported in June 2015 that about one million people visited beaches in Washington County.

The Rhode Island Travel and Tourism Research Report, compiled in 2005 by URI's Office of Travel, Tourism and Recreation, found that Washington County collected 9% of the $11.9 million generated by the State lodgings tax in 2004. Tourism industry wages in Westerly in 2002 were the seventh highest among the state's cities and towns, generating $27.88 million in wages and $101.54 million in economic impact. An indicator of the interdependence of tourism with the general local economy is the finding that for every dollar of wages generated by tourism in Westerly, $3.64 in economic activity was generated. Despite the global economic downturn in the latter part of the last decade, comparisons of actual state grant in aid for hotel and meal taxes since FY2009 has indicated a general growth in this sector in Westerly.

Westerly is comprised of four key components which include seasonal homes and residents, a year-round residential community, a short-term tourist destination, and a regional service and retail center. These elements are often in competition with each other and require that management between them is balanced. While Westerly embraces its past, its future as a resort community relies on better planning, growth management, and encouraging positive visitor experiences. While making the opportunity to enjoy Westerly's attributes available to tourists and visitors, the Town must also protect the interests of residents and taxpayers in preserving the community's natural and cultural resources for the benefit of all. Any strategy intended to extend the length of stay of vacationers and tourists (and thereby increasing their positive economic contribution to the community) must not result in negative impacts on infrastructure and municipal services. When encouraging an economy that appeals to a broad spectrum of seasonal visitors, Westerly must also provide a range of housing alternatives and value and help to maintain the significant seasonal resident tax base.



For several years, the Town has faced the review and revision of ordinances and regulations that would promote longer stays by visitors and tourists while limiting impact on the environment and local neighborhoods. Examples

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include the opportunities for B&Bs and culinary tourism. As seasonal tourism continues to be a major contributor to a vital economy, the discussion of an appropriate mix of uses and functional alternatives should continue.

The Town should promote environmentally sustainable and diversified tourism, like cultural tourism, the arts, and recreational tourism as an added benefit of doing business in the community while advancing its brand as a resort community at the same time. Rather than the thousands of weather-dependent daily beach visitors only in summer, extended seasonal tourism utilizes accommodations and food and beverage facilities, extends local employment opportunities, and brings additional tax revenue, without higher demands on local resources and less economic impact. The Sustainable Tourism Eco-Certification Program (STEP) is a suite of online tools for tourism businesses established by Sustainable Travel International. STEP is composed of three steps which include an online self-assessment for businesses to identify and measure key impacts on the environment and eco-friendly practices.

Subsection 5.2.8 – Accommodations

The Town has been proactive in supporting the redevelopment of several major coastline properties to assist in growing local tourism which include the following:

- **Ocean House**
  The single remaining Victorian-styled hotel is in the village of Watch Hill, a historically affluent summer destination. At the request of New York-based Royce Family Fund, the original 1868 structure was demolished and rebuilt in replication of the original with the approval of the Town Council and oversight by the Rhode Island Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) and other historic preservation groups. This resort is one of a small number worldwide with the combined designations of American Automobile Association (AAA) Five Diamond and Forbes Five Star hotel, restaurant, and spa. Over $1.1 million in tax revenue for the Town of Westerly was generated from the Ocean House in 2015.
- **Watch Hill Inn**
  Established as the Narragansett Inn in 1845, the Watch Hill Inn was approved to be converted into spacious bay and ocean view residential units. An adjacent structure was also added providing motel accommodations.
- **Weekapaug Inn**
  The renovation and restoration of this historic inn was completed in October 2014. In 2015, this Forbes four-star hotel generated $226,799 in tax revenues for the Town.

Westerly also includes many other businesses catering to visitors and the seasonal economy, ranging from bed and breakfast establishments ~~and~~ to other inns and hotels as shown in Table 5-1 below:

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Table 5-1 Accommodations in Westerly, 2016-2019

Business Establishment	Available Rooms and Suites	
	2016	2019
Aquastar Inn	16	16
Blue Whale Inn	9	N/A
Breezeway Inn	50	50
The Coast	N/A	18
Hotel Maria	5	31
Langworthy Farm Bed & Breakfast	6	6
Margin Street Inn	N/A	10
Misquamicut Beach Front Inn	N/A	23
Ocean Club at Atlantic Beach	27	27
Ocean House	49	67
Ocean View Motel	10	10
Pleasant View Inn	100	112
Point 1 Motel	30	35
Sand Dollar Inn	33	N/A
Sandcastle Beachfront Inn	26	26
Sandy Shore Motel	N/A	32
Sea Shell Motel	10	10
Shelter Harbor Inn	24	13
The Villa Bed & Breakfast	8	8
Watch Hill Court	8	N/A
Watch Hill Harbour House	10	12
Watch Hill Inn	18	21
Weekapaug Inn	31	31
Winnapaug Inn	47	50

Sources: OCCC, 2016 and Town of Westerly, 2019

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan, referencing a past edition of OCCC's publication *Go Westerly,* stated approximately 600 guest rooms existed in the Westerly area, which reflects loss of about 83 rooms. The Chamber, monitoring changes in room availability between 1996 and 2015, recorded the closing of 19 establishments resulting in a total loss of 195 rooms and a net loss of 172 rooms. Some of these establishments were purchased to be used as housing for seasonal workers. Since 2015, though, an additional 60 rooms and suites have returned (according to self-reporting to the Town) and the number is over 600.

Although summary information has been compiled, there has been no systematic evaluation of the accommodations available in Westerly to determine whether modern markets for seasonal vacationers, year-round visitors, and business travelers are being adequately served. A hotel may be best discussed in conjunction with a much broader economic development program for the revitalization of the Route 1 corridor. Westerly presently does not have a single national brand hotel, but there is the proliferation (280 units) of short term rentals including AirBnB and VRBO properties providing expanded consumer options.

Subsection 5.2.9 – Seasonal Residents

An important component not included in economic impact studies is the impact of second homes and part time residents. According to 2013-2017 ACS estimates, 60% of Rhode Island's approximately 18,000 households considered vacant for seasonal and similar use were in Washington County. In Westerly, single-family homes within the Misquamicut, Shelter Harbor, Watch Hill, and Weekapaug fire districts (which contain most of the Town's seasonal homes) accounted for nearly $1.4 billion in total assessed value (or 38.1% of the Town's total assessed

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property) in 2018 and contributed about $15.5 million to property tax revenue for Westerly. Seasonal homes may be used as a summer residence for property owners, but many are also used as weekly rental from May through August.

In addition to helping to increase the tax base of the community, seasonal residents actively participate with full-time residents in funding numerous community assets and amenities, such as the Westerly Library, Westerly Hospital, and the WARM ~~Center~~Shelter. They also provide additional business for local retailers and restaurants, as well as for construction and skilled trades related to residential maintenance.

Subsection 5.2.10 – Agriculture

While agriculture is not a significant employing industry in the local economy itself, the food system in Westerly is a critical component of the local quality of life enjoyed by residents and visitors. Its relation to accommodation and food services is important to recognize and support. According to a 2016 snapshot by the Rhode Island Food Policy Council (RIFPC) and Rhode Island Agricultural Partnership (RIAP), agricultural and related economic activities were identified within all four components of the food system, including production and harvesting, processing, distribution, and consumption. The following table overviews the most commonly recognized form of agriculture within Westerly by their products and forms of product distribution.

According to the USDA Census of Agriculture, the number of farms in the State to ~~-~~date peaked in 2012 (1,243). In the ~~most recent~~ 2017 census ~~(2017)~~, total farms now number 1,043. Almost three-quarters (72.5%) of these farms operate on land less than 50 acres. ~~-~~Despite this decrease in number, the average market value of agricultural products per farm, which fell to $47,990 in 2012, is returning to pre-Great Recession levels. In 2017, the average value ($55,607) per farm was $1,540 more than it was a decade earlier.

The 2013-2017 ACS estimated just under 90 people were employed in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting in Westerly, with males making up a little more than half (54.5%) of total persons employed in this industry. However, this statistic does not paint a wholly accurate picture of agriculture in Westerly. Many agricultural enterprises are family run businesses that do not typically count family members as employees. A more detailed perspective can be obtained by looking at working farms and the role they play in the community. Table 5-2 lists working farms in Westerly based on data from Farm Fresh RI, Rhody Fresh, and the records of RIDEM's Division of Agriculture.

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Table 5-2 Active Food Producers, 2019

Food Producer	Location	Products
Barlow Farm	449 Westerly-Bradford Road	Crop farming
Everbreeze Farm	56 Dunn's Corners-Bradford Road	Beef, eggs, and rabbit
Hillandale Farm	26 Haversham Road	Basil, lettuce, and tomatoes
Keena Farm	109 Wells Street	Eggs, various herbs, and various vegetables
Langworthy Farms	308 Shore Road	Grapes/Wine
Manfredi Farms	77 Dunn's Corners-Bradford Road	Basil, blueberries, eggs, honey, maple syrup, strawberries, various spreads, and various vegetables
Ocean Breeze Dairy Farm	9 Noyes Neck Road	Milk
Wandering Star Microgreens	3 Benefit Street	Microgreens
Watch Hill Farms	55 Watch Hill Road	Eggs, honey, lobsters, various herbs, and various vegetables
Watch Hill Oysters	227 Shore Road	Oysters
Westerly Packing Company	15 Springbrook Road	Beef and pork
Winnapaug Selects	14 Ricci Road	Oysters
Tower Street School Community Center*	93 Tower Street	Various vegetables

Source: Farm Fresh Rhode Island, 2019; Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce

* Note: Tower Street School Community Center is no longer in service as of the date of this Plan.

The 13 food producers listed provide a wide range of agricultural products. According to RIDEM, a "farm" is any place from which $1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would be produced and sold during the year. That $1,000 is a minimum, and most Rhode Island farms produce much more.

Businesses such as farm equipment suppliers, farm management, produce and grocery wholesalers, and other support activities for animal production are also directly dependent on local agriculture. In Westerly, in addition to the farms and farm stores listed above, there is an Agway on Friendship Street and there are garden centers at both Home Depot and Walmart. Florists, landscaping contractors, cemeteries, and golf courses make extensive use of agricultural products and services that also contribute to the agricultural economy.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), farm share programs, and urban agriculture are changing the economics of farming in Rhode Island as well. Farmer's markets and farm stands have grown in popularity in recent years, mirroring a national trend for seeking out local food sources. A seasonal (June to October) farmer's market is organized on Main Street each week with several farms and artisanal producers from Westerly and neighboring communities taking part. Two additional farmer's markets in Avondale and in Weekapaug are also held weekly (both between July and August).

Several restaurants, the local hospital, and the local public-school system have also sought to purchase local products for inclusion in their meal offerings. The Town has an annual agricultural program known as Westerly Springs Green focused on local agriculture, sustainable living, and family activities. Local experts provide information on composting, rain gathering, organic gardening, beekeeping, organic pest maintenance, and other topics. Participants can browse a farmer's market, enter a raffle, bid on items in a silent auction, or take a workshop. The event takes place in the United Theatre building and is free and open to the public. Two other artisanal producers are also located in Westerly.

While land constraints and use will likely limit the ability for new producers to be established in Westerly, the Town should support the continued operation of its current producers and seek opportunities to assist in expanding operations whenever possible such as through the promotion of agritourism. In promoting agritourism, the Town may be interested in farm enterprises which are processes, activities or uses of a farm subordinate to and

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conducted in conjunction with an ongoing agricultural, horticultural, or sylvicultural operation. Farm tours, agricultural production and skills classes, interactions with farm animals, hayrides, annual festivals, and horse and pony rides are examples of such enterprises.

Restrictive zoning and ~~land use~~land-use requirements can prevent local farmers from engaging in traditional and non-traditional business activities ancillary to a profitable farm operation. Rhode Island communities have been increasingly placing zoning limits on such ancillary operations as agritourism, farm festivals, corn mazes, farmers markets, farm stands, hayrides, and use of farms as event venues for company picnics, weddings, family parties, etc. This is a practice which the Town of Westerly may choose to abandon as it considers providing more opportunity and flexible regulation of agricultural uses.

Changing federal, state, and local priorities with respect to land, agriculture, and animal husbandry also have a significant potential to impact agriculture in Westerly. Laws that regulate land development, rights-of-way, veterinary practices, and agricultural chemicals such as fertilizers, pesticides, fuels, and lubricants can also affect farm profitability. Westerly will have to work closely with local farmers, agricultural businesses, and the farm bureau to help protect local farmers from otherwise well-intentioned ordinances with the potential for adverse effects on local agriculture.

Westerly farmers and farm-~~-~~related businesses still face many challenges. Farmland in Rhode Island continues to be under threat from subdivision, development, and rising land prices. According to RIDEM, the State of Rhode Island has lost 80% of its farmland since 1940, more than anywhere else in the nation over the same period so that the tiny, densely populated state now has some of the most expensive farmland in the nation, second only to New Jersey in average value per acre.

Rising Rhode Island land prices can be a barrier to land acquisition for new agriculture operations that could otherwise expand the economic base of agriculture in Rhode Island and Westerly. Rising land values may improve farmer's access to capital, but they also lead to rising property taxes that threaten farm profitability. That, in turn, can increase the probability of eventual sale, subdivision, and development of local farmland, reducing the amount of land available for agriculture. Property taxes are not the only taxes that impact agriculture. Estate taxes tied to land values can also make it difficult or expensive for retiring farmers to pass farmland on to successive generations and sustain the agricultural economy. Farms that raise livestock also often have difficulty getting access to support services, particularly slaughterhouses and meat packing operations. It is often necessary for local farmers to transport animals out of state for slaughter, complicating local farming and raising the costs of animal products for local residents.



Indicative of its coastal location, agricultural activity in Westerly and Rhode Island is also not restricted to land. Three (3) aquaculture farms and 27 commercial fishers are operate within the Town according to the Rhode Island Food System 2018 Snapshot. In 2014, the State's aquaculture farms totaled 206.2 acres and produced a combined total value of $5.23 million, or an average of $25,363 per acre. With five acres under cultivation in Winnapaug Pond, the annual value of aquaculture in Westerly at that time could be estimated at $126,818. This number has likely increased since.

In 2015, Education Exchange, Inc., with 10 partners including OCCC and the Jonnycake Center of Westerly, applied for a Real Jobs Rhode Island grant for an Aquaculture Training Partnership (Real Jobs RI will be discussed in greater detail further in the chapter). Noting the rapid growth in revenue in recent years, the partnership was awarded $19,681 to develop a training program first for entry-level employees and then for intermediate positions.

Subsection 5.2.11 – Employment and Industries

According to RIDLT, the labor force consists of all residents 16 years and older who are employed or are seeking employment. The unemployment rate is the proportion of members of the labor force who are jobless, available, and looking for work. Westerly traditionally had an unemployment rate between 15% to 20% lower than the State-wide rate prior to the Great Recession. With the economic downturn, though, was a shift in these statistics. The average annual, seasonally unadjusted unemployment rate peaked at 11.6% in Westerly compared to 10.4% State-wide in the same 12-month period. Rhode Island's unemployment rate has since remained below Westerly's, though the annual averages between the two are a difference of less than half of one percent.

An examination of the industries in which Westerly residents are employed, as listed in Table 5-43 below can provide an indication of the quality of jobs they hold. This review also translates into ~~their~~ residents' potential buying power, though it should be noted the buying power in the local economy is significantly affected by seasonal trends in tourism and resident population (including the number of part-time workers).

Table 5-3 Average Employment by Economic Sector, 2012-2018[1]

Economic Sector	2012	2015	2018	Percent Change, 2012-2018
Accommodation and Food Services	1,528	1,627	1,708	11.8%
Administrative Support and Waste Management	194	193	223	15.0%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	N/A[1]	N/A[1]	5	N/A[1]
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	436	505	554	27.1%
Construction	236	291	326	38.1%
Education Services	85	65	68	-20.0%
Finance and Insurance	337	329	210	-37.7%
Government	1,060	1,066	1,089	2.7%
Health Care and Social Assistance	2,073	1,902	1,752	-15.5%
Information	188	123	91	-51.6%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	N/A[1]	N/A[1]	261	N/A[1]
Manufacturing	536	513	632	17.9%
Mining	N/A[1]	N/A[1]	22	N/A[1]
Other Services (except Public Administration)	297	310	324	9.1%
Professional and Technical Services	215	276	244	13.5%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	79	71	63	-20.3%
Retail Trade	1,871	1,897	2,064	10.3%
Transportation and Warehousing	62	62	60	-3.2%
Utilities	0	N/A[1]	9	N/A[1]
Wholesale Trade	70	74	95	35.7%

Sources: 2012, 2015, and 2018 RIDLT Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Annual Summaries

[1] In some cases, information was not made available due to the possibility of identifying data of a specific employer.

Subsection 5.2.12 – Private and Public Establishments

The number of businesses in the Town of Westerly has remained relatively stable over the past several years with a slight decrease that was likely the result of the significant changes that occurred in the local and State-wide economies throughout the Great Recession.

Table 5-4 Number of Businesses with Taxable Assets, 2012-2018

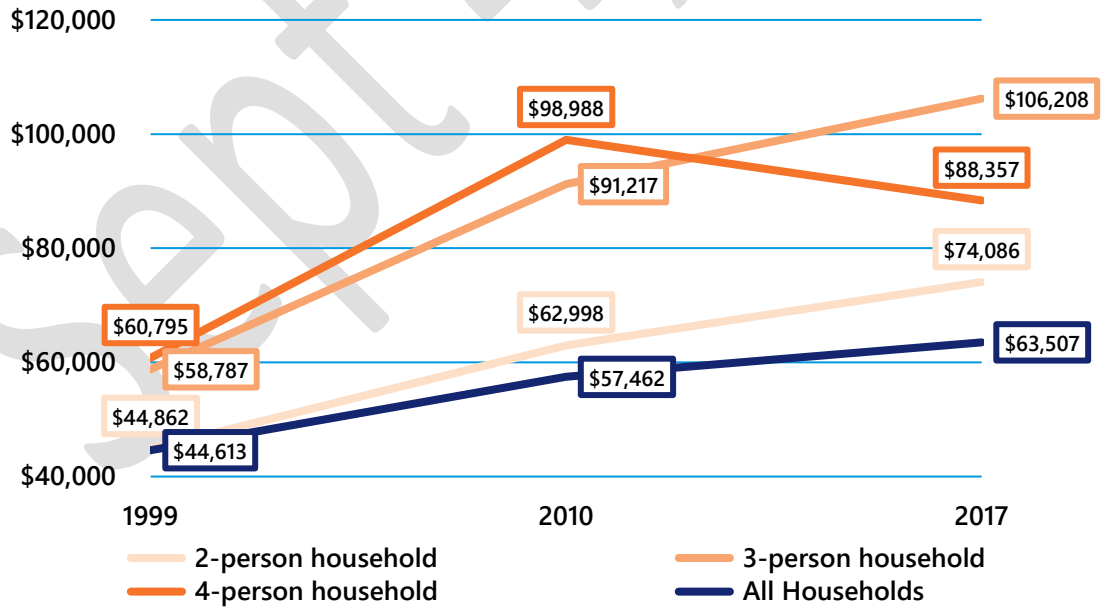
	2012	2015	2018	Percent Change, 2012-2018
Total	1,522	1,507	1,508	-0.9%

Source: Town of Westerly Assessment Department, 2019

Section 5.3 – Income

While the US Census Bureau collects and reports on incomes in several forms, the most commonly known and used statistics are median household income and median family income. Households are defined as all housing units occupied by one or more people. Families, as briefly defined in the Housing Opportunities chapter, are a type of household where the housing unit is occupied by two or more people related by birth, marriage (including same-sex couples since 2014), or adoption. Median family incomes are often higher than median household incomes due to the number of households with more than one income earner making up a larger portion of the total. From 1999 to 2017, median household income increased from $44,613 to $63,507 (an increase of 42.4%). For a three-person family, the median income grew from $58,787 to $106,208 (80.7% – nearly double the increase of the median household income). When adjusting for inflation, the median household income has not kept pace (-$1,842) while the median three-person family income has performed extremely well ($20,098). The following table summarizes median incomes in Westerly from 1999 to 2017 for two-, three-, and four-person families as well as all households.

Figure 5-1 Median Income by Select Household Sizes, 1999-2017



Sources: 2000 US Census, 2006-2010 ACS five-year estimates, and 2013-2017 ACS five-year estimates

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Section 5.4 – Economic Development Initiatives and Organizations

In 2007, nearly $154 million in new residential construction projects were underway in Westerly. Townhomes, single-family, and hotel room upgrades were all part of the development mix. In addition to the Watch Hill Inn and Ocean House projects referenced above, there were also nearly $42 million in new commercial development projects approved along US Route 1. New shopping centers, medical office buildings and restaurants, and adaptive reuse projects contributed to this development total.

In 2015, the amount of new residential construction had declined to just $16 million. New commercial development was also declining, with just under $5.9 million in recorded value, but there appeared to be an increased interest in revitalization, which had a recorded value of over $23.6 million. One of these projects currently underway is the revitalization of the United Theatre, which will be an important cornerstone of downtown Westerly and a key attraction and economic driver. With both movies and live entertainment to be scheduled year-round, the United Theatre will generate frequent visits which may in turn provide downtown businesses with increased walk-in traffic. A variety of programming targeted to families, children, and adults will provide many sustained opportunities for activity and contribute to the downtown revitalization.

Although the Town of Westerly has fostered mixed-use development since at least 1991, this concept has only born fruit in recent years. Mixed-use development done well blends residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, or industrial uses where they may be physically and functionally integrated. For example, the Lanphear Livery located in Watch Hill is a mixed-use, year-round structure which has been fully restored to its 1909 time period but with all of the modern necessities. The Livery had been condemned and vacant for a number of years. This restoration helps to reinvigorate the northern portion of Bay Street with two retail spaces on the first floor and three apartments on the upper two floors. In addition to attracting seasonal visitors, the Livery will be the new home of the Watch Hill Conservancy and have a gathering space for lectures and events for the greater Westerly area, as well as the location of a summer camp for young actors. The entire project was generously funded by a private local foundation~~,~~ and a private equity partner and utilized historic preservation tax credits.

Subsection 5.4.1 – Neighborhood Revitalization

Land Use 2025 identifies the urban core of Westerly as an area for potential growth and development. Concentration of growth in this area is intended to conserve State and municipal resources by making better use of the existing infrastructure, transportation choices, and ability to provide a variety of housing options. This area has a unique and historic character, significant existing infrastructure, and walkability to and from a strong and active downtown, including Westerly Station.

The 2003 North End Neighborhood Revitalization Plan guided three consecutive CDBG applications to enable a cohesive approach to encourage both public and private reinvestment. Phased housing rehabilitation, the provision of four neighborhood gateways, a new neighborhood service building, adaptive reuse of the Providence Gas Company property on Canal Street and the designation of the North End as an official Rhode Island Enterprise Zone were all recommended as a part of the revitalization strategy (though the State's Enterprise Zone program has been defunct since July 1, 2015). With the use of the North End Neighborhood Revitalization Plan, 11 structures were rehabilitated to provide 23 dwelling units, an existing building was purchased for the establishment of a Neighborhood Community Center, a pocket park was developed, and off-street vehicle parking was expanded at the Jonnycake Center of Westerly to serve its patrons and clients as well as the general public. Recognizing the accomplishments made through this plan, an update is being sought as of 2019.

Westerly's economy is also enhanced by the historic downtown, which is active year-round for residents and visitors. Downtown Westerly is a substantial commercial, professional, and financial hub and is also the civic and cultural center of the Town. In recognition of the importance of this area, the downtown has been the focus of numerous efforts to ensure that its vitality continues into the future. In 2008, it was identified as one of four KeepSpace communities across the State and was the only community identified outside of Providence County. KeepSpace brought together a number of State-level regulatory agencies, local organizations, planning grants and financing. The program provided funding for a pilot "shop-dine trolley" circulator connecting downtown,

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Watch Hill, and Misquamicut, which was coordinated through the OCCC. KeepSpace has been inactive since 2013 due to budget cuts at Rhode Island Housing, the program's administrator.

A smart growth initiative, KeepSpace intended to focus residential and commercial redevelopment in Downtown Westerly while protecting and preserving natural spaces such as parks and the Pawcatuck River. The original community garden established by WLT on Main Street, the downtown façade improvement program promoted by OCCC (under its previous name), and the creations of WRAP and WRF are all results of the funding awarded to KeepSpace Westerly as well as the Westerly Preservation Society. Though no longer active, the vision of KeepSpace continues to have an impact on redevelopment and new development in and around downtown.

Subsection 5.4.2 – Westerly-Pawcatuck Downtown Business Association (DBA)

The DBA has a stated focus to support a vibrant downtown for all to enjoy. Underlying this purpose is the belief that the downtown business district should emerge as a destination for shopping, dining, personal services, and arts and entertainment. The DBA's 60 members (as of autumn 2019) are kept informed of events, marketing and promotional efforts, and political activities affecting the downtown as the DBA lobbies for legislation to sustain and improve the downtown economy. Its reach is furthered through connections with organizations such as OCCC. The DBA also presents a unified voice for all concerns and plans for downtown in order to maintain the historical character and appeal of the area to residents and visitors alike.

Subsection 5.4.3 – ~~Westerly~~ Land Trusts

Westerly Municipal Land Trust was established in 2003 pursuant to the provisions of RIGL 42-17.1-1 et seq. for the purpose of acquiring, holding, and managing real property for the use and benefit of the citizens of Westerly, now and in the future. Such properties consist of open, residential, agricultural, recreational, historical and littoral property, including existing and future well fields and aquifer recharge areas, freshwater marsh, and adjoining uplands, wildlife habitats, and/or buildings providing access to or views of water bodies, or for bicycling and hiking paths, or for future public recreation, agricultural, environmental, or educational use.

Westerly Land Trust (WLT) is a private non-profit conservation corporation~~was~~ founded in 1987 to preserve open space and natural resources in Westerly and the surrounding area and later expanded their mission in 2004 to assist in revitalizing culturally significant properties. ~~In addition to the KeepSpace initiative discussed above, t~~The WLT has worked independently and in partnership with other~~s~~ organizations and the Town of Westerly to acquire several properties through its Urban Program. One of these properties, 10 High Street (the Industrial Trust Building), previously hosted the offices of the Land Trust while its other ~~five~~ properties provide cultural and recreational activities for the community.

Subsection 5.4.4 – Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce

Westerly 1 Fund – This is a centralized website location for the public to acquire information after a community disaster, natural or man-made, and learn about the appropriate ways to provide volunteer and financial support. The website is funded by the Ocean Community Chamber Foundation (OCCF) and includes logos and mission descriptions of the 501(c)~~©~~3 non-profit groups that respond during such a disaster.

The site gives specifics on what each group is doing to collaborate on community recovery efforts. Information about the committed partners Jonnycake Center (human services), Stand Up For Animals (animal services), and the ~~Ocean Community Chamber Foundation~~OCCF (business recovery grants and supplies) is outlined. A list of items accepted for donations (bottled water, cleaning supplies, professionally prepared meals for victims and/or volunteers, etc.) may be registered on this site. A list of donation items NOT accepted will also be included. Volunteer registration and/or a link to Serve Rhode Island is included. There are direct links to each organization's web sites. One hundred percent (100%) of all donations made to this central depository are tax-deductible and any undesignated/general funds will be pooled. An oversight committee consisting of at least ~~1~~one town council member, the OCCF Board, and representatives from the groups outlined on the site will evaluate community needs,

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establish criteria for funding allocations, and make consistent and fair determinations of grants and expenditures based on need, overall funds collected individually by the groups and collectively by this site. Appropriate uses of donated funds include, but are not limited to, supplies for clean up (rakes, gloves), meals for volunteers, business recovery grants, and transportation of volunteers from a designated Westerly site to the ground zero emergency site. ~~-~~All income and expenses related to this account are subject to complete public transparency. The site is located at westerly1fund.com but remains "hidden" until that point in time that it may be necessary to customize and activate.

The ~~Ocean Community Chamber Foundation~~OCCF raised $430,000 and provided grants to 29 small businesses after Superstorm Sandy to help the economy rebound. ~~-~~In 2010, the ~~Ocean Community Chamber Foundation~~OCCF raised $73,000 and provided grant relief to thirteen (13) businesses affected by the 500-year flood.

Subsection 5.4.4 – Arts & Entertainment District

In 1998, the Rhode Island General Assembly designated a portion of Westerly's Downtown as an Arts & Entertainment District (today one of only nine districts in Rhode Island), outlining special tax incentives for artists to live and work within its boundaries with the intent to spur the local creative economy. The sale of original works of art within the district's galleries is also exempt from state sales tax regardless of the location where the piece was created. While Westerly's district is arguably the least developed in the state, the local arts, entertainment, and recreation industry has experienced notable growth in the last decade and Downtown is home to a number of artistic establishments and events (for more on these, see the Historic and Cultural Resources chapter).

Subsection 5.4.5 – Real Jobs RI

It was noted earlier in the chapter that an Aquaculture Training Partnership received a Real Jobs ~~Rhode Island~~RI grant in 2015 to develop a job training program. Real Jobs RI is a flexible grant program initiative of RIDLT funded by the State and federal governments which awards up to $25,000 to applications put forward as collaborative efforts by businesses and agencies involved in commerce, industry, and professional activities seeking to provide skills to potential employees. Along with Aquaculture Training Partnership, a Real Jobs RI grant was also awarded in 2015 to the Westerly Regional Real Jobs Partnership. The application, a collaboration of 18 local employers and partners led by the OCCC with Westerly Public Schools, the Jonnycake Center, and Education Exchange, sought funding to gather information on local and regional employer needs through surveys and focus groups with the intent to develop a workforce training plan primarily focused on non-college bound students. In 2015, 112 businesses completed an extensive survey, which led to the development of the training program. Annually, the partnership is awarded grants over $260,000 to provide training for adults, career exploration in the Westerly school to grades 4, 8, and 12, and a summer employment program.

Subsection 5.4.6 – Other State-wide Business Incentives

Like its New England neighbors and other northeastern states, Rhode Island suffers from a level of taxation that is recognized as being a hindrance to business. However, the State has recently created new programs, such as Real Jobs RI, focused on industry clusters to develop jobs and lure business to the State. Some additional programs also include:

- **Research & Development (R&D) Tax Credit**
  A 22.5% tax credit offered to qualifying companies for increases in qualified research expenses associated with research and development.
- **Qualified Jobs Incentive**
  Annual, redeemable tax credits for up to 10 years for companies expanding their workforce in the State (either through relocation or new hiring) by as few as 10 employees, dependent on the industry, company size, wage level of employees, and other criteria.
- **Innovation Vouchers**

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Grants of up to $50,000 awarded to enterprises with fewer than 500 employees to fund R&D assistance from a university, research center, or medical center in the State.

- **Small Business Assistance Program**
  Below-market rate loans of $25,000 or more (microloans of less than $25,000 are also available) and technical assistance for businesses with 200 or fewer employees.
- **Bond Financing**
  Offered by the Rhode Island Industrial Facilities Corporation to commercial and manufacturing enterprises.
- **Wavemaker Fellowship**
  Reimbursement of eligible higher education student loan debt expenses for up to 4 years available to any individual employed in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields in Rhode Island with such expenses.
- **Small Business Capital Development**
  Tax deductions or modifications for investment, capital gain exclusions, or wage credits for qualifying business entities and certified venture capital partnerships, pursuant to RIGL §44-43-2.
- **CommerceRI's Renewable Energy Fund (REF)**
  Exists to help expand the role of renewable energy by providing funding for Small Scale Ssolar, Commercial Scale, and Community Renewables throughout Rhode Island. A Brownfields solar PV program is also available.

Section 5.5 – Economic Resilience

The Town's existing emergency permitting system goes a long way to ensure Town readiness and effective administration in the time period after a catastrophic event. However, a viable economy for Westerly requires robust economic resiliency to natural and man-made events. The Town will strive to anticipate the impact of catastrophic events on the local economy through study and strategic planning to reduce threats to public infrastructure, forecasted loss of property revenues, and mapping areas vulnerable to economic impacts. Alignment of town activities with the State strategic plan on the reduction of impact from climate change hazards will also help Westerly reduce fiduciary risks as well.

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Chapter 6
SERVICES AND FACILITIES

This chapter contains an inventory of existing and forecasted needs for the public such as, and not limited to, community facilities, education and schools, healthcare, public safety, recycling and waste management, and social services. Figure **Public Facilities (SAF-M1)** shows all structures ~~which~~ that contribute to Westerly's ability to provide a broad range of services including emergency response, medical services, education, waste disposal, library services, and social support. Datasets for these facilities were made available to RIGIS by several contributors and have been modified to indicate their current statuses. Some infrastructural components are also shown in this map, including public wells and electric transmission and gas lines.

Section 6.1 – Westerly Police Department

The Westerly Police Department (WPD) has 64 staff members (excluding constables and community service officers), 51 of whom are sworn officers. Its 27,700-square foot headquarters was completed in September 2007 at 60 Airport Road. The headquarters centralizes all police operations including Patrol, Community Policing, School Resource, Dispatch, Investigations, Detention of ~~p~~Prisoners, Marine Patrol, Harbor Management, Animal Control, Maintenance of F~~f~~leet, and Administration. The facility also serves as a regional emergency operations center in the event of a disaster. In FY2018, WPD received 48,418 calls for service, a less than one percent increase from the previous fiscal year. The following categories accounted for the largest percentage of calls in FY2018:

- Traffic warnings (7%)
- Traffic summons (3.7%)
- Criminal arrests (2.2%)
- Traffic collisions (1.7%)
- Criminal offenses (3.4%)

Updates to equipment were approved in the FY2017 budget for WPD to acquire and install new consoles, radios, computers, wall monitors, and access controls for the existing dispatch center. Now completed, the center serves as a state-of-the-art facility for public safety.

Approximately five high-mileage marked police cruisers are rotated out on an annual basis and replaced by fully-outfitted marked vehicles. Updates to desktop and mobile unit computers are in progress as of this Plan's adoption to support further advances in technology. Research is also being performed regarding the possible use of vehicle and body cameras to be used by sworn officers. Among the challenges to this proposal are the storage costs resulting from the transferal of data from the units.

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Section 6.2 – Westerly Animal Shelter

The Westerly Animal Shelter is a municipally owned building but was financed by a local non-profit organization, Stand Up For Animals (SUFA). The Animal Shelter was opened in 2009 and was designed as a space where animals could be housed and maintained whenever possible until adopted. The Animal Shelter is run by the Animal Control Officer, a member of the Westerly Police Department, with assistance from an Assistant Director (civilian) and numerous volunteers. SUFA continues to fundraise for the Animal Shelter, providing monetary assistance for animals in need, in particular as to veterinary care. The Animal Shelter has a dog park on premises, with designated areas for large and small dogs. In partnership with local veterinarians, the Animal Shelter provides a low-cost clinic and ongoing educational information to current and prospective pet owners. Moreover, the Animal Shelter acts as an evacuation center for the placement of domestic animals during a major weather event.

Section 6.~~2~~3 – Fire Protection Services

The Town of Westerly is divided into seven fire districts – Bradford (BFD), Dunn's Corners (DCFD), Misquamicut (MFD), Shelter Harbor (SHFD), Watch Hill (WHFD), Weekapaug (WKFD), and Westerly (WFD). Each fire district is incorporated to provide services within its boundaries and provides services, upon request, to neighboring districts with which it has a mutual aid agreement. Fire departments in Rhode Island have taxation powers and do not rely on appropriations from municipalities. Services provided by the departments include fire prevention and extinguishment, protection and preservation of life and property endangered by fire and related emergencies, and maintenance of fire district property such as beaches and facilities. BFD and SHFD have contracted with DCFD and WKFD has contracted with MFD to provide fire protection services. Following the termination of the recently approved contract between BFD and DCFD, it is anticipated BFD will merge with DCFD. All fire departments within the Town provide ongoing training programs. Training standards are consistent within all the fire districts and meet National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) standards 1500 and 1501. The following table indicates the location and major characteristics of each fire department located in Westerly.

Table 6-1 Overview of Fire Departments in Westerly, 2018

Fire Department	Station	Apparatuses	Members[1]	Service Calls
Dunn's Corners	1 Langworthy Road	3 Engines, 1 Tower, 1 Tanker, 1 Brush, 1 Squad, and 1 Bucket	42	899
Misquamicut	65 Crandall Avenue	2 Engines, 1 Rescue Boat, 1 Truck, 1 ATV, and 1 Jet Ski	20	120
Watch Hill	222 Watch Hill Road	2 Engines, 1 Aerial Ladder 2 Rescue Boats, 1 EMS Response, 1 Car, and 1 ATV	28	177
Westerly	7 Union Street 180 Beach Street	6 Engines, 1 Aerial Ladder, 1 Fire Alarm, 2 WTs, 1 Decontamination, 1 Bucket, 1 Special Hazards, and 1 Car	60	712

Sources: DCFD, MFD, WHFD, and WFD, 2019

[1] Part-time and seasonal staff and volunteers are assigned as half-members

The fire departments have developed strong working relationships ~~which~~that allow them to provide support as needed in the form of Mutual Aid. DCFD, MFD, WHFD, and WFD have standing mutual aid agreements with all fire departments in Rhode Island utilizing the State of Rhode Island Mutual Aid Agreement as well as with all fire departments in New London County, Connecticut utilizing the New London County Chiefs' Association.

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Section 6.~~3~~4 – Ambulance Services

The Westerly Ambulance Corps, established in 1917, is a private, non-profit volunteer organization ~~which~~ that provides basic life support (BLS) and advanced life support (ALS) emergency medical services to Westerly and portions of Stonington, Connecticut, including the ~~v~~Village of Pawcatuck. Other services include routine medical transportation, a Rescue Squad, 911 dispatching services (upgraded and automated in 2009) and first aid training courses. Ambulance services are provided by 8 full-time paid staff and 20 active volunteer members. The volunteer Rescue Squad, composed of 20 to 30 active members, specializes in vehicle extrication, dive rescue, swift-water rescue, ice rescue, rope rescue, and emergency scene lighting. Headquarters of the Westerly Ambulance Corps are located at 30 Chestnut Street and house a fleet of five Type III ambulances and three four-wheel drive rescue vehicles. Westerly Ambulance Corps members are required to attend training programs and to keep their certifications current. The Rescue Squad attends training programs sponsored by the Rhode Island Fire Academy and private Rescue Teaching Corporations.

Mutual aid agreements for rescue services exist with Charlestown Ambulance Services and the Ashaway and Pawcatuck Fire Departments. Mutual aid agreements for ambulance services also exist with ambulance corporations in Charlestown, Ashaway, Stonington, North Stonington, and Hope Valley.

Police, fire, and ambulance services in Westerly are very effectively meeting local needs. The proposed modernization of the police dispatch center will improve local dispatch services. This, together with programmed upgrades in equipment and training, will allow the current network to provide these services effectively for at least the 20-year planning period.

Section 6.~~4~~5 – Medical Facilities and Services

The presence of well-maintained, functional, and high-performing medical facilities and services ~~are~~ is an important component of in the quality of life for any community. For the next two decades, this will be an even more critical part of Westerly as its population ages and as the healthcare industry continues to outpace other economic sectors in State-wide growth.

Subsection 6.~~4~~5.1 –Westerly Hospital

Since 1925, Westerly Hospital has been providing residents of southern Rhode Island and southeastern Connecticut with a full range of inpatient and outpatient services in a community hospital setting. Westerly Hospital was acquired by L+M Healthcare in 2013 and is now part of Yale New Haven Health, a system that includes Lawrence + Memorial Hospital, Bridgeport Hospital, Greenwich Hospital, Yale New Haven Hospital, the Visiting Nurse Association of Southeastern Connecticut, and Northeast Medical Group. As a 60-bed community hospital, Westerly Hospital provides the finest quality treatment in the following areas of care: emergency, medical, surgical, radiology, laboratory, and rehabilitative services. The hospital also offers heart and vascular care, interventional pain management, wound care, pulmonary rehabilitation services, inpatient geriatric psychiatric care, and comprehensive cancer care provided through the Smilow Cancer Hospital Care Center. All inpatient rooms are private. Westerly Hospital is a key economic driver in the region, employing more than 600 full and part-time clinical, professional, technical, and support staff. The hospital also has more than 200 volunteers who provide vital functions in numerous departments.



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Subsection 6.45.2 – South County Health

South County Health is another major medical provider in the region. In May 2016, South County Health expanded its services in Westerly with the opening of its second medical and wellness center in the State. The center (15,600 square feet) offers numerous services including an anti-coagulation clinic, behavioral health specialist, cardiology, dermatology, diabetes care, diagnostic imaging, laboratory services, nutrition services, oncology and hematology, orthopedics, physical therapy, podiatry, primary care and family medicine, an Urgent/Walk-in Care, wound care, and services provided by the Center for Women's Health.

Prior to the construction of the medical and wellness center, South County Home Health (SCHH) had a local presence through visiting nurses, rehabilitation therapists, and other home-based care needs professionals to residents. Licensed by the State and accredited by Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), it is certified by Medicare and Medicaid and a member of the Visiting Nurse Associations of America and the National Association for Home Care. Low levels of insurance reimbursement from Medicare and other insurance companies and increasing documentation requirements to receive those reimbursements are issues that this and other medical facilities are struggling to address.

Subsection 6.45.3 – Wood River Health Services

Wood River Health Services (WRHS), a non-profit community health center, operates a satellite office ~~at the Tower Street School Community Center~~in Westerly in addition to its main facility in the village of Hope Valley in Hopkinton. WRHS offers patients access to numerous services in several medical areas including family medicine, women's health, ~~dental care,~~ behavioral health, care management, and laboratory services.

Subsection 6.5.4 – Hope Recovery Center of Westerly

The Hope Recovery Center of Westerly is a relatively new community service provider for Westerly, housed at 55 Beach Street, Merchant's Square. A member of the Westerly Prevention and Wellness Partnership, the Hope Recovery Center offers numerous programs and outreach services to individuals in need of support for mental illness, addiction, and recovery from abuse. Its certified peer recovery support services are particularly helpful for those seeking support with substance misuse and/or mental health challenges. The Hope Recovery Center has already established itself as a resource for the Westerly Police Department.

Subsection 6.45.54 – Nursing Homes, Retirement Homes, and Assisted Living Facilities

Several nursing homes and retirement facilities are established in Westerly and summarized in the table below. An assisted living facility, ~~T~~the Elms, is also located at 22 Elm Street and has 119 units.

Table 6-2 Nursing Homes in Westerly, 2019

Facility	Address	Number of Beds
Apple Rehab Clipper	161 Post Road	60
Apple Rehab Watch Hill	79 Watch Hill Road	41
Westerly Health Center	280 High Street	106
Royal Westerly Nursing Center	79 Beach Street	66

Sources: Apple Rehab, 2019, Westerly Health Center, 2019, and Royal Westerly Nursing Center, 2019

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Section 6.~~5~~6 – Education

Westerly's public school system provides education from pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) through high school graduation at five school locations: Dunn's Corners School, Springbrook Elementary School, State Street School, Westerly Middle School, and Westerly High School. The stated mission of Westerly Public Schools is "to create an inspiring, challenging, and supportive environment where students are encouraged and assisted in reaching their highest potential."

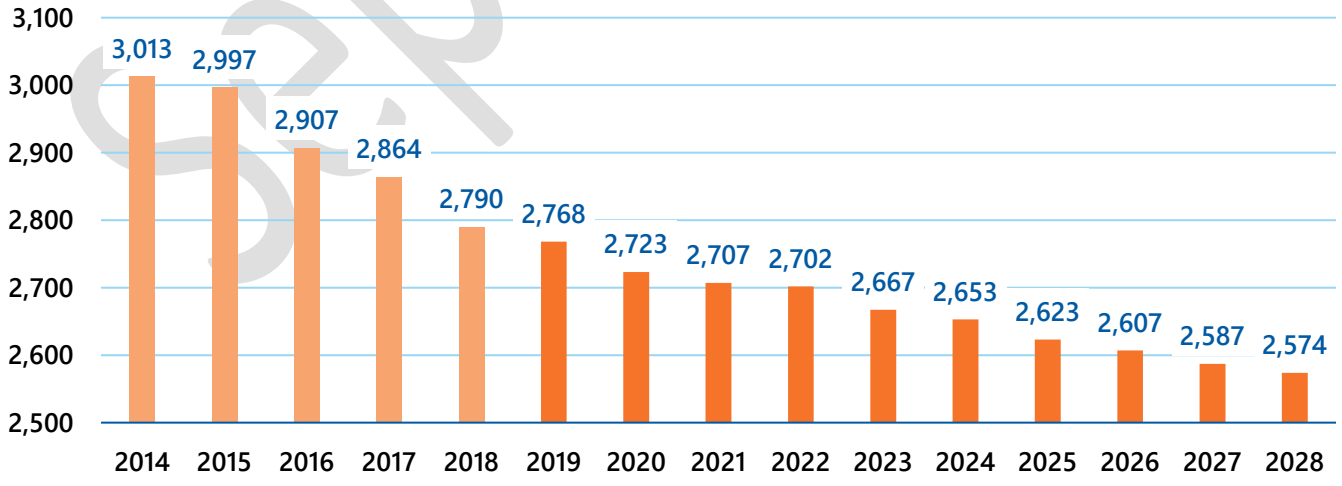
Since the preparation of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, significant improvements have been made to the Town's public school facilities. Through a collaborative effort between the Town Council and the Westerly School Committee, land was acquired in 1995 for the construction of Springbrook Elementary School (completed in 1996) and an additional site was purchased in 2001 to establish a new Westerly Middle School (completed in 2005). Strategies to maintain and repair other school buildings have been identified and implemented as well, but many facilities are old and will require significant renovation or replacement over the next two decades ~~years~~.

Subsection 6.~~5~~6.1 – Enrollment

Most of the Town's school-aged children (approximately 95%) attend public school. Enrollment for the 2017-2018 academic year included 756 students attending Westerly High School, 859 students attending Westerly Middle School, 945 attending an elementary school, and 90 within the preschool program at Babcock Hall. Beyond these numbers, additional students are also sent by the Westerly School District to the Chariho Regional Vocational School, charter schools, or outside placement.

Overall, the Westerly School District has a projected total enrollment of 2,723 for 2020. This continues a general decline in student population, which began trending in 2003. Enrollment projections prepared for the School Department, shown in Figure 6-1, indicate this negative trend is expected to continue until at least 2028 and will result in a loss of 439 students from 2014. Despite this projection, student capacity will likely fluctuate by school building and academic year for the foreseeable future and the distribution and condition of individual classroom spaces may require specific attention in addition to school-wide needs. The decline in the student population is generally attributed to the aging of the Town-wide population and stagnant economic climate in the State in comparison to other regions and, more specifically, metropolitan areas. Westerly is expected to see a continued decline in student population, with periods of leveling off or occasional and slight increases as economic conditions improve and employment opportunities increase.

Figure 6-1 Actual and Projected Public School Enrollment, 2014-2028



Source: RIDE Necessity of School Construction Stage II Submission, 2019

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Subsection 6.~~5~~6.2 – Demographics and Special Services

The most recent *And How Are the Children?* report by Washington County Coalition for Children (WCCC) provides several statistics regarding youth population and related characteristics for all towns in Washington County. According to the report, Westerly's population at age 18 or younger was the third largest in the county. At the same time, the community was identified as having the highest number of children not living with parents (also identified in the 2019 KIDS COUNT Factbook published by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT), receiving support through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and receiving free or reduced-price school lunches. According to the 2019 KIDS COUNT Factbook, Westerly School District also had the highest number of identified homeless children in Washington County as of the 2017-2018 academic year and the ninth-highest number State-wide.

These numbers, along with other economic and social demographics, are indicative of hardships many students may experience while enrolled in public school both currently and in the future. Westerly Public Schools, in its commitment to student well-being, staffs four (4) full-time school psychologists and 7.5 school social workers. A behavioral specialist has also been sought by the district in the past.

Subsection 6.6~~5~~.3 – School Facilities

Since the turn of the century, three school facilities have been closed within the Town: Tower Street Elementary School in 2009 ~~and~~, Bradford Elementary School in 2017, and a private Catholic academy in 2018. In all cases, these changes were due primarily to a decade-long trend of declining enrollment. The Westerly School District is now comprised of five public schools, as presented in the table below, and there are no local private schools offering education for kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Table 6-3 Public Schools Overview, 2018

School	Grades	Location	Enrollment	Year Built
Dunn's Corners School	K-4	8½ Plateau Road	325	1967
Springbrook Elementary School	K-4	39 Springbrook Road	316	1996
State Street School	K-4	35 State Street	304	1955
Westerly Middle School	5-8	10 Sandy Hill Road	859	2005
Westerly High School	9-12	23 Ward Avenue	756	1937

Source: RIDE Necessity of School Construction Stage II Submission, 2019

A Long Range Facilities Master Plan for Westerly Public Schools titled Vision 2020 completed by Gilbane and RGB was adopted by the School in 2002. ~~The Plan~~Vision 2020 outlined the needs for each school building in the district from that time to 2020 with work to be completed in three major phases. As of winter 2020, two phases have been successfully completed:

- **Phase 1 (completed 2005)**
  Westerly Middle School (renamed from Babcock Middle School and previously located at Babcock Hall) was constructed and has been in use for grades 6 through 8 since the 2005-2006 academic year. Fifth grade classes were relocated from their respective elementary schools to the middle school beginning in the 2009-2010 academic year.

- **Phase 2 (completed 2012)**
  The School District relocated its offices to the first floor of Babcock Hall while the second and third floors became classroom space for Westerly High School (redesigned as a campus). The building previously used for the district's offices was torn down and replaced by a bus loop and increased parking capacity for students and staff. Renovations to the Ward Building resulted in several

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improvements including a new science and technology wing, new art classrooms, installation of Smart Boards, and new flooring, windows, and ceilings. Due to decreasing enrollment, both historic and projected, there is additional capacity within the two-building campus that may allow for greater utilization by the high school and/or by the school district.

The third phase, redesigning the elementary schools, is ongoing despite being recommended to occur between 2005 and 2010. While both Dunn's Corners School and State Street School have supported larger enrollments in past academic years, Springbrook Elementary School may realistically be approaching its maximum enrollment. In the present, though, it does not represent a substandard environment.



A 2015 Facilities Planning Services study made recommendations to close State Street School and undertake renovations of the three (3) remaining elementary schools. The issuance of a $38.5 million bond to fund the proposal was put to referendum and rejected by voters in 2016. A decision to close Bradford Elementary School was then approved by the School Committee in the following year and a new committee was formed. Prior to beginning its work, the committee conducted a survey of voters to better understand their concerns and assess the viability of another proposal.

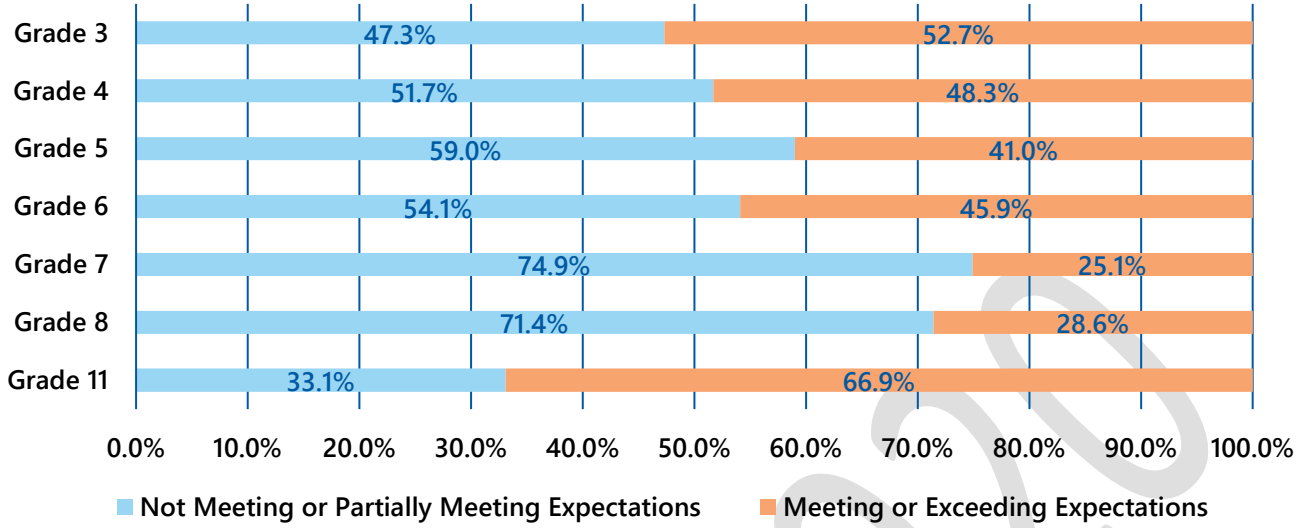
The committee's ultimate product, the Westerly School Legacy Plan, was embodied within the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) Necessity of School Construction Stage II Submission completed in February 2019. The plan proposed the renovation of Dunn's Corners School and Springbrook Elementary School as lower elementary schools serving kindergarten through second grade and the demolition and rebuilding of State Street School as an upper elementary school serving third grade through fifth grade. Westerly Middle School would return to serving sixth grade through eighth grade and Westerly High School would not be impacted, though both facilities would receive limited improvements to their heating and ventilation systems. Limited district-wide improvements to safety and technology were also included. The issuance of a $71.4 million bond, partially reimbursable by the State if the project met certain criteria at completion, was put to referendum. The proposal was rejected by voters in October 2019 and Westerly Public Schools is now in the process of evaluating next steps to complete Vision 2020.

Subsection 6.6~~5~~.4 – Academic Performance

In 2010, ~~T~~the State of Rhode Island adopted a set of academic learning goals known as Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for students to achieve at the completion of each grade level. The full implementation of CCSS began in the 2013-2014 academic year and the State has since replaced Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) testing with the Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System, which uses end-of-year standardized tests modeled on those used in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Select, simplified results from testing conducted in 2018 are visualized in Figures 6-2 and 6-3 on the next page and show performance varied considerably by grade year between the subjects of English language arts and mathematics.

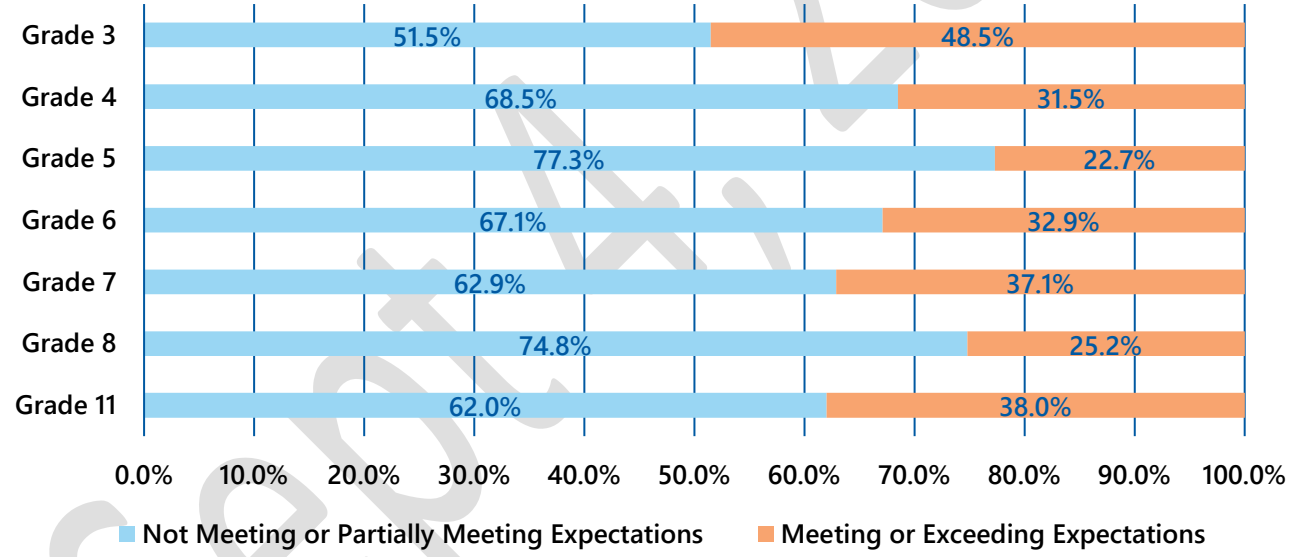
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Figure 6-2 Student English Language Arts Performance in State Assessments, 2018



Source: RIDE School District Report Card, 2019

Figure 6-3 Student Mathematics Performance in State Assessments, 2018



Source: RIDE School District Report Card, 2019

The Westerly School District is the sole authority of the Town to guide student achievement and it works continuously to ensure greater access to 21st-century educational programming within all schools for all students.

Subsection 6.6~~5~~.5 – Other Educational Resources

In addition to Westerly Public Schools, the Town is also home to Westerly Education Center (WEC). Established in 2017, this facility was supported by the 2010 Comprehensive Plan and is a public-private partnership that includes all public institutions of post-secondary education within the State as well as additional private schools and State agencies. WEC h~~w~~as also been uniquely designed to include significant training areas which are used by employers, such as ~~GD~~EB, to provide prospective employees with hands-on and simulated learning opportunities. Within the

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next two decades, it is anticipated that the facility's programming will expand and become an increasingly important resource for the Town and the local economy.

Section 6.7~~6~~ – Solid Waste Disposal

The Town owns and operates the Westerly Transfer Station at 39 Larry Hirsch Lane and sells trash bags (known locally as orange bags due to their distinct color) which residents fill and return to the transfer station on their own in place of curbside pickup. The Westerly Transfer Station also operates a pay as you throw (PAYT) program for large disposals. Use of the solid waste facility is also available to residents of Hopkinton under an agreement between the two municipalities. In all cases, the solid waste collected at the transfer station is loaded and trucked to the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC) facility in Johnston, Rhode Island where it is landfilled.

Adjustments to drop-off fees may be made in the future to cover costs and encourage recycling and diversion. If residents choose not to haul their trash, there are several licensed private haulers which will collect it for a fee. If residents use a private hauler, they are not required to use orange bags. It is estimated that slightly more than half of residents hire a private hauler. Overall, the system is generally affordable and is expected to continue effectively meeting community needs throughout this Plan's 2040 horizon.

Over the past several years, the Town has increased the types of materials which can be recycled at the facility to 25 categories. Items include, among others, propane tanks, electronics, scrap metal, used motor oil, automotive batteries and tires, oil filters, wood stove ashes, rubble, clothing, and mattresses. The facility will also accept truck tires and refrigerators. Various fees are associated with these items, except for cooking oil, books, bikes, scrap metal, paint, and rigid plastics, which are currently collected for free. This system has been in place for several years and generally works well, as residents have an incentive to separate their recyclables to save money. Residents can also currently drop off leaves and grass at no charge and brush for a per-ton fee. All compost materials are currently sent to Earth Care in neighboring Charlestown. ~~In the future, the Town should consider implementing a municipal composting program.~~ Other services under consideration are the recycling of food scraps, composting, and new outreach programs.

According to RIRRC 2019 Municipal Summary~~.~~, Westerly generated ~~18,015~~25,236 tons of solid waste in 201~~8~~. This yielded a mandatory recycling rate of ~~40.3~~32.1% and an overall diversion rate (meaning all items diverted from the landfill) of ~~44.4~~33.3%. These are ~~strong improvements~~reductions in comparison to the percentages reported for 2014 (37.7% and 39.4%, respectively)~~ and the recycling rate exceeds the State's 35% minimum goal. The overall diversion rate is also closely approaching the State's 50% minimum goal.~~ Westerly continues to push towards improved recycling numbers and diversion rate to meet the State's minimum goals of 35% recycling rate and 50% diversion rate.

Section 6.8~~7~~ – Westerly Library

The Westerly Library is located on an approximately 14.7-acre property shared with Wilcox Park in the heart of Downtown Westerly. The library, owned and operated by the Memorial and Library Association of Westerly, is a participating member of the Ocean State Libraries network which allows its more than 17,400 cardholders (free to residents of all Rhode Island municipalities and the Town of Stonington in Connecticut, as well as nonresident property owners in Rhode Island) to access the collections of all libraries throughout the State (Westerly's collection totals over 181,600). In FY2018, 37.2% of the library's total support in revenue (just over $2.8 million) came from State grant aid, municipal grant aid, and grant revenue.

In addition to traditional books and periodicals, the library's collection is made up of audiobooks, computer software, e-books, films, and online databases. Wi-Fi access and annual calendars of programs including plays, concerts, lectures, and civic discussions are also made available. At present, the library is ranked among Rhode Island's 10 libraries with the highest number of items in circulation, number of library visits, number of programs offered, and program attendance. The table that follows presents selected library statistics for the most recent full five-year period.

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Table 6-4 Select Westerly Library Statistics, 2014-2018

Statistics	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Items circulated	213,956	208,808	206,870	199,020	193,685
Size of collection	180,106	170,151	183,336	190,957	203,963
Full-time employees	15	17	15	16	18
Hours operated	2,906	2,906	2,913	2,913	2,950
Patron visits	243,009	242,607	256,167	263,342	272,032
Registered borrowers	17,690	17,424	16,934	16,861	15,327
Computer log-ons	34,177	29,186	30,012	24,155	20,636
Programs offered	461	636	636	796	987
Attendance of programs	28,681	31,424	49,204	50,694	44,670
Annual budget	$1,875,291	$1,987,233	$2,016,556	$2,063,335	$2,120,141

Source: Westerly Library, 2019

The library has had three additions since it was first constructed in 1894, the most recent occurring in 1992, necessitated by expansions of services. To address that and other needs, the Library is conducting an $8 million capital campaign. Roughly half of the hard~~#~~ construction costs will be provided by the Rhode Island Office of Library Services, which provides grants for library construction. Funds will be used for space reallocation in the library and renovations to the park. Interior renovations are expected to provide a 20% increase in floor space for each of the library's four floors without increasing the 50,000-square foot footprint. Most of the funds for this project are coming from private donations, but the project will require the combined efforts of federal, ~~s~~State, Town, foundation, corporate, and community supporters. Renovation work on the library structure was started in August 2009. In spring 2016, following the library's receipt of a grant provided by the Champlin Foundation, work was completed to update the library's circulation desk, create a new space for teenagers, and establish a modernized technology lab and makerspace.

The Westerly Library not only meets needs of Westerly residents but continues to exceed the expectations of both residents and visitors. With its continued improvements, and the continued support of the community, the library is expected to remain one of the community's most valuable assets.

Section 6.9 – Adult Day Center of Westerly and Westerly Senior Citizens Center

The Adult Day Center of Westerly (ADCW) is 501(c)(3) organization located in the former Police Department headquarters providing daytime care for adults with cognitive, emotional, and/or functional impairments for over 36 years. ADCW utilizes the PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) program to enable seniors to remain in their communities, rather than being placed in long-term care facilities. ADCW provides socialization, nursing support services, personal care services, physical therapy and rehabilitation, therapeutic activities, family counseling and a monthly Caregiver Support Group, and nutritious meals in a supervised setting to support adults in need. Such services allow caregivers to manage work, household maintenance, and other tasks knowing their loved ones are in a safe place.

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Section 6.10 – Westerly Senior Citizens Center

The Westerly Senior Citizens Center is a 501(c)(3) organization providing social and transportation services and health programs to the senior and elderly population in Westerly and nearby communities. The Senior Center hosts daily meal pickups, with transportation to and from the mealsite and to medical appointments through the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority's (RIPTA) RIde (Riders with Disabilities) program. The Senior Center also provides transportation to other locations not covered by the RIde program, like grocery stores, pharmacies, banks, shopping centers, and libraries. A variety of social services are offered at the Senior Center, including support groups, nursing services and a monthly mini clinic, postal services, and assistance with finances, taxes, health insurance, and other services. Recreational and social activities are also hosted at the Senior Center daily.

Section 6.11 – Jonnycake Center of Westerly

Jonnycake Center of Westerly is a 501(c)(3) organization serving 3,000+ individuals annually through education, food pantry, and social services programs. In partnership with organizations such as Education Exchange, Washington County Literacy Volunteers, Families Learning Together, Westerly Parent Academy, and RI Real Jobs Partnership, Jonnycake provides continuing education and career advancement opportunities, including tuition assistance and scholarships and free education and training programs. Jonnycake provides financial assistance for basic needs like housing, utilities, prescriptions, and education, and offers vouchers to their onsite thrift shop, which sells low-cost clothing, furniture, and household items. Other services and programs hosted by Jonnycake include the Fresh Start Program, Domestic Violence Advocacy Program, and other seasonal drives and fundraisers. The food pantry provides free pantry items and prepared meals to those in need, including pet foods as well. Additional nutrition assistance programs offered at Jonnycake include the Rhode Island Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Power Pack Program and Summer Program Looking to Alleviate Student Hunger (SPLASH) for families with children, holiday dinner baskets, and a weekly free community farmer's market.

Section 6.12 – Westerly Area Rest Meals (WARM)

Westerly Area Rest Meals (WARM) Shelter is a 501(c)(3) organization providing an emergency shelter, soup kitchen, Attire for Hire program, tax assistance, and community outreach activities. The WARM Shelter has been operating at its current location in Westerly since 1990 and provides one of the three emergency shelters in Washington County. It often operates near or at full capacity (approximately 80 individuals) and offers temporary housing onsite, as well as long-term transitional housing onsite through its WARM-Up program. Additional offsite housing is provided through several projects and programs, including the Harvest Homes program, the Section 811 project , and WARM Supportive Homes, which provides permanent housing to disabled individuals and families with disabled adults. Anita's Kitchen, the WARM soup kitchen, serves nearly 100 meals every day to homeless individuals, and the Children's Summer Lunch Program delivers bagged lunches to children across Washington County. Case management services are provided to homeless individuals and families in crisis to connect them with needed services and/or funds.

Section 6.13 – Age Friendly Westerly

Age-Friendly Westerly is an affiliate of the Age-Friendly RI organization, a coalition of community and state agencies, healthcare and social service providers, advocacy and faith-based organizations, businesses, academic institutions, municipal leaders, and community members committed to healthy aging. This organization provides resources to aging community members and their loved ones and raises awareness about the value of building a community that supports older adults.

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Section 6.14 – Westerly Education Center (WEC)

Westerly Education Center (WEC) is a public-private collaboration managed by the State of Rhode Island's Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner and designed to bring together higher education, business, industry, and community partners to provide high-quality educational programs to meet projected workforce growth in the region. Established in 2017, in partnership with all public institutions of post-secondary education within the State, as well as additional private schools and State agencies, over 4,000 people have already received education at WEC as of summer 2019. WEC provides undergraduate, graduate, and workforce training courses, with hands-on and simulated learning opportunities. Some affiliated institutions offering programming at WEC include Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI), Rhode Island School of Design Continuing Education (RISD CE), Rhode Island College (RIC), and University of Rhode Island.

Section 6.15 – Religious Organizations

Many of the religious organizations across Westerly offer additional social services and programs supporting Westerly residents. The following highlights some of these services, though others may exist within the community. St. Vincent de Paul Society is parish-based operation of Roman Catholic lay people operating locally at Immaculate Conception Church providing temporary financial assistance and a food pantry for individuals experiencing emergency situations. St. Pius X is a Catholic parish that hosts the Helping Hands Family Ministry (HHFM), a group with the mission to provide families in temporary crisis with financial support and/or meal delivery. Christ Episcopal Church operates the Living Supplies Closet, a 501(c)(3) community outreach program providing personal hygiene items not covered by food stamps or distributed by welfare agencies. Christ Episcopal Church also operates the Pastoral Care Commission, providing spiritual care to those in need during illness and/or difficult times.

Section 6.168 – Other Social Service Agencies and Programs

As indicated through data earlier in this chapter (and in other chapters as well), many of Westerly's residents experience or will experience financial and social hardships ~~which~~ that require some form of assistance to manage and overcome. Along with relevant services described above, there are several locally involved agencies and programs, shown in Table 6-5 on the next page, that aim to provide needed assistance.

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Table 6-5 Inventory of Select Social Service Agencies and Programs

Agency/Program	Description
~~Adult Day Center of Westerly~~	~~501(c)(3) organization, located in the former Police Department headquarters, providing daytime care for adults with cognitive, emotion and/or functional impairments~~
~~Deborah K. Fallacaro Pregnancy Center of Westerly~~	~~Center located at Immaculate Conception Church providing services and education at no cost for women who believe they may be pregnant~~
Ayers Foundation	Charitable, educational, agricultural, and scientific non-profit corporation promoting local food and farming, sustainable agriculture, holistic nutrition, healthy living, and environmental literacy of youth
Domestic Violence Resource Center of South County (DVRCSC)	Non-profit ~~agency~~organization dedicated to preventing and responding to domestic violence through offering safety, support, advocacy, education, and services
~~Jonnycake Center of Westerly~~	~~501(c)(3) organization serving 3,000+ individuals annually through education, food pantry and social services programs~~
The Fogarty Center	Non-profit organization providing resources to children and adults with special needs
Grow and Go Seek	Nature-based early childhood education program with curriculum based on RI Early Learning and Development standards
Literacy Volunteers of Washington County	ProLiteracy America accredited affiliate providing English as a second language (ESL) learning and preparation for citizenship and General Education Diplomas (GEDs), among other services
Living Supplies Closet (LSC)	Ministry of Christ Church providing personal hygiene products at no cost
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Westerly/Chariho	Local affiliate of NAMI, the largest grassroots organization in the United States dedicated to educating on, advocating for, and listening to individuals with mental illnesses and their families
New England Sailing and Science	Non-profit organization providing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math)-based education programs using experiential learning on and off the water
Opening Doors for Westerly's Children	501(c)(3) organization promoting early childhood literacy by providing essential materials and opportunities and supporting academic programs and initiatives
Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center (PNC)	Multi-purpose facility offering social, educational, health and human services programs to Westerly and southeastern Connecticut communities
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	Program of the United States Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service offering grants to states for supplemental foods, health care referrals and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding postpartum women and to children five years old and younger found to be at nutritional risk
SNAP	Program of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service offering financial assistance to eligible, low-income individuals
~~St. Vincent de Paul Society~~	~~Organization of Roman Catholic lay people operating locally at Immaculate Conception Church providing temporary financial assistance and a food pantry for individuals experiencing emergency situations~~
South County Community Action Agency (SCCAA)	501(c)(3) organization providing numerous financial, housing, learning and social services with offices in Westerly, Charlestown, North Kingstown, and South Kingstown
~~Tower Street School Community Center~~	~~Westerly Public Schools facility, previously an elementary school, offering continuing education and learning programs for cost and for free~~

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	~~through numerous partners and office space for the Town's Recreation Department. Four organizations (Bradley School, Church at Westerly, Literacy Volunteers of Washington County and Wood River Health Services) are also tenants of the center.~~
Washington County Coalition for Children (**WCCC**)	Coalition of social service agencies, healthcare providers and private and public individuals providing children's advocacy
Westerly Parent Academy	Westerly Public Schools parent education program offering workshops and courses to support student learning and help parents build personal, educational, and vocational skills for job and career growth
Westerly Parents as Teachers	Westerly Public Schools home visiting program, funded by federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program, providing parent support and education through early childhood (prenatal through kindergarten) to improve development, health, and well-being of at-risk families
~~**WARM**~~	~~501(c)(3) organization providing an emergency shelter, soup kitchen, Attire for Hire program, tax assistance, and community outreach activities~~
~~**Westerly Senior Citizens Center**~~	~~501(c)(3) organization providing social and transportation services and health programs to the senior and elderly population in Westerly and nearby communities~~

Many ~~of these~~ agencies are involved in the **Basic Needs Network of Washington County (BNN)**, a group of basic needs providers established in 1995. BNN conducted a Regional Needs Assessment in 2011 which focused on low-income individuals achieving economic independence. A survey of 292 low-income individuals was conducted which found respondents represented a broad range of work experiences and over one-third were from Westerly.

This network of social service agencies and organizations continues to ~~effectively~~ meet the needs of Westerly residents. The availability of funding for social services continues to be an issue. Just getting funding to continue on-going programs is a persistent problem in the social service sector, making it very difficult to create new programs or expand existing programs in response to demographic and economic changes. Changing priorities at the federal level, and corresponding changes in eligibility criteria for the CDBG program appear likely to tighten fiscal constraints. Westerly needs to champion the cause of these social service organizations and assist them in obtaining the funding that will allow them to respond to the expected increase in an aging population living on fixed incomes with limited savings.

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Section 6.179 – Energy Usage and Conservation

Energy conservation and the efficient use of energy has long been a part of planning in Westerly. In 2008, the Town adopted a renewable energy policy that included a policy statement defining renewable energy as:

> "any energy resource that is naturally regenerated over a short time scale and derived directly from the sun (such as thermal, photochemical, and photoelectric), indirectly from the sun (such as wind, hydropower, and photosynthetic energy stored in biomass) or from natural movement and mechanisms of the environment (such as geothermal, tidal and river flow energy)."

The policy statement also included objectives such as obtaining at least 15% of the Town's energy from renewable sources, partnering with the State on renewable energy initiatives, and reducing energy consumption by applying sustainable measures in the management, operation, and maintenance of facilities and infrastructure.

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan also included measures proposed to conserve energy and seek alternative forms of energy production. One of the adopted energy objectives was to "decrease Westerly's dependence on petroleum-related energy sources through a municipal strategy of conservation and renewable energy generation." Action 6.3 called on the Town to "update ~~land use~~land-use regulations to address and encourage appropriate renewable energy opportunities." Policy 9 stated "the Town shall encourage on a continuing basis the recycling and conservation of energy, water, and other environmental resources."

In 2011, Johnson Controls, Inc. (JCI) conducted a six-month audit of energy consumption in public facilities to find ways to reduce energy costs, provide capital upgrades, increase energy efficiency, increase reliability of the Town's mechanical and electrical systems, and maintain or improve occupant comfort and well-being. The results of the audit and subsequent recommendations were provided in the Town of Westerly Detailed Energy Audit Report prepared by JCI in 2012. Table 6-6 below shows a summary of audited energy usage in each of the Town's non-school buildings. The findings included a total of over 4.9 million kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity and range from 2.3 to 138.1 million British Thermal Units per square foot per year (MBTU/sf/year) of thermal energy used across Town buildings. For informational purposes, the therm (thm) is a measure of heat energy equal to 100,000 British thermal units (BTUs).

Table 6-6 Energy Usage in Municipal Buildings, 2011[1]

Municipal Building	Electrical Energy			Heating Oil			Natural Gas		
	kWh	$/kWh	MBTU/ sf/yr	Gallons	$/gal	MBTU/ sf/yr	Thm	$/thm	MBTU/ sf/yr
Adult Day Center[2]	21,409	0.23	5.2	-	-	-	5,112	1.5	36.5
Animal Control/Shelter	136,857	0.12	72.4	-	-	-	5,331	1.6	82.6
Armory	11,778	0.18	2.4	2,778	*3.33*	22.9	1,687	1.6	10.0
Beach Building #2	888	0.23	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bus Garage	-	-	-	1,126	*3.33*	21.9	-	-	-
DPW Highway	97,000	0.13	21.6	1,735	*3.33*	15.7	2,428	1.6	15.8
Landfill Building #2	19,575	0.15	8.0	-	-	-	-		-
Police Station	665,900	0.14	53.5	-	-	-	8,307	1.6	19.5
Senior Center	128,960	0.12	30.5	-	-	-	8,562	1.5	59.3
Town Hall	297,620	0.11	38.2	10,645	*3.33*	55.5	-	-	-
WWTF	2,275,524	*0.15*	215.8	*15,568*	*3.33*	*60.0*	-	-	-
Water Dept. Building #1	791,900	0.13	180.8	5,193	*3.33*	48.2	348	2.2	2.3
Water Dept. Building #2	482,750	0.13	-	-	-	-	4,058	1.5	138.1
Water Dept. Building #3	18,519	0.17	152.7	-	-	-	80	4.0	19.5

Source: Town of Westerly Detailed Energy Audit Report, 2012

[1] Italicized text indicates assumed numbers when billing history was not available.

[2] The Adult Day Center began operations in in 2013.

The major findings of the Johnson audit included the following:

- There are many opportunities to reduce energy costs within the Town buildings. By implementing the recommendations outlined in the audit study, the Town of Westerly could reduce energy usage by 9.3% in Town buildings (3.1% electric and 21.3% thermal) based on the average utility data established as the baseline period.
- Some of the mechanical and electrical systems are in poor condition, but are operated well, given current funding and staffing level constraints. Some of the Town buildings have programmable thermostats and the rest have pneumatic thermostats or electric dial gauge thermostats. All remaining electric and pneumatic thermostats should be replaced by programmable thermostats with two set points (day and night) for occupied and unoccupied hours. The installation of a control system was proposed that would upgrade and connect all control systems in the Town Hall via the district Wide Area Network (WAN) to a front end/host computer, allowing facility personnel to access all building systems via the front end to make changes to optimize the space conditions and maximize energy savings.
- The existing boilers in the buildings that are near the end of their useful life were recommended for replacement with high efficiency boilers that would provide the Town buildings with newer and more reliable equipment and contribute largely to energy savings.
- Several measures were recommended to reduce the demand for manual operations and labor to add to the Town Department's savings.
- The measures recommended were expected, at a minimum, to maintain, and in most cases improve, occupant comfort.

The facilities owned and operated by the School Department are also public buildings and their operating costs are ultimately paid by taxpayers. Any energy efficiencies that can be obtained from various measures proposed for other Town buildings could therefore equally apply to public school facilities. JCI conducted a separate energy audit of Westerly Public Schools in 2011 with its results made available in the Westerly School District Preliminary Energy Audit Report. The results are summarized in Table 6-7 below:

Table 6-7 Energy Usage in Public School Buildings, 2011[1]

School Building	Electric			Heating Oil			Natural Gas		
	kWh	$/kWh	MBTU/ sf/yr	Gallons	$/gal	MBTU/ sf/yr	Thm	$/thm	MBTU/ sf/yr
Bradford[2]	176,060	0.15	18.34	0		0	13,153	1.55	40.14
Babcock Hall	409,561	0.15	10.68	0		0	60,686	1.60	46.37
Dunn's Corners	*968,720*	*0.15*	*60.00*	0		0	4,222	2.81	7.66
Springbrook	274,305	0.15	21.54	0		0	20,304	1.54	46.71
State Street	217,820	0.14	17.39	0		0	43,248	1.55	101.14
Tower Street[3]	205,240	0.14	18.04	0		0	39,299	1.53	101.23
Westerly Middle	1,497,800	0.13	32.98	0		0	47,967	1.56	30.95
Ward Building	1,359,140	0.13	20.62	1,954.83	1.98	1.2	67,547	1.55	30.02

Source: Westerly School District Preliminary Energy Audit Report

[1] Italicized text indicates assumed number or basis on assumed number from JCI's experience working on similar projects.

[2] Bradford Elementary School closed in 2017 and its ownership by the School Department was relinquished to the Town in 2019.

[3] Tower Street Elementary School closed in 2009.

From the audit, 19 energy conservation measures (ECMs) were formed and recommended for Westerly Public Schools. The major findings of the schools' audit were comparable to non-school municipal buildings. The Town recommends that the School Department use all necessary measures to ensure energy efficient operations.

Subsection 6.179.1 – Evaluation of Energy Conservation Measures

In consideration of the findings made at that time, the JCI audit recommended the following energy saving improvements for Town buildings:

- Retrofit most existing T8 and T12 lamp fixtures with Super T8 lamps and replace standard power ballasts with low power electronic ballast
- Retrofit exterior lighting (Metal Halides and High-Pressure Sodium) with Induction/LED lights that have higher efficiency and longer life expectancy
- Add occupancy sensors to turn off lighting in storage rooms, mechanical rooms, and offices when unoccupied
- Install caulking, weather-stripping and seal roof-wall joints to prevent air infiltration and improve insulating properties
- Replace existing windows with energy efficient windows that cut solar heat gain, provide more insulation, and reduce infiltration
- Adjust scheduling of the air handling equipment, fan-coil units, and unit ventilators to set back to a lower temperature during unoccupied hours
- Replace existing boilers that are near the end of their useful life with high efficiency condensing boilers that provide increased reliability and significant energy savings
- Replace all existing steam traps (including Float and Thermostatic, Thermostatic and bucket types) with new steam traps to decrease losses in the heating system
- Install new insulation to decrease heat loss on all existing steam, hot water and domestic hot-water piping not already insulated.
- Add computer management software that will automatically power down the school computers during unoccupied/low usage hours
- Replace existing high flow fixtures with new low flow toilets, low flow urinals, faucet aerators, and low flow shower heads
- Repair dampers, controls, motors, air handling units, and exhaust fans that are non-functioning
- Provide new controls to optimize compressor and evaporator operation

Subsection 6.~~9~~17.2 – Anticipated Energy Savings

Projected energy savings for Town facilities, excluding public schools, are presented in Table 6-~~8~~9 and would total 5,524 kWh of electricity and 1,556 MBTUs of thermal energy per year. This reduction in energy consumption would result in a reduction in total of carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions that would be otherwise equivalent to burning 1,140 barrels of oil or heating 45 homes for one year. Emissions of CO_2 have been implicated as a causative factor in the current pattern of global climate change.

To allow a comparison between buildings, an Energy Use Index (EUI) was also calculated by JCI for each municipal building. The EUI is calculated by converting annual consumption of all fuels to BTUs and then dividing that value by the area of the building (in this case, gross square footage).

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Table 6-8 Energy Savings from Implementation of Recommended ECMs

Municipal Building	Electrical Energy Usage		Thermal Energy Usage		EUI Total	
	Before (kWh/yr)	After (kWh/yr)	Before (MBTU/yr)	After (MBTU/yr)	Before	After
Adult Day Center	21,409	15,330	511	453	42	36
Animal Control	136,857	133,550	533	367	155	128
Armory	11,778	8,865	555	389	35	25
Beach Building #2	888	575	0	0	0	0
Bus Garage	0	0	157	114	22	16
DPW Highway	97,000	89,571	484	368	53	44
Landfill #2	19,575	14,051	0	0	8	6
Police Station	665,900	639,449	831	841	73	71
Senior Center	128,960	89,844	856	703	90	70
Town Hall	297,620	256,146	1,480	821	94	64
WWTF	2,275,525	2,263,242	2,164	1,743	276	263
Water Dept. Building #1	791,900	782,760	757	718	232	227
Water Dept. Building #2	482,750	479,976	406	350	699	677
Water Dept. Building #3	18,519	18,421	8	7	172	168

Source: Town of Westerly Detailed Energy Audit Report, 2012

According to JCI estimates, application of the 11 recommended energy conservation measures to the Town buildings would cost an estimated $1,463,649 and would yield an annual savings of $69,650. With anticipated utility rebates and verification costs, the payback period for the 11 recommended energy savings was estimated at 24 years.

Subsection 6.179.3 – Recommended Energy Conservation Measures

In January 2016, less than five years after the JCI audits, the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources and National Grid contracted with CHA Consulting on behalf of Westerly and other municipalities in the State to assist in Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank (RIIB) applications. In Westerly, this included completing Technical Energy Audit Reports for the police station and the Town Hall.

The audit report for the police station recommended three energy conservation measures:

- heating, venting, and air conditioning (HVAC) control improvements,
- replacement of high-intensity discharge (HID) lighting with light-emitting diode (LED) lighting, and
- replacement of fluorescent lighting with LED lighting.

These improvements were projected to cost approximately $185,000 and result in an annual energy savings of 299,954 kWh of energy. The amount equated to $33,746 in annual savings and an estimated payback of 5.5 years.

The audit report for the Town Hall recommended five energy conservation measures:

- Installation of attic insulation,
- Improvements to the domestic hot water (DHW) system,
- Replacing the dual temperature pump motor replacements with variable frequency drive pumps,
- Exterior lighting replacement, and
- General building lighting replacement.

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These energy conservation measures were predicted to cost approximately $249,000 and would save 73,803 kWh of electricity and 1,330 therms (or 133,000,000BTUs) of natural gas. The total annual savings would be $10,187 and would be paid back after 24.4 years.

Westerly is now proceeding to prioritize energy conservation measures and actively seeks funding from the State for low-interest financing for energy improvements. Recently, Westerly successfully acquired and converted its streetlights to LED and installed solar panels on the DPW headquarters facility. The Town has also completed the following energy improvements recommended by CHA Consulting in the past decade:

- New exterior and interior LED lighting and a new HVAC control system were installed at Westerly Police Station.
- New exterior LED lighting, insulation, and hot water heater were installed at Westerly Town Hall. A control system allowing Public Works staff to access building systems via a front-end host computer to optimize space conditions and maximize energy savings was also installed.
- New exterior and interior LED lighting and roof-mounted solar panels were installed at the Public Works facility on Larry Hirsch Lane. All remaining electric and pneumatic thermostats were also replaced by programmable thermostats with set points for active (daytime) and non-active (nighttime) hours.
- All streetlights were converted to LED lighting.
- All existing boilers nearing their end of useful life in public facilities were replaced with high efficiency boilers that provide greater reliability and energy efficiency.

Several other measures were implemented to reduce the demand for manual operations and labor to add to the Town Department's savings. ~~and t~~The Town, with assistance from an energy consultant to be determined, will also draft a Strategic Energy Plan in accordance with RIIB requirements for funding. The consultant will additionally advise the Town on the goals, policies, and action items of the Comprehensive Plan related to energy and assist with reviews of requests for proposals (RFPs), design-build solutions, and similar items.

Subsection 6.17~~9~~.4 – Carbon Emissions Reduction

Reducing the Town's carbon footprint has been a policy of the Town for over a decade and, as recently mentioned, is an important step towards avoiding the most severe global climate projections. The Town must consider greater fuel efficiency in purchases of municipal vehicles and consider the carbon footprint of products procured by municipal and school operations as a matter of course when selecting vendors. Reducing energy demands through such measures as the use of EnergyStar© efficient appliances in all Town installations also reduces CO_2 emissions and decreases the size of the Town's carbon footprint. Ensuring that, as part of the development process for any new public facility, the result will be certifiable through the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) building rating system, will also help to diminish the Town's role in increasing climate-related risks.

Local food production shortens food transport distances, reducing energy usage and carbon emissions. ~~and s~~Such initiatives as the Westerly-Pawcatuck Farmers Market, CSA, farm share, and farm-to-table programs have also increased the amount of locally grown food that is sold within the Town. The land trusts in Westerly have preserved hundreds of forested acres that absorb carbon, and Westerly has strongly supported the Farm, Forest, and Open Space Act tax reduction plan, which is typically applicable to managed forests. These land preservation efforts in Westerly have also, whether intentional or unplanned, reduced the maximum buildout population in the Town, which reduces energy demand for infrastructure and potential commuting to jobs elsewhere in Rhode Island, Connecticut, or beyond. Maintaining land as open space also reduces the mileage of roadways and power lines needed to be maintained, further contributing to a lower long-term total energy usage in the community. While comparatively small in impact, many residents also heat their homes, or supplement home heat, with wood rather than fossil fuels during colder months.

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Chapter 7
INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY

This chapter contains a written inventory of existing and forecasted infrastructural needs for the public, including potable water, stormwater management, sanitary sewer system, telecommunications, and energy. Components of the municipality's infrastructure are encompassed within the following mapped figures:

- Figure Groundwater (INF-M1) identifies community and non-community wellhead protection areas (portions of aquifers through which groundwater moves to a public community or non-community well), groundwater reservoirs (significant subsurface water sources defined by RIDEM), and groundwater recharge areas (areas intended to be protected drinking water sources). RIDEM's Office of Water Resources contributed to the datasets used to produce this map.
- Figure Sewer and Water Infrastructure (INF-M2) shows the ~~service areas for~~ location of the existing public water and public sewer ~~service~~infrastructure. The datasets were contributed by RIDEM, RIDOT, and the United States Geological Survey (USGS). ~~These infrastructural components are concentrated primarily within the State-identified USB in *Land Use 2025* that appears on~~ Figure ~~Water Service Area~~State Designated Urban Services Boundary (INF-M3)~~.~~ identifies the existing Westerly Urban Services Boundary and sewered area, as well as the proposed extension of the Westerly Urban Services Boundary and sewered area, within the State Designated Urban Services Boundary.

Section 7.1 – Potable Water System

Westerly's potable water system is a self-sustaining enterprise fund of the Town that is operated by DPW's Utilities Division. The system serves most of Westerly as well as a portion of the ~~v~~Village of Pawcatuck in the neighboring Town of Stonington, Connecticut, with a small portion (about six percent) of Westerly properties are dependent on private wells due to the remote location of some residences. As a water supplier obtaining, transporting, purchasing, or selling more than 50 million gallons of water per year, the Town is required by the State to adopt a Water Supply System Management Plan (WSSMP). Westerly's most recent WSSMP was prepared in May 2013 which described existing conditions and included a long-range program to improve the quality and quantity of water. Water studies are conducted every five years and their results are submitted to RIDOH and the Connecticut Department of Public Health for evaluation. The quality of the water is generally considered good and the Town previously implemented an updated and improved disinfection system.

Westerly's public water supply comes from groundwater accessed via wells. The Town undertook a comprehensive assessment of its groundwater resources that concluded its existing sites in White Rock, Bradford, and Aguntaug Swamp provided sufficient capacity. To enhance the Town's reserves, however, a new well (Bradford IV) was developed and became operational in October 2013. To ensure the functionality of these wells, the Town also continues to acquire land for aquifer protection. As required by the State of Rhode Island, the 2013 WSSMP ~~that~~ includes procedures for addressing sustained periods of dry weather.

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The water distribution system in Westerly is well over a century old. Extensive investments have been and continue to be made to extend the system's useful life. Improvement projects recently completed include the construction of the new one million-gallon storage tank in Winnapaug, permitting of a new pump station and well in Bradford, design of a new main extension on Westerly-Bradford Road, the Tower Street tank rehabilitation, and a new transmission main in White Rock. A major pipeline rehabilitation study is also in progress.

Subsection 7.1.1 – Potable Water Source

Westerly's drinking water is obtained from wells ~~which~~ that tap into the Bradford and Westerly groundwater reservoirs and pump from 12 supply wells at seven pumping stations. Generators are provided at several wells to ensure a constant supply of water is available in the event of a power failure. Pumping stations each have their own chemical feed pits where potassium hydroxide (KOH) is added to the raw water to adjust the pH (a measurement of how acidic or basic water is). Water is stored in six storage facilities before being distributed for use. Generally, the quality of the water is good; however, in three separate past incidents (in 1994, 1998, and 2000) the water became contaminated with fecal coliform, prompting the State to mandate some form of disinfection.

The Town successfully completed a pilot program for a Mixed-Oxidants (MIOX) disinfection system and transitioned to full implementation in autumn 2009. Westerly was the first town in Rhode Island authorized to conduct a year-long, full system test on water supply using the MIOX technology.

Subsection 7.1.2 – Potable Water Supply

The Town has undertaken a comprehensive assessment of its groundwater reserves. The conclusion has been that its existing sites at White Rock, Bradford II, Bradford III, and Aguntaug Swamp provide sufficient capacity. To further enhance the Town's reserves; however, Bradford IV was permitted in 2007 and became operational in October 2013 with a half-million gallons per day (mgd) capacity. The Town has implemented a program for hydraulic modeling which is used to ensure expected results are occurring within the water supply system. The volume of water the Town pumps into the system varies widely throughout the year due to seasonal requirements, residents, and visitors. As reported by the Utilities Division, the Town pumps three mgd from November to March and increases this volume to between four and six mgd from April to October due to the influx of seasonal residents and visitors.

The Town has actively acquired land for aquifer protection with the acquisition funded most notably through the RIWRB Grant program. As noted previously, Westerly also provides some water service to the Town of Stonington. While this has generally been a mutually beneficial arrangement, the level of future demand from Stonington is unknown and could possibly pose significant future implications. Westerly also owns water rights on land in the Town of North Stonington in Connecticut with proven water capacity of about one mgd. It would be important for the Town to preserve this critically important resource.

Subsection 7.1.3 – Drought Management

The State Planning Council adopted Rhode Island Water 2030 in 2012, which included a Drought Management Plan addressing drought mitigation to establish coordinated procedures for a State-wide response to severe drought episodes. It outlines the responsibility of the federal, State, and municipal governments and defines the roles each plays in response to long-term drought conditions.

The Drought Management Plan's policies, goals, and strategies should be viewed within the context of the four over-arching goals of the WSSMP, which seeks to ensure:

- Protection of public health, safety, and welfare
- Conservation of essential drinking water resources
- Reasonable allocation of water supply
- Support of essential and high priority water uses

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This study functions as the master plan for the water system, addressing adequacy of water supply, the water distribution system, conservation measures, watershed protection, capital improvements, and emergency preparedness. In the emergency operations management section of their WSSMPs, water suppliers are required to address drought contingencies and appropriate response. In addition, RIWRB regulations require that a WSSMP include an emergency component to assess system risks, including droughts, and response capabilities, and to describe a contingency plan for all foreseeable water supply emergencies.

Specific drought response activities described in the Town's WSSMP include procedures for the designation of a water supply alert followed by criteria and procedures for several drought phases including the following:

- Drought Watch/Advisory Phase
- Conservation Phase
- Expanded Restriction Phase

Subsection 7.1.4 – Distribution

Domestic water within the Westerly Water District is pumped through an extensive network of pipes totaling approximately 207 miles in length. Pipe sizes range from 1.25 to 20 inches and consist of multiple materials ranging from polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and ductile iron (recent use) to asbestos-cement and cast iron (historic use). In 2009, a 20-inch water main was constructed over a 2.6-mile distance from the White Rock pumping station to Granite Street due to a previous inability of the Town to access the full capacity of the White Rock wells. The improvement added two mgd (a 33% increase to capacity) to the distribution system capacity. There are just over 920 public hydrants located throughout Westerly and almost all have been replaced and upgraded over the past 30 years.

Improvements to the supply system are funded through the Town's Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which is a list of all known upcoming capital improvements within a projected five-year period. Improvement projects have historically included the construction of a new one-million-gallon Winnapaug Tank, the Winnapaug Tank site lead remediation, addition of a new pump station and well in Bradford, design of a new main extension on Westerly-Bradford Road, the Tower Street Tank rehabilitation and lead soil remediation, and the new White Rock Transmission Main. There was also a major pipeline evacuation study and hydraulic analysis completed by C&E Engineering Partners, Inc. in May 2009 to establish priorities for upgrading and establishing a long-term replacement schedule. Other completed projects have included:

- Exterior and interior painting of the Bradford tank in 2009
- A complete electrical upgrade and new standby gas generator for White Rock pump station 3 in May 2012
- Well redevelopment and inspections of wells 2B, 2D, 3, Bradford III, and Crandall in 2012
- Power washing of the Winnapaug and Bradford tanks in November 2013
- Well redevelopment and inspections of wells 1A, 1B, 1D, 2A, 2C, and Bradford II in 2013
- Masonry repairs to the Hinkley Hill tank's concrete structure in June 2014
- A new roof system for White Rock pump station 1 in September 2014
- Water main replacements on Bay Street, Oak Street, and Watch Hill Road
- Replaced 2,214 feet of water mains and 17 lead services
- Installed 800 feet of 8-inch water main to the Westerly Pee-Wee Football Complex and 16 new water services across the town
- Redeveloped wells 1A, 1B, 1D, 2A, 2C, and Bradford II
- Started a Lead Soil Removal project for properties surrounding the Tower Street Tank
- Contracted with GeoInsight to complete studies on the Bradford and White Rock aquifers
- Added 823 meters to the Radio Read System
- Repaired 77 water breaks
- Completed two rounds of Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR) Testing for EPA

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, the Utilities Division:

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- Replaced 6,400 feet of water mains
- Redeveloped #1D PS 1, #2D PS 3, Bradford III, and Crandall wells
- Completed two rounds of UCMR testing for EPA
- Participated with RIDOH in perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) testing and protocol developments

Future projects include installing approximately 400 feet of guardrail along White Rock Road adjacent to the open well field, along with monitoring well installation in locations prescribed in recent Aquifer protection studies. These projects were all designed to ensure Westerly has an ample supply of high-quality water into the future.

There are approximately 14,500 service connections to the Westerly water system currently. Every residential, commercial, industrial, and governmental service connection is metered, and bills are sent out based on the volume of water used. The budget for the water supply system is prepared to incorporate all operating costs and water rates are set to ensure users fully fund its operation.

Subsection 7.1.5 – Anticipated Future Demand

Table 7-1 below details the total water supply in relation to the existing supply and proposed average and maximum day system demands. It should be noted that the development of future projections assumed reasonable estimates for unaccounted-for water and would therefore, reflect the total amount of water supply needed (i.e. total pumping supply) to meet overall system demands.

Table 7-1 Available Water Summary

	Existing	Projected (2037)
Total Available Capacity	7.72 to 9.02	8.48 to 9.93
Average Day Demand (MGD)	3.33	3.83
Maximum Day Demand (MGD)	6.29	7.24

Source: WSSMP, 2013

The information presented above indicates that the Westerly water system's supply will remain adequate to meet existing and future demands for the planning horizon.

Section 7.2 – Wastewater Systems

Westerly, also through a self-sustaining enterprise fund, owns and operates a wastewater collection and treatment system that serves approximately 45% of the Town's properties. Of all residential properties, ±39% use public sewer and about ±61% use an individual OWTS. The Town has not itself extended sewer service in several years but has permitted some private developers to extended sewer lines in conjunction with completing their related development projects.

The wastewater in areas not serviced by sewers has been accommodated in many ways over time, including during time periods when minimal or no regulations existed. More recent systems have been installed under RIDEM regulations, including the Rules Establishing Minimum Standards Relating to Location, Design, Construction, and Maintenance of On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems.

The Westerly WWTF discharges effluent through a 24-inch diameter outfall pipe into the Pawcatuck River. The plant's discharge is regulated by RIDEM through the RIPDES program. Effluent standards are based on the water quality classification of the receiving water body (in this case, the Pawcatuck River) and are regulated by RIDEM's Water Quality Regulations. A Wastewater Facilities Plan was prepared for the Town in November 1998 and revised in December 1999 by BETA Engineering, Inc. (now BETA Group, Inc.). The plan addressed deficiencies within the existing sewer collection system and sewage treatment plant as well as any deficiencies or problems in areas of

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the community without public sewer. Recommended improvements to the Westerly WWTF and the existing collection system were completed in September 2008. Additionally, the Bradford pump station was replaced in 2011. In February 2019, the Town's WWTF received a Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant Excellence Award from EPA for its operations and maintenance.

Subsection 7.2.1 – Existing Sewer System Capacity

The Town of Westerly owns and operates a wastewater collection and treatment system that services approximately 45% of the Town with the remainder of development within the Town being served by individual wastewater treatment systems such as septic tanks with on-site infiltration. In terms of residential parcels only, 39% have connectivity to the public sewer system and 61% use individual septic systems. There are areas within the Westerly Sewer District to which sewer service has not been extended; these include residential developments in Avondale and Misquamicut, around Springbrook Elementary School, Apache Drive, Ledward Avenue, and Winnapaug Road. Westerly has one wastewater treatment plant that discharges effluent into the Pawcatuck River, as regulated by RIDEM, and went through a major upgrade in its biological nutrient removal capability in 2003. The plant is near the threshold of its treatment capacity. The Town is working to limit the amount of groundwater that infiltrates the system, which will help to reduce the amount of water currently being treated. The plant has been designed to allow for capacity increases with the installation of additional components.

The wastewater treatment plant was built in 1920 and has had modifications and upgrades made in the late 1950s, 1979, 1986, and1992. There was also a major upgrade in 2003 for biological nutrient removal and replacement of equipment dating from the 1970s.

The plant is currently designed to treat an average flow of 3.3 million gallons per day (mgd) and a peak hourly flow of 7.8 mgd. The plant is at 83.3% of capacity and averaged 2.75 mgd in fiscal year 2017-2018. The plant currently has capacity for all currently proposed and approved subdivisions within the sewer district, normal build-out within the district. The Town is also working to limit the amount of groundwater infiltration in the system. The Town has lined 33,929 linear feet of sewer piping to reduce infiltration into the sewer system.

There are nine active wastewater pumping stations in the Town. The four major sewer pump stations (one on Beach Street, one on Margin Street, and two on Canal Street) have all been rebuilt since 2003 and each is capable of handling current incoming flows. The plant property has room to expand to about 4.4 mgd if the Town decides to extend the sewer district boundaries.

Subsection 7.2.2 – On-site Wastewater Treatment Systems

OWTSs (formerly Individual Sewage Disposal Systems [ISDSs]) are likely to continue playing an important role in the future of wastewater treatment in Westerly due to the limitations of the public sewer system. Unfortunately, negligence, improper operation, and/or unsatisfactory site conditions can lead to the failure of an OWTS, a potential threat to the health of surrounding residents due to the contamination of groundwater and other environmental damage. One future consideration is whether the Town should consider extending sewers to areas not currently served. This has been a contentious issue in the community and one which will require considerable informed dialogue among all interested parties. The impacts of climate change and sea level rise may direct future decision making.

In addition to the regulations referenced above, wastewater systems are also subject to RIDEM regulations for groundwater quality, titled Rules and Regulations for Groundwater Quality, and are not regulated by the Town. These State regulations are designed to protect and restore groundwater resources for drinking water purposes and other beneficial uses and to assure protection of public health, welfare, and the environment. BETA Engineering, Inc. prepared an On-site Wastewater Management Plan (OWMP) in January 2005 (revised in May 2007) which addresses many of the questions regarding OWTS. Additional information on this issue is available from URI's New England On-Site Wastewater Training Program.

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OWTSs can have a direct impact on the integrity of both groundwater and surface water sources. Improperly functioning systems can contribute pollutants to the Town's water resources. Therefore, proper septic system function and maintenance is of long-term importance for Westerly. For a description on the relationship between OWTSs and water quality, visit the Natural Resources chapter. Advances in relatively inexpensive treatment systems and effluent fields have made formerly undevelopable properties now potentially developable and properties of limited development capacity now capable of supporting greater development. Additionally, recent changes in state law have mandated the use of these technologies in vulnerable coastal areas.

Section 7.3 – Stormwater System

The inability for impervious surfaces to absorb precipitation results in over-land stormwater flow which facilitates contaminant runoff and requires proper drainage to mitigate the potential for flooding. The Town of Westerly owns and maintains a stormwater drainage system with most of the system flowing into the Pawcatuck River or surrounding wetlands. There are no combined sewer overflow (CSO) connections between the sanitary sewer and stormwater drainage system. Most of the system flows by gravity with only a single pump station. There are several new developments in the Town ~~which~~ that have created their own stormwater retention basins or ponds to comply with newer stormwater regulations. After a private developer constructs a stormwater basin associated with a public improvement, the Town may assume the responsibility for maintenance upon construction to Town design standards and Town acceptance. The Town has an ongoing maintenance program for the stormwater system that includes cleaning catch basins and pipes and replacing aging pipes and structures. In 2007, the Town received approval from RICRMC to install a municipal storm drainage collection and treatment system serving the Misquamicut area. This system is operational and successfully addressing serious flooding problems which occur during moderate and heavy rainfall.

EPA stormwater pollution regulations are applied locally through RIDEM. Communities ~~which~~ that operate Small MS4, as defined by population of the community, were required in 2003 to obtain permits and establish storm water management programs ~~which~~ that reduce the quantity of pollutants able to enter stormwater drainage systems during storm events. The permit, or Notice of Intent (NOI), must include a~~n~~ Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP) ~~which~~ that describes the BMPs for each of the following six measures:

- Public Education and Outreach,
- Public Involvement/Participation,
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination,
- Construction Site Runoff Control,
- Post Construction Runoff Control, and
- Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping.

The Town of Westerly is currently revising the SWMP to comply with the 2019 regulations. Parallel to this, the Town is also in the process of mapping its stormwater system.

Another stormwater pollution related study is the Phase II Storm Water Management Plan prepared by Fuss & O'Neill, Inc., in March 2004. The Town has received a grant from NEIWPCC to establish BMPs which would reduce or eliminate known contaminants and establish recommendations to correct problems where high concentrations have been detected and documented. In this process, recommendations will be made to update the 2004 Phase II SWMP.

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Section 7.4 – Electricity and Natural Gas

Both natural gas and electrical lines in Westerly are currently maintained, owned, and provided by National Grid. An engineering study was prepared for the Watch Hill Conservancy for the relocation of utility lines below ground along a one-mile segment of Bay Street. The project ultimately became a public-private partnership involving the Town and was successfully completed in summer 2019. There is interest among some residents to bury existing utility lines in other areas, though the high cost of doing so restricts the Town's ability without partners, and some private developments have incorporated subsurface utilities.

In April 2015, the Town Council was presented a preliminary estimated savings by the Partnership for Rhode Island Streetlight Management (PRISM) of over $5 million after a 20-year period for the municipal purchase and collaborative maintenance of its approximately 3,100 streetlights. PRISM, parented by the Washington County Regional Planning Council, estimated the savings based on filings by the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission (RIPUC) and previous experience in other communities in comparison to the Town's annual payment mandated by the rate tariff set by RIPUC.

As of April 2016, following its joining of PRISM, the Town received an updated estimate of between $147,477 and $395,600 in savings annually, which would be between $2.9 and $7.9 million in savings after 20 years. The estimate was dependent upon the purchase of streetlights and their conversion from conventional lighting to light emitting diodes (LED), which the Town has since completed.

While natural gas service is available in some portions of Town, the main transmission line is not adequate to provide Town-wide service. There is a major gate station along one of the large pipelines ~~which~~that run~~s~~ parallel with many of the major roads. These lines can be extended to meet demand as needed. There are approximately 4,000 gas service connections in Westerly and National Grid performs improvements and upgrades to their distribution system within the Town routinely.

Section 7.5 – Solar, Wind, and other Alternative Energy

Along with the intent of conserving energy use, Westerly has also undertaken efforts to seek means of alternative energy generation. In 2010, EA Engineering was contracted by the Town to conduct a study, preliminary site screening, and pre-feasibility assessment for the possible establishment of a municipal wind energy system. The consultant was selected by the Alternate Energy Study Committee (AESC), a public body established in the same year with an additional task of drafting an updated ordinance for wind energy systems supporting both commercial and residential properties. While Westerly recognizes the benefits of wind energy as an alternative energy source for the State, Westerly has turned away from establishing municipal wind energy in the Town following a variety of investigations.

At the AESC's request, EA Engineering screened 151 Town-owned properties and conducted a site analysis for each location's suitability. The analysis eliminated sites due to multiple factors (including extensive forest, wetlands, properties near high density residential areas, and local flight paths) and ultimately identified 12 potentially feasible Town-owned properties. The AESC then sought and received $25,000 funding from the predecessor of the ~~$25,000~~ Rhode Island Commerce Corporation (Commerce RI) to evaluate and~~the sites. Based largely on funding constraints, the AESC chose to~~ do a detailed study of the seven most promising sites.~~:~~

- ~~Site 1 – 78 White Rock Road (neighboring the White Rock facility)~~
- ~~Site 2 – 8 Springbrook Road (Westerly Public Schools' bus refueling station)~~
- ~~Site 3 – 49 White Rock Road (Gingerella Sports Complex)~~
- ~~Site 4 – 20 White Rock Road (neighboring White Rock Pump Station I)~~
- ~~Site 5 – Bradford Road (the Bradford Preserve)~~
- ~~Site 6 – 39 Westerly Bradford Road (the Transfer Station)~~
- ~~Site 7 – Atlantic Avenue~~

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While the project did not move forward, the second-highest ranked site, the transfer station on Larry Hirsch Lane, was ultimately selected the most advantageous due to the adequacy of the wind resource and it being well-buffered from residential neighborhoods as well as its favorable location relative to the (now former) National Grid substation and airport runways.

In November 2011, the Town approved a contract with rTerra of Middletown, Rhode Island to conduct a feasibility study on the former landfill site as a possible location for installing a municipal solar energy system. rTerra determined the landfill cover was not adequate to support a solar energy installation and was then directed to conduct a second feasibility study on undeveloped land abutting the White Rock facility to the north. The site was determined to be suitable and rTerra subsequently filed a combined Master Plan-Preliminary Plan application for a one (1) megawatt, 5.5-acre, 4,000 panel solar photovoltaic system installation on the site in April 2012. During public review the following month, the Planning Board denied the Master Plan's approval due to concerns regarding the appropriateness of that use on the property. Additional factors, including a need for additional screening, issues regarding wind-load requirements, and dissatisfaction with financial terms, resulted in the abandonment of the project shortly thereafter.

~~While these attempts to establish a renewable energy system as a primary use on an undeveloped property have not moved forward, the Town has had success in smaller-scale approaches. A notable example of this was the installation of roof-mounted solar panels on the DPW headquarters facility.~~

Subsection 7.5.1 – Net Metering

In March 2016, the Town issued a request for proposals (RFP) seeking to procure up to 100% of the nearly 4.1 million kWh of electricity used by the Town annually by contracting with a private renewable energy developer to provide electricity through the development of one or more renewable energy projects. The purpose of the RFP was to select a qualified third-party renewable energy developer who would successfully plan, permit, design, install, finance, operate, and maintain one or more renewable energy projects at no cost to the Town to build, commission, operate, and maintain (potentially excluding routine grounds maintenance).

The RFP was issued in recognition of the benefits and value of renewable energy projects as a means of stabilizing and reducing long-term electricity costs, reducing the Town's carbon footprint and its correlating impact on the environment and community and incorporating local economic development opportunities. The State has made significant improvements in the number and types of incentives and related policies which support the development of new renewable energy projects, particularly those which benefit municipalities through public-private partnerships. Therefore, renewable energy technologies which will be considered in the future are those consistent with RIGL §39-26-5:

- Solar PV or concentrated solar power
- Wind power
- Hydropower
- Biomass (in compliance with RIGL§39-26-2[6])
- Fuel cells (using resources listed above)
- Waste-to-energy (in compliance with RIGL §39-26-2[6])
- Geothermal

The location and/or site of the proposed projects is not limited to the Town but a description of the proposed net metering (including virtual net metering through a municipal collaborative) must be provided. The 2010 net metering RFP was Westerly's first major effort towards locally generated renewable energy.

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Subsection 7.5.2 – Future Alternative Energy

While these attempts to establish a renewable energy system as a primary use on an undeveloped property have not moved forward, the Town has had success in smaller-scale approaches. A notable example of this was the installation of roof-mounted solar panels on the DPW headquarters facility. ~~Westerly has made great strides in studying the feasibility of large-scale wind and solar power.~~ The community ~~also~~ has ~~a significant~~the potential to meet future energy needs through adoption of small-scale energy generation. Westerly's sea breezes and sunlight duration are well-suited for wind and solar generation. The Town adopted regulations for wind energy systems in September 2006 and solar energy systems in March 2019. Along with regulating the types of wind and solar energy systems allowed, they also established standards for their design, installation, operation, and maintenance to protect public health and safety and to preserve historic, natural, and cultural resources.

Solar energy is currently being pursued as an alternative energy source in the Town. There have been several sites permitted through zoning in the last calendar year. Residents can additionally meet some or all of their energy needs through the installation of small-scale systems and both private and public facilities can benefit from roof-mounted ~~wind and~~ solar generators. ~~The Town adopt regulations for wind energy systems in September 2006 and solar energy systems in March 2019. Along with regulating the types of wind and solar energy systems allowed, they also established standards for their design, installation, operation, and maintenance to protect public health and safety and to preserve historic, natural, and cultural resources.~~

Recent technological advances in the generation of electricity using tidal currents to turn turbines, sometimes built into bridge and breakwater structures, show considerable promise for future energy generation. In the future, tidal turbines associated with breachways and coastal waters may offer a way for Westerly and neighboring towns to generate electricity without the adverse effects associated with combustion. Similarly, new advances in the use of wave action to generate energy indicate there may be a potential for the Town to take advantage of its coastal location to help meet future energy needs. While these technologies are mostly in the prototyping phase in the United States, they are already in use in some foreign states for power generation. Westerly should monitor these technological advances and remain open to alternative approaches to power generation as they are further developed.

Section 7.6 – Communications

There are several telecommunications providers in Westerly whose services include land line telephones, cellular and mobile phones, and networking, including internet access. This is a dynamic market and new suppliers continue to be established at a rapid rate. Although no official survey has been conducted, cellular coverage is reported to be generally good except for some areas lacking service dependent upon the individual provider and location. Most telecommunications infrastructure in Westerly is overhead and physical telephone lines are owned by Verizon Communications, Inc. The Town also seeks to establish a Municipal Broadband Infrastructure Upgrade and Expansion project, which would develop a fiber optic infrastructure (transmitting information as light impulses through optical fibers) enabling the ability to receive fiber optic connection across the Town. Development of 5G (Fifth Generation Wireless) networks in the Town is also a consideration for the future. Next-generation integrated street poles containing small cell 5G/4G electronics may help meet coverage in urban areas. Especially given the current climate of virtual learning and remote working, faster internet speeds and reliable communications are essential for economic growth and development in the Town.

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Section 7.7 – Electric Vehicles and Electric Charging Stations

Vehicles, vehicle maintenance, and fuel costs are an unavoidable budget expense for the Town of Westerly. For the State of Rhode Island, transportation is the most carbon-intense energy sector, accounting for approximately 40% of State-wide energy expenditures and 36% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. While transportation is still heavily dependent on petroleum-based fuels, the adoption of electric vehicles and other clean transportation has obtained popular support.

The installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations can provide many benefits within the Town. Access to EV charging for the public, customers, visitors, and employees is not merely a convenience. Embracing EV is a very visible commitment to environmental sustainability, protection of natural and cultural resources, and quality economic development. According to Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER), there are four (4) electric vehicle charging stations in Westerly – Ocean House in Watch Hill, Misquamicut State Beach, the Weekapaug Inn, and 249 Post Road. Bay Street and other roadways with on-street parking, such as those in Downtown, may also be ideal locations for installing electric charging stations to encourage the use of electric and hybrid vehicles.

The Electrify RI Electric Vehicle Charging Station Program launched on November 1, 2019. This $1.4m initiative is supported by the State of Rhode Island's settlement of a lawsuit with Volkswagen Diesel and is administered by the OER. The Program provides financial incentives to install EV charging stations at Rhode Island workplaces, multi-unit dwellings, non-profits, and government-owned properties. Incentives are available for both DC Fast Charge and Level II stations at publicly-accessible and non-public (e.g. a workplace gated parking lot) locations. The Town of Westerly will pursue opportunities to provide publicly accessible electric charging stations and local government workplace charging through the Electrify RI Program.

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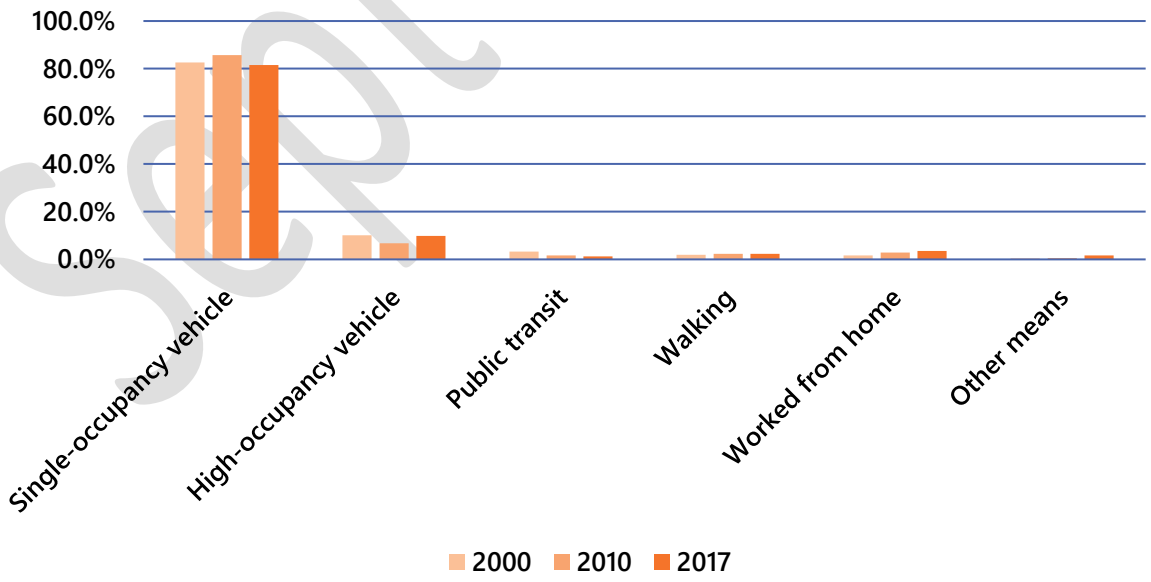
Chapter 8
TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

A transportation network has a major impact on the community it serves – defining community character, influencing affordability, and affecting public health. More fundamentally, though, a transportation network determines the ability for people and goods to enter, exit, and circulate within a defined place. This chapter covers the various elements contributing to Westerly's transportation network, including roadways, sidewalks and crosswalks, bike routes, air and rail services, boat launches and ramps, and public transit routes. Figure Transportation (TRANS-M1) offers a visual overview of these components through datasets contributed to and made available through RIGIS.

Section 8.1 – Roadways and Motor Vehicles

Like most communities in the US, the early development of the transportation network in Westerly considered several modes of travel including walking, biking, and public transit. Through the twentieth century, this original system was greatly transformed by the introduction and popularity of automobiles. As shown in Figure 8-1 below, the popularity of and reliance on motor vehicles has continued into the new millennium:

Figure 8-1 Means of Transportation to Work for Westerly Workers 16 years and over, 2000-2017



Source: 2000 US Census, 2006-2010 ACS five-year estimates, and 2013-2017 ACS five-year estimates

The largest single commuter group in Westerly is composed of those driving a motor vehicle alone to work. As such, Westerly has seen motor vehicle ownership increase steadily since at least 2000. In addition to the dominance

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of driving to and from work, the prevalence of automobiles is further indicated by the number of households with access to vehicles. Approximately 94% of households had access to a vehicle at the time of the 2000 Census, with 16.7% of households having three or more vehicles available. According to the 2013-2017 ACS five-year estimates, 93.3% of households had access to a vehicle and 19.2% had three or more vehicles available. This indicated that the number of total vehicles within the Town has increased since the turn of the century. Today, it is supported by a 219.7-mile network of public roadways maintained by RIDOT and DPW's Highways Division.

Subsection 8.1.1 – Functional Classification of Roadways

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) classifies roadways according to the function they provide and there are three major classifications of roadways and highways:

- Locals account for most roadways and limit vehicle traffic mobility to slower travelling speeds
- Collectors provide links between local roads and arterials as well as between different areas of a community, allowing vehicles comparatively greater accessibility and mobility than local roads; collectors are sub-classified as either major or minor
- Arterials provide the highest level of vehicle mobility due to high travelling speeds and larger traffic capacity meant for long distance, uninterrupted travel; arterials are also sub-classified as either principal (including interstate, other freeways and expressways, and other principal arterials) or minor

In Rhode Island, the functional classification system is prepared and maintained by the Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program in cooperation with RIDOT. There are 43.4 miles of arterials (6.2 miles of non-interstate freeways and expressways,10.5 miles of principal arterial roads, and 26.7 miles of minor arterials) in Westerly, as well as 18.8 miles of collectors (16.3 miles of major collectors and 2.5 miles of minor collectors), and 157.5 miles of local roads. Roadways are also further categorized locally as urban or rural, generally corresponding with the urban services boundary and the local history of development.

Route 78, also known as Westerly Bypass, serves as the longest arterial in Westerly and connects Connecticut to Westerly's beaches without disruption to local traffic in Downtown Westerly. Nearly all of Route 1, including Broad Street, Franklin Street, Granite Street, and Post Road, is a principal arterial which provides service through the central-southern portion of the Town and generally runs east-west. The scenic alternative to Route 1, Route 1A, also traverses the Town from east to west. It encompasses Beach Street, Elm Street, Shore Road, and Watch Hill Road and provides a collector route for traffic to and from coastal neighborhoods. Other arterials in Westerly include Route 91 (Oak Street and Westerly-Bradford Road) and Route 216 (Church Street and portions of Ross Hill Road). Route 3 begins on Grove Avenue as a principal arterial and continues to High Street and Ashaway Road.

Subsection 8.1.2 – Traffic Volumes and Safety

Input received from public meetings and focus group sessions held in conjunction with the preparation of this Plan indicated there are areas of Town ~~which~~ that have long-standing concerns for residents regarding vehicle congestion. This issue peaks in the summer months when the year-round traffic volume is combined with the presence of seasonal residents and daily influxes of visitors. Significant congestion is particularly concentrated along those roadways providing access to the shoreline, such as Airport Road, Atlantic Avenue, Beach Street, Route 78, and Winnapaug Road. During summer weekends and holidays, Community Service Officers of WPD are commonly stationed at the intersections of Airport Road and Winnapaug Road and Atlantic Avenue and Winnapaug Road to direct and manage traffic. Notable year-round instances of traffic congestion may also be generated from Downtown Westerly as well as the community's five schools. New commercial developments can also pose additional traffic volume concerns.

Traffic congestion issues were previously addressed State-wide through a Congestion Management System (CMS) resulting from a 1997 plan. Routes 1 and 78 were both noted as part of the CMS and Route 1 was identified as experiencing congestion at that time. It was additionally forecasted to experience continued congestion as far out

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as 2025. Recommendations for improvements along Route 1 at that time included intersection improvements, signalization improvements, and access management. Some of these recommendations were realized near the Charlestown-Westerly line, with the installation of several traffic lights and turning lanes to enhance both traffic flow and safety. More recently, the Congestion Management Process (CMP) included as Appendix A to *Transportation 2037* identified Westerly's segments of both Route 1 and Route 78 as experiencing congestion in 2012, with congestion projected to continue until at least 2035.

From FY2017 to FY2018, decreases in the number of motor vehicle verbal warnings (20.4%), motor vehicle citations (20.5%), and vehicle collisions (11.3%) in Westerly were recorded by WPD. Since 2010, at least one fatality has occurred each year except in 2015 and 2018. WPD has initiated a traffic calming program managed by the Community Policing Division, which is forwarded all traffic complaints and concerns and then develops a plan to address the issue. Directed patrol, speed signs, electronic message signs, and public outreach are all utilized to achieve the desired results.



These improvements have been beneficial (as noted in the statistics above). Between 2014 and 2018, the number of individuals driving while intoxicated ranged between 79 and 116 and decreases were reported in the numbers of motor vehicle stops (21.9%) and erratic drivers (15.1%). Route 1 is a roadway which has experienced numerous collisions. The impact of autonomous vehicles (AVs) and other advances in vehicle technology is difficult to project. As of the date of this Plan's publication, the State government was one of fourteen with no legislation enacted or executive order issued for the appropriate, widespread use of fully-AV technology State-wide.

Subsection 8.1.3 – Motor Vehicle Parking

While most of the parking supply throughout Westerly is adequate for current and expected future needs, Watch Hill, Misquamicut, Shelter Harbor, and Weekapaug Fire Districts, ~~and~~ as well as Historic Downtown Westerly are areas of concern regarding the availability of parking.

It can currently be estimated that Downtown Westerly is able to accommodate approximately 1,300 vehicles at any given time. This capacity is possible through a combination of on-street spaces, off-street parking lots, and one three-floor parking garage. The largest suppliers of parking are Ocean Community YMCA on High Street (a private parking lot reserved for members, though the YMCA has historically opened the lot to the public for downtown events), ~~the Town of Westerly, and~~ the Washington Trust Company on Broad Street (a two story garage, again privately owned and largely reserved for employees or clientele of the Washington Trust Bank), another lot owned by the Washington Trust Company on Main Street (leased by local restaurants for patrons and overflow for Bank employees), and the Town of Westerly parking lot off Union Street (with reserved parking for Town Hall staff, visitors to Town Hall, and Christ Church). A noteworthy amount of the off-street parking supply, however, is restricted for specific purposes. Following a successful petition in 2015 by the DBA and other downtown businesses, time restrictions for on-street parking and municipal lots were changed from a two-hour limit in place 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays and Saturdays to a three-hour limit in place 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. every day.

Exploring opportunities for shuttle bus service, alternative parking facilities, developing traffic management, calming and parking plans and encouraging the growing trend of walking and biking, as well as use of taxi services, are some strategies which may assist in decreasing the demand for parking downtown. One taxi service, Wright's Oceanview Taxi, operated out of Westerly as of mid-2019 while additional taxi services and other ride-sharing and networking services also operated in town at limited activity. Shared parking arrangements between day and evening uses and identifying properties which could provide additional parking would help to alleviate parking congestion. AVs may also come to alter current parking perceptions and configurations.

Parking in Misquamicut is an issue in the summer. While both Town beaches and Misquamicut State Beach provide on-site parking (the State beach alone has about 2,500 vehicle spaces), beachgoers often seek out parking at privately owned lots along Atlantic Avenue's commercial areas either due to cost or other lots being at full capacity. The primary cause for parking to be an issue in Watch Hill, like Downtown, is due to restrictions imposed on privately owned off-street lots. The area may thus benefit from the same strategies suggested for Downtown in the paragraph above.

Parking is an important concern for many residents and visitors, particularly in the downtown and coastal areas. Strategies to decrease demand for on-street parking in downtown may include encouraging walking and bicycling and exploring opportunities for shuttle bus service and/or other alternative parking initiatives. As the downtown continues to be re-energized and its most vital areas increase in popularity, people may be more willing to walk longer distances – particularly when opportunities exist for engagement with passive activities such as window shopping along the way. Parking shortages in other areas of Town also include Misquamicut and Watch Hill.

Section 8.2 – Public Transit Service

Public transportation is provided by the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) throughout Rhode Island, including Westerly. Local service is limited with connections to Narragansett, Providence, Richmond, and South Kingstown through three different routes. Two operate each weekday and none operate on weekends. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant service is also available by request. Westerly Station serves as the Park-n-Ride lot for the route to Providence.

The first of the three (3) routes is the Westerly/Hope Valley Rural Ride Flex (301), which regularly operates each Friday and was established in November 2015. The 301 Flex route originates twice at Westerly Railroad Station and includes several stops in Westerly before continuing into neighboring Hopkinton and nearby Richmond. One additional trip originating in Richmond and terminating at Westerly Station is also scheduled. Table 8-2 overviews the stops included on this route, which takes a projected total of 78 minutes between Westerly Station and the Stilson Road/Stop & Shop stop in Richmond and averaged about eight riders each day the service was run in FY2019.

Table 8-2 Westerly/Hope Valley Rural Ride Flex Stops, 2016

Municipality	Stop	Street(s)
Westerly	Westerly Station	Railroad Avenue
	Downtown Westerly	Intersection of Broad/High/Main
	Westerly Senior Center	State Street
	Franklin Shopping Plaza	Franklin Street (Route 1)
	Wal-Mart	Post Road (Route 1)
	Village/Main	Intersection of North Main/Village
Hopkinton	Main/Champlin	Intersection of Champlin/Main
	Saugatucket Springs	Intersection of Clarke Falls/Main
	Wood River Health	Main Street
	Main/Spring	Intersection of Main/Spring
Richmond	Stilson/Stop & Shop	Stilson Road

Source: RIPTA, 2019

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Westerly Flex (204) is a more regular route, operating Mondays through Fridays. As shown in Table 8-3, the 204 route originates at Westerly Station and terminates at Salt Pond Plaza in Narragansett, where riders may connect to the West Bay (14), University of Rhode Island (URI) / Galilee (66) and Narragansett Flex (203) routes. A total of 18,294 rides were taken in FY2019.

Table 8-3 Westerly Flex Stops

Municipality	Stop	Street(s)
Westerly	Westerly Station	Railroad Avenue
	Wal-Mart	Post Road (Route 1)
South Kingstown	Stedman Center	Tower Hill Road
Narragansett	Salt Pond Plaza	Point Judith Road

Source: RIPTA, 2019

RIPTA also operates a commuter-oriented bus route, the Westerly Park & Ride (95x), between Westerly and Providence, the State's capital and largest city. All buses used are equipped with bike racks to support multi-modal travel. Three morning trips, spaced 30 minutes apart, originate at Westerly Station and make several stops (overviewed in Table 8-4) along Interstate 95 before terminating at the Turk's Head building in Providence for a 75-minute projected duration. Three return trips are then operated in the late afternoon, with the same projected time duration. In FY2019, 21,810 total rides were taken on the 95x route.

Table 8-4 Westerly Park & Ride Stops

Municipality	Stop	Street(s)
Westerly	Westerly Station	Railroad Avenue
Hopkinton	Ashaway Park & Ride	Main Street
Richmond	Wyoming Park & Ride	Kingstown Road
West Greenwich	Exit 7|West Greenwich	New London Turnpike
Providence	Exchange Terrace	Exchange Terrace
	RI Convention Center	Sabin Street
	Empire & Westminster	Intersection of Empire/Westminster
	Weybosset & Eddy	Intersection of Eddy/Weybosset
	Turk's Head	Weybosset Street

Source: RIPTA, 2019

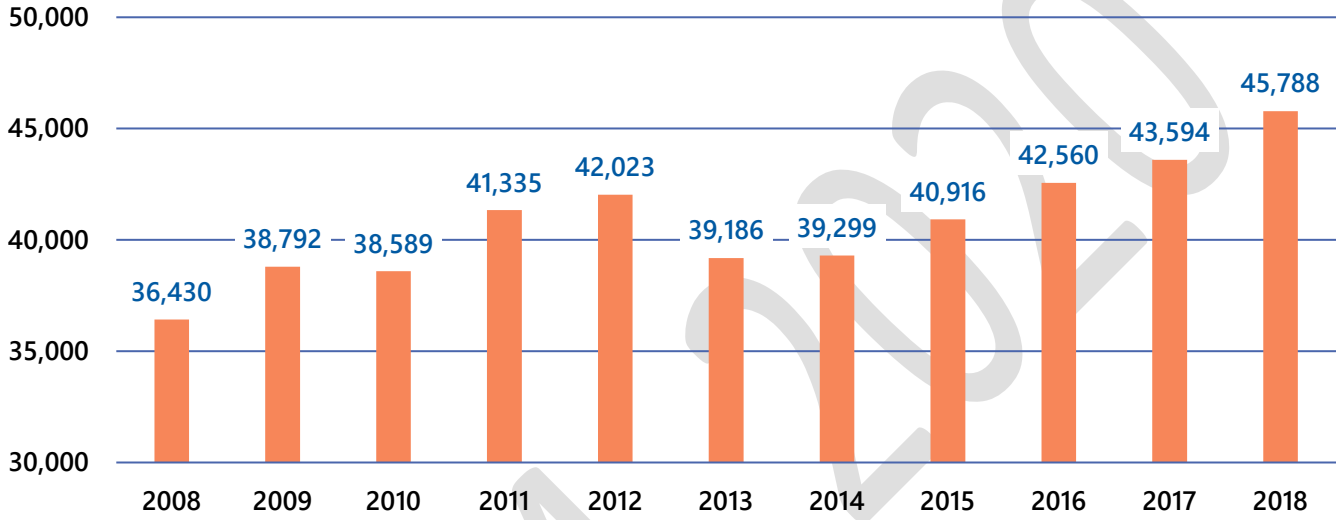
RIPTA also provides ADA-compliant paratransit through the RIde program. Reservations need to be made at least one day in advance and rides are made available through either a van or taxicab. In addition to the RIde program, van services are offered through Westerly Senior Citizens Center and Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center. Through the strong economic and social connections between Downtown Westerly and the village of Pawcatuck in Stonington, Connect, many residents of the Town also are in proximity to Southeast Area Transit (SEAT) service, jointly governed by the Town of Stonington and seven other municipalities in New London County.

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Section 8.3 – Rail Services

Westerly Station is located on Railroad Avenue between Downtown and the North End neighborhood. Built in 1912, it is today a stop on the most-heavily travelled railway line in the United States – the Northeast Corridor (NEC). Amtrak operates two services on the NEC, Northeast Regional and Acela Express and both offer passengers direct stops in major cities including Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington. Figure 8-2 below shows the numbers of unlinked (defined as separating roundtrips [including layovers]) Amtrak ridership departing from and arriving at Westerly Station from 2008 to 2016.

Figure 8-2 Amtrak Ridership at Westerly Station, 2008-2018



Source: Rail Passenger Association Ridership Statistics, 2008-2018

As presented above, ridership at Westerly Station increased by 16.5% in the five-year period between 2014 and 2018. This rate was significantly higher than the ridership growth at Kingston Station (10.6%) in South Kingstown and slightly more than ridership at Providence Station (15.2%) as well. This level of activity is generally positive when considering the far greater number of trains which stop at both Kingston (169.5 thousand riders in 2018) and Providence (758.4 thousand riders in 2018) stations. Further, it may provide exploratory evidence to support a widely held interest in the Town for the extension of Shore Line East (SLE) and the Providence line commuter rail services.

Two ridership projections have been conducted for Westerly Station regarding commuter rail service -one in 1995, by Brown University and one in 2010 based on 2000 US Census data. A new study should take place to assess any changes in ridership and to provide new projections and any significant growth in potential ridership.

SLE service currently exists between New London and New Haven, Connecticut, where riders may then connect to New York via the New Haven Line of Metro-North Railroad, operated by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA). Growth in SLE ridership and public advocacy at a public hearing encouraged the Connecticut Public Transportation Commission to recommend service expansion to Westerly as soon as feasible in its 2015 Annual Report and Recommendations but noted the expansion was not the primary focus for ConnDOT.

RIDOT has also identified Westerly Station as suitable for commuter rail service due to its walkability and surrounding high density. Land Use 2025, Transportation 2035 and the Rhode Island State Rail Plan 2014 cite Westerly as a community to consider for future expansion. The rail line between New London and North Kingstown is the only segment of the NEC between Boston and New York currently not served by commuter rail. An extension

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would allow Westerly to be a major commuter rail connection between New York and Boston, two of the country's largest metropolitan regions.

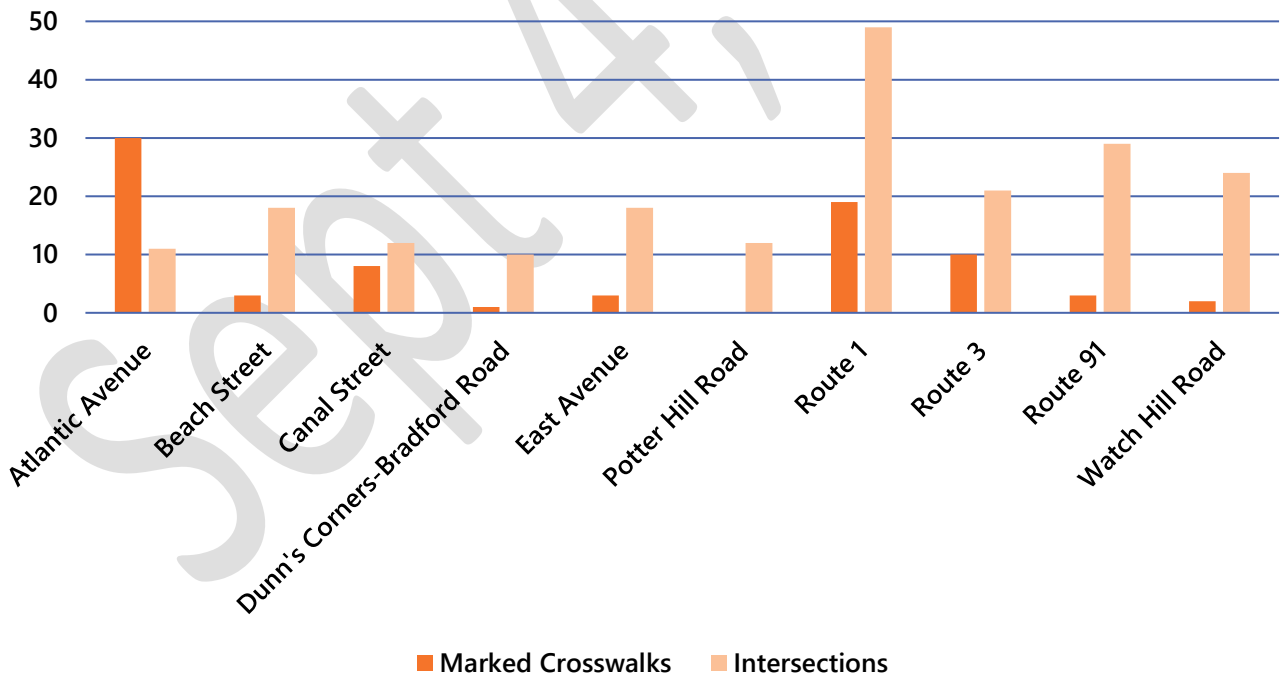
Westerly Station has also been an important component of the downtown revitalization project and in 2018, it was determined by *Evaluating the Potential for Transit-Oriented Development in Rhode Island,* prepared in partnership between Roger Williams University, GrowSmart RI, and Housing Works RI, to demonstrate some of the initial characteristics needed for transit-oriented development (TOD). Numerous community assets were identified within a half-mile radius of the train station and the population density within the same area equaled just under seven people per acre.

Westerly Station is one of the contributing elements to the historic fabric of the Historic Downtown District and an important connection to the transportation network in the region. In 2018, the waiting area of the Westerly Station was leased to the Artist Cooperative to create a temporary art gallery in the space. The Artist Cooperative intends to remain at the Westerly Station until renovations of the United Theater are completed, at which point the gallery plans to move back to its location adjacent to the Theater. Continued renovations of the Westerly Station, including construction of an ADA accessible tunnel that is currently underway, will provide improved ridership and accessibility for all members of the public.

Section 8.4 – Pedestrians and Walkability

Pedestrian infrastructure in Westerly, while located throughout the community, is less extensive than its vehicular counterpart. Figure 8-3 below is evidential of this, showing a comparison between the number of marked crosswalks and vehicle intersections on major roadways throughout the Town.

Figure 8-3 Marked Crosswalks and Intersections on Select Roadways, 2019



Source: Town of Westerly, 2019

While motor vehicle operation is the dominant means of travel in Town, walking is steadily becoming a more viable option for residents as they seek a more active lifestyle and the Town seeks to build upon its strong pedestrian infrastructure established prior to the automobile. Downtown, Misquamicut and Watch Hill areas are

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arguably the most walkable neighborhoods in Westerly due to their historical development and roles within the community.

These places share many of the characteristics often cited as contributing to a walkable environment, including a mix or concentration of residential and commercial uses, greater population density, and human scale development practices (such as shorter setbacks, hidden parking lots, and aesthetic features) which together allow shorter walking distances and more attractive areas to observe while walking.

The Town has adopted several ordinances to better ensure the safety of those who walk. Arguably the most prominent of these is the required removal of all snow and ice from sidewalks within the first twenty-four hours following the end of any accumulation of winter precipitation. In 2018, 109 code violations were issued concerning inadequate sidewalk clearing by adjacent property owners.

Several streets have recently received or will be receiving improvements to their pedestrian infrastructure or streetscaping in the near future through municipal funds. These include Chestnut Street, Greenman Avenue, Main Street, Pearl Street, and Spray Rock Road. Improvements to several more streets in the North End and Granite Hill will be funded through the federal CDBG program and are expected to occur in spring 2020.

In May 2017, the Town was awarded a Main Street Rhode Island Streetscape Improvement program to rehabilitate deteriorated sidewalks and install crosswalk access points compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements along High Street, the main roadway in Downtown Westerly. One result from the funding award has been the elimination of parking spaces in advance of marked crosswalks to provide motor vehicle operators greater visibility of pedestrians.

The Bay Street Streetscape Improvements project consisted of reconstruction of the roadway and sidewalks for the entirety of Bay Street and approximately half of Larkin Road, both located in the village of Watch Hill. The proposed sidewalk improvements were compliant with the American Disabilities Act requirements and were funded by the State Transportation Improvements Program. Work began in autumn 2018 and completed in summer 2019. The Town also made further sidewalk and roadway improvements along the remainder of Larkin Road and on a portion of Bluff Avenue in 2019. Surface and emergency access improvements are also planned for a public right-of-way located along Bluff Avenue that provides walking access to the East Beach.

The Town has contracted with an engineering consultant for design of ADA-compliant sidewalks along an approximately one-mile long portion of Church Street (State Route 216), where sidewalks are in deteriorating condition. The Town also intends to proceed with an annual program for sidewalk saw cutting that will address sidewalk tripping hazards throughout the Town.

Public safety for sidewalk users remains a common concern, however. Many sidewalks are narrow and in poor condition and the clearing of snow and ice accumulation in the winter months is often insufficient. Continued enforcement of sidewalk clearing and funding for the maintenance and expansion of pedestrian infrastructure will be important aspects contributing to Westerly's progress towards being a more walkable community.

Section 8.5 – Cyclists and Bikeability

In an effort to promote biking (which also works to improve public health, reduce traffic congestion and subsequent air pollution) as a more viable travel option, the Town has endorsed a regional approach to the construction and financing of a safe bike network that serves the recreational and transportation needs of residents and visitors. Rhode Island's small size allows Westerly residents convenient access to the State's eight off-street recreational bike paths, including the 7.8-mile William C. O'Neill Bike Path (more commonly known as the South County Bike Path) that extends from South Kingstown to Narragansett.

Westerly currently shares a goal with South Kingstown and neighboring Charlestown for establishing a continuous bikeway which would become part of RIDOT's bike network and may serve, in part, as a segment of an off-street East Coast Greenway. This greenway is a planned bike interstate connecting Florida and Maine. Previously, cross-community collaboration occurred with a Shoreline Bikeway Report submitted by the Town of Charlestown to

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RIDOT as part of the 2003-2005 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which proposed a signed bike route along four roadways between Charlestown and Westerly. Following this and other efforts, RIDOT established a signed on-street bike route system across southern Rhode Island which includes several roadways in the eastern portion of Westerly – Bradford Road, Church Street, Dunn's Corners-Bradford Road, Langworthy Road, and Ross Hill Road.

The 2007 *Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Study and Development: Shoreline Bikeway* prepared for Westerly and Charlestown noted a recommendation not to designate the segment of the proposed Shoreline Bikeway – Post Road (Route 1) from the Charlestown-Westerly municipal boundary to the intersection of Post Road and Shore Road and from that intersection to the intersection of Shore Road and Winnapaug Road – through the installation of signage. Experienced bicyclists had indicated they would not likely make efficient use of indirect paths and driving statistics collected for the study presented safety concerns. More recently however, Westerly's Bike Path Study Committee was working to establish a bike path generally aligning with Shore Road, Atlantic Avenue, Weekapaug Road and Winnapaug Road. A Feasibility Study for the Misquamicut Bike Path was completed in May 2018, shortly after re-establishing the study committee as the Bike Path and Cycling Advisory Commission.

In 2018, the Westerly Downtown Bike Loop was also established which involved the installation of posted signage and surface markings on several roadways in Downtown Westerly and its immediate surroundings. Bike parking is also available in Downtown Westerly through five bike racks: –one at Westerly Library, one at Wilcox Park's northwest entrance, one at the Ocean Community YMCA, one at Westerly Station, and one at Remy's Cycle. Possible locations for expanding the availability of bike parking include Westerly Town Hall, the US Post Office, and other key sites.

In 2017, the League ranked Rhode Island 22nd out of all states for its bicycle friendliness. Among five categories, the State earned its highest rank for education and encouragement (21st) while its lowest rank was in evaluation and planning (33rd). Overall, this was an improvement from the 2015 report in which Rhode Island ranked 26th.

Section 8.6 – Transportation Improvements

The Engineering Division has been proactive in designing and implementing programs for the rehabilitation and maintenance of local bridges, roadways, and sidewalks. There is a comprehensive pavement management plan that determines specifically where money is to be used for resurfacing of roadways and there also is bond money available for roadway reconstruction, roadway drainage, and overall improvements to Town roads.

Transportation projects which seek federal funding are required to be included in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which is adopted by the State Planning Council at a required minimum of every four years.

The STIP is proposed to cover federal fiscal years 2017 through 2025, to align the asset management-based system to which the State is currently shifting. There were 21 projects in Westerly requested for inclusion in the FFY2017-2025 STIP. Of these, 10 were designated for funding in an April 2016 status report:

- Cross Street (Main Street to Granite Street) pavement capital program (FY 2017)
- Granite Quarry Bridge (Route 78 West bypass at Route 3) capital project (FY 2017)
- Guardrail and median improvements to Route 1 (FY 2017)
- High Street Railroad Bridge capital project (FY 2017)
- Safe Routes to School infrastructure improvements for State Street Elementary School (FY 2017)
- Potter Hill Road (High Street to Hopkinton town line) pavement capital program (FY 2019)
- Bay Street streetscape improvements transportation alternatives program (FY 2019)
- Route 78 (Route 1 to Connecticut state line) pavement capital program (FY 2022)
- Route 1 (Robin Hollow Road to Prosser Terrace) pavement capital program (FY 2023)
- Route 1 (Tower Street to Route 78) pavement capital program (FY 2024)

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Several of these projects, as well as other transportation projects, have been completed as of the date of this Plan, and other projects are still being considered. The reconstruction of the entirety of Cross Street was completed in 2017 and the Friendship Street reconstruction as completed in 2019. The Bay Street Streetscape Improvements project began construction in Fall 2018 and was completed in 2019. This project was the result of a public-private partnership between the Town, the Watch Hill Fire District, and the non-profit organization the Watch Hill Conservancy. Resurfacing of several sections of Canal Street were completed over the course of several years preceding this Plan, the most recent of which was resurfacing of Upper Canal Street (White Rock Road to Potter Hill Road) in autumn 2019. Other projects being considered by the Town include reconstruction of School Street, road reconstruction and drainage improvements on Pasadena Avenue and Breen Road, a feasibility study for reconstruction of Atlantic Avenue, ~~and resurfacing of Canal Street,~~ and various sidewalk and drainage improvements on ~~Town-owned~~local roads. ~~The Bay Street Streetscape Improvements project began construction in Fall 2018 and is anticipated for completion by July of 2019. Friendship Street reconstruction was completed in 2019.~~ An application was submitted in 2020 for a RIDEM Climate Resilience Grant to raise Atlantic Avenue along Winnapaug Pond in anticipation of sea level rise; however, the project was not selected as one of recipients of the grant. An engineering study began in Spring 2019 for reconstruction of School Street, with bidding scheduled for fall 2020, ~~which is~~and construction is anticipated ~~for construction~~to begin in spring 2021~~0~~. The Town is currently developing a proposal with an on-call engineering consultant for evaluation and redesign of Breen Road and Pasadena Avenue. Initial drainage improvements in this area were implemented in August 2020. The Town recently completed drainage, paving and sidewalk repair on Broad Street, Main Street, High Street, and Canal Street.

The Engineering Division implements programs for the rehabilitation and maintenance of local roads and bridges which support the community's transportation network, including a Guardrail Replacement Program, Pavement Management Program, Street Improvement Program and Sidewalk Replacement Program. The Pavement Management Program was established to determine specifically where funding is to be used for performing resurfacing of roadways. A $15 million bond referendum was approved in November 2018 and will be used to facilitate improvements to roads across the Town between 2019 and 2021, including the reconstruction of Boombridge Road bridge. The Town is working in coordination with the State of Connecticut, the State of Rhode Island, and the Town of North Stonington for reconstruction of the Boombridge Road bridge, ~~with bidding scheduled for autumn 2019~~which began in March 2020 and is anticipated to be completed by November 2020.

Section 8.7 – Water and Waterfront Access

The Pawcatuck River (which serves as the southernmost portion of the Connecticut-Rhode Island state boundary) and its estuary are under the jurisdiction of an RICRMC SAMP adopted in July 1992 and developed to provide a consistent, ecologically-based policy framework for decisions involving the use of the estuary's resources.

The State provides access to the Pawcatuck River at four locations in Westerly, two of which are hand carry boat launches and two are boat ramps, which include Bradford Landing, Post Office Lane (near Potter Hill Dam), Main Street RIDEM ramp, and an RICRMC designated right-of-way located off Avondale Road.

The Town has made many efforts to further connect its residents and visitors with its waters including the acquisition of 27 acres of tidal marsh adjoining Winnapaug Pond on the north side of Atlantic Avenue and a parcel on Main Street next to the sewer treatment plant. A third acquisition was a seven-acre parcel adjacent to land leased by the Town of Westerly to Westerly Marina. During the marina's operating season, the boats of Town residents can be launched there under that lease agreement between the marina's owners and the Town of Westerly. In addition to river access, there is a boat ramp across from the DPW facility on Larry Hirsch Lane to access Chapman Pond.

In October 2018, the Town Council adopted the Westerly Harbor Management Plan after several years in development. The Harbor Management Plan is intended to help manage the growing activity within the Pawcatuck River, its estuary, and Little Narragansett Bay and identified a total of 224 docks, 781 slips, and 336 moorings in the Town's waters. Revisions to the Harbor Management Plan were subsequently adopted in October 2019

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following the adoption of a Chapter 86 to the Code of Ordinances, the hiring of an interim Assistant Harbor Master, and implementation of a mooring registration program.

Section 8.8 – Air Service

"WST" (Westerly State Airport), located on Airport Road, is operated by the Rhode Island Airport Corporation (RIAC) and serves corporate aviation and air passenger services, as well as aircraft maintenance and repair. In addition to general aviation which includes recreational flight, corporate and business flight and flight instruction, WST serves as the mainland base for the only regularly scheduled commercial flights to New Shoreham, RI (a/k/a Block Island) via New England Airlines. WST is classified as a commercial service airport due to annual passenger numbers falling between 2,500 and 10,000 passengers.

The Rhode Island Airport System Plan (State Guide Plan Element 640) was adopted by the State in September 2011 to address the six existing State airports within Rhode Island. The Plan defined Westerly Airport's future role as being general aviation/commercial service and projected total operations (the number of takeoffs and landings) to be between 18,500 and 29,700 in 2021, depending on the projection used for future growth. An issue regarding the future of the airport is the fact that the airport is largely surrounded by existing commercial and residential development which presents safety concerns. The plan proposed six goals for recommended facility and service improvements—obtaining easements and clearing obstructions, updating the Master Plan, improving security fencing and lighting, constructing an operations/maintenance building, providing T-hanger storage and providing corporate hanger storage—were included in the plan along with a separate goal to maintain commercial service between Westerly and Block Island. A sample survey of pilots using WST indicated the three primary needs at the airport included a restaurant, ground transportation, and a precision/instrument approach.

The 2013 Rhode Island Airport Land Use Compatibility Guidebook cited 20,528 operations at WST in 2009—a 33.3% increase from the 2006 estimate (15,400)—and noted passenger boardings in certain years may be in excess of 10,000. Most private aircraft activity occurs throughout the summer months due to the seasonal increase in residents and visitors. ~~The most recent economic impact for the airport was $16 million in 2016.~~

In 2016, RIAC published the Aviation System Plan Update which was intended to provide more recent data on airport operations than the 2011 plan. According to the 2016 update, operations at WST had dropped from 2009 to 11,518 in 2014. Based upon the 2014-2040 Terminal Area Forecast (number of operations forecast by 2035 would be 12,525, an increase of 8.7% over a period of 21 years.

The community will continue to decide the scope and scale of airport operations, but RIAC has the responsibility to ensure the safety of airport operation. The preservation of safe airspace is a necessary component of safe airports. Safe airports require land be designed and set aside for the approach, landing, and taking-off of aircraft as defined by the Federal Aviation Administration and Code of Federal Regulations in Title 14 CFR Part 77 – "Safe, Efficient Use and Preservation of the Navigable Airspace". The objective is to develop effective and realistic land-use compatibility guidelines that satisfy local zoning ordinances and protects the safe and effective operation of the airport. Successful land-use compatibility with the airport requires continuous communication and coordination between the Town of Westerly, the FAA and RIAC.

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Chapter 9
NATURAL HAZARDS AND RESILIENCY

Like the comprehensive plans of all other Rhode Island communities, this Plan must include an identification of areas that could be vulnerable to the effects of sea-level rise, flooding, storm damage, drought, and other natural hazards. Goals, policies, and implementation techniques must also identify what would help to avoid or minimize the effects that natural hazards pose to lives, infrastructure, and property.

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of how various natural hazards, such as flooding, high wind, and changes in the climate, can impact Westerly. In this chapter, natural hazards will be ranked in order of priority based on their frequency of occurrence and area affected. The information provided also attempts to put the likelihood of an event occurring into perspective; recognizing that, although some events may occur more often, their impacts are less severe than events that may occur infrequently.

Identifying the risks and vulnerabilities of Westerly to natural hazards is the primary factor in determining how to allocate finite resources and to determine what actions are feasible and appropriate to address those vulnerabilities. The analysis involves identifying all the hazards individually to determine the degree of threat that is posed by each. Addressing these risks and vulnerabilities proactively will reduce the community's exposure to natural hazard impacts. Hazard mitigation is a sustained action taken to permanently reduce or eliminate longer term risks from the effects of natural hazards to vulnerable elements of the environment, people, and property. Resiliency is a fundamental concept within hazard mitigation strategies, being the ability to both withstand and quickly recover from the hazards listed below in Table 9-1 and the ensuing narrative.

Section 9.1 – Overview of Natural Hazards

The Town's Hazard Mitigation Committee reviewed many hazards impacting the local natural environment as part of the local Hazard Mitigation Plan update completed in early 2018. The hazards presented and analyzed in this Plan are included for a variety of reasons, including the historical prevalence and repetition of past events, the projected impacts of future events produced by models such as Sea, Lake, and Overland Surges from Hurricanes (SLOSH) and Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), and their inclusion in the Rhode Island State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP).

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Table 9-1 Hazards

Wind-related	Winter-related	Flood-related	Geological-related	Others
Storm surge	Snow	Riverine flooding	Earthquakes	Wildfires
Tropical cyclones	Ice	Flash flooding		Droughts
Tornadoes	Extreme Cold	Coastal flooding		Extreme heat
High winds		Climate change and sea level rise		
		Coastal erosion		
		Dam breaches		

Source: SHMP, 2014

As presented above, many of the most prevalent hazards are storm events. The Town experienced historic flooding in spring 2010, Hurricane Irene in summer 2011, Superstorm Sandy in autumn 2012, and blizzards in the winters of 2011 and 2013. These storms all caused significant damage in Westerly.

Figures **Natural Hazards and Mitigation (HAZ-M1)** and **Storm Hazards (HAZ-M2)** depict several components of the Town's infrastructure, including dams, electric transmission lines, public facilities, and other facilities related to emergency management and sewer pumping stations. It also shows these components in relation to those areas of the community which are at greatest risk of impact from a natural hazard, primarily a major storm or flooding event. These areas include the coastline of Block Island Sound, the banks of the Pawcatuck River, and the wetlands within the center of the Town. Most of the information presented was made available by RIGIS datasets contributed by several departments of the State, URI, FEMA, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

Subsection 9.1.1 – Storm Surge and Wind

Due to Westerly's oceanfront location, many of its developed areas are susceptible to water and wind-related damage. Areas that have historically suffered damage from storms include Misquamicut State Beach and Westerly's two municipal beaches, all located directly on the coast. Additionally, Watch Hill, located in the southwestern portion of the Town, is situated on an exposed peninsula bounded by the open ocean and Little Narragansett Bay. A particularly susceptible area of Watch Hill is the Napatree Point Conservation Area, which is a sandy spit that extends westward from Watch Hill's commercial zone. Other areas prone to wind damage include Shelter Harbor and Weekapaug.



Hurricane and gale force winds and storm surges can also cover roadways with debris, making them impassable to conventional vehicles and presenting potentially dangerous situations for any person requiring immediate medical attention. This susceptibility was presented in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy when a large segment of Atlantic Avenue, located on a spit between Block Island Sound and Winnapaug Pond, was buried under four feet of sand.

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Subsection 9.1.2 – Tropical Cyclones

Tropical cyclones, a general term for tropical storms and hurricanes, are low pressure systems that usually form over the tropics. The Rhode Island shoreline faces south, so storms passing to the west raise the highest storm surges for the State. In addition, Little Narragansett Bay can funnel storm surge northward into the narrower Pawcatuck River, which subsequently amplifies the surge height.

Notable impact areas in Westerly include the coastal barrier beaches that separate the salt ponds from Block Island Sound and lands directly abutting the salt ponds to the north. These areas are all within the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), meaning they are subject to inundation by a 100-year flood event. In some areas, they are also subject to storm-induced waves and their associated velocity wave action. Other areas of concern include low-lying portions of Watch Hill and properties along Shore Road.

The most recent hurricane to strike Westerly and much of the eastern seaboard was Superstorm Sandy in October 2012. Despite being reduced to tropical storm status by the time it reached the northeastern US, Rhode Island and, most notably, Westerly still experienced a great deal of damage from the storm. Rhode Island sought and received a federal emergency declaration from the federal government prior to the storm to ensure access to federal assistance would be immediately available for the recovery effort. In its aftermath, Sandy left over 122,000 people in Rhode Island without power and required $39.4 million in support from federal disaster relief programs. Other notable tropical cyclones to impact the Town were the Great September Gale of 1815, the 1938 New England Hurricane, Hurricane Carol in 1954, and Hurricane Bob in 1991.

Subsection 9.1.3 – Tornadoes

A tornado is a violently rotating column of air in contact with and extending between a cloud and the surface of the earth that is considered a low frequency, high-impact event. Winds in most tornadoes do not normally surpass 100 miles per hour but can exceed 250 miles per hour in the most extreme and least frequent cases. Tornado paths typically range between 300 feet and about 2.5 miles but, in the most extreme cases, can extend over 50 miles.

The central part of the US between Texas and North Dakota is informally known as Tornado Alley for its high tornado activity in comparison to the nation. Rhode Island falls well outside of this region, but tornadoes may still occur locally at any time. This situation may be more dangerous than for Tornado Alley because Rhode Island residents do not expect severe tornadoes and are ill-prepared to respond to such an event. One tornado was recorded in Rhode Island by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)'s 2018 Annual Severe Weather Report Summary.

Subsection 9.1.4 – Thunderstorms

Thunderstorms are formed when moisture combines with rapidly rising unstable warm air and can occur at any time but are most common during summer afternoons and evenings in conjunction with a weather front. The National Weather Service (NWS) classifies a thunderstorm as severe if it produces hail at least one inch in diameter, winds of at least 58 miles per hour, or a tornado. NOAA reports that there are approximately 100,000 thunderstorms annually in the US, including about 10,000 severe thunderstorms.

In general, buildings are more likely to be struck by lightning if they are located on high ground or if they have tall protrusions, such as steeples or poles. Electrical-based utilities are also vulnerable to direct lightning strike and damage to them has the potential to cause power outages for businesses, residents, and critical facilities.

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Subsection 9.1.5 – Winter-related Hazards

Westerly's location on Rhode Island's south coast results in it having a maritime climate that is cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter than much of New England. As a result, Westerly experiences less snowfall than landlocked communities to its north and west. Nevertheless, Westerly is still susceptible to winter weather because of its geography.

The most common winter-related hazard is heavy snow, which is generally defined as an accumulation of more than six (6) inches in less than 24 hours. In these events, communities can be brought to a standstill by inhibiting travel and by causing collapses of trees, utility lines, and buildings due to the weight of the snow. In certain cases, snowfall may combine with sustained winds to also result in reduced visibility. When winds of 35 miles per hour or greater are sustained for at least three (3) hours and cause visibility to be less than a quarter-mile, NOAA identifies the event as a blizzard.

Another serious winter-related hazard is ice, which occurs when a critical nucleus of molecules crystallizes in liquid water in response to a freezing temperature and expands to encompass nearly the entire body, regardless of size. A very thin layer of liquid sometimes remains on the ice's surface and usually forms as the air temperature rises, resulting in the slippery condition that causes it to be hazardous. Ice storm occurs when freezing rain results in an accumulation of at least a quarter-inch of ice and it has similar, but often more severe, results compared to heavy snow due to the more concentrated weight of the ice.

Subsection 9.1.6 – Flood-related Hazards

NFIP's primary definition for flooding is:

> "A general and temporary condition of partial or complete inundation of 2 or more acres of normally dry land area or of 2 or more properties (at least 1 of which is the policyholder's property) from: overflow of inland or tidal waters; or unusual and rapid accumulation or runoff of surface waters from any source; or mudflow"

By their very nature, floodplains are the low, flat, periodically flooded lands adjacent to rivers, lakes, and other water bodies and watercourses that are subject to geomorphic and hydrologic processes. It is only during and after major flood events that the connections between a river and its floodplain becomes more apparent. These areas form a complex physical and biological system that not only supports a variety of natural resources but also provides natural flood and erosion control. In addition, the floodplain represents a natural filtering system, with water percolating back into the ground and replenishing groundwater.

In Westerly, the SFHA generally identifies the areas most susceptible to flooding and is composed of several flood zones that offer greater detail on the potential hazards. Zone VE designates areas along coasts subject to inundation by a 100-year flood event in addition to storm-induced velocity wave action. Zone V designates areas along coastline subject to inundation by the 100-year flood events and additional hazards associated with storm-induced waves; however, unlike Zone VE, no base flood elevations are described. Both Zones V and VE require mandatory flood insurance for federally backed mortgages. The coastal barrier beaches that separate the local salt pond region from Block Island Sound and the land directly abutting the salt ponds to the north are designated Zone VE. Other Zone VE locations include Napatree Point, Watch Hill Point, and portions of Weekapaug to the south of Wawaloam Drive and Ninigret Avenue. Along with the damages caused to the built environment, coastal flooding can also cause coastal erosion.

Zones A, AE, AH and AO are also subject to inundation by a 100-year flood event and require mandatory flood insurance for federally backed mortgages but are also susceptible to shallow flooding from ponding and/or sloping terrain. Zones A and AE are more expansive than Zones V and VE and include low-lying portions of Watch Hill, portions of Misquamicut located inland from the coastline, and many properties along the Pawcatuck River, Chapman Pond, and Aguntaug Swamp. Zone X exists outside the SFHA and is designated for areas subject to flooding by severe, concentrated rainfall coupled with poor drainage systems. A shaded Zone X indicates land

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subject to a 500-year flood event and unshaded Zone X indicates lands only subject to flooding in instances less frequent than a 500-year flood event.

In 1982, the United States adopted the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA) to establish the John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS). The CBRS is comprised of several coastal areas along the Atlantic (including the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea) and Great Lakes shorelines of the United States - designated in the CBRS as units - which buffer inland areas from storm surge and heavy winds and often support significant bio-diversity. While private development is allowed in CBRS units, federal expenditures and federal financial assistance for developments are prohibited. This means, among other restrictions, a structure built in a CBRS unit is ineligible for flood insurance and cannot receive funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for elevation, rehabilitation, or reconstruction. The CBRS units existing in the Town of Westerly are available for you to view as maps on the Town's website.

While riverine flooding in Westerly is a typical by-product of coastal storms, it can also occur during late winter and early spring due to melting snow and ice as well as seasonal precipitation. These flood conditions are exacerbated by constrictions of movement that can occur when large amounts of ice, debris, and/or fallen trees are obstructed by bridge piles or low-lying bridge decks. There are 12 bridges crossing the Pawcatuck River that connect Westerly to surrounding municipalities and several date to a period before structures were designed to pass floodwaters from a 100-year storm event. The collapse of one of these structures could cause a downstream catastrophe if a flood surge, laden with debris and other objects, piled up against a dam or bridge abutments further down the River. The Stillmanville Bridge is a structure vulnerable to flood events and debris buildup, for example, because of the location of the supporting columns within the middle of the River.

In 1978, 1982, and 2010, heavy rains caused the Pawcatuck River to overflow its banks. In the 2010 event, the floodwaters lasted nearly two weeks (from March 30 to April 12) and caused road blockages along Canal Street and on Route 91 between Downtown Westerly and Bradford. Marine transport became the sole mode of travel for residents living to the east of Chapman Pond to schools, grocery stores, and pharmacies. The flooding along Canal Street caused a complete failure of the National Grid substation (now demolished) that disabled power throughout the North End. Several businesses experienced severe water damage and one commercial building suffered a partial collapse. In Westerly, a mile of train track was inundated, resulting in a suspension of Amtrak services.

Subsection 9.1.7 – Coastal Erosion

Coastal zones are dynamic areas constantly undergoing change in response to multiple, simultaneously occurring factors including sea level rise (SLR), wave and current patterns, and human influence. High winds and flooding from storm events such as hurricanes and nor'easters further increase the local risk of exposure to potential loss of life and property damage ranging from thousands to millions of dollars. In addition to the natural events that cause erosion, human impacts are also affecting and accelerating erosion rates.

The beaches, barrier spits, and coastal bluffs of Rhode Island are vital economic, environmental, and cultural resources. A wide, healthy sand beach provides protection against the effects of storm surge, coastal flooding, and high surf impacts. The beach and barrier environment provide habitat for marine and terrestrial organisms with beach dependent life stages and are home to species of indigenous and endemic Rhode Island plants. Beaches, barrier spits, and coastal bluffs are also the basis for the tourism industry, exceeding by a factor of three (3) all other industries combined in terms of direct revenue to the State.

The headlands and barrier beaches of the south shore, ranging from Watch Hill in Westerly to Point Judith in Narragansett, are generally eroding at a higher rate than other shorelines along the Rhode Island coast. According to the Rhode Island Sea Grant program, East Matunuck State Beach, Misquamicut State Beach, and South Kingstown Town Beach combined lost over 400 feet of beach combined from 1974 to 2014, in comparison to 250 feet lost on average for Rhode Island's total coastline from 1964 to 2014. Of the six shoreline types found in Rhode Island, beaches and barrier spits are the most susceptible to erosion. About seven of Westerly's nine miles of

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coastline are comprised of these unconsolidated sediments, with the exceptions being rocky headlands located at Watch Hill Point and Weekapaug Point.

Coastal erosion threatens both waterfront property and fragile shoreline habitats and can occur even during moderate coastal storms. In addition, the predicted increase in global SLR will exacerbate coastal erosion as traditionally lower intensity storms cause greater amounts of damage and flooding than their historic counterparts. Westerly is composed of headland beaches and barrier beaches, which experience erosion at different rates. The average coastal erosion rate in Rhode Island, as identified in the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan, is 1.6 feet per year. According to the Shoreline Change SAMP, the sea level at the Newport tide gauge has risen 10 inches from 1930 to 2017 and nearly 1.7 feet of additional SLR is projected to occur between 2017 and 2030 with an 83% confidence interval. Figure **Sea Level Rise Hazards (HAZ-M3)** better visualizes the impact of SLR locally by showing areas of the Town that would become permanently submerged due to one (1) foot, three (3) foot, and five (5) foot increases in sea level. As SLR increases, storm surges and waves will extend further inland and flood greater quantities of homes, businesses, and roadways. Figure **Surface Water Resources (NAT-M1)** also shows the Sea Level Affecting Marshes Model (SLAMM), which indicates potential impacts of these same increases in SLR on wetlands and shorelines.



The vulnerability of many of Rhode Island's beaches and shoreline areas to coastal erosion and flooding tends to increase dramatically as manmade structures can be built along the shoreline, thus impeding the natural, dynamic system of the beach. Coastal armoring, such as the construction of jetties, may serve as protection for individual private properties but it severely impacts sediment deposits from occurring elsewhere along the shoreline and ultimately accelerates erosion activity which reduces the effective life of the coastal armoring.

Superstorm Sandy caused significant erosion to beaches and dunes in Misquamicut. In the following year, with assistance from the USACE, the Town began a project to repair the damage on the beach caused by the storm through a sand replacement project. A significant portion of the sand, unfortunately, washed out to sea in succeeding years. The most significant local example of the impact of coastal erosion diminishing or resulting in the loss of beach area, though, is Sandy Point. In 1938, Sandy Point was permanently severed from mainland Rhode Island as a result of the high winds and storm surge resulting from the 1938 New England Hurricane.

Subsection 9.1.8 – Dam Breaches

Dam failures can result from natural events, human-induced events, or a combination of the two. The most common cause is overtopping, which occurs when a dam's spillway capacity is exceeded and portions of the dam that are not designed to convey flow begin to pass water, erode, and ultimately fail. Other causes of dam failure include design flaws, foundation failure, internal soil erosion, inadequate maintenance, or mis-operation. Complete failure occurs if internal erosion or overtopping results in a complete structural breach, releasing a high-velocity wall of debris-laden water that rushes downstream, damaging or destroying everything in its path. As noted previously, an additional hazard concern is the cascading effect of one dam failure causing further structural failures downstream due to the sudden release of flow.

Dams are classified by RIDEM in terms of size and hazard risk. The size classification is composed of three categories – small, medium, and large – and is based on the storage capacity and height of the impounded water. The hazard classification relates to the probable consequences of failure or mis-operation of the dam are defined in the Rhode Island Dam Safety Regulations as follows:

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- **High Hazard** means a dam where failure or mis-operation will result in a probable loss of human life,
- **Significant Hazard** means a dam where failure or mis-operation results in no probable loss of human life but can cause major economic loss, disruption of lifeline facilities, or impact other concerns detrimental to the public's health, safety, or welfare, and
- **Low Hazard** means a dam where failure or mis-operation results in no probable loss of human life and low economic losses.

It is important to note that the hazard classification does not relate to the current condition or the likelihood of failure of the dam, though. According to the 2018 Dam Safety Annual Report, five dams within Westerly are designated as low hazard. The five dams are Boiling Spring Dam (Dam No. 752) on Mastuxet Brook, the Olaf Farm Pond Dam (Dam No. 493) on Cedar Swamp Brook, the Stillmanville Dam (Dam No. 256) on the Pawcatuck River, the Woody Hill Reservoir Dam (Dam No. 454) on Perry Healy Brook, and the unnamed dam (Dam No. 547) on the Misquamicut Club Pond. The Potter Hill Dam was not included in the inventory and the previously existing Bradford Dam was removed in 2017.

During the historic flooding in 2010, breaches of the Blue Pond Dam in Hopkinton and the Hewitt Farm Dam in North Stonington, Connecticut caused the surge of water that incapacitated the National Grid substation on Canal Street and flooded the North End. Other dams that were closely monitored during the 2010 flooding included the Alton Dam in Hopkinton the Bradford Dam, which both experienced overtopping and led to evacuation orders in their surrounding areas. The dams they did not fail but a deep crevice was created in the Bradford Dam, which was a factor in the decision for its removal.

Subsection 9.1.9 – Wildfires

Wildfires are fueled by natural cover, including native and non-native vegetation, along with weather conditions and topography but are most often caused by people through criminal or accidental misuse of fire. Westerly is a well-developed coastal town with large areas of open space that are mostly composed of beaches and wetlands. Fires can occur in these open spaces under the right conditions due to the grasses and underbrush found in these areas. Wildfires that occur in undeveloped areas pose a greater risk as they may be less accessible to fire protection services.

The likelihood of fire varies based on several weather-related factors including:

- Drought, which leads to increasing dryness, and
- Wind speed, which influences the direction and speed of the wildfire spreading.

Locations in Westerly most vulnerable to wildfire include the Woody Hill Management Area and the Town Forest. Both areas are largely inaccessible to motor vehicles. Other critical areas are the coastal grasslands of Avondale, Watch Hill, and the local salt pond region. While these grassland areas are relatively small, their spread could quickly threaten nearby structures and their distance from hydrants would necessitate the transport of water to burning vegetation and delay the controlling of the fire.

Subsection 9.1.10 – Drought and Extreme Heat

Drought is defined by NOAA as "a period of abnormally dry weather sufficiently prolonged for the lack of water to cause serious hydrologic imbalance in the affected area." The period can range from weeks to years and, while causing very little structural damage, can result in significant economic, environmental, and social impacts.

In Westerly, the primary risk of drought is to its groundwater. Potable water supply is drawn from three (3) major aquifers all located within the Pawcatuck Basin, designated in 1988 as a sole-source aquifer. At the local level, DPW has the primary responsibility for managing the Town's water supply distribution system and for ensuring that it can provide enough water to meet public health and safety needs of its customers. The RIWRB issues notices

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regarding drought conditions in the State, and Rhode Island Water 2030 outlines State policy relative to long-term drought response.

The White Rock WHPA draws approximately 70% of the Town's average daily potable water supply from the Pawcatuck Basin. During seasonally dry months, the Pawcatuck River's flow through the WHPA provides recharge to groundwater. ~~Land use~~Land-use activity surrounding this WHPA is a mix of medium to high-density residential development (about 380 acres) and agriculture (about 100 acres). Institutional and recreational land uses account for just over 105 additional acres. Some industrial uses are also present.

The Town has the lead role in preparing for and managing all stages of drought at the local level and drought preparedness measures are included in Westerly's WSSMP. Policies are included that promote water conservation wherever possible, including a provision for local ordinances to ensure that established regulations and procedures can effectively respond. Westerly's water distribution deficiencies have caused water use restrictions in the past partly due to insufficient drought planning and water-supply protection but have been relatively infrequent.

Subsection 9.1.11 – Geological-related Hazards

The primary geological-related hazards are earthquakes, rapid shaking of the earth's surface in both horizontal and vertical directions caused by shifting in the rock layer below. This ground movement begins at the focus, or hypocenter, deep in the earth and is divided into two wave types: primary waves are compressional and secondary waves have a shear motion. Rhode Island is in an intraplate region of the North American Plate and falls within seismic zone 2A, indicating an area subject to moderate ground acceleration. This means that people may experience shaking that can lead to slight damage during an earthquake event.

According to the USGS' Earthquake Hazards Program, 14 earthquakes ranging in local magnitude from 1.3 to 3.1 have been recorded in Rhode Island between 1974 and 2019. European settlers in Rhode Island noted the effects of several earthquakes beginning in the mid-seventeenth century. The largest earthquake ever recorded in Rhode Island occurred in Kingston in June 1951 at a 4.6 local magnitude. The most recent earthquake to affect a portion of Connecticut and Rhode Island was a 3.3 magnitude quake that occurred on January 12, 2015 with an epicenter in Wauregan, Connecticut (USGS, January 12, 2015).

Subsection 9.1.12 – Climate-related Hazards

Changes in the climate are considered hazardous within themselves but also exacerbate and intensify other naturally occurring events. NOAA released Technical Report NESDIS 142-1 in 2013 which presented two climate model simulations projecting the effects of high and low greenhouse gas emission scenarios. Analyses of the simulated future climates were provided for the periods of 2021-2050, 2041-2070, and 2070-2099, based upon data from three historical climate reference periods (1971-1999, 1971-2000, or 1980-2000). The federal agency noted the intent of the exercise was to present the scenarios but not to assume the probability of either. Key findings included:

- Models indicate an increase in temperature for all three future periods, with little spatial variation. Changes along coastal areas, such as Westerly, are slightly smaller than inland areas.
- Simulated temperature changes are similar in value for the high and low emissions scenarios for the near future, whereas late in the twenty-first century the high emissions scenario indicates nearly twice the amount of warming.
- The range of model-simulated temperature changes is substantial, indicating substantial uncertainty in the magnitude of warming associated with each scenario. However, in each scenario, the modeling is unequivocal and large compared to historic variations.
- Increases in the number of days with a maximum temperature above 95°F are simulated to occur throughout the northeast, with the largest increases occurring in the southern and western areas.

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- Simulated decreases in the average annual number of days with a minimum temperature below 10°F are largest (21 days or more) in northern areas. Decreases in the number of days with a minimum temperature below 32°F are 20-23 days across most of the region.
- The freeze-free season is simulated to lengthen by at least 19 days across the region by the mid-twenty-first century. Simulated increases in most areas are 3-4 weeks.
- The far northern regions show the largest simulated increases in average annual precipitation, while southern and coastal areas show less of an increase. Models are mostly in agreement that precipitation will increase over the entire region under these scenarios. Simulated seasonal changes are mostly upward in winter, spring, and fall, and downward in summer.
- All areas see simulated increases in the number of days with precipitation totals exceeding 1 inch, with the greatest increases (up to 30%) occurring in parts of New York. The simulated increases are statistically significant in most northern areas.
- Most models do not indicate a statistically significant change in temperature (with respect to 2001-2010) for the near future; however, as the time period increases, a greater number of models simulate statistically significant temperature changes, with all being significant at the 95% confidence level by 2055 (for the high emission scenario).

In either scenario, warmer weather, and increased precipitation, along with other current climate trends such as increased SLR, will affect Westerly in the long-term through flooding, increasing storm intensity, coastal erosion, and/or drought.

Section 9.2 – Resiliency

Because of its geographic characteristics, extensive shoreline on Rhode Island Sound, and its location on the Pawcatuck River, Westerly is subject to a wide range of natural hazards with the potential to adversely affect public health and safety. Resiliency requires identifying all the hazards that potentially threaten Westerly and analyzing them individually to determine the degree of threat posed by each.

Subsection 9.2.1 – Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP)

Westerly adopted its local Hazard Mitigation Plan update in February 2018 to help better organize the future allocation of the Town's finite resources, determine what actions are feasible and appropriate to address local vulnerabilities, and to enhance community resiliency. Analysis of these threats recognizes that some events, such as flash flooding, may occur more frequently, but may also have impacts which are less severe than events that occur infrequently, such as coastal storms and hurricanes. The appropriate mitigation actions to address these threats are then established based on the probability of events and of significant impacts. Addressing risk and vulnerability through hazard mitigation measures is an effective way to reduce the community's societal, economic, and environmental exposure to natural hazards' most damaging effects.

Subsection 9.2.2 – Community Resilience Building

The Town recognizes the need to begin planning to increase resilience and adapt to a changing climate and its impacts – from extreme weather events to SLR. In response to this recognition, the Town is collaborating proactively with partners to reduce Westerly's vulnerabilities while reinforcing its strengths and serving as a model for other communities throughout the region.

In spring 2019, in conjunction with RIIB and TNC, Westerly was chosen to embark on certification within the State's newly established Municipal Resilience Program, Resilient Rhody. As an important step towards certification, RIIB and TNC provided the Town with a community-focused process to assess current hazard and climate change impacts and to identify and prioritize projects, plans and policies for improved resilience. They also facilitated a community resilience building (CRB) workshop in August 2019 that was attended by more than 50 community stakeholders. The core directive of this effort has been engagement with and between these community partners

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to assess climate vulnerabilities, education, planning, and future implementation of priority resilience actions for Westerly. Overall, the CRB workshop's main objectives included:

- Defining top local natural- and climate-related hazards of concern,
- Identifying existing and future vulnerabilities and strengths,
- Developing prioritized actions for the Town of Westerly, and
- Identifying opportunities to collaboratively advance actions to increase resilience.

The result of the CRB were included in a Summary of Findings report. The top hazards included:

- In-land and riverine precipitation-driven flooding,
- Coastal flooding and inundation due to storm surge and SLR,
- Major storms, such as hurricanes, nor'easters, and blizzards, that create high winds, and
- Extreme temperatures and drought resulting from heatwaves.

The report identified a long list of items as Westerly's key area of concerns and challenges across three different categories:

1. Infrastructure concerns and challenges,
2. Societal concerns and challenges, and
3. Environmental concerns and challenges.

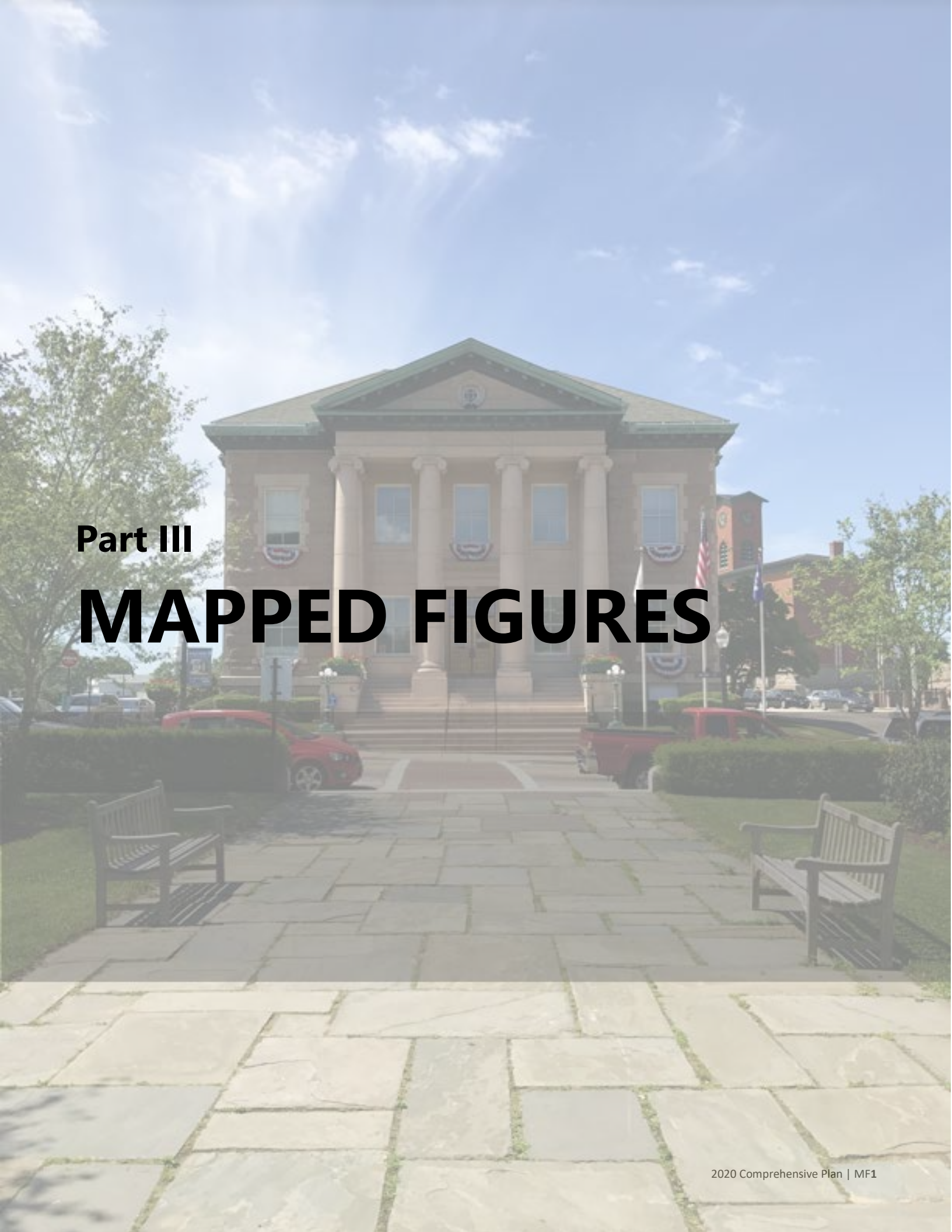
Workshop participants identified several key strengths in the community and expressed interest in using them as the core of future resilience building interventions. Items such as engaged and responsive leadership, experienced staff, a well-coordinated and connected sheltering system, rich historic and cultural resources, desirable economic and natural resources, open space, agricultural enterprises, a strong social support network, actively engaged civic groups, and the willingness of local employers and businesses to contribute to the common good in times of disaster and major need were all identified.

A common thread throughout the CRB workshop was the recognition that Westerly needs to be better prepared through longer term, community-based contingency planning across all areas of concern. The workshop participants collectively identified several key priority areas stated below as items to focus on:

- Infrastructure improvements to the WWTF, stormwater management system, and the roadway network, including bridges,
- Natural system conservation and water quality protection for ecological and public health, and
- Emergency preparedness, communication systems and continuation of services

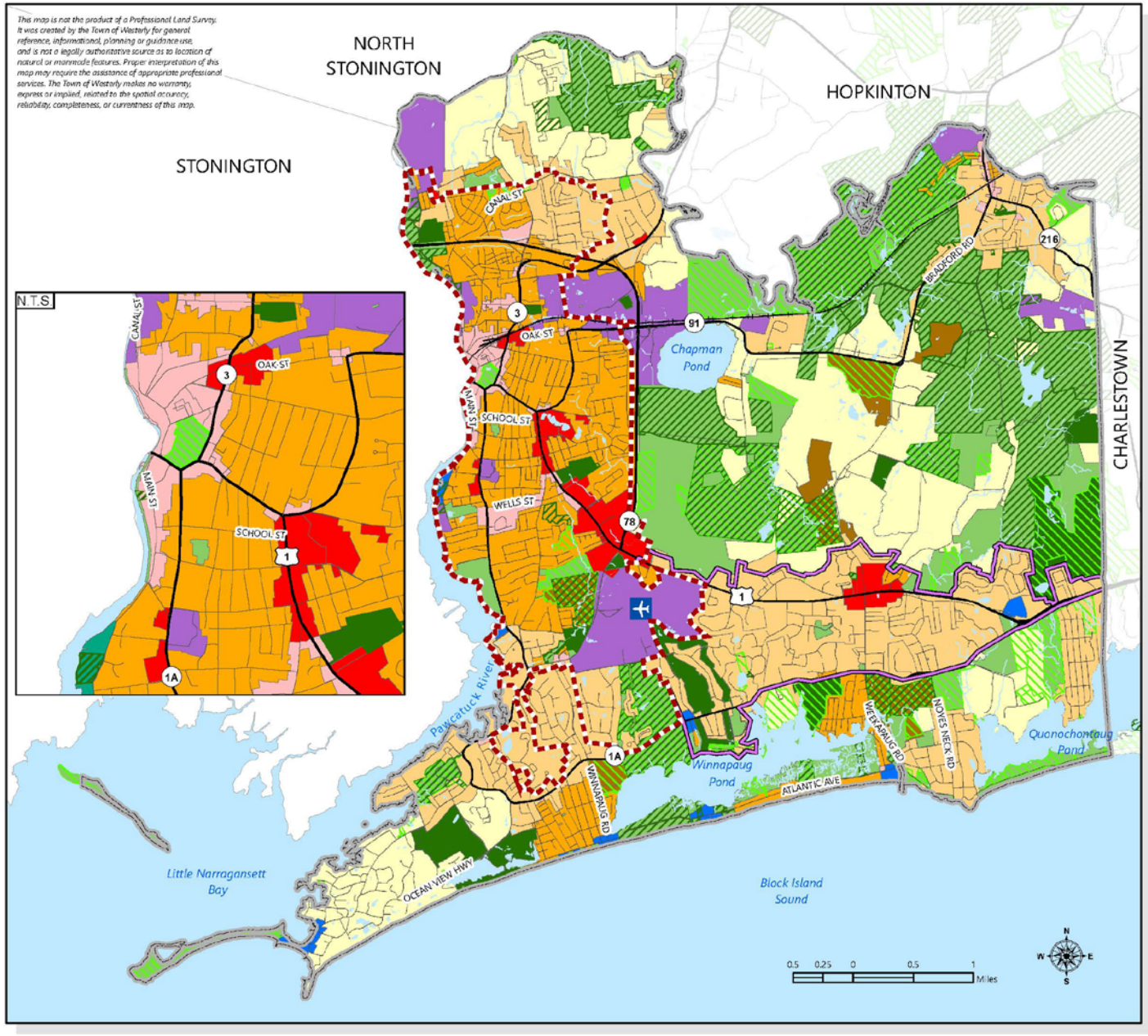
The information collected during this community stakeholder workshop is extremely helpful in developing plans for capacity building, ranking prioritization of resiliency project and determining the need for future plans, studies, education, and outreach.

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Part III

MAPPED FIGURES



2020 Comprehensive Plan

Future Land Use
FLU-M1

Legend

Future Land Use

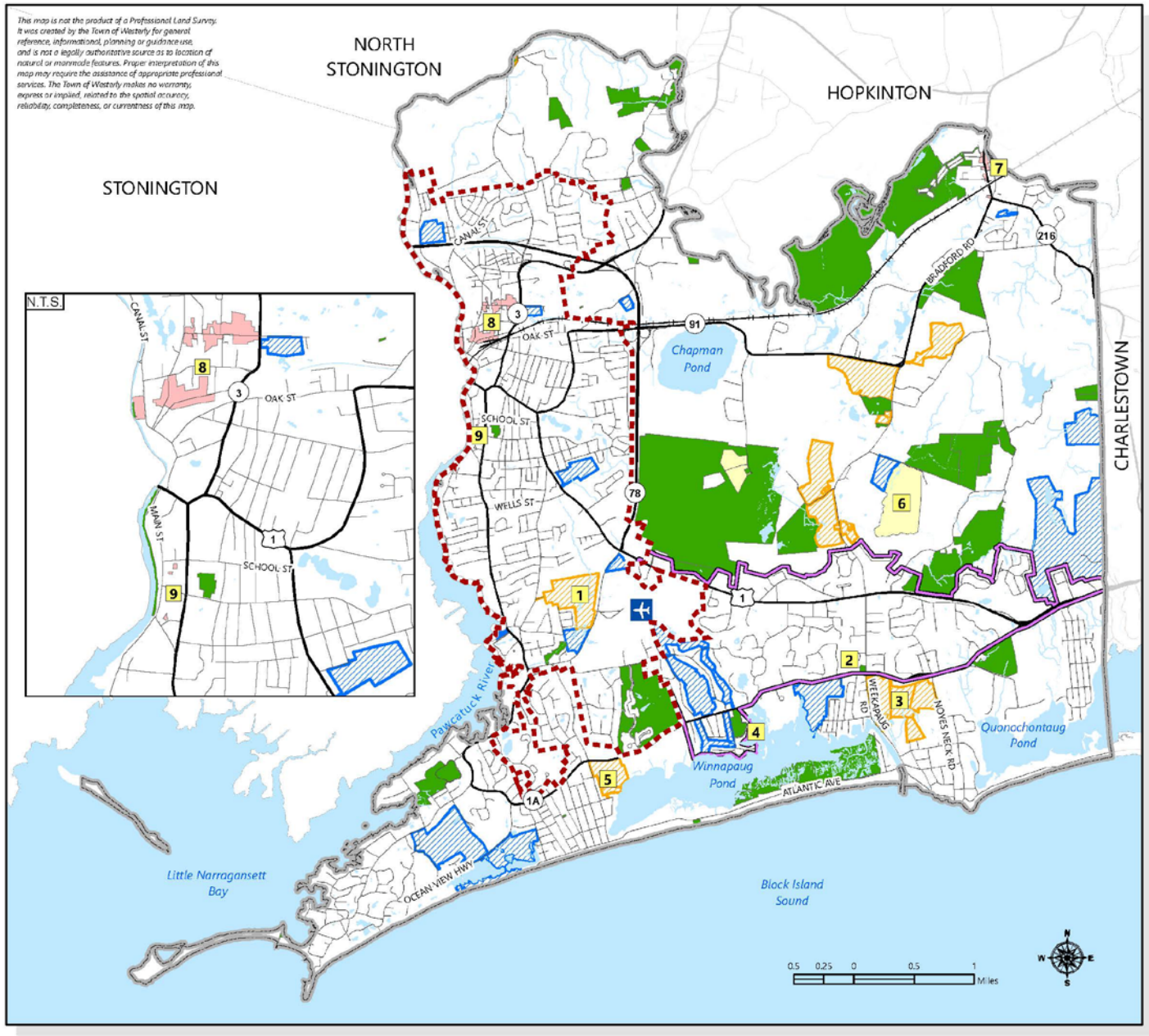
- Low-Density Residential
- Medium-Density Residential
- High-Density Residential
- Mixed-Use Commercial
- Commercial
- Coastal Commercial
- Industry
- Agricultural
- Conserved Land
- Recreation

Conservation Lands

- Private Conservation Restriction
- Public Conservation Restriction
- Prospective Urban Services Boundary Extension
- Westerly Urban Services Boundary
- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

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2020 Comprehensive Plan

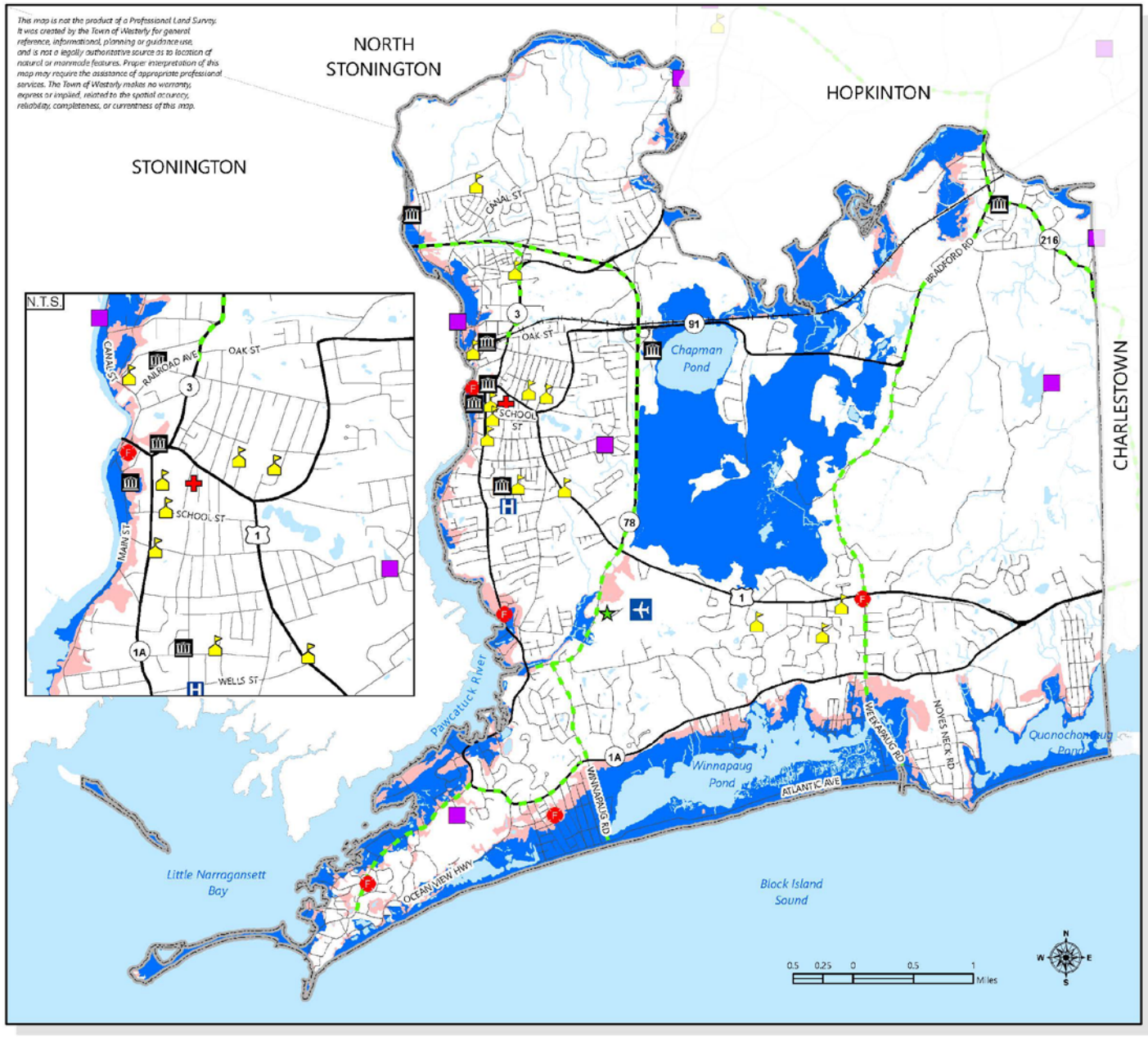
Future Land Uses
Inconsistent with Existing Zoning
FLU-M2

Legend

- Agriculture
- Recreation
- Low-Density Residential
- Mixed-Use Commercial
- Coastal Commercial
- Conserved Land
- Westerly Urban Services Boundary
- Prospective Urban Services Boundary Extension
- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

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2020 Comprehensive Plan

Flood Hazards
HAZ-M1

Legend

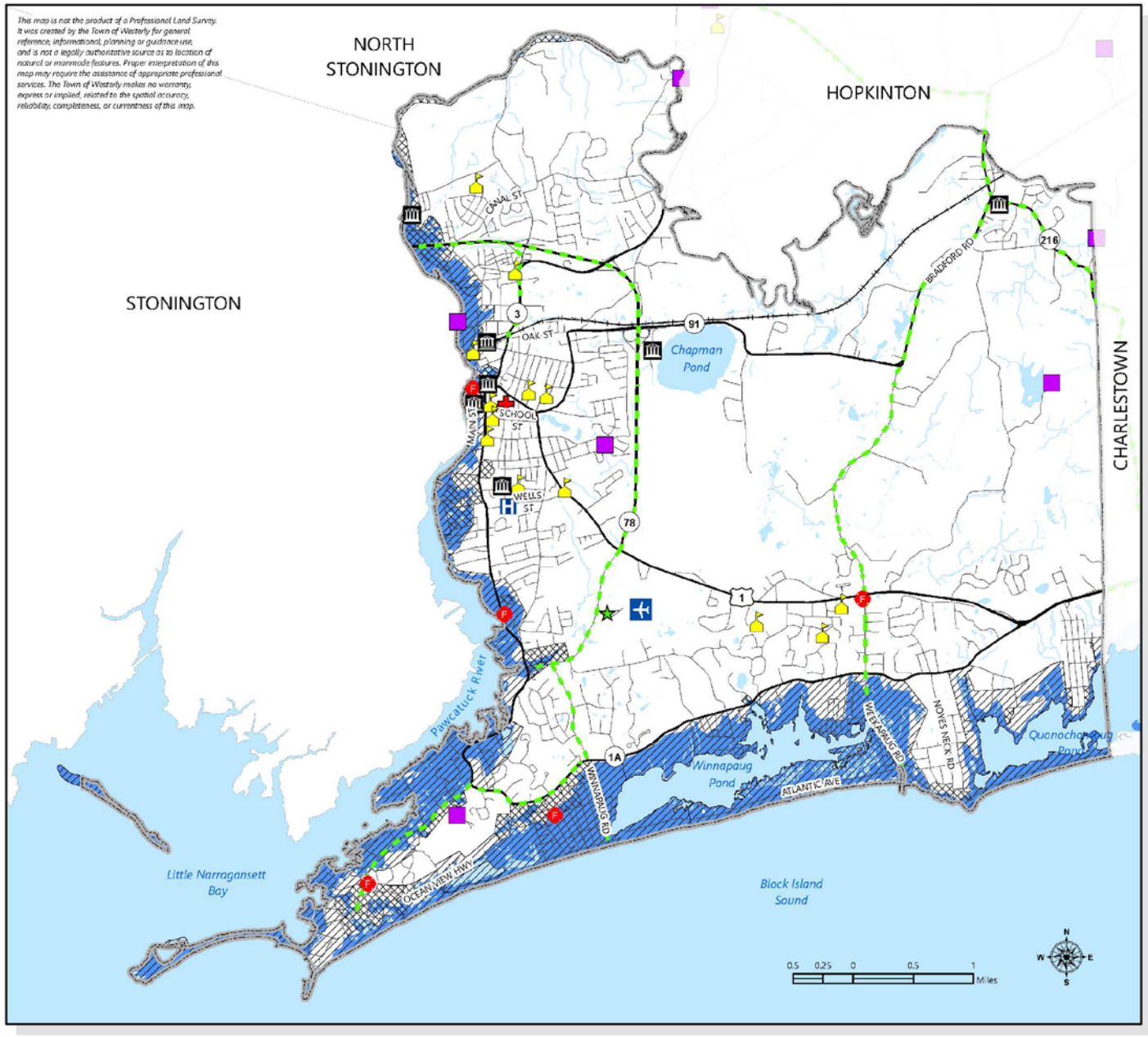
- Municipal Facility
- Fire Station
- Dam
- School
- Hospital
- Police Station
- Westerly Ambulance Corps
- Evacuation Route

FEMA Flood Zone

- 100-Year Event
- 500-Year Event
- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

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Storm Hazards
HAZ-M2

Legend

- Municipal Facility
- Fire Station
- Dam
- School
- Hospital
- Police Station
- Westerly Ambulance Corps
- Evacuation Route

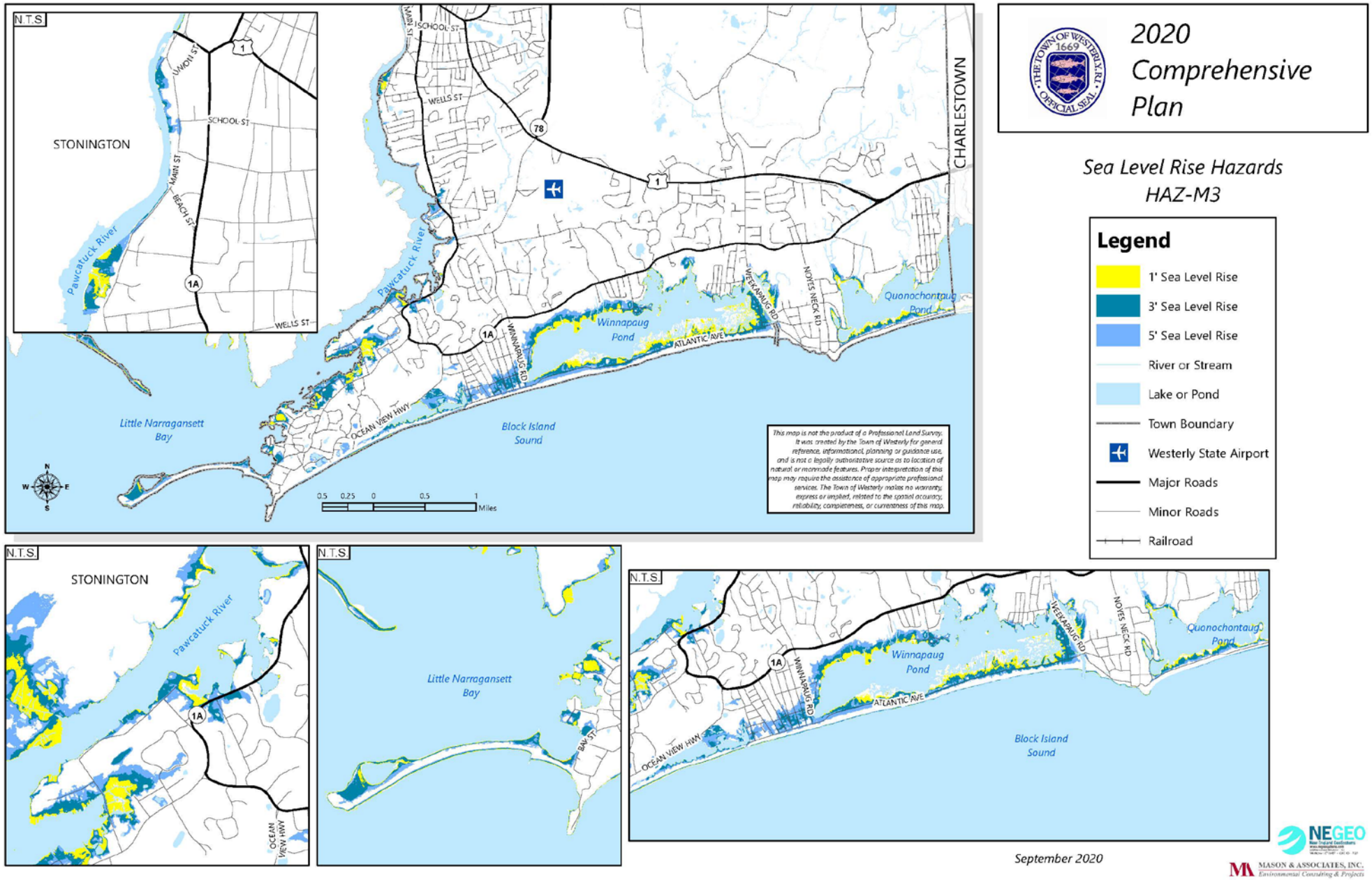
Evacuation Area

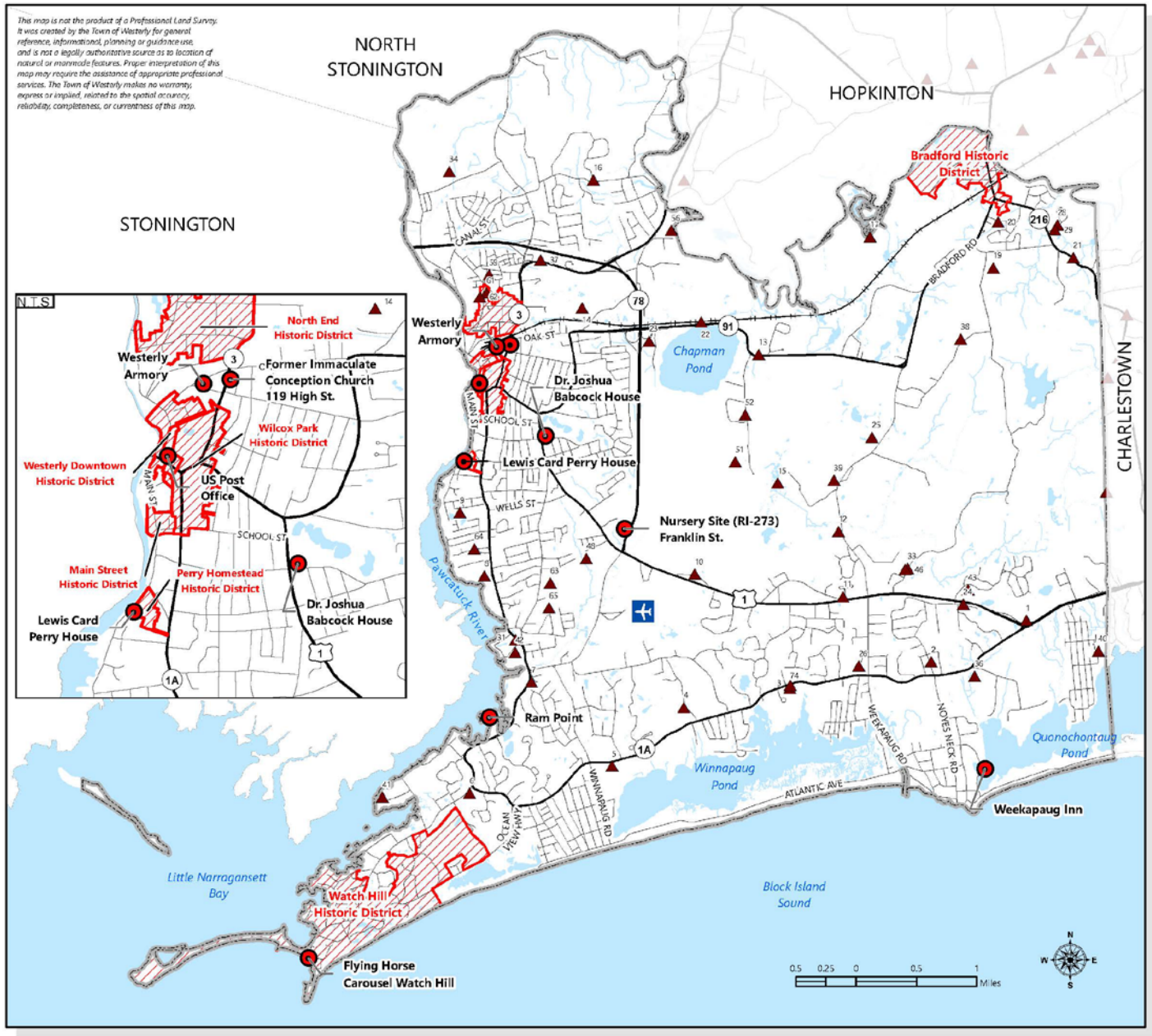
- Category 1 or 2 Hurricane
- Category 3 or 4 Hurricane
- Hurricane Surge Inundation (USACE)
- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

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2020 Comprehensive Plan
Sea Level Rise Hazards
HAZ-M3
Legend
1' Sea Level Rise
3' Sea Level Rise
5' Sea Level Rise
River or Stream
Lake or Pond
Town Boundary
Westerly State Airport
Major Roads
Minor Roads
Railroad
N.T.S.
STONINGTON
CHARLESTOWN
Pawcatuck River
Little Narragansett Bay
Block Island Sound
Winnapaug Pond
Quonochontaug Pond
ATLANTIC AVE
OCEAN VIEW HWY
WINNAPAUG RD
WEEKAPAUG RD
NOYES NECK RD
BAY ST
MAIN ST
SCHOOL ST
WELLS ST
UNION ST
BEACH ST
1
1A
78
0.5 0.25 0 0.5 1 Miles
This map is not the product of a Professional Land Survey. It was created by the Town of Westerly for general reference, informational, planning or guidance use, and is not a legally authoritative source as to location of natural or manmade features. Proper interpretation of this map may require the assistance of appropriate professional services. The Town of Westerly makes no warranty, express or implied, related to the spatial accuracy, reliability, completeness, or currentness of this map.
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2020 Comprehensive Plan

Historic and Cultural Resources
HCR-M1

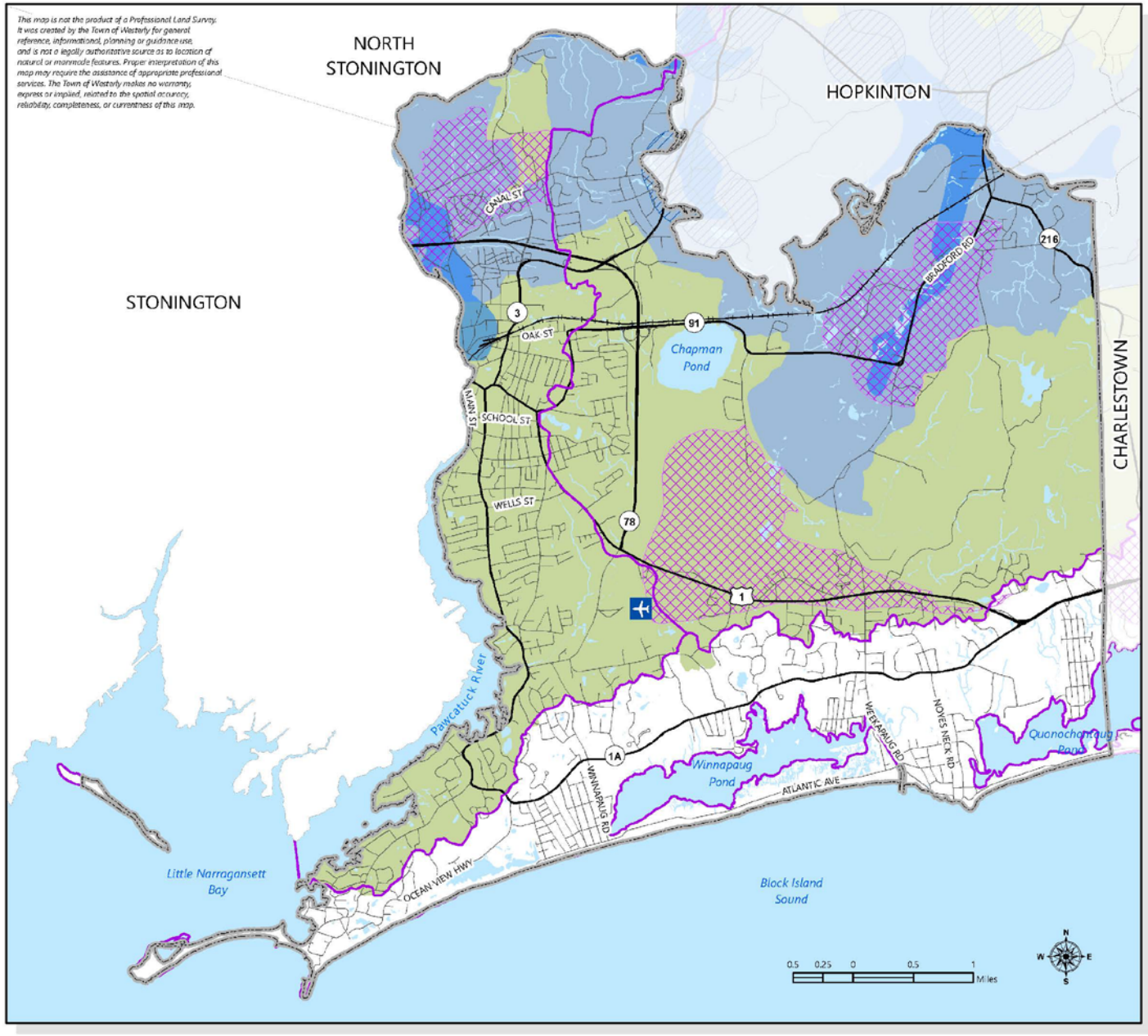
Legend

- National Register Historic Site
- National Register Historic District
- Historic Cemetery
- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

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2020 Comprehensive Plan

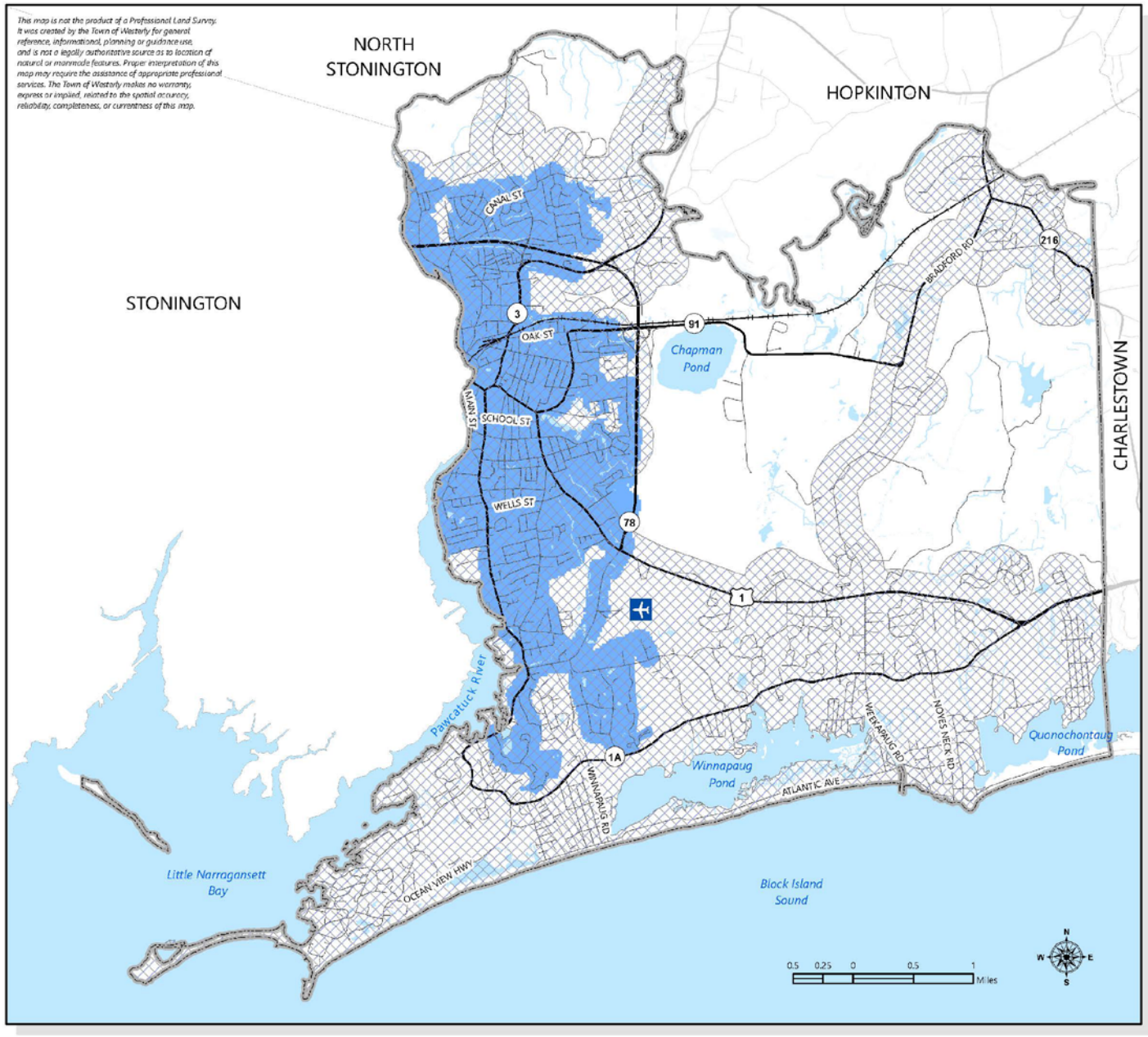
Groundwater
INF-M1

Legend

- Community Wellhead Protection Area
- Non-Community Wellhead Protection Area
- Groundwater Reservoir
- Groundwater Recharge Area
- Sole Source Aquifer
- Watershed Boundary
- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

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2020 Comprehensive Plan

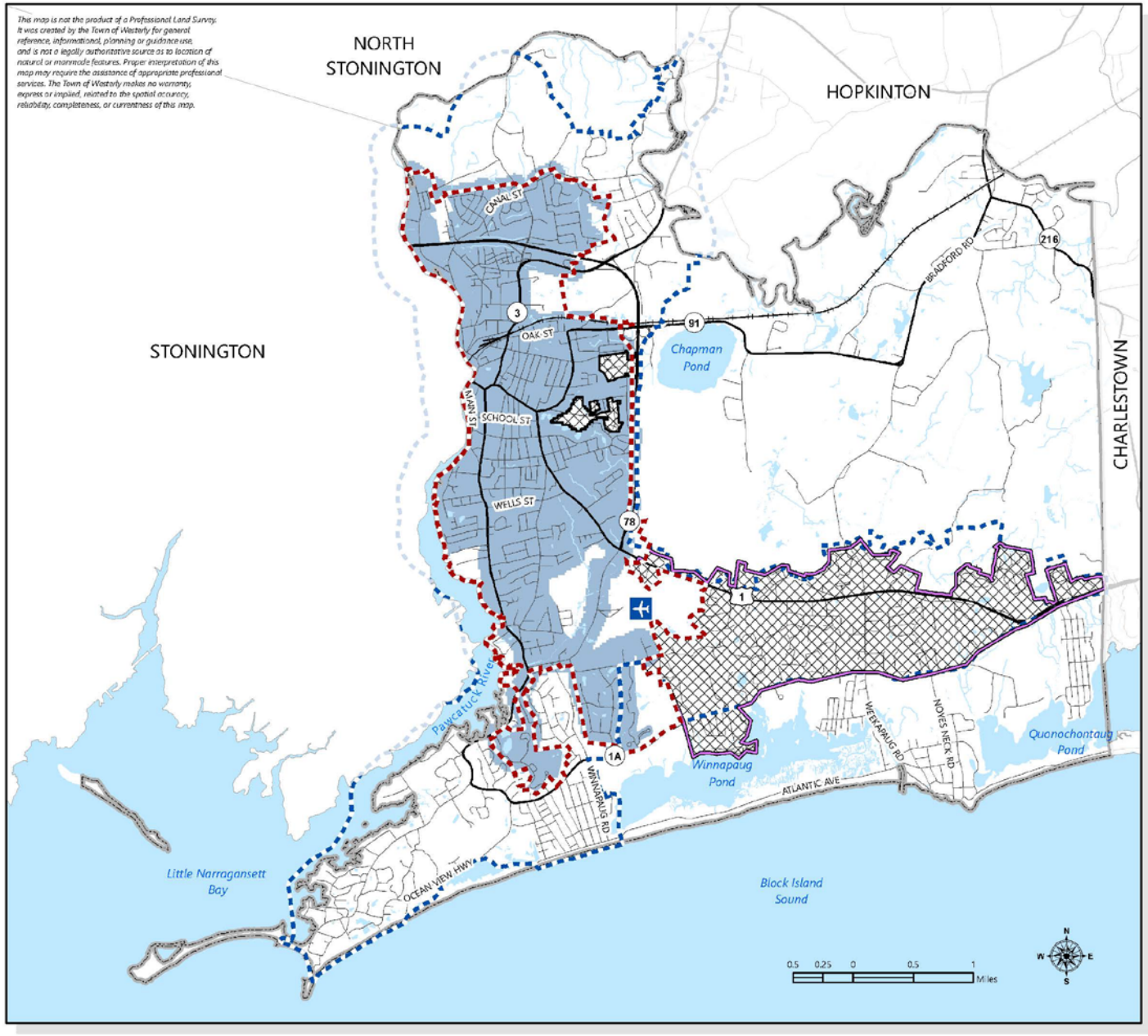
Sewer and Water Infrastructure
INF-M2

Legend

- Public Water
- Public Sewer
- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

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2020 Comprehensive Plan

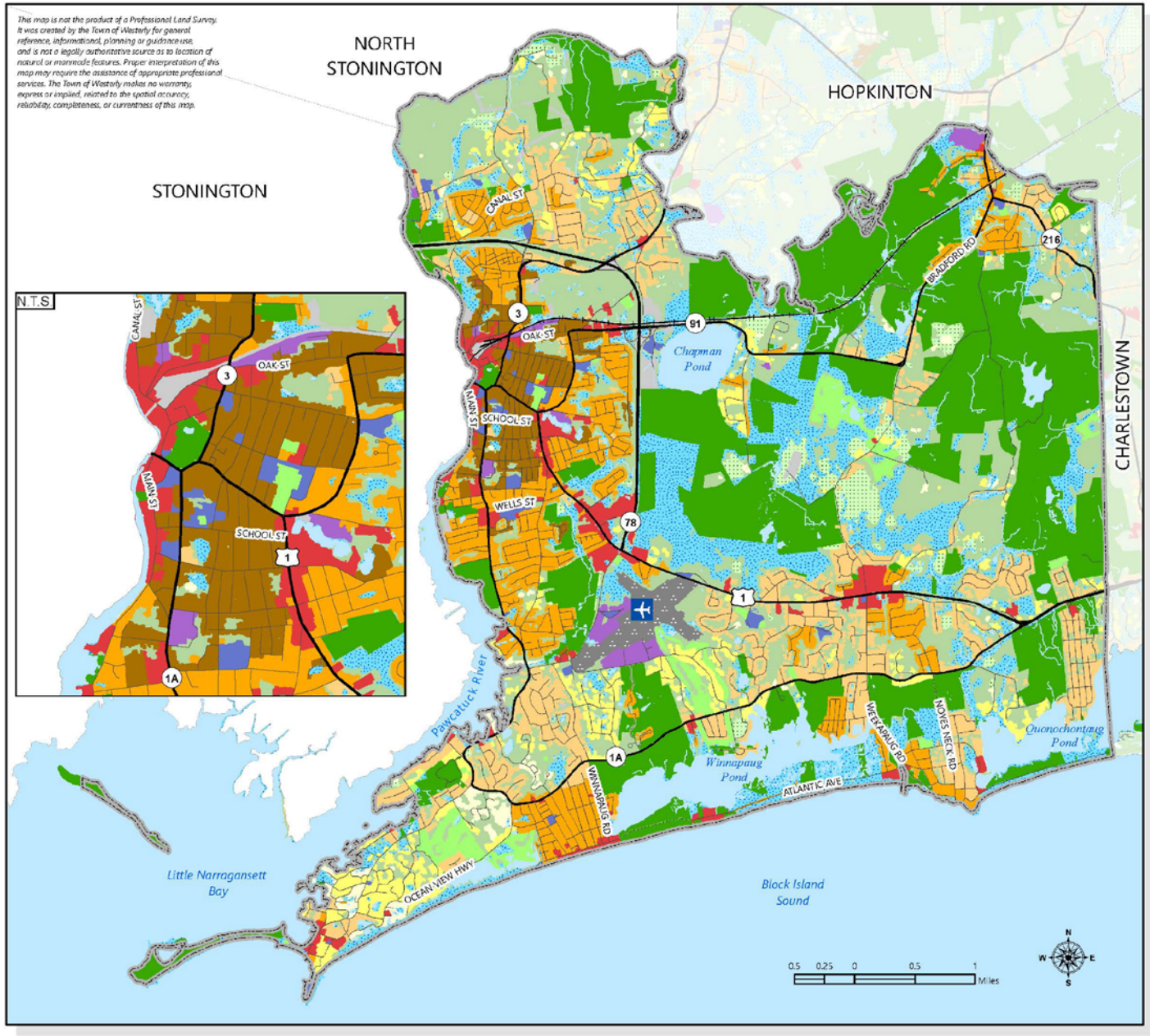
State Designated Urban Services Boundary
INF-M3

Legend

- State-Designated Urban Services Boundary
- Westerly Urban Services Boundary
- Prospective Urban Services Boundary Extension
- Prospective Sewer Service Extension Area
- Public Sewer
- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

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2020 Comprehensive Plan

2011 Land Cover
LUZ-M1

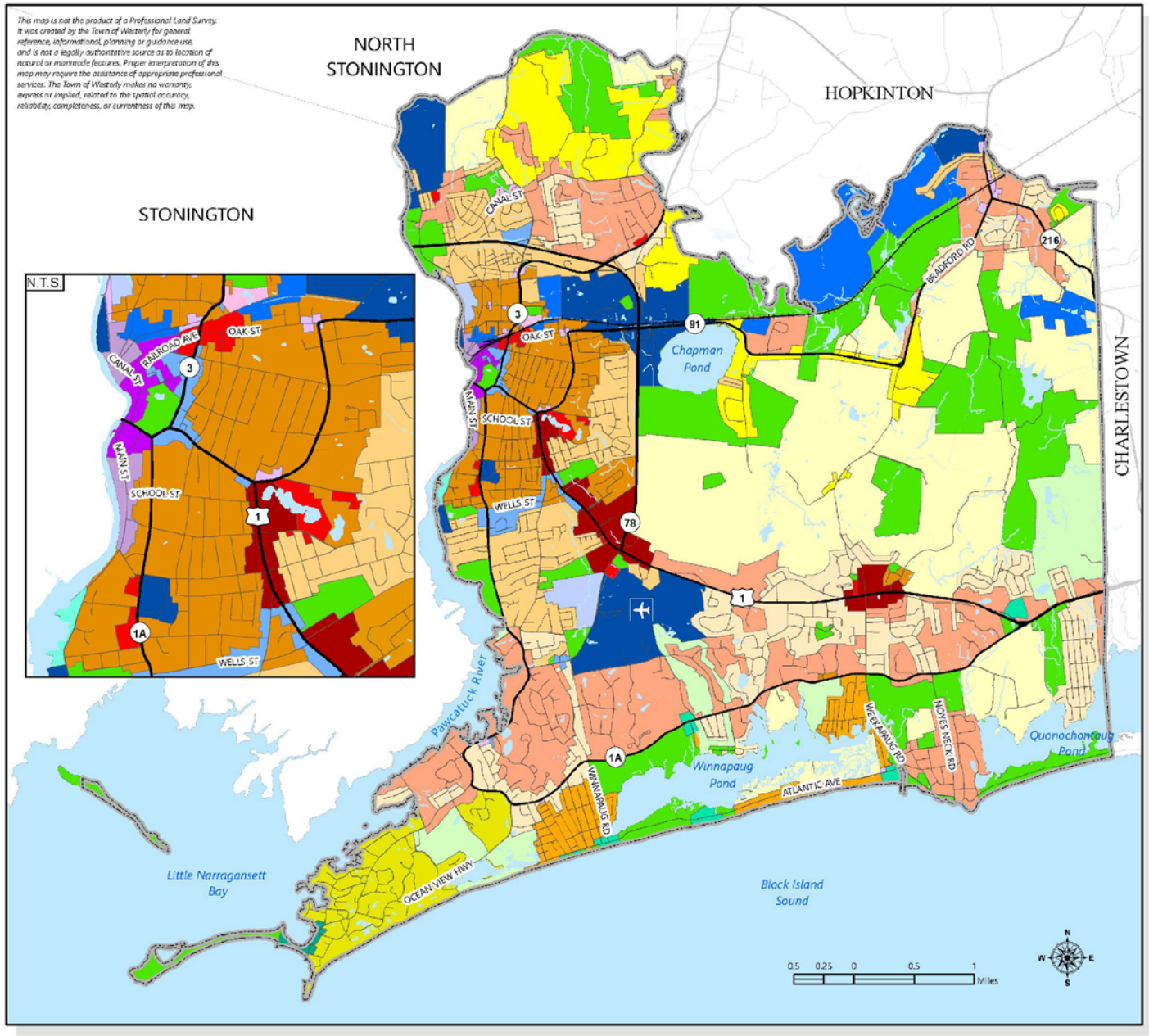
Legend

- High Density Residential
- Medium High Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Medium Low Density Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Transportation and Utilities
- Airports
- Mixed Use
- Developed Recreation
- Conservation/OS
- Institutional
- Agricultural
- Undeveloped/Unprotected
- Water
- Wetland
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

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2020 Comprehensive Plan

Zoning
LUZ-M2

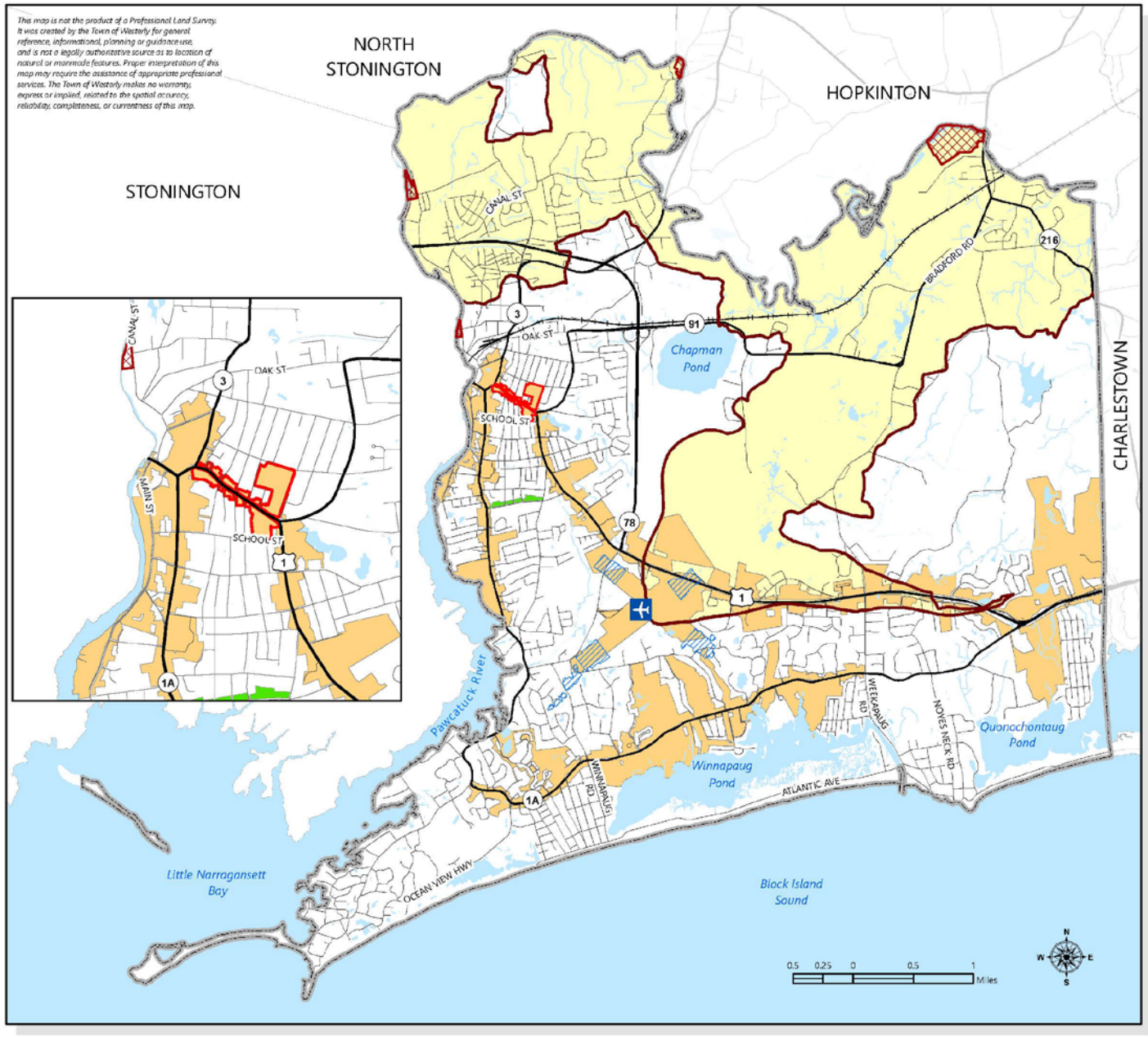
Legend

- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

- Rural Residential 60
- Low-Density Residential 43
- Low-Density Residential 40
- Medium-Density Residential 30
- Medium-Density Residential 20
- High-Density Residential 15
- High-Density Residential 10
- High-Density Residential 6
- Professional 15
- Neighborhood Business
- Downtown Center 1
- Downtown Center 2
- General Commercial
- Highway Commercial
- Marine Commercial
- Shore Commercial - General
- Shore Commercial - Watch Hill
- Office Research, Assembly, and Technology
- Light Industrial
- General Industrial
- Commercial Recreational
- Open Space and Recreation
- Planned Unit Development

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Zoning Overlays
LUZ-M3

Legend

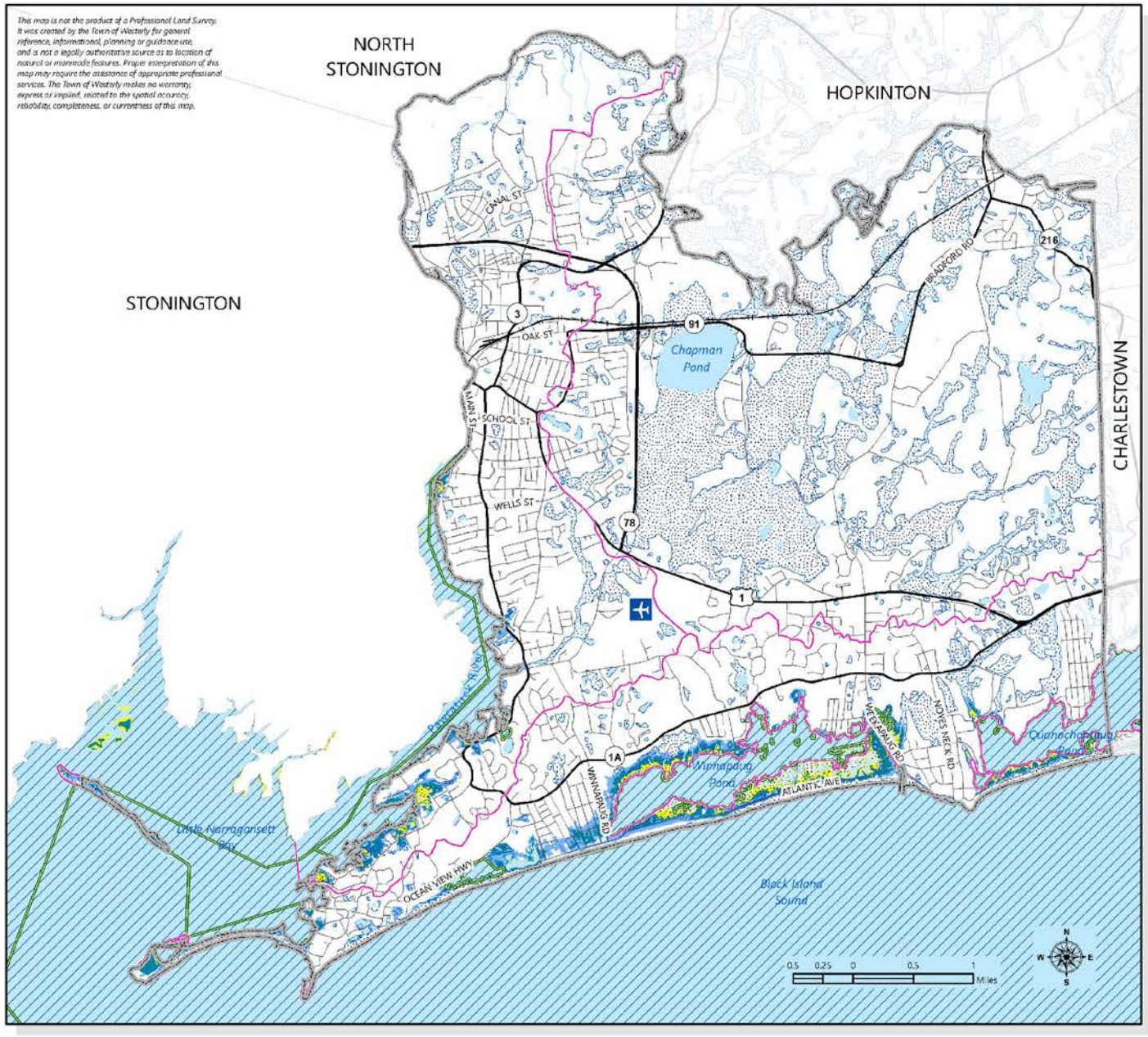
- Bed & Breakfast Overlay
- Granite Street Overlay
- Wells Street Overlay
- Historic Mill Overlay
- Airport Overlay
- Future Aquifer Protection Overlay District*
- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

*Based on RI GIS GAA classified groundwater data

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Surface Water Resources
NAT-M1

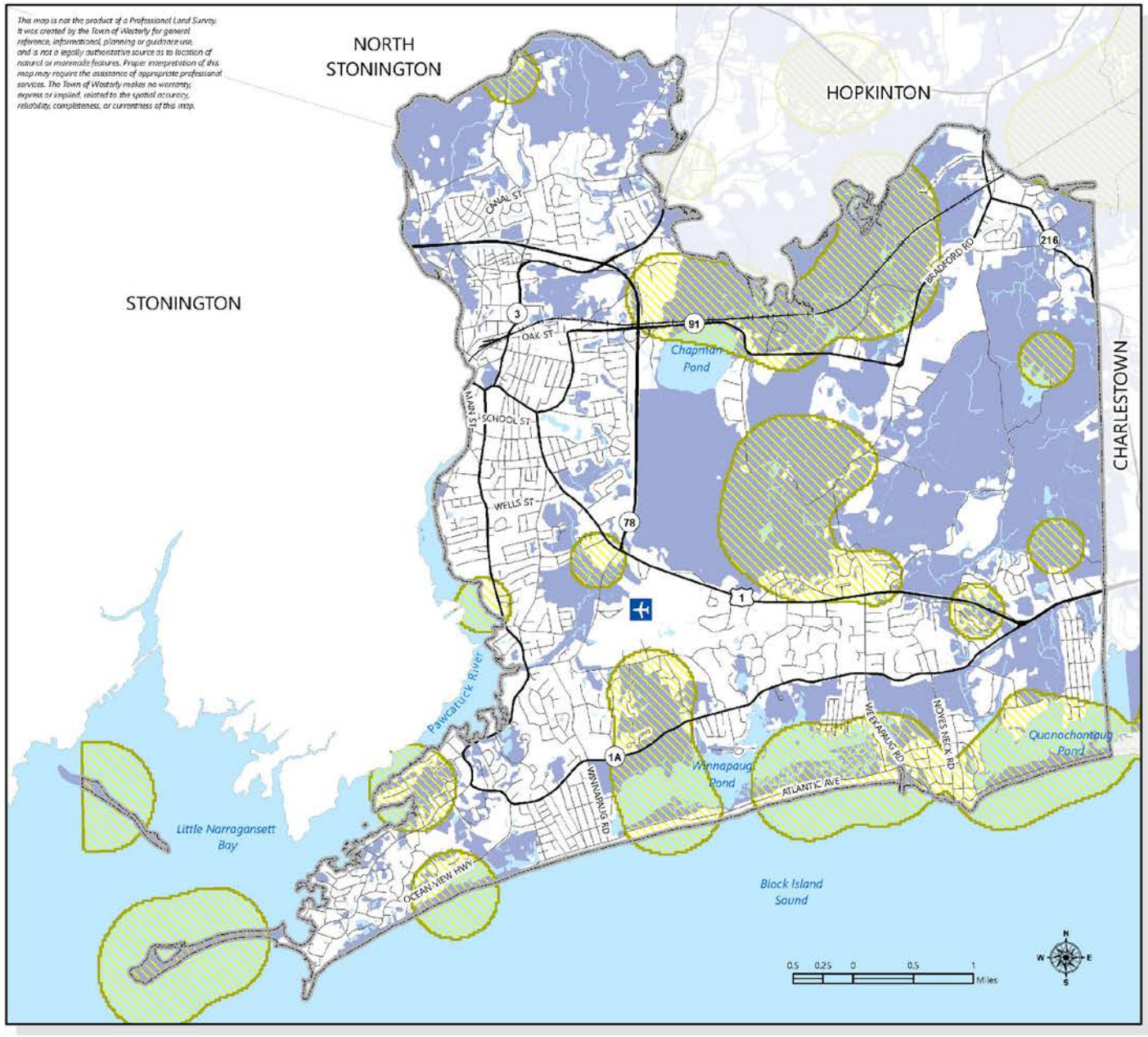
Legend

- Estuarine Water Quality Standard Boundary
- Watershed Boundary
- Coastal Water
- Wetland
- 1' Sea Level Rise
- 3' Sea Level Rise
- 5' Sea Level Rise
- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

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Habitat Resources
NAT-M2

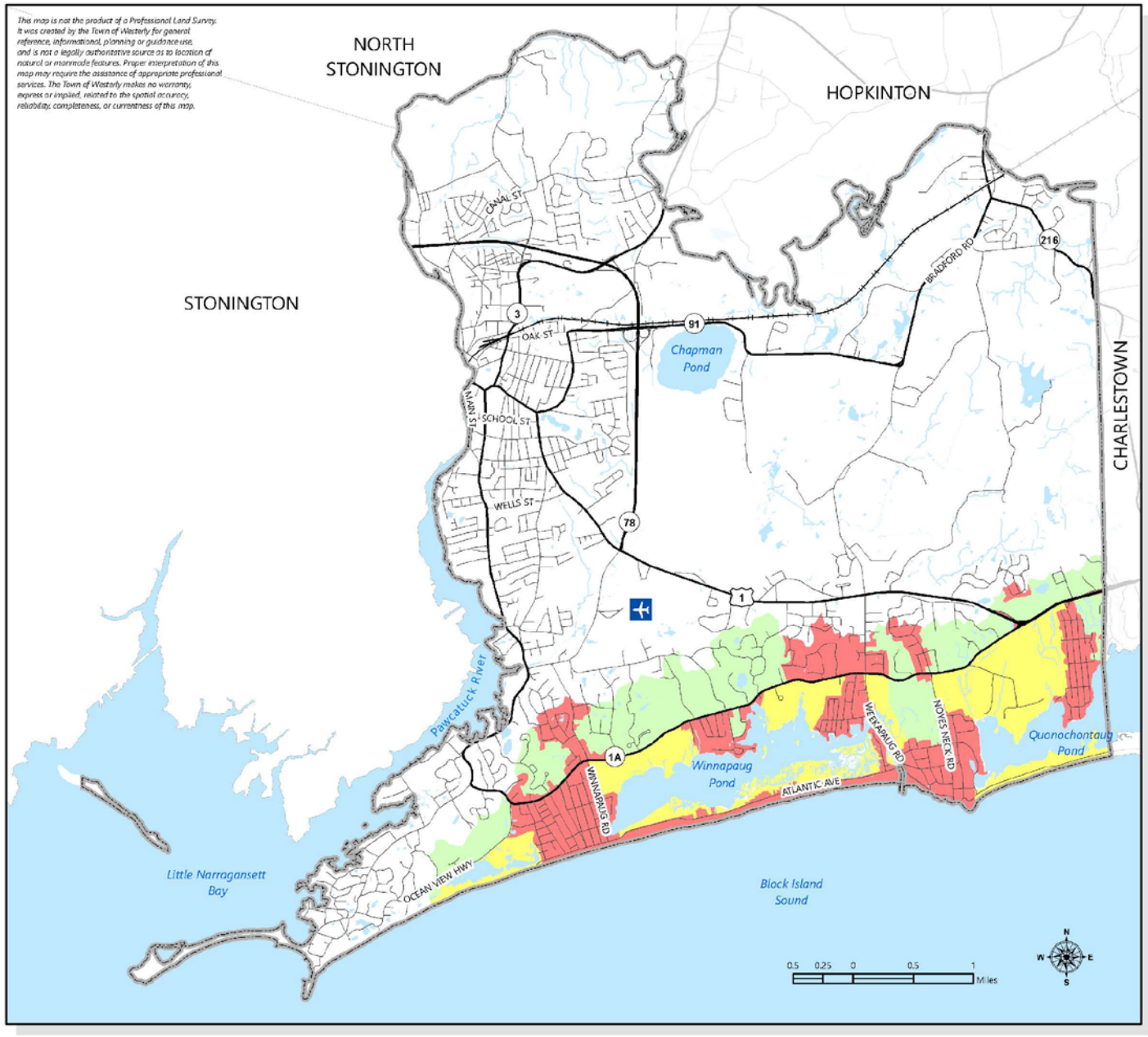
Legend

- Natural Heritage Area
- Conservation Opportunity Area
- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

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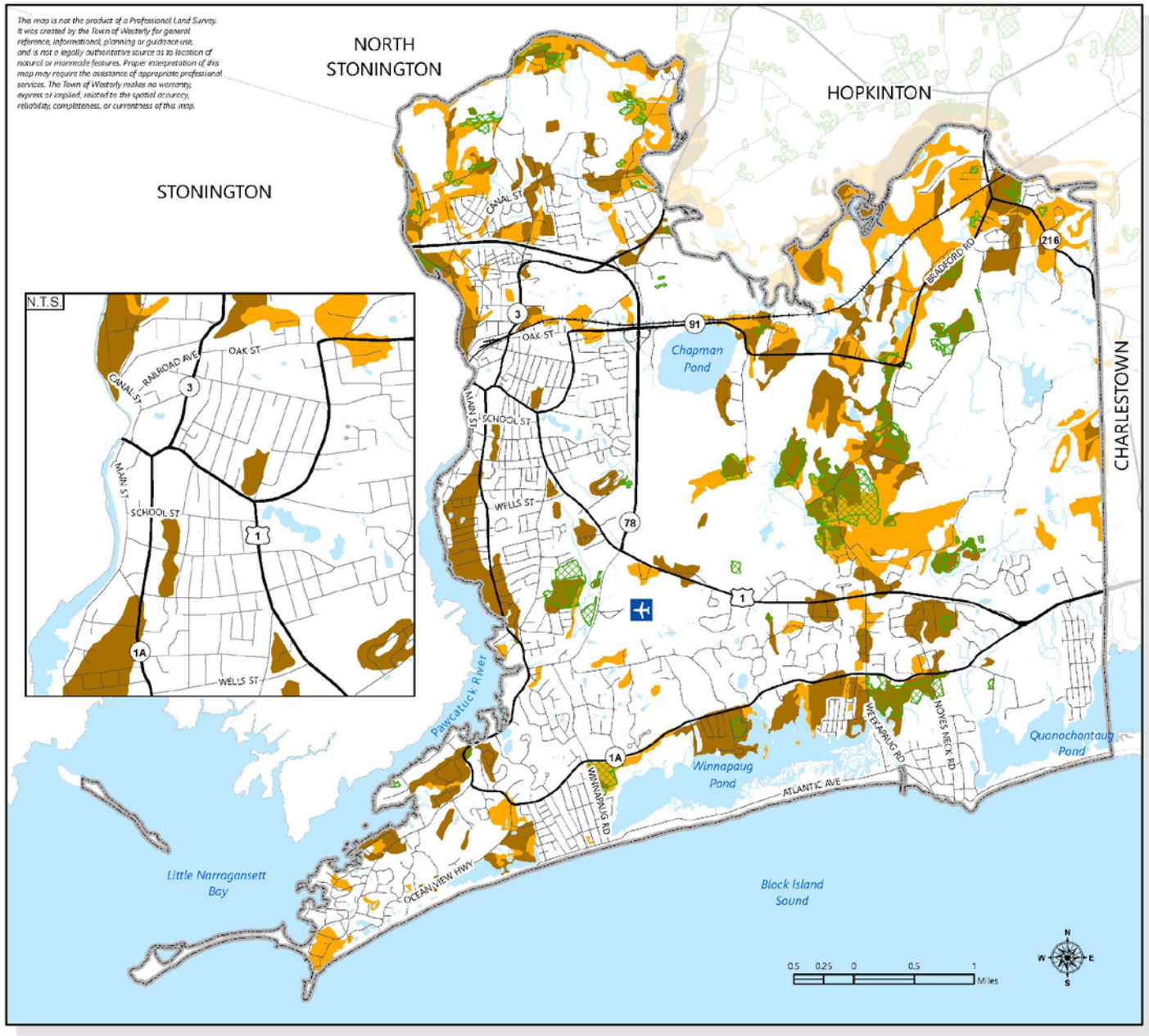
CRMC
Salt Ponds Region SAMP
NAT-M3

Legend

- Developed Beyond Carrying Capacity
- Lands of Critical Concern
- Self-Sustaining Land
- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

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2020 Comprehensive Plan

Agricultural Soils
NAT-M4

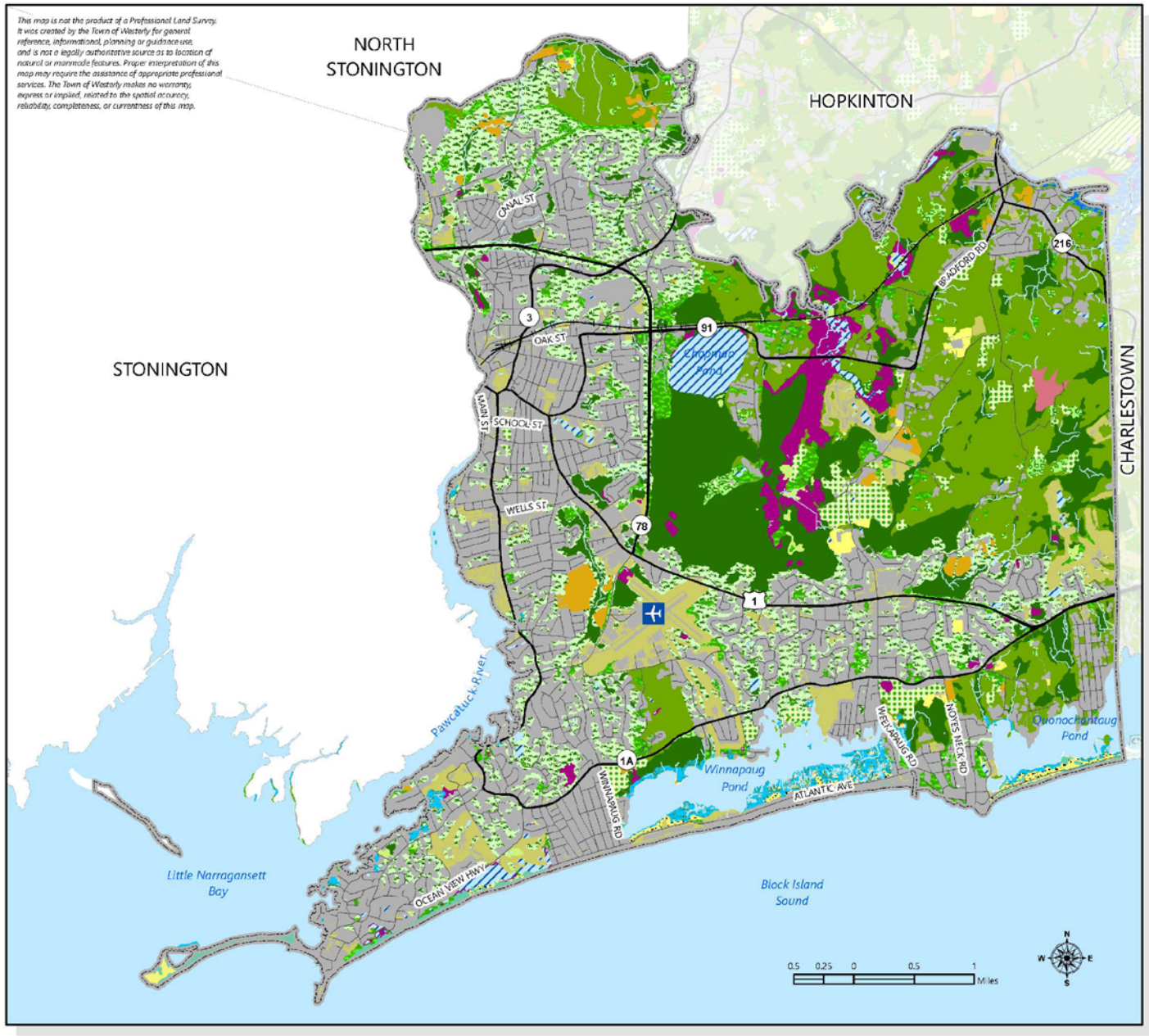
Legend

- Prime Farmland
- Statewide Important
- Agricultural Use (2011)
- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

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2020 Comprehensive Plan

Ecological Communities
NAT-M5

Legend

- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

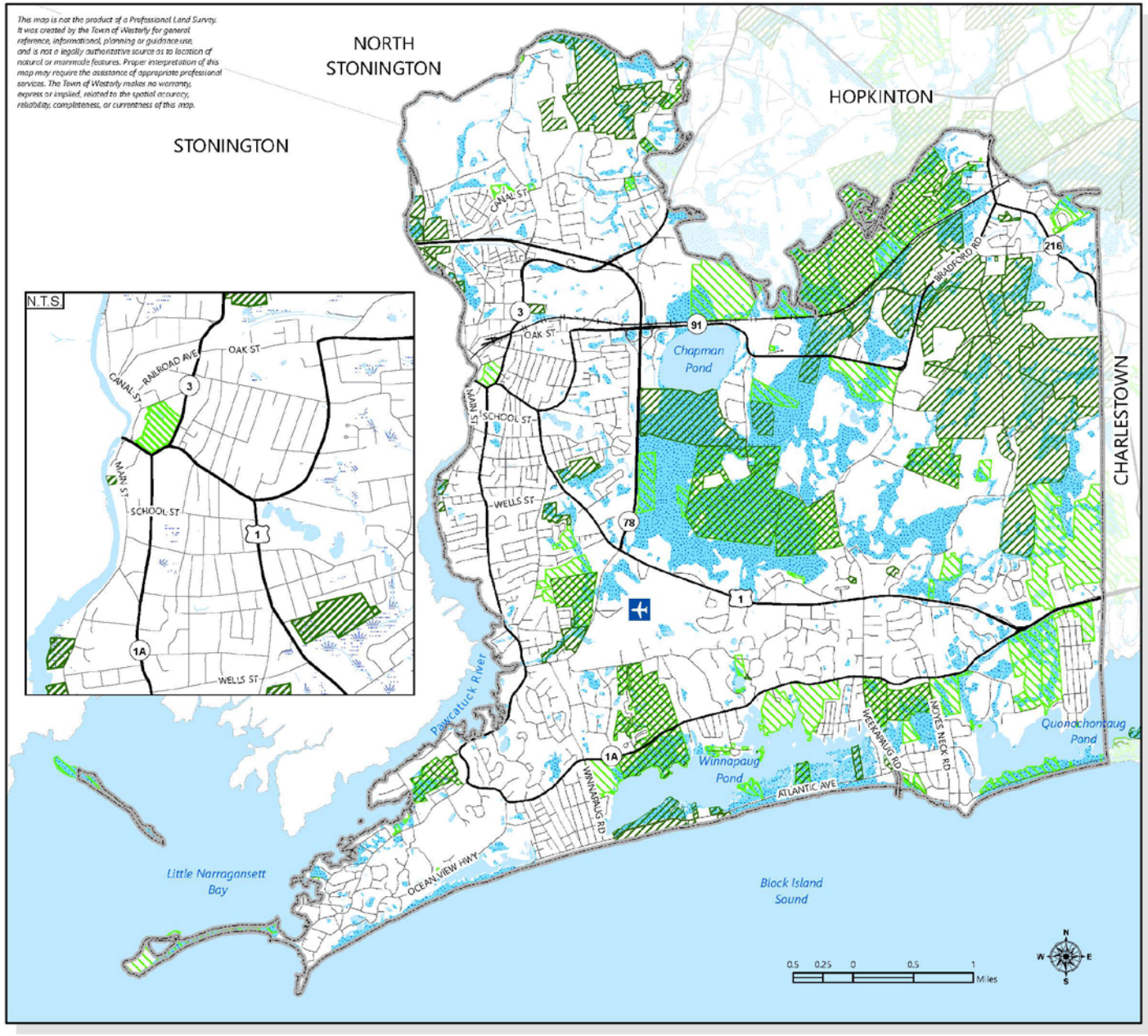
Ecological Communities

- Forested Swamp
- Floodplain Forest
- Emergent Marsh
- Modified Marsh
- Fresh Water
- Peatland
- Intertidal Shore
- Salt Water
- Salt Marsh
- Shrub Swamp
- Mud Flat
- Tidal Creek
- Tidal River/Stream
- Oak Forest
- Mixed Forest
- Pitch Pine Woodland
- Ruderal Forest
- Ruderal Grassland/Shrub
- Inland Sand Barren
- Maritime Shrub Dune
- Maritime Shrubland
- Coastal Grassland
- Tree Nursery / Cropland / Orchard
- Turf
- Pasture
- Hayfield
- Urban Grass
- Developed
- Vacant Land

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Conservation Lands
NAT-M6

Legend

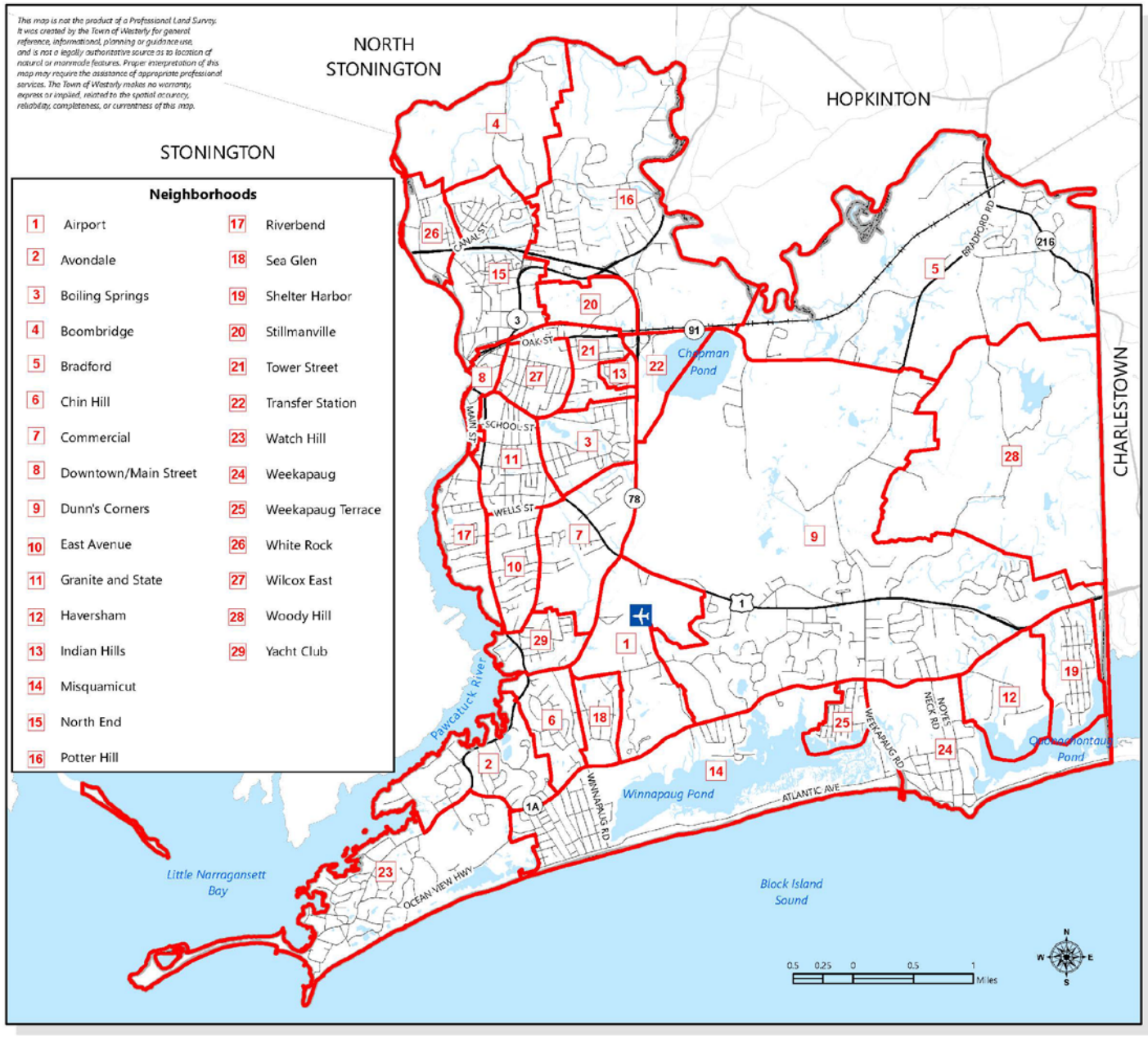
Conservation Lands

- Private Conservation Restriction
- Public Conservation Restriction
- Wetland
- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

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2020 Comprehensive Plan

Neighborhoods
NBH-M1

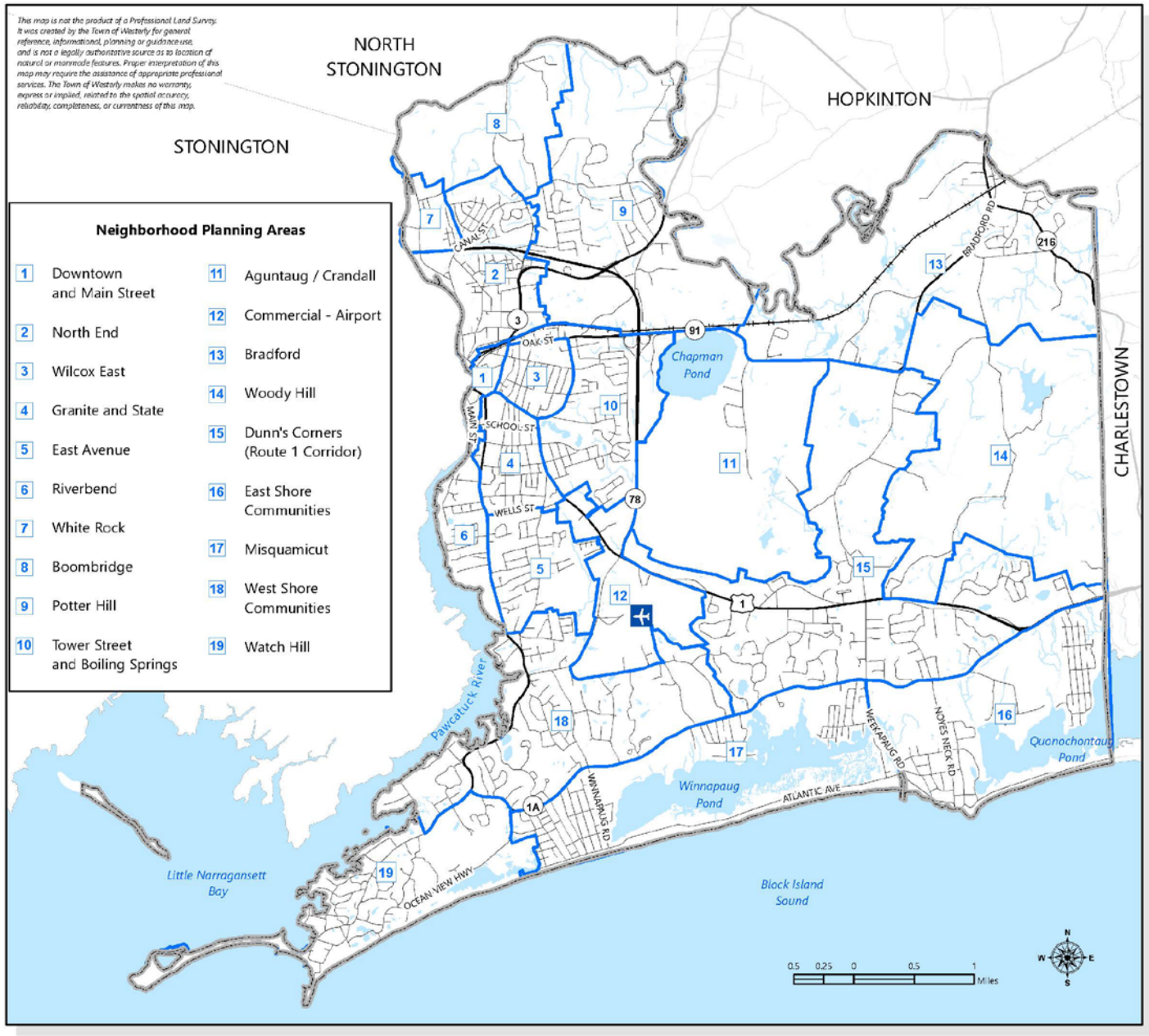
Legend

- Neighborhood Boundary
- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

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NEGEO Northeast Geodetics

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2020 Comprehensive Plan

Neighborhood Planning Areas
NBH-M2

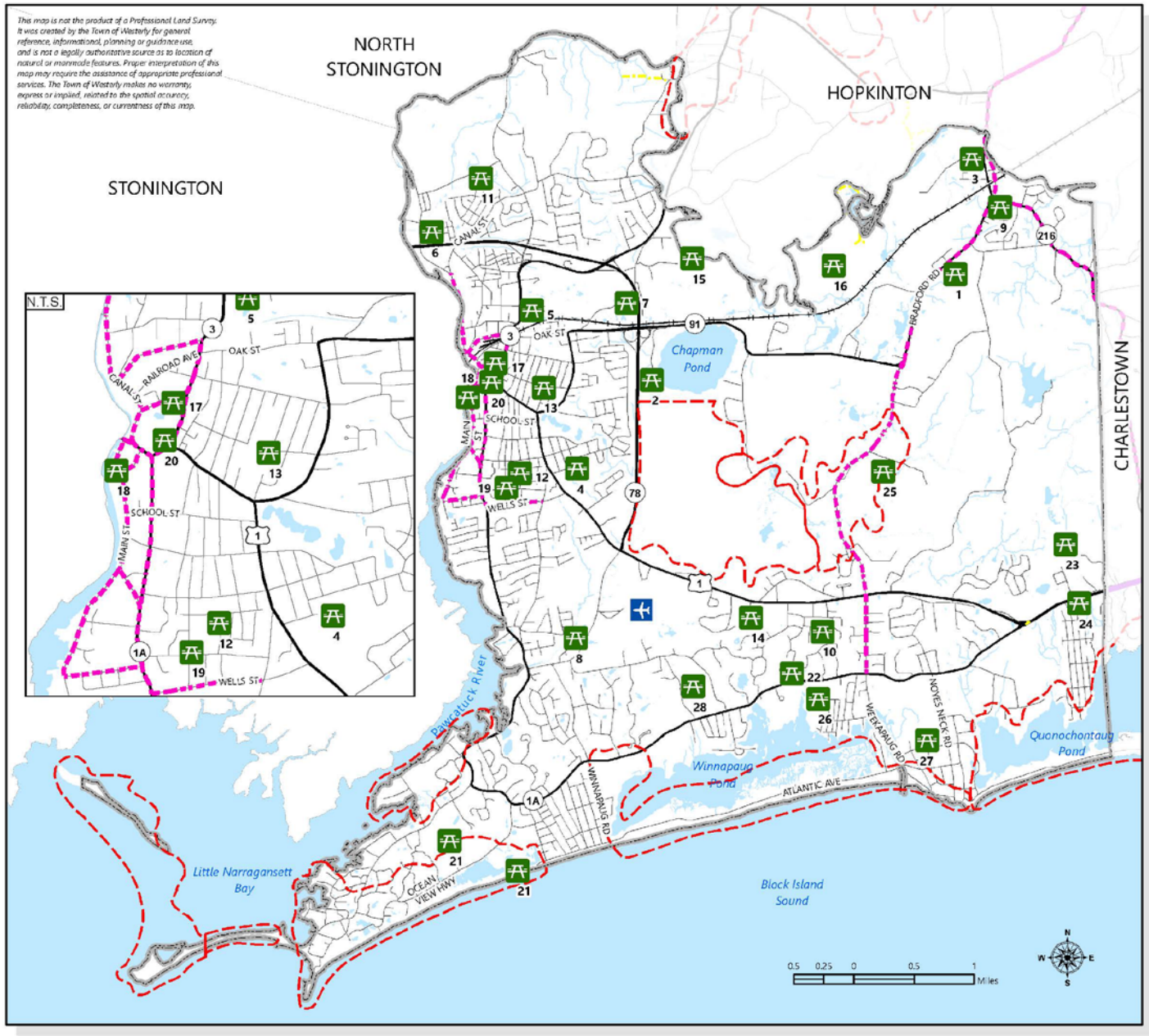
Legend

- Neighborhood Planning Area
- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

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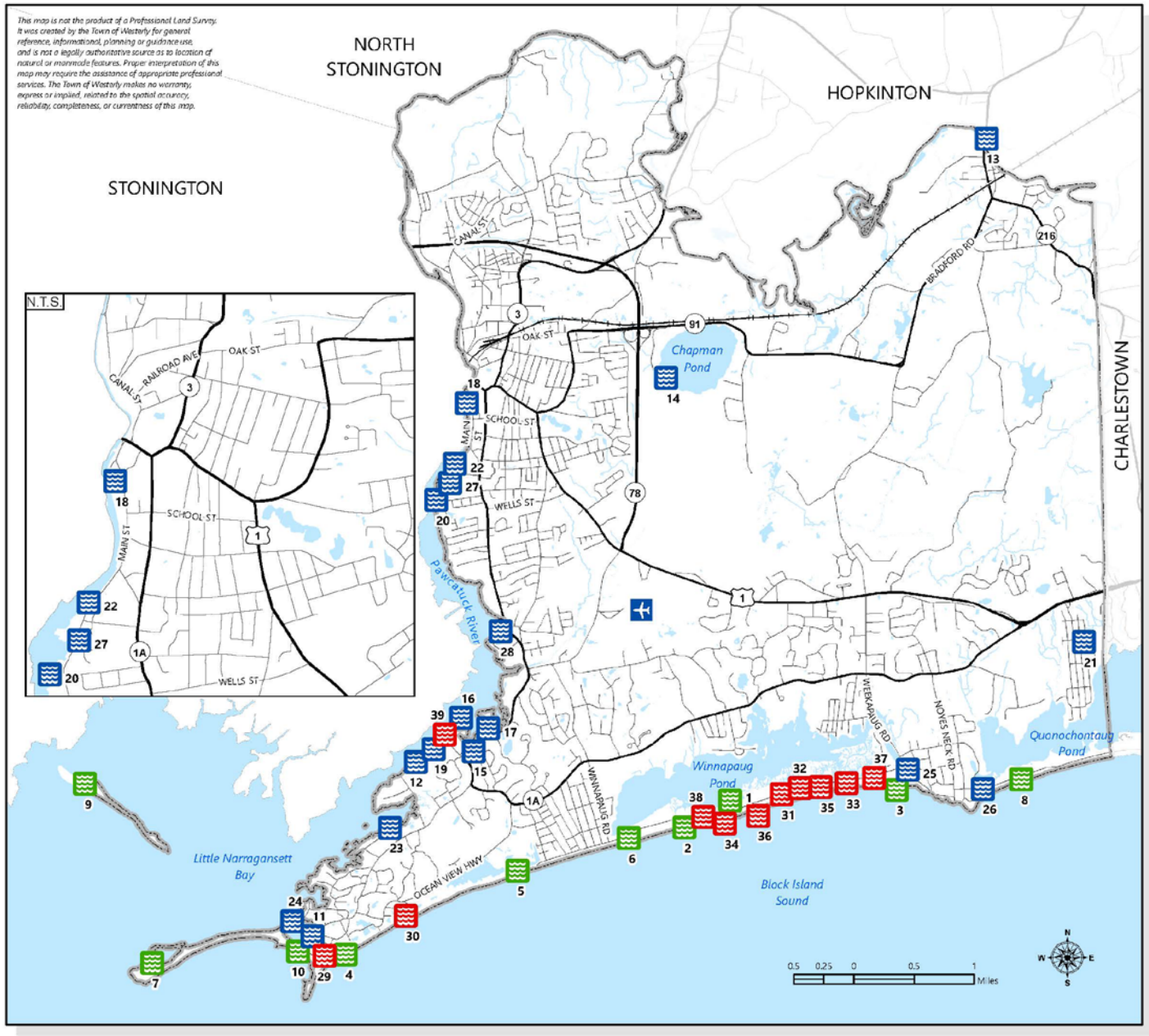
Land-Based Recreation
REC-M1

Legend

- Land-Based Recreation Site
- Scenic Road
- On-Street Bike Route
- Trail
- Scenic Area
- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

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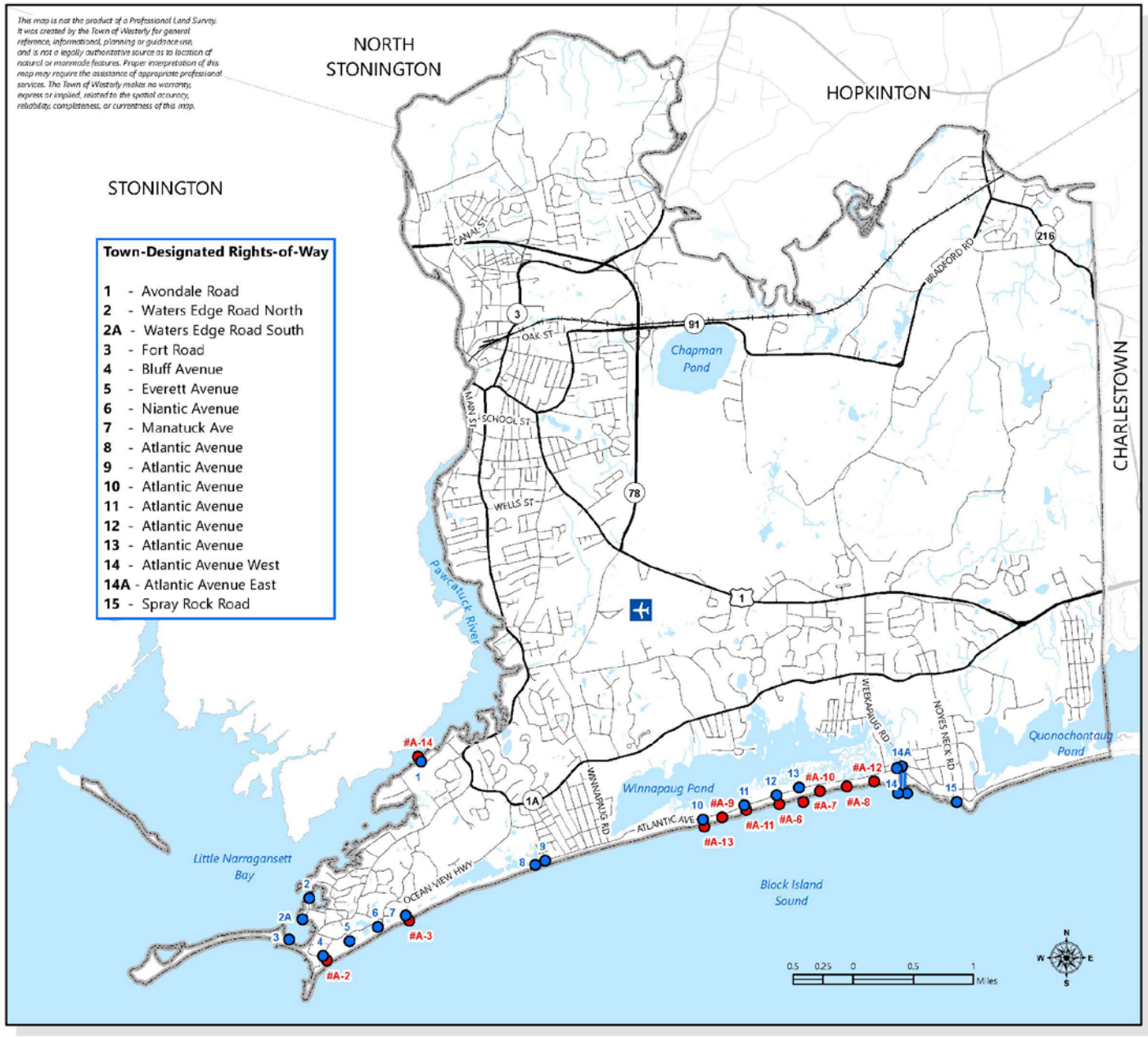
Water-Based Recreation
REC-M2

Legend

- Recreational Boating & Fishing Facility
- Publicly Accessible Water-Basted Recreation Facility
- RI CRMC-Designated Right-of-Way
- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

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Westerly Harbor Management Plan
Rights of Way to the Shore
REC-M3

Legend

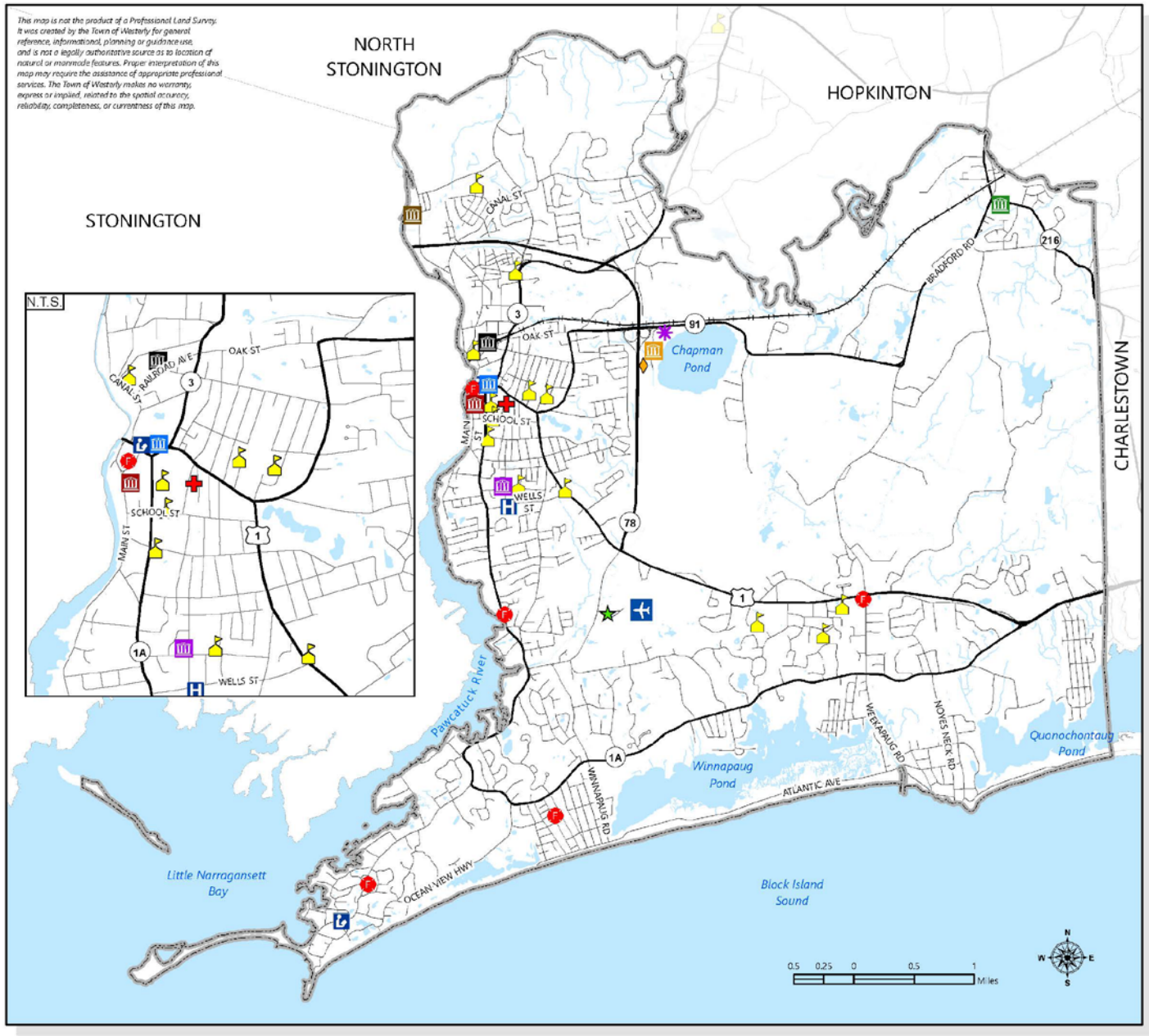
- Town-Designated Right-of-Way
- RI CRMC-Designated Right-of-Way
- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

RI CRMC-Designated Rights-of-Way

#A-2 - Bluff Avenue
#A-3 - Manatuck Avenue
#A-6 - Atlantic Avenue #1
#A-7 - Atlantic Avenue #2
#A-8 - Atlantic Avenue #4
#A-9 - Atlantic Avenue #5
#A-10 - Atlantic Avenue #6
#A-11 - Atlantic Avenue #7
#A-12 - Atlantic Avenue #8
#A-13 - Atlantic Avenue #9
#A-14 - Lotteryville Marina

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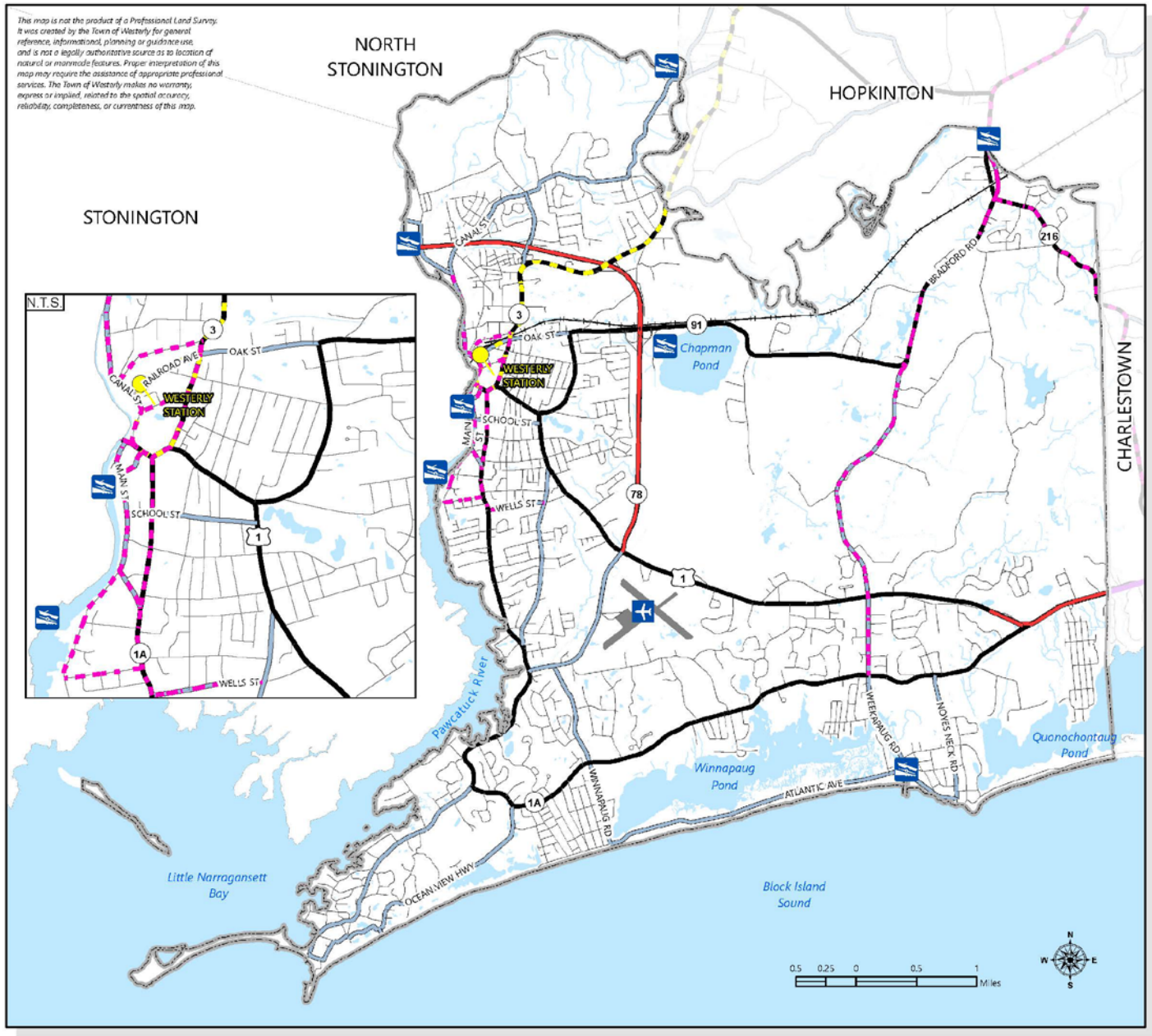
Public Facilities
SAF-M1

Legend

- Westerly Town Hall
- Recreation Department
- DPW-Highways
- DPW-White Rock
- Westerly Armory
- Senior Center
- PACE Adult Day Center
- Library
- School
- Hospital
- Fire Station
- Police Station
- Westerly Ambulance Corps
- State Facility
- Active Solid Waste Facility
- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Westerly State Airport
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railroad

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2020 Comprehensive Plan

Transportation
TRANS-M1

Legend

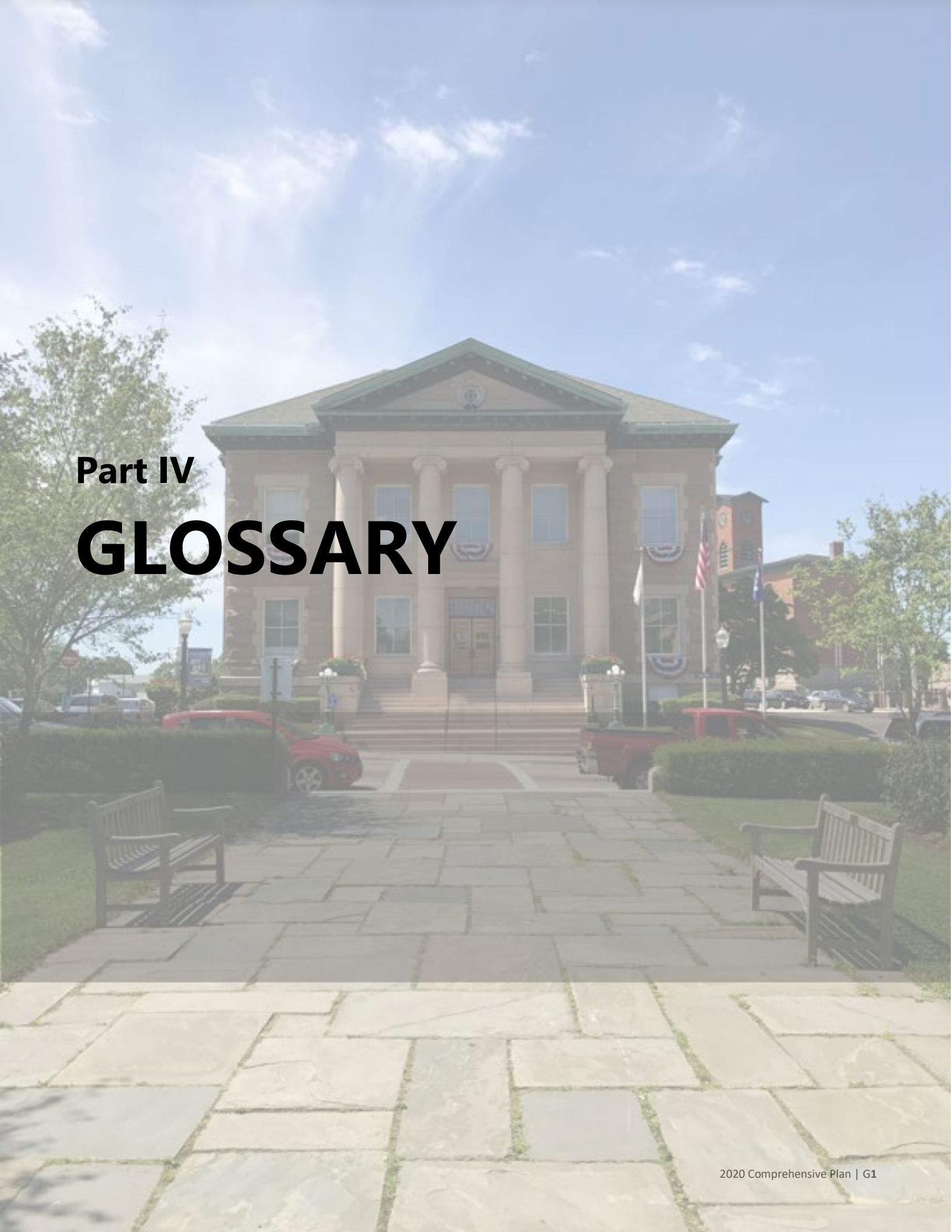
- Westerly State Airport
- Public Boating/Fishing Access
- RIPTA Fixed Bus Stop
- RIPTA Fixed Bus Route

Road Classifications

- Interstate Highway & Expressway
- Arterial Roadways
- Collector Roadway
- Local Roadway
- Scenic Road
- On-Street Bike Route
- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Town Boundary
- Railroad

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Part IV
GLOSSARY

ACRONYMS, INITIALISMS, & SHORT FORMS

A

ACS	American Community Survey
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AirBnB	Air Bed & Breakfast
APOD	Aquifer Protection Overlay District
AV	Autonomous vehicle

B

BDA	Bradford Dyeing Association
BFD	Bradford Fire Department OR Bradford Fire District
BMP	Best management practice
BTU	British Thermal Unit

C

CAO	Certificate of Apartment Occupancy
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant
CDC	Community Development Corporation
CHAS	Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy
CIS	Composite Index Score
CIP	Capital Improvement Program
CMP	Congestion Management Process
CMS	Congestion Management System
CommerceRI	Rhode Island Commerce Corporation
ConnDOT	Connecticut Department of Transportation
CPTC	Connecticut Public Transportation Commission
CRMC	Coastal Resource Management Council
CRMP	Coastal Resources Management Program
CRS	Community Rating System
CSA	Community-supported agriculture
CSO	Combined sewer overflow
CWA	Clean Water Act

D

DBA	Westerly-Pawcatuck Downtown Business Association
DCFD	Dunn's Corners Fire Department OR Dunn's Corners Fire District
DHW	Domestic hot water
DPW	Department of Public Works

E

EB	General Dynamics/Electric Boat
ECM	Energy conservation measure
EDC	Economic Development Commission
EDR	Environmental Data Resources, Inc.
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
EUI	Energy Use Index
EV	Electric vehicle

F

FAR	Floor Area Ratio
FBC	Form-Based Code
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FLUM	Future Land Use Map
FMR	Fair Market Rent
FTE	Full-time equivalent
FY	Fiscal Year

G

GED	General Education Diploma
GI	Green infrastructure
GIS	Geographic Information System

H

HABS	Historic American Buildings Survey
HAER	Historic American Engineering Record
HAMFI	HUD Area Median Family Income
HID	High-intensity discharge
HMI	Housing Market Index
HMIS	Homeless Management Information System
HNRI	Housing Network of Rhode Island
HUD	United States Department of Housing and Urban Development

I

IBHS	Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety
i.e.	In essence

J

JCAHO	Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations
JCI	Johnson Controls, Inc.

K

KOH	Potassium hydroxide
kWh	Kilowatt-hour

L

LED	Light-emitting diode
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
LMI	Low-to-moderate income
LSC	Living Supplies Closet
LUST	Leaking underground storage tank

Sept 4, 2020

ACRONYMS, INITIALISMS, & SHORT FORMS

M

MBA	Misquamicut Business Association
MBTA	Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
MBTUs	Million British Thermal Units
MFD	Misquamicut Fire Department OR Misquamicut Fire District
MGD	Million gallons per day
MIOX	Mixed-Oxidants
MLS	Multiple Listing Service
MoE	Margin of error
MSA	Metropolitan Statistical Area
MS4	Municipal separate storm sewer system
MTA	Metropolitan Transportation Authority

N

NAMI	National Alliance on Mental Illness
NEC	Northeast Corridor
NECTA	New England City and Town Area
NEIWPCC	New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NFPA	National Fire Protection Agency
NHA	Natural Heritage Area
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOI	Notice of Intent
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
NPS	National Park Service
NRCS	National Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWEA	Northwest Evaluation Association
NWS	National Weather Service

O

OCCC	Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce
OCCF	Ocean Community Chamber Foundation
OSDRI	Operation Stand Down Rhode Island
OWMP	On-site Wastewater Management Plan
OWTS	On-site wastewater treatment system

P

PAYT	Pay as you throw
PFAS	Perfluoroalkyl substance
PNC	Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center
PRISM	Partnership for Rhode Island Streetlight Management
PVC	Polyvinyl chloride
P-TECH	Pathways in Technology Early College High School

R

RFP	Request for proposal
RIAC	Rhode Island Airport Corporation
RIAP	Rhode Island Agricultural Partnership
RICH	Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless
RICNPCP	Rhode Island Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program
RICRMC	Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council
RIDE	Rhode Island Department of Education
RIDEM	Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
RIDLT	Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training
RIDOH	Rhode Island Department of Health
RIDOT	Rhode Island Department of Transportation
RIEMA	Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency
RIFPC	Rhode Island Food Policy Council
RIGIS	Rhode Island Geographic Information System
RIGL	Rhode Island General Law
RIHPHC	Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission
RIIB	Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank
RINHP	Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program
RINHS	Rhode Island Natural History Survey
RIPDES	Rhode Island Pollution Discharge Elimination System
RIPTA	Rhode Island Public Transit Authority
RIPUC	Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission
RIRC	Rhode Island Rivers Council
RIRRC	Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation
RISCA	Rhode Island State Council on the Arts
RIWRB	Rhode Island Water Resources Board
RPCP	Rivers Policy and Classification Plan
RtI	Response to intervention

S

SAMP	Special Area Management Plan
SCORP	State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
SCCAA	South County Community Action Agency

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ACRONYMS, INITIALISMS, & SHORT FORMS

SCHH	South County Home Health
SEAT	Southeast Area Transit District
SHAB	State Housing Appeals Board
SHFD	Shelter Harbor Fire Department OR Shelter Harbor Fire District
SHMP	State Hazard Mitigation Plan
SLE	Shoreline East
SLOSH	Sea, Lake, and Overland Surges from Hurricanes
SLR	Sea level rise
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SPRW	Special resource protection waters
STEP	Sustainable Tourism Eco-Certification Program
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Program
SWMP	Stormwater Management Plan

T

Thm	Therm
TIP Program	Transportation Improvement
TMDL	Total maximum daily load
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
TOD	Transit-Oriented development
TSA	Tax Stabilization Agreement

U

UCMR Monitoring Rule	Unregulated Contaminant
UConn	University of Connecticut
URI	University of Rhode Island
US	United States
USACE Engineers	United States Army Corps of
USB	Urban Services Boundary
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey

V

VRBO	Vacation Rental-by-Owner

W

WAN	Wide Area Network
WARM	Westerly Area Rest and Meals, Inc.
WCCC	Washington County Coalition for Children
WCCU	Westerly Community Credit Union
WEC	Westerly Education Center
WFD	Westerly Fire Department OR Westerly Fire District
WHBO	Watch Hill Business Organization
WHFD	Watch Hill Fire Department OR Watch Hill Fire District
WHPA	Wellhead protection area
WIC	Women, Infants, and Children
WKFD	Weekapaug Fire Department OR Weekapaug Fire District
WLT	Westerly Land Trust
WMLT	Westerly Municipal Land Trust
WPD	Westerly Police Department
WPWA	Wood-Pawcatuck Water Association
WRAP	Westerly Regional Arts Partnership
WRF	Westerly Revolving Fund
WRHS	Wood River Health Services
WST	Westerly State Airport
WWTF	Wastewater Treatment Facility

Y

YE	Year end
YNHHS	Yale-New Haven Healthy System

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TERMS & CONCEPTS

The following descriptions are provided to explain and identify the meaning of certain planning terms and concepts referred to in this Plan that may not be well-known to some readers. They are not intended for use as legal definitions.

A

Affordable by design
Residential dwelling units that cost less to own or rent because they are smaller, more efficient, and have fewer amenities, such as in-unit storage, in-unit laundry, and/or off-street parking space.

Age-friendly
Efforts to promote an environment which improves the health, participation, and security of older adults by enabling them to age safely in a place that is comfortable for them, to be free from poverty, to continue their personal development, and to contribute to the community.

B

Best management practice
A procedure, process, rule, or other type of high-quality water pollution control.

Bikeability
The extent to which the built environment and public realm is welcoming to the active presence of bicyclists living, shopping, visiting, enjoying, travelling, or spending time in an area.

Built environment
The environment that contains all physical, human-made parts of where people live and work, such as buildings, streets, and open spaces, that influence a person's physical and mental activity.

C

Community food system
A food system in which all components are sustainable and integrated to enhance the economic, environmental, nutritional, and social wellbeing of a defined area.

Community-supported agriculture
An economic model in which an agricultural producer, such as a farmer, sells or otherwise supplies a specified number of goods directly to local consumers.

Complete street
A street that provides people, regardless of age or level of ability, with safe and accessible options for multiple travel modes, including walking, bicycling, using public transit, and operating or riding in a motor vehicle.

Culinary tourism
Unique, memorable, and sometimes untraditional eating and drinking experiences that offer authentic sense of place.

F

Form-Based Code
A land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm for people by using physical form, rather than a separation of land uses, as the predominant organizing principle.

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TERMS & CONCEPTS

G

Green infrastructure — A cost-effective, resilient stormwater management approach designed to reduce and treat stormwater at its source while delivering environmental, social, and economic benefits by using vegetation, soils, and other natural elements and practices.

Growth center — A municipally-designated and State-approved area which encompasses a core of commercial and community services, residential development, and natural and built landmarks and boundaries that provide a sense of place.

H

Housing Tourism — A sector of the tourism industry which uses associations of private homeowners to welcome and host visitors for a brief or extended experience to share a community or region's heritage, history, architecture, craftsmanship, and/or cuisine.

Human scale — The extent to which the built environment and public realm is designed to be experienced by people walking at a casual pace rather than while driving or riding in a motor vehicle.

K

Knowledge-based industry — An economic subsector characterized by a dependence on high skill levels, information, knowledge, and modern technology.

N

Nature Tourism — Travel for the purpose of enjoying underdeveloped natural areas or wildlife.

Neighborhood plan — A document presenting a vision and strategy to guide change within a contiguous, often predominantly residential portion of an urban area.

New economy — A service-based industry which is characterized by high growth, innovation, and a use of or reliance on modern technology.

P

Parking maximum — A land development regulation that sets a limit on the number of parking spaces which can be provided or otherwise assigned to a single commercial, industrial, or residential dwelling unit.

Place-based — An approach to economic development that uses a community's attractiveness and quality of life as a tool for the growth and vitality of its wealth and resources.

Placemaking — The practice of creating, enhancing, and expanding a community's large-scale and small-scale assets to improve its overall attractiveness and quality of life.

Public realm — The publicly accessible space around, between, and within buildings, encompassing streets, squares, parks, and other open spaces, that supports and facilitates the experiences, lives, and social interaction of people.

TERMS & CONCEPTS

Q

Quality of opportunity
The condition of circumstances and possibilities for people to advance their personal and professional development.

R

Recreational tourism
Active participation in some recreational activity or participating in a sport or cultural event as spectator.

S

Smart city
A municipality that uses a combination of computing devices and other technologies to derive data from multiple components of the urban area and use the processed and analyzed information to improve the experience and lives of the urban area's residents and visitors.

Smart growth
An approach to development that encourages a mix of building types and uses, diverse housing and transportation options, and community engagement.

Strong town
A municipality that focuses on its contemporary conditions and undertakes a process of continuous adaptation through small, incremental steps, rather than large-scale or legacy-based projects, to positively impact its future.

Sustainable city
A municipality which actively plans for the social, economic, and environmental impacts of its actions to maintain and increase its resiliency for existing and future residents and visitors.

T

Transit-oriented development
The creation of a compact, walkable, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use area concentrated around a high-quality group travel system, such as a passenger train, which reduces or eliminates dependence on a motor vehicle to conveniently maintain a person's quality of life.

U

Urban
Relating to, or being characteristic of, a concentration of people within a defined area, such as a town, and the impacts of those people on the pre-existing natural environment within and surrounding the defined area.

Urban agriculture
The cultivation, processing and distributing of an agricultural product or service, including food, horticultural crops, composting, aquaponics, aquaculture, and hydroponics, in an area with little or no direct access to natural resources.

W

Walkability
The extent to which the built environment and public realm is welcoming to the active presence of pedestrians living, shopping, visiting, enjoying, travelling, or spending time in an area.