City of Woonsocket, Rhode Island

2012 Comprehensive Plan

Adopted by the Woonsocket Planning Board on June 22, 2010
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Revised and Approved by the Rhode Island Department of Administration on January 3, 2012

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Re-Adopted by the Woonsocket City Council on April 4, 2012
Approved by the Rhode Island Department of Administration on _____

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INTRODUCTION

2011 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

This document is an update to the City of Woonsocket's Comprehensive Plan and supersedes any and all previous iterations of the Woonsocket Comprehensive Plan. Woonsocket's original Comprehensive Plan received approval by the state on November 29, 2002. Woonsocket's Comprehensive Plan is organized into eight distinct yet interrelated Elements. Each Element is designed to provide specific direction toward the implementation of the City's central goal. That goal is:

> *To promote and enhance the quality of life for present and future residents of the City, by making Woonsocket an attractive and sustainable place to live, work, recreate, and do business.*

This broad-based document discusses current community conditions, expected future trends, and new initiatives, challenges, and opportunities in Woonsocket. This plan sets out a vision for the future direction and development of the community by identifying updated goals, policies, and implementation actions across each of the eight plan Elements. These eight Elements are:

- Heritage Corridor (HC)
- Housing (H)
- Economic Development (ED)
- Natural and Cultural Resources (NCR)
- Open Space and Recreation (OSR)
- Services and Facilities (SF)
- Circulation (C)
- Land Use (LU)

Format of the 2011 Update

The 2011 Update has been designed to be a comprehensive, yet streamlined Comprehensive Plan. Demographic data in the tables and figures have been updated to reflect the most-recent data available. The maps have been recreated, wherever possible, using spatial geographic software and all of the maps have been reformatted to aid in electronic posting and replication of the 2011 Update. The 2011 Update also includes a section that discusses the public participation process employed to complete the plan update. This public participation process included two public surveys, a series of focus group sessions, and a schedule of public hearings leading to the adoptions of the plan update.

In addition to the eight updated Elements and the summary of the public participation process, the 2011 Update also contains a revised Goals and Policies Report and a revised Implementation Report. These reports are a status update of the goals and policies and

implementation activities as identified in Woonsocket's 2002 Comprehensive Plan. Where appropriate, goals and policies have been updated, modified, or deleted based on community changes. The Goals and Policies Report discusses these changes. In addition, achieved, outdated, or irrelevant implementation activities have been deleted from the 2011 Update. The Implementation Report explains these changes.

Background

The City of Woonsocket was formed in 1871 by the coalescence of six mill villages clustered on either side of the Blackstone River, and incorporated as a city in 1888. The city saw an extraordinary boom period of industrialization that lasted well into the twentieth century. The deindustrialization of the Northeast affected Woonsocket, resulting in a net and continual loss of population since the 1950s.

Woonsocket is a city of distinct character and presence. Its physical quality is defined, in part, by a rough topographic profile. The steeply sloping terrain is so prevalent that in the Social Area of the City, the exceptional difference of its landform has resulted in it being called the "Flatlands." The old sections of the City show remarkable achievements of building in areas with great physical constraints.

Certainly the determining influence on Woonsocket's physical character and development is the presence of the Blackstone River, which twists its way through the entire City. The power engendered in the rapid descent of the river, especially at Woonsocket Falls, led to the clustering of mill villages in the area which eventually coalesced to become the Town, and then the City of Woonsocket.

The City's special character is not only defined by its physical presence: its social character also has a distinctive quality. A small city, in a small state, Woonsocket is close-knit and inward-looking, with the positive attributes of a shared identity and feeling of community. The self-contained nature of the City may be rooted in the fact that it was for many years a predominantly French-Canadian enclave in an English speaking state.

Woonsocket's residents are hard working and mostly working class, with strong ethnic and family ties. With a local daily newspaper, two local radio stations and local cable programing, the citizens of Woonsocket are kept well informed and communicate freely about local issues and events. They recognize the need for high quality employment opportunities for City residents to keep the educated younger generation in Woonsocket.

Woonsocket's population has declined from a high of 50,211 in 1950 to 41,186 in 2010. Table A-1 illustrates the age structure of the population change from 1980 to 2010. The City has been historically, and still is, a magnet for newly immigrating populations. School Department enrollments and information from human services providers indicate that the City has experienced an influx of immigrant groups since the 1980's census, mostly Southeast Asians and Hispanics of various nationalities. Tables A-2, A-3, and A-4 show a variety of demographic information on the racial and ethnic makeup of the City. Overall, the percentage of minority residents in the City

stands at 22.3%. The largest minority group in the City is Hispanic/Latino, making up just over 14.2% of the population.

TABLE A-1
AGE STRUCTURE OF POPULATION: 1980 - 2010

YEAR	**1980**		**1990**		**2000**		**2010**	
Total Pop.	45,914		43,877		43,224		41,186	
	Number	*%*	*Number*	*%*	*Number*	*%*	*Number*	*%*
Under 5	3,257	7.1	3,353	7.6	3,287	7.6	3,118	7.6
5 to 9	3,295	7.2	2,982	6.8	3,266	7.6	2,626	6.4
10 to 14	3,735	8.1	2,620	6.0	2,901	6.7	2,563	6.2
15 to 19	3,989	8.7	2,942	6.7	2,780	6.4	2,635	6.4
20 to 24	3,966	8.6	3,582	8.2	2,912	6.7	2,778	6.7
25 to 34	6,742	14.7	7,894	18.0	6,625	15.3	5,969	14.5
35 to 44	4,199	9.1	5,720	13.0	6,360	14.7	5,408	13.1
45 to 54	4,444	9.7	3,760	8.6	5,166	12.0	5,963	14.5
55 to 64	5,134	11.2	3,900	8.9	3,338	7.7	4,678	11.4
65 to 74	4,009	8.7	3,882	8.8	3,031	7.0	2,527	6.1
75 +	3,144	6.8	3,242	7.4	3,558	8.2	2,921	7.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Note: Numbers and/or percents may not add to total due to rounding.

TABLE A-2
POPULATION BY RACE: 2010

YEAR	**2010**	
Total Population	41,186	
	Number	*%*
White alone	32,011	77.7
Black or African American alone	2,621	6.4
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	184	0.4
Asian alone	2,240	5.4
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	16	0.0
Some other race alone	2,333	5.7
Two or more races	1,781	4.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010

TABLE A-3
MINORITY POPULATION: 2010

YEAR	**2010**	
Total Population	41,186	
	Number	*%*
Not Hispanic or Latino, White alone population	32,011	77.7
Minority population	9,380	22.3

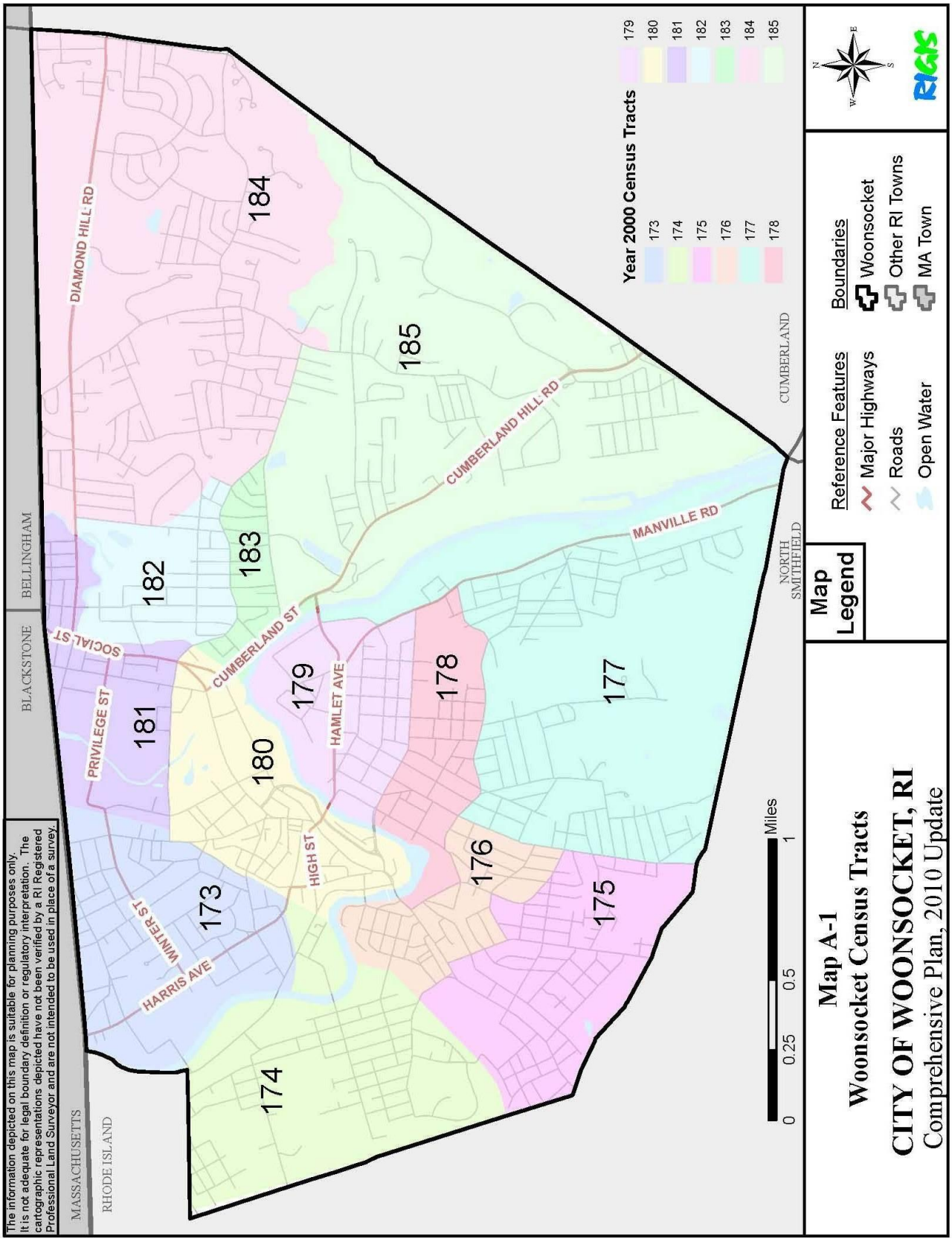
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010

TABLE A-4
HISPANIC OR LATINO POPULATION: 2010

YEAR	**2010**	
Total Population	41,186	
	Number	*%*
Not Hispanic or Latino population	39,341	85.8
Hispanic or Latino population	5,845	14.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010

Though small in population and area, Woonsocket has the urban feel of a city where you can live, work, shop and play. There are nine distinct neighborhood districts in the City as well as a sizable industrial park, home to the headquarters of CVS-Caremark. Map A-1 shows the census tract boundaries within the city and Map A-2 shows the approximate limits of the city's neighborhoods. Woonsooocket has been in the past, and strives to be in the future, a center where its residents and those of the region can find provision for all their daily needs.


The information depicted on this map is suitable for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation. The cartographic representations depicted have not been verified by a RI Registered Professional Land Surveyor and are not intended to be used in place of a survey.
MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
BLACKSTONE
BELLINGHAM
NORTH SMITHFIELD
CUMBERLAND
DIAMOND HILL RD
SOCIAL ST
PRIVILEGE ST
WINTER ST
HARRIS AVE
CUMBERLAND ST
HIGH ST
HAMLET AVE
CUMBERLAND HILL RD
MANVILLE RD
173
174
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178
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181
182
183
184
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Year 2000 Census Tracts
173
174
175
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177
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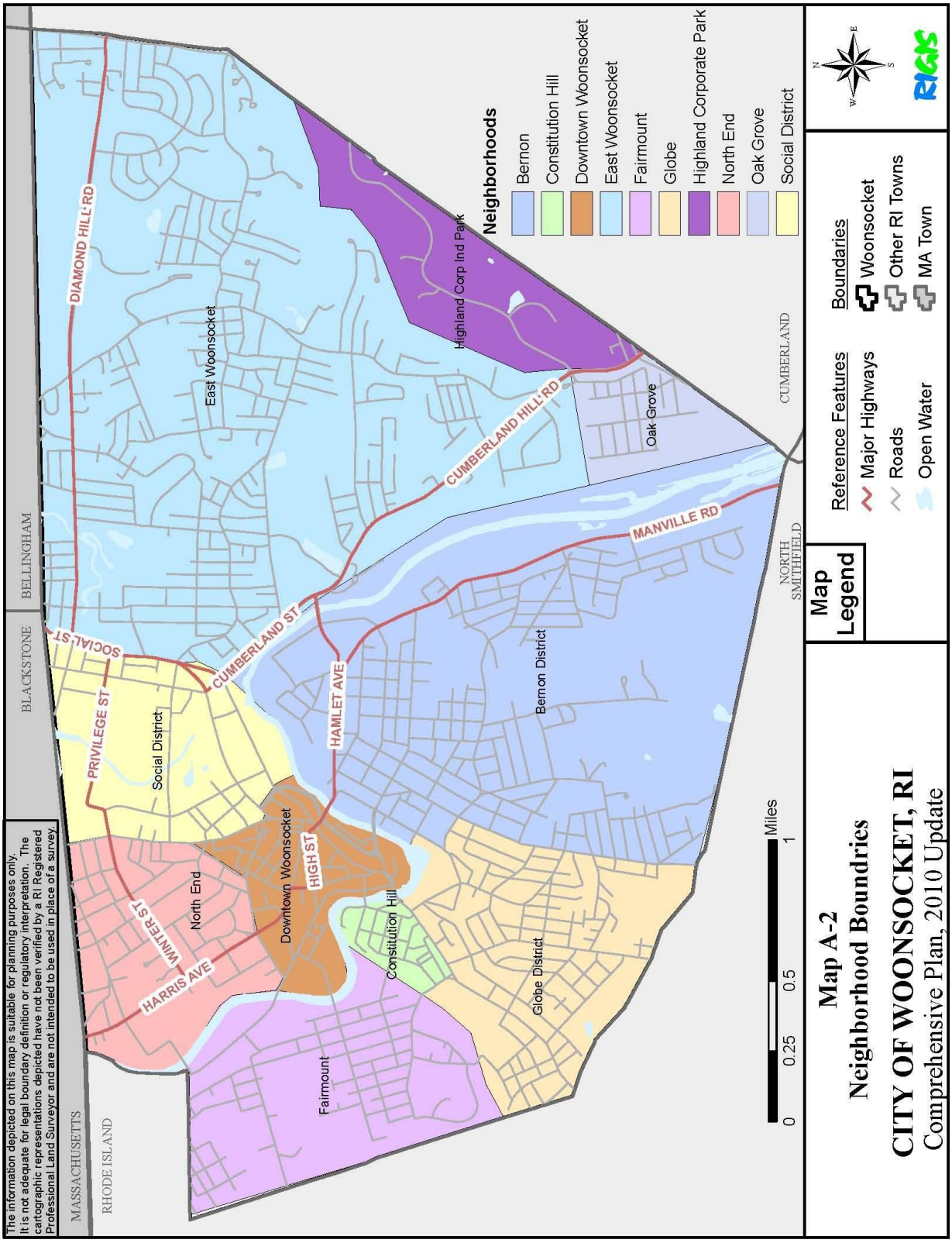
180
181
182
183
184
185
Map Legend
Reference Features
Major Highways
Roads
Open Water
Boundaries
Woonsocket
Other RI Towns
MA Town
0
0.25
0.5
1
Miles
Map A-1
Woonsocket Census Tracts
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update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HAMLET AVE
HIGH ST
WINTER ST
HARRIS AVE
CUMBERLAND HILL RD
MANVILLE RD
Social District
North End
Downtown Woonsocket
Constitution Hill
Fairmount
Globe District
Bernon District
East Woonsocket
Highland Corp Ind Park
Oak Grove
Neighborhoods
Bernon
Constitution Hill
Downtown Woonsocket
East Woonsocket
Fairmount
Globe
Highland Corporate Park
North End
Oak Grove
Social District
Map Legend
Reference Features
Major Highways
Roads
Open Water
Boundaries
Woonsocket
Other RI Towns
MA Town
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
Map A-2
Neighborhood Boundries
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update

HERITAGE CORRIDOR ELEMENT

The City has chosen to include this Element as a demonstration of its commitment to the successful development of the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor. It consists of a set of goals which seek to both protect and enhance the significant historic, cultural and physical resources of the Heritage Corridor within the City of Woonsocket. These goals are an expression of the local community, the State of Rhode Island, and the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission.

CURRENT CONDITIONS AND ISSUES

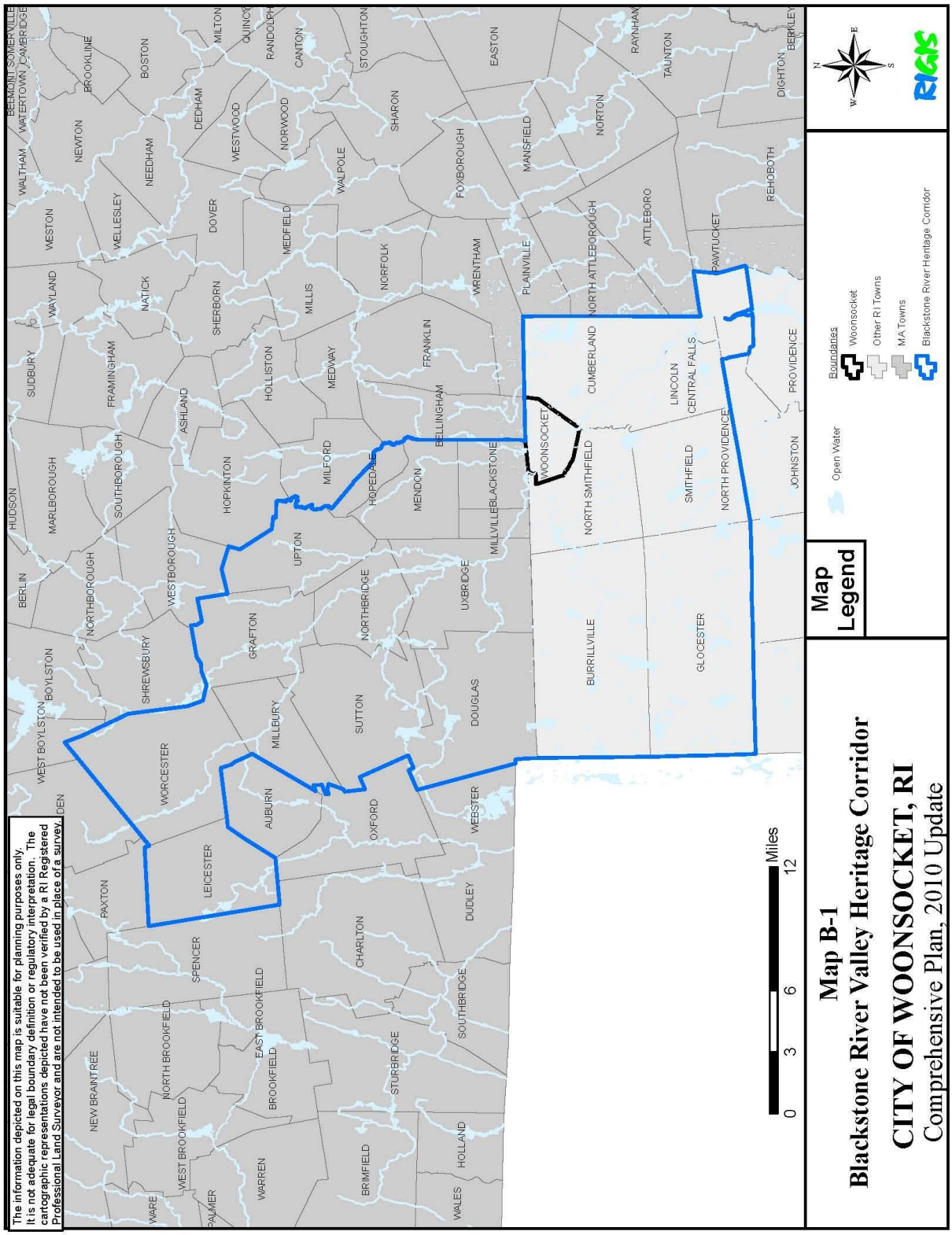
Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor

The Blackstone Valley was the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution. The waters of the Blackstone River powered this country's first textile mills. In recognition of the historical and cultural significance of this area, in 1986 the United States Congress established the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. The City of Woonsocket is located at the heart of this Heritage Corridor. Congress created this corridor in order to "preserve and interpret for future generations the unique and significant contribution to our national heritage of certain historic and cultural lands, waterways and structures" within this area. The Blackstone River Valley is a special type of National Park; it is a living landscape that contains thousands of natural, cultural and historic treasures. In 1996 and again in 2006, Congress reauthorized the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, assuring its presence through at least 2011.

The Heritage Corridor encompasses twenty-four towns within the Blackstone River Valley and watershed from Worcester, Massachusetts to Providence, Rhode Island. It is a "unified, working landscape" tied together by the Blackstone River, the Blackstone Canal and the Providence & Worcester Railroad. Map B-1 shows the boundaries of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.

The Valley is historically significant for many reasons. It is the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution, influencing the rest of the country through the industrial use of water power and the development of the Rhode Island System of Manufacturing. It is an area characterized by ethnic and religious diversity. The Valley's remarkable history is revealed in its concentrations of historic, cultural, and natural resources that have survived through the past two centuries. Today, the Blackstone Valley's unique qualities remain as a result of ongoing preservation efforts that protect the Valley's special resources. The context of a "working valley" of mill villages, farms, cities and towns, transportation systems, river and canal is what makes the individual elements of the Blackstone River Valley significant.

The Blackstone River Valley is this country's second designated National Heritage Corridor and the first bi-state National Heritage Corridor. To be a successful initiative, there needs to be strong coordination and consistency between the federal government, the States of



Rhode Island and Massachusetts, the Heritage Corridor Commission, interested private parties, and all of the Valley's municipalities: Worcester, Leicester, Millbury, Grafton, Sutton,

Northbridge, Upton, Hopedale, Douglas, Uxbridge, Mendon, Millville, and Blackstone, Massachusetts, and Woonsocket, North Smithfield, Cumberland, Lincoln, Central Falls, Pawtucket, Smithfield, Glocester, and Burrillville, Rhode Island.

The United States Congress established a Valley-wide commission, the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, which consists of local and state members nominated by the Rhode Island and Massachusetts governors and appointed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. The early mission of the Commission was to "assist in the development and implementation of an integrated resource management plan" for the Heritage Corridor. This resulted in the Heritage Corridor's official adoption in 1990 of its Cultural Heritage and Land Use Management Plan. This Plan identifies seven action areas for focusing its efforts in the Valley. These seven areas are coordination and consistency, historic preservation, environmental conservation, land use management, recreation, economic development, and tourism.

In 1997, the Heritage Corridor Commission adopted an amendment to its Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan, entitled “The Next Ten Years.” This amendment sets out four Core Commitments of the Commission’s work. These four Core Commitments are 1) to tell the story of the American Industrial Revolution to a national audience and shape a visitor experience which makes this story accessible to large numbers of people; 2) to promote preservation and new life for the Valley’s older village centers, mills, and other historic resources; 3) to assist local communities in balancing conservation and growth; and 4) to reaffirm an active commitment to improving the health of the river system.

Within each of these seven areas and four commitments, the City of Woonsocket supports the goals of the Commission’s Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan for the Heritage Corridor. Woonsocket intends to work within the framework established by the Heritage Corridor Commission and to develop and implement its own integrated cultural, historical, and land resource management programs for the purpose of retaining, enhancing, and interpreting the significant assets of the lands, waters, and structures within the Heritage Corridor.

Land Use and the Built Environment

The national significance of the Blackstone River Valley rests in the sheer number and quality of the Valley’s historic structures, and heritage landscapes that remain intact from the time of the Industrial Revolution and earlier. Many of Woonsocket’s historic structures, its former mills and historic storefronts are concentrated in Woonsocket’s central core, on the city’s historic Main Street and along the banks of the Blackstone River. These historic buildings and structures are valuable resources for both the community and the greater Blackstone Valley region. Unfortunately, for several decades since the decline of the manufacturing industry, many of these historic resources sit idle or underutilized. The city’s historic Main Street struggles with high vacancy rates in the commercial storefronts and has been unsuccessful at encouraging upper-floor residential uses in these buildings. Many of the former textile mills that make up the historic fabric of the Blackstone River Valley are also idle or underutilized, although others have seen substantial renovation and adaptive reuse in recent years. These structures are threatened by the risk of fire or demolition, yet fire and building code requirements have made it difficult to

renovate and rehabilitate historical properties. Woonsocket is challenged to devise sustainable solutions to these issues in ways that preserve Woonsocket's critical historical and cultural position within the context of the larger Blackstone River Valley region. The structures built during this former era do pose unique reuse challenges because the building stock is not always easily adapted to modern-day spatial and functional needs. In order for Woonsocket to fully capitalize on its position at the center of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, the city must encourage appropriate preservation and adaptive reuse of its historic built environment.

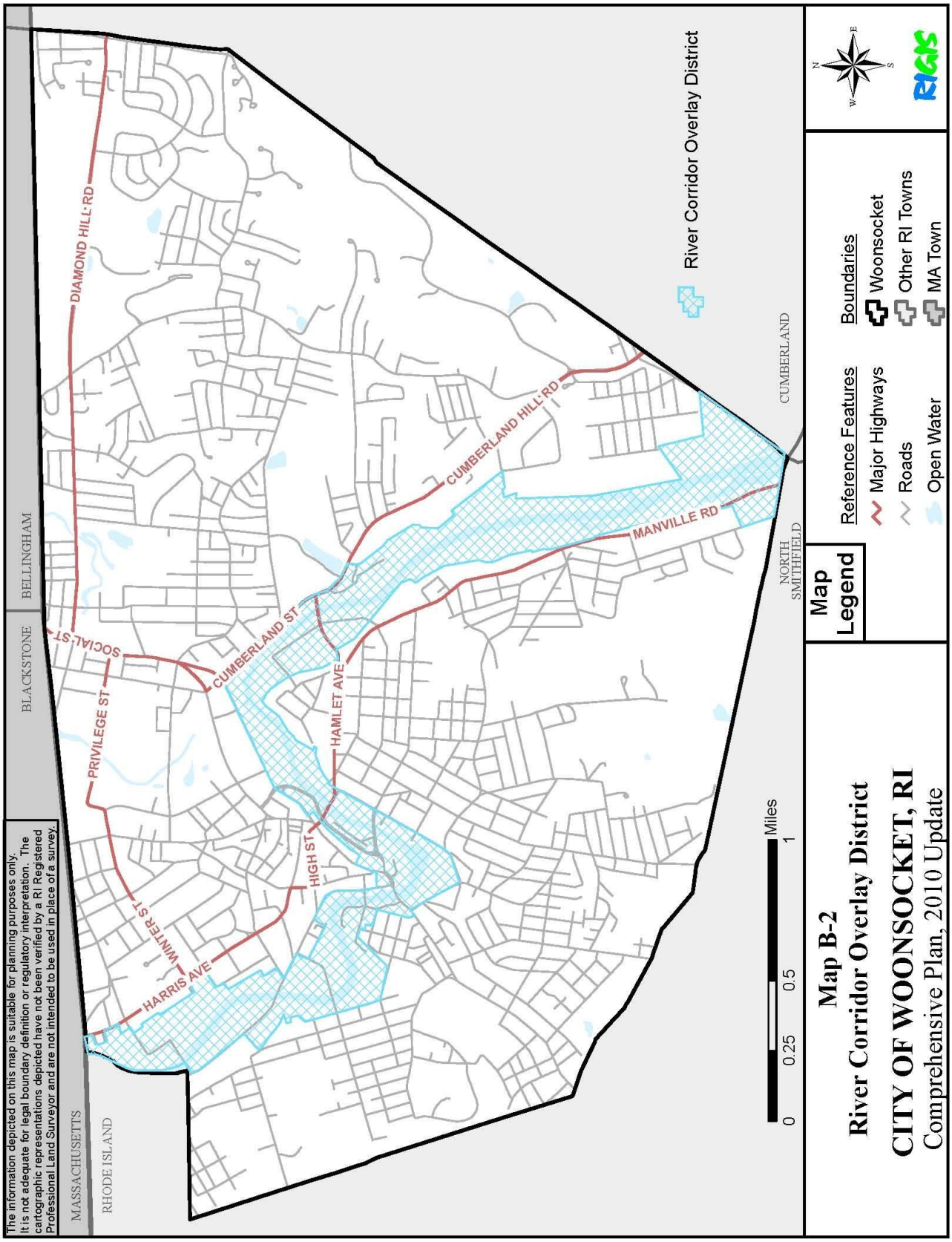
Woonsocket's pattern of land use has changed since the early time of industrialism. During the industrial era, the city's commercial and manufacturing land uses were concentrated in the downtown core and the riverfront area. Now these land uses are primarily located on the outskirts of the city in the Highland Corporate and Woonsocket Industrial Parks and along the major commercial artery, Diamond Hill Road. Mill complexes built along the river now present opportunities to meet such differing needs as light industry, retail, and housing. Several recent successful mill-to-condominium conversion projects in the city highlight the changing land-use patterns in the community.

Transportation systems at once comprise the old patterns of land use and greatly influence their evolution. Growth necessitates the expansion and/or creation of new networks to accommodate more people and newly developed areas. A sensitive relationship clearly exists between increasing and improving transportation systems and preserving the historic, cultural and natural landscapes which contribute to the history and quality of life in the Valley. Alternative and multi-modal methods of transportation such as bus service, bike paths, commuter rail, and river travel provide opportunities in the future to better connect Woonsocket with the surrounding Blackstone Valley communities.

Land use along and adjacent to the River can have a tremendous effect on the environmental and visual quality of the River, and of the Valley as a whole. A Blackstone River Overlay Zone has been enacted to better regulate the future land use in these most critical areas. This overlay zone is shown in Map B-2. The city also has a Design Review Overlay District, which regulates new commercial and mixed-use developments throughout the community. This regulatory tool can and should be used to ensure that new commercial and mixed-use developments are sensitive to the historical context of Woonsocket as a Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor community.

Conservation and Environmental Protection

While a rich industrial heritage has left valuable resources throughout the landscape of the Valley, the nature of the manufacturing industry has also created a legacy of environmental woes. Industrial properties, particularly those along riverways, often contain toxic wastes and hazardous materials which pose serious deterrents to the reuse and development of these properties. Woonsocket has inherited a significant inventory of lands and buildings which are wholly or partially unusable due to this problem. The following Plan Element, Natural and Cultural Resources, discusses the brownfields situation in Woonsocket in greater detail.



Map B-2
River Corridor Overlay District
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update

In a recent public survey, undertaken as part of this Comprehensive Plan Update, community members voiced clear and strong support for protecting the Blackstone and its tributaries, the Mill and Peters Rivers, as the primary natural resource in the Blackstone Valley. As Woonsocket turns to its rivers and riverbanks as rediscovered community resources, a comprehensive approach is needed to reclaim these important lands and waters. The related issues of public ownership of the riverbanks, increased public access to rivers, improved water quality, expansion of water-related recreational activities, and preservation and interpretation of historic resources associated with these rivers must be the focus of policy guidelines for the city, state, and Blackstone Valley region.

Regional Planning and Cooperation

The existence of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission has helped strengthen the identity of the Blackstone Valley as a regional entity with a common heritage and a common resource: the Blackstone River. With a number of Valley-wide projects underway, there is a sense among communities that the Valley as a whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Recent developments within the Heritage Corridor include the ongoing bi-state Blackstone River Bikeway project, a Blackstone Valley commuter rail initiative, heritage festivals throughout the region, increased canoe and kayak access points into the Blackstone River, and public park and conservation land development adjacent to the Blackstone River, among other regional projects create opportunities to improve the quality of life for Woonsocket residents to draw new populations and visitors to the city and the region.

Woonsocket has made strides towards becoming more of a tourist destination. The city is actively involved in efforts to capitalize on the recreational amenities and heritage tourism potential of Woonsocket’s part of the Blackstone River Valley. In conjunction with the Heritage Corridor Commission and the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Woonsocket plays host to a variety of events including kayak races, heritage festivals, and concerts at its downtown riverfront park, River Island Park. The City also partners with these and other regional entities in support of the Blackstone River Bikeway project, the Blackstone Valley commuter rail initiative, and the River’s Edge Recreational Complex project. Both the Bikeway project and the River’s Edge Recreational Complex support the Heritage Corridor Commission’s mission to develop park space along the Blackstone River and to increase public access to the Blackstone River. Woonsocket’s new middle school campus, with its public athletic fields, has been constructed alongside the Blackstone River, providing additional riverside acreage to the public. The Blackstone River Bikeway and the River’s Edge Recreational Complex projects are discussed in greater detail in the Open Space and Recreation Element. The Blackstone Valley commuter rail initiative project is discussed in greater detail in the Circulation Element.

The completion and opening of the Museum of Work and Culture at the former Lincoln Textile Complex site in downtown Woonsocket is the centerpiece of the city’s efforts to showcase its historical and cultural significance within the Valley. This interactive museum presents the compelling story of the French Canadians who left the farms of Quebec for the factories of the New England area. It tells the remarkable story of a people's preservation of their faith, language, and customs and their acculturation into the working class of America. The museum's exhibits

recreate the unique Woonsocket experience while also telling a broader story of hope, struggle and perseverance. The Museum of Work and Culture plays a central role in the heritage tourism economy of the Blackstone Valley and secures Woonsocket's prominent place in the Valley. The Museum also serves as a downtown Visitor Center and plays a key role in the rehabilitation of Main Street and Woonsocket's downtown. Furthermore, the Museum at the Visitor Center contributes significantly to the cultural life of the City and serves as a point of community pride.

NEW INITIATIVES

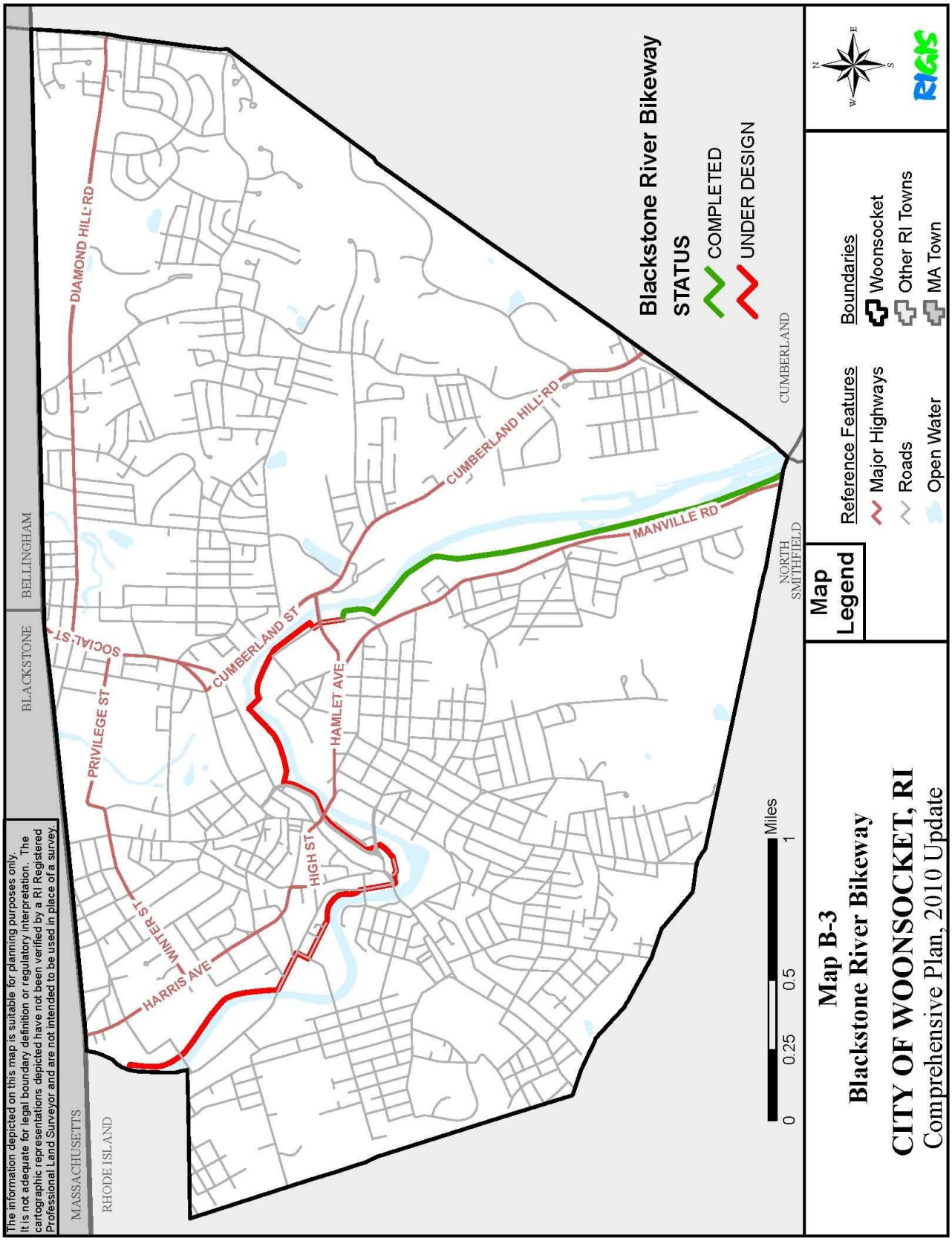
Blackstone River Bikeway

The City of Woonsocket actively supports the ongoing efforts to complete the Blackstone River Bikeway project. This bikeway, once completed, will extend forty-eight miles from Providence, Rhode Island to Worcester, Massachusetts and will connect the region with other statewide bikeways, such as the East Bay Bikeway. Currently, just over 10 miles of the Blackstone River Bikeway are open to the public in Rhode Island, spanning through Central Falls, Lincoln, Cumberland, and Woonsocket. In Woonsocket, the bikeway ends at the entrance to the River's Edge Recreation Complex at Davison Avenue. The next planned segment will extend the bikeway into downtown Woonsocket and through to the North Smithfield border. In the State of Massachusetts, 2.5 miles of bikeway are complete in Worcester and Millbury. When completed, the bike path project will result in a mostly off-road alternative transportation facility passing through the historic John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. The Blackstone River Bikeway will serve as an alternate mode of transportation for commuters as well as the region's premiere multi-use recreational facility. This bi-state linear State Park along the Blackstone River will connect New England's second and third largest cities and serve a population of more than 1 million. The bikeway will link many of the Valley's significant natural and historic features.

The bikeway is being developed thanks largely to federal transportation funding. The cooperative efforts of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Massachusetts Highway Department, and the Rhode Island Department of Transportation with support from Valley communities, are making the bikeway a reality. Map B-3 shows the entire stretch of the Blackstone River Bikeway, both existing and future sections.

Commuter Rail

Woonsocket supports the resumption of commuter rail service within the Blackstone Valley. From 1847 until 1960, Woonsocket residents could board trains at the Woonsocket Depot on Main Street and travel to Providence or Worcester along the Providence & Worcester Railroad. The growing trend towards alternative and intermodal modes of transportation,


The information depicted on this map is suitable for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation. The cartographic representations depicted have not been verified by a RI Registered Professional Land Surveyor and are not intended to be used in place of a survey.
MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
BLACKSTONE
BELLINGHAM
CUMBERLAND
NORTH SMITHFIELD
DIAMOND HILL RD
SOCIAL ST
PRIVILEGE ST
CUMBERLAND ST
HAMLET AVE
HIGH ST
WINTER ST
HARRIS AVE
CUMBERLAND HILL RD
MANVILLE RD
Blackstone River Bikeway
STATUS
COMPLETED
UNDER DESIGN
Map Legend
Reference Features
Major Highways
Roads
Open Water
Boundaries
Woonsocket
Other RI Towns
MA Town
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
Map B-3
Blackstone River Bikeway
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update

increased awareness of the value of mass transit, and a rising interest in rail transportation within the state and the region have inspired the city to examine whether the resumption of passenger commuter rail service within the Blackstone Valley along the Providence & Worcester Rail Road is feasible. The City completed two commuter rail studies with grant funding from the RI Statewide Planning Program's Challenge Grant Program. The first study, completed in 2007 and entitled: *A Commuter Rail Feasibility Study for Woonsocket, Rhode Island,* examined the city's commuter rail potential, broadly, and determined that commuter rail service from Woonsocket to Providence, along the existing P&W rail line was feasible. A second study, completed in 2009 and entitled: *Intrastate Commuter Rail: Woonsocket to Warwick,* examined in greater depth a future passenger rail service along the P&W line with continued service to the T.F. Green airport in Warwick. This study concluded that commuter rail service through the southern section of the Blackstone Valley from Woonsocket to Providence (and on to Warwick) was a feasible and competitive project, one that should be prioritized as the State's next rail project. It is hoped that once this service was realized, the next logical piece would be to examine extending the commuter rail service northward to Worcester, Massachusetts, thereby connecting the entire Blackstone Valley via rail. Woonsocket will continue to advocate for the creation of commuter rail service connecting Woonsocket with Providence, Warwick, and eventually, Worcester.

Regional Planning in the Blackstone Valley

The communities in the Blackstone Valley have been linked, physically, economically, and culturally since the time of the Industrial Revolution. These communities share a common heritage, a unique history, and a valuable natural resource: the Blackstone River. The Blackstone River Valley is now a recognizable region within the state. The Valley is recognized for its unique mixture of urban centers, mill villages, and farm towns and for its strong sense of history. Woonsocket benefits from being part of this larger region and the city plays a key role in the identity that is the Blackstone Valley. Retaining the special assets and characteristics that make the Valley what it is and strengthening Woonsocket's identity as a Blackstone Valley community will be critical goals into the future. The strength of the Valley communities is derived from their shared experiences and histories. In order to retain the historical and cultural identity of the Blackstone River Valley, a greater emphasis on regional planning will be critical.

In response to this need for a more regional planning approach, the former Blackstone Valley Partnership was developed to address regional issues in the Valley such as water, economic competitiveness, land use, and transportation and to build greater regional cooperation around strategic projects. While the Blackstone Valley Partnership does not currently exist, there is hope to reinstate this network of regional stakeholders whose mission was to strengthen and unite the communities of the Valley through a regional approach to planning, transportation, and land use. Woonsocket is committed to actively engaging in a regional planning process for the Blackstone Valley because strengthening the Valley as a whole strengthens Woonsocket. The City has a goal of strengthening its identity as a Blackstone Valley community through affiliation with this group.

GOALS AND POLICIES

The following goals and policies have been developed to guide the protection and enhancement of the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor:

GOAL HC-1
The City's historical, cultural, and natural resources are protected and preserved in an integrated manner.

POLICY HC-1.1
Protect the Blackstone River and its tributaries as the primary natural resource in the Blackstone Valley. *(also see POLICY NCR-2.1c on page E-47)*

IMPLEMENTATION HC-1.1a
Form alliances between government, local businesses, landowners, regional foundations, and environmental advocacy groups such as the Trust for Public Land and the Nature Conservancy to ensure that key natural resources are protected.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-1.1b
Increase public awareness and appreciation of natural resources by supporting public education and outreach on environmental issues in the community.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-1.1c
Advocate with surrounding communities, the EPA and RIDEM for a collaborative, regional, watershed-based approach to hazardous waste cleanups and brownfields remediation.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-1.1d
Explore tax incentives, including deferment, for businesses instituting stricter pollution controls.

POLICY HC-1.2
Preserve Woonsocket's significant historic structures as valuable heritage resources in the Blackstone Valley.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-1.2a
Pursue technical assistance and funding to continuously update and evaluate the Statewide Historical Preservation Report.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-1.2b
Collaborate with the public to gather public support for a local Historic Districts Commission.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-1.2c
Identify and establish additional local historic districts under the authority of a local Historic Districts Commission.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-1.2d
Support and encourage applications of National Register nominations and, once applicable, local historic zoning proposals.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-1.2e
Identify historic properties that are threatened by development pressures, deterioration or inadequate resources, and take proactive steps to prevent the loss of these resources.

GOAL HC-2
Woonsocket maintains its Blackstone Valley character through an integrated approach to land use management.

POLICY HC-2.1
Protect key historic, cultural and natural resources utilizing zoning regulations and incentives as tools.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-2.1a
Ensure that all new developments within the River Corridor Overlay District are reviewed by the River Corridor Commission.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-2.1b
Develop design guidelines for the Design Review Overlay District in accordance with the Heritage Corridor's Design Review Manual.

POLICY HC-2.2
Require land use near rivers, streams, wetlands, and restrictive soil areas to be environmentally sensitive.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-2.2a
Require that low-impact development measures are implemented in new subdivisions and in sensitive environmental area.

POLICY HC-2.3
Develop and maintain conservation areas and parkland along the Blackstone River and its tributaries, consistent with Heritage Corridor goals.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-2.3a
Rehabilitate and maintain the City's existing riverfront parks, including River Island Park, River's Edge, Cold Spring Park, and Costa Park.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-2.3b
Identify and protect land suitable for conservation along the Blackstone River and its tributaries.

POLICY HC-2.4
Support economic development projects and initiatives that complement the unique character of the Blackstone Valley.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-2.4a
Help thriving established local manufacturers, mature industries and businesses to maintain their utilization of old structures.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-2.4b
Establish grant/loan programs for the internal adaptation of older, historic mill buildings and structures to meet industrial needs.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-2.4c
The Design Review Commission's review of new and expanded commercial and mixed-use developments encourages the design of these developments to be sensitive to the historical design context of Woonsocket.

POLICY HC-2.5
Take a pro-active role in local transportation and RIDOT projects to ensure the consideration of historic, cultural and natural features in the design process.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-2.5a
Establish a City liaison to actively review proposed plans and communicate with RIDOT during the design development stage of transportation projects.

GOAL HC-3
Woonsocket is fully integrated into and identified as a critical part of the broader Blackstone Valley region.

POLICY HC-3.1
Interpret the Valley's importance and sponsor activities which lead to public education and engagement about Woonsocket's and the Valley's local historic, cultural, and natural resources and their proper use.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-3.1a
Incorporate interpretive features of historic information into public projects when appropriate, with the assistance of the Woonsocket Historical Society and the Heritage Corridor Commission.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-3.1b
Develop an interpretive education curriculum for grades K-12 involving the School Department, the Conservation Commission, the Historical Society and other key partners.

POLICY HC-3.2
Pursue and support local projects that support the broader goals of the Heritage Corridor.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-3.2a
Research opportunities and apply for grant funds from the Heritage Corridor Commission and other agencies to fund heritage corridor-related local projects.

POLICY HC-3.3
Expand heritage tourism opportunities as a means of preserving Woonsocket's heritage resources and as a sustainable economic development tool.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-3.3a
Continue to support the Woonsocket Visitor Center / Museum of Work and Culture.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-3.3b
Develop a realistic, short-term tourism plan based on a Valley-wide strategy that identifies the key features with tourism potential in Woonsocket that could be tied into a larger series of tourism activities.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-3.3c
Develop and disseminate a Woonsocket tourism map with identified Valley-wide and regional tourism sites.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-3.3d
Advocate at the State level for the continued presence of the Blackstone Valley in the tourism plans for Rhode Island.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-3.3e
Utilize the Blackstone Valley Council's Tourism Plan and the Heritage Corridor Commission's plans as a basis for developing appropriate local tourism strategies and programs.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-3.3f
Collaborate with the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council and the Heritage Corridor Commission for special events promotion, and encourage the continuation of activities such as the Autumn Foliage Train, the Autumnfest, the Dynamite Cook-off, the French Farmer's Market, the Polar Express, the Blackstone Valley Explorer boat tours, and the Greenway Challenge.

GOAL HC-4
Woonsocket is an active supporter of and participant in regional planning efforts within the Blackstone Valley which link the Valley's resources and communities together.

POLICY HC-4.1
Encourage cooperation and consistency with other local communities in planning efforts.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-4.1a
Utilize the Blackstone Valley Partnership as a forum for achieving regional-level planning in the Valley.

POLICY HC-4.2
Actively engage in Valley-wide partnership projects and initiatives which are consistent with the goals of the Heritage Corridor.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-4.2a
Attend the regular meetings and events of the Heritage Corridor Commission, the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Main Street Riverfront Initiative Group, and other similar groups.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-4.2b
Actively pursue commuter rail service in the Blackstone Valley by working with local, state, and federal partners to obtain funding for additional study, design, and construction.

POLICY HC-4.3
Encourage recreation development and programs which emphasize Valley resources and provide links to other communities.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-4.3a
Support the Bikeway as an alternative transportation route and recreational and educational feature.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-4.3b
Establish a reporting schedule with RIDOT and RIDEM on Bikeway progress.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-4.3c
Work with RIDOT and RIDEM to examine access to the Bikeway from key areas off-site, and to ensure compatibility with existing street traffic in the design development of the Bikeway.

IMPLEMENTATION HC-4.3d
Collaborate with and support the Heritage Corridor Commission in the establishment of a greenway along the Blackstone and Mill Rivers.

HOUSING ELEMENT

Shall consist of identification and analysis of existing and forecasted housing needs and objectives including programs for the preservation, improvement and development of housing for all citizens. The housing element shall enumerate local policies and implementation techniques to provide a balance of housing choices, recognizing local, regional and statewide needs for all income levels and for all age groups, including but not limited to, the affordability of housing and the preservation of federally insured or assisted housing. The element shall identify specific programs and policies for inclusion in the implementation program, necessary to accomplish this purpose. (Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act 45-22.2-6)

CURRENT CONDITIONS AND ISSUES

Introduction

Woonsocket has long been home to numerous manufacturing businesses and as a direct result has been populated by a high percentage of hard-working blue-collar workers. The tremendous expansion of the local economy resulting from the industrial revolution in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was the catalyst of Woonsocket's urbanization and development. This development was marked by the construction of modest multi-story wood frame tenements, in a high density configuration, in the Social, Globe, Lower Bernon, Constitution Hill and Fairmount neighborhoods. Large single-family homes for the affluent business owners were constructed in the City's North End. The environment shaped and built during this period is in large part the same one that exists today in many inner-city neighborhoods. Since the 1950's, housing construction in the outlying neighborhoods, while decreasing the amount of undeveloped land in the City, has provided a broader range of housing options for Woonsocket's residents.

Analysis of Past Housing Initiatives by the City of Woonsocket and Surrounding Communities

At the conclusion of World War II, Woonsocket made a substantial commitment to provide family housing for its low and very low income residents. With direct federal financial assistance, sizeable public family housing developments were constructed at Morin Heights and Bourdon Boulevard. This housing has been well-maintained over the years, being periodically renovated by the Woonsocket Housing Authority. Today, it continues to provide quality public housing units to the area's neediest families. When combined with other federal low-income housing programs such as Section 8 and RI Housing's affordable housing stock in the city, there are over 1,600 affordable housing units for families in Woonsocket. In addition, there are over 1,500 public housing, RI Housing, Section 8, HUD 202, and group home housing units in the city for the area's elderly and disabled residents. The majority of these units have been constructed in the form of large high-rise structures in and adjacent to the downtown area. As of 2006, the City of Woonsocket had over 3,000 housing units available for the city's low-income family, elderly, and disabled residents. Table C-1 shows a breakdown of these housing units by type.

As Table C-1 illustrates, Woonsocket hosts over 1,600 units of public and subsidized family units. Table C-2 lists the type and location of the city's public subsidized housing units.

TABLE C-1: ASSISTED HOUSING BY CITY AND TOWN

Location	Elderly					Elderly Total
	RIH	Public Housing	HUD Section 8	HUD 202	Rural Housing Service 515	
Burrillville	113	76	-	53	-	242
Cumberland	255	176	88	61	-	580
Lincoln	120	246	-	-	-	366
North Smithfield	140	-	-	-	75	215
Woonsocket	502	666	87	43	-	1,298
Regional Totals	*1,130*	*1,164*	*175*	*157*	*75*	*2,701*
Providence	2,089	1,129	520	610	-	4,348
Pawtucket	594	629	14	114	-	1,351
Central Falls	289	329	-	14	-	632

Location	Family					Family Total
	RIH	Public Housing	HUD Section 8	Rural Housing Service 515	Other-Family	
Burrillville	198	-	-	-	2	200
Cumberland	106	-	-	-	-	106
Lincoln	93	6	70	-	-	169
North Smithfield	-	-	-	-	14	14
Woonsocket	592	625	415	-	-	1,632
Regional Totals	*989*	*631*	*485*	*0*	*16*	*2,121*
Providence	1,885	1,803	892	-	-	4,580
Pawtucket	649	456	-	-	21	1,126
Central Falls	141	18	-	-	-	159

Location	Special Needs				Special Needs Total
	Group Home Beds	Transitional Units	PSH*	HUD 811	
Burrillville	31	-	-	-	31
Cumberland	52	-	7	-	59
Lincoln	57	-	-	-	57
No. Smithfield	49	-	-	-	49
Woonsocket	97	16	-	49	162
Regional Totals	*286*	*16*	*7*	*49*	*358*
Providence	355	139	295	80	869
Pawtucket	135	4	-	36	175
Central Falls	29	-	8	-	37

Location	LMIH Grand Total	2010 Census: Total Housing Units**	2009 Overall LMIH %
Burrillville	500	6,419	7.79%
Cumberland	746	13,791	5.41%
Lincoln	595	9,062	6.57%
No. Smithfield	381	5,068	7.52%
Woonsocket	3,080	19,214	16.03%
Regional Totals	*5,302*	*53,554*	*9.90%*
Providence	10,079	71,530	14.09%
Pawtucket	2,722	32,055	8.49%
Central Falls	862	7,478	11.53%

Source: RI Housing (Updated April 2010)
* Permanent Supportive Housing
** Total Housing Units less seasonal units

TABLE C-2: LOW AND MODERATE INCOME HOUSING BY TYPE

Housing Type	Name of Development	Location	Program Type	Rental/ Homeownership	Total Number of Units
Elderly	Blackstone Apartments	23 Clinton St.	RIH Elderly	Rental	47
	Chateau Clare	16 Greene St.	HUD Section 8 -Elderly	Rental	87
	Crepeau Court	100 Front St.	Public Housing - Elderly	Rental	153
	Fairmount Heights	525 2nd Ave.	RIH Elderly	Rental	138
	Hanora-Lippett Mills	1 Main St.	RIH Elderly	Rental	117
	John F. Kennedy Manor	547 Clinton St.	Public Housing - Elderly	Rental	198
	Park View Manor	218 Pond St.	Public Housing - Elderly	Rental	150
	Sadwin Apartments	183 Elm St.	HUD 202	Rental	33
	St. Germain Manor	429 East School St.	Public Housing - Elderly	Rental	153
	Sutherland Apartments	462 East School St.	HUD 202	Rental	10
	Veterans Memorial	2 Bourdon Blvd.	Public Housing - Elderly	Rental	12
	Waterview Apartments	300 Privilege St.	RIH Elderly	Rental	100
	Temple Mount Vernon	939 Bernon St.	RIH Elderly	Rental	100
Family	Ashley Court	34-35 West St.	RIH Family	Rental	22
	Burnside Apartments	96 Burnside Ave.	RIH Family	Rental	11
	BVCAP	1044 Social St.	RIH Family	Homeownership	6
	Constitution Hill I	103 Olo St.	RIH Family	Rental	44
	Constitution Hill II & III	141 Olo St.	RIH Family	Rental	47
	Constitution Hill IV	143 South St.	RIH Family	Rental	19
	David Housing	459 Front St.	HUD Section 8 - Family	Rental	21
	Erik Estates	Elm St.	RIH Family	Rental	16

	Glenark Landing	104 Sayles Ave.	RIH Family	Rental	67
	Morin Heights	66 Morin St.	Public Housing - Family	Rental	*298
	Pothier Condos	1044 Social St.	RIH Family	Homeownership	6
	Plaza Village	180 Village Rd.	HUD Section 8 - Family	Rental	228
	Rock Ridge Apartments	181 Rock Ridge Rd.	RIH Family	Rental	114
	St. Ann's Apartments	114-120 Gaulin Ave.	RIH Family	Rental	25
	Veterans Memorial	2 Bourdon Blvd.	Public Housing - Family	Rental	*276
	Village West	128 Cumberland St.	RIH Family	Rental	35
	Vulcan Apartments	32 North East St.	HUD Section 8 - Family	Rental	41
	Walnut Hill Apartments	2085 Diamond Hill Rd.	HUD Section 8 - Family	Rental	125
	Woonsocket NDC	193 Rhodes Ave.	RIH Family	Homeownership	6
	Woonsocket NDC	33 Snow St.	RIH Family	Homeownership	1
	Woonsocket NDC	43 Snow St.	RIH Family	Homeownership	3
	Woonsocket NDC	24 New St.	RIH Family	Homeownership	1
	Woonsocket NDC	10 6th Ave.	RIH Family	Homeownership	3
	Woonsocket NDC	1 Marian Ln.	RIH Family	Rental	9
	Woonsocket NDC	146 Sayles St.	RIH Family	Rental	1
	Woonsocket NDC	719 Front St.	RIH Family	Rental	43
	Woonsocket PHA	44 Jacob Ln.	Public Housing - Family	Rental	51
	Woonsocket Village	182 Cumberland St.	RIH Family	Rental	89
	Temple Mount Vernon	98 Rivulet St.	RIH Family	Rental	24
Special Needs	Leo M. Tanguay Apts.	129 Main St.	HUD 811	Rental	8
	Roland Boucher Apts.	30 Willow St.	HUD 811	Rental	31
	Willow House	444 Willow St.	HUD 811	Rental	10
	Woonsocket Shelter	184 Sayles St.	Transitional Units	Rental	16
	Group Home Beds	--	Group Home Beds	--	96

Source: RI Housing (April 2008)

* In October 2009, the Woonsocket Housing Authority (WHA) submitted a request to HUD for approval to demolition some of these public housing units. If HUD approves this request, these unit counts will be reduced.

In summary, based upon the 2010 statistics developed by RI Housing and the State of Rhode Island, 16.03% of the housing units in the City of Woonsocket are classified as "affordable" to low-moderate income households. Woonsocket fully supports the State of Rhode Island's mandate that all communities work to reach and exceed the state-mandated 10% housing affordability. The conclusion can be drawn, that through the years, Woonsocket's commitment to provide low and very low income housing for area residents has substantially surpassed that of the State's comparable older urban areas.

In Woonsocket, the total number of assisted units has continued to grow during a period of continued overall population decline. In order to achieve the central and priority goals of the Comprehensive Plan, Woonsocket should selectively choose those programs which will not only be a benefit to the continued housing needs of its residents, but help achieve its important

community development goals, which are centered around the provision of low-income homeownership opportunities and achieving a healthier balance between the city's rental and homeownership housing stock.

The City of Woonsocket has developed a homeownership strategy that involves preserving existing homeownership while increasing opportunities for low and moderate income households to become homeowners. This program should include a comprehensive homebuyer education program. The City of Woonsocket has developed the Woonsocket Healthy Homes Programs. The programs involve preserving existing homeownership, creating safe and healthy homes, and increasing homeownership opportunities for low to moderate income households. The repair cost assistance can cover lead hazard reduction and code-related repairs. The funds are distributed in the form of a deferred loan and a forgivable loan.

Homebuyer Assistance – Down payment and other repair cost assistance is available to low-moderate income first-time homebuyers purchasing a home as their principal residence.

Home Repair Cost Assistance – Repair funds for single family homeowners and landlords of affordable rental properties.

The Woonsocket Housing Authority (WHA) is the agency responsible for the operation of public housing units in the City. WHA owns and operates 1,291 units of public housing and 502 Section 8 subsidies. These units are a valuable source of affordable housing for Woonsocket's low and very low income households. Over the years, WHA has begun providing a number of services to their residents. They have implemented family self sufficiency, homeownership, educational, and job training programs for family residents and health services and recreational programs for elderly and disabled residents. WHA's Comprehensive Plan lists detailed plans to comply with handicapped accessibility codes, lead based paint testing and other issues.

NeighborWorks Blackstone Valley (formerly the Woonsocket Neighborhood Development Corporation) is a non-profit entity which has made significant contributions to the revitalization of the City's affordable housing stock. In recent years, NeighborWorks' efforts in the Constitution Hill and Fairmount neighborhoods have resulted in neighborhood revitalization in a neighborhood that had experienced significant disinvestment in its housing stock. NeighborWorks has rehabilitated many multi-family structures in the neighborhood, providing affordable rental units while reversing the neighborhood's visual blight. In addition, NeighborWorks offers several social service programs for area residents which comprehensively address the needs of low and moderate income households in the area.

Sojourner House and Family Resources are two agencies which are addressing the needs of the homeless in Woonsocket. Homeless shelters and other special needs housing are discussed in more detail in the "Significant Issues" section of this element

Analysis of Housing Supply and Demand

Demand

An analysis of the demand side of Woonsocket's housing market requires an analysis of the City's population and household characteristics. Woonsocket has experienced absolute population declines over the past fifty years, but their impact has been blunted by an increase in the number of households residing in the City. This difference is due to the decreasing number of people per household in the City. The City's disproportionately high percentage of elderly residents tends to live alone more often than younger adults. This trend reflects a broader nationwide trend of shrinking household sizes. In 2010, 81% of all households had between 1 and 4 members, while 57% had 1 or 2 members.

Woonsocket's median age is 36.8 years, which is lower than the State's corresponding figure (39.4). Yet, the percentage of those in the 65 years and older category in Woonsocket (13.2%) is similar to the State's percentage (14.4%). A large number of elderly residents reside in the Woonsocket Housing Authority's elderly developments (JFK Manor, St. Germaine Manor, Parkview, and Crepeau Court, as well as other affordable elderly rental developments and nursing homes). The trend of elderly homeowners staying in their homes longer contributes to fewer units becoming available for younger buyers or new residents to the community. Woonsocket's large percentage of elderly homeowners impacts the community through tax abatements to the elderly which reduce the City's revenue.

Upwardly mobile and higher income Woonsocket residents have continued to leave the City, not only for lack of quality educational programs, job opportunities and other amenities (real or perceived), but due to the limited availability of quality higher priced housing units. The trend of higher priced housing units catering to Boston area commuters, that has been seen in nearby communities such as Wrentham, Franklin, and Cumberland has not significantly affected Woonsocket to date. The lack of significant amounts of undeveloped land free of significant constraints causes potential real estate developers to look to surrounding suburban communities.

In general, Woonsocket is considered to be quite "land poor." Some undeveloped residential land does exist, however, and should be developed with respect for its natural constraints, and compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods. Out of approximately 2,800 acres of residential land in the City, approximately 250 acres (9%) are undeveloped. Of the undeveloped residential land, approximately 90 acres are "developable" based on having frontage on an accepted public street.

Woonsocket's minority population has increased significantly during the past decade from 7% in 1990 to nearly 20% in 2000 to 22.3% in 2010. A large percentage of this increase is from groups whose first language may not be English, particularly Asians and Hispanics. Table C-3 shows the change in race by household between 1990 and 2000 to 2010, according the US Census.

TABLE C-3: RACE BY HOUSEHOLD, 1990-2010

	1990		2000		% Change 1990-2000	2010		% Change 2000-2010
	Number	%	Number	%		Number	%	
Total Households	17,572	100.0	17,771	100.0	1.1	19,214	100.0	8.12
Total Minority Households	*1,183*	*6.7*	*3,533*	*19.9*	*198.6*	*4,529*	*23.5*	*28.2*
Asian	327	1.9	486	2.7	48.6	668	3.5	37.4
Black	368	2.1	734	4.1	99.5	955	5.0	30.1
American Indian/Alaska Native	27	0.2	63	0.4	133.3	69	0.4	9.5
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander**			6	0.03	--	8	0.04	3.3
Other	118	0.7	679	3.8	475.4	748	3.9	10.2
Hispanic Origin*	343	2.0	1,158	6.5	237.6	1,693	8.8	46.2
White (Not Hispanic)	16,732	95.2	15,024	84.5	-10.2	14,226	74.0	-5.3
Two or More Races**			407	2.3	--	388	2.0	-4.7

* Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

** This group was not categorized until 2000.

Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000 and 2010

Woonsocket's household median income according to the 2005 – 2009 American Community Survey Estimates was $41,001, which trails that of the region and the State. In 2009 it was only 73.8% of the statewide median, which in 2009 was $55,569. This income statistic is partially offset by the pricing of comparable housing in Woonsocket being below other Rhode Island communities. For instance, in 2008, the median selling price for a single-family home in Woonsocket was $180,000 as compared to $234,000 median for the State as a whole. According to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development guidelines, 64% of all persons in the City qualify under the definition of low/moderate income.

Neighborhood stability is one indicator a neighborhood's quality of life. As of 2010, 69% of all City households have lived in the same housing unit for at least five years. This percentage increased from 47% in 2000. Stability is so important to a neighborhood and community. Owner occupancy is, of course, correlated to neighborhood stability, as owners are less likely to move, and are more likely than owners who live elsewhere to invest in their property.

There is a high demand for special needs housing in the City and the surrounding communities. As indicated by local service providers and as a result of the economic recession of 2008/2009, Woonsocket, like most urban areas, has recently experienced a worrisome increase in homelessness over the past years.

Supply

In 2009, the value of the City's housing resources is $1.27 billion dollars. This represents the largest single component of the local economy and tax base. Housing is also one of the costliest day-to-day living expenses incurred by many City households. (See section on demand/supply interrelation for information on the rent burdened population).

Woonsocket's housing supply has steadily increased over time, but despite this growth, the City has an older housing stock. Sixty-two percent (62%) of the City's housing stock was built before 1950. Table C-4 shows the year built for the City's housing stock from pre-1939 to 2009.

TABLE C-4: YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT, 2009

Total Housing Units (%):	18,683 (100.0)
Built 2005 or later	252 (1.3)
Built 2000 to 2004	430 (2.3)
Built 1990 to 1999	543 (2.9)
Built 1980 to 1989	714 (3.8)
Built 1970 to 1979	1,321 (7.1)
Built 1960 to 1969	1,797 (9.6)
Built 1950 to 1959	2,012 (10.8)
Built 1940 to 1949	1,026 (5.5)
Built 1939 or earlier	10,588 (56.7)

Source: American Community Survey Estimates 2005 - 2009

As would be expected, areas of the City with a greater percentage of older units are generally found closer to the City's core. An exception is block group 180-2 which encompasses the Social Renewal Area adjacent to downtown, where few older dwelling units remain after the mass demolition during the 1970's. Younger dwelling units are generally found in East Woonsocket, and in the area surrounding Jillson Avenue.

Woonsocket contains the third highest percentage of renter occupied housing units in the State, trailing only Providence and Central Falls. Sixty-five percent of all occupied dwelling units in the City are renter occupied and thirty-five percent of all occupied units are owner occupied. Map C-1 shows the percent of renter occupied housing units by census block for 2000. As the figure shows, a greater percentage of rental units are found in the City's central core areas.

Approximately 45% of the City's dwelling units are in multi-family structures with between 3 and 9 units. Just over 27% of the housing supply is made up of single-family housing units. An additional 13% of the housing stock is comprised of two-family homes. Woonsocket has a much higher percentage of multifamily dwelling units than does the rest of the State. Over 73% of the City's housing units are in units other than single-family homes, as compared to only 45% Statewide.

The variation in the number of rooms per unit is fairly limited in the City. A little less than half of the housing stock (48%) is composed of 4 or 5 room units, best suited for small or medium sized families. Woonsocket lacks many of the large single family homes that are increasingly popular among families today. There has been very slight increase in units with 1 to 3 rooms, and this is almost entirely due to new additions in the City's housing stock including a significant number of government assisted elderly housing complexes.

When coupled with the age of the majority of the City's housing, renovation is a significant concern. Since 62% of all units were built before 1950, a great deal of the City's housing stock will be affected if renovations are not made. Lack of renovations will lead to

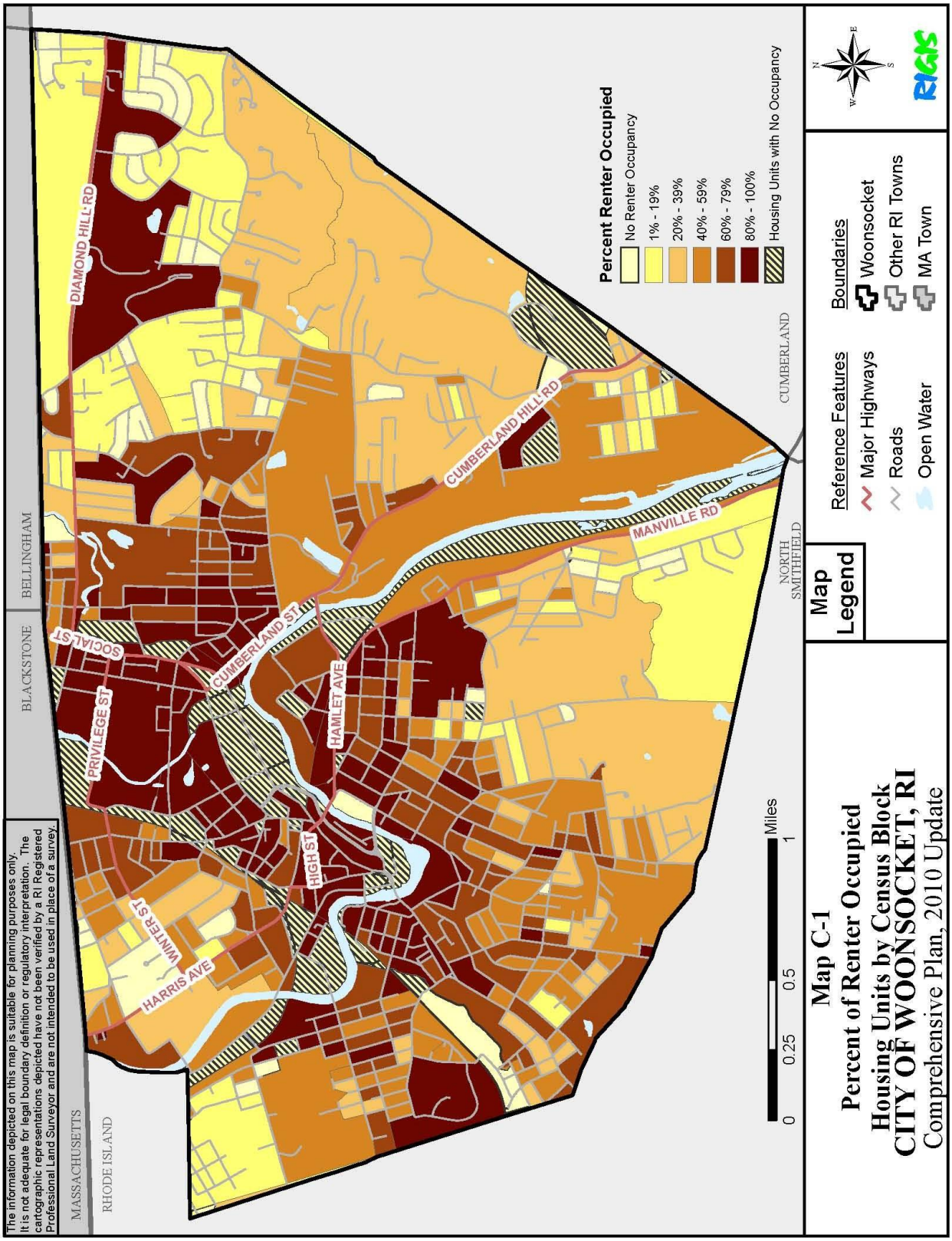
vacancies, demolition, and increased economic segregation in the City's older multifamily neighborhoods, as older tenements become desirable only to the lowest income residents. One hindrance to multi-family and commercial property owners completing renovations is the hardship imposed by fire code changes.

Renovation is also a major concern due to the threat of lead poisoning in the City. Lead poisoning is an issue which directly relates the City's housing stock with the health of its children. Over recent years, Woonsocket has seen a significant reduction in incidents of lead poisoning in its children. According to the *2009 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook*, the percentage of lead poisoning in kindergarten-aged children is 3.0%, which is slightly lower than the State average of 3.1% and is significantly lower than the 5.2% rate of lead poisoning found in other Rhode Island core cities. While any amount of lead poisoning in children is unacceptable, it is encouraging that Woonsocket, especially given the age of its housing stock, has succeeded in reducing the incidents of childhood lead poisoning. Most of this success is attributable to education and outreach, which are critical components to an effective lead hazard program. However, in order to completely eliminate incidents of lead poisoning, the City must continue with its lead abatement assistance programs to homeowners. According to the 2009 American Community Survey Estimates, approximately 90% of Woonsocket's housing stock was built before 1980, making them likely to contain lead-based paint.

Demand and Supply Interrelationships

The interrelationship between demand and supply gives rise to the problems and opportunities facing the citizens and policy makers of Woonsocket in the coming years. Some of the indicators of the success or failures of the local housing market are summarized below:

Vacancy rates have increased over recent years. Earlier Census data (1960-1980) showed vacancy rates ranging from 4% to 5.6%. In 1990, there was a City vacancy rate of 7.4%. By the 2000 Census, this dropped to 5.4%, but increased to 11.2% in 2010. Anecdotal information, analysis of the increasing number of rental ads in the Woonsocket Call and other information indicate that the current number of vacant units may be even higher. This rate substantially exceeds the widely recognized desired vacancy rate of 3.5-5.0%.


The information depicted on this map is suitable for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation. The cartographic representations depicted have not been verified by a RI Registered Professional Land Surveyor and are not intended to be used in place of a survey.
MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
BLACKSTONE
BELLINGHAM
CUMBERLAND
NORTH SMITHFIELD
DIAMOND HILL RD
SOCIAL ST
PRIVILEGE ST
CUMBERLAND ST
HAMLET AVE
HIGH ST
WINTER ST
HARRIS AVE
CUMBERLAND HILL RD
MANVILLE RD
Percent Renter Occupied
No Renter Occupancy
1% - 19%
20% - 39%
40% - 59%
60% - 79%
80% - 100%
Housing Units with No Occupancy
Map Legend
Reference Features
Major Highways
Roads
Open Water
Boundaries
Woonsocket
Other RI Towns
MA Town
0
0.25
0.5
1
Miles
Map C-1
Percent of Renter Occupied
Housing Units by Census Block
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update

The current rate has placed many multi-family housing structures at financial risk. Map C-2 shows the percent of vacant housing units by census block as of 2000.

Figures from the 2000 Census for "Tenure by Occupants per Room" provide an index of the fit of a household to its housing accommodation, an indication of the adequacy of the supply as compared to the physical needs of households. Since 1960, Woonsocket's "Tenure by Occupants per Room" has been steadily declining to 2000 levels where 97% of the City's households occupied quarters with no more than 1 person per room (the Census Bureau's definition of "overcrowding"). In large part, this was due to increasing numbers of smaller households. While it is true that overcrowding is not a significant problem in the City, Woonsocket is nonetheless characterized by some of the highest population densities in the State. Table C-5 lists the people per square mile by Woonsocket Census Tracts.

TABLE C-5
POPULATION DENSITY BY CENSUS TRACT, 2000 - 2010

Census Tract	Square Mileage	2000 Population Density (per./sq.mi.)	2010 Population Density (per./sq.mi.)	% Change
173	0.54	6,443.94	5,968.52	-7.38
174	0.69	6,167.53	6,124.64	-0.7
175	0.50	6,525.78	6,256.00	-4.13
176	0.22	13,288.00	11,636.36	-12.43
177	1.26	2,874.39	2,792.06	-2.86
178	0.25	10,184.11	10,056.00	-1.26
179	0.30	11,019.31	10,163.33	-7.77
180	0.24	7,533.30	11,166.67	48.23
181	0.34	8,101.43	7,420.59	-8.4
182	0.23	10,471.62	11,469.57	9.53
183	0.12	14,413.51	14,741.67	2.28
184	1.56	4,344.87	4,183.97	-3.7
185	1.52	1,905.64	1,862.50	-2.26
Citywide	*7.96*	*7,944.11*	*5174.12*	-34.87

Notes:
27,878,400 sq.ft in a sq.mi.

There are significant variations of income capacities and housing costs across the City's neighborhoods. Yet despite the costs involved, owning a home remains an important aspiration for many residents. Woonsocket has a history of being one of the more affordable communities in Rhode Island for both rental and homeownership. For example, according to Census 2000, the median family income in Woonsocket in 1999 was $38,353. In 1999, the median selling price of a single-family home in Woonsocket was $105,000 with a typical monthly housing payment of $805 (calculated based on Housing Works RI's housing cost formula.) In 1999, this was only 25% of the median household family income and considered quite affordable. "Affordability" is typically defined as paying less than 30% of the household income on housing costs. However, from 1999 to 2008, the average selling price of a single-family home in Woonsocket rose 71% to $180,000. While this is still significantly more affordable than the State median of $234,000, it is nearly certain that Woonsocket's median family income has not risen to keep pace with the rising

cost of homeownership. In Woonsocket, the median family income is 68% of the income needed to afford the average purchase price of a home. This compares favorably with the 60% ratio for the State of Rhode Island.

Renters are devoting greater portions of their income for housing. A "rent burdened" household, as defined by HUD, is one which spends over 30% of its income on rent. HUD defines households which spend over 50% of their income of rent to be "severely rent burdened."

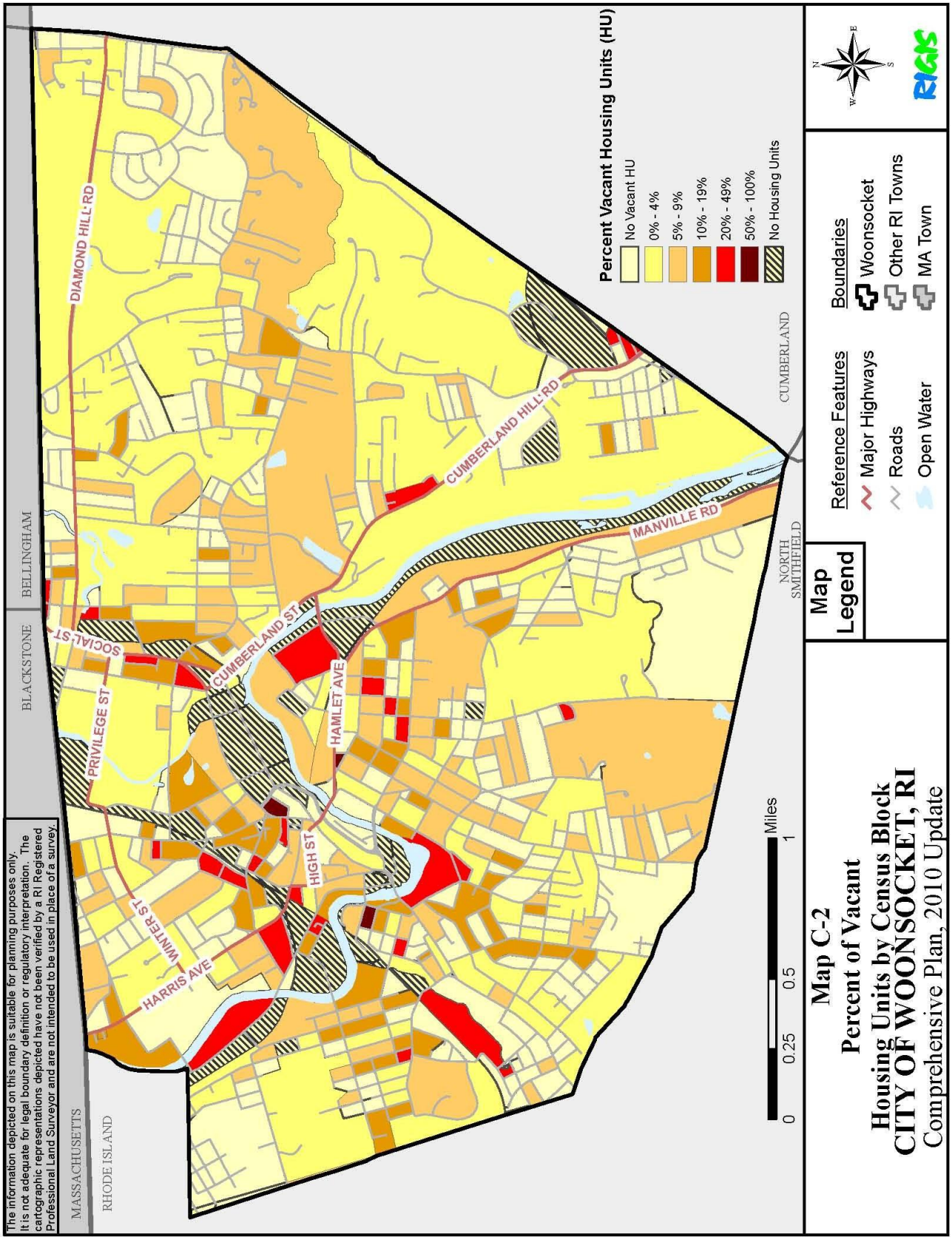
TABLE C-6: GROSS RENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF INCOME: 1980 - 2000

% of Income Spent on Gross Rent	1980		1990			2000		
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	% Change	Number	% of Total	% Change
Less than 20 %	4,325	40.2	3,170	28.8	-26.7	4,346	39.1	37.1
20 to 24 %	1,851	17.2	1,678	15.3	-9.3	1,406	12.7	-16.2
25 to 29 %	1,055	9.8	1,895	17.2	79.6	1,509	13.6	-20.4
30 to 34 %	912	8.5	1,177	10.7	29.1	775	7.0	-34.2
35 % or more	2,608	24.3	3,074	28.0	17.9	3,065	27.6	-0.3
***35 to 39 %*						*481*	*4.3*	--
40 to 49 %						*673*	*6.1*	--
50 % or more						*1,911*	*17.2*	--
Total Rental Occupied Units*	10,751	100.0	10,994	100.0	2.3	11,101	100.0	1.0

* 1990 and 2000 totals do not include households that were "Not Computed" per the census data table.

** Census 2000 data includes greater delineation than previous reports.

Source: U.S. Census 1980 & 1990; Census 2000, Summary File 3 (SF 3), H69 -Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income


The information depicted on this map is suitable for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation. The cartographic representations depicted have not been verified by a RI Registered Professional Land Surveyor and are not intended to be used in place of a survey.
MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
BLACKSTONE
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DIAMOND HILL RD
SOCIAL ST
PRIVILEGE ST
CUMBERLAND ST
HAMLET AVE
HIGH ST
WINTER ST
HARRIS AVE
CUMBERLAND HILL RD
MANVILLE RD
Percent Vacant Housing Units (HU)
No Vacant HU
0% - 4%
5% - 9%
10% - 19%
20% - 49%
50% - 100%
No Housing Units
Map Legend
Reference Features
Major Highways
Roads
Open Water
Boundaries
Woonsocket
Other RI Towns
MA Town
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
Map C-2
Percent of Vacant
Housing Units by Census Block
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update

According to the 2000 Census, and as shown in Table C-6, in 2000, 33% of the City's renters paid 30% or more of their income for rent, up from 28% in 1990. In 2000, 17% of City renters were considered "severely rent burdened." During the ten year period from 1990 to 2000, the percent of total renters using less than 20% of their income on gross rent rose from 29% 38%.

The 2008 Rhode Island Rent Survey found that the average rent for a 2-bedroom apartment in Woonsocket is $976. According to this survey, the average rent prices in the city are the second lowest in the entire State, behind only Central Falls. According to the Housing Works RI 2009 City & Town Fact Sheets, Woonsocket's rent prices are basically affordable when one compares the average private sector wages for jobs in Woonsocket to the income necessary to rent in Woonsocket. Despite Woonsocket's relatively affordable rental units, affordability remains a concern, considering the City's low median income, which ranked fourth in the State in 1990.

Elderly households in the City are disproportionately rent burdened. Forty-five percent of these renters in 2000 were considered "rent burdened," paying more than 30% of their income towards rent.

NEW INITIATIVES

Foreclosures and Homelessness

Woonsocket, like most of the country, experienced a sharp increase in instances of home foreclosure in 2008/2009 with the economic recession. Connected to the general economic downturn, Woonsocket also experienced an alarming increase in homelessness and saw the creation of its first "tent city," set up briefly at a local church. The City needs to develop an improved system of responding to the ebbs and flows of the housing market. The City should set up a system for monitoring home foreclosure rates and develop policies and programs that can assist homeowners avert foreclosure. The City should also institute policies and create programs that mitigate the negative impact of foreclosures on neighborhoods by enforcing building code and minimum housing requirements on foreclosed homes and holding banks accountable for a minimum level of upkeep. The City should assess the effectiveness and capacity of its homeless shelters and work to increase capacity where needed.

Diversify Housing Opportunities

While Woonsocket cannot be compared with surrounding suburban towns, the City would benefit from a more continuous spectrum of housing opportunities. Variety in future housing construction should be encouraged. A wide range of housing types to meet the needs of all current and future residents, from the most affluent to the most needy, will help to establish Woonsocket as an attractive place to live. In addition, efforts should be made to promote Woonsocket's historic neighborhoods and distinctive setting, both of which are attractive to residents desiring an urban atmosphere.

One of the greatest benefits of the mix of the City's housing stock is that it is priced so that a large percentage of its single-family units are eligible for first time homeownership assistance through RIHMFC programs. However, it must be recognized that, due to a lack of financing opportunities for multi-family structures, a significant portion of the City's over-all housing stock is not eligible for similar programs. There is a need for the development of financing opportunities for first time buyers of multi-family structures, to encourage property rehabilitation and increased owner occupancy. Such programs might be run on a City, State or federal level, could include restrictions to prevent speculative property turnover, and would prove especially useful for the rehabilitation of abandoned and tax lien properties. Promotion of increased homeownership throughout the City will assist in the stabilization of Woonsocket's neighborhoods.

There are few large parcels of buildable land left in Woonsocket, and the scarce land that remains faces competition for usage between industrial, open space, and housing needs. Where potential for future housing development does exist on large tracts of land, in the East Woonsocket, Rhodes Avenue and Upper Bernon sections, the City should encourage the development of housing opportunities for all income levels, including higher-income, middle-income/workforce, and affordable housing and should provide stronger incentives for cluster development that retains important topographical and environmental features of these sites. In order to meet the diverse housing needs of Woonsocket’s aging population, consideration should be given to providing a suitable level of senior housing and pertinent regulations, such as the Zoning Ordinance, should be amended to make in-law apartments more feasible as a way of allowing extended families, aging parents, or adult children to live independently in a family homestead. A sunset clause should be built in to the in-law apartment regulation, to ensure that in-law apartments are being used as a means of expanding housing options for the extended families and the city’s senior population and not merely as a means of increasing the intensity of use of the land. Because of the scarcity of land available for development, innovative housing models such as live/work space should also be supported.

The presence of rock out-croppings, steep slopes and wetlands throughout many of these parcels presents an opportunity for creative site design to enhance their natural features. These parcels have, at the same time, the potential for development as either the most attractive or the most ill conceived home sites. Thus, development of these sites will require skillful and creative site planning.

Revitalization and Preservation

Woonsocket's future viability and vitality as a City is dependent on the success of its older neighborhoods in retaining and attracting residents. If its neighborhoods can be nurtured to hold their own in the face of a weakening regional housing market, then this will serve to increase the attractiveness of the City as a whole.

The past decades have witnessed a steadily increasing threat to the quality of life in Woonsocket's older neighborhoods. Some suffer from blighting conditions, social and economic dysfunction and increasing crime. Others are sound but in need of assistance to preserve their ability to compete in the regional housing market. It is important to realize that improvements to

the City's housing stock cannot take place in a vacuum. Neighborhood revitalization and community development initiatives are critical to making the City's neighborhoods desirable places to live, especially its older neighborhoods, where the greatest population losses have occurred over the years. To assist with neighborhood stabilization, the city has a policy of encouraging the reduction of number of housing units in multi-family dwellings in its older, densely populated neighborhoods. Reducing density within multi-family structures (typically considered to be those structures that contain 4 units or more) contributes to neighborhood stabilization by making these buildings more financially viable, allows for more off-street parking, and increases the usable acreage per unit on the site.

Recognizing the need to combine the provision of affordable housing with community development, neighborhood revitalization was established as a priority for both the HOME program and Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG). Neighborhood revitalization requires a combination of homeownership and rental rehabilitation. It is important to promote owner occupancy and to provide funds for the renovation of owner-occupied single family homes. Provision of grant assistance to first-time homebuyers and rehabilitation of single family and rental units for extremely low-income households, especially families, will continue to be a priority.

Physical improvements alone will not ameliorate the deterioration of many Woonsocket neighborhoods. Residents need improved economic opportunities to help neighborhoods prosper. The creation of jobs through financing neighborhood businesses, training opportunities, and education will significantly contribute to the long-term viability and stability of Woonsocket's neighborhoods.

As discussed in the Natural and Cultural Resources Element of this plan, the City contains dozens of historic residential properties. While some of these homes are listed on the National Register of Historic Properties, others may be significant on a more local level. The allocation of the City's HOME funds should be spent with consideration of the Natural and Cultural Resources Element's goal of rehabilitating the City's older housing stock. It should be noted that Woonsocket's "historic" housing is not only that which housed the wealthy mill owners of the past, but also its workers. Such multi-family tenements, constructed for the blue-collar families of the early twentieth century are also an integral part of Woonsocket's history. These structures continue to play an important role in housing residents in the City's core areas.

Mill Conversion

Woonsocket is home to a multitude of underutilized mill buildings and complexes. These properties present interesting opportunities for adaptive reuse as mixed-use, live/work spaces, or residential conversion. The city should treat mill conversion proposals on a case-by-case basis to determine if the mill conversion would bring a positive impact to the community as a whole. That said, mill-to-condo conversion projects are most appropriate in areas adjacent to existing residential districts and in situations where opportunities for the reuse of the building for commercial or industrial purposes is not considered feasible. In areas where developers seek zoning relief or a zoning change to accomplish a mill-to-condo conversion project, they should be encouraged to include an affordability component to the overall project.

Balance Affordable Rental and Homeownership Opportunities

Woonsocket's ratio of homeowner to renter is 35:65. The City has a policy of working to increase the homeownership levels in the City and to achieve a healthier balance between rental and ownership housing units. As of 2009, Woonsocket has achieved close to 17% affordable housing stock. In order to maintain Woonsocket's position as an affordable community in which to live, the city's primary and preferred method of providing additional affordable units is through the rehabilitation of the existing housing supply, the provision of rental assistance to qualified tenants, and by expanding affordable homeownership opportunities. Due to a high vacancy rate, a City policy against participation in the construction of new subsidized units should be implemented, until such time as Woonsocket's vacancy rate reaches an acceptable level and the desired balance of housing types has been achieved in the City.

Assisted rehabilitation should be the method chosen as a means of protecting the interests of existing property owners while providing financial relief for the severely cost burdened tenants. Thus, while the allocation of additional rental subsidies will be pursued to meet the needs of Woonsocket residents, those subsidies will be directed toward existing housing units to assist the property owners.

Any comprehensive program aimed at meeting this growing need for affordable housing must include the commitment of surrounding communities in the Northern Rhode Island Region to accept their fair share of responsibility for the provision of affordable housing. Construction of new assisted units should be encouraged in the surrounding communities of Lincoln, Cumberland, North Smithfield and Burrillville. Each community must accept its fair share of responsibility for housing Northern Rhode Island's low-income and at risk populations. Woonsocket's share should be limited to the rehabilitation of existing older units.

Special Needs Housing

Special needs housing is an important component of an area's total housing stock. Conventional living arrangements are inadequate for many residents who require a certain level of care due to physical or mental handicap, age, illness, or other limitation. As of 2009, the City had 158 beds for special needs population. Lincoln had 58 beds, Cumberland had 60 beds, Burrillville had 34 beds, and North Smithfield had 49 beds for special needs population.

Despite the fact that Woonsocket has by far the highest number of beds among all communities in the Northern Rhode Island housing market, due to the size of its risk population, a continuing commitment is required. Since 1990, the surrounding communities have made strides in increasing the number of housing units available for the special needs population. According to the Woonsocket 2010 Consolidated Plan, there is an unmet need/gap of 359 beds/units in order to truly meet the needs of the homeless and special needs population (see Table C-9). Diligent and strong efforts are needed on the part of the State to ensure and enforce fair share principles in the location and development of facilities for special needs housing, and especially for facilities serving substance abusers and the homeless.

TABLE C-7
SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING BY COMMUNITY IN NORTHERN RHODE ISLAND, 2008

Need Area	Burrillville	Cumberland	Lincoln	North Smithfield	Woonsocket	*Regional Totals*
Group Home Beds	34	53	57	49	96	*289*
HUD 811	0	0	0	0	49	*49*
PSH*	0	7	0	0	0	*7*
RIH Family	0	0	0	0	0	*0*
Thresholds**	0	0	0	0	0	*0*
Transitional Units	0	0	0	0	16	*16*

* Permanent Supportive Housing

** The Thresholds Program increases the supply of housing for people with serious and persistent mental illness.

Source: RI Housing

TABLE C-8:
RI MHRH FUNDED FACILITIES SERVING SPECIAL NEED POPULATIONS IN WOONSOCKET

Service Provider	**Services Offered**				
	Developmental Disabilities Service and Support	Developmental Disabilities Advocacy and Informational Organizations	Mental Health Services	Substance Abuse Treatment Services	Narcotic Treatment Services
The Homestead Group	***X***	***X***			
NRI Community Mental Health Center			***X***	***X***	
Tri-Hab				***X***	
Family Resources, Inc.				***X***	
Discovery House					***X***

Source: RI Department of Mental Health, Retardation, and Hospitals

TABLE C-9
HOUSING NEEDS OF HOMELESS AND SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATION

Type of Housing	Beds / Units		
	Estimated Need	Current Inventory	Unmet Need/Gap
Individuals			
Emergency Shelter	800	734	66
Transitional Shelter	800	733	67
Permanent Housing	720	654	66
Total	*2,320*	*2,121*	*199*
Persons in Families with Children			
Emergency Shelter	400	350	50
Transitional Shelter	400	350	50
Permanent Housing	360	300	60
Total	*1,160*	*1,000*	*160*
All Needs			
Emergency Shelter	1,200	1,084	116
Transitional Shelter	1,200	1,083	117
Permanent Housing	1,080	954	126
Total	*3,480*	*3,121*	*359*

Source: City of Woonsocket Consolidated Plan, 2010

Homelessness is considered by those closest to it a statewide concern that cannot be quantified to a geographic location with the State's borders. Limited information on the homeless population is available at the local level. The characteristics of the non-sheltered homeless population are especially difficult to quantify. The amount of housing units available to serve persons with disabilities and persons with HIV/AIDS and their families is limited, yet proportional to the percentage of this category within the population at large. As the needs of these groups increase with the progress of their disease or disability, social service agencies provide a network of care, including housing opportunities. The Department of Mental Health, Retardation and Hospitals currently funds a number of facilities in Woonsocket. These licensed community residential facilities provide services to a variety of clients and at risk populations. Table H-8 shows these local facilities and the services they provide.

GOALS AND POLICIES

The goals and policies established for the Housing Element, toward the achievement of Woonsocket's vision for the future, are as follows:

GOAL H-1
Diversify housing options for present and future City residents.

POLICY H-1.1
Encourage the construction of "workforce" housing for middle income residents

POLICY H-1.2
Expand opportunities for the creation of in-law apartments as a means of providing options for extended family members to reside together

IMPLEMENTATION H-1.2a
Revise the Zoning Ordinance to ease the ability to develop in-law apartments in single-family residential districts (R1 & R2)

POLICY H-1.3
Support the development of live/work dwelling units in structures suitable to such living arrangements as a means of attracting micro-business enterprises and artists to Woonsocket

IMPLEMENTATION H-1.3a
Complete an inventory and assessment of existing structures, focusing on former mill buildings and commercial blocks, to determine which would be most appropriate for live/work space and then amend Zoning Ordinance to permit and regulate this type of use

POLICY H-1.4
Support residential conversion in select underutilized former mill buildings that are no longer practicable as commercial or industrial use

IMPLEMENTATION H-1.4a
Complete an inventory and assessment of all underutilized former mill buildings/complexes and determine which would be most appropriate for residential reuse existing structures, focusing on former mill buildings and commercial blocks, to determine which would be most appropriate for live/work space and then amend Zoning Ordinance to permit and regulate this type of use

GOAL H-2
Preserve the City's existing housing stock in order to protect the health, safety and financial well-being of City residents

POLICY H-2.1
Promote small scale development that enhances and supports the existing economic and social fabric of the City's neighborhoods

POLICY H-2.2
Recognize and preserve housing and neighborhood resources that contribute to the City's viability and heritage

POLICY H-2.3
Encourage and support the rehabilitation of existing housing units and enforce minimum housing requirements and building codes

IMPLEMENTATION H-2.3a
Continue federal, State and locally funded rehabilitation programs, and target efforts in the City's older inner-city neighborhoods

GOAL H-3
Improve the stability and desirability of the City's older neighborhoods as places to live

POLICY H-3.1
Institute comprehensive community development and neighborhood revitalization programs

IMPLEMENTATION H-3.1a
Support community based initiatives that contribute and improve the quality of life in the City's neighborhoods (i.e., crime watches, beautification efforts, etc.)

POLICY H-3.2
Structure policies and efforts to benefit existing residents without displacing them

POLICY H-3.3
Institute neighborhood level planning programs

IMPLEMENTATION H-3.3a
Coordinate local planning efforts in the Fairmount and Constitution Hill neighborhoods with the Sustainable Communities Program's Quality of Life Plan being developed by LISC and NeighborWorks

POLICY H-3.4
Develop programs with strong citizen participation components

POLICY H-3.5
Work to increase homeownership in the community to bring the renter to homeowner ratio closer to 1:1

IMPLEMENTATION H-3.5a

Support the conversion of units in multi-family dwellings from rental to homeownership by adopting flexible guidelines regarding utility separation requirements

POLICY H-3.6
Develop programs to prevent and mitigate the impact of foreclosures in the community

IMPLEMENTATION H-3.6a
Track and map foreclosures on a quarterly basis and use this data to develop targeted policies and foreclosure prevention/mitigation programs

GOAL H-4
Ensure that existing low income and special needs residents have safe, decent, and affordable places to live

POLICY H-4.1
Prioritize the City's assisted housing units to be designated for the rehabilitation of existing older units.

POLICY H-4.2
The City will continue to meet RIGL 45-53 of the Rhode Island Low and Moderate Income Housing Act.

POLICY H-4.3
Ensure that city's homeless shelters have the capacity to meet the needs of the homeless population in Woonsocket

IMPLEMENTATION H-4.3a
Provide continued financial support for the existing operation of shelters for the homeless, and other agencies serving the at-risk population

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

> *Shall include the identification of economic development policies and strategies either existing or proposed by the municipality, in coordination with the land use plan element. Such policies should reflect local, regional and statewide concerns for the expansion and stabilization of quality employment opportunities. The policies and implementation techniques must be identified for inclusion in the implementation program element.* (Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act 45-22.22-6)

CURRENT CONDITIONS AND ISSUES

Introduction

Economic development, through the retention of existing businesses and the attraction of new ones, is of prime importance to the City. The City is pro-development and will utilize proactively various State and local incentive programs, financing support, and land use regulations to support growth in employment opportunities for City residents. Woonsocket offers a positive business climate where City officials and the business community work hand in hand. The City of Woonsocket sees the following as the strategic advantages it offers to local business:

- Progressive tax incentive programs for new and existing businesses
- A skilled labor force coupled with a variety of employment assistance programs
- Prime geographic location, providing easy access via car or truck to Routes 99, 146, 295, 95 and 495 into Massachusetts
- An existing surplus capacity of water and wastewater treatment
- Existing rail access to a number of locations and facilities in the City
- An inventory of affordable lease space in historic mills
- A first-class industrial park that enjoys enhanced incentives for new construction and expansion
- Access to a market that has over 146,000 residents living in the City or its surrounding communities and are linked directly by roads to the City's commercial areas
- A well established and growing creative economy in the Main Street area that has begun to reinvigorate night life in the City through offerings of theater, live music and other entertainment, restaurants and night clubs
- Existing strong efforts to promote a targeted tourism development program that emphasizes the City's historic buildings, cultural heritage, and access to the Blackstone River.

Recognizing the strength of Woonsocket's strategic advantages, our goals for economic development are to:

- Broaden and deepen the commercial and industrial tax base
- Achieve and maintain a competitive commercial tax rate
- Support ongoing efforts to address educational and / or skill gaps and improve the competitiveness of the local labor force

- Assist in the transformation of mill properties to accommodate small, multi-tenanted manufacturing, warehouse, and industrial applications
- Build up commercial tenants along Main Street as a result of increased tourism.
- Leverage appropriate sources of federal, state and private funding to improve the appearance of the City, support small business development through gap financing, and redevelop targeted areas suffering from blight or inactivity
- Foster the ongoing development of a lively arts community within the boundaries of the City's state-designated Arts District by promoting the related tax incentives to the creative community.

Background

Since 1950, Woonsocket like many textile-based urban communities in the Northeast, experienced an exodus of the textile industry, which traditionally was the core of the City's industrial base. Currently, manufacturing jobs in Woonsocket account for only 9% of the City's total employment. Comparatively, in 2008, the largest employment sector in the City was in the category of "General Services," which includes administrative support, educational, health care, and social assistance jobs.

During the 1970s, Woonsocket undertook a major urban renewal plan. The deteriorated residential and neighborhood commercial area known as the Social Flatlands was demolished and rebuilt to become the new financial and commercial center of the City. A number of government and public service facilities (including the post office, police station, and library) are now also located in the area. Additionally, this initiative resulted in the construction of five Class A Office Buildings.

Development of Highland Industrial Park

There have been significant new job opportunities created by the development of the City's Highland Corporate Park beginning in the 1980s and continuing to the present day. Approximately fourteen businesses have expanded or located in the City as a result of this project, with the number of new jobs approaching 4,000.

The list of tenants is headed by the CVS/Caremark Corporation which has experienced unparalleled growth during the past twenty years. CVS is Rhode Island's only Fortune 50 Company, and Woonsocket's number one corporate citizen, with local employment of approximately 3,500. Today, the company continues to make large corporate acquisitions, and to expand their employment.

The remaining industrial park tenants are dynamic companies who have found high technology manufacturing niches in which to operate and grow. While many of these firms are small to medium in size, they maintain a commitment to employing Woonsocket residents and continuing to invest in their presence in the City.

High Volume Commerce

Diamond Hill Road is the City's major retail center with three major developments. Woonsocket Plaza totals approximately 350,000 square feet, and the expanded/renovated Walnut Hill Plaza contains 300,000 square feet. Other significant free-standing commercial development includes Wal-Mart, Lowe's, and other retail stores. Retail space along Diamond Hill Road totals approximately 850,000 square feet, making it a significant regional retail center. Other smaller scale retail developments are located at Park Square, the Social Renewal Area, and along Cumberland Hill Road. The City's commercial, mixed use, and industrial land uses are shown in Map D-1. Traffic counts in this area are typically the highest in the City. The largest national stores serving these shopping areas are some of the City's most significant taxpayers.

Health Care

Another set of substantial employers in the City health care facilities, especially Landmark Medical Center, a community hospital that has served the City and surrounding communities for many years. Landmark's presence is felt by the extensive network of professionals who derive their income from the hospital even though not directly employed by it. Like many hospitals, Landmark has had financial struggles, and preserving this key part of the economy is a priority for the City as merger and growth opportunities arise.

Main Street

As a result of the modern day demands for quick and easy retail shop access and demographic changes, Main Street for many years through the mid-1990's showed a persistent decline. During recent years though, a significant revitalization has occurred in the Market Square Area. Advancements included the Museum of Work and Culture, the newly opened Vintage, River Falls, and City Side restaurants to compliment eateries, upgrades to the City's ice rink, and the continued development of River Island Park.

Over recent years, the City has commissioned several studies, plans, and reports to aide in further development of Main Street and the Market Square area. The latest effort to revitalize the area is in the form of a Wayfinding Master Plan for Downtown Woonsocket. Refer to the Natural and Cultural Resources Section for more information on this.

Current planned revitalization efforts now center around public and private improvements to the Truman Drive area, improving wayfinding between Main Street's two anchors: the Museum of Work and Culture and the Stadium Theatre, improving connectivity between Main Street and the Blackstone Riverfront area, and drawing on Main Street's historic and cultural resources and heritage tourism potential as a means of economic development. Future Main Street developments should accentuate the opportunity for tourist-related activity along Main Street, enhance existing business, and promote future mixed-use development in the area.

Small Business

The largest remaining portion of the City's economy is traditional small business, often family owned or single proprietorships operating in the restaurant or retail sectors, spread throughout the City. The City has made its tax incentive programs available to businesses with as few as two employees, reinvigorated its small business lending program and is working to better serve the needs of this sector through expediting the permitting process involved in opening a new business.

Population, Labor Force, and Employment

The population of Woonsocket peaked in 1950 at 50,211 and declined until reaching 41,186 by 2010. From 1970 to 1980, a total of 906 people or 1.9% of the population left the City. Between 1980 and 1990, Woonsocket witnessed a decline in total population of 2,037 people, or 4.4% representing the largest percentage decline since the 1950's. By 2000, the population declined, but in much less dramatic fashion, with only 653 people leaving the City, resulting in a total population decline of only 1.5%. Another relatively large decline occurred by 2010, 2,038 people left the City.

The largest employment shift from 2002 – 2008 occurred in the manufacturing sector, which decreased from 14.4% of total employment to 9.0%. The other significant shift occurred in the services sector: general services increased by 4% and professional services increased by 2.3%. When combined, general and professional services account for 65.8% of Woonsocket's employment as of 2008. Table D-1 shows the changes in employment by sector between 2002 and 2008. The City's labor force (those currently working or actively seeking work) has slightly increased between 1990 and 2008. Table D-2 shows the City's labor force and unemployment rates from 1990 to 2008.

Income and Wages

Per capita income for Woonsocket according to the 2009 American Community Survey Estimates was $20,846 as compared to $28,638 for the State of Rhode Island. This amount was trailed only by Providence at $20,791 and Central Falls at $15,094. The State average per capita income figure for that same period of time was $28,638. In part, the low per capita income figures are a reflection of the relatively high percentage of unemployed and elderly. But they are also a reflection of low wages paid in both the manufacturing and service sectors.

Figure D-2 shows Woonsocket's average wages as a percent of the State's average wages across the various employment sectors for 2002, 2006, and 2008. As the graph illustrates, Woonsocket's average wages in the retail sector far exceeded the State average wages paid in that sector. Unfortunately, wages in all other sectors are significantly lower than the State averages. Woonsocket's manufacturing wages and professional services wages are approximately only 80% of the State average wages in those sectors.

TABLE D-1
WOONSOCKET COVERED PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT (2002 - 2008)
Average Annual Employment by NAICS Sector

NAICS Sector/YEAR	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	*	*	*	0	0	0
Mining	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Utilities	0	*	*	*	0	0	0
Construction	272	370	350	367	312	315	289
Manufacturing	1,908	1,608	1,408	1,346	1,338	1,325	1,233
Wholesale Trade	369	270	275	364	375	387	371
Retail Trade	2,074	2,055	2,034	2,021	2,016	1,975	1,958
Transportation & Warehousing	741	770	810	788	775	838	810
Information	55	50	58	59	45	143	131
Finance & Insurance	245	275	277	278	253	222	191
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	304	138	100	109	139	149	141
Professional & Technical Services	214	207	228	411	404	399	394
Management of Companies & Enterprises	1,586	1,698	1,647	1,663	1,697	1,728	1,927
Administrative & Waste Services	246	466	560	582	589	516	506
Educational Services	345	361	367	375	382	355	305
Health Care & Social Assistance	3,124	3,228	3,272	3,378	3,506	3,600	3,588
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	89	79	64	70	68	92	103
Accommodation & Food Services	1,132	1,161	1,146	1,160	1,132	1,178	1,150
Other Services, except Public Administration	550	574	570	561	531	544	534
Total, Private Only	13,254	13,366	13,238	13,537	13,561	13,765	13,630

* Some data not shown to avoid revealing data of a specific employer.

Source: RI Dept. of Labor & Training, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages

TABLE D-2

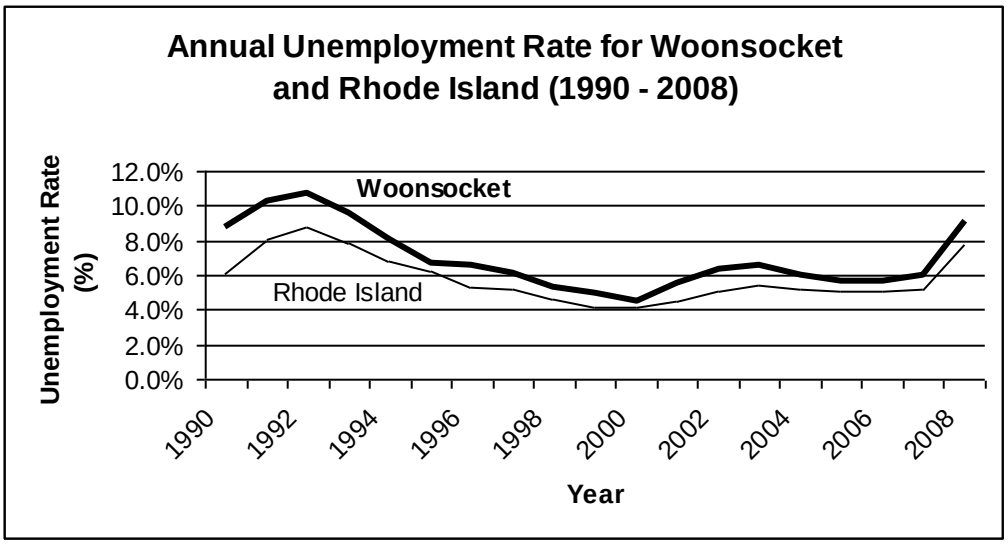
LABOR FORCE AND UNEMPLOYMENT: 1990 - 2008, WOONSOCKET

Year	Labor Force	Change		Total Employed	Change		Unemployed	
		#	%		#	%	#	Rate
1990	21,951	-	-	20,028	-	-	1,923	8.8%
1991	21,498	-453	-2.1%	19,285	-743	-3.7%	2,213	10.3%
1992	21,295	-203	-0.9%	19,010	-275	-1.4%	2,285	10.7%
1993	20,735	-560	-2.6%	18,754	-256	-1.3%	1,981	9.6%
1994	19,869	-866	-4.2%	18,273	-481	-2.6%	1,596	8.0%
1995	20,197	328	1.7%	18,836	563	3.1%	1,361	6.7%
1996	20,568	371	1.8%	19,209	373	2.0%	1,359	6.6%
1997	20,776	208	1.0%	19,512	303	1.6%	1,264	6.1%
1998	20,987	211	1.0%	19,870	358	1.8%	1,117	5.3%
1999	21,116	129	0.6%	20,068	198	1.0%	1,048	5.0%
2000	20,988	-128	-0.6%	20,050	-18	-0.1%	938	4.5%
2001	21,156	168	0.8%	19,989	-61	-0.3%	1,167	5.5%
2002	21,468	312	1.5%	20,110	121	0.6%	1,358	6.3%
2003	22,175	707	3.3%	20,710	600	3.0%	1,465	6.6%
2004	21,750	-425	-1.9%	20,445	-265	-1.3%	1,305	6.0%
2005	21,987	237	1.1%	20,742	297	1.5%	1,245	5.7%
2006	22,297	310	1.4%	21,048	306	1.5%	1,249	5.6%
2007	22,179	-118	-0.5%	20,860	-188	-0.9%	1,319	5.9%
2008	22,127	-52	-0.2%	20,106	-754	-3.6%	2,021	9.1%

Woonsocket Labor Force Statistics, Not Seasonally Adjusted

Source: Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, Labor Market Information

Figure D-1



Recession Dates:

July 1990 to March 1991
March 2001 to November 2001
December 2007 to current

Source: Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, Labor Market Information

Figure D-2

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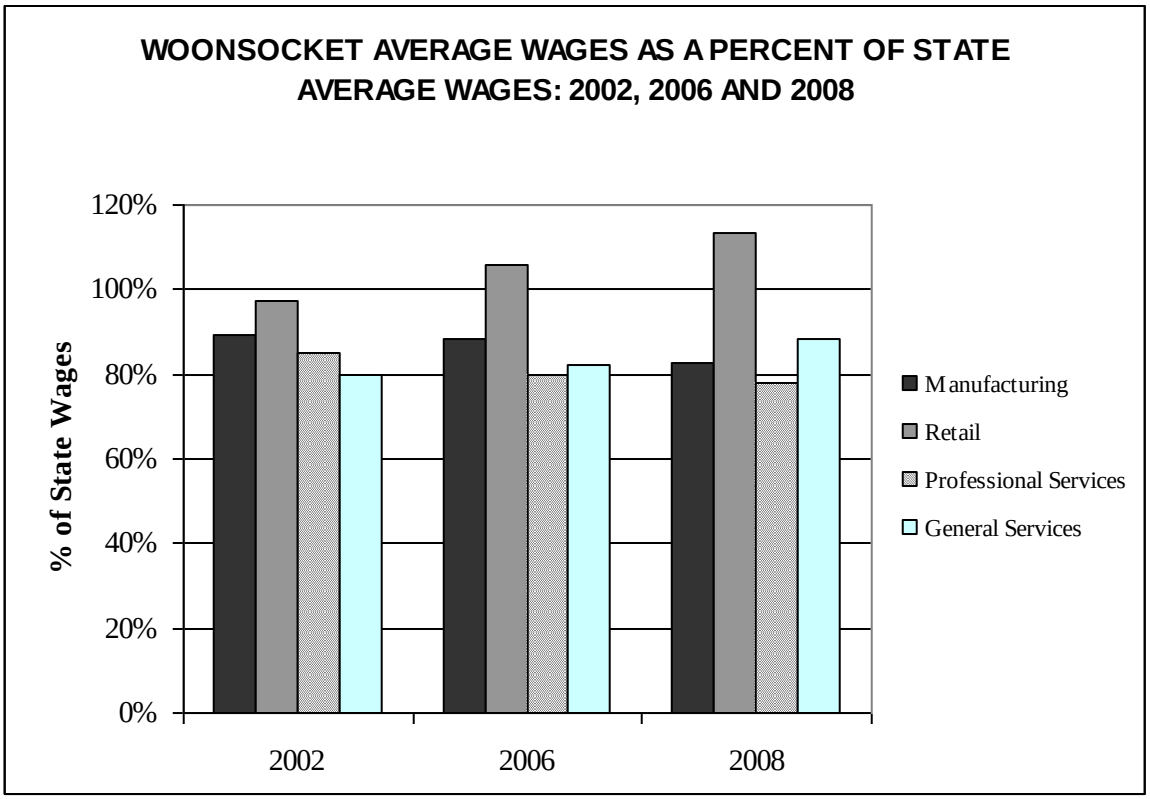
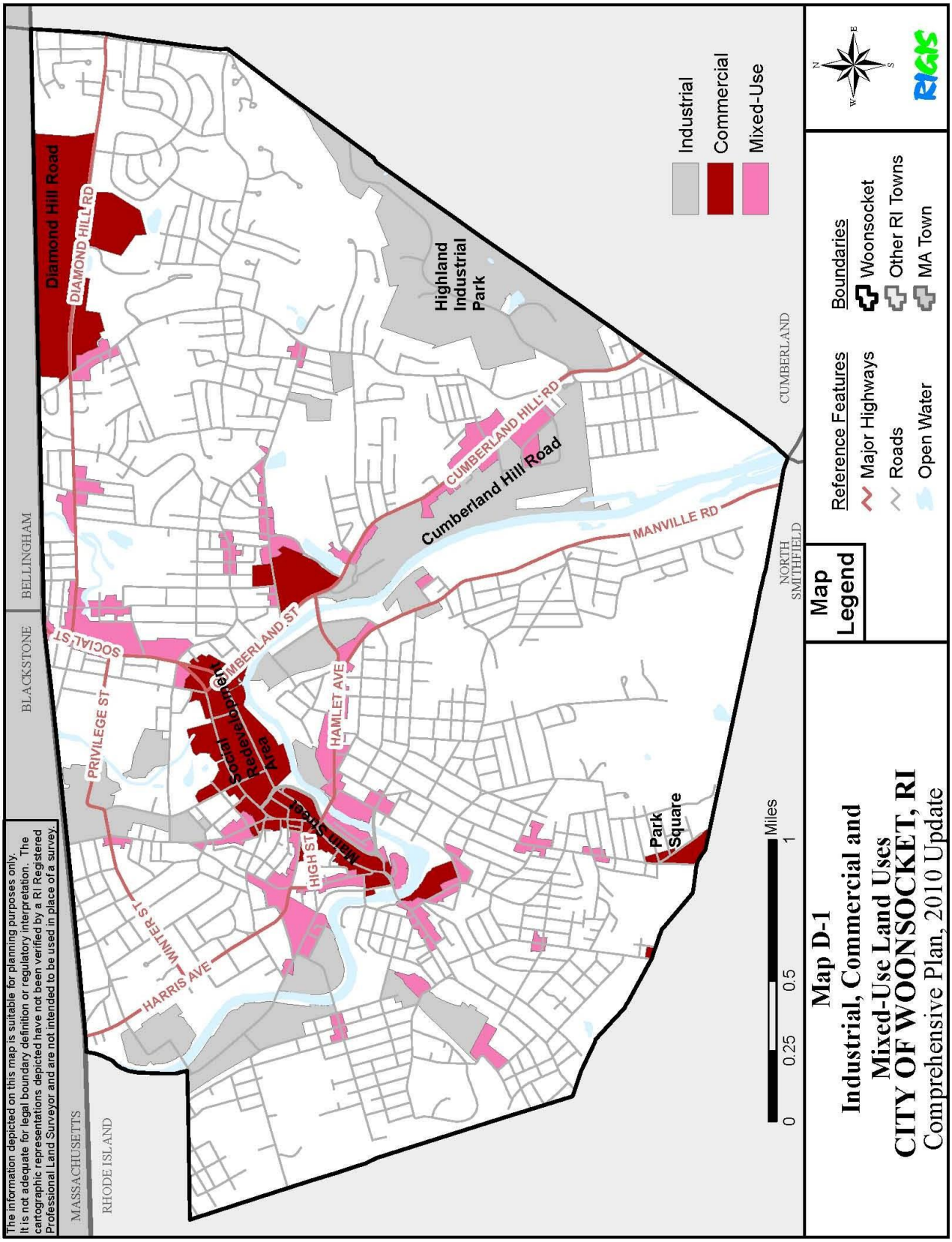


Source: Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, Labor Market Information


The information depicted on this map is suitable for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation. The cartographic representations depicted have not been verified by a RI Registered Professional Land Surveyor and are not intended to be used in place of a survey.
MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
BLACKSTONE
BELLINGHAM
CUMBERLAND
NORTH SMITHFIELD
Diamond Hill Road
DIAMOND HILL RD
Highland Industrial Park
Cumberland Hill Road
CUMBERLAND HILL RD
MANVILLE RD
CUMBERLAND ST
SOCIAL ST
PRIVILEGE ST
HAMLET AVE
Social Redevelopment Area
Main Street
HIGH ST
WINTER ST
HARRIS AVE
Park Square
Industrial
Commercial
Mixed-Use
Map Legend
Reference Features
Major Highways
Roads
Open Water
Boundaries
Woonsocket
Other RI Towns
MA Town
0
0.25
0.5
1
Miles
Map D-1
Industrial, Commercial and Mixed-Use Land Uses
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update

Industrial Land

Woonsocket contains a limited amount of 'shovel ready' industrial land.

The completion of Highway 99 greatly improved access to the entire city by providing a direct connection to the Interstate Highway System. The highway which terminates at the entrance to Highland Corporate Park, Mendon Road, and Cumberland Hill Road, makes these areas increasingly attractive for more intensive commercial and industrial use. Furthermore, the Woonsocket Industrial Park across from Highland Park should be converted in the future to industrial use exclusively, rather than allowing commercial uses.

The Mill Resource

Woonsocket is home to several older/historic mill facilities. During the past ten years, some inoperable mills have been converted to other adaptive uses. Due to the unfortunate elimination of the State Historic Tax Credit Program, this trend has substantially slowed. With this credit off the table, many of these properties sit in a 'holding pattern' with regard to sale, lease or more extensive development. These buildings typically benefit from having been situated on large, flat parcels of land with existing infrastructure and acceptable roadway access. They also typically offer greater square footage to owners or tenants at a fraction of the cost of more modern space.

For the most part, existing zoning corresponds to land use. However, some pockets of industry are nestled in predominantly residential areas. In some cases, large parcels such as the Bonin Mill on Mendon Road are surrounded by residential use. Even so, proximity to Highland Industrial Park and Highway 99, coupled with the size of the complex, indicates that continued light industrial or commercial use may be appropriate. A distributor/warehouse operation could work and may attract higher paying jobs to the area.

The possibility and desirability of converting additional obsolete mill buildings to residential use should be made on a case-by-case basis. Prior to supporting a change in use from industrial to residential, an assessment should be completed that determines that the highest and best use of the mill building is achieved through residential reuse, over mixed use, commercial, or industrial economic activities.

A final point to be raised concerning re-use of the existing structures relates to the size of the buildings and the declining size and space requirements of single small manufacturers. Individual users will find it difficult to fully utilize existing structures given the size and layout of the buildings. Larger companies will find the lot sizes too small and the two, three or four story buildings awkward and inefficient for use by today's industrial operations. The Department of Economic Development, working with the Department of Planning and Development, should update its mill building survey. Also, it should be recognized that that the size and importance of the Economic Development which was recently downgraded should be restored in the future. Although the power of the City to control or influence the decisions of the private mill owners is limited, it is important that the Department of Planning and Development make some decisions

and comprehensive recommendations about industrial uses in residential and commercial zones in the event that owners or use change in the future.

NEW INITIATIVES

Main Street Inventory

Above average vacancy rates on the upper stories of Main Street properties continue to exist. To combat this issue, the City, led by the Economic Development Department should develop a detailed Main Street inventory. This inventory, when completed, should be available online to potential new small business owners and entrepreneurs.

Industrial Land Needs Assessment

For most of its history, Woonsocket was dominated by industrial land uses. Over the years, much of Woonsocket's industrial lands have been redeveloped for other uses. The original Woonsocket Industrial Park and then the Highland Corporate Park were developed as a means of addressing this and as a way of spurring economic development in the city. Today, Highland Corporate Park is nearly 100% occupied, leaving the city with limited options for bringing new industrial and manufacturing growth in to the city. Although Woonsocket will likely never return to being a center of manufacturing for the region, the existence of light industry and small manufacturing businesses are an asset to the city in the number of steady and moderately well-paying jobs they bring to a community.

The City should complete a needs assessment of its existing industrial land use and industrial zoning districts to determine whether these areas could be better utilized to support light industrial development and small-scale manufacturing. In addition, the assessment will assess what other areas in the city may be feasible for development of another light industrial/corporate park. Due to the limited availability of large tracts of land, this may need to be done at a smaller scale In general, the city will support development applications that grow the city's industrial and manufacturing base where those applications can be shown to not have an adverse impact on surrounding neighborhoods.

Small Business Incubator Spaces

There exists an extensive inventory of underutilized mill buildings in Woonsocket. Particularly along the banks of the Blackstone River, where development has the potential to adversely impact the water quality of the river, the city should support the development of small-business incubator spaces, micro business development, and artist live/work spaces as a way of redeveloping and achieving economic development goals in these underutilized spaces. Vacant upper-story space along Main Street is also most suitable for this type of re-use.

Expand Commercial Corridors

Woonsocket, being land poor, struggles with providing available space for new commercial developments. Many commercial developers require flat acreage with good highway or major roadway access, making it difficult to entice retailers to retrofit their business so as to utilize Woonsocket's vacant buildings. In order to remain competitive in attracting commercial retailers to the city, Woonsocket should expand the commercial and mixed-use potential of its existing commercial corridors, particularly Cumberland Hill Road and Mendon Road, as well as areas along Diamond Hill Road and Park Avenue. Zone changes that allow for a higher intensity commercial activity or mixed-use along these established corridors will be enacted as discussed in the Land Use Element. Guiding commercial growth to these areas will bring a benefit to the community in terms of economic development, new jobs, and by concentrating development in areas already accustomed to some level of commercial activity.

Tourism as an Economic Development Tool

Woonsocket sits at the heart of the bi-state Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor and is advantageously positioned to capitalize on the growing heritage tourism industry. Woonsocket should remain an active participant in the region's tourism initiatives and support projects that grow the tourism industry in the Valley. Further development of scenic or recreational areas along the river, such as River Island Park and the River's Edge Recreation Center will greatly enhance the economic development potential in these areas.

GOALS AND POLICIES

The following goals and policies have been developed for the establishment and maintenance of a strong local and regional economy:

GOAL ED-1
Stabilize Woonsocket's economic base

POLICY ED-1.1
Retain and ensure the health of Woonsocket's existing businesses

IMPLEMENTATION ED-1.1a
Hold quarterly meetings with the city's business community to understand their needs and concerns

IMPLEMENTATION ED-1.1b
Lower Woonsocket's commercial/industrial tax rate to make it more competitive in the State

GOAL ED-2
Grow Woonsocket's economy in a balanced and beneficial manner

POLICY ED-2.1
Attract new businesses to the City

IMPLEMENTATION ED-2.1a
Work with the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, the RI Economic Development Corporation, and other business alliances to explore economic development incentives for attraction and retention purposes, and advertise available options to the business community

POLICY ED-2.2
Expand existing commercial corridors, where appropriate, in the city

IMPLEMENTATION ED-2.2a
Rezone areas of Park Avenue, Mendon Road, and Cumberland Hill Road to allow for greater opportunities for commercial activity

POLICY ED-2.3
Examine and make substantial modifications to the regulations within the Woonsocket Zoning Ordinance for the mixed-use, commercial, and industrial zones so as to further encourage economic development and relax existing cumbersome restrictions for these uses.

IMPLEMENTATION ED-2.3a

For those existing mill and other industrial sites, when it has been determined that the rehabilitation of existing mill structures is not a viable option, that the demolition of these obsolete buildings occur and redevelopment sites for future industrial or commercial purposes be created.

GOAL ED-3
Diversify Woonsocket's economy

POLICY ED-3.1
Transition the city from its former history as a manufacturing center

IMPLEMENTATION ED-3.1a
Develop and implement a long-range economic development plan for the retention of existing businesses and the attraction of new investment

POLICY ED-3.2
Redevelop the city's mill resources for modern uses

IMPLEMENTATION ED-3.2a
Annually, inventory all mill sites and maintain a space analysis of each mill so that most appropriate potential uses may be identified

IMPLEMENTATION ED-3.2b
Make every effort to realize the rehabilitation and reuse of vacant and underutilized mill buildings for mixed use or small business incubator space

POLICY ED-3.3
Promote light industry and small-scale manufacturing in appropriate areas in the city

IMPLEMENTATION ED-3.3a
Complete and maintain an inventory of the city's available industrial land to be used as a basis for identifying areas that could support new industrial activities and place this on the city's website

GOAL ED-4
Identify Woonsocket as a "business-friendly" community

POLICY ED-4.1
Provide a variety of local economic development programs to support business development

IMPLEMENTATION ED-4.1a
Retain and expand existing economic development programs, including the Small Business Revolving Loan Program, the Job Creation Program, and the Commercial Facade Restoration Grant Program for Main Street

POLICY ED-4.2
Work in partnership with the business community on regional and local economic development initiatives

IMPLEMENTATION ED-4.2a
Work with the business community and other business alliances to conduct an attitude survey of businesses to identify priorities, needs, and concerns of the business community

POLICY ED-4.3
Build positive relationships between City Hall and the business community

IMPLEMENTATION ED-4.3a
Re-establish a full-time position for the Economic Development Director and an administrative staff person

GOAL ED-5
Support Woonsocket's Main Street as an economic heart of the City

POLICY ED-5.1
Encourage and try to guide new economic activities to the City's historic Main Street area

IMPLEMENTATION ED-5.1a
Complete and maintain the Main Street Inventory database to assist with spurring economic development along Main Street

IMPLEMENTATION ED-5.1b
Implement innovative programs and policies to encourage upper floor uses on Main Street, including artist live-work spaces

POLICY ED-5.2
Utilize heritage tourism and the arts as economic development tools in the Main Street area

IMPLEMENTATION ED-5.2a
Foster the ongoing development of heritage tourism within the boundaries of the City

IMPLEMENTATION ED-5.2b
Foster the ongoing development of a lively arts community within the boundaries of the City's state-designated Arts District

POLICY ED-5.3

Support tourism activities in Woonsocket that strengthen Woonsocket's role in the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor

IMPLEMENTATION ED-5.3a
Work closely with the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, and other established business alliances to include Woonsocket as a destination for regional tours, meetings and seminars of economic development professionals

GOAL ED-6
Develop a well-trained workforce

POLICY ED-6.1
Expand employment opportunities with competitive wages and safe quality working environments

POLICY ED-6.2
Encourage communication and working relationships between educational institutions and the business community regarding critical skills development and work force readiness

GOAL ED-7
The City will integrate the implied and overt value of economic development into all goals and policies within the Comprehensive Plan.

POLICY ED-7.1
Assign the highest priority in the City's municipal capital budgeting and the preparation and submission of grants for state and federal funding for future economic development projects

POLICY ED-7.2
Assign top priority and provide existing City staffing required to identify, develop, and pursue all options and opportunities in future economic development

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

Shall provide an inventory of the significant natural resource areas such as water, soils, prime agricultural lands, natural vegetation systems, wildlife, wetlands, aquifers, coastal features, flood plains and other natural resources and the policies for the protection and management of such areas. The element shall include policies for the protection of historic and cultural resources of the municipality and the state. The policies and implementation techniques must be identified for inclusion in the implementation program element. (Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act 45-22.2-6)

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND AND DATA

Historical Development

Native Americans were the first known inhabitants of the area now known as Woonsocket. Archaeological finds in the Bellingham and Blackstone area suggest Native American settlers in the region as long as 8000 years ago, with more permanent agricultural settlements beginning in 300 A.D. (RI Historical Preservation Commission. Statewide Historic Preservation Report P-W-1. 1976. Pg. 4).

The next known inhabitants of this area were European settlers, most of whom lived here as farmers and artisans. One of these settlers, John Arnold, has been called the "patriarch of Woonsocket" (RI Historical Preservation Commission. Statewide Historic Preservation Report P-W-1. 1976. Pg. 7). John Arnold developed the City's potential as a mill site, controlled much of the land in the City, and was a political and religious leader in the new settlement (RI Historical Preservation Commission. Statewide Historic Preservation Report P-W-1. 1976. Pg. 7). John Arnold's son, Richard Arnold, is credited with establishing a saw mill at Woonsocket Falls in the late 1600s. The Arnold Mill, located in the area now known as Market Square, was the first to capitalize on the enormous power of the Blackstone River as it descended the falls.

The small agricultural community developed by these European settlers existed primarily as a crossroads for travelers to and from Boston and Providence. However, the start of the Industrial Revolution in the early 1800s, driven by the incredible power of the Blackstone River, led to the establishment of Woonsocket as a thriving industrial center. This water-driven power served small industries at first, but it was not long before the region blossomed into the six busy mill villages of Bernon, Globe, Hamlet, Jenckesville, Social, and Woonsocket Falls.

Housing soon sprang up to serve the owners, managers, and employees of these mills. Residences differed in size and style to reflect the status of its inhabitants in the Mill Society.

Excellent examples of worker housing have been preserved and can be seen today throughout Woonsocket, with the most notable in the Cato Hill, Constitution Hill, and Lincoln Street areas of Woonsocket. Grand examples of owner and management housing are also scattered throughout the City, with the earliest examples located nearest to the mills themselves.

Although the six mill villages had for some time been collectively known as "Woonsocket," the land they occupied remained under the jurisdiction of the Towns of Cumberland and North Smithfield until the later part of the 19th Century. The Town of Woonsocket did not form until 1867, when the portion of present day Woonsocket located north and east of the Blackstone River broke away from the Town of Cumberland. Woonsocket grew to its present size in 1871, when it annexed land south and west of the Blackstone River from the Town of North Smithfield. In 1888, the Town of Woonsocket was incorporated as the City of Woonsocket.

For a short period of time, the mill villages were served by the Blackstone Canal. For the most part, the canal followed the course of the Blackstone River through Woonsocket. However, separate channels were utilized to avoid dams and sharp curves in the river. Conflicts with the water needs of the mills, followed by the establishment of the Providence & Worcester Railroad, led to the failure of the Blackstone Canal in the late 1840s. Remnants of the short-lived canal system can still be found beneath certain streets and buildings in the City.

The growth of the railroads led to further industrial growth and to the development of extensive mill complexes, most of which were involved in the textile industry. These mills attracted immigrant laborers, the first of which came here in the 1840s from Ireland and several other European nations. These immigrants were followed by great numbers of French Canadians from Quebec in the 1870s and 1880s. A wave of Ukrainian immigrants came to Woonsocket in the early 1890s. Each of the immigrant groups brought with them vestiges of their native cultures, and established their own parishes and church complexes as centers of social activity. Of all these groups, the French Canadians have left the greatest mark on Woonsocket. Their influence is evident in the names of streets and places throughout the City.

As the mills prospered, and the City's population expanded, commercial establishments grew to serve both the Mill Society and travelers passing through Woonsocket. The downtown area, from Market Square to Monument Square, became the business and financial center. Here were located the post office, City Hall, library, banks and professional offices, shops, restaurants and saloons. A number of the original structures remain, with the architectural styles of individual buildings reflecting the importance of their occupants and the relative prosperity of their owners.

Woonsocket’s domestic architecture consisted of two basic groups, the mill owners and managers, and the mill workers. Homes of wealthy residents reflected the diverse trends in architecture during the nineteenth century. Mill workers most often inhabited simple company-owned housing or in modest cottages in unassuming neighborhoods like Cato Hill.

The emergence of a middle class in the early 1900s, made up of businessmen, mill managers and professionals, led to the development of the City's North End. Here, architecturally

distinctive houses were constructed on relatively large lots during the 1910s and 1920s to serve this new class. The North End is the most recent, and the most well preserved, of the City historical developments.

As industry flourished, Woonsocket grew and the City's six mill villages merged into a single urban area. Row upon row of housing, mainly two- and three-deckers, were constructed in the City's dense neighborhoods to accommodate the expanding population. Then, beginning with the Great Depression in the 1930s, and exacerbated by the flight south of the textile industry, Woonsocket witnessed a sharp economic decline. A short reprieve, brought on by the role of the mills in fulfilling the country's production needs during World War II, was followed by an even sharper decline in the 1950s.

Since that time, the City has continued to struggle in an attempt to rebound from that decline and to establish for itself a strong future. In 1966 voters defeated a proposed bond issue known as the Gateway Urban Renewal Project. This bond issue would have redeveloped a 22 acre Main Street tract, razing several of Main Street's historic buildings and constructing new ones. The 1970's, however, saw the implementation of the City's largest urban renewal project, the Social Flatlands business district. A combination of urban disinvestment and disastrous flooding left much of the Social area blighted. The Army Corps of Engineer's Social Flood Control Project reduced the threat of disaster in the area and plans for a "new downtown" were prepared featuring modern commercial and office uses. The renewal project saw the demolition of the majority of Social Village, one of the six original mill villages in Woonsocket.

Surface Water and Watershed Areas

Blackstone River

This region developed around its primary water body, the Blackstone River. The first mill villages in Woonsocket developed around the power of the Blackstone River. Other water bodies, such as the Peters and Mill Rivers, drain into the Blackstone. The Blackstone is approximately 46 miles long, stretching from Worcester, Massachusetts to the Seekonk River in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. The Blackstone River is the second largest freshwater tributary to Narragansett Bay. In 1986, Congress designated the Blackstone as an American Heritage River and established the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor in both Rhode Island and Massachusetts. The main tributaries of the Blackstone are Kettle Brook and the Quinsigamond, Mumford, and West Rivers in Massachusetts, and the Mill, Peters, and Branch Rivers in Rhode Island. The Blackstone River's average flow is about 862 cubic feet per second.

Mill River

One of the major tributaries into the Blackstone is the Mill River. The Mill River watershed consists of approximately 35 square miles and extends from Hopkinton, MA to northern Woonsocket. The river itself spans 11 miles. The watershed is an area which has experienced a large amount of growth over the past decades as a result of convenient access to Routes 90 and 495. The Mill River is culverted for approximately 900 ft. before it empties into

the Blackstone south of the intersection of Clinton Street and John E. Cummings Way in the Social Flatlands area of the City. A small area of deciduous wetlands and shrub swamp is associated with the Mill River south of Privilege Street.

Peters River

The Peters River is another tributary to the Blackstone in the City. This river originates in the northern section of the Town of Bellingham, MA, and outlets into a 1,200 foot long culvert at Elm Street in Woonsocket, where it empties into the Blackstone. The Peters River watershed is approximately 12 square miles, of which less than 10% is in Rhode Island. The Wood Estate is a 23-acre conservation area comprised mainly of deciduous wetlands, and emergent marsh/wet meadow which abuts the Peters River south of Diamond Hill Road.

Theresa Brook

Theresa Brook flows in a southwesterly direction from the Cumberland town line and joins an unnamed stream at Newton Street. It passes under Cass Avenue into the culvert system which drains into Cass Pond. The brook drops about 130 ft. over its length of 1.2 miles. The brook's watershed encompasses 392 acres from Diamond Hill Road to Cass Avenue. The Theresa Brook area has a history of flooding at Mendon Road during significant storm events because of the insufficient capacity of the underground pipes as the book flows under Mendon Road and alongside Aylsworth Avenue.

Iron Rock Brook

Iron Rock Brook originates in Cumberland's Diamond Hill State Park and flows west where it joins Theresa Brook at Cass Avenue. The brook's watershed consists of 1,027 acres (1.6 sq. miles) of land, including the Highland Corporate Park expansion area, and extends as far north as the intersection of Diamond Hill Road and Bound Road. The brook flows through a wetland of approximately 5 acres in Cass Park. The Iron Rock Brook has a history of flooding at Mendon Road during significant storm events because of the insufficient capacity of underground pipes as the brook flows under Mendon Road.

Cass Pond

Cass Pond is a 2-acre, man-made pond into which the culverted Theresa Brook empties. Cass Pond's drainage area includes the Theresa and Iron Rock Brook drainage areas. Cass Pond is in Cass Park, a public park of approximately 40 acres adjacent to Woonsocket High School. The pond is stocked with trout annually for the benefit of local fishermen. The pond drains through a small brook and wetland to Sylvester Pond and then on to the Blackstone River.

Sylvester Pond

Sylvester Pond lies adjacent to Cumberland Hill Road and Dionne Track. Water drains into Sylvester Pond from Iron Rock Brook/Cass Pond after filtering through the adjacent wetland area in Cass Park. Water drains from Sylvester Pond under Cumberland Hill Road to the Blackstone River.

Booth Pond

Booth Pond lies in the southern part of the City at the North Smithfield border. The northern portion of the pond is located in Woonsocket, surrounded by the 37-acre Booth Pond Conservation Area. The southern part of the pond lies within the Town of North Smithfield. A stream flows from Booth Pond east for nearly one mile into the Blackstone River. The stream flows through approximately 21.4 acres of deciduous wetlands in the area between Jillson and Lydia Avenues.

Cherry Brook

Cherry Brook originates at Cedar Swamp, a 325-acre area of mainly deciduous wetlands, shrub swamp, and emergent marsh/wet meadow in North Smithfield. The brook flows northeasterly 2.8 miles to the Blackstone River near Sayles Street.

Social Pond

Social Pond is the most popular recreational body of water for the people of Woonsocket. Located in the State-owned WWII Memorial Park, this man-made pond has been used for swimming for decades, and is operated and maintained by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. Water for swimming is taken from the Mill River and chlorinated at City property on East School Street.

Globe Park Pond

Globe Park Pond is a small pond within Globe Park, approximately less than 1-acre. The pond receives surface runoff from the adjacent embankment from Smithfield Road/Route 146A.

Highland Park Holding Pond

This 1-acre holding pond fronts onto CVS Drive and Park East Drive in the Highland Corporate Park. This retention pond is part of the area's stormwater system.

Patton Road Holding Pond

This oval-shaped holding pond was constructed as part of the stormwater system for the Walnut Hills plat. It was developed in the 1960's and 1970's. It retains storm flow during peak rainfall events.

Public Water Supply and Public Watershed Areas

Woonsocket's water supply system consists of three reservoirs, Reservoir #1, Reservoir #3, and Harris Pond. (The former Reservoir No. 2 is no longer in use.) Map E-2 shows the location of these reservoirs. Reservoir No. 1 is located approximately 2.5 miles downstream, along Crookfall Brook in North Smithfield and Manville, Rhode Island. The reservoir is 10.2 acres in area, and contains 33.2 million gallons at the dam spillway elevation of 170.30 feet (City of Woonsocket. 1999. Infrastructure Rehabilitation Plan). Reservoir No. 3 lies in the towns of

Smithfield and North Smithfield is the largest of the three reservoirs at 263 acres, and a total storage volume of 1,173 million gallons (Infrastructure Rehabilitation Plan). Harris Pond, just over the state line in Blackstone, Massachusetts, has a total surface area of 108 acres, and stores 340 million gallons at the dam spillway elevation of 167.5 feet (Infrastructure Rehabilitation Plan). Harris Pond was developed as a supplementary water supply for the City during the 1960's. A main from the Harris Pond Pump Station sends water south of the City to Reservoir No. 1 where it is aerated. This water supply must be prechlorinated prior to its use. Before using water from Harris Pond, the City must notify the Rhode Island Department of Health.

The Crookfall Brook pipeline project was completed in the year 2000. The brook was piped from Reservoir #3 to Reservoir #2, lessening the potential for contamination of the brook, and therefore the City's water supply. Route 146 crosses the brook at the North Smithfield/Lincoln border. Should a fuel spill or some other environmental hazard threaten the brook, the City can now transfer all of the water flow to the pipeline. The piping of the brook also prevents the evaporation of as much as 1,000,000 gallons of water per day.

Reservoir #1's watershed area consists of approximately 4.73 square miles. The area is hilly with steep slopes in the vicinity of Mill Brook and Crookfall Brook in North Smithfield. This watershed is traversed by the major highways of Routes 146, 116 and 99. The City of Woonsocket owns 124 acres, or 4 percent of this watershed. The watershed area for Reservoir #3 measures approximately 3.23 square miles and is hilly with large areas of wetlands or marsh lands. This watershed is primarily undeveloped but does include some residential and agricultural land uses. The City of Woonsocket owns 636 acres, or 31 percent of this watershed. The Harris Pond watershed includes approximately 33.3 square miles within the Massachusetts communities of Blackstone, Mendon, Hopedale, Upton, Bellingham, and Milford. The Woonsocket Water Division owns Harris Pond and about 10 acres of the watershed along the shoreline. As stated in the Services and Facilities Element of this Comprehensive Plan, underground pollution from surrounding development in Massachusetts negatively impacts the water quality levels of this water source.

Wetlands

Freshwater wetlands are valuable natural resources which serve an important role in a region's ecosystem. Wetlands hold waters from rain and melting snow and aid in flood protection. Wetlands also aid in recharging groundwater supplies leading to cleaner surface water or public water supplies. Wetlands also provide habitat for many kinds of wildlife and may also serve as valuable open space for recreation and conservation. Before government regulation, many acres of wetlands in the region had been filled to make room for development. It is important to note that not all wetlands contain standing water. Therefore, it is not always obvious to the casual observer whether their property contains wetlands.

Poorly planned development can impair the functions of wetlands leading to flooding problems, pollution of water bodies, and destruction of wildlife habitat. It is in the City's interest to encourage the protection of its wetlands in order to prevent flooding and resource pollution problems in the future.

Table E-2 is a summary of wetlands in the City of Woonsocket, as determined by RIGIS through aerial photography and the United States Geological Survey. According to RIGIS, the City contains approximately 249.17 acres of wetlands, of which over 77% are classified as deciduous.

Wetlands are scattered throughout various sections of the City. Some areas with larger wetland areas are the undeveloped land north of Rhodes Avenue (29 acres), Wood Estate (23 acres), the undeveloped areas both east and west of Jillson Avenue (47.8 acres), and the a large wetland area north of Diamond Hill Road east of the Woonsocket Plaza (19 acres). Several smaller wetland areas exist east of Mendon Road in the Iron Rock Brook Conservation Area (57 acres). Approximately 28.4 acres of wetlands exist at the banks of the Blackstone River in the southern portion of the City. Map E-3 shows the location and classification of the City's wetlands, as determined by the U.S. Geological Survey. As with other natural resources, a regional approach to wetland protection is necessary in the greater Woonsocket area. Functioning wetlands in neighboring communities offer the benefits of cleaner surface water and groundwater throughout the region.

Groundwater Resources

Groundwater is another natural resource that the City must take steps to protect. Groundwater is rain water that has filtered into (or recharged) the ground and then stays beneath the surface. Virtually none of the City's residents or businesses relies on groundwater for their drinking water supply. However, groundwater remains a prime concern due to its interrelationship with surface water quality. Groundwater flows to and discharges into surface water bodies and wetlands, thus affecting the quality of these surface waters.

The City of Woonsocket has a long and proud heritage as a center of industry. Woonsocket's history as home to many of New England's prominent textile mills is one of its greatest resources. However, as was the case in many of the State's urban areas, the City's economic success during the period from the mid-eighteen hundreds to the mid-nineteen hundreds, often came at the expense of the natural environment.

Map E-4 shows groundwater classification for the City of Woonsocket as of 2005, as determined by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, as well as wellhead protection areas near Woonsocket. Roughly one-half of the groundwater in the City is classified as GB, groundwater which is known or presumed to be unsuitable for drinking water use without treatment. This area of groundwater exists mostly beneath the older, more densely developed city center. It is in this area where virtually all of Woonsocket's manufacturing took place during the City's peak industrial period. The majority of the Blackstone River is in an area where the groundwater is classified as GB.

The City of Woonsocket contains no areas where groundwater is classified by RIDEM as GC, in which groundwater resources are underlying waste disposal sites and surrounding areas.

In the southern portion of the City, along both sides of the Blackstone River, groundwater is classified as GAA, "known or presumed to be suitable for drinking without treatment." This groundwater is a portion of the recharge area to the major stratified drift aquifer known as the Blackstone Groundwater Reservoir. This aquifer has the potential to be developed into a major source of water supply.

The second most common groundwater classification in the City, behind GB is GA, defined by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management as groundwater resources known or presumed to be of drinking water quality but are not assigned GAA. The largest GA area in the City is in East Woonsocket. This section of City consists mainly of lower-density residential development, constructed since the 1950's. Before that time, much of this land was forested. Other areas classified as GA include the undeveloped area surrounding the Booth Pond Conservation Area west of Manville Road and the undeveloped areas near the Rhodes Avenue Conservation Area.

The City of Woonsocket does contain a small amount of private wells within its borders. Table E-3 lists the location and groundwater classification of these private wells. Most of the private wells used for drinking in the City are classified as GA or GAA.

Wellhead protection areas are areas around public wells considered critical for the protection of their source water supplies. Community wells are groundwater wells that serve a public water system with at least 15 service connections used by year round residents or regularly serve 25 residents. Non-Community Wells are groundwater wells that serve a public water system with at least 25 persons who are not permanent residents for more than 60 days a year. Two non-community well head protection areas that extend into the City serve Park Square Medical Center in North Smithfield, near Park Square, and the Lil' General Store in Cumberland, near the intersection of Diamond Hill Road and Bound Road.

As previously stated, the northern portion of the Blackstone Groundwater Reservoir is located in the southern portion of the City. This aquifer has the potential for development as a source of water supply for potable or non-potable uses. The location of critical portions of groundwater recharge areas in the City can be found on Map E-5. Groundwater recharge areas are areas where permeable soil or rock allows water to readily seep into the ground and into a groundwater aquifer. Surface runoff from these areas also has an effect on groundwater quality. Groundwater quality is an area requiring a regional approach, as is evidenced by the Map E-5. The critical portions of the Blackstone Groundwater Reservoir recharge area are approximately 10 square miles in area beneath five Blackstone Valley Communities (Woonsocket, North Smithfield, Lincoln, Cumberland, and Central Falls).

Soil Features

Woonsocket's soils make up an important natural resource in that they serve as a guide to future development, and help to determine which land is most appropriate for development or conservation. Table E-4 shows the approximate acreage of soils by type and description of constraints.

As shown in Table E-4, over sixty percent of the land in the City is defined as having only moderate constraints to development. Out of these soils, the most abundant is the Merrimac-urban land complex (24.4% of total acreage) which is well suited for home sites, shopping centers, industrial parks, and other urban purposes (US Department of Agriculture. 1991. Soil Survey of Rhode Island). Nearly one-third of the City's acreage contains bedrock and slope constraints (>15% slope) as determined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Over six percent of the City's acreage has been determined to contain severe constraints associated with hydric soils of 0-18 inches in depth. Seasonally high water tables are found in over one percent of the City (60 acres). Surface water constitutes 15 acres, or 0.3%, of the City's acreage.

Map E-6 shows soil suitability for the City. The undeveloped area west of the Blackstone River in Southern Woonsocket largely contains bedrock and slope constraints. The area containing the Rhodes Avenue Conservation area as well as the undeveloped land north of Rhodes Avenue is also contains bedrock and slope constraints. Much of the land shown as having bedrock or slope constraints has already been developed. Examples of such areas include much of the Bernon Neighborhood west of Manville Road, and much of the area south of Diamond Hill Road and west of Mendon Road. Many areas in the southern and eastern portions of the City also have development constraints due to hydric soils. Map E-7 shows soil suitability in Woonsocket for agricultural use.

Geological and Topographical Features

The geological features of the Blackstone Valley region were modified by the movement of glaciers approximately 2.5 to 3 million years ago. Surface geology in the City of Woonsocket is mostly comprised of till in much of the upland areas. Till is material which was deposited with little or no sorting and has been compacted to form dense deposits not suited to groundwater storage.

Outwash is found in much of the lower-lying developed areas of the City. Outwash is material which was deposited by the glacial meltwater with much sorting and stratification by grain size. Outwash is often well suited for groundwater storage.

Bedrock geology in the City consists of Crystalline Rocks found mainly in the southern and eastern sections of the City, and Sedimentary Rocks in the western and northern sections of the City, including the downtown area.

Several areas of bedrock outcrop are present in the City. These include outcroppings in the Rhodes Avenue Conservation Area, and Highland Industrial Park, as well as outcroppings along Manville Road and Route 146A. The Woonsocket and Horseshoe Falls are also notable areas of outcrop.

The topography of the City varies from flat to hilly. The Downtown and Social Flatlands areas sit at the lowest elevation in the City. Hills rise up from these areas offering significant views of the City and the region. The City's steepest sloping areas exist mostly in the southern part of the City west of the Blackstone where much of the land remains undeveloped. Significant

areas of sloping terrain include the Globe Park Overlook, the Mount Saint Charles area, and the Highland Industrial Park area.

Air Quality

Air quality is often a regional issue that can be difficult to quantify on a local level. RIDEM and EPA data are usually on Statewide level. In many cases, ozone and other forms of air pollution can be carried hundreds of miles upwind from its source. Nonetheless, air quality is an issue that affects every local resident. Pollutants which compromise air quality include sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, ozone, nitrogen dioxide, lead, and other particulate matters.

The State of Rhode Island is classified as a serious nonattainment area for ozone (RIDEM, Office of Air Resources. 1997. Air Quality Summary, State of RI. Pg. 2). Ozone is formed by nitrogen oxides, and volatile organic compounds emitted into the air under the influence of heat and sunlight.

Ground level ozone can lead to several environmental problems. Ozone leads to reduced agricultural yields, and compromised plant growth and reproduction. Ozone affects entire ecosystems as well, impacting water movement, mineral nutrient cycling, and habitats for various animal and plant species.

Inhaling high levels of ozone can lead to many health problems in people. Ozone has been found to cause acute respiratory problems, and impair the body's immune system, making people more susceptible to respiratory illnesses, including bronchitis and pneumonia. High levels of ozone are also linked to increased hospital admissions and emergency room visits (RIDEM, Office of Air Resources. 1997. Air Quality Summary, State of RI).

Several factors lead to the quality of air resources in the community. One of these is the level of emissions created by local industry. Table E-5 shows establishments in the City of Woonsocket which are monitored by EPA for certain emissions. This table is not a list of illegal polluters, only of establishments which are monitored by the state for emissions.

Transportation is another area which has a direct effect on local and regional air quality. Over fifty percent of Nitrogen Oxide Emissions in New England in 1996 were from automobiles and trucks. The State's increasing reliance on the single occupancy automobile has added significantly to air pollution, even as the State's population has diminished (Brown University Center for Environmental Studies. 2000. RI Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory). More people rely on their cars for commuting to work and to other destinations as land uses become more spread out and segregated. Increased commuting options, such as mass transit, carpooling, bicycling and walking, will serve to lower emissions from automobiles.

Rare/Endangered Species

The City of Woonsocket does not contain any known rare or endangered species. Great blue heron have been spotted by residents in various locations. The City also does not contain any rare or endangered flora or fauna. Notable flora in the City includes Lousewirt sited by RIDEM at the Rhodes Avenue Conservation Area.

TABLE E-1: WOONSOCKET'S NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural Resources	Location
Conservation Land	
Booth Pond Conservation Area	See Existing Protected Open Space Map F-1
Iron Rock Brook Conservation Area	See Existing Protected Open Space Map F-1
Rhodes Avenue Conservation Area	See Existing Protected Open Space Map F-1
Wood Estate	See Existing Protected Open Space Map F-1
Flora & Fauna	
Great Blue Heron	Sighted by residents at various locations
Lousewirt	Sighted by DEM at Rhodes Ave. Conservation Area
Geological Features	
Cobble Rock (Rhodes Avenue Conservation Area)	Within Conservation Area south of Rhodes Avenue
Horseshoe Falls/Harris Dam	At Massachusetts border, viewable from Privilege Street
Rock Outcroppings - Wall above Manville Rd.; above Route 146A	West of Manville Road at its southern portion; east of SR-146A in N. Smithfield
Rock Shelter (Highland Industrial Park)	East of Park East Drive in Highland Industrial Park
Spines (Rhodes Avenue Conservation Area)	Within Conservation Area south of Rhodes Avenue
Woonsocket Falls	At Market Square just north of the South Main Street bridge
Rivers & Waterways	
Blackstone River	See Surface Water Bodies Map E-1
Booth Pond	See Surface Water Bodies Map E-1
Cass Pond	See Surface Water Bodies Map E-1
Cherry Brook	See Surface Water Bodies Map E-1
Crook Fall Brook	See Surface Reservoir Map E-2
Darling Pond	See Surface Water Bodies Map E-1
Harris Pond	Located in Blackstone, MA
Iron Rock Brook	See Surface Water Bodies Map E-1
Mill River	See Surface Water Bodies Map E-1
Peters River	See Surface Water Bodies Map E-1
Reservoirs 2 & 3	See Surface Reservoir Map E-2
Sylvester's Pond	See Surface Water Bodies Map E-1

TABLE E-2
WETLANDS CLASSIFICATION: CITY OF WOONSOCKET, 1995

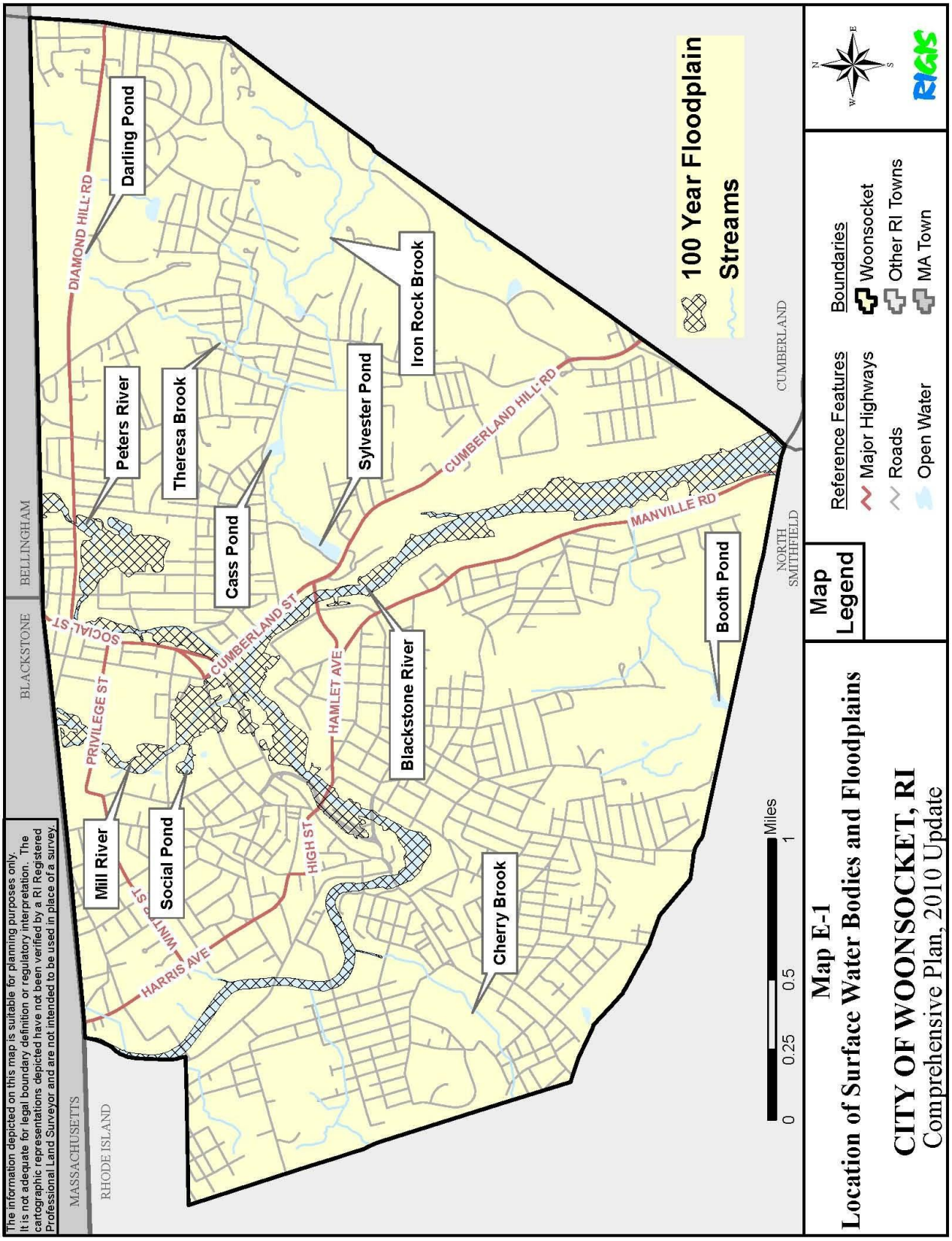
Wetlands Description	Area		
	(sq. ft.)	*(acres)*	*(sq. miles)*
No Data	565,945.91	12.99	0.02
Coniferous	48,119.17	1.1	0.00
Deciduous	8,437,547.17	193.7	0.30
Emergent	1,110,237.48	25.49	0.04
Shrub Fen or Bog	45,168.27	1.04	0.00
Shrub Swamp	646,943.38	14.85	0.02
Total Wetlands	*10,853,961.38*	*249.17*	*0.39*

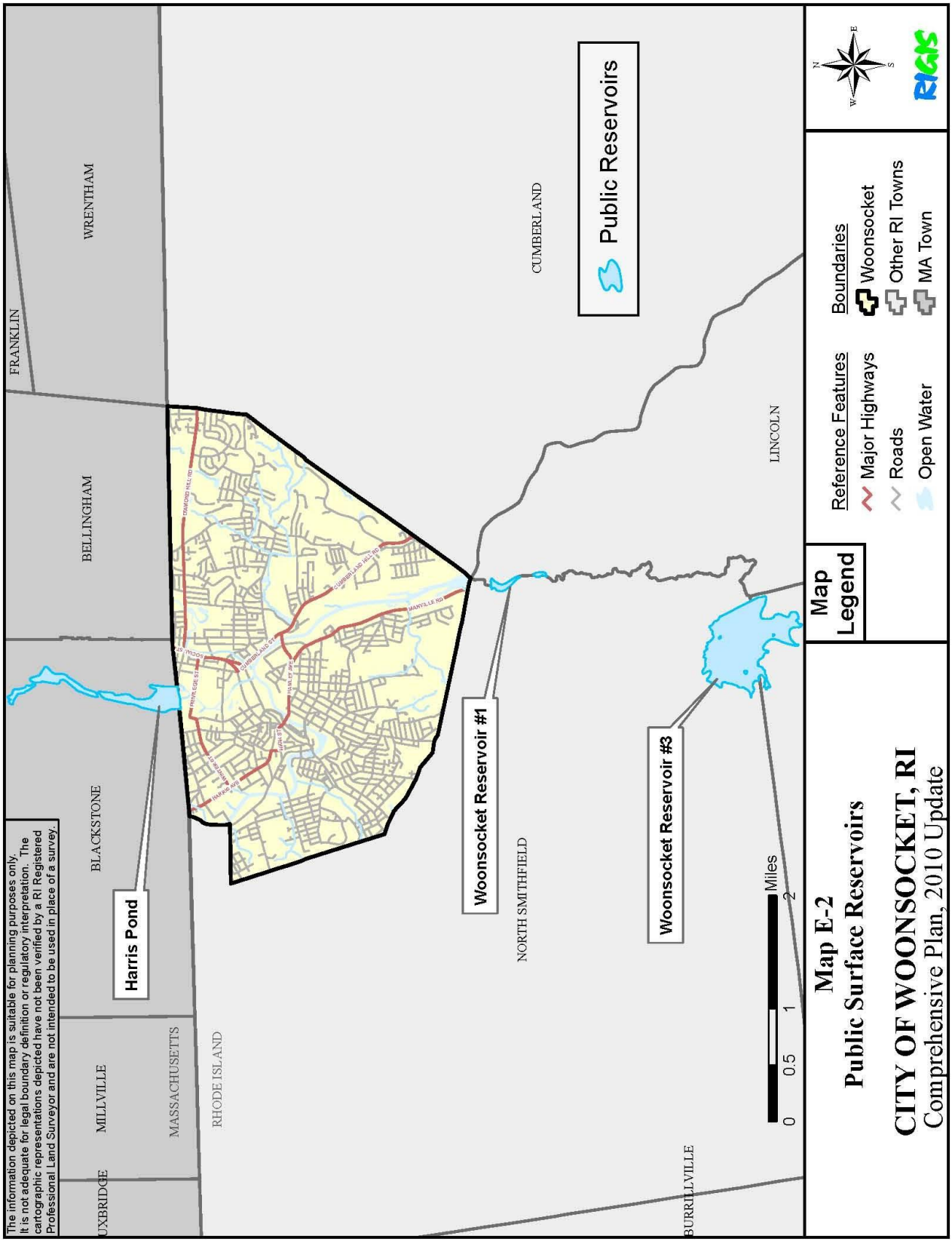
Source: RIGIS Wetlands Data, 1995.

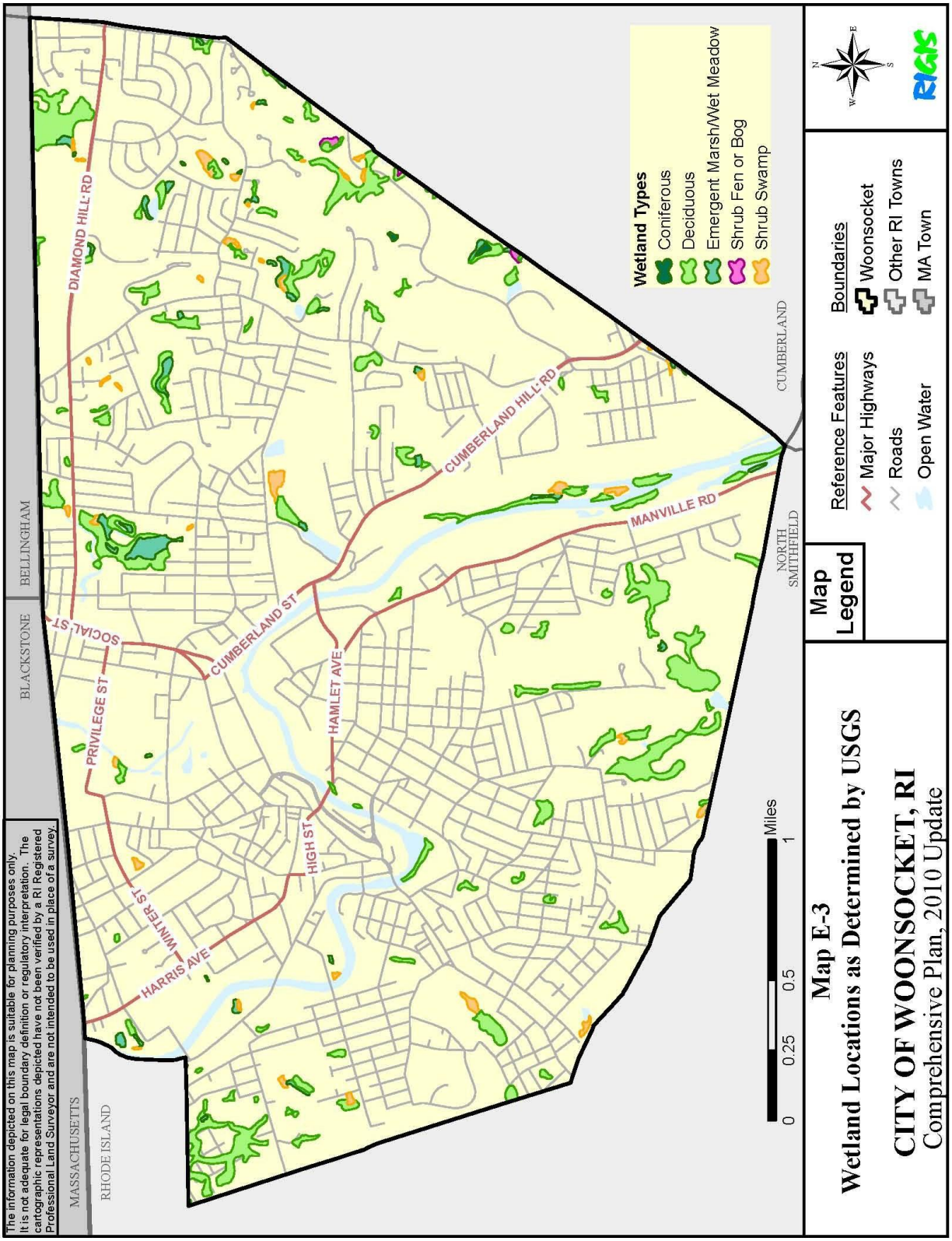
TABLE E-3
PRIVATE WELLS: CITY OF WOONSOCKET

Location	Groundwater Classification	Use
Joffre St.	GAA	Drinking
Wilcox St.	GA	Drinking
Grace Ave.	GA	Drinking
Fairmount St. (7 Wells)	GA	Drinking

Source: City of Woonsocket Dept. of Public Works, Engineering Division


The information depicted on this map is suitable for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation. The cartographic representations depicted have not been verified by a RI Registered Professional Land Surveyor and are not intended to be used in place of a survey.
MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
BLACKSTONE
BELLINGHAM
CUMBERLAND
NORTH SMITHFIELD
Darling Pond
Peters River
Theresa Brook
Cass Pond
Sylvester Pond
Iron Rock Brook
Mill River
Social Pond
Blackstone River
Cherry Brook
Booth Pond
DIAMOND HILL RD
SOCIAL ST
PRIVILEGE ST
CUMBERLAND ST
HAMLET AVE
HIGH ST
WINTER ST
HARRIS AVE
CUMBERLAND HILL RD
MANVILLE RD
100 Year Floodplain
Streams
Map Legend
Reference Features
Major Highways
Roads
Open Water
Boundaries
Woonsocket
Other RI Towns
MA Town
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
Map E-1
Location of Surface Water Bodies and Floodplains
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update


The information depicted on this map is suitable for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation. The cartographic representations depicted have not been verified by a RI Registered Professional Land Surveyor and are not intended to be used in place of a survey.
FRANKLIN
WRENTHAM
BELLINGHAM
BLACKSTONE
MILLVILLE
UXBRIDGE
MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
CUMBERLAND
LINCOLN
NORTH SMITHFIELD
BURRILLVILLE
Harris Pond
Woonsocket Reservoir #1
Woonsocket Reservoir #3
Public Reservoirs
Map Legend
Reference Features
Major Highways
Roads
Open Water
Boundaries
Woonsocket
Other RI Towns
MA Town
0 0.5 1 2
Miles
Map E-2
Public Surface Reservoirs
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update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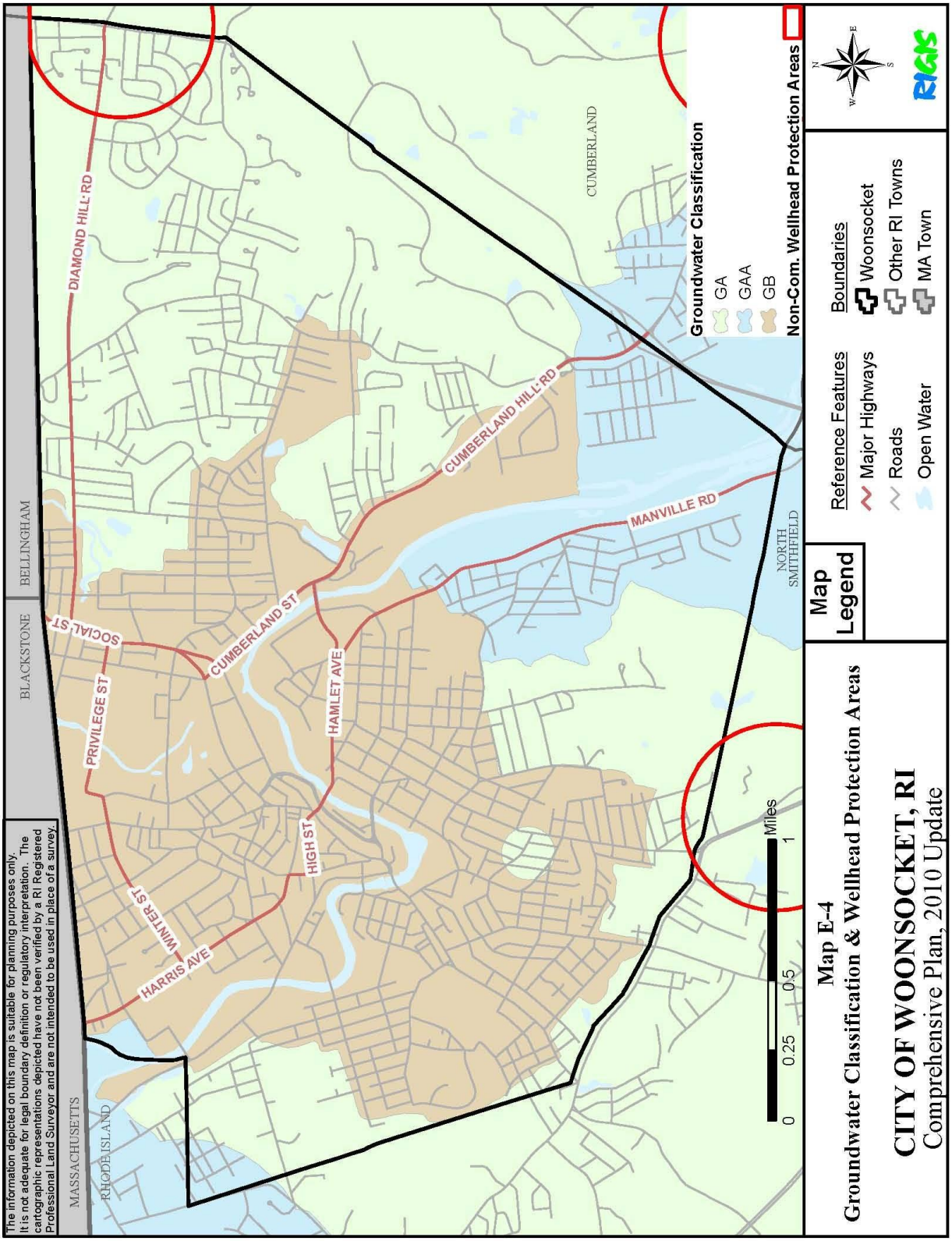
MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
BLACKSTONE
BELLINGHAM
CUMBERLAND
NORTH SMITHFIELD
DIAMOND HILL RD
SOCIAL ST
PRIVILEGE ST
CUMBERLAND ST
HAMLET AVE
HIGH ST
WINTER ST
HARRIS AVE
CUMBERLAND HILL RD
MANVILLE RD
Wetland Types
Coniferous
Deciduous
Emergent Marsh/Wet Meadow
Shrub Fen or Bog
Shrub Swamp
0
0.25
0.5
1
Miles
Map Legend
Reference Features
Major Highways
Roads
Open Water
Boundaries
Woonsocket
Other RI Towns
MA Town
RIGIS
Map E-3
Wetland Locations as Determined by USGS
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update


The information depicted on this map is suitable for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation. The cartographic representations depicted have not been verified by a RI Registered Professional Land Surveyor and are not intended to be used in place of a survey.
MASSACHUSETTS
BLACKSTONE
BELLINGHAM
RHODE ISLAND
CUMBERLAND
NORTH SMITHFIELD
DIAMOND HILL RD
SOCIAL ST
PRIVILEGE ST
CUMBERLAND ST
HAMLET AVE
HIGH ST
WINTER ST
HARRIS AVE
CUMBERLAND HILL RD
MANVILLE RD
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
Map Legend
Reference Features
Major Highways
Roads
Open Water
Boundaries
Woonsocket
Other RI Towns
MA Town
Groundwater Classification
GA
GAA
GB
Non-Com. Wellhead Protection Areas
Map E-4
Groundwater Classification & Wellhead Protection Areas
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update
RIGIS

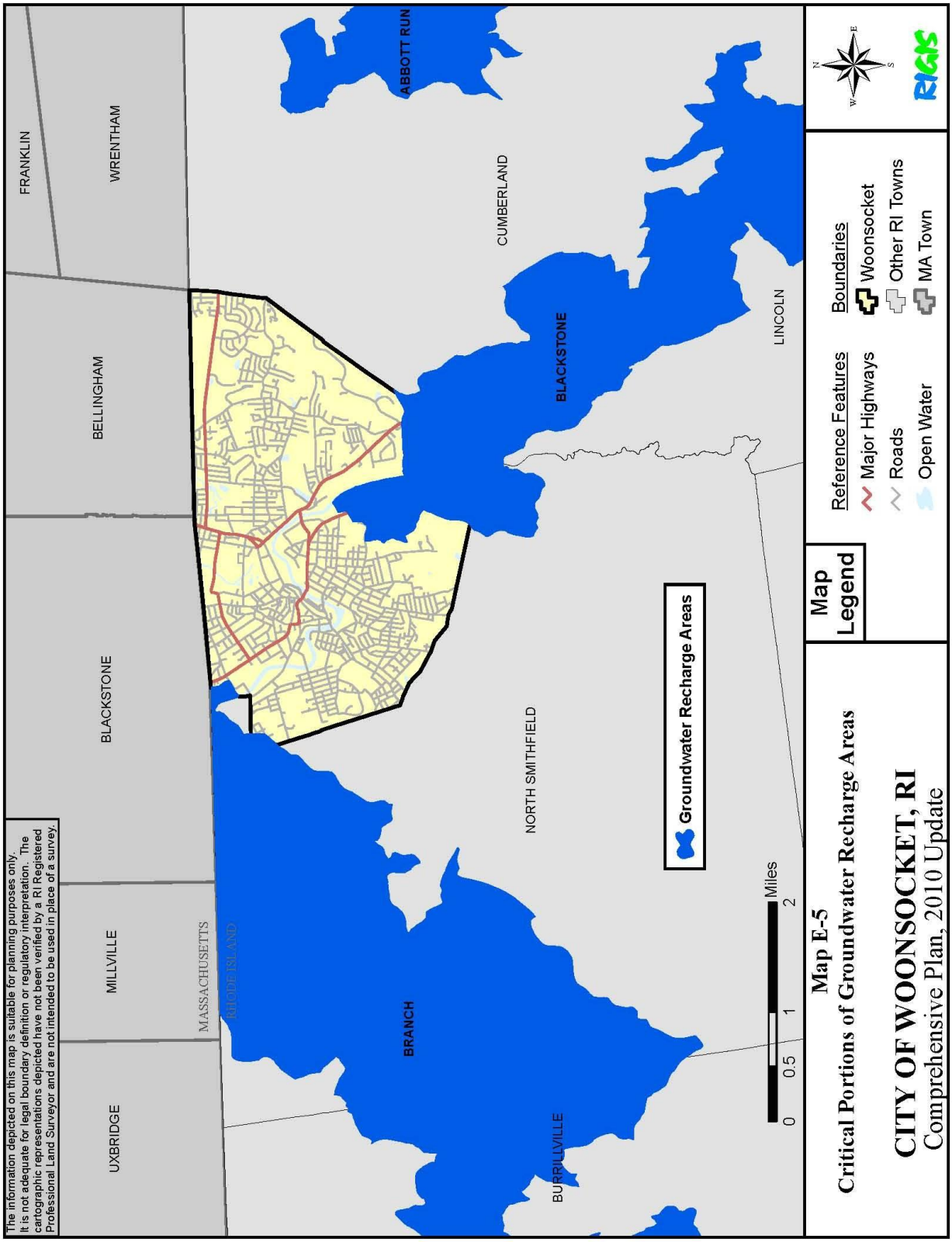
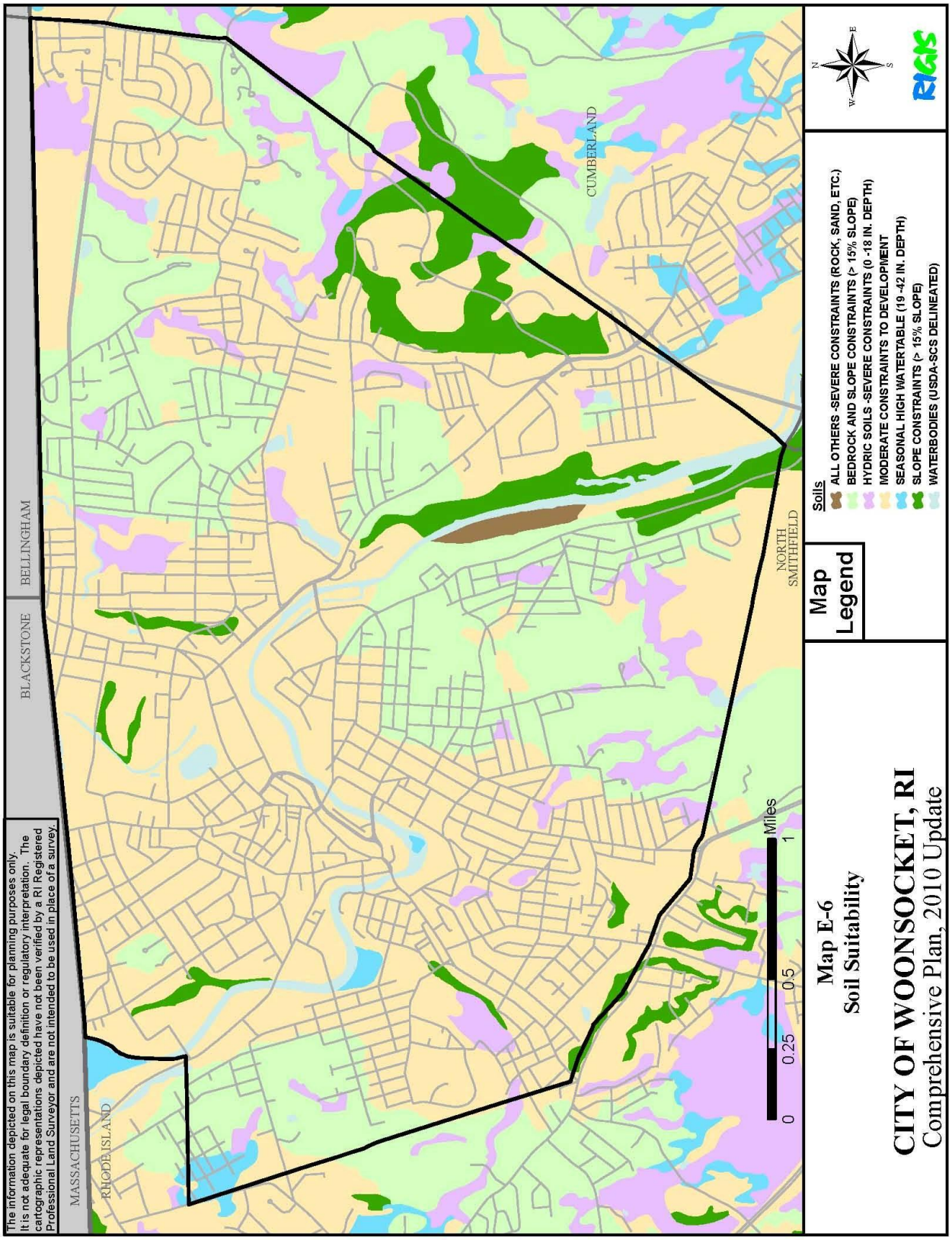

The information depicted on this map is suitable for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation. The cartographic representations depicted have not been verified by a RI Registered Professional Land Surveyor and are not intended to be used in place of a survey.
FRANKLIN
WRENTHAM
BELLINGHAM
BLACKSTONE
UXBRIDGE
MILLVILLE
MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
BRANCH
BURRILLVILLE
NORTH SMITHFIELD
CUMBERLAND
BLACKSTONE
ABBOTT RUN
LINCOLN
Groundwater Recharge Areas
0 0.5 1 2
Miles
Map Legend
Reference Features
Major Highways
Roads
Open Water
Boundaries
Woonsocket
Other RI Towns
MA Town
N
W
E
S
RIGIS
Map E-5
Critical Portions of Groundwater Recharge Areas
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update

TABLE E-4
ACREAGE OF SOILS: CITY OF WOONSOCKET, 1991

Soil Symbol	Soil Name	Acres	% of Total Acreage
Bedrock and Slope Constraints			
CaC	Canton-Charlton-Rock outcrop complex, 3 to 15 % slopes	120	2.3
CaD	Canton-Charlton-Rock outcrop complex, 15 to 35 % slopes	175	3.4
CC	Canton-Urban land complex, very rocky	820	16.0
CeC	Canton and Charlton fine sandy loams, very rocky, 3 to 15 % slopes	255	5.0
ChD	Canton and Charlton very stony fine sandy loams, 15 to 25 % slopes	150	2.9
HkD	Hinkley gravelly sandy loam, hilly	120	2.3
Total Bedrock and Slope Constraints		*1,640*	*32.1*
Hydric Soils - Severe Constraints (0-18 in. Depth)			
Rf	Ridgebury, Whitman and Leicester extremely stony fine sandy loams	230	4.5
Wa	Walpole sandy loam	95	1.9
Total Hydric Soils - Severe Constraints		*325*	*6.4*
Moderate Constraints to Development			
CB	Canton-Urban land complex	600	11.7
CdA	Canton and Charlton fine sandy loams, 0 to 3 % slopes	80	1.6
CdB	Canton and Charlton fine sandy loams, 3 to 8 % slopes	90	1.8
CdC	Canton and Charlton fine sandy loams, 8 to 15 % slopes	25	0.5
ChB	Canton and Charlton very stony fine sandy loams, 3 to 8 % slopes	50	1.0
ChC	Canton and Charlton very stony fine sandy loams, 8 to 15 % slopes	110	2.2
CkC	Canton and Charlton extremely stony fine sandy loams, 3 to 15 % slopes	10	0.2
HkC	Hinkley gravelly sandy loam, rolling	85	1.7
MmB	Merrimac sandy loam, 3 to 8 % slopes	10	0.2
MU	Merrimac-Urban land complex	1,245	24.4
PbB	Paxton very stony fine sandy loam, 0 to 8 % slopes	20	0.4
PbC	Paxton very stony fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 % slopes	10	0.2
Pg	Pits, gravel	30	0.6
UD	Udorthents, very steep	345	6.8
Ur	Urban land	350	6.8
HkA	Hinkley gravelly sandy loam, 0 to 3 % slopes	10	0.2
Total Moderate Constraints to Development		*3,070*	*60.1*
Seasonal High Water Table (19-42 in. Depth)			
Pp	Podunk fine sandy loam	10	0.2
SuB	Sutton very stony fine sandy loam, 0 to 8 % slopes	20	0.4
WhB	Woodbridge fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 % slopes	30	0.6
Total Seasonal High Water Table		*60*	*1.2*
Total Surface Water		*15*	*0.3*
Total		5,110	100.0

Source: US Department of Agriculture. 1991. Soil Survey of Rhode Island.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MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
BLACKSTONE
BELLINGHAM
CUMBERLAND
NORTH SMITHFIELD
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
Map Legend
Soils
ALL OTHERS -SEVERE CONSTRAINTS (ROCK, SAND, ETC.)
BEDROCK AND SLOPE CONSTRAINTS (> 15% SLOPE)
HYDRIC SOILS -SEVERE CONSTRAINTS (0 -18 IN. DEPTH)
MODERATE CONSTRAINTS TO DEVELOPMENT
SEASONAL HIGH WATERTABLE (19 -42 IN. DEPTH)
SLOPE CONSTRAINTS (> 15% SLOPE)
WATERBODIES (USDA-SCS DELINEATED)
N
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S
RIGIS
Map E-6
Soil Suitability
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update

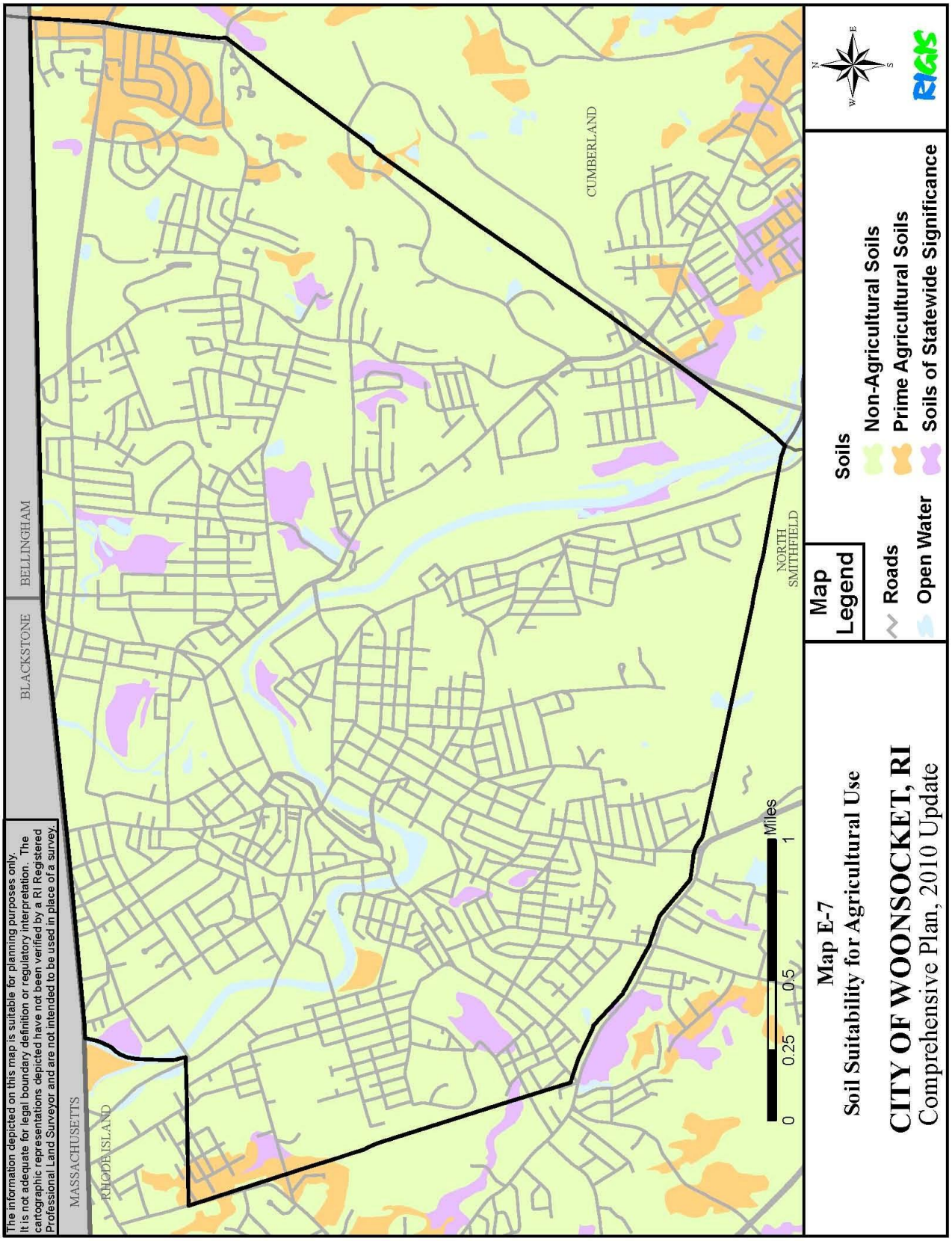

The information depicted on this map is suitable for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation. The cartographic representations depicted have not been verified by a RI Registered Professional Land Surveyor and are not intended to be used in place of a survey.
MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
BLACKSTONE
BELLINGHAM
CUMBERLAND
NORTH SMITHFIELD
0
0.25
0.5
1
Miles
Map E-7
Soil Suitability for Agricultural Use
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update
Map Legend
Roads
Open Water
Soils
Non-Agricultural Soils
Prime Agricultural Soils
Soils of Statewide Significance
N
W
E
S
RIGIS

TABLE E-5
ESTABLISHMENTS MONITORED FOR EMISSIONS:
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, 2002

Plant Name	Street Address
B & E Metal Finishing Inc.	153 Hamlet Ave.
Brickle Realty	235 Singleton St.
CNC International LP	20 Privilege St.
CVS Caremark Corporation	One CVS Drive
Fairmount Foundry	25 Second Ave.
Fandetti Fusion	582 Manville Rd.
Flocktex Inc.	200 Founders Dr.
Hanora Spinning Inc.	159 Singleton St.
Honeywell Sensing & Control	245 Railroad St.
Jill Realty Trust	32 Mechanic Ave.
Laminated Products	32 Mechanic Ave. #204
Landmark Medical Center, Woonsocket Unit	115 Cass Ave.
Mount Saint Charles Academy	800 Logee St.
Northern Products Inc.	153 Hamlet Ave.
Polyurethane Molding Inc.	32 Mechanic Ave.
Portola Tech International	85 Fairmount St.
Technic Inc. EPD	300 Park East Dr.
Woonsocket Call, The	75 Main St.
Woonsocket WWTF	11 Cumberland Hill Rd.

Source: U.S. EPA AirData (retrieved 3/2009)

TABLE E-6
RIDEM OFFICE OF WASTE MANAGEMENT
LEAKING TANKS PROJECTS

Name	Address	Status*
ACS Industries	71 Villa Nova St.	Inactive
Allam Oil	144 Cooper St.	Active
Bonin Industries	1265 Mendon Rd.	Active
Capeway Dye (Former Florence Dye)	168 Florence Dr.	Inactive
City of Woonsocket	Costa Park	Active
City of Woonsocket	259 Cottage St.	Inactive
Cumberland Farms	779 Park Ave.	Inactive
Cumberland Farms	247 South Main St.	Inactive
Desmond Mill	308 East School St.	Active
Desmond Mills	308 East School St.	Active
Diamond Hill Apartments	127 Mendon Rd.	Inactive
East Street School	292 East St.	Inactive
Exxon Station	852 Park Ave.	Active

First Universalist Church	78 Earle St.	Inactive
Foundry Building (Former)	85 Mason St.	Active
Globe Park School	Avenue A	Inactive
Hanora Spinning	159 Singleton St.	Active
JED Delta	99 Allen Ave.	Inactive
Marquis Oil	188 Willow St.	Inactive
Merit Station	300 Social St.	Inactive
Mill Woonsocket Associates	96 Mill St.	Inactive
Rick's Car Wash	621 Pond St.	Inactive
Rosecraft Facility (former)	685 Social St.	Active
Rosemont Holdings, LLC	540 Dulude Ave.	Inactive
RR Riverview Furniture	68 South Main St.	Inactive
Savoie School	980 Mendon Rd.	Active
Sawyers Sunoco	905 Park Ave.	Active
Shell	1325 Diamond Hill Rd.	Active
Shell	450 Social St.	Active
Social Street Mobile	1030 Social St.	Active
Thomas Dybala Property	46 Thomas St.	Inactive
Valley Transportation	664 Front St.	Active
Woonsocket Call	75 Main St.	Inactive
Woonsocket Consumers Coal	1182 River St.	Inactive
Woonsocket DB	1023 Social St.	Inactive
Woonsocket Highway Garage	105 Cumberland Hill Rd.	Inactive
Woonsocket Police Station (former)	139 Front St.	Inactive

* ”Status” refers to the status of the clean-up.

This table is a list of full cleanups only and does not include sites which require only minor soil removal. The names column refers to the name the property was known by at the time the property was placed on the RIDEM list. Several properties have since changed ownership.
Source: RIDEM, GIS map "Reinvesting In Our Industrial Heritage", 2008.

CURRENT CONDITIONS AND ISSUES

Introduction

This Element of the Plan covers the most pertinent and critical aspects of the City’s natural and cultural resources. For more detailed information with regard to past historical conditions and research data, please refer to the Natural and Cultural Resources section of the Appendix, which contains a narrative, tables, and maps that provide useful background information.

Woonsocket's natural and cultural resources are fascinating. Its history, both unique and illustrative of broader historical patterns, is a source of community pride. The City of Woonsocket was born of the Blackstone River, the relationship its people had with that river and the surrounding landscape. Its historical environment is a blend of the power of the natural landscape, the resourcefulness and hard work of generations of its people, and the built legacy of its villages and urban industrialism. The City places great importance on protecting the physical remnants of that history and of Woonsocket's proud industrial heritage.

In 1909, Winthrop Packard wrote:

The hardest working river, the most thoroughly harnessed to the mill wheels of labor in the United States, probably in the world, is the Blackstone.

The significance of the Blackstone River to the City of Woonsocket and the entire Blackstone Valley cannot be overstated. Dropping over 438 feet in its 46 mile run, the Blackstone River has a greater drop over this course than does the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon. Within that context the Blackstone River, at Woonsocket Falls, has its greatest single drop in elevation, 31 feet, with a capacity for the generation of 2,000 horsepower of energy.

Of course, the river needed people to make it work -- people who started and managed the mills, and people who worked in the mills. These people built the City, and their work, together with the harnessed work of the river, gave rise to Woonsocket's industrial pre-eminence in 19th century America. The legacy of both the river's power and the people who took hold of that power are evident throughout the urban landscape.

The Blackstone River, the most prominent of Woonsocket's natural resources, physically shaped the historical development of the City. Due to its steeply sloping terrain, exposed ledge and wetlands, no abundance of easily developable land ever existed in Woonsocket. Nonetheless, persistent settlers overcame these severe constraints to form the City which exists today as a symbol of man's dominance over nature.

While this dominance allowed for the creation of so many of Woonsocket's treasured historic resources, it also led to an attitude of irreverence toward the natural environment and to the degradation of that environment. The nature of the manufacturing industry has created a legacy of environmental woes. Industrial properties, particularly those along riverways, often contain toxic wastes and hazardous materials which pose serious deterrents to the reuse and redevelopment of these properties.

Over the years, many of the City's natural resources have been negatively affected by carelessness and indifference, with the Blackstone River suffering the most. Wetlands and waterways contain concentrations of metals imbedded in silt and other toxins which seriously affect water quality and wildlife habitat. The sheer magnitude of the problem, and the incredible cost of mitigation, presents an enormous challenge to the City. Fortunately, a new respect for the environment is replacing that indifference, as Woonsocket turns to the Blackstone and its banks as a rediscovered community resource. In addition, recent efforts have been made to preserve the City's limited open space and to protect its natural environment.

Cultural Resources: Inventory

The history of Woonsocket's development can be read in its wealth of surviving resources. These resources exhibit a powerful connectedness between people, time, buildings, and the landscape. This connectedness contributes to a unique sense of place in Woonsocket. The listings of historic resources in the City are well documented and impressive, rivaling that of Providence and Newport in many regards. Table E-7 lists the City’s National Register of Historic Places Historic Districts and Historic Properties. Map E-1 locates these cultural resources within the City. As the City considers enacting a local historic district commission and historic district

zoning, priority should be given to these areas already identified on the National Register. In addition to these sites, Table E-8 lists all of the City's locally significant cultural resources. These historic properties should be considered for future listing on the National Register, with particular attention placed on the City's mill complexes. Improvement to this inventory and the development of a procedure for continuously updating the inventory are recommendations of this Plan.

Although many of the City's historic structures and sites remain, others have been lost over the years. While these losses have certainly left gaps in Woonsocket's historical environment, the City's overall character has been largely preserved. Unfortunately, that character is now more fragile than ever, and additional losses could prove devastating. Every effort must be made to ensure that future losses of the City's significant cultural resources do not occur.

TABLE E-7
NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS AND PROPERTIES

Name	Location	Date Added
1761 Milestone	640 South Main St.	11/24/1982
John Arnold House	99 Providence St.	9/13/1990
Bernon Worsted Mill	828 Park Ave.	6/10/2005
Henry Darling House	786 Harris Ave.	11/26/1982
Alphonse Gaulin, Jr. House	311 Elm St.	11/24/1982
Glenark Mills	64 East St.	5/15/1989
Grove Street Elementary School	312 Grove St.	11/24/1982
Hanora Mills	1 Main St.	11/24/1982
Harris Warehouse	61 Railroad St.	7/1/1976
Honan's Block and 112 - 114 Main Street	110 - 114 Main St.	8/3/1989
Hope Street School	40 Hope St.	4/14/2000
Jenckes Mansion	837 - 839 Social St.	11/24/1982
Jules Desurmont Worsted Company Mill	84 Fairmount St.	1/12/2007
L'Eglise du Precieux Sang	94 Carrington and 61 Park Aves.	7/26/1982
Linton Block	3 - 5 Monument Sq.	11/24/1982
Logee House	225 Logee St.	11/24/1982
Philmont Worsted Company Mill	685 Social St.	4/19/2006
Pothier House	172 Pond St.	11/24/1982
Smith - Ballou House	641 Harris Ave.	6/6/2003
Smithfield Friends Meeting House, Parsonage & Cemetery	126 Smithfield Rd.	11/24/1982
St. Andrews Episcopal Chapel	576 Fairmount St.	11/24/1982
St. Ann's Church Complex	Cumberland and Elm Sts. and Gaulin Ave.	11/24/1982
St. Charles Borromeo Church Complex	North Main, Daniels and Earle Sts.	2/24/1983
Stadium Building	329 Main St.	6/30/1976
U.S. Post Office	295 Main St.	5/30/1979
Frank Wilbur House	1273 Park Ave.	11/24/1982
Woonsocket City Hall	169 Main St.	5/1/1974
Woonsocket Civil War Monument	Monument Sq.	11/24/1982

Woonsocket Company Mill Complex	100 - 115 Front St.	5/7/1973
Woonsocket District Courthouse	24 Front St.	11/24/1982
Woonsocket Rubber Company Mill	60 - 82 South Main St.	5/1/1989

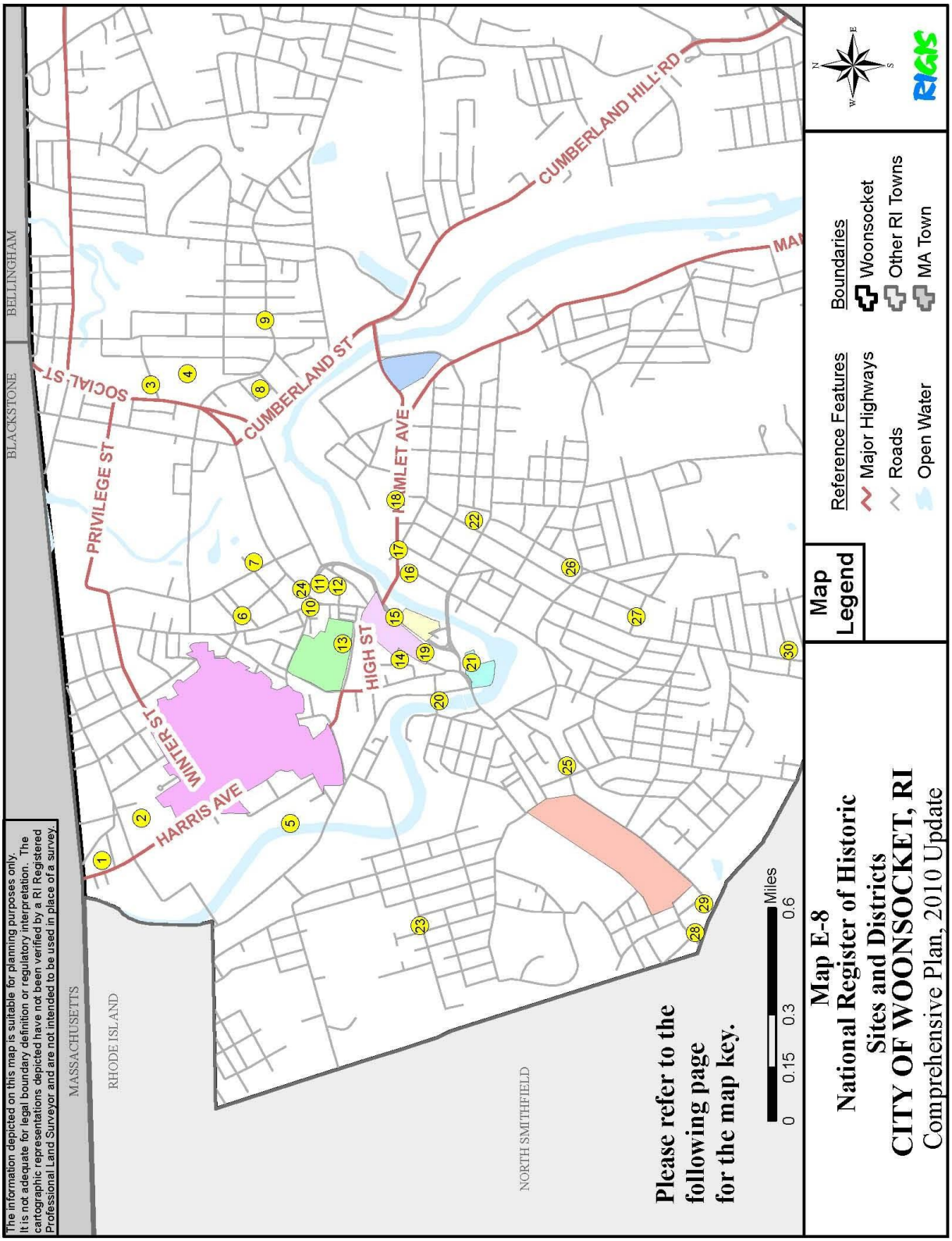
(cont'd…)

Historic Districts	**Location or Boundaries**	**Date Added**
Allen Street	Allen St.	9/13/1990
Cato Hill	RI 44	8/10/1976
Cato Hill (Boundary Increase)	Roughly, Arnold, Blackstone, Cherry and Railroad Sts.	11/24/1982
French Worsted Company Mill	153 Hamlet Ave.	5/21/2008
Island Place	Island Place and South Main St. at Market Sq.	9/13/1990
Main Street	Roughly, Main St. east of Market Sq. to Depot Sq.	4/18/1991
North End	Roughly, Verry, Highland, Winter and Summer Sts.	11/24/1982
South Main Street	Roughly, Mason, Coe and Andrews Sts. and Bernice Ave.	11/24/1982

Source: National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, 2009

Cultural Resources: Historic Preservation

In 1976, a Woonsocket Historic Districts Commission was founded, based on recommendations of a survey conducted by the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission. Woonsocket designated the Cato Hill residential neighborhood as its first and only local historic district. This designation made the neighborhood eligible for rehabilitation grants and loans. However, all restorations were under the authority of the then Woonsocket Historic Districts Commission, which insured that all improvements were in keeping with the historical character of the neighborhood. After nearly twenty years, many Cato Hill homeowners, frustrated by the bureaucracy involved in minor home improvements, succeeded in petitioning the City Council to abolish the Woonsocket Historic Districts Commission, and the local historic district designation in 1996. Since that time, Woonsocket has experienced an increase in the number of historic properties falling into disrepair and abandonment. There are several examples of historic properties that have been lost to demolition and even more examples of historic properties being renovated in ways that degrade the historic nature of the structures. In response to these realities, the city plans to begin a public outreach and education campaign to gain support for reinstating a Local Historic District Commission. The City will explore which area(s) in the city may be most appropriate for this designation, which may or may not mirror one of the several National Historic Districts currently situated in Woonsocket. The City has a small but active Historical Society. The City should capitalize on the resources of this group and include it more formally in the community planning process. The city should better utilize the resources of the Woonsocket Historical Society, as well as those of the various state and regional historic preservation entities as the city considers instituting local historic districts and a commission.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MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
BLACKSTONE
BELLINGHAM
NORTH SMITHFIELD
SOCIAL ST
PRIVILEGE ST
CUMBERLAND ST
CUMBERLAND HILL RD
HARRIS AVE
WINTER ST
HIGH ST
MLET AVE
Please refer to the following page for the map key.
0 0.15 0.3 0.6 Miles
Map E-8
National Register of Historic Sites and Districts
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update
Map Legend
Reference Features
Major Highways
Roads
Open Water
Boundaries
Woonsocket
Other RI Towns
MA Town
RIGIS

= National Register Listed Historic Sites

1) Henry Darling House
2) Smith Ballou House
3) Jenckes Mansion
4) Philmont Worsted Company Mill
5) Jules Desurmont Worsted Company Mill
6) St. Charles Boromeo Complex
7) Pothier House
8) St. Ann's Church Complex
9) Alphonse Gaulin Jr. House
10) Linton Block
11) Stadium Building and Theatre
12) Former U.S. Post Office
13) Harris Warehouse
14) Honans Block and 112-114 Main Street
15) Woonsocket City Hall
16) Woonsocket Company Mill Complex
17) Woonsocket District Courthouse
18) L'Eglise Du Precieux Sang
19) Hanora (Ballou/Harrison/Lippett) Mills
20) Glenark Mills
21) Woonsocket Rubber Company Mill
22) Grove Street Elementary School
23) St. Andrews Episcopal Chapel
24) Woonsocket Civil War Monument
25) John Arnold House
26) Logee House
27) Bernon Worsted Mill
28) 1761 Milestone
29) Smithfield Friends Meeting House
30) Frank Wilbur House

National Register Historic Districts

- French Worsted Company Mill
- South Main Street
- Allen Street
- Cato Hill
- Island Place
- Main Street
- North End

TABLE E-8: WOONSOCKET'S CULTURAL RESOURCES
EXISTING HISTORIC MILLS

Cultural Resource	Location	Status*
Masurel Worsted Company Mill	Singleton St.	LHS
Joan Plush/RI Plush Mill	River St.	LHS
Woonsocket Machine and Press Co.	Second Ave.	LHS
Samoset Mills	Singleton St.	LHS
Nyanza Mill	Singleton St.	LHS
Colchis Mill	River St.	LHS
Fairmount Foundry	Second Ave. and Mason St.	LHS
Alice Mill	Fairmount St.	PNR
Jules Desurmont Worsted Company Mill (Riverside Worsted)	84 Fairmount St.	NR - 1/12/07
Glenark Mills	64 East St.	NR - 5/15/89
Arthur I. Darman Mill Building	Arnold St.	LHS
Woonsocket Rubber Company Mill / Lincoln Textile Mill	South Main St. / Island Place	NR - 5/1/89
Harris Mill #2	Main St.	NRD
Hanora Mills / Lippitt Woolen Company / Dexter Ballou Mill	1 Main St.	NR - 11/24/82
Ron-Kim Knitting Mill	Benefit St.	LHS
Bernon Worsted Mill / Airedale Worsted Mill	828 Park Ave.	NR - 6/10/05
Narragansett Knitting Mill	Allen St.	NRD
Harris Warehouse	Railroad St.	NR - 7/1/76
Allen Street Mill	Allen St.	NRD
The Shorr Mill	Allen St.	NRD
Woonsocket Brush Co. Mill	North Main St.	LHS
Taft-Pierce Mills	Mechanic St.	LHS
Friends Foundry	East School St.	LHS
Bernon Mill Complex (Woonsocket Company)	Front St.	NR - 5/7/73
Privilege Mill (Partial)	Privilege St.	LHS
Cohen Mill	Privilege St.	LHS
Guerin Mills	East School St.	LHS
Social Mill Co. (Partial)	Social St.	PNR
Philmont Worsted Company Mill	685 Social St.	NR - 4/19/06
Jenckes Mill Complex (Partial)	Social St.	PNR
Florence Dye Works	Florence Dr.	LHS
Lafayette Worsted Mills	Hamlet Ave.	NRD
French Worsted Mills	153 Hamlet Ave.	NRD
Verdun Worsted Company Mill	Manville Rd.	LHS
Belmont Worsted Co. Mill	East Mill St.	LHS
Woonsocket Spinning Co. Mill	Ricard St.	LHS
Bonin Spinning Mill	Mendon Rd.	LHS

EXISTING HISTORIC RESIDENCES

Cultural Resource	Location	Status*
Alphonse Gaulin, Jr. House	311 Elm St.	NR - 11/24/82
Ezekiel Aldrich House	454 South Main St.	LHS
Gilbert Darling House	45 Ballou St.	LHS
Globe Mill Housing	Lincoln St.	PNR
Henry Rousseau House	West Park Pl.	LHS
Jenkes Mansion	837-839 Social St.	NR - 11/24/82
John Arnold House	99 Providence St.	NR - 9/13/90
John Arnold House (second)	Arnold and Fountain Streets	PNR
Lagace-Gamache House	Chester St.	PNR
Lewis Metcalf House	120 Harris Ave.	NRD
Lyman Cook House	246 Harris Ave.	NRD
Mungeon House	Sayles St.	LHS
Frank Wilbur House	1273 Park Ave.	NR - 11/24/82
Henry Darling house	786 Harris Ave.	NR - 11/26/82
Logee House	225 Grove St.	NR - 11/24/82
Pothier house	172 Pond St.	NR - 11/24/82
Privilege Mill Tenement Houses	North Main and Farm Streets	PNR
Eldridge Faxon House	South Main and Buxton Streets	PNR
Ingolls-Cass House	942 Cass Ave.	PNR
121-123 Gaulin Street	Gaulin St.	PNR
Jillson House	1088 Mendon Rd.	LHS
Gaskill Homestead	815 Harris Ave.	NRD
Willing Vose House	150-154 Providence St.	LHS
Smith - Ballou House	641 Harris Ave.	NR - 6/6/03

EXISTING HISTORIC CHURCHES

Cultural Resource	Location	Status*
St. Andrews Episcopal Chapel (Bethel Lutheran Evangelical Church)	576 Fairmount St.	NR - 11/24/82
Congregation B'nai Brith Israel Synagogue	Prospect St.	NRD
First Baptist Church	Blackstone St.	LHS
First Universalist Church	Earle St.	LHS
Globe Congregational Church	South Main & Providence Streets	PNR
Greek Orthodox Church	Elbow St.	LHS
Holy Family Church	South Main St.	LHS
First United Methodist Church	Federal St.	NRD
L'Eglise du Precieux Sang & Chateau Clare	94 Carrington Ave. & 61 Park Ave.	NR - 7/26/82
Former Presbyterian Church	Blackstone and Spring Streets	NRD
Sacred Heart Church	Second Ave.	LHS
St. Ann's Church Complex	Cumberland and Elm Streets and Gaulin Ave.	NR - 11/24/82
St. Anthony's Church	Greene St.	LHS
St. Charles Borromeo Church Complex	N. Main, Daniels & Earle Streets	NR - 2/24/83
St. Elias Church	Hamilton St.	LHS
St. James Episcopal Church	Hamlet Ave.	PNR

St. Aloysius Church	Rathbun St.	LHS
St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church	Harris Ave.	NRD
St. Michael's Ukranian Catholic Church	Blackstone St.	NRD
St. Michael's Ukranian Orthodox Church	Harris Ave.	NRD
St. Stanislaus Church	Harris Ave.	NRD
Smithfield Friends Meeting House & Parsonage	126 Smithfield Rd.	NR - 11/24/82

EXISTING HISTORIC MONUMENTS AND CEMETERIES

Cultural Resource	Location	Status*
Monuments		
Woonsocket Civil War Monument	Monument Square	NR - 11/24/82
Firefighter's Monument	Cumberland Hill Rd.	LHS
Grindstone	Main Street	NRD
Harris Gates	Harris Avenue at Blackstone St.	NRD
Hiker Monument	Court Square	LHS
Jolicoeur Monument	Cumberland Hill Rd.	LHS
John F.Kennedy Memorial Square	Elm Street at Winthrop St.	LHS
Labor Monument	Mill River Square at Marquette Plaza	LHS
Lincoln Plaque	Harris Hall - Main Street	NRD
Marker Stone	Park Ave.	LHS
Milestone on Main Street	Mini-Park - Main Street	NRD
Mohawk Trail Marker	Off of 146A	LHS
North Main Street	North Main Street opposite Fire Station	LHS
Palmer Carillon Clock	Social Street in Andrew Palmer Carillon Plaza	LHS
Police Monument	Intersection of Cumberland Hill Rd. and Hamlet Ave.	LHS
Polish Memorial	Harris Ave.	NRD
Post Office Monument	Main Street	NRD
Vietnam War Memorial	Worrall & Clinton Streets	LHS
Cemeteries		
Cook Cemetery	Elder Ballou Meeting House Rd.	LHS
Smithfield Friends Cemetery	126 Smithfield Rd.	NR - 11/24/82
Precious Blood Cemetery	Diamond Hill Rd. and Rathbun St.	PNR
St. James Episcopal Cemetery	Front St.	LHS
Vose Cemetery	East Orchard St.	LHS
Woodlawn Cemetery	Bernon St. and Manville Rd.	LHS

EXISTING HISTORIC MUNICIPAL STRUCTURES AND SCHOOLS

Cultural Resource	Location	Status*
Municipal Structures		
Avenue A Armory	Avenue A	LHS
Fire Station #3	North Main St.	LHS
Fire Station #5	Social St.	LHS
Fire Station #6	Fairmount St.	LHS
Gas House	Arnold St.	LHS

Woonsocket City Hall	169 Main Street	NR - 5/1/74
South Main Street Armory	South Main St.	PNR
Spring at Cold Spring Park	Harris Ave.	NRD
Woonsocket District Courthouse	24 Front St.	NR - 11/24/82
Woonsocket Water Works Building	Reservoir #1, North Smithfield, RI	LHS
Schools		
Grove Street Elementary School	312 Grove St.	NR - 11/24/82
Harris School	High School St.	LHS
Hope Street School	40 Hope St.	NR - 4/14/00
Kendrick Avenue School	Kendrick Ave.	LHS
Pothier School	Social St.	LHS
Social Street School	Social St.	LHS
St. Charles School	Daniels St.	LHS
St. Clare High School / Chateau Clare	61 Park Ave.	NRD
Summer Street School	Summer St.	NRD
Vose Street School	Vose St.	NR

HISTORIC COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS AND TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

Cultural Resource	**Location**	**Status***
Transportation Facilities		
1761 Milestone	640 South Main St.	NR - 11/24/82
Blackstone Canal Remains	Water St. and Allen St.	PNR
Court Street Bridge	Court St.	PNR
Globe Bridge	South Main St.	PNR
Grand Trunk Railroad (remnants)	Charles St. and Cass Ave.	LHS
Indian Paths	Logee and Elm Streets	LHS
Kendrick Avenue Footbridge	Cumberland St. at Kendrick Ave.	LHS
Lyman Arnold Trench (remnants)	Main Street	NRD
Mill Street Bridge	Mill St.	LHS
Providence and Worcester Railroad Depot	Depot Square	PNR
Sayles Street Bridge	Sayles St.	LHS
Tow Path	River St.	LHS
Singleton Street Bridge	Singleton St.	LHS
Commercial Buildings		
Commercial Block House	Bernon St. and Manville Rd.	NRD
Honan Block	110-114 Main Street	NR - 8/3/89
Stadium Building and Theatre	329 Main Street	NR - 6/30/76
Thomas Paine Shop	South Main St.	LHS
Commercial Building	Main Street	NRD
Kithis Building	Main Street	NRD
Law Offices at Market Sq.	Main & Arnold Streets	NRD
Woonsocket Institute for Savings	Main Street	NRD
RI Hospital Trust Co. Building	Main Street	NRD
Former U.S. Post Office / YMCA	295 Main Street	NR - 5/30/79
Andrews Tavern	Park Square	PNR

HISTORIC PLACES, DISTRICTS AND VIEWS

Cultural Resource	Location	Status*
Cato Hill Historic District	Bounded by Arnold, Blackstone, Cherry, and Railroad Streets; see Map E-8	NR - 8/10/76, expanded 11/24/82
French Worsted Company Mill Historic District	153 Hamlet Ave.	NR - 5/21/08
Cumberland Hill Road	From Mendon Rd. to Hamlet Ave.	LHS
Davison Street	From Manville Rd. to Hamlet Ave.	LHS
Depot Square	Juncture of Main, Clinton, Court and High Streets	NRD
Globe Park Overlook/Lovers' Lane	Off of Smithfield Rd. (SR-146A)	LHS
Lincoln Street	From Providence St. to Front St.	PNR
Manville Road	From southern city boundary to Hamlet Ave. (SR-126)	LHS
Market Square	Bounded by Main and River Streets at Woonsocket Falls	NRD
Mount Saint Charles Academy	800 Logee St.	LHS
Monument Square	Juncture of Main, North Main and Clinton Streets	NRD
North End Historic District	Roughly Verry, Highland, Winter and Summer Streets; see Map E-8	NR - 11/24/82
Paradis Avenue	From Wilson Ave. to Bernon St.	LHS
Park Avenue	From Eddie Dowling Hwy (SR-146A) to Hamlet Ave.	LHS
Rafting Place	Just north of the railroad bridge crossing at Truman Dr.	LHS
Robinson to Social Street	View from Robinson St. (west of Wood Ave.) onto Social district	LHS
Wading Place	Near the former Ballou Manufacturing Company mill	LHS
Woonsocket Falls (falls and village)	Adjacent to Market Square and the South Main St. bridge	NRD
Hamlet Village	Area surrounding Hamlet Ave. and northern Manville Rd.	LHS
Bernon Village	Area surrounding Front St. south east of the Blackstone River	LHS
Social Village	Area surrounding Social and Clinton Streets	LHS
Jenckseville Village	Area surrounding Mill and Social Streets	LHS
Globe Village	Area surrounding western section of Front St.	LHS
Allen Street Historic District	Allen Street; see Map E-8	NR - 9/13/90
Island Place Historic District	Below S. Main St. at Market Square	NR - 9/13/90

Constitution Hill	Bounded by Mason and S. Main Streets, the Blackstone River and railroad tracks to the northwest	PNR
Main Street Historic District	Roughly Main St. east of Market Sq. to Depot Sq.; see Map E-8	NR - 4/18/91
South Main Street Historic District	Roughly Mason, Coe and Andrews Sts. and Bernice Ave.; see Map E-8	NR - 11/24/82
Mendon Road	From southeastern city boundary to Massachusetts border	LHS
Great Road	Continuation of Smithfield Rd. (SR-146A) into North Smithfield	LHS

*Status
NR - listed properties
NRD - listed with an NR historic district
PNR - possibly eligible
LHS - local historical significance

Cultural Resources: Main Street and the Riverfront

The 1990's and 2000's saw a new level of interest in Woonsocket's cultural resources and its historic Main Street and Blackstone Riverfront area. In 1993 the City commissioned a private consultant to prepare a Main Street Revitalization Plan, referred to locally as the Hyatt-Palmer Report. In 2003, the City commissioned another Main Street/Riverfront Revitalization Plan, called the Downtown Riverfront Revitalization Plan, prepared by the Urban Design Group. These plans offered several suggestions on ways to improve the city's downtown core and riverfront area. Some of these recommendations have come to fruition, while others have not. In 2009 the city initiated a Wayfinding Master Plan for Downtown Woonsocket, which represents the City's evolution in ideas for revitalizing the Main Street and Blackstone Riverfront area. This project is discussed in detail in the Heritage Corridor Element.

Two important historic preservation and cultural developments anchor the City's Main Street. At the southern terminus of Main Street sits the former Lincoln Textile mill, which has been redeveloped into the Museum of Work and Culture. A joint venture between the City, the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, and the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, the museum chronicles life in the Blackstone Valley during the Industrial Revolution. The historic Stadium Theatre anchors Main Street's northern terminus. In the 1990's this historic 1920's theatre was renovated and re-opened after decades of neglect. The theatre was rehabilitated through the efforts of the non-profit Stadium Theatre Foundation and has become the center of arts and entertainment in the greater Woonsocket area. These two redevelopments serve as anchors at the two ends of Main Street and have the potential to draw people in the region back to Downtown Woonsocket.

Cultural Resources: Threats to Historic Resources

The most common and the most dangerous threat to Woonsocket's cultural resources is an ignorance of, and lack of respect for, those resources. Thus, public recognition of the City's

resources along with public education regarding proper care and treatment will be the key to preserving these resources for the future.

Throughout much of the central City, industrial-era building stock predominates. This building stock is not always easily adapted to modern-day spatial and function needs or values. There is a conflict, sometimes real, at times perceived, between the old patterns of development and current needs. Woonsocket's pattern of land use has changed since the early time of industrialism. Mill complexes built along the Blackstone River now present opportunities to meet such differing needs as light industry, mixed-use, retail, or housing. Urban areas of dense commercial and residential settlements today require substantial space for parking. At the same time, contemporary needs and desires for housing and economic growth poses a threat to Woonsocket's scarce remaining open space and its valuable natural resources.

Over the years, Woonsocket has witnessed the loss of a number of historic structures due to neglect by property owners. The lack of proper maintenance and protection from the elements can cause extensive and often irreparable damage to a historic property. Such losses can occur in good economic times as well as in bad. In prosperous times, inappropriate additions may destroy the character of an historic property or demolition may occur to make room for growth. Well-meaning, but improper maintenance can do more harm than good. For example, improper repointing of brick or stone work, sand blasting, application of masonry sealants, and cladding of structures in acrylic siding, can all lead to the degradation of a historic property. Residents, business persons, and property owners must be educated as to the value and proper care of historic resources.

In past decades, several significant properties, including the St. James Hotel, the Opera House and a number of mill structures were lost to fire or flood. Fire remains a threat to the City's historic properties. The abandoned or underutilized historic properties are those which are most at risk of fire, through failure to meet minimum building codes or by arson. Owners and caretakers of historic properties must be educated in the area of fire prevention to lessen the chance of further devastating losses.

Physical obsolescence is another threat to many of Woonsocket's historic properties. Approximately 57% of the housing units in the City were constructed before 1939. Naturally, many of these structures lack the modern conveniences desired by today's residents. In addition, societal changes, such as a decreased household size and an increase in the number of cars per household have made many older historic properties incompatible with the needs of current residents. Many of the City’s vacant housing units are located in the older, most densely populated areas of the City, are too large for the average family, and have no provision for the parking of two or more cars.

Similar problems exist with the City's commercial structures. During the early 1970s an Urban Renewal project resulted in the demolition of the Social Flatlands neighborhood to make way for the construction of a "New Downtown." Multi-level office buildings surrounded by ample parking lots and commercial developments designed for an automobile-oriented society were constructed where mill housing and neighborhood storefronts once stood. Banks and businesses were drawn away from the old downtown with its poor circulation pattern, lack of

parking, and building stock in need of costly updating and repair, to the more spacious and efficient modern buildings of the renewed Social Area.

The obsolescence of many of its historic buildings, combined with the "new downtown" concept in the adjacent Social Area and the development of commercial strip malls along Diamond Hill Road, led to the spiraling decline of the City's historic downtown area. Those businesses that remain on Main Street suffer from the surrounding vacancies, the lack of pedestrian traffic in the area, marginal commercial uses, and questionable level of design control. It is a challenge for the City to stimulate appropriate development along Main Street. Over time the City has witnessed the demolition of several Main Street buildings. These demolitions have left gaps in the streetscape which detract from the historic character and continuity of the downtown.

Obsolescence has also been a factor in the reuse of the City's vast supply of mill buildings. Their sizes and layouts are in many cases inconvenient for contemporary industrial uses. Many of Woonsocket's old mills are very large and are now used by numerous small businesses rather than a single large user. In addition, due to the lack of safety rated elevators in many mill buildings, owners may only be able to find tenants for their lower floor space, while their upper stories remain vacant. Furthermore, many of these structures were built along the rivers and railroad lines and are not readily accessible by contemporary means of transportation. Others are located in dense commercial or residential neighborhoods which discourages the heavy industrial use for which these structures were designed. Improvements and expansions to the City's mixed use zoning districts could make these buildings more viable for continued use or creative reuse.

In the early 2000s, sparked by a housing boom and supported by the State's Historic Tax Credit program, the City witnessed several successful mill-to-condominium conversion projects. These developments have preserved several historic mill structures and have revitalized several areas of the city. Unfortunately, the Historic Tax Credit program was halted in 2008. However, there are still efforts to put the credit back in place for new application. Since then, the number of successful mill building adaptive reuse projects has sharply declined since then. Several vacant mill structures that would be appropriate for residential use sit idle, at risk of falling into greater disrepair, loss through demolition or arson. The City and its historic resources would greatly benefit from the resumption of a State Historic Tax Credit program.

Natural Resources: Inventory

Woonsocket is a dense, urban city, with a population of approximately forty-one thousand people in an area of under eight square miles. In order to accommodate the City's growing economy, builders at the beginning of the twentieth century consumed much of the City's open space for housing development. This trend continued into the 1950's as much of the East Woonsocket area was developed into single family housing intended for families who were looking for a more suburban landscape than the City's older neighborhoods could offer. As a result of this housing development pattern, there is a limited amount of greenspace within the City. By far, the City's most valuable natural resource is the Blackstone River, which bisects the city and runs through the heart of the City's downtown.

Table E-1 in the Natural and Cultural Resources section of the Appendix lists an inventory of Woonsocket's natural resources. Although it is not an exhaustive inventory of the City's resources, it is a first step in quantifying the natural resources that need to be protected should development pressures increase. Map E-1 shows the location of the City's surface water bodies, as well as flood plains.

Table E-2 is a summary of wetlands in the City of Woonsocket, as determined by RIGIS through aerial photography and the United States Geological Survey. According to RIGIS, the City contains approximately 249.17 acres of wetlands, of which over 77% are classified as deciduous. Map E-3 shows the location and classification of the City's wetlands, as determined by the U.S. Geological Survey.

Map E-4 shows groundwater classification for the City of Woonsocket as of 2005, as determined by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, as well as wellhead protection areas near Woonsocket.

The City of Woonsocket does contain a small amount of private wells within its borders. Table E-3 lists the location and groundwater classification of these private wells.

The northern portion of the Blackstone Groundwater Reservoir is located in the southern portion of the City. This aquifer has the potential for development as a source of water supply for potable or non-potable uses. The location of critical portions of groundwater recharge areas in the City can be found on Map E-5.

Woonsocket's soils make up an important natural resource in that they serve as a guide to future development, and help to determine which land is most appropriate for development or conservation. Table E-4 shows the approximate acreage of soils by type and description of constraints. Map E-6 shows soil suitability for the City. Map E-7 shows soil suitability in Woonsocket for agricultural use.

Air quality is often a regional issue that can be difficult to quantify on a local level. Table E-5 shows establishments in the City of Woonsocket which are monitored by EPA for certain emissions.

Natural Resources: Water Quality in the Blackstone River Watershed

Unfortunately, the water quality of the Blackstone River and its tributaries is poor. This lack of acceptable water quality in the Blackstone River prevents recreational use of the river for fishing and swimming, and makes the waterway inhospitable for fish and wildlife habitat. Across its 46 mile span, the river's water quality continues to be affected by sewage discharges, combined with sewage overflows, urban runoff, and leaching from active and abandoned landfills. The goal waterbody classification for the Blackstone River in Rhode Island is "Waterbody Classification B1." Such waterbodies should be suitable for primary and secondary contact recreational activities, although primary contact recreational activities, such as swimming

and fishing may be impacted due to pathogens from approved wastewater discharges. Waterbodies classified as B1 are ones that are suitable for fish and wildlife habitat. These waterbodies are also considered suitable for compatible industrial processes and cooling, hydropower, aquacultural uses, navigation, and irrigation and other agricultural uses.

The RI Department of Environmental Management issues annual Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Reports on the water quality of waterbodies throughout the state. In 2008, this report found that the water quality of the Blackstone River and two of its main tributaries, the Mill River and the Peters River is too poor to support a variety of river habitat and water-based activities, including the following:

Blackstone River

- Not supporting of fish and wildlife habitat because of benthic-macroinvertebrate bioassessments; copper; dissolved oxygen; and phosphorus.
- Not supporting of fish consumption because of mercury and PCB in fish tissue.
- Not supporting of primary (swimming) and secondary (boating) contact recreation (swimming) because of fecal coliform.

On the positive side, this report found that the Blackstone River is now meeting water quality standards for lead. The Blackstone River, likely due to improvements at the wastewater treatment plant, is now also meeting water quality standards for ammonia levels.

Mill River

- Not supporting of fish and wildlife habitat because of lead.
- Not supporting of primary and secondary contact recreation because of fecal coliform.

It should be noted that the Mill River was not assessed with regards to fish consumption.

Peters River

- Not supporting fish and wildlife habitat because of copper.
- Not supporting of primary and secondary contact recreation because of fecal coliform.

It should be noted that the Peters River was not assessed with regards to fish consumption.

The watershed of the Blackstone River encompasses approximately 540 square miles and extends from Holden and Boylston, Massachusetts, north of Worcester to Central Falls and Pawtucket, Rhode Island in the south. The watershed encompasses the entire City of Woonsocket as well as the entire Town of Cumberland. Because of the extent of the Blackstone River watershed, planning and development patterns and decisions in Northern Rhode Island and Central Massachusetts communities have a profound impact on the City of Woonsocket. Seventy-one percent of the river's watershed is in Massachusetts. The extent of the Blackstone River watershed means that pollution being discharged into waters over forty miles away compromise water quality in the City of Woonsocket.

Natural Resources: Conservation Land and Forest Resources

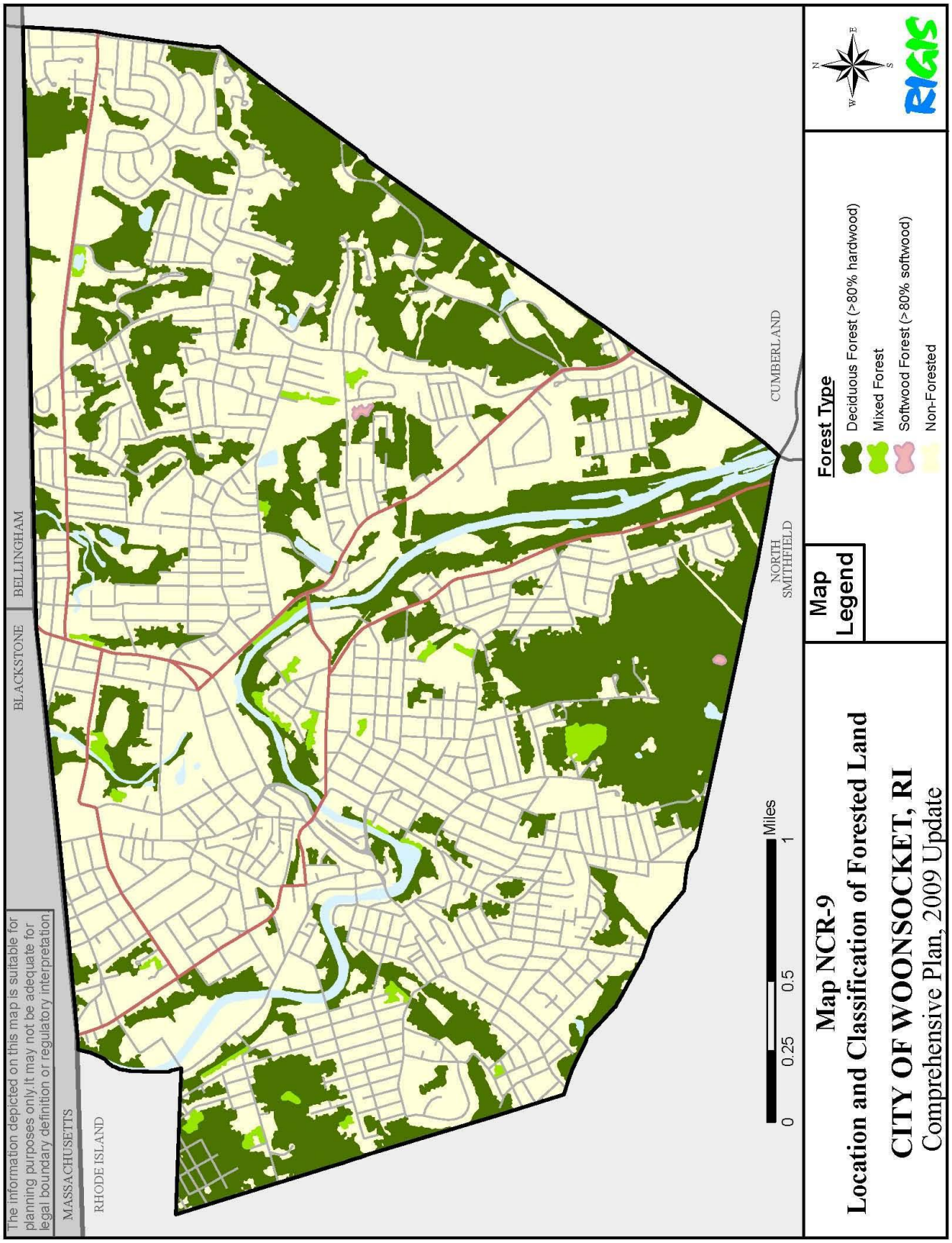
The City of Woonsocket has four officially-designated conservation areas, totaling approximately 171 acres of conservation land. In Woonsocket's dense urban environment, the City's conservation areas offer passive recreational opportunities and provide areas where the natural environment is permanently protected. City conservation land is owned by the City and is zoned for either active or passive public recreation. The City has a voluntary Conservation Commission, which serves the City in an advisory capacity. The City should expand this resource and include this group more formally in the community planning process.

The Booth Pond Conservation Area is the largest conservation area in the City at 70.1 acres in size and was acquired in 1977. The conservation area is at the southern tip of the City surrounding Booth Pond which lies in Woonsocket and North Smithfield. The Rhodes Avenue Conservation Area is located at the western edge of the City, is 45.9 acres in size and provides habitat for wildlife and passive recreation opportunities for residents of the Fairmount neighborhood and the rest of the City. The Iron Rock Brook Conservation Area is 34.11 acres in size and was acquired in 1981. The Wood Estate Conservation Area is located in the northern part of the City, adjacent to the Peters River and is approximately 20.82 acres in size. The Open Space and Recreation Element of this plan discusses recommended improvements to the City's conservation land and lists other areas of undeveloped open space within the City.

If compelling circumstances or opportunities for development arise that impact the City's conservation or open space land, the City should endeavor to replace the lost acreage with, at minimum, a one-to-one swap (in a contiguous or other appropriate parcel) in order to maintain the balance of the city's critical natural resources.

Woonsocket's forested land is a natural resource which has significantly diminished over the past century as development spread to outlying areas of the City. However, Woonsocket still boasts over 27.6% forested land (1,394 acres), as of 2003/2004. The location of the City's forested land is shown in Map E-9.

Urban forestland provides several benefits to residents of cities. Forests lead to the reduction of surface water runoff and flood risks, as well as the reduction of soil erosion and sedimentation of water bodies. Urban forests serve to absorb water and air pollutants, leading to a cleaner overall environment. Urban forests have also been shown to enhance property values of nearby residents (RI Department of Administration, Information Services, Statewide Planning Program. 1999. Rhode Island Urban and Community Forest Plan, 3.11). Urban forests lead to the "sequestration of atmospheric carbon – countering the greenhouse effect," in addition to


The information depicted on this map is suitable for planning purposes only.It may not be adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation
MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
BLACKSTONE
BELLINGHAM
CUMBERLAND
NORTH SMITHFIELD
0
0.25
0.5
1
Miles
Map Legend
Forest Type
Deciduous Forest (>80% hardwood)
Mixed Forest
Softwood Forest (>80% softwood)
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RIGIS
Map NCR-9
Location and Classification of Forested Land
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2009 Update

offering micro-climate control and the reduction of energy costs (RI Department of Administration, Information Services, Statewide Planning Program. 1999. Rhode Island Urban and Community Forest Plan, Page 3.2). Recognizing the value of urban tree resources, the City shares the major goal as stated in the 1999 Urban & Community Forest State Guide Plan Element 156, namely that steps be taken to ensure sustainable forest and tree resources in the community. As a first step to achieving this goal, the City will enact regulations to preserve and/or expand tree cover, where possible, in the course of new development.

Threats to Natural Resources

A change in attitudes over the last two decades has resulted in a new recognition of the importance of the natural environment. Efforts are underway to reverse the effects of past degradation, and to prevent future degradation of Woonsocket's natural resources. Nonetheless, current practices and lifestyles still pose threats to those resources.

The most sensitive of all the City's natural resources are its surface waters - the Blackstone River, Mill River, Peters River, Cherry Brook, Iron Rock Brook, and various ponds. These waters are threatened by continued pollution. "Point source" pollution is caused by the direct discharge of pollutants into the water bodies (i.e.: from municipal and industrial outflow pipes, storm drains, sewage treatment plants, etc.). Strict regulation and enforcement is necessary to reduce and eventually eliminate many of these polluting discharges.

"Non-point source" pollution is not as easily identifiable as point source pollution. It is caused by the release of pollutants to the water bodies from the surrounding land and air. The greatest single source of non-point source pollution is stormwater runoff. When rain falls, materials from streets and parking lots, including substantial amounts of motor oil, road salt, animal wastes and litter are washed into the rivers, streams and ponds. Any chemicals or fertilizers which are not absorbed by the earth are also likely to wash into these waters, adding to their pollution. Further non-point source pollution can be caused by leaching of septic tanks and land fills, by leaking underground storage tanks, and by improper disposal of household and industrial chemicals. In addition, eroding soils can enter the waters, carrying with them whatever hazardous materials they might contain.

Woonsocket's water bodies are also threatened by the resuspension of toxins from the stirring of historically contaminated sediments. This is often caused by excessive discharges and uncontrolled releases of water from dams used by power companies and industry. Regardless of the source of water pollution, the result is the same. The degradation of the quality of the water leads to the loss of animal life and vegetation and prevents the use of these waters for recreation. The contaminated waters can also have an unsightly appearance and can give off odors, creating unpleasant and unhealthy conditions.

The same types of pollution threaten the City's precious water supply. The lifestyle practices and behaviors which can lead to the pollution of Woonsocket's rivers can cause contamination of its reservoirs and of the aquifers serving private wells. In addition, water, like many natural resources, can be negatively impacted by over-use. Failure to conserve water can

result both in a reduction of the supply of clean drinking water and an increases in the amount of sewage returned. The City should continue to follow state guidelines and institute best practices with respect to water conservation, as well as provide outreach and education to the public, in order to protect this precious resource.

The performance of the Woonsocket Wastewater Treatment Facility located off Cumberland Hill Road will continue to be a contributing factor to the health of the Blackstone River. The facility was originally built in 1975 and serves as a regional facility for the City, as well as portions of nearby Massachusetts. Its purpose is to collect millions of gallons of used and polluted water every day and purify it before it is discharged back into the City's surface waters.

The Woonsocket Wastewater Treatment Facility has recently undergone upgrades in order to deal with past permit violations, however additional major capital expenditure will be required in the near future to conform to newly promulgated release standards. The City is under a consent order from RIDEM to meet these new compliance levels by 2013. The treatment facility is a source of ammonia-nitrogen and orthophosphate, copper, zinc, and suspended solids. In 1999 the City leased the operation of the facility to U.S. Filter, now operating under the name Veolia Operating Services. Veolia is responsible for improvements at the facility needed to ensure compliance with current permit limits and provide nutrient removal. Another major factor in the water quality of the Blackstone is the performance of the Upper Blackstone UBWPAD Plant in Worcester. The Worcester plant is a major source of metals, nutrients, TSS, BOD, and fecal chloroforms in the river.

Similarly, the overproduction of trash, due to failure to recycle, can result in greater disposal needs and increased potential for leaching of landfills. Woonsocket currently depends on the State landfill to meet its needs. There is no possibility that the City, with its limited available space, can accommodate landfill operations within its borders. (See Services and Facilities Element.)

Leaking underground storage tanks are a common yet serious threat to groundwater and soil resources. Underground storage tanks are often used by small business, such as gas stations and laundromats. Owners of such businesses may not have the financial resources to alleviate the problems caused by leaking tanks. Often such properties can lie vacant with few investors willing to clean up the site. These sites are also more likely to be located near residential areas than are larger industrial sites. Table E-6 lists those sites which have experienced problems with leaking underground storage tanks in the past, as monitored by RIDEM.

Woonsocket's history of heavy manufacturing has left a physical toll on some areas of the City. The City's mills provided jobs for thousands of residents, many of whom emigrated from Canada and Europe to find employment in Woonsocket. However, decades later many sites are polluted from contaminants that have leached or spilled into soil or groundwater. These "brownfield" sites lie vacant or underutilized due to the hesitation of developers to invest in sites which may require expensive environmental remediation. The environmental remediation of these brownfields sites would lead to a healthier natural environment for local residents, many of whom live in close proximity to such sites. Most of the City's brownfield are adjacent to the Blackstone, Mill, or Peters Rivers. Remediation of these sites may be accomplished through

capping or containment of the sites or through the removal of pollutants which, in turn, will lead to cleaner surface waters and groundwater.

NEW INITIATIVES

Brownfields Program

The City began its Brownfields Program in 2003, with a $100,000 Brownfields Assessment Grant from the USEPA. Since that time, the City has received several more brownfields grant awards, both for assessment and for cleanup. The City's Brownfields Program has contributed to the assessment and cleanup of over 20-acres of brownfields sites in the community. The greatest success thus far for the City's Brownfields Program has been the remediation and redevelopment of the Lafayette Worsted brownfields site on Hamlet Avenue as the city's new middle school campus. Unfortunately, some of the remaining historic resources at the Lafayette site were demolished during the course of this project. While the loss of these buildings was unfortunate, this project resulted in significant public good. The 20-acre Lafayette site, one of the City's most notorious brownfields sites where two separate arson fires destroyed over half of the structures, has now been cleaned up. As a result of this cleanup, there is now hope that the historic French Worsted mill complex across the street will now be preserved and redeveloped into a vibrant mixed-use center. Prior to the cleanup, pollutants in the groundwater under the Lafayette site were flowing into the adjacent Blackstone River. The removal and treatment of these contaminants improves the water quality of the Blackstone at this location. The City will build on the success of its Brownfields Program and expand the reach of this program. The City will seek out innovative partnerships with the private sector for future brownfields redevelopment and will continue to seek additional funding from state and federal sources in support of the Woonsocket Brownfields Program.

Local Historic District Commission/Zoning

The City acknowledges the need for a more formal mechanism to protect its various historic and cultural resources. Sensitive to the fact that the Cato Hill local historic district failed to maintain community support and was eventually abolished by the City Council, the City must first engage in a proactive public education and outreach effort prior to enacting a new local historic district and commission. The City must first work closely with local, state, and regional historic preservation groups and thoroughly research the issue prior to enacting a local historic district. Existing National Register Historic Districts are likely candidates for local historic districting. However, local factors may influence the boundaries of a local historic district. Research, outreach, and perceived benefit will dictate the selection process for any local historic district classification. In order for this initiative to be successful, clear guidelines, incentives, and regulations for a local historic district and commission must be carefully crafted. Given the City's experience with the failure of the Cato Hill Local Historic District, careful thought must be given to the underlying dominant land use in the local historic district. It is believed that the Cato Hill Local Historic District had limited success because of the fact that it was located primarily in a residential neighborhood. A new local historic district may be more successful and have greater impact in a commercial or mixed-use area.

Main Street Overlay Zone

The City's historic Main Street area is the heart of Woonsocket. Despite numerous efforts on the part of the City, this area still suffers from high vacancy rates, marginal uses, dilapidation of its historic buildings, and poor design controls. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of marginal uses, such as second-hand shops and check-cashing businesses, a decrease in the quality of signage at many of the businesses, as well as the installation of roll-down security gates, all of which degrades the historic quality of the area and makes it challenging for the City to attract residential and higher-end retail into the available space on Main Street. Currently, Main Street is zoned C-1. Unlike other parts of the city with C-1 zoning, Main Street is the historic and cultural center of the city. It is anchored by the Stadium Theatre and the Museum of Work and Culture and the City would like to see more tourism-focused development along Main Street, such as restaurants, art galleries, and boutiques, as well as more upper-level residential use.

The C-1 zoning district, while appropriate for Main Street in many respects, is not responsive to the unique nature of the City's historic Main Street. Uses that might be appropriate in other parts of the City, such as second-hand shops or check-cashing businesses are not the highest and best use for Main Street. In addition, Main Street deserves a higher design standard that is sensitive to the historic and cultural context of this area. Roll-down security gates should be prohibited in this area as they present a foreboding image of the area as unsafe and signage should be made consistent to add to the visual appeal of this area. While the City's existing Design Review Overlay District would regulate the design of any new development, it does not regulate use. A separate Main Street Overlay District should be adopted that will hold development on Main Street to a higher standard, both through uses restrictions and clear design and signage guidelines. In this fashion, the City can begin to attract and support the types of uses appropriate for this historic city center. However, so to not stunt appropriate development on Main Street, the City should prioritize its Main Street signage, awning, and beautification programs.

A Fishable, Swimmable, Accessible Blackstone River

The City of Woonsocket supports making the Blackstone River fishable, swimmable, and accessible to all. The Blackstone River is one of, if not the greatest of all of Woonsocket's resources. Improving the health of the river through watershed protection measures and increasing visual and physical accessibility to the river are high priorities for the community. Woonsocket will work with its regional partners to educate residents and property owners about responsible stewardship of the river as a public resource. Because stormwater runoff is one of the most significant factors contributing to water quality problems in the Blackstone, the City will update its subdivision and land development regulations to require and encourage, where possible, low-impact development measures. More detailed information about the City's stormwater management program can be found in the Services and Facilities Element beginning on page G-8.

Improving access to the riverfront is an important goal of this Plan. The City will continue to work with other stakeholders such as the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council and the Heritage Corridor Commission on projects that increase and sustain public access to the riverfront. Such initiatives include increasing fishing, boating, and canoeing access points into the river, as well, and prioritizing riverfront land for conservation or park development.

Downtown Woonsocket Wayfinding Master Plan

The heart of Woonsocket is its historic downtown area, defined as Main Street and the adjacent riverfront area. The Blackstone River bisects Woonsocket and is located within walking distance to the city's historic Main Street. Over the years since the height of the industrial era, Main Street has experienced rising vacancy rates, underutilized storefronts, and a slow but steady dilapidation of many of its historic buildings. Previous studies of the area and a public charrette process identified that there is a lack of connectivity between Main Street and the Riverfront area, both in a physical and a mental sense. This disconnectedness is viewed as a major impediment to Main Street's revitalization. In 2009, the city began an ambitious design planning project to address this problem. The result of the project will be a comprehensive wayfinding master plan for downtown Woonsocket that is intended to reconnect Main Street and the Blackstone Riverfront area to spur economic development and heritage tourism opportunities.

The project builds from the recommendations of previous Main Street studies and implements the vision of a public charrette process to create a wayfinding master plan for the Main Street-Riverfront area. The objectives of the project are 1) to propose design solutions, landscaping, and site amenity improvements to create a sense of cohesiveness between Main Street and the Blackstone Riverfront area; 2) to suggest opportunities for new connections from Main Street to the river; 3) to propose redesign options for improvements to Truman Drive in order to reflect the historic Clinton Pond that once was located there and to improve visitor experience of this area; and 4) through wayfinding guidance, improve visitor movement through downtown by suggesting the design, type, and placement of signage, landscape improvements, historic markers, and pathways to better integrate all of the many historic assets located in downtown Woonsocket. This project will result in a wayfinding master plan for the area that will help spread economic development and heritage tourism opportunities to Woonsocket's historic Main Street. The wayfinding master plan will be used as a tool to implement innovative changes to the design and use of the area.

Mill Reuse

Woonsocket's post-industrial landscape is distinctive and unique. The various mill buildings and complexes across the city are resources that deserve to be protected because of their historic, cultural, and aesthetic value. The loss of the State Historic Tax Credit Program has negatively impacted the city. There are many underutilized historic buildings in the city that cannot be successfully redeveloped without this public financial assistance. The City will advocate that the State should reinstate its Historic Tax Credit Program in order to spur the reuse and redevelopment of these valuable resources. The City adopts a policy of reviewing the

redevelopment plan for its various mill buildings on a case by case basis. Mill buildings that are currently thriving as industrial or manufacturing uses should remain as such. In instances where structures are underutilized, the City adopts a policy of encouraging these properties to be redeveloped back into productive use, which could include residential conversion, mixed-use developments, small business incubator space, artist work-live space, community use, or some other development that is deemed suitable for the surrounding neighborhood.

GOALS AND POLICIES

The following goals and policies have been established in order to assure the continued preservation and enhancement of Woonsocket's natural and cultural resources:

GOAL NCR-1
Protect and preserve Woonsocket's unique cultural, historic, and heritage resources.

POLICY NCR-1.1
Support the preservation and awareness of Woonsocket's historic and cultural resources

IMPLEMENTATION NCR-1.1a
Encourage and support owners of historic properties to have those properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places

IMPLEMENTATION NCR-1.1b
Regularly update the City's inventory of National Register-listed sites and historic districts

IMPLEMENTATION NCR-1.1c
Encourage developers and property owners to place preservation easements on their historic properties

IMPLEMENTATION NCR-1.1d
Develop a series of maps which identify the City's historic and cultural resources

POLICY NCR-1.2
Utilize innovative land use management tools to ensure that cultural resources are recognized, protected, and preserved.

IMPLEMENTATION NCR-1.2a
Outreach and educate the community about the benefits and importance of local historic district zoning.

IMPLEMENTATION NCR-1.2b
Identify most appropriate area of the city to adopt a local historic district

IMPLEMENTATION NCR-1.2c
Once public support has been garnered, adopt a local historic district and commission in an appropriate area in the city.

IMPLEMENTATION NCR-1.2d
Strengthen the review process within City departments when historic properties are involved or affected by development

IMPLEMENTATION NCR-1.2e
Clearly identify and map the location of all sensitive natural, cultural and archaeological resources, beginning in the undeveloped areas of the City, for use in the review of proposed subdivisions and site plans

POLICY NCR-1.3
Value and prioritize Woonsocket's historic Main Street and Blackstone Riverfront as the central focus for historic preservation and revitalization

IMPLEMENTATION NCR-1.3a
Create a Main Street/Riverfront Overlay District as a way to guide revitalization and ensure appropriate use of historic resources along Main Street and the Blackstone Riverfront.

IMPLEMENTATION NCR-1.3b
Apply for funding to implement the changes recommended in the Wayfinding Master Plan for Downtown Woonsocket.

POLICY NCR-1.4
Focus redevelopment efforts on the adaptive reuse of vacant and underutilized historic structures, especially former mill buildings

GOAL NCR-2
Protect and improve the quality of the City's natural environment

POLICY NCR-2.1
Support efforts to improve the water quality of the Blackstone River and its tributaries

IMPLEMENTATION NCR-2.1a
Seek funding to complete necessary upgrades and improvements to the water and wastewater treatment facilities

IMPLEMENTATION NCR-2.1b
Support the efforts of organizations working to make the Blackstone River fishable and swimmable

POLICY NCR-2.2
Foster recognition and appreciation of the Blackstone River as a valuable natural resource

IMPLEMENTATION NCR-2.2a
Support projects that achieve this policy such as river walkways, scenic overlooks, education and interpretation programs, fishing piers, and canoe launches

POLICY NCR-2.3

Maintain an active local Brownfields Program as a vehicle for investigating, cleaning up, and redeveloping contaminated sites

IMPLEMENTATION NCR-2.3a
Apply for brownfields grant funding through the USEPA, RIDEM, and other sources on a regular and continuous basis

IMPLEMENTATION NCR-2.3b
Update the city's existing brownfields inventory on an annual basis

IMPLEMENTATION NCR-2.3c
Consider brownfields issues as related to public health risks during the course of subdivision and land development reviews

IMPLEMENTATION NCR-2.3d
Outreach to the owners of suspected or documented brownfields sites to educate them about the benefits, incentive programs, and funding mechanisms available for brownfields remediation

POLICY NCR-2.4
Increase stewardship of the City's conservation lands, forested areas, and tree resources

IMPLEMENTATION NCR-2.4a
Adopt a tree ordinance to regulate tree preservation and new tree plantings during subdivision and land development reviews

IMPLEMENTATION NCR-2.4b
Strengthen the membership, formalize the role of, and adopt procedures for the Woonsocket Conservation Commission

IMPLEMENTATION NCR-2.4c
Develop a series of maps which identify the City's natural resources

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION ELEMENT

Shall include an inventory of recreational resources, open space areas and recorded access to such resources and areas. The element shall also contain an analysis of forecasted needs and policies for the management and protection of such resources and areas. The policies and implementation techniques must be identified for inclusion in the implementation program element. (Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act 45-22.22-6)

CURRENT CONDITIONS & ISSUES

Introduction

Woonsocket has benefited from a long history of civic improvement efforts, one of the most note-worthy being the dedication of large tracts of land for public use in the 1890s. These tracts of land became the core of the City's park system, and include the present-day Cold Spring, Cass and Globe Parks. Over the years, other City parks, and more recently conservation areas and playgrounds, have been added to the system. Today, Woonsocket remains committed to the pursuit of a consistent program of park acquisition and rehabilitation.

The Open Space and Recreation Element has been developed to address the main issues and concerns which surround the City's park system, including:

•Park maintenance;
•Recreational needs of the elderly;
•Recreational activities and places to go for the youth of the City;
•Community responsibility;
•Vandalism;
•Public safety enforcement; and
•Opportunities for expansion.

Land Form

Woonsocket's physical character is sharply defined by its rugged topography and the Blackstone River. The City’s few remaining areas of undeveloped land have severe physical constraints, including steep topography, exposed ledge and wetlands. Current development practices and policies adopted by the City are designed to ensure that future development of these remaining areas will include the protection of open space through the establishment of dedicated open space areas.

The City's parks necessarily reflect the general character of the land with their steeply sloping hillsides, river frontage and incorporated wetland areas. This is both an opportunity and a constraint, providing sites of great physical beauty and interest, yet limiting areas for active

recreational facilities and making the provision of handicap accessibility extremely difficult. In many instances, the steep slopes also provide a feeling of isolation that helps to create a distinction between the natural settings within the parks and the densely developed urban environment surrounding them. At the same time, however, this isolation engenders a perception of danger that may inhibit the usage of these parks.

Development Patterns

The most salient point that affects the provision of outdoor recreation for Woonsocket is that the City is "land poor." With approximately 41,000 residents, and concentrations of industry and commerce on only 7.9 square miles of land, relief from dense development is often needed yet difficult to establish. In terms of land use, the options available to the City are:

•To protect those remaining areas of the City that are undeveloped from unsympathetic development;
•To find pockets of space in the urban matrix that can be devoted to recreational purposes; and
•To make more effective use of the space currently devoted to recreation.

Much of the City's population lives in the older areas of the north and west sides of the City. These areas are characterized by small lots of multifamily dwellings. The City provides direct support for the acquisition and rehabilitation of recreational facilities through its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The program responds to the need for outdoor recreation in densely developed areas. The impact such facilities can have on improving the quality of life for the residents of the community is significant. To accommodate the recreation needs of these older, more densely populated areas, the City must continue to concentrate on renovating, upgrading, and maintaining existing facilities.

Eastern Woonsocket, and to some extent the southern portion of Woonsocket, are where most of the new residential development areas are located. Geographically, we see a slow continuation of the residential development in the eastern and southern portions of the City. To accommodate the recreation needs of these areas, the City must look into protecting what little land remains for future park development.

Woonsocket has four remaining large tracts of undeveloped, privately held land:

1) The first of these tracts is located north of Rhodes Avenue in the northwest corner of the City and includes several small parcels the City acquired as tax lien lots. The area across Rhodes Avenue to the south is currently designated as a conservation area and represents a large spatial commitment. Extending this conservation area north across Rhodes Avenue would not presently be in the City's best interest in part because Rhodes Avenue forms a natural barrier between the two tracts of land.
2) The second tract of land is located west of the Booth Pond Conservation Area, in the southern portion of Woonsocket. This land is not suitable for development as it is largely constrained by rock outcrops and wetlands.

3) The third large tract of privately owned land is located east of Jillson Avenue in the southern portion of the City. Much of the area east of Jillson Avenue is in a groundwater recharge area. Conservation of the most sensitive parcels would therefore be in the best interest of the public.
4) The fourth tract is the area around Iron Rock Brook in the eastern portion of the City.

All four of these areas should be surveyed to determine the significance of their natural resources and their potential for conservation or passive recreational use. As of this writing, there are no unprotected areas in Woonsocket that have been noted in the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's Open Space or Landscape Inventories, nor are there any known rare or endangered species in Woonsocket. One of the objectives for the above mentioned surveys would be the identification of any unrecognized resources, which might fit into those categories.

Map F-1 shows the City's existing conservation land, open space, parks, playfields, and playgrounds.

Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor

Of particular concern to the City is the protection and expanded use of its dominant geographical feature, the Blackstone River. Woonsocket sees the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor and the building of related parks, bicycle paths and developments, as a great opportunity to create a resource that will improve the quality of life of its residents. The City has an opportunity to capture its river frontage and create a continuous parkway, which can be incorporated into the Heritage Corridor system.

A number of City-owned lots along the river have been developed in conjunction with Heritage Corridor development and others have been zoned for protection and eventual development with other Heritage Corridor development. The City will continue to pursue rehabilitation and development of its own Heritage Corridor-related parks and facilities, and will take an active role in the coordination of regional developments. Increased public access, expansion of water-related recreational activities, and related issues are also addressed in the Heritage Corridor and Land Use Elements of this Plan. Additionally, protection of facilities associated with the Heritage Corridor is consistent with the *State Guide Plan Element 155: A Greener Path . . . Greenspace and Greenways for Rhode Island* in that it will promote the expansion of the statewide greenspace and greenway system.

Inventory of Existing Facilities

The City of Woonsocket has 25 separate parks, playgrounds, and playing field areas, as well as 4 conservation areas, 3 publicly-owned open space areas, and several riverfront open space parcels. These locations are shown on Map F-1 and are listed on Table F-1. Table F-2 is an inventory of the number and location of various recreational facilities and amenities throughout the community.

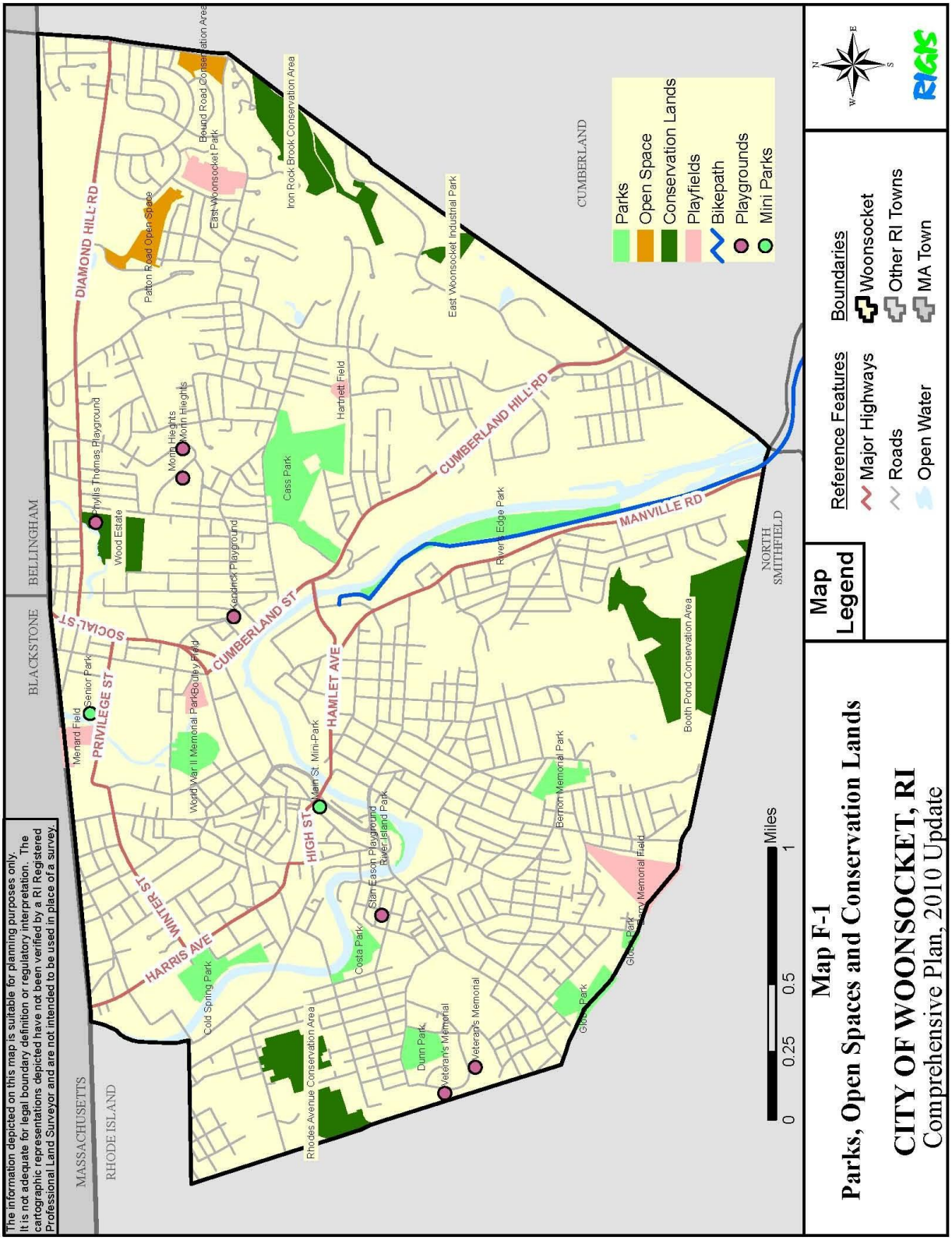

The information depicted on this map is suitable for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation. The cartographic representations depicted have not been verified by a RI Registered Professional Land Surveyor and are not intended to be used in place of a survey.
MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
BLACKSTONE
BELLINGHAM
CUMBERLAND
NORTH SMITHFIELD
DIAMOND HILL RD
SOCIAL ST
PRIVILEGE ST
WINTER ST
HARRIS AVE
CUMBERLAND ST
HIGH ST
HAMLET AVE
CUMBERLAND HILL RD
MANVILLE RD
Senior Park
Menard Field
Phyllis Thomas Playground
Wood Estate
Patton Road Open Space
Bound Road Conservation Area
East Woonsocket Park
Iron Rock Brook Conservation Area
East Woonsocket Industrial Park
Mohn Heights
Kendrick Playground
Cass Park
Hartnett Field
World War II Memorial Park
Bouley Field
Main St. Mini-Park
River Edge Park
Cold Spring Park
Stan Eason Playground
River Island Park
Costa Park
Berrion Memorial Park
Booth Pond Conservation Area
Rhodes Avenue Conservation Area
Dunn Park
Veteran's Memorial
Veterans Memorial
Glick Park
Glick Park Memorial Field
Parks
Open Space
Conservation Lands
Playfields
Bikepath
Playgrounds
Mini Parks
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
Map Legend
Reference Features
Major Highways
Roads
Open Water
Boundaries
Woonsocket
Other RI Towns
MA Town
Map F-1
Parks, Open Spaces and Conservation Lands
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update
RIGIS

TABLE F-1
WOONSOCKET'S PARKS AND OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

Type	Park Inventory: Acreage
Mini-park	**2 sites - 0.89 acres total** Senior Park: 0.03 acres Main Street Mini-Park: 0.87 acres
Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	**12 sites - 40.74 acres total** Bernon Park: 9.86 acres Costa Park: 7.20 acres Dunn Park: 11.09 acres Globe Park: 8.67 acres River Island Park: 2.75 acres Kendrick Playground: 0.3 acres Phyllis Thomas Playground: 0.5 acres Stan "The Bulldog" Eason Playground: 0.08 acres 2 at Morin Heights: 0.14 acres* 2 at Veterans Memorial: 0.15 acres*
Community Parks	**3 sites - 57.60 acres total** Cold Spring Park: 18.87 acres River's Edge Rec. Complex: 25.42 acres WWII State Park: 13.31 acres
District Parks	**1 site - 55.47 acres total** Cass Park: 55.47 acres
Playfields (stand-alone)	**5 sites - 48.38 acres total** Barry Field: 22.67 acres Bissonette Field/E. Woonsocket Park: 12.37 acres Bouley Field: 4.08 acres Hartnett Field: 2.22 acres* Menard Field: 7.04 acres
Public, Undeveloped Open Space	**3 Sites - 30.75 acres total** Bound Road: 6.22 acres Darling Pond: 8.25 acres Patton Road Holding Pond: 16.28 acres
Conservation Land	**4 sites - 174.37 acres total** Booth Pond: 70.10 acres Iron Rock Brook: 39.32 acres** Rhodes Avenue: 45.90 acres Wood Estate: 19.05 acres

* measured estimate

** includes option parcel

Since the writing of the original Comprehensive Plan in the early 1990's, there have been some significant developments in the City's parks and open space inventory. Two new parks: the small, half-acre Phyllis Thomas Park Playground, which is named to honor the contributions of a local community member. In 2008, the River's Edge Recreation Complex, a large, 25-acre active recreation area opened to the public on land once used as the City's landfill. Now fully

remediated, the River's Edge Recreation Complex contains soccer fields, pitch and putt golf, walking paths, a canoe and kayak launch into the Blackstone River, and a segment of the Blackstone River Bikeway. Since the original Comprehensive Plan was written, a new playground has been constructed in the Fairmount neighborhood. The Stan "the Bulldog" Eason Playground was built in honor of a neighborhood activist and provides more recreational opportunities to the residents of the densely developed Fairmount area. In 2006, the City embarked on an ambitious project to improve Cass Park. Funded by CDBG funds and RIDEM Open Space and Recreation grants, this four-phase project, once completed, will substantially upgrade Cass Park as Woonsocket's premier city park. Lastly, in 2008, the City rezoned one of its active recreation facilities, Ayotte Little League Field, for commercial use. The original Ayotte Field is located at a busy four-way intersection which contains commercial uses on the other three corners. The City determined that this location is more suitable for commercial use. Once suitable development plans are put forward, this area will be redeveloped for commercial purposes and Ayotte Field will be reconstructed at an acceptable alternate location. The reconstruction of Ayotte Field will be done in such a manner that the new field will have the same or better facilities (lighting, stands, concessions, facilities, scoreboard, parking, etc.).

The Woonsocket Housing Authority has a total of 4 playgrounds: 2 at the Morin Heights and 2 at the Veterans Memorial family housing complexes. In addition, community rooms for meetings and indoor recreational activities are provided at these housing complexes and at the elderly housing high-rises.

In 1988, Woonsocket established Public Recreation districts in its Zoning Ordinance. These districts are composed of "publicly owned lands and/or facilities set aside for the purpose of active (PR-1) or passive (PR-2) recreational activities." Any proposed development on these lands must be deemed appropriate by the Department of Planning and Development, the Planning Board and City Council, and must also conform to the recreational needs of the City as determined in this Plan**.** Of all the City property zoned PR-1 or PR-2, 4 areas are official "conservation areas" designated as protected open space not only through local zoning, but also through private agreements between the City and a second party, in some cases the State. These 4 conservation areas are the Rhodes Avenue Conservation Area, the Booth Pond Conservation Area, the Wood Estate Conservation Area, and the Iron Rock Brook Conservation Area. The rest of the acreage is devoted to parks, city-owned open space, and certain municipal structures like detention basins, water towers, and some municipal buildings like schools.

Considering Woonsocket's urban industrial history and its high population density, Woonsocket's 453 acres of parklands and open space (including conservation lands) for its roughly 41,000 residents compares favorably with the 2006 National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standard of providing a minimum of 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 citizens.

As of May, 2009, Woonsocket had a total of 540.7 acres of land zoned for either passive or active public recreation. While not all of the parcels zoned PR-1 and PR-2 are currently used for public recreation, their zoning classification represents the City's determination to protect its scarce land resources for future recreational use. Many of these protected yet unused sites are located along the Blackstone River and are intended for long-range development in coordination with the Heritage Corridor. The City Council, after recommendation from the Planning Board,

does retain the ability to build structures on Public Recreation Land, and as with most City owned land, reserves the authority to sell Public Recreation Land when it is in the best interest of the City. This decision is defined not only by this element, but all elements of the Comprehensive Plan. In the event that Public Recreation land is developed, every effort will be made to mitigate the loss of open space with the acquisition of an equal of greater amount of protected open space elsewhere.

Since Woonsocket is in a generally good position with regard to its current inventory of parkland, conservation areas, and public open space, concentration must now be placed on the acquisition of targeted sites for specified purposes. Among these specified purposes are neighborhood play lots, riverfront walkways, areas of significant natural resources, and tie-ins to the Heritage Corridor projects such as the Blackstone River Bikeway and the development of greenspace along the Blackstone River. Emphasis must also be placed on the maintenance and improvement of the city's existing parks, conservation lands, and public open space areas.

State and Private Facilities

Woonsocket is home to a number of recreational facilities that are neither owned nor operated by the City. The State of Rhode Island, Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) provides an important recreation facility at World War II Veterans Memorial State Park. According to the RIDEM, usage of the park, limited by a lack of parking, averages around 100 to 200 persons per day. Concerts held at the park tend to serve the immediate community, mostly elderly, and attract between 200 and 300 people. Fireworks are a big draw, averaging about 1,000 spectators. Autumnfest is this park's main annual event with visitors numbering in the hundreds of thousands over the three days of activities.

World War II Veterans Memorial State Park includes a sandy beach, a pool with swimming lanes and a diving board, and a small kiddie pool. Water for swimming is taken from the Mill River and chlorinated at East School Street on City property. This facility is the only one offering outdoor swimming in Woonsocket. Approximately 80% of its summer visitors swim, and many take advantage of free swimming lessons offered at the park. In the winter, ice-skating is allowed on the main pond, weather permitting. Tennis and volleyball courts are available and are well used, as is a playground that gets constant, year-round use. There is no recreation director at this park, nor is there likely to be in light of State budget cut backs. This is a critical public recreation amenity for city residents. It is the best interests of the residents of the City of Woonsocket that World War II Veterans Memorial Park remains open to the public and that the State continues to own and operate the park. The City should oppose any proposals that would diminish the recreational opportunities at World War II Park.

Mount Saint Charles Academy, a Catholic parochial secondary educational institution that draws its students from Woonsocket and the surrounding region, also provides recreational facilities. Baseball, softball and soccer fields, as well as open space, are associated with the school. Mount Saint Charles also houses the City's only indoor ice hockey rink.

The CYO, YMCA and YWCA all provide recreational programs for children, while the YMCA and the YWCA also serve adults. The YMCA has one of only two indoor pools in the City (the other being a lap pool at the New England Health and Racquet Club). Programs at these facilities require payment of a fee and are open to members and non-members alike.
Other private recreation providers include fitness centers and clubs, a bowling alley, a roller rink, restaurants (with and without entertainment), cinemas, social clubs, bars, theaters and independent theater groups. Numerous churches and the Woonsocket Senior Center provide recreation programs for citizens and facilities for events, such as Bingo games.

Private enterprises have distinct disadvantages. Because they are driven by a profit motive, there are usually direct charges to their clientele, and they are thus exclusionary. In addition, private enterprises often have a high turnover rate (a youth center with arcade games and dancing recently closed in Woonsocket after less than a year's operation). Nonetheless, their contribution to the life and diversity of the City should not be underestimated and continued cooperation between public and private recreation providers should be encouraged to avoid unnecessary duplication of services.

Beyond Woonsocket's borders are regional parks, such as Diamond Hill State Park in Cumberland, Lincoln Woods in Lincoln, Snake Den in Johnston and Wallum Pond in Burrillville, that are a short car ride for Woonsocket’s residents. And although Woonsocket may be beyond the coastal plain, many of its residents enjoy boating on the Bay. The Rhode Island Public Transportation Authority (RIPTA) runs a beach bus from Woonsocket to the shore during the summer months. The beach bus is an important commitment to making salt-water recreation accessible to residents of Woonsocket.

Needs Analysis

Maintenance and Operation

Maintenance and service provision in the park system have been on a long and continual decline. While the City has been successful in pursuing acquisition and rehabilitation grant monies, manpower and funding for routine park maintenance have been scarce. At a focus group meeting in preparation for this Comprehensive Plan Update, many attendees observed that the City’s parks have fallen into disrepair and suffer from the city’s limited budget levels for park maintenance and upgrade. Attendees also mentioned that many of the City’s open space areas and conservation lands are also not well-maintained and can attract negative uses: ATV-riding, dumping, vandalism, and even more serious types of crime.

Decreased use of the parks and poor marketing of the parks, recreational amenities, conservation lands, and recreation programs add to the negative perception and misuse of many of the city’s open space and recreational resources. A future goal in this plan is to improve the city’s ability to maintain its park system, operate recreational programs, and better market and educate the local community and the wider region of Woonsocket’s many recreational and open space opportunities.

Recreational Opportunities

There are a variety of organized sports leagues active in the city, including little league baseball, youth soccer, and adult softball, all of whom benefit from the city's varied parks and playfields. While these organizations have an intense and vocal following, and are often the focus of service and facility support, the park system is also used for more independent activities. There has been strong interest in individual, fitness-related activities, a great response to entertainment offerings and a call for opportunities for the quiet enjoyment of natural surroundings. Playgrounds are important for both young children and the adults and teenagers who supervise their play. Many residents also use the parks to walk, socialize, or simply to relax. Recreational activities that have had high demand for facilities and/or recreational programs include basketball, tennis, soccer, baseball, softball, ice hockey, and volleyball.

Woonsocket's Dionne Track at Cass Park, completed in the mid-1980s, has been highly successful. In the past, Woonsocket had placed "fitness courses" in several of its parks, however, they were little used and targets of vandalism. The Dionne Track is so heavily used for walking and running, throughout the day and by all segments of the population, that foot traffic control has become a problem. There are lights at Dionne Track, making it available for evening use. One criticism of Dionne Track is that although it is attached to Cass Park, access between Cass Park and Dionne Track is poor. The Cass Park Improvement project intends to examine this issue and propose redesign solutions to better connect these two resources.

Playgrounds are an important amenity for children's recreation. The continued maintenance and improvement of existing playgrounds is an important City service. The City should next develop playgrounds in areas not currently serviced, such as Oak Grove, East Woonsocket, and Upper Bernon.

Over the past several years, the city has experienced a renewed interest in the Blackstone River, as a cultural resource, a natural resource, and also as a recreational resource. Increasing the recreational use of the river for fishing, canoeing, and kayaking could be achieved by constructing docks, and canoe and kayak put-ins. The Blackstone River Bikeway provides another opportunity for residents and visitors to experience the Blackstone River and engage in a variety of recreational activities, including cycling, walking, and jogging. The Bikeway will eventually traverse the entire city, following the route of the Blackstone River from south to north. By 2009, construction of the Bikeway had been completed from Woonsocket's southern border with the Town of Lincoln to Davison Avenue, passing through River's Edge Recreation Complex. This paved, multi-use path greatly expands walking, jogging, and bicycling recreational opportunities for Woonsocket residents. The Bikeway also brings new visitors into Woonsocket and has proven to be very successful and popular. Expanding recreational activities will improve the health and social well-being of citizens and visitors, as well as providing access to the greenway, consistent with *State Guide Plan Element 155: A Greener Path . . .Greenspace and Greenways for Rhode Island's future*.

The City must strive to improve recreational opportunities for all demographic segments of the population, and especially for the two age groups that are perceived to be most at need -- the elderly and youth of Woonsocket -- and for the increasing numbers of Southeast Asian and

Hispanic minority group populations who have arrived since the last census. The City is committed to meeting the culturally distinctive recreational needs of these newly arrived immigrant populations.

TABLE F-2
WOONSOCKET'S RECREATION FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

Activity	Inventory	Location
Baseball		
Adult Softball & Hardball	4	Barry Field, Bouley Field, Clem Labine Field (in Bernon Park), and Charles Baldelli Field (in Cold Spring Park)
Little League	9	Ayotte Field, Barry Field (2), Hartnett Field, Menard Field, Joe Cahill Field (in Bernon Park), Dunn Field (in Dunn Park), Marcel Godin Field (in Cold Spring Park), and Dupre Field (in Cass Park)
Unofficial	4	Bissonette Field, Steffanick Field (at Leo Savoie School), Bernon Heights School Field, and a playfield at Costa Park
Basketball	8	Bernon Park, Costa Park (2), Dunn Park (2), Cold Spring Park, Cass Park, and Globe Park
Biking	1	Blackstone River Bikeway
Bocce/Quoits	1	Bouley Field
Canoe/Kayaking	3	Cold Spring Park, River's Edge Recreation Complex, and River Island Park
Fishing	1	Cass Pond
Football	2	Barry Field, and Dunn Park
Golf - pitch and putt	1	River's Edge Recreation Complex
Hockey, ice	1	Bernon Park
Ice skating	2	Bernon Park, and River Island Park
Horseshoes	1	WWII Park
Kickball/Skateboarding/Street Hockey	3	Costa Park, Dunn Park, and Cass Park
Playgrounds	15	Bernon Park, Costa Park, Dunn Park, Cold Spring Park, Cass Park (2), Savannah Smith Playground (in Globe Park), River's Edge Recreation Complex, Stan Eason, Phyllis Thomas, Kendrick, Morin Heights (2), and Veterans Menorial (2)
Soccer		
Official	4	Dionne Track (in Cass Park), River's Edge Recreation Complex, and at the Middle Schools (2)
Unofficial	3	River's Edge Recreation Complex (4)
Swimming	1	Social Ocean (in WWII Park)
Tennis	14	Aylsworth Avenue, Bernon Park (2), Dunn Park (3), Cold Spring Park (2), Cass Park, Globe Park, and WWII Park (4)
Track and field	1	Dionne Track (in Cass Park)
Volleyball	3	Bernon Park, Costa Park, and WWII Park
Walking Paths	5	Costa Park, Dunn Park, Cass Park, Globe Park, Bernon Heights Nature Trail

Although there is a need for more recreational activities for seniors, the City's older residents appear to be most interested in cultural events, and transportation to the parks is one of the most important issues that needs to be addressed. (See the Circulation Element for further discussion of transportation needs.)

For younger residents, the problem is a lack of supervised recreation opportunities. Assertions have repeatedly been made that there are not enough year-round recreational opportunities for the youth of the City. It has been noted that this is particularly so for pre-teen and middle school students who may be too old for, or uninterested in, league sports. In addition, this lack of entertainment opportunities has been linked with the perceived inability of the City to convince its young adults to remain in Woonsocket. There have often been calls to provide a community "youth center," outside of what the YMCA/YWCA the Boys & Girls Club provide. Unfortunately, projects such as these have not been met with much success. The City should continue to consider ways in which such a community youth center could be developed and succeed in the city.

Specific information about the physically handicapped population in the City is not readily available (although the high elderly population in the City would suggest that it might be of particular concern). Efforts have been made in recent park redevelopment to include handicap access to parks, but as previously mentioned, some park areas are marked by very difficult terrain, which cannot be made accessible by conventional means.

Facility Rehabilitation

The City's newer parks: River Island, River's Edge, and Costa Park are in relatively good condition. Facility rehabilitation efforts need to be directed at the city's older parks and playing fields, particularly Cass Park, Barry Field, and Cold Spring Park. While some of the parks and playfields are lighted, efforts should be directed to light more parks and playfields, in order to extend the hours available to residents to safely engage in outdoor recreational activities. A project is currently underway to complete significant improvements at Cass Park, including upgrades to the adjacent Dionne Track. In order to fully complete this ambitious project however, additional funding will be required. The City will continue to seek out grants and innovative methods of funding the completion of this project. Changes are also planned in the future for Ayotte Field, one of the city's main Little League fields. The existing Ayotte Field will be reconstructed at another suitable location in the City such as at Barry Field, Bernon Heights School, or at Cass Park. The new Ayotte Field will be lighted, will have suitable parking facilities, concessions, facilities, dugouts, and stands. The site of the original Ayotte Field will be redeveloped for commercial use and has been rezoned for commercial use.

The City's conservation lands are not adequately well-known in the community, making these open space resources underutilized. The City should devise methods to bring greater attention, stewardship, and positive use of the city's conservation areas. Installing signage, developing formal nature trails through the conservation areas, and educating the public about the conservation areas should all be included as part of the city's broader public outreach and

education effort. The city should create maps, brochures, and improve its website to better inform the public about the open space and recreation resources available in Woonsocket. It is hoped that greater awareness of the community's open space and recreation resources will lead to greater stewardship and appropriate use of these areas.

The following is a summary of pertinent redevelopment plans or projected redevelopment needs of City-owned and controlled parks, open space areas, and conservation lands:

Bissonette Field/East Woonsocket Park:
This area includes both playing field and open space. The open space will be subject to limited development but nonetheless has the need for access and interpretation. Parking is a major problem for the Bissonette Playing Field in East Woonsocket, due to the emerging use of the field for organized sports. This field was originally established to serve the immediate neighborhood. Scheduled league play was never its intended purpose, and conflicts with neighborhood needs have evolved from league use.

Bernon Park:
Bernon Park is a heavily used major facility for its surrounding neighborhood. The City has installed lighting for night use of this park. Some of Bernon's facilities require major repairs or replacement, and play apparatus is needed.

Booth Pond Conservation Area:
This conservation area is in need of interpretive features to support public use and educational programs, including trail marking and signage.

Bouley Field:
Woonsocket's central sports facility, this field could use lighting, restroom and court improvements, as well as improvements to landscaping and parking layout. Overhead wires must be buried to qualify for federal or State funding. This represents a considerable expense for the City.

Cass Park:
Cass Park is in need of significant reconditioning and the City is in the process of completing a major upgrade to this park. The Cass Park Improvement Project is discussed in greater detail later in this Element. Dionne Track is also located in Cass Park, but more work is needed to integrate this facility better with the rest of the park. Planned improvements include replacement of the existing playground facilities, upgrades to the baseball field, tot lot, lighting and signage, erosion control, and replacement of the storm water line flowing from Cass Pond.

Cold Spring Park:
One of the City's flagship parks, Cold Spring Park has undergone major renovations: Improvements were made to the playing fields, and in the areas of vehicular access and parking. In addition, a community-built playground was installed. Further phases of development will be needed to improve access, appearance, and erosion control of the

upper slopes toward Harris Avenue, to connect the park to the Bikeway, to allow greater interaction with the riverfront, and to improve access from the River Street side.

Costa Park:
Costa Park could provide much needed service for the Fairmount and Constitution Hill neighborhoods, and be an important contributor to the Heritage Corridor Linear Park, but meager development, neglect and vandalism have resulted in a derelict facility.

Dunn Park:
This park is a major neighborhood facility and as such experiences heavy use. Dunn Park has some difficulties with its layout, could use expanded facilities, and is in need of major renovations.

Globe Park:
Globe is another of the City's flagship parks and was completely rehabilitated in 1992.

Iron Rock Conservation Area
This scenic and naturally vegetated area was created in 1993 and has been expanded to approximately 40 acres in total. This area is not well-utilized and could benefit from some formal interpretive signage, nature trails, etc.

Kendrick Avenue Play lot:
The Kendrick Avenue Playground requires major overhaul including regrading, improvements to site layout, and replacement of worn play structures.

Main Street Mini-Park:
This mini-park, directly adjacent to City Hall is in good condition and is a well-utilized urban park space with plantings and benches.

Patton Road Holding Pond Open Space
This open space area supports a holding pond for the adjacent residential and commercial districts. This pond is undersized and contributes to downstream flooding of the Theresa Brook. In 2004, a 6-acre portion of this area was rezoned from PR-2 to C-2 in order to accommodate the expansion of the nearby Wal-Mart into a Wal-Mart Super Center.

Phyllis Thomas Park Playground:
This new playground along the Peters River is in good condition.

Rhodes Avenue Conservation Area:
This recently expanded Conservation Area would benefit from trail marking, signage and educational programs.

River’s Edge Recreation Complex:
Opened in 2008, this 21-acre parcel provides 4 new soccer fields, a 3-hole pitch and putt golf course, canoe/kayak access to the Blackstone River, walking paths, and a segment of the Blackstone River Bikeway.

River Island Park:
This downtown park is in good condition. In the winter, its skating rink is well-utilized. The park provides an important urban oasis in the heart of downtown. River Island provides an access point to the Blackstone River and has facilities that make it suitable for a variety of community events, festivals, and gatherings.

Senior Park:
This small sitting area near the Harris Dam provides a scenic spot to view the falls and the Mill River.

Wood Estates Conservation Area:
This conservation area is not well-utilized and sometimes attracts negative uses. This area could benefit from additional public outreach, education, signage, and interpretive features to provide more positive uses of this area.

Park Development

Over the past decade, two new parks opened in the City: River Island Park and River's Edge Recreation Complex. River Island Park is of crucial importance to the City as an area of great physical and historic interest, as an amenity to the densely populated downtown neighborhoods, and especially, in its connection with the completed Heritage Corridor Visitor's Center and planned Blackstone River Bikeway. The park provides an exceptional location for recently hosted public events including press conferences and concerts, and furnishes a beautiful restful place for everyday visitors. The River's Edge Recreation Complex is located on the site of the former municipal landfill off of Davison Avenue. After being ordered by RIDEM to cap the former landfill, the City, with grant assistance from RIDEM, redeveloped this property into a recreational complex benefiting local residents by offering opportunities for both active and passive recreation. The site provides a link with the Blackstone River Bikeway (offering plentiful parking for bicyclists), has a playground, a 3-hole pitch and putt golf course, several soccer fields, a riverfront canoe launch, a concession stand, and restrooms.

A major addition to the City's recreational amenities is the State's planned Blackstone Valley Bikeway. As shown in Map F-1, the Woonsocket portion of the proposed bikeway runs from the Lincoln/North Smithfield town line next to Manville Road and follows the path of the Blackstone River to Downtown Woonsocket and onward to the Massachusetts border. The bikeway will link various recreational facilities in the City, including River Island Park and River's Edge Recreation Complex. As of 2009, the Bikeway has been constructed up to Davison Avenue and the River's Edge Recreation Complex. City officials along with the Woonsocket Main Street/Riverfront Initiative should continue to work with RIDOT to plan for the remainder of the route, in order to maximize public access to the Blackstone River and promote economic development in the City. The Blackstone Valley Bikeway will ultimately extend 48 miles from Providence to Worcester, Massachusetts and will be part of a larger network of bike trails linking Woonsocket to the greater New England region.

An area still to be developed is The Island. This recently acquired riverfront property, directly opposite Costa Park, was acquired in 1990 and is intended to provide passive recreation and access to the Blackstone River. In addition, land has been acquired off River Street along the Blackstone to tie into the Linear Park system and the Bikeway. This land, which will form an important part of the linear string of parks, is immediately adjacent to Market Square and the planned Visitor's Center, and overlooks Woonsocket (Thundermist) Falls.

Open Space Protection

The development of Woonsocket is tightly linked to the Blackstone River, which dominates the physical form of the City. Still, it is difficult to get close to or to even see the river in Woonsocket. The City will continue to acquire and protect river frontage and Bikeway-related areas as feasible. In 2004, the City's Planning Board approved a Master Plan for the Oak Grove Extension major subdivision, which stipulated that 8 acres of land along the Blackstone River be deeded to the City as open space. This land is located in East Woonsocket, an area of focus for increasing the amount of open space. Additional acreage of open space protection has recently been added to the Booth Pond and Iron Rock Brook Conservation Areas.

While Woonsocket has benefited from a long history of park development and the securing of open space land of great physical presence and natural beauty, further improvements to heighten aesthetic experiences in the City can be made. Recapturing riverfront lands for public enjoyment should be a high priority of future open space programs in Woonsocket. While some public parks, notably Cold Spring and Costa, are located along the river, physical and even visual access to the river is still restricted, in part because of the extensive rip-rapping and low water height set by the flood control project. The rugged landform upon which most of Woonsocket is built provides an opportunity for scenic views of the Blackstone River Valley and of the City itself. Every opportunity to preserve and open these views must be seized.

In addition, since most of the City's parks and conservation areas are not along major public thoroughfares, and must be sought out to be appreciated, there is a desire for the extension of a park-like setting onto these thoroughfares and throughout Woonsocket's downtown area. Many residents have shown interest in street-tree planting programs and other beautification projects.

NEW INITIATIVES

Cass Park Improvement Project

The City is undertaking a major project to substantially upgrade Cass Park. Cass Park is Woonsocket's largest park. It is the city's premiere park space in the community, designed to meet the recreation needs of all segments of Woonsocket's society. Completing this multi-million dollar, four-phased park improvement project is the City's highest open space and recreation priority. This project involves upgrading or replacement of nearly all of the existing facilities: play fields and courts, playground equipment, walking paths, Dionne Track, and parking areas, as well as improvements to Cass Pond and the installation of a splash park. The City will continue to utilize a portion of its CDBG allocation to fund this project, but will also

seek additional outside funding through the form of state grants and federal grants and appropriation requests.

Blackstone River Bikeway

The Blackstone River Bikeway is a great addition to the city's open space and recreation inventory. As of 2009, the Bikeway is constructed adjacent to the Blackstone River from Woonsocket's southern border, through the River's Edge Recreation Complex to Davison Avenue. A goal of this Plan Update is advocate for the construction of the remainder of the bikeway in Woonsocket, from Davison Avenue to Woonsocket's northern border with Massachusetts. The City will work closely with RIDOT to ensure that local preference is taken into consideration during the design and construction of the remaining segment(s). In all cases, the City will advocate that the Bikeway links with other city attractions, parks, and amenities and that the Bikeway will be constructed as close to the banks of the Blackstone River as possible. Consistent with the *State Guide Plan Element 155: A Greener Path . . . Greespace and Greenways for Rhode Island's Future*, the Bikeway promotes access to and usage of the greenspace system.

Public Outreach and Education

Based on feedback from the focus group for this Element Update, the City recognizes the need to do a better job at marketing its many open space and recreation resources. Maps that show where the city's parks and conservation areas are located, what amenities and programming are present in each of them, and which attractions are nearby should be produced to engender greater positive use and stewardship of the city's parks and open spaces. The city's website should also be modified to highlight these important community resources.

GOALS & POLICIES

The following goals and policies have been developed to guide Woonsocket in the provision and management of open space and recreational opportunities:

GOAL OSR-1
Maximize integration of the City Park System with the Heritage Corridor

POLICY OSR-1.1
Develop park facilities that enhance the historical and cultural importance of the Blackstone River to the City's growth and development

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-1.1a
Develop a combined master plan for recreation, interpretation and tourism development along the Blackstone River, coordinated with the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, the Woonsocket Heritage Corridor Planning and Advisory Commission, RIDEM and the Rhode Island Department of Transportation.

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-1.1b
Implement a program to increase public awareness of the natural resources and recreational opportunities associated with the Heritage Corridor.

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-1.1c
Establish an annual festival and events calendar and public awareness campaign for Woonsocket in conjunction with the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council.

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-1.1d
Monitor progress in the development of the Blackstone River Bikeway, and work closely with State agencies to plan a specific route that maximizes public access to the riverfront and economic development opportunities in the City.

POLICY OSR-1.2
Develop and interpret historical elements and features of the City through its park facilities

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-1.2a
Continue support, both technical and monetary, for Corridor-related developments.

GOAL OSR-2
Improve the level and quality of maintenance and attention to the City's parks

POLICY OSR-2.1
Increase citizen participation and support for the City's parks and recreation system

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-2.1a
Establish public educational programs in the areas of conservation and park history, as a means of increasing understanding and appreciation of these valuable resources.

POLICY OSR-2.2
Improve the City's ability and commitment to fund park maintenance and development

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-2.2a
Make a long term commitment to gradually increase the general fund appropriation for park and recreation operations, to a level comparable with per capita appropriations for parks and recreation in other Rhode Island communities.

POLICY OSR-2.3
Develop necessary park and conservation area support facilities to enhance patronage, personal safety and ease of use

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-2.3a
Continue with regular improvements and rehabilitation efforts in the City's parks

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-2.3b
Replace or recondition deteriorated play equipment and sports facilities in the City's parks.

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-2.3c
Complete the Cass Park Improvement Project

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-2.3d
Develop nature trails, parking areas, and signage to encourage appropriate use of the city’s conservation areas

GOAL OSR-3
Increase visitation and the appropriate use of the city’s parks, conservation areas, and open space lands.

POLICY OSR-3.1
Improve public knowledge and awareness of the city’s recreational and open space resources

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-3.1a
Produce a park and recreation guide/map for public use.

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-3.1b

Install signage at conservation areas.

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-3.1c
Create a city website that highlights the parks, recreation amenities, and conservation areas in the community.

GOAL OSR-4
Make a consistent and progressive commitment to the provision of efficient, well-managed recreational services and facilities

POLICY OSR-4.1
Utilize all available methods, including as appropriate, aggressive pursuit of sufficient funding, coordination of municipal recreation services with other providers, private collaboration, and direct citizen participation

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-4.1a
Continue aggressive pursuit of State and federal park development grants to supplement existing municipal funding sources.

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-4.1b
Continue public open space and conservation area acquisition by land use planning and either direct or easement purchase measures.

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-4.1c
Reconstruct a new Ayotte Field in a suitable alternate location after the original site of Ayotte Field is redeveloped for commercial use.

GOAL OSR-5
Preserve and protect significant undeveloped and environmentally sensitive areas.

POLICY OSR-5.1
Pursue open space acquisition and appropriate management of open space lands

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-5.1a
Require that large residential developments/subdivisions must donate land for new public open space.

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-5.1b
Upon implementation of the Holly Springs development project, secure 8-10 acres of land for public open space.

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-5.1c
Upon final approval of the Oak Grove subdivision plan, secure 8 acres of open space along the Blackstone River for public open space and river access.

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-5.1d
Implement management plans in the City's conservation areas and public open space.

GOAL OSR-6
Diversify the activity focus of the City's Park System through the provision of opportunities for passive recreation

POLICY OSR-6.1
Continue acquiring properties where feasible and implement new open space preservation techniques to protect land for future public access.

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-6.1a
Utilize local and State-wide resources to inventory the natural resources contained in the public open space and conservation areas and to survey the remaining large tracts of undeveloped land for significant natural resources.

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-6.1b
Plan and implement improvements to the access, trails, parking, and interpretive exhibit features of public open space and conservation areas to allow for increased public use.

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-6.1c
Create a conservation area/nature preserve guide booklet on Woonsocket's natural areas.

GOAL OSR-7
Ensure that City and State parks and recreational facilities meet the diverse needs of Woonsocket residents

POLICY OSR-7.1
Provide a variety of recreational areas and facilities for all demographic groups and residential areas in the community

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-7.1a
Engage community organizations to aid in the creation of a Youth Center.

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-7.1b
Continue redevelopment of existing neighborhood parks with an emphasis on family and passive recreation features.

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-7.1c

Encourage the State to continue, and to expand where possible, recreation services at World War II Veterans Memorial State Park (especially in regard to swimming and cultural events) and other State recreational facilities.

POLICY OSR-7.2
Promote equity in park, recreation and open space expenditure by targeting the City's densely developed, low income neighborhoods

IMPLEMENTATION OSR-7.2a
Develop plans for the “The Island Park” on Fairmount Street and additional park area along River Street in the Fairmount neighborhood.

SERVICES AND FACILITIES ELEMENT

> *Shall provide an inventory of existing and forecasted needs for facilities and services used by the public such as, but not limited to, educational facilities, public safety, water, sanitary sewers, libraries and community facilities. The policies and implementation techniques must be identified for inclusion in the implementation program element.* (Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act 45-22.2-6)

CURRENT CONDITIONS & ISSUES

City-wide Issues

The services offered, and the various public facilities housing these activities, are identified and discussed in detail in the separate individual sections of this Element. Useful input in the evaluation of these services and facilities came from a variety of public outreach processes and through various public hearings and meetings, and specific information received from the various City department and division heads, operators and managers. Table G-1 contains a detailed inventory of public facilities and structures. Map G-1 places these public facilities on a map.

Of all the services and facilities provided by the City, the highest priority has been assigned to Woonsocket's educational system and its water treatment and wastewater treatment systems. The educational system, which consists of the School Department and various ancillary services such as the Harris Public Library, is seen as the key to good jobs, the health of the City, and the personal growth and betterment of its citizens. A functioning water and wastewater treatment system is critical to the public and environmental health of the community.

Although there has been notable improvement to many public facilities in recent years, including library, police, fire, water, wastewater, senior services, public housing, and modest school and park improvements, a good portion of decaying and declining public infrastructure remains. Some of the recent capital improvements and expansion of City services have been funded with the assistance of State and federal grants. However, State and federal budget deficits are currently being addressed by a reduction of aid and financial assistance to cities and towns. Reduced aid to Woonsocket places an additional burden on the local property taxpayer. The reduction of aid, combined with the severe recessionary trends affecting the region, has contributed to a bleak outlook for the availability of funds to substantially upgrade City services and facilities.

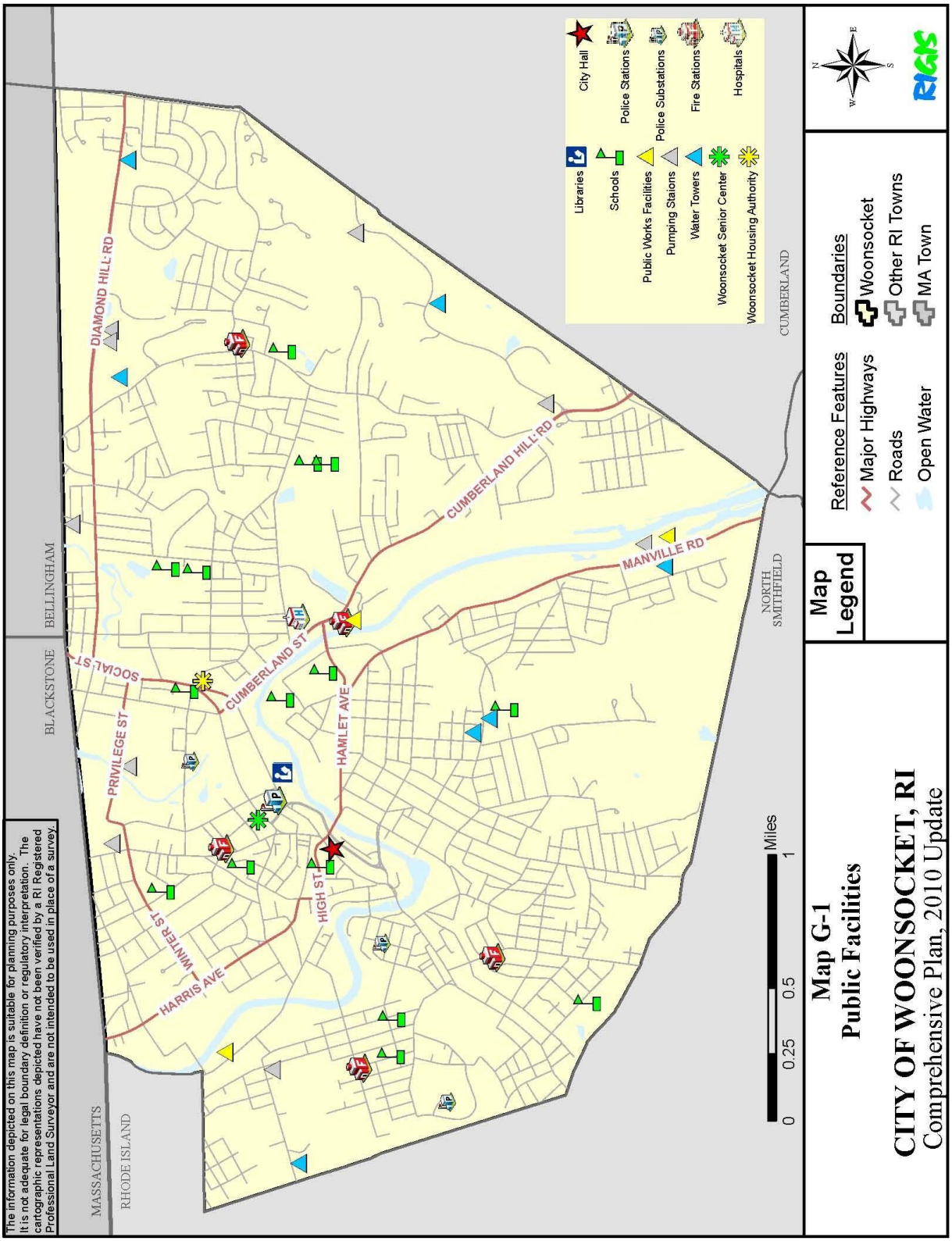
It is clear then that part of the planning process must focus on the consolidation and regionalization of service provision, greater operational efficiency, and other innovative management initiatives resulting in a more efficient delivery system. By implementing cost saving initiatives on the operations side, money saved can be utilized to supplement conventional sources of funding for future public improvements.

TABLE G-1
WOONSOCKET'S INVENTORY OF PUBLIC FACILITIES/STRUCTURES

Structure	*Location*
GOVERNMENT:	
Woonsocket City Hall	169 Main Street
SCHOOLS:	
Woonsocket Education Department (administration)	108 High Street
Woonsocket High School	777 Cass Avenue
Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center	400 Aylsworth Avenue
Woonsocket Middle School (present)	357 Park Place
Woonsocket Middle School (under construction)	Florence Drive
Bernon Heights Elementary	657 Logee Street
Citizens Memorial Elementary	250 Winthrop Street
Kevin A. Coleman Elementary	96 Second Avenue
Feinstein Learning Academy at Social	706 Social Street
Fifth Avenue Elementary	65 Fifth Avenue
Globe Park Elementary	192 Avenue A
Governor Aram J. Pothier Elementary	420 Robinson Street
Harris Elementary	60 High School Street
Leo Savoie Elementary	990 Mendon Road
POLICE:	
Woonsocket Police Department	242 Clinton Street
Police Substation	152 Center Street
Police Substation	22 Memorial Drive
Police Substation	429 East School Street
FIRE:	
Woonsocket Fire Department - Station #1	169 Providence Street
Station #2 (Headquarters)	5 Cumberland Hill Road
Station #3	241 North Main Street
Station #4	804 Mendon Road
Ststion #6	504 Fairmount Street
PUBLIC WORKS:	
Water Treatment Plant (present)	1500 Manville Road
Water Treatment Plant (proposed)	Jillson Avenue
Wastewater Treatment Plant	11 Cumberland Hill Road (Rear)
Water Towers:	
Diamond Hill Tank	Diamond Hill Road (Lot 61-4)
Logee Street Tanks 2-3-4- High Service Tank 5	568 Logee Street (Lot 23-180)
Logee Street Tank 1	Logee Street (Lot 24-55)
Manville Road Wash Water Tank	Manville Road (Lot 34-22)
Cobble Hill Tank	304 Mendon Road (Lot 46-191)
Industrial Park Tank	765 Park East Drive (Lot 56-22)
Rhodes Ave Tank – 10 Tanks	526 Rhodes Avenue (Lot 2-17)
Wastewater Pumping Stations:	Manville Road (Lot 34-23)
	North Main Street at Temple Street
	Privilege Street (Lot 20-27)
	Park East Drive (Lot 59-6)

	Saint Louis Avenue (Lot 38-25)
	Diamond Hill Road (Lot 46-192)
Water Pumping Stations:	
Rhodes Ave Pumping Station	Rhodes Avenue (Lot 2-22)
Park East Drive Pumping Station	40 Park East Drive (Lot 51-17)
Diamond Hill Rd Pumping Station	1703 Diamond Hill Road (Lot 46-192)
Mount St. Charles Pumping Station	568 Logee St. (Lot 23-180)
	2003 Manville Road (in North Smithfield)
Woonsocket Highway Department Garage & Weld Shop	943 River Street
Highway Facility	1117 River Street

PUBLIC:	
Woonsocket Harris Public Library	303 Clinton Street
Woonsocket Senior Center	84 Social Street
Woonsocket Housing Authority	679 Social Street
Museum of Work and Culture	42 South Main Street
Dog Pond	9 Cumberland Hill Road


The information depicted on this map is suitable for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation. The cartographic representations depicted have not been verified by a RI Registered Professional Land Surveyor and are not intended to be used in place of a survey.
MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
BLACKSTONE
BELLINGHAM
CUMBERLAND
NORTH SMITHFIELD
DIAMOND HILL RD
SOCIAL ST
PRIVILEGE ST
CUMBERLAND ST
HAMLET AVE
HIGH ST
WINTER ST
HARRIS AVE
CUMBERLAND HILL RD
MANVILLE RD
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
Map G-1
Public Facilities
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update
Map Legend
Reference Features
Major Highways
Roads
Open Water
Boundaries
Woonsocket
Other RI Towns
MA Town
City Hall
Police Stations
Police Substations
Fire Stations
Hospitals
Libraries
Schools
Public Works Facilities
Pumping Staions
Water Towers
Woonsocket Senior Center
Woonsocket Housing Authority
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As required by the City Charter, the Planning Board is responsible for the annual preparation of a 5-year Capital Improvement Program. The components of the Capital Improvement Program come from requests prepared by City department and division heads. An evaluation including the review of cost estimates is made by the Planning Board, prioritization is given to each request, and a final suggested funding schedule is approved. The Capital Improvement Program is then presented to the Mayor and City Council for adoption and implementation.

To help improve the coordination of the annual City budget process, the Planning Board should submit the Capital Improvement Program to the Mayor and Finance Director at the same time that departments are submitting their annual operating budgets. It is recommended that the Mayor be responsible for coordination of the various departmental capital expenditure requests and for their submission to the Planning Board. This is recommended to provide for a single view of priorities, to ensure more timely departmental compliance, and to allow for better integration of the Capital Improvement Program and the overall budget process.

As is often the case in municipal government, the City has traditionally operated on an accretion of measures designed to address specific circumstances, as they arise. There is a need to periodically review City ordinances, services and programs, and their organization and management for both effectiveness and cohesiveness.

Information and data-sharing between departments needs to be improved and expanded. Certain advancements and the implementation of state-of-the-art programs in the centralized computer system have been recently completed; however, the full City-wide integration of this computer system to allow for the easy transfer of information between departments is necessary for the achievement of greater operational efficiency.

The current collective bargaining agreements with the City's unions impose certain limitations on the development of cost savings and efficiency initiatives. While maintaining the goal of more efficient service provision, it may be most acceptable to both unionized workers and administrators if such initiatives are directed at reorganizing responsibilities rather than eliminating personnel and increasing work loads.

School Department

The importance of the school system to any community cannot be overstated. The school system is a civic and cultural focus, a demonstration of caring for our children and hope for the future. The school system is the major public expenditure, a repository of social ills and the cure for them. Most people readily identify that schools are clearly the most important public service. As a result of this recognition, the implementation of educational program improvements remains a top priority of this Plan Update.

Basic decisions on locating into a community or a specific neighborhood are based upon an individual's perception of that community's school system. In Woonsocket, the retention and attraction of families, and of businesses, are clearly tied to the perception of the quality of the

City's educational system. The future viability of the City will directly result from the measure of preparatory training given to today's youth, who are the future leaders of Woonsocket. The City's primary goal, therefore, must be to substantially improve its educational system, by reducing the school drop-out rate and developing effective educational programs which ensure that all of Woonsocket's youth are properly prepared for their future career paths and further intellectual development. It is only through such improvements that Woonsocket's school system will serve as a model for other communities and its superior educational programs will draw families to Woonsocket.

Municipal school systems operate under a complexity of constraints and requirements from a variety of sources, including the elected School Committee, collective bargaining agreements with unions, State and federal requirements and mandates, City Council and Mayoral appropriations, and voter approval for capital expenditures.

The current drop-out rate during the high school years is far too high and totally unacceptable. According to the RI Department of Education, the 2006-2007 drop-out rate for Woonsocket was 18%. The State average is 11%. The graduation rate for the same period was 81.7% in Woonsocket and 89.2% for the State as a whole. If the City's youth are to become productive members of society as part of tomorrow's work force, special programs and outreach initiatives must be undertaken to reduce the current drop-out rate.

In the 2006-2007 school year, the enrollment in the Woonsocket school system was 6,375. In past years, the City has expended substantial funds to bus students out of the neighborhoods in which they live to available classroom space located in other sections of the City. Increased school housing pressures may also result from the future non-availability of classroom space currently being rented. In order to accommodate this projected increasing population, new classrooms may have to be constructed.

Educational mandates come from the federal and State governments. While the City receives substantial State and federal contributions for the operation of schools, the cost of meeting these mandates can exceed the amount of contributions received. Current and future mandates need to be clearly tied to matching levels of outside funding. The State and federal governments response to their budget crisis has been to shift greater financial responsibility onto the cities and towns. This increased responsibility may eventually exceed the community's ability to pay or maintain the current level of programs. Local initiatives must be developed to address these issues.

In August 2007, the voters of Woonsocket passed a major bond referendum, authorizing the city to replace the outdated Woonsocket Middle School with a new middle school campus, complete with two smaller, 800-pupil capacity middle schools and athletic fields. The new middle school opened in January 2010 and is located at the site of the former Lafayette Worsted mill complex at Hamlet Avenue and Florence Drive. The new 20-acre school campus replaces the antiquated and obsolete Woonsocket Middle School and is endowed with state-of-the-art educational amenities for the city’s middle school students. The city’s middle school students will now be able to learn in a setting more appropriate for their educational needs and will now, for the first time, have access to outdoor recreation fields for physical education.

Finance Department

It could be argued that the importance and complexity of managing the City's finances has grown rapidly over the years. The field of finance administration is rapidly changing in today's world, reflecting the impact of computers and data and information systems that monitor and control the expenditures of any large business. The City of Woonsocket is a $135 million business, and like any other business, its equipment and techniques for management must undergo periodic updating.

City Hall continues to suffer from a lack of integrated information sharing. Programs that can be operated on a City-wide basis, additional terminals and further training of staff in the individual departments will be necessary to realize the full potential of the system. In addition, close communication with the School Department, including the mutual generation and reporting of financial information, is of critical importance.

Finance Department functions which have seen little change in format during past years are budget preparation and periodic financial reporting. The current Administration and other individuals have recognized and promoted the need for an update of the City's budget and financial reporting process. Development and utilization of meaningful statistical information by the Management Information Systems Division is important. With ever increasing municipal budget concerns, it is critical that information be continuously generated and made available as required, so that comprehensive analysis leading to affirmative and corrective policies can be implemented in a timely manner.

As a result of the most recent property revaluation, the Tax Assessment Division now has fully computerized records. Notable improvements in tax collections by the Treasury Division and preparation of timely periodic revenue reports have followed.

The City Treasurer has initiated a procedure to gain competitive bids for the investment of City funds. Expansion of the role of the City's Investment Board would provide assistance in this effort. A cash flow projection has been developed in basic form, but must be prepared in greater detail. In addition, computerized reporting systems are needed to better track the periodic receipt of significant revenue components of the budget.

Ongoing improvements can and should be made in the area of minority recruitment, in accordance with the City’s City Affirmative Action Program.

The City's Purchasing Division has noted that a substantial percentage of actual purchases are being made directly by individual departments, and the City's purchasing procedures are being by-passed. The City must update purchasing procedures and may wish to gain higher efficiency and cost savings through incorporation of City purchasing with School Department purchasing, and through regionalization.

Public Works

Managing the City's infrastructure and related services falls under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Works. Woonsocket is an older urban area, with the majority of the City having been developed before the 1920s. As a result of this early development, outdated materials are found in the roads, utility systems, and many city facilities. In addition, a decaying infrastructure has resulted from a lack of properly funded maintenance programs over the years.

Stormwater Management

On December 8, 1999, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) promulgated Phase II of its National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) storm water regulations. Phase I of the USEPA storm water program established regulations for storm water discharges from municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) in municipalities with populations of 100,000 or greater, construction activities disturbing five or more acres of land, and ten categories of industrial facilities. The Phase II Final Rule expands the Phase I program by requiring smaller communities with MS4s in urbanized areas to implement programs and practices to control polluted storm water runoff through the use of NPDES permits. Urbanized areas are based on the 2000 census.

The City of Woonsocket is one of thirty-two Rhode Island municipalities located completely or partially in an Urbanized Area automatically designated under the Phase II program. In Rhode Island, Phase II regulated communities are required to apply for a Rhode Island Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (RIPDES) permit which is issued by Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM). These communities are required to reduce the discharge of pollutants from their storm sewer systems to the “maximum extent practicable” to protect water quality.

As part of the permitting process, these regulated municipalities are required to prepare and submit Storm Water Management Plans that address how the regulated MS4 will comply with six minimum control measures. These six minimum measures include:

- Public Education and Outreach
- Public Participation/Involvement
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
- Construction Site Runoff Control
- Post-Construction Runoff Control
- Good Housekeeping/Pollution Prevention

The City of Woonsocket is entirely within the Blackstone River Watershed. A watershed is the area of land where all of the water that is under it or drains off of it migrates to a common location. A watershed generally includes lakes, rivers, estuaries, wetlands, streams, and the surrounding landscape. Groundwater recharge areas are also considered. Watersheds are nature's boundaries, which transcend political, social, and economic boundaries.

Because watersheds are defined by natural hydrology, they represent the most logical basis for managing water resources. A Watershed Protection Approach is, therefore, a viable strategy for effectively protecting and restoring aquatic ecosystems and protecting human health. Rhode Island supports this approach through the RI Watershed Partnership, which coordinates what have traditionally been separate government programs. Major features of a Watershed Protection Approach are: targeting priority problems, promoting a high level of stakeholder involvement, integrated solutions that make use of the expertise and authority of multiple agencies, and measuring success through monitoring and other data gathering. A watershed framework offers many opportunities to simplify and streamline the workload between involved parties, thus generating cost efficiencies. Each watershed presents unique opportunities and challenges. More importantly they present an opportunity for partnering with watershed advocates, academic institutions, industry, private landowners, neighboring communities, or state agencies to achieve mutual beneficial goals.

Significant water resources in the City of Woonsocket include:

- Blackstone River
- Mill River
- Peters River
- Booth Pond
- Cass Pond
- Darling Pond
- Harris Pond
- Social Pond
- Sylvester Pond

It should be noted that other significant water resources exist in Woonsocket as small, unnamed ponds, watercourses and wetlands. Some of these are isolated while others are located along stream lengths. The City continues to commit significant resources to improve and upgrade its storm water system. Staff of the Public Works Department attends numerous training seminars and workshops offered by the State of Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) and other agencies/organizations/groups. Plan reviews of proposed storm water management systems and inspections of the construction of the systems are handled by the Engineering Division.

The City of Woonsocket City Council established rules and regulations within the Code of Ordinances that specify the guidelines that the City and its residents must abide to. The Director of Public Works/City Engineer oversees the program and with the use of Municipal Court, enforces the ordinances.

The program is evaluated by hired engineering consultants and through an annual report submitted to RIDEM by the City. The effectiveness of the program in place is consistently reviewed by the Public Works Director, the Engineering Division staff. Changes, modifications or deficiencies in the program which can be corrected immediately are done so otherwise they are address in accordance to the Code of Ordinances.

Wastewater Treatment

The Woonsocket Regional Wastewater Commission serves the City of Woonsocket, RI, The Town of North Smithfield, RI, The Town of Blackstone, MA and the Town of Bellingham, MA. Woonsocket's modern wastewater and water treatment facilities each employ state-of-the-art treatment techniques. The City has made a priority commitment to the on-going maintenance of these important utilities in recent years. The Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant, a multi-million dollar facility, was built to correct and employ new technology in the treatment of waste, and to correct earlier environmental deficiencies. In addition to upgrades necessary to meet the new nutrient limits, the City is proposing other major facility upgrades. The estimated cost of this upgrade is $40,000,000 (per the March 2011 Facility Plan Update). Additionally, there are some ancillary repairs that are recommended and are estimated at $15,000,000. The plant is currently operating substantially below capacity, and the opportunity exists for future increase of the current service area, leading to greater cost efficiency in the treatment of Woonsocket's wastewater.

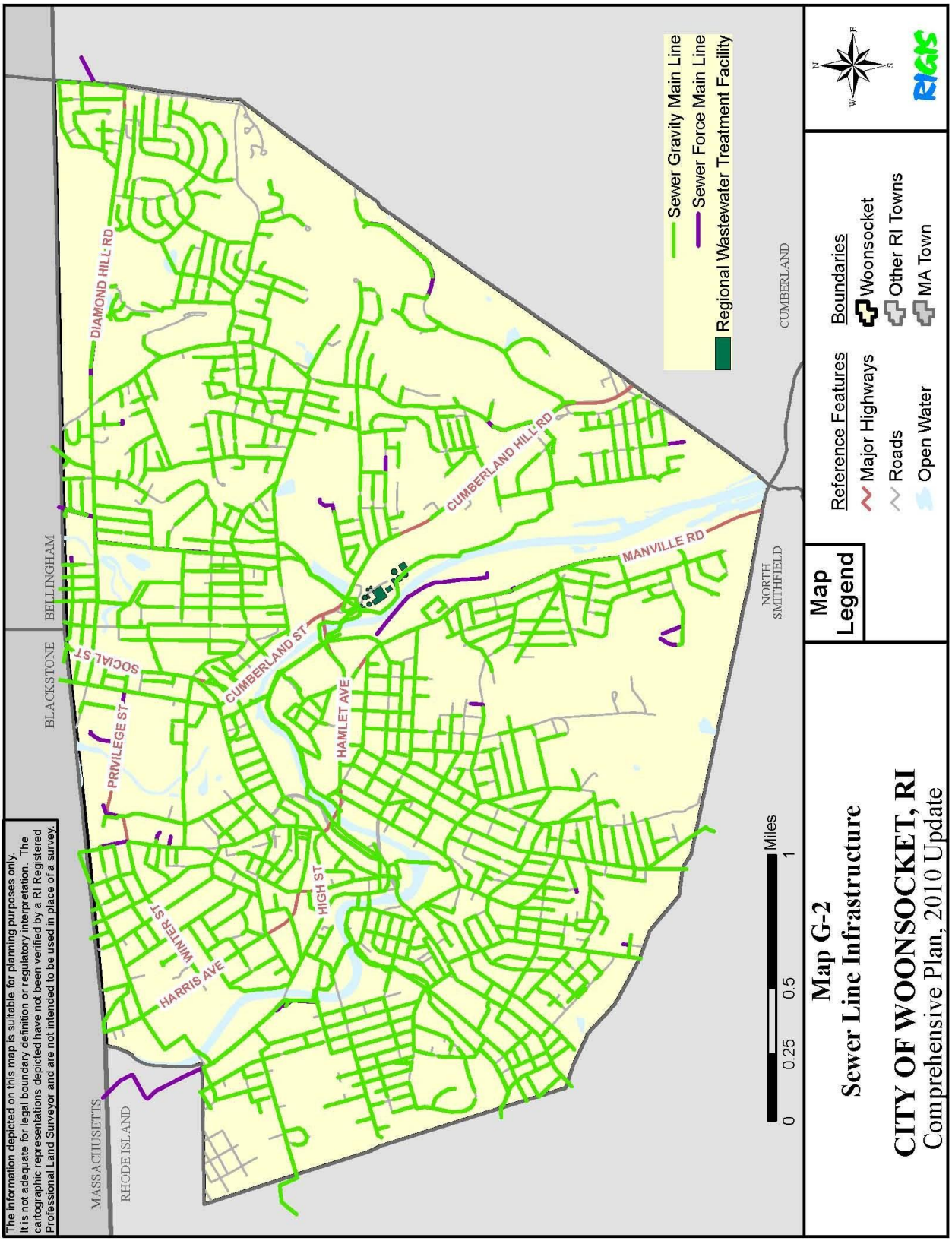
The availability of additional sewer and water capacity places Woonsocket at a competitive advantage in attracting new industry and business to the region. A portion of these resources should be made available for significant economic development projects in surrounding towns that will provide much needed jobs to Woonsocket residents. These resources should be judiciously expended so as to gain the greatest degree of labor employment and economic development benefit, and to realize the greatest amount of fees and other operational monies. These monies can in turn be used to fund the substantial required improvements in the delivery segment of both utilities. Many of the City's water and wastewater mains are in need of repair or replacement, and many lines must be replaced in order to gain greater capacity.

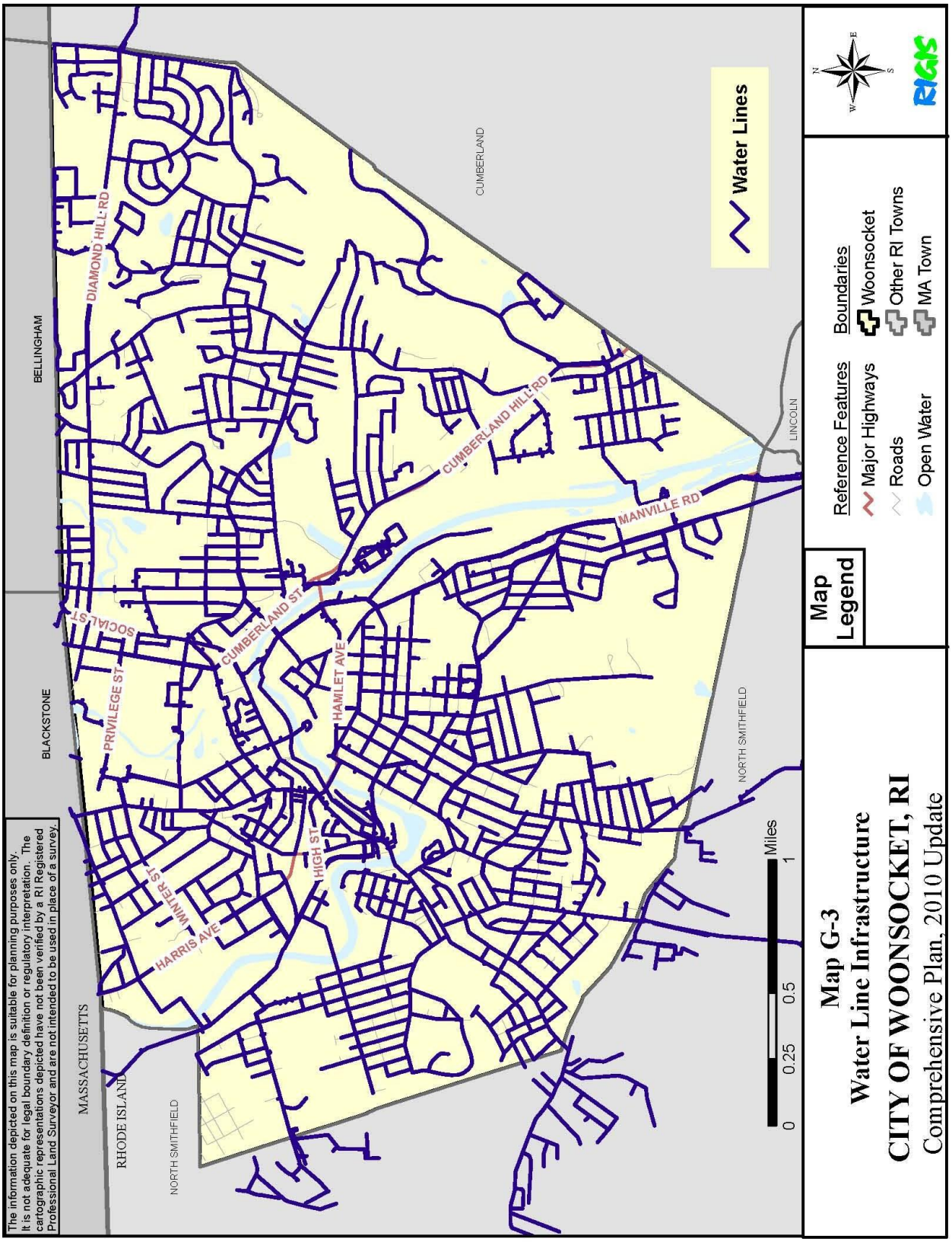
Water System Supply Management Plan Summary

Consistent with the policies of the State of Rhode Island set forth in §Public Drinking Water Supply System Protection (RIGL §46-15.3-5.1), the City of Woonsocket prepared a five-year update to its Water Supply System Management Plan in January 2011, a summary of which follows.

<u>Goals Statement</u>
The Woonsocket Water Division's (WWD) mission includes four foals:

- To provide high quality drinking water that protects public health and complies with all applicable standards.


The information depicted on this map is suitable for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation. The cartographic representations depicted have not been verified by a RI Registered Professional Land Surveyor and are not intended to be used in place of a survey.
MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
BLACKSTONE
BELLINGHAM
CUMBERLAND
NORTH SMITHFIELD
DIAMOND HILL RD
SOCIAL ST
PRIVILEGE ST
CUMBERLAND ST
HAMLET AVE
HIGH ST
WINTER ST
HARRIS AVE
CUMBERLAND HILL RD
MANVILLE RD
Sewer Gravity Main Line
Sewer Force Main Line
Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility
Map Legend
Reference Features
Major Highways
Roads
Open Water
Boundaries
Woonsocket
Other RI Towns
MA Town
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
Map G-2
Sewer Line Infrastructure
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update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HAMLET AVE
HIGH ST
WINTER ST
HARRIS AVE
CUMBERLAND HILL RD
MANVILLE RD
Water Lines
Map Legend
Reference Features
Major Highways
Roads
Open Water
Boundaries
Woonsocket
Other RI Towns
MA Town
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
Map G-3
Water Line Infrastructure
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update

- To produce adequate water supply in the most economically feasible and environmentally sound manner.
- To serve those areas in Woonsocket and adjacent communities that have contaminated private, wells, or are otherwise in need of water supply.
- To efficiently manage and protect its active and supplemental water resources.

The City of Woonsocket's three water supply reservoirs are Reservoir No. 1, Reservoir No. 3 and Harris Pond. The Water Treatment Plant (WTP), built in 1962, has limitations for pumping, and an evaluation of the WTP in October 2004 found that the existing WTP is in need of rehabilitation and ultimately replacement. The City's Engineering Consultant has identified nearly $12,000,000 of required capital improvements to the City's water system. (see New Initiatives section on page G-23 for more information on efforts to site, design and construct a new water treatment plant)

During the past few years, significant improvements have been made to the treatment component. The Woonsocket Water Department completed the Crookfall Brook pipeline project in 1997. However, the City's secondary source of water at Harris Pond remains at risk. Underground pollution from surrounding development in Massachusetts has placed the quality of this water source in the marginal category. In addition, the Town of Blackstone has laid claim to a portion of the historic water supply. A recommendation of previous Capital Improvement Programs, which has yet to be implemented, is the improvement to the distribution and storage elements of the City's water system. Despite these concerns, Woonsocket does have a limited surplus in system capacity which should be judiciously expended.

There are nine distribution storage facilities and four booster pump station facilities in the Woonsocket water system, each with emergency generators. The water system service area includes all of the City of Woonsocket, sections of North Smithfield and Cumberland, Rhode Island, and sections of Blackstone and Bellingham, Massachusetts.

Water Conservation and Efficient Use of Water

The WWD purchased leak detection equipment, conducts leak surveys, and repairs all identified leaks. Infrastructure rehabilitation is completed on an as-needed basis and, to date, approximately 400 hydrants and about 4,200 service meters have been replaced including all residential meters. Infrastructure projects identified in the 2007 Infrastructure Rehabilitation Plan include the replacement of transmission lines, the cleaning and cement mortar lining of transmission lines, upgrades/replacement of existing pump stations, a hydrant flushing program, rehabilitation of existing dams and the design of a new water treatment facility.

In 1998, the WWD began one of the largest tank replacement programs within the state of Rhode Island resulting in construction of five new storage tanks as follows:

- Logee Tank – Completed in 2003
- Mt. Saint Charles Tank 4 – Completed in 2004

- Rhodes Avenue Tank – Completed in 2005
- Cobble Hill Tank – Completed in 2006
- Mt. Saint Charles Tank 5 – Completed in 2009

The WWD has developed a comprehensive Emergency Response Plan (ERP), in part to comply with Rhode Island Water Resource Board's regulations. The ERP includes a discussion of the local, state, and federal resources available to WWD in an emergency, and the applicable community systems, and identifies organization charts and response action flow charts for each of 13 specific emergency situations. The ERP follows the incident commands system, a procedure developed to address command and control of resources during emergency situations, as described in the *Guidelines for Water Emergency Response Plan for the State of Rhode Island* and the AWWA Manual.

Supply and Demand Management

Currently, the average day demand is about 3.73 mgd (2008). The maximum day demand during 2008 is 5.42 mgd, which occurred during the month of June, according to distribution data. The average day demand is projected to be 3.79 mgd in 2030. The safe yield of the water supply system based on the drought of record is 6.9 mgd; yield based on a critical dry period with a five percent chance of occurrence is 8.0 mgd. The WWD is able to meet the average daily demand of 3.72 mgd with the existing sources of supply. The WWD will be also able to meet the 2030 projected demand with the existing sources of supply.

City Incinerator

A major problem identified by residents of surrounding neighborhoods has been the operation of the City incinerator by a private concern (Synagro). Although some modifications have been effected, continued surveillance is important, and additional improvements may be required. Synagro has built state of the art new incinerator and it has been in operation since July 2007. Synagro also installed new odor control equipment which has resulted in a reduction of the odor complaints in the area. Despite the reduction in odor complaints, the public still cites odor issues coming from the wastewater treatment plant as a major negative impact in the city. The only way to solve this problem is to totally enclose the wastewater treatment plant, an extremely costly venture that the city has no way of funding at this time.

Bridges, Roads, and Highways

In the course of the public participation process for this Update, members of the public and representatives of the city and state government expressed dissatisfaction with the condition of many of the city's bridges, roads, and highways. While specific improvements are discussed in detail in this Plan's Circulation Element, the local funding commitment for scheduled maintenance and repair has yet to even come close to meeting the need. In addition to the unacceptable condition of many streets and roadways, some of the City's existing curbing requires resetting or replacement, and many sidewalks need replacement. A partial solution to this problem is to petition the State of Rhode Island to add additional streets to the list of State-maintained roadways. Currently, Woonsocket has one of the lowest percentages of any

municipality of State-maintained roads. Many of the City's bridges are in need of repair and upgrades. The bridges that cross the Blackstone River are in particular need of improvement in that many of them are painted with lead paint, which is peeling off and falling into the Blackstone River. This poses obvious public and environmental health risks. The Sayles Street, River Street, and Singleton Street Bridges are in particular need of this type of upgrading. The need for bridge repair of the numerous bridges in the City is primarily the replacement of the surface course. The City will pursue funding for these projects through many different avenues including CDBG and the TIP. Prioritization of the bridge repairs will be based on the bridge inspection reports that the City receives from RIDOT.

Solid Waste and Recycling

The City continues to commit significant resources to improve and upgrade its solid waste and recycling programs. In July 2007 the City implemented an automated collection program for all 1 – 3 unit residences (approximately 10,400 units) in order to improve its recycling rate. Each residence was provided two recycling carts (blue and green) and one trash cart owned and maintained by the City. Concurrently the City opened a Material Recovery Facility for the collection of recyclables from those units not eligible for curbside collection and for the collection of recyclable materials that Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC) does not accept.

Following the State of Rhode Island Laws along with the rules and policies of RIRRC the City needs to achieve a 35% recycling rate and a 50% diversion rate. These rates will be a goal of the Solid Waste Division to reach through educational outreach programs such as a bilingual web site, use of billboard and bus stop advertising, cooperation with area schools to promote education on recycling and provide recycling program information to new residents.

Since the incorporation of the automated system and program guidelines in 2007 the City has increased it recycling rate by 17%, decreased its trash by 27%.

	FY 2007	FY 2011
TRASH (tons)	24,955	9,002
RECYCLING (tons)	2,258	2,977
TOTAL (tons)	27,213	11,979
PERCENTAGE RATE	8.30%	24.90%

The City Material Recycle Facility collects items such as; books, Styrofoam, propane tanks, television/computer monitors, electronic waste, rigid plastic, metals, mattresses/box springs, vegetable oil, cloths, appliances, commingle recyclables and paper/cardboard. City residents have accepted the facility as part of the City's changing solid waste collection efforts.

Woonsocket
Material Recovery Facility

Date	Customers
June 2008	497
June 2011	915

The solid waste program also includes services for the collection of 'Bulk Items' and 'White Goods' along with 'Yard Waste' pick up during peak spring and fall periods. At other times of the year, residents may bring 'Yard Waste to a drop-off site on Mill Street, provided they have the appropriate resident yard waste sticker.

'White Goods' are large metal items that are recyclable that won't fit into the carts such as: refrigerators, dryers, dishwashers (see complete list posted on the City's Solid Waste web site). These items required an orange sticker. Each unit in the program is allowed one (1) 'White Good' item per week. After obtaining an orange sticker the resident/ property owner must contact the City's solid waste hauler to schedule an appointment for the pick up of the item. 'White Goods' are picked up on a weekly schedule.

'Bulk Items' are non-recyclable items that won't fit into the burgundy carts such as: couches, chairs, tables, rugs, etc. These items required a green sticker. Each sticker the resident/property owner must contact the City's solid waste hauler to schedule an appointment for the pick up of the item. 'Bulk Items' are picked up on a monthly schedule.

'Yard Waste' (grass clippings, small branches, weeds, etc.) will be collected during two 10-week periods, one in the spring and one in the fall. See the Solid Waste calendar for collection weeks.

Periodically the City is able to offer other collection services not typically part of a solid waste program such as; collection of tires, paper shredding, collection of household hazardous waste. Public press releases are used to inform the residents when these collections are available.

The City of Woonsocket City Council established rules and regulations within the Code of Ordinances that specify the guidelines that the City and its residents must abide to. The Superintendent of Solid Waste oversees the program and with the use of Municipal Court enforces the ordinances.

The effectiveness of the program in place is consistently reviewed by the Solid Waste Superintendent, the Public Works Director, RIRRC and its solid waste hauler. Changes, modifications or deficiencies in the program which can be corrected immediately are done so otherwise they are addressed in accordance to the Code of Ordinances.

Parks and Recreation Division

The needs of the Parks and Recreation Division are presented in detail in the Open Space and Recreation Element of this Plan. It has been noted by the Planning Board, in its preparation of the Capital Improvement Program, that the Parks Division has been understaffed and that limited local financial resources have been made available for needed materials and equipment.

The summer recreation programs in the Parks are in need of revamping in order to properly respond to the recreation needs of the City's youth.

Thundermist Hydro Plant

In 1981, Woonsocket completed the construction of the municipally-owned and operated "Thundermist Hydro Plant." The plant operated successfully for several years but then started to lose money in the mid-1990's and was subsequently requested to be shut down by RIDEM, citing concerns with the fluctuation of the river water levels. In 2009, the hydro-plant re-opened. The plant has been leased to a private company that will be responsible for the ongoing operating of the hydro-plant. The City will see a minimum of $100,000 in revenue every year from the operation of the hydro-plant.

Army Corps of Engineers Flood Control Project

Also incident to the fluctuation in water levels of the Blackstone River is the City's flood control system, the ownership and maintenance of which was recently turned back over to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). This critical flood protection system had degraded over time as the City lacked the resources to properly maintain the system over the long-term. Congressional intervention and federal stimulus funding has led to an agreement being reached whereby the USACE will reclaim responsibility for the functioning of the system. The City should remain vigilant to ensure that the USACE is providing appropriate levels of care and operation to ensure the protection of property landward of the levees. The City will need to maintain a cooperative relationship with the USACE and with downstream communities to be able to respond cooperatively to threatening flood events.

Harris Public Library

The library is one of the City's relatively newer public facilities, having been completed in 1973 and expanded and renovated in 2001. Usage of the library has grown dramatically in recent years, to a fiscal year 2008 circulation of 196,632. This increase has placed a strain both on the facility and on its service provision. With increasing use, the Library has become more important as a civic center and gathering place.

The private collections of records, photographs and other historic artifacts that have been amassed are an invaluable resource for the City. With the development of the Visitor's Center/Labor History Museum as part of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, another center of local and regional history was established. The Library should take the lead in offering its expertise in cataloging and conservation techniques and acting as an information center for the City.

Training in job-related skills has been identified as an important objective by the people of Woonsocket. The School Department and Library should work together to develop programs to reach at-risk students, and to improve their chances of staying in school. Adults should also be targeted in association with continuing education programs.

In addition, the Library would like to expand its publicity effort, and become the City Center for informational services. An additional problem that has been identified is the Library's underutilization by the City's minority population. An outreach effort may be required to address this situation.

Human Services and the Senior Center

The system of human service provision is tremendously complex. This array of programs and agencies, designed to meet the needs of today's family, is composed of federal, State and local governmental, private and religious service providers, with differing, and sometimes overlapping, locational jurisdictions and programs. It is difficult for a municipality, concerned about the adequacy of service provision for its residents, to understand which agency provides what type of services and for which groups. It is all the more difficult for a client in need to know where to go for assistance.

The City's Human Resource Director recognizes the need to develop a Master Plan of the multitude of programs and services offered by Woonsocket service providers. In January 1990 the Department of Human Services composed an Operation Instruction Manual, including a mission statement, set of immediate goals for action, needs assessment and specific procedures for the Budget Advisory Committee to follow.

The primary role of a municipality in this area is that of advocate for its residents. The City must assess the needs of residents, speak for those who cannot speak for themselves, and secure funding for needed programs. Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) provide a major source of funding for this office, and involves the CDBG Review Committee in an extensive review and evaluation process, over and above that of the Human Resource Department.

Because of increasingly restricted funding and arbitrary grant application procedures, service providers are placed in competitive rather than cooperative positions, further adding to the confusion, overlap and occasional duplication of services. The current downturn in the economy combined with budgetary concerns at all levels of government has placed additional strains on human service provision. The number of people needing assistance has drastically increased, while funding levels have declined. Private responses such as the establishment of food kitchens have been made in an attempt to close this ever widening gap.

The State had, at one time, begun to assume the responsibility for inventory, coordination and master planning of the complex human resources system, however, action in this area appears to have been suspended. A regional body, serving Woonsocket and the surrounding Northern Rhode Island communities, might be in the best position to assume these functions. The United Way, as a coordinating body for raising monies, has now begun to take a more active role in program assessment and other planning functions -- something that they are in a very good position to do.

In a State with one of the highest elderly populations in the nation, Woonsocket's elderly population is similar to the State average. One explanation for this is the concentration of Woonsocket Housing Authority elderly housing units that have been built in Woonsocket, and the City's emphasis on senior service provision. Future projections suggest that the elderly population will continue to increase. Senior citizens thus make up a very significant service group, and plans must be made to enlarge current programs to meet their growing need.

The Senior Citizens' Center serves as a centralized site for the provision of services and programs. With the Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP) and Senior Services as its resident agencies, the Center exhibits a highly effective organizational design. Specific programs that are working very well are Respite Care for the Elderly, Adult Day Care and the Adult Learning Experience Literacy Program. Areas of service in need of improvement include transportation, cultural enrichment activities, and physical activities. As a facility, the building is heavily used and capital repairs and improvements need to be made on a yearly basis.

Public Safety

Although Woonsocket is an urban community, it has a strong history of being close-knit and family-oriented. Comments received at public meetings indicate a concern with serious crime as a recent development to Woonsocket, and one that is related to current social developments. These developments, including an increase in drug use, the dissolution of the family, and downward economic trends, are not peculiar to Woonsocket but are endemic to American society and hard to escape.

There have been complaints from residents about police prioritization of activities resulting in limited attention in the areas of petty crime, miscellaneous parking offenses, and enforcement of local ordinances. Other citizen comments have included requests for greater neighborhood presence through expanded police patrols in City parks to better respond to acts of vandalism. Many individuals and community groups have also identified the lack of police presence in the form of foot patrols in the inner-city neighborhoods. This type of presence may be needed to deter crime, and to closely coordinate neighborhood crime prevention programs. One area in which a foot patrol has recently been instituted is the Main Street area.

As noted in the Circulation Element of this Plan, the City needs to recognize and appoint a single authority for traffic circulation and control. Responsibility for street layout and control design, construction and maintenance, and enforcement and accident response currently ranges from the Police Traffic Division and the Fire Department to the Department of Public Works. The City Fire Department handles traffic light maintenance on local roads through the Fire Alarm Superintendent but does not get involved with traffic signals on state roadways. Better coordination of these various agencies is called for, as well as greater responsiveness to citizen input.

The City Code identifies certain ordinance enforcing agents outside of the Police Department, including the Zoning Officer, the Building Inspector, and the Fire Chief or his designated officer. Fire ordinance enforcing agents use the police to serve necessary warrants

through the Fire Marshal's office. While it is appropriate to have these individuals responsible for their various specialized functions, each of them may have the need for Police assistance at some point, or for surveillance or protection during weekend, holiday, and nighttime periods. Close communication and cooperation with the Police Department are necessary during these off hours.

The Police Department would like to see the implementation of new programs such as the Neighborhood Crime Watch Program, and the establishment of a Community Relations Officer, one of whose duties would be the handling of recently instituted civilian complaint procedures. The Police Department recently identified a problem with information storage and retrieval, and responded with the installation of an updated computer system.

Much of the City's public safety apparatus needs to be upgraded or replaced following a well detailed capital improvement program. Much expenditure on equipment currently occurs as the result of emergencies and equipment breakdown. More detailed planning is required in the preparation of the 5-year Capital Improvement Program and in the allocation of CDBG funding as ongoing budgetary commitments are needed to provide adequate resources to fund the necessary repair and replacement of police and fire apparatus. Currently, much of the public safety vehicle replacement is done through the use of CDBG funds.

A comprehensive study involving the examination of all existing fire stations has been completed in September 2009. This study identifies building renovations and/or consolidation of stations that may be possible. As part of this study, the city proposes the construction of a new fire department headquarters, which could consolidate fire department services (through the closure of two smaller fire stations) and provide needed training, telecommunications, and conference space.

The Woonsocket Fire Department currently bills for EMS service. This is an income-generator for the City. The projected income for this service in FY 08-09 is $1.1 million. Furthermore, the Fire Department is considering a fee schedule for central alarm monitoring for all master fire alarm systems in the City of Woonsocket. Currently, many other Rhode Island communities have such a billing system in place. The Woonsocket City Council would need to pass legislation to pursue this revenue stream. The Woonsocket Fire Department has many mutual aid agreements in place with neighboring communities to provide fire and EMS support both into and out of the City. The Woonsocket Fire Department also has some regional participation, specifically Haz-Mat responses.

Emergency Management is another crucial part of public service. The City of Woonsocket has an Emergency Operations Plan, which was most recently updated in 2005. The document addresses the City's planned response to extraordinary emergency situations, associated with natural disasters, technological accidents, and national emergencies. The plan does not replace the established routine procedures used in coping with normal day-to-day emergencies. The Emergency Operations Plan is consistent with RIEMA goals and policies.

Heads of the following departments have copies of the Emergency Operations Plan and are responsible for its implementation in case of an emergency: Mayor, Woonsocket EMA,

Police Department, Fire Department, Public Welfare Department, Public Works Department, Engineering and Highway Divisions, School Department, Planning and Development Department, City Solicitor, Woonsocket American Red Cross, Salvation Army Providence Corp., RIEMA/FEMA.

As detailed in the Emergency Operations Plan, City Hall is the primary location where local officials would gather. In the event of a power outage, they would move to the Police Station with overflow to the Fire Station on Cumberland Hill Road.

The City has entered into an agreement with the Red Cross for two shelters, the High School and the Middle Schools. The City plans on having the Senior Center also designated as an official shelter. In addition, many shelters, which are not officially sanctioned Red Cross sites, are listed in the Emergency Operations Plan.

Planning and Development

In addition to its primary function of planning for the physical and economic development of the City, the Department of Planning and Development is responsible for the enforcement of Woonsocket's Zoning, Subdivision, and Minimum Housing Ordinances. This Department has traditionally been responsible for the administration of the CDBG, Housing Rehabilitation and Small Business Loan programs, the preparation of grant applications for the parks, and the development of the 5-year Capital Improvement Program.

As mentioned previously, the 5-year Capital Improvement Program has had limited acceptance as a legitimate step in the City's financial and physical planning process. It is recommended that the Mayor, Finance Department and City Council take a more active role in the preparation of the Capital Improvement Program, and that this Program be completed prior to the annual budget process.

The Department also oversees the City's Design Review process, which applies to commercial zones and is a relatively innovative technique for guiding development in a manner sympathetic to local design values. A similar process has been proposed for the creation of a River Corridor Review Overlay District. This is discussed in the Land Use and Heritage Corridor Elements of this Plan.

A major portion of the Planning Department staff is funded by the CDBG program, and the City has relied heavily on this financing source over the years. If these funds were to be eliminated, the level of planning services utilized for municipal projects would be greatly reduced.

Enforcement of the Minimum Housing Code has become more difficult due to the state of the national economy and to the current high local vacancy rate. The process is hard to control as the owners of housing in need of repairs are frequently unable to afford those repairs. In recent years, the staffing of the Minimum Housing Division has been reduced; however, this trend should be reevaluated due to the increased number of housing code violations.

An annual review of building permit and other fees should be made to ensure that they approximate the budgeted cost of services.

While the Department provides staff to various City boards and agencies, no regular method of communication exists between these separate boards on related issues. The boards should meet once a year as a large group to discuss relevant issues. There also should be an ongoing process of providing education and support for all City Boards, committees, agencies and commissions so they may better understand their role in carrying out the goals of this Comprehensive Plan and make decisions accordingly.

Office of the Mayor and Other Municipal Functions

As prescribed under the City's Home Rule Charter, Woonsocket has a strong mayoral form of local government. However, a limited financial commitment to the funding of the Executive Department for performance of its many functions has been made in the City's Annual Budget. The responsibilities of the chief executive in Woonsocket have increased and grown more complex due to emerging problems of financial management and the reduced roles of the federal and State governments in providing financial assistance to cities and towns. In addition, the need to respond to the requests of individual citizens and neighborhood groups has been greatly expanded in recent years. One of the most difficult responsibilities of the Mayor's office is to receive individual citizen calls of complaints, suggestions and requests, research information required, and respond in a timely fashion. Future consideration needs to be given to the overall staffing and management of the Mayor's office.

The City's Law Department is the legal advisor to the Mayor, City Council, and all municipal departments. In addition it provides legal advice and assistance to the various boards and agencies. The department also conducts criminal prosecutions. In addition, the City Solicitor serves as a member of the negotiating team with the various local unions, and defends the City against all litigation. Due to the proliferation of litigation in today's society, and the complexity of union negotiations, the current work load for the three part-time attorneys has resulted in an overextended situation. A detailed management study may be required to restructure the personnel make-up of the department. Consideration should be given to having at least one full-time attorney so that the department is covered at all times.

The Office of the City Clerk provides a multitude of public services. Activities include serving as the staff for the City Council, the Probate and Municipal Courts; issuing various permits and licenses; and maintaining archives of public records, deeds and other legal instruments.

The Board of Canvassers is responsible for the implementation of the election process within the boundaries of the City of Woonsocket according to the Election Laws of the State of Rhode Island. The Board's duties include administration of voter registration, service to voters and candidates, coordination of the voting process, and certification of election results. This office is responsible for keeping detailed records for the compilation of eligible voting lists. In

order to comply with the State and federal accessibility standards, modifications are needed at many polling locations.

Woonsocket Housing Authority

The Woonsocket Housing Authority is not a municipal agency, but rather a non-profit, federally-funded operation. The primary responsibility of the Housing Authority is to provide safe, decent housing to the City's low-income and very low-income families and elderly, at the lowest possible cost, with direct subsidy from the federal government. In addition, this agency provides an array of related social programs (for additional information on the Housing Authority, see page H-5 and H-6 of the Housing Element).

The Woonsocket Housing Authority is proud of its Security, Drug Prevention, Energy Conservation, Congregate Care, Tenant Initiative, and Water Conservation programs. Future initiatives are planned in the areas of water conservation, congregate care, and energy controls, and the Housing Authority recently implemented a highly successful in-fill housing program, constructed on a scattered site basis in some of Woonsocket's older neighborhoods.

NEW INITIATIVES

Proposed New Fire Department Headquarters

Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the City intends to apply for funding to construct a new, $15 million headquarters for the Fire Department. This new building would allow the City to close two of its existing satellite fire stations and consolidate its operations in a central location. The new headquarters building would also provide necessary training, conference, and telecommunications equipment for emergency services.

Replacement of the Water Treatment Plant

The City’s water treatment plant (WTP) needs to be replaced. The City evaluated a number of options to replace the aging WTP which is degrading structurally as well as discharging backwash into the Blackstone River. The City considered an option to build a connection to Pawtucket Water which would have provided a regional interconnection for Woonsocket, Cumberland, Lincoln, and Pawtucket. However, the project would have required the construction of a large transmission main in State and local roads, possible a fairly new bikeway, and railroad right-of-way, as well as crossing numerous wetlands, construction within the Flood Plain, and crossing navigable waters in Army Corps of Engineers’ jurisdiction. The timeframe for permitting, design, and construction extended far beyond the timeframe of the City’s consent agreement with RIDEM, and the cost for a partial solution was unjustifiable and unsupported by any of the other effected communities. Rather, the City concentrated its efforts on evaluating a number of sites which have been reduced to four under consideration at this time. Appraisals are being done which will enable the city to negotiate with private property owners and select a site, which will then lead to final design and construction of a new water treatment facility.

Once a site is selected for the construction of a new water treatment facility, the City will proceed with design and construction. One possible scenario for this is Design/Build/Operate, and the City did solicit requests for interest. With completion of the new middle schools, the replacement of the water treatment plant is the city's most critical capital improvement project. Along with improving water quality, the City should strive to conserve water resources.

GOALS & POLICIES

The following priority goals and policies have been developed for City-wide services and facilities.

GOAL SF-1
Provide city residents with an efficient delivery of services and adequate community facilities

POLICY SF-1.1
Establish a set of priorities to guide actions

IMPLEMENTATION SF-1.1a
Conduct periodic public surveys of appropriate segments of the population to gauge service satisfaction and assess the needs of those surveyed

IMPLEMENTATION SF-1.1b
As required by the 1988 Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act, the City's Comprehensive Plan must be revised no less than every five years. At year four, the Planning Board should initiate all processes for review and public participation that are necessary for the Plan's revision. The Planning Board may initiate an annual "State of the Comprehensive Plan" review. There may be instances when an update is warranted sooner than mandated by the 1988 law.

POLICY SF-1.2
Resolve to make changes in municipal functions under the direction of an orderly plan

IMPLEMENTATION SF-1.2a
Work towards further integration of the City's computer system to allow for the efficient transfer of accurate, current data and information between departments

POLICY SF-1.3
Pursue new avenues of resource generation for the support of needed programs

POLICY SF-1.4
Commit to on-going maintenance programs for all City facilities

POLICY SF-1.5
Provide creative options for private sector investment in the City

POLICY SF-1.6
Adopt an annual or periodic maintenance program to ensure the greater life expectancy of all existing facilities

POLICY SF-1.7

Complete detailed physical evaluations of facilities, recognizing replacement or renovation actions required

POLICY SF-1.8
Plan and evaluate capital improvement needs, including the identification of preferred options for the most cost-effective expenditure of public funds

IMPLEMENTATION SF-1.8a
Annually prepare and adopt comprehensive 5-year capital improvement programs for the City

GOAL SF-2
Produce a school system recognized for its excellence

POLICY SF-2.1
Institute programs and policies aimed at decreasing the drop-out rate and making universal completion of high school a highest priority

IMPLEMENTATION SF-2.1a
Support and implement early intervention for at-risk students and after-school tutorials

POLICY SF-2.2
Develop and implement programs aimed at improving the skills of graduating students

IMPLEMENTATION SF-2.2a
Support and implement vocational skills training and apprenticeship programs with local business as alternatives to college preparation

POLICY SF-2.3
Ensure that the education system prepares the City's youth to become well-rounded, well-adjusted, productive members of society

IMPLEMENTATION SF-2.3a
Support and implement Head Start and other pre-school programs

POLICY SF-2.4
Expand opportunities for Woonsocket residents to pursue post-graduate training and further intellectual development

IMPLEMENTATION SF-2.4a
Establish post-graduate programs through the schools

POLICY SF-2.5
Develop a progressive educational system to enhance the quality of life for the whole community

IMPLEMENTATION SF-2.5a
Attract higher educational institutions and programs to Woonsocket (i.e.: Community College, New England Tech, Bryant College, Sawyer School, etc.)

POLICY SF-2.6
Provide adequate facilities to address increasing school enrollment

POLICY SF-2.7
Develop a school housing program to implement the neighborhood school concept

GOAL SF-3
Provide efficient professional management of City finances with an integrated network of data and information systems

POLICY SF-3.1
Engage in sound financial planning and budgeting

POLICY SF-3.2
Complete fair and equitable tax assessments

POLICY SF-3.3
Achieve efficient collection and reporting of revenue

POLICY SF-3.4
Make wise and prudent investment of City funds

POLICY SF-3.5
Monitor the enforcement of prescribed procedures for the obtainment of the best product at the lowest cost to the taxpayer

POLICY SF-3.6
Utilize fair and equitable procedures for employment of the most capable and well trained personnel

IMPLEMENTATION SF-3.6a
Continue to implement the City's Affirmative Action Program in city hiring practices

POLICY SF-3.7
Increase the technology and data sharing capabilities across city departments

IMPLEMENTATION SF-3.7a
Invest in technology upgrades as warranted in city government

IMPLEMENTATION SF-3.7b

Move towards a universal data system for all city departments

POLICY SF-3.8
The city's website is upgraded and improved to make it user-friendly and informative for residents, businesses, and visitors alike

GOAL SF-4
Provide a safe, accessible, and efficient public infrastructure and public works system

POLICY SF-4.1
Provide a high level of maintenance and operation for all City infrastructure through a comprehensive, periodic maintenance program

IMPLEMENTATION SF-4.1a
Aggressively pursue any federal grants that might be available for funding special public improvement projects along Main Street and in other targeted areas

POLICY SF-4.2
Replace obsolete or worn out system components with state-of-the art equipment and materials through a comprehensive capital facilities plan, as part of the City's Capital Improvement Program

IMPLEMENTATION SF-4.2a
Prepare a prioritized list of all capital improvement needs, and undertake the implementation of high priority improvements as funding becomes available

IMPLEMENTATION SF-4.2b
Replace the city's existing water treatment plant with a new facility, one that will meet higher water quality and environmental standards

IMPLEMENTATION SF-4.2c
Continue to upgrade the wastewater treatment plant to address environmental health concerns and public complaints regarding odor

POLICY SF-4.3
Achieve compliance with all requirements for handicapped accessibility for all public buildings, parks, and facilities

POLICY SF-4.4
Maintain clean and safe public roadways and facilities.

IMPLEMENTATION SF-4.4a
Provide an appropriate level of annual funding in the City budget for street reconstruction and other necessary improvements

IMPLEMENTATION SF-4.4b
Gain State approval for the listing of additional City arterial roads to be owned and maintained by the State of Rhode Island, in an effort to alleviate growing local budgetary shortfalls

IMPLEMENTATION SF-4.4c
Identify areas of the city most in need of sidewalk reconstruction to achieve ADA compliance and prioritize these areas in project selection

POLICY SF-4.5
Continue to educate and encourage residents and businesses for support of recycling in the city

IMPLEMENTATION SF-4.5a
Periodically review and update the city's Solid Waste Plan to achieve high levels of recycling across the city

GOAL SF-5
Provide a high-quality public library system for the benefit of all community members

POLICY SF-5.1
Effectively disseminate all types of information in order to meet basic human needs

POLICY SF-5.2
Expand days and hours of operation and library programs in order to better serve all segments of the population with a special emphasis placed on the minority and adult population sectors

IMPLEMENTATION SF-5.2a
Develop outreach programs aimed at those sectors of the community not currently utilizing the Library.

POLICY SF-5.3
Provide increased levels of service to the community by providing special programs and assistance in locating available information

GOAL SF-6
Provide basic human services to all persons in need

POLICY SF-6.1
Maximize the contributions of the various human service providers and provide a coordinated response to clients' needs

IMPLEMENTATION SF-6.1a
Support funding for Early Intervention services and programs

POLICY SF-6.2
Alleviate the confusion associated with the complex human services system by providing efficient direction and client referral

POLICY SF-6.3
Enforce fair housing principles and the rights of the disabled in all forms of service provision

GOAL SF-7
Provide basic public safety services that efficiently maintain or improve existing quality in order to meet community needs

POLICY SF-7.1
Continue to provide basic police services for the enforcement of laws and ordinances; the preservation of peace and public order; the protection of life, liberty, and property; the prevention and repression of crime; the detection of violations of the law; the apprehension of violators; and the prosecution of those apprehended

IMPLEMENTATION SF-7.1a
Complete all necessary steps to get the Police Department accredited

POLICY SF-7.2
Continue provision of basic fire fighting services, including the obtainment of the quickest possible response time in responding to fires so as to result in a well protected community and the education of the public on fire prevention measures and emergency medical techniques

IMPLEMENTATION SF-7.2a
Complete a review of the fire stations, to determine where there are needs for upgrades, closures, consolidations, etc.

IMPLEMENTATION SF-7.2b
Pursue funding through the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, or other suitable funds, for the construction of a new fire station headquarters

POLICY SF-7.3
Implement policies that will increase the efficiency of service provision, including the adoption of a detailed maintenance and replacement program for police and fire fighting vehicles and other apparatus; the implementation of widespread and more efficient fire warning systems; and the restructuring of personnel so as to obtain greater levels of efficiency

IMPLEMENTATION SF-7.3a

Carefully plan and schedule the refurbishment and replacement of all police and fire apparatus, (alarm console, trucks, aerial ladder, pumper, rescue vehicles, and protective clothing), as part of the City's 5-year Capital Improvement Program.

POLICY SF-7.4
Establish a safe, drug-free community

IMPLEMENTATION SF-7.4a
Utilize the services of the Woonsocket Prevention Coalition (WPC) to strive towards a safe, drug-free community with measures outlined in WPC's Three Year Prevention Plan.

POLICY SF-7.5
Increase public education of safety procedures and drug awareness

IMPLEMENTATION SF-7.5a
Utilize the support and services of the Woonsocket Prevention Coalition (WPC) to increase pubic awareness of services for prevention and treatment of substance abuse and of the dangers of substance abuse.

POLICY SF-7.6
Continue pressure on criminal activities through vigorous investigation and prosecution

POLICY SF-7.7
Institute community outreach programs in an effort to educate the community and to gain their help and cooperation in fighting crime

GOAL SF-8
Maintain a Planning and Development Department that satisfactorily plans for Woonsocket's optimum physical, economic, and community development

POLICY SF-8.1
Increase the importance of, and adherence to, the 5-year Capital Improvement Program in the development of the City's annual municipal budget

IMPLEMENTATION SF-8.1a
Establish a schedule and procedure for coordinated development of the 5-year Capital Improvement Program

POLICY SF-8.2
Coordinate planning and development efforts with the city's Economic Development Department

POLICY SF-8.3

Coordinate the actions of the various boards and agencies in areas where overlap occurs

IMPLEMENTATION SF-8.3a
Conduct annual reviews of building permit and other fees

POLICY SF-8.4
Ensure that the City boards and agencies are well informed of the components and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan, so they may routinely follow the Plan's intent in decision-making processes

IMPLEMENTATION SF-8.4a
Carefully review and update the Zoning, Design Review, Subdivision, and Planned Residential Development ordinances as part of the Comprehensive Planning process

IMPLEMENTATION SF-8.4b
Conduct workshops for the purpose of familiarizing the various boards and agencies with the City's goals and policies as established in this Plan Update

IMPLEMENTATION SF-8.4c
Provide opportunities for board members to participate in outside training including those offered by Grow Smart Rhode Island or others as deemed appropriate.

GOAL SF-9
Provide efficient administration and coordination of all City departments, agencies, and boards and their delivery of services

POLICY SF-9.1
The Mayor's Office is responsible for establishing and implementing overall City policies and priorities for the various service providers

POLICY SF-9.2
The Mayor serves as the City's advocate and receive designated funding from State and federal governmental agencies

POLICY SF-9.3
The Mayor provides overall public leadership

POLICY SF-9.4
The Mayor works with other chief elected officials from neighboring communities on regional initiatives

IMPLEMENTATION SF-9.4a

Investigate the expansion of the Municipal Court to include other Northern Rhode Island communities on a regionalized basis

POLICY SF-9.5
The Law Department provides effective and efficient legal representation to all departments, boards and agencies of the City of Woonsocket

POLICY SF-9.6
The Law Department effectively prosecute all charged individuals in the various State and local municipal courts

POLICY SF-9.7
The City Clerk's Office provides efficient storage and cataloging of all important City records and legal documents

POLICY SF-9.8
The Board of Canvassers provides efficient service to voters and candidates in the administration and implementation of the election process

POLICY SF-9.9
The Economic Development Department guides appropriate economic growth and development within the city based on professional best practices

GOAL SF-10
The Woonsocket Housing Authority provides safe, decent housing for Woonsocket's low-income families and elderly population

POLICY SF-10.1
Continue annual application for, and expenditure of, available federal funding to support the continued occupation of the Housing Authority's 1300+ housing units.

POLICY SF-10.2
Evaluate and pursue new federal funds for future projects that are in conformance with the City's Housing Assistance Plan

CIRCULATION ELEMENT

> *Shall consist of the inventory and analysis and proposed major circulation systems, street patterns and any other modes of transportation in coordination with the land use element. The policies and implementation techniques must be identified for inclusion in the implementation program element.* (Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act 45-22.22-6)

CURRENT CONDITIONS AND ISSUES

Introduction

This Element is based on an earlier study prepared by the consulting firm of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB). Its purpose was to evaluate the City's transportation system, existing and future needs, and alternative transportation improvement strategies, and to offer short-term and long-term implementation strategies.

The study area included the entire City of Woonsocket and to a broader extent the regional transportation network connecting the City to its neighboring communities. The Circulation Element addresses traffic flow, travel patterns, and problem locations. It acknowledges Woonsocket's access and internal circulation concerns, and how some of the concerns have been resolved in light of the completion of Route 99 and circulation improvements in the Main Street area. Administrative issues including signals, signs and maintenance of roads and bridges are also discussed.

History of Transportation in Woonsocket

The basic land use pattern of the City has been largely determined by the City's location along the Blackstone River and by the location and spacing of textile establishments directly adjacent to the river. In 1828 water access was greatly enhanced with the opening of the Blackstone Canal. By 1847, the Providence and Worcester (P&W) Railroad completed the link between Woonsocket, Providence and Worcester marking the last major improvement to transportation systems in Woonsocket in over one hundred years.

The Blackstone River and its surrounding topography has undoubtedly been the single most important factor in the development of transportation systems in Woonsocket. Water access allowed the City to thrive during the Industrial Revolution. Rail lines developed along the Blackstone Valley and the steep topography centered development along the river, while the northwest, south-central and western areas of the City developed more slowly because of the steep and rocky terrain. The Blackstone River also acted as a major barrier to travel in both the north-south and east-west directions and influenced development in these areas. Eight automobile bridges cross the Blackstone River and connect the two sides of the City. Three of these (Court Street, Bernon Street, and South Main Street Bridges) feed traffic to the downtown area.

Typical during the Industrial Revolution was the development of high density residential areas centered around mills. Woonsocket, together with Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls has had the highest residential density in the State for generations. The multi-family residential development that occurred was dependant upon the trolley car and pedestrian movement for the majority of its travel.

As manufacturing declined, the downtown suffered the most. The decentralization of business away from downtown lead to the growth of business, industry, and residential development in outlying areas within and outside of Woonsocket. Decentralization led to the eventual demise of both water and rail transportation in the City and a rise in dependence on the private automobile and trucks as the major mode of transportation in Woonsocket. The automobile era brought about the further decentralization of employment and residential centers. This in turn allowed lower density, more sprawling residential land use patterns, as seen in the eastern portion of the City. Today, there is less dependence on transit and walking as a means of travel and a greater dependence on the automobile.

Shifts in the commercial and industrial areas have contributed to the development of retail commercial centers at Park Square and along Diamond Hill Road. The Social District with its ample parking areas developed as an alternative to the once congested areas of downtown Woonsocket, and more recently, the Highland Industrial Park opened in East Woonsocket. All of these areas provided opportunities for new development with improved roadway access and seemingly limitless parking.

However, unlike the early growth that occurred during the nineteenth century, where transportation systems assisted growth and furthered development of an existing industrial base, today's growth in the City has occurred with little or no change to the transportation systems of the area. Today transportation systems have not kept pace with the needs of the area.

Perceptions of an inadequate circulation system have burdened the City for many years. These perceptions stem from a road and bridge system that was developed in the 19th century and failed to keep up with the City's growth after the Industrial Revolution. Opportunities for future circulation improvements will be limited by the availability of needed funding and the physical constraints of a mature City. Regulations protecting the environment will also restrict expansion in some areas.

Development Potential

For the most part, scarcity of undeveloped land, current land uses, and environmental constraints limit the location and types of future development in the City. However, potential does exist for the redevelopment of underutilized existing properties, especially in the Main Street area, and for the expansion of existing developments, such as Highland Corporate Park, along the Diamond Hill Road Shopping Area in the northeast section of the City, and along other city thoroughfares such as Cumberland Hill Road and Mendon Road.

Woonsocket is not anticipating major changes in demographics, either in total population or distribution. Geographically, Woonsocket expects a slow continuation of residential development in the eastern and to a lesser extent, southern portions of the City.

The following is an accounting of the locations and types of development that might occur in or near Woonsocket, and the degree to which each potential development might affect future transportation needs:

North of Rhodes Avenue: Although constraints include steep slopes and limited sewer and water services in this area, future residential or institutional development is possible. Improved access from Route 146A will be required.

West of Booth Pond Conservation Area: For the most part, existing land uses and environmental constraints limit future development around this area to residential use. Improved access to Park Avenue will be required. Some potential does exist for limited industrial development with access to 146/146A through North Smithfield.

Around Iron Rock Brook: Preservation of significant portions of this undeveloped land as conservation zones will be strongly encouraged. This will most likely limit any future development to single family housing, and in turn limit future growth in traffic and associated impacts on Mendon Road.

Main Street: The Main Street Riverfront Initiative has identified development opportunities, including the rehabilitation of Market Square and improved utilization of existing property along Main Street. Institutional and government uses, along with existing office and commercial enterprises, will be encouraged to remain and expand. The attraction of new business will be aggressively pursued. Slightly heavier traffic volumes are likely to accompany the resurgence of this area.

Highland Corporate Industrial Park: The City's largest employment center, Highland Park, is projected to expand in conjunction with the development of the Highland II Industrial Park on adjacent land in Cumberland. Environmental and transportation constraints will require creative solutions as the full potential for development of each park is fulfilled.

Cumberland Hill Road: Improved access to the City via Route 99 and Mendon Road will increase traffic along Cumberland Hill Road. This increased traffic volume will then provide the potential for new development of property in this area.

Mendon Road: The opening of Route 99 makes Mendon Road a natural connector route that connects the Diamond Hill shopping area with the closest highway system. Increased traffic along Mendon Road creates a potential for additional commercial activity along this roadway.

Bellingham, Massachusetts: Proposed sewering of southern Bellingham will increase the potential for additional residential development of this area. Increased development could lead to increased traffic along Diamond Hill Road.

Regional Road Network

The regional road network is important to Woonsocket because it provides:

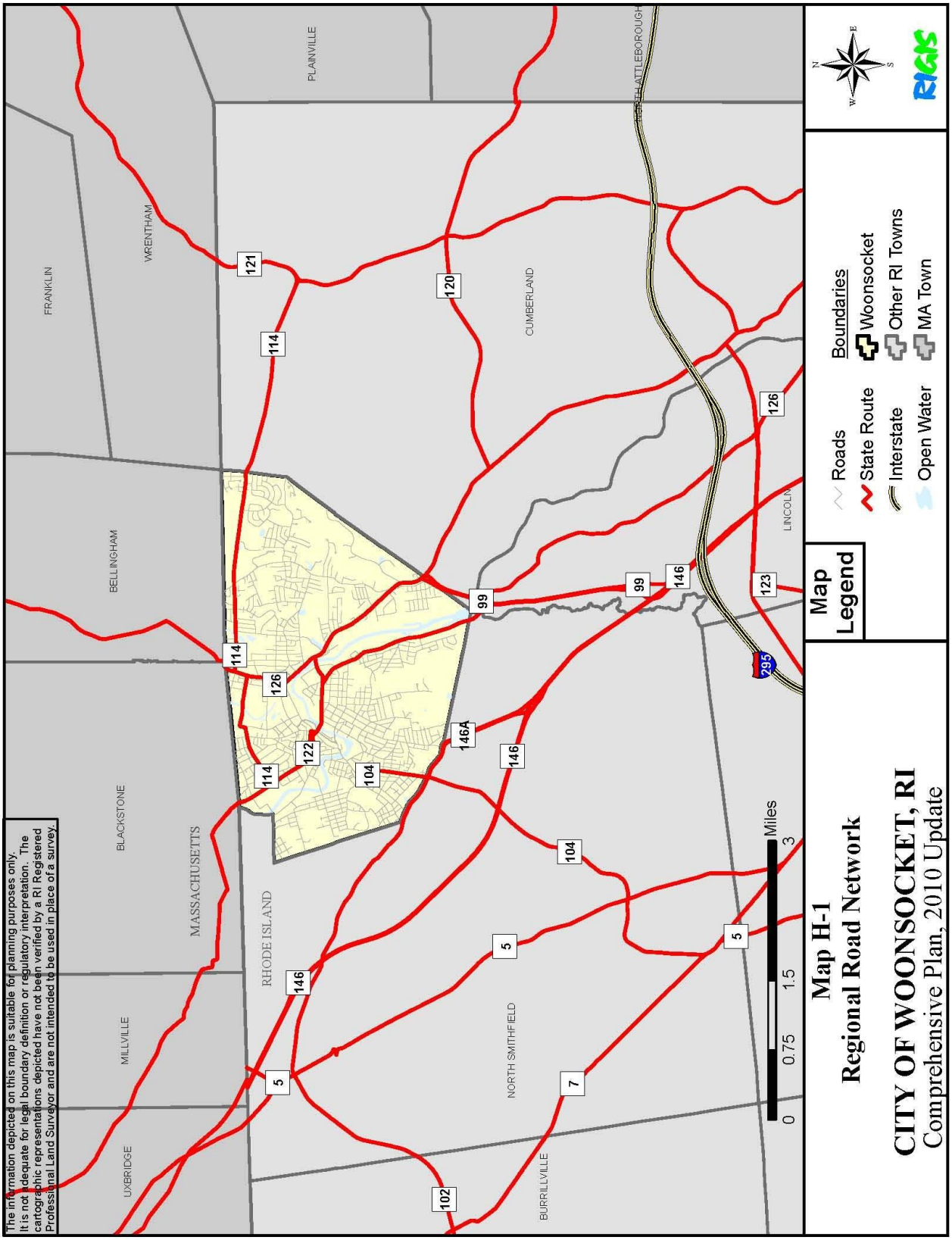
- Means for residents to commute to work or services outside the City;
- Means for the non-resident labor force to reach employment centers in the City;
- Routes by which raw materials and finished products enter and exit the City; and
- Routes which provide non-resident access to City businesses, and to services such as those provided by the Landmark Medical Center and the Registry of Motor Vehicles.

The regional road network is an important component to the City's economic vitality, future development, increased business expansion and tourism. Access to the regional road network is an important consideration for a business locating (or expanding) in the City. The network is important for tourism, in terms of providing access to recreation areas and access to the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.

Woonsocket is relatively well placed in the regional transportation network because of its proximity to Routes 146/146A, I-295, and I-495. Access to Providence and Worcester is very good. Access to Boston and the Route 128 area is less direct, relying on either a circuitous route to the south, or winding local roads leading to the northeast. Population and economic growth in this region of Northern Rhode Island and adjacent Massachusetts is likely to increase the need and demand for improved routes between Woonsocket and I-495.

Map H-1 shows the regional road network including major routes to the Providence, Boston and Worcester metropolitan areas. Access to Providence and points south (Interstate Routes I-295 and I-95) is provided by Routes 146A and 146 along the southwestern City boundary. Route 146/146A is also a principal means of access to the Heritage Corridor in Woonsocket. Route 146 is a four lane, divided, limited access highway over most of its 15 mile distance between Woonsocket and Providence. Driving time between the Woonsocket City line and downtown Providence is approximately 20 minutes. Main Street, Providence Street, and Park Avenue provide the connection between City streets and Route 146A. Route 99 provides access to Route 146 from Mendon Road and Cumberland Hill Road, thus providing an important connection between East Woonsocket and destinations to the south. Map H-1 shows the regional road network surrounding Woonsocket.

Routes providing access to the Northern Rhode Island communities include Routes 122 (Mendon Road) and 104 (Providence Street). Route 122 provides direct access to Cumberland and Central Falls. Route 104, which becomes Farnum Pike in North Smithfield and Smithfield, provides direct access to destinations southwest of Woonsocket. It provides an important link with Route 7, which, in turn, can be used to access I-295.


The information depicted on this map is suitable for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation. The cartographic representations depicted have not been verified by a RI Registered Professional Land Surveyor and are not intended to be used in place of a survey.
FRANKLIN
WRENTHAM
PLAINVILLE
BELLINGHAM
CUMBERLAND
BLACKSTONE
MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
MILLVILLE
UXBRIDGE
NORTH SMITHFIELD
BURRILLVILLE
LINCOLN
121
114
120
126
99
146
123
122
104
146A
5
102
7
295
0
0.75
1.5
3
Miles
Map Legend
Roads
State Route
Interstate
Open Water
Boundaries
Woonsocket
Other RI Towns
MA Town
Map H-1
Regional Road Network
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update

Access between Woonsocket and Worcester is provided by Routes 146A and 146. Route 146 continues from Woonsocket to the northwest as a divided, four-lane limited access highway for most of its 25 mile distance to Massachusetts Route 20 outside Worcester. From this point, drivers may access the Massachusetts Turnpike (Interstate Route I-90) over a short, circuitous route, or they may continue on Route 146 to Worcester. Route 146 turns into a two-lane undivided roadway between Route 20 and Worcester. Driving time between Woonsocket and Worcester is approximately 40 minutes.

Access between Woonsocket and the Boston metropolitan area is less direct. Typical destinations to the northeast of Woonsocket include the metropolitan Boston area, Massachusetts Route 128 development, and Interstate Route I-495 development. There are several common routes drivers might take to these destinations. One route is south on Route 146A/146 to I-295 (or Route 122) and then east to I-95 and points north. This route is approximately 50 miles between Woonsocket and downtown Boston; driving time is approximately one hour during off-peak periods, and one and a half hours during the peak commuting hours.

The other common routes to the north provide access to I-495 through the Massachusetts communities of Blackstone, Bellingham, Franklin, and Wrentham. One route follows Harris Avenue (Route 122) into Blackstone and then northeast to I-495 in Bellingham. Another begins at Social Street, Route 126 (and Mendon Hill Road, to a lesser extent) in northern Woonsocket, and follows local roads in Bellingham (Pulaski Boulevard), and Franklin (Washington Street - King Street) to access I-495 in Franklin. One may also follow Route 126 all the way through Bellingham (South Main Street/North Main Street/Hartford Avenue) to I-495.

An alternative to these northern routes follows Route 114 from Diamond Hill Road east through Cumberland (Wrentham Road), then along Route 121 into Wrentham (West Street) where access to I-495 is gained via Route 1A. All of these northerly routes are over local, two-lane undivided roadways. Travel speed on these local roads is relatively slow, but these routes provide shorter and quicker access to the rapidly developing I-495 corridor. These local routes to the north may experience increased use as more Woonsocket residents take advantage of the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) commuter rail station on Route 140 in Franklin.

Improvements for better northern access might include widening and upgrading portions of South Main Street/Main Street in Woonsocket, Route 126/Pulaski Boulevard in Bellingham, Massachusetts, and Washington Street/King Street in Franklin, Massachusetts. These improvements would be dependent upon the cooperation of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and towns in both Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

Access to Woonsocket from the west is also limited. Route 146A and Great Road in North Smithfield, and South Main Street and Providence Street in Woonsocket, comprise the primary routes serving this portion of the City. The possibilities for access improvements, especially to the Fairmount area, are constrained. The most reasonable solution requires the upgrading of Mendon Road in North Smithfield to Rhodes Avenue in Woonsocket. However, current land use constraints in North Smithfield lessen the potential for future access improvements in this location.

A common problem of Woonsocket's connection with the entire regional road network is the absence of clear signs and route designations directing drivers into and out of Woonsocket. Signs on Interstate Routes 95, 295, and 495 indicate the exits to Woonsocket; however there are few, if any, signs marking these routes on the local roads. Signs reading "Entering Woonsocket" are placed on major routes in Massachusetts connecting with Woonsocket, and signs along Woonsocket's boundaries with other Rhode Island communities have been erected. Signage indicating that you can get to downtown Woonsocket has been installed at various points throughout the city, but the signage system could and should be greatly improved to better direct visitors into the downtown and help guide them back to the regional highway system.

Map H-2 shows the City's road network, including State numbered routes. These are especially important to visitors unfamiliar with the local roads who try to navigate into or through the City via numbered routes. Improvements to State route and destination signing within the City are urgently needed to facilitate local traffic flow and assist motorists in reaching their destinations. State routes for many travelers are the primary guides for travel. Posting of signs at all intersections on State routes is critical. Regular inspections are needed to insure that missing signs are quickly replaced.

City regulations require all truck traffic to follow numbered routes. Some of these routes, particularly downtown, are circuitous and poorly signed. Wherever possible, these routes should represent the most direct routing through the City. Use of one-way streets as State routes should be avoided to minimize confusion and the condition of State designated routes should be maintained at a high level. The four State numbered routes traversing the City (Route 104, Route 126, Route 122, and Route 114) should be reviewed periodically to insure that they are meeting these requirements, and needed improvements should be made as quickly as possible.

Road Characteristics

The City of Woonsocket has approximately 133 miles of roadway within its corporate limits. The vast majority of these roadways are under the jurisdiction of the City, with only a few miles of roads that are State maintained. There are two "typical" street types in the City, a 40-foot and a 50-foot right-of-way. A 40-foot right-of-way has a paved width of 26 feet with 7-foot sidewalks on each side. A 50-foot right-of-way has a 32-foot paved width with 9-foot sidewalks on each side.

Map H-2 shows the city's road network and identifies which routes are classified by the State as functioning as freeways/expressways, as principal arterials, as minor arterials, as collectors, or as local roads. The State Department of Transportation defines and assigns the roadway classifications. Table H-1 lists the mileage of Woonsocket's functionally classified roads and those that are eligible for improvement with federal-aid monies.

Local access and internal circulation is generally poor in Woonsocket. Travel through the City is complicated by the poor street conditions, insufficient destination signage, poor designations for truck routing, inadequate or poorly functioning traffic signals and congested streets. Traffic circulation within the downtown area has improved since Main Street's re-

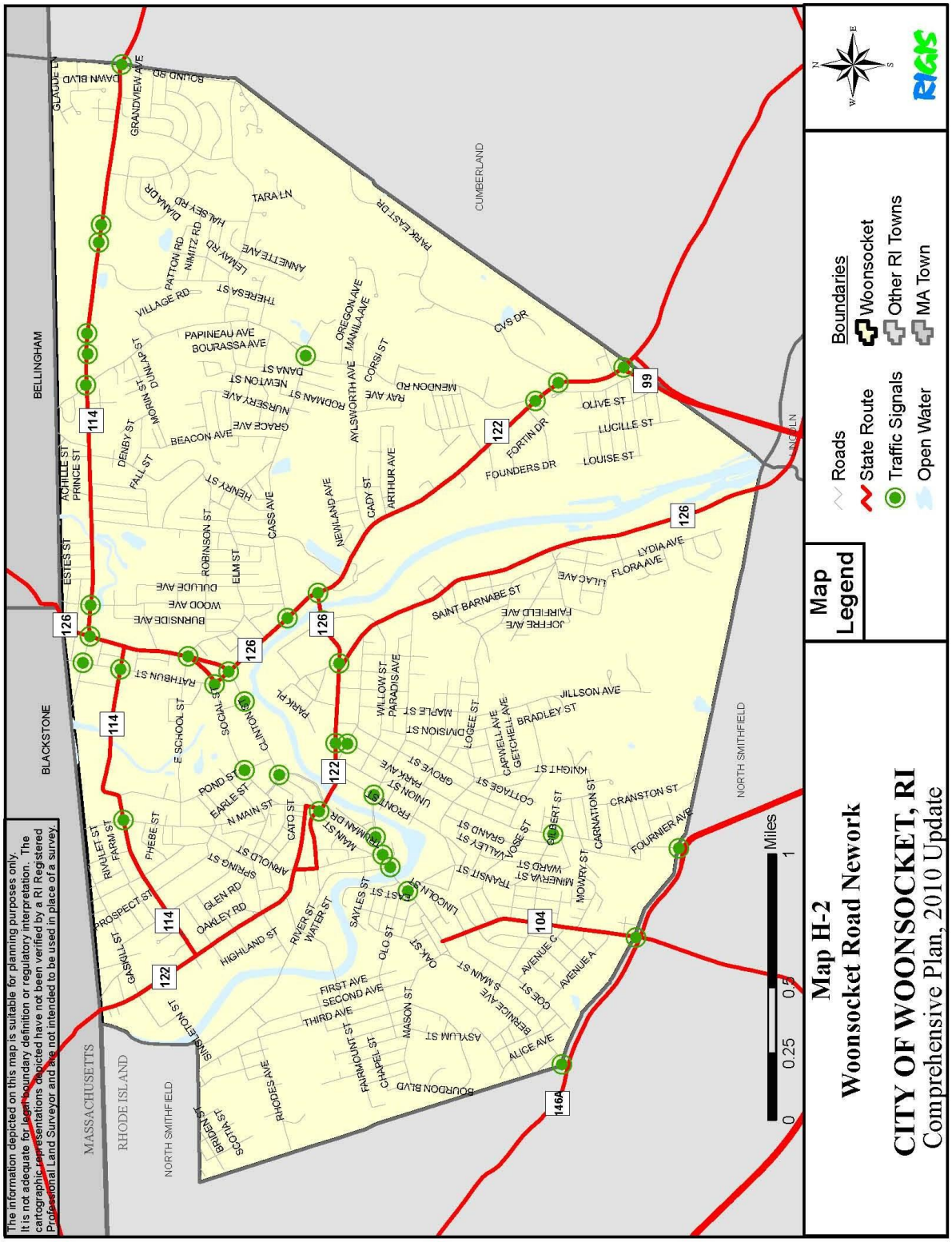

Map H-2
Woonsocket Road Nework
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update
Map Legend
Roads
State Route
Traffic Signals
Open Water
Boundaries
Woonsocket
Other RI Towns
MA Town
Miles
0
0.25
0.5
1
MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
BELLINGHAM
BLACKSTONE
NORTH SMITHFIELD
CUMBERLAND
LINCOLN
The information depicted on this map is suitable for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation. The cartographic representations depicted have not been verified by a RI Registered Professional Land Surveyor and are not intended to be used in place of a survey.

TABLE H-1
CITY OF WOONSOCKET
2005 - 2015 FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION MILEAGE

Freeways and Expressways (Urban):		
Route	*Segment Name*	*Miles*
99	Woonsocket Industrial Highway	0.12
Total		*0.12*
Principal Arterials (Urban):		
Route	*Segment Name*	*Miles*
---	Clinton Street	0.64
---	Main Street	0.15
---	Mendon Road	1.86
---	Park Avenue	1.36
---	Social Street	0.54
114	Diamond Hill Road	2.17
122	Court Square	0.03
122	Court Street	0.09
122	Cumberland Hill Road	1.10
122	Hamlet Avenue	0.44
122	Mendon Road	0.43
126	Brook Street	0.17
126	Cumberland Street	0.51
126	Hamlet Avenue	0.31
126	Social Street	0.63
Total		*10.43*
Minor Arterials (Urban):		
Route	*Segment Name*	*Miles*
---	Arnold Street	0.22
---	Bernon Street	0.27
---	Blackstone Street	0.40
---	Cass Avenue	1.03
---	Diamond Hill Road	0.10
---	East School Street	0.66
---	John A Cummings Way	0.09
---	Main Street	0.30
---	Mendon Road	0.14
---	North Main Street	0.74
---	Pond Street	0.62
---	Providence Street	0.74
---	Railroad Street	0.24
---	Rathbun Street	0.56
---	River Street	0.10
---	South Main Street	1.10
---	Sayles Street	0.06
---	Truman Drive	1.04
---	Wood Avenue	0.72
---	Worrall Street	0.18

114	Privilege Street	0.56
114	Winter Street	0.74
122	Arnold Street	0.09
122	Harris Avenue	0.82
122	Railroad Street	0.10
126	Manville Road	1.77
Total		*13.39*
Collectors (Urban):		
Route	*Segment Name*	*Miles*
---	2nd Avenue	0.08
---	3rd Avenue	0.58
---	9th Avenue	0.16
---	Aylsworth Avenue	0.64
---	Ballou Street	0.51
---	Beacon Avenue	0.43
---	Bernon Street	0.63
---	Bertenshaw Road	0.04
---	Bound Road	0.43
---	Carnation Street	0.28
---	Carrington Avenue	0.50
---	Davison Avenue	0.22
---	Elder Ballou Meeting House Road	1.00
---	Elm Street	0.61
---	Fairmount Street	0.67
---	Front Street	0.78
---	Gaskill Street	0.52
---	Greene Street	0.29
---	High Street	0.10
---	Highland Corporate Drive	1.29
---	Knight Street	0.45
---	Logee Street	1.11
---	Mason Street	0.49
---	Morin Street	0.36
---	Morse Avenue	0.08
---	Pleasant Street	0.03
---	Rhodes Avenue	0.51
---	River Street	0.96
---	Singleton Street	0.38
---	St. Leon Street	0.22
---	Transit Street	0.48
---	Willow Street	0.52
---	Winthrop Street	0.30
122	High Street	0.23
Total		*15.88*
City Total		**39.82**

Source: RI Statewide Planning (http://www.planning.state.ri.us/transportation/155/text/woonsocket.pdf)

establishment as a two-way street. Improvements have also been made at both Market Square and Depot Square to improve existing operating conditions and provide an acceptable level-of-service.

Bridges

Because of its development along the Blackstone River and the importance of railroads during the Industrial Revolution, bridges have played an important role in the roadway system of the City. Today some of the railroad bridges create an obstacle to truck routings. Vertical clearance at the Main Street, Clinton Street and Davison Street railroad bridges prohibit certain truck traffic from using these bridges.

The administration of Woonsocket's road and bridge system is divided among a number of different City and State offices. RIDOT inspects all bridges in the City and has an existing program for addressing the replacement or rehabilitation of bridges. Bridge maintenance, however, is a City responsibility and the City must provide adequate financial and staff resources to support an ongoing bridge maintenance program. Many of the City's bridges that span the Blackstone River are covered in lead paint that, over time, has become worn and in need of removal and repainting. The RI Department of Environmental Management's stringent regulations regarding the lead paint abatement of these over-water structures make it cost prohibitive for the city to undertake this type of repair and maintenance. While the City supports policies and regulatory standards that protect the Blackstone River and human health, funding is not immediately available for this type of bridge maintenance. The City will pursue funding for these projects through many different avenues including CDBG and TIP. Prioritization of bridge repairs will be based on the bridge inspection reports that the City receives from RIDOT.

Table H-2 lists the various bridges in the city and whether they are categorized as "structurally deficient" or "functionally obsolete." RIDOT classifies a bridge as structurally deficient if there is elements of the bridge that need to be monitored and/or repaired. A structurally deficient bridge must be monitored, inspected and maintained, repaired or replaced at an appropriate time to maintain its structural integrity. The fact that a bridge is structurally deficient does not imply that it is unsafe. If unsafe conditions are identified during a physical inspection, the structure must be closed. RIDOT classifies a bridge as functionally obsolete if the bridge was built to standards that are not used today. These bridges are not automatically rated as structurally deficient, nor are they inherently unsafe. Functionally obsolete bridges are those that do not have adequate lane widths, shoulder widths, or vertical clearances to serve current traffic demand or to meet the current geometric standards, or those that may be occasionally flooded.

Low and narrow bridge clearances on Main Street restrict the use of the street for trucks and create a hazardous condition. Proposals for truck routing on State numbered routes, and signing of traffic to Truman Drive will minimize the problem. Future plans by the State and the P&W to upgrade the railroad line should include more detailed engineering studies of reasonable alternatives for physically eliminating restrictions, and improving traffic flow through this area of the City.

TABLE H-2
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RIDOT BRIDGE RATINGS

Bridge Name	Bridge ID	Year Built	Year Reconstructed	NBI Rating*
Hamlet Avenue	50001	1959		SD
Harrison Avenue (RR)	68701	1913		SD
Mill Street	68801	1930	1992	FO
Sayles Street	68901	1958		
Blackstone Street (RR)	93901	1999		FO
Harris Avenue	94001	1929	2003	
Arnold Street (RR)	94401	1908	1993	FO
Bernon Street	95201	1989		
Wood Avenue	95301	1900	1983	
Diamond Hill Road	95401	1926		FO
Singleton Street	95501	1958		
River Street	95601	1959		
Fairmount Street	95701	1958		
S. Main Street south arch	95801	1903		SD
S. Main Street north arch	95821	1903		
Court Street	95901	1895	2000	FO
Kendrick Ave. pedestrian	96001	1948	1999	
Social Street	96101	1962		
East School Street	96201	1964		
Elm Street	99801	1963		FO
Privilege Street	96301	1961		SD

*(SD) Structurally Deficient, (FO) Functionally Obsolete

Source: RIDOT, 2007

Traffic Control Devices

Traffic control devices, including signals, signs, pavement markings, and traffic islands, assist in promoting the orderly flow of traffic. (See the Roads Network Map for locations of traffic signals and one-way streets in the City.) Observations were made as to the conformance of these control devices with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control. In many instances pavement markings, warning and guide signs, and parking signs were not in conformance with this manual.

Traffic signals within the City are in urgent need of upgrading. Many signals are over 20 years old and are a maintenance headache. Many of the traffic signals are functionally obsolete, and replacement parts are difficult or impossible to obtain. An inability to adjust signal phasing is also a problem with the older signal models. Traffic operations at busy intersections are hampered by signal systems that are out-dated.

New signals, including fully actuated signals, would improve traffic flow through certain areas. The City has recently submitted, with the approval and recommendation of the State, a federal funding request for the upgrading of all existing traffic signals within the City which are currently inadequate or substandard.

Parking

The location of on-street parking areas influences the capacity and safety of local streets. Regulations for on-street parking are set forth in the Code of Ordinances for the City of Woonsocket, Chapter 17, Traffic. Off-street parking requirements and standards are governed by the City's Zoning Ordinance.

In general, outlying residential areas have unrestricted curb parking on both sides of the street, except where roadway geometry or other physical characteristics dictate restriction of parking to one side of the street. Growth in both the number of automobiles per family and the number of new housing units in the City has contributed to an on-street parking problem in many residential areas, as most of the available off-street parking places are taken. This has placed pressure on neighborhood streets to accommodate additional on-street parking, often creating problems for emergency and maintenance vehicles. In addition, the demand for more off-street parking has increased paved yard areas, thereby decreasing open space and increasing stormwater runoff. Unless adequate off-street parking can be provided, the current on-street parking problem will prevail.

The supply of parking in the Central Business District (CBD) is generally ample for the current level of usage. Parking availability within the downtown area, in terms of the number of spaces, is considered sufficient to meet existing and future needs. Two parking studies of the Main Street and Social areas of the downtown have been completed. The results of these studies indicate that some of the more pressing parking needs in the downtown area include:

•A program for the management of public parking facilities;
•Upgrading surface conditions, lighting and security in existing municipal lots;
•Improved signing of lots;
•Increased enforcement of parking regulations; and
•Designation of long-term and short-term parking facilities.

In the downtown area curb parking is restrictive and its location has an important bearing on the roadway capacity. Therefore, the number and location of off-street parking facilities is an important consideration to both property owners and users. City zoning regulations currently require approximately 50% more non-residential parking spaces than recommended by the Institute of Traffic Engineers Handbook. Excessive parking requirements are costly to developers in terms of sacrificed building space and costly to the City in terms of decreased taxes. In this case, the need for parking appears to be less than what is required.

Traffic Volumes

The volume of traffic on roads assists in identifying major travel corridors. The volumes can also be compared with other factors (i.e.: road width, road condition, number of accidents, etc.) to identify possible inadequacies in the circulation system. Traffic volumes were determined from RIDOT traffic counts taken in 2007/2008, both along roads and at intersections. These traffic counts are shown in Table H-3: Average Annual Daily Traffic, 2009.

TABLE H-3
AVERAGE ANNUAL DAILY TRAFFIC, 2009

Roadway	Average Daily Traffic
Mendon Road	
Rte. 99 to Cumberland Hill Rd.	29,600
Cass Ave. to Diamond Hill Rd.	14,700
Cumberland Hill Road	
Mendon Rd. to Hamlet Ave.	19,700
Hamlet Ave. to Congress St.	17,900
Manville Road	
City boundary to Bertenshaw Rd.	7,700
Bertenshaw Rd. to Hamlet Ave.	8,600
Social Street	
Pond St. to Cumberland St.	13,700
Diamond Hill Rd. to Mass. state line	9,500
Clinton Street	
Cumberland St. to Worrall St.	5,000
Rte. 146A / Providence St.	10,600
Diamond Hill Road	
Bound Rd. to Mendon Rd.	10,600
Mendon Rd. to Social St.	14,100
Social St. to Massachusetts state line	700
Mendon Rd. to Cumberland town line	8,200

Source: RIDOT, 2008 Traffic Flow Map (http://www.dot.state.ri.us/documents/gis/maps/SM02.pdf)

Some of the most heavily traveled roadways in Woonsocket, according to 2007/2008 RIDOT traffic counts, include Mendon Road (from Route 99 to Diamond Hill Rd), Cumberland Hill Road (from Mendon Rd to Hamlet Ave), Diamond Hill Road (from Mendon Rd to Social St), and Social Street (from Cumberland St to Pond St). These sections handle over nearly 14,000 vehicles per day. Other heavily traveled roadways are identified in Table H-3.

Traffic volumes demonstrate the relationship between land use patterns and transportation networks:

- Heavy traffic along Diamond Hill Road reflects the development of East Woonsocket and the plazas and large retailers on Diamond Hill Road.
- High levels of traffic on Mendon Road and Cumberland Hill Road reflect the influx of traffic from this direction due to Route 99.
- Social Street traffic reflects trips to the shopping areas in the Social area as well as trips to the shopping areas on Diamond Hill Road and commuter traffic traveling north to I-495
- While there are not specific traffic counts for Truman Drive, anecdotally it is felt that this road has very low traffic counts as there are rarely queues at the two Truman Drive traffic signals. Truman Drive is viewed as an impediment to Main Street revitalization and the

City would support future lane reductions to accommodate a bicycle path and other pedestrian and beautification improvements to the area.

Major Trip Origins

Land use is an important factor in the development of travel patterns. Residences are considered trip origins, while employment, shopping, and City offices are trip destinations. In addition to helping determine general travel patterns, the land use information is used to address the need for transit services.

The concentration of housing units is a major factor in determining the number of trips that will originate in an area. A study in the 1990's looked at trends in housing concentration in the City, using summaries of the City's tax assessor's records for more detailed information. The number of housing units was divided by the reported area to determine housing concentration. (See *Table H-4*) Areas with between 1 and 4 units per acre are considered moderate density housing, areas with between 5 and 8 units per acre are considered high density housing, and areas with more than 8 units per acre are considered very high density housing.

TABLE H-4
RESIDENTIAL UNITS AND TRIPS GENERATED, 1990
(BY ASSESSOR'S PLAT)

Plat #	# Res. Units	Acreage	Density (units/ac)	Daily Trips	% Total Trips	Peak Hour Trips
Very High Density Areas:						
6	714	75	10	4,258	3.30%	2,787
10	790	92	9	4,781	3.70%	3,190
15	913	80	11	4,962	3.84%	2,917
16	670	71	9	4,025	3.11%	2,664
19	685	72	10	4,180	3.23%	2,813
21	1,026	100	10	5,730	4.43%	3,487
36	878	94	9	5,358	4.15%	3,606
39	826	95	9	4,469	3.46%	2,611
Subtotal	*6,502*	*679*		*37,763*	*29.22%*	*24,075*
High Density Areas:						
3	494	107	5	2,443	1.89%	1,248
4	382	67	6	2,331	1.80%	1,569
9	486	62	8	2,783	2.15%	1,746
13	616	90	7	3,474	2.69%	2,140
14	671	103	7	3,718	2.88%	2,240
22	326	72	5	1,369	1.06%	490
23	482	80	6	2,942	2.28%	1,980
27	387	67	6	2,362	1.83%	1,590
28	526	63	8	3,210	2.48%	2,160
29	450	99	5	2,746	2.13%	1,848
35	466	89	5	2,844	2.20%	1,914

37	440	58	8	2,517	1.95%	1,578
53	491	92	5	2,275	1.76%	1,030
Subtotal	*6,217*	*1,049*		*35,014*	*27.10%*	*21,533*
Moderate Density Areas:						
1	171	90	2	1,710	1.32%	171
2	318	106	3	3,180	2.46%	318
5	223	67	3	2,230	1.73%	223
7	55	78	1	1,250	0.97%	125
8	218	83	3	2,180	1.69%	218
11	345	103	3	3,450	2.67%	345
12	319	91	4	3,190	2.47%	319
17	382	61	6	2,331	1.80%	1,569
18	206	74	3	2,060	1.59%	206
20	185	102	2	1,850	1.43%	185
24	216	62	3	2,160	1.67%	216
25	35	61	1	350	0.27%	35
26	3	37	0	30	0.02%	3
30	128	83	2	1,280	0.99%	128
31	46	69	1	460	0.36%	46
32	143	73	2	1,430	1.11%	143
33	9	86	0	90	0.07%	9
34	56	69	1	560	0.43%	56
38	330	104	3	330	0.26%	33
40	186	82	2	1,860	1.44%	186
41	184	88	2	1,840	1.42%	184
42	140	83	2	1,400	1.08%	140
43	17	81	0	170	0.13%	17
44	200	82	2	2,000	1.55%	200
45	31	51	1	310	0.24%	31
46	46	74	1	460	0.36%	46
47	101	58	2	1,010	0.78%	101
48	337	108	3	3,370	2.61%	337
49	237	93	3	2,370	1.83%	237
50	46	86	1	460	0.36%	46
51	36	69	1	360	0.28%	36
52	1	60	0	10	0.01%	1
54	120	74	2	1,200	0.93%	120
55	82	85	1	820	0.63%	82
56	0	74	0	0	0.00%	0
57	268	101	3	2,680	2.07%	268
58	90	69	1	900	0.70%	90
59	0	71	0	0	0.00%	0
60	117	58	2	1,170	0.91%	117
61	393	91	4	3,930	3.04%	393
Subtotal	*6,020*	*3,137*		*56,441*	*43.68%*	*6,980*
Total 18,739	18,739	4,865		129,218	100.00%	52,588

The high and very high density residential areas generally occur in the center of the City near the river. Apartment complexes located toward the margins of the City increase the density in some areas away from the City center. The highest density plats are in the areas of Fairmount, Front Street, Social Street-Cass Avenue, and West School Street.

The housing information was used to determine the number of trips that would originate in each area, based on standard numbers of trips from various types of housing. *Table H-4* indicates that approximately 30% of the trips in the City originate in the highest density plats. Another 25% originate in the high density areas. More than 50% of the trips originating in Woonsocket come from the central one-third of the City.

Major Trip Destinations

Land use other than residential areas accounts for the major trip destinations. Most of the major employers and mills are concentrated along the Blackstone River and in the center of the City north of the Blackstone, along the Mill River. Major employers are also located in East Woonsocket, near Aylsworth Avenue, along Fortin Drive, and in the Highland Industrial Park. Certain of these employers represent destinations for trips other than employment. These include the City's shopping centers, hospital, larger schools, and City offices. Most of the shopping centers are located at the edges of the City. Other commercial areas, the hospital, and the City offices are located near the geographic center of Woonsocket.

Table H-5 lists places of employment for Woonsocket residents. As the table shows, of Woonsocket’s 18,700 member workforce, 34% of residents work in Woonsocket, making this the single largest place of employment for residents. Other significant employment centers for Woonsocket residents include Norfolk County, Massachusetts, which is an employment destination for 16% of Woonsocket residents. Norfolk County includes the southeastern Massachusetts communities such as Franklin, Wrenthan, and Bellingham. Approximately 20% of Woonsocket residents work in the Providence area, including Providence, Lincoln, Cumberland, Pawtucket, and North Smithfield.

High Hazard Locations

2008 accident reports from the Woonsocket Police Department were reviewed to determine locations with high accident rates. High accident rates may indicate areas with problems such as inadequate signals or obstructed visibility. Frequent accidents occurring on roads with relatively lower traffic volumes raise special concerns about the safety of these roadways.

The locations of high accident rates are shown early in Table H-6, a 2008 Accident Summary for the City of Woonsocket. They generally correspond with the heavily traveled roads, including Mendon Road, Cumberland Street, Diamond Hill Road, Clinton Street, Cumberland Hill Road, and Cass Avenue.

TABLE H-5
PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT FOR CITY OF WOONSOCKET RESIDENTS

Place of Employment	Number of Workers	Percent of Workers
Woonsocket	6,400	34.17%
Norfolk County, MA	3,041	16.24%
Worcester County, MA	1,328	7.09%
Providence	1,229	6.56%
Other Massachusetts	1,052	5.62%
Middlesex County, MA	951	5.08%
North Smithfield	857	4.58%
Lincoln	729	3.89%
Cumberland	495	2.64%
Pawtucket	444	2.37%
Cranston	308	1.64%
Smithfield	280	1.50%
Warwick	266	1.42%
East Providence	207	1.11%
Other Rhode Island Cities and Towns	936	5.00%
Connecticut	94	0.50%
Total Workers	*18,729*	*100%*

Note: Numbers and/or percents may not equal totals due to data reported and rounding

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

TABLE H-6
ACCIDENT SUMMARY, CITY OF WOONSOCKET, 2008

Intersection	# of Accidents
Diamond Hill Road - Mendon Road	49
Cumberland Hill Road - Mendon Road	30
Clinton Street - Cumberland Street	23
Cumberland Street - Cass Avenue	21
Diamond Hill Road - Rock Ridge Drive	21
Diamond Hill Road - Walnut Hill Road	21
Mendon Road - Cass Avenue	20
Social Street - John A. Cummings Way	16
Cumberland Street - Socail Street	15
Social Street - Pond Street	15
Cumberland Hill Road - Hamlet Avenue	14
Clinton Street - John A. Cummings Way	13
Clinton Street - Pond Street	13
Diamond Hill Road - Social Street	13
Diamond Hill Road - Wood Avenue	13
East School Street - Rathbun Street	13
Hamlet Avenue - Park Avenue	11
Cass Avenue - Dulude Avenue	10

Diamond Hill Road - St. Leon Avenue	10
Park Avenue - Logee Street	10
Privilege Street - Roland Street	9
Social Street - Worrall Street	9
Wood Avenue - Elm Street	9
Cumberland Hill Road - Founders Drive	8
Cumberland Street - Hamlet Avenue	8
Diamond Hill Road	8
Hamlet Avenue - Manville Road	8
Mendon Road - Elder Ballou Mtg House Road	8
Park Avenue - Smithfield Road	8
Providence Street - South Main Street	8
Blackstone Street - Harris Avenue	7
Cumberland Hill Road - Aylsworth Avenue	7
Cumberland Hill Road - Columbus Avenue	7
Harris Avenue - Gaskill Street	7
Main Street - High Street	7
Mendon Road - Talcott Street	7
North Main Street - Winter Street	7
Park Avenue - Fournier Avenue	7
Social Street - Privilege Street	7
South Main Street - Pleasant Street	7
Wood Avenue - Robinson Street	7
Bernon Street - Front Street	6
Bernon Street - Truman Drive	6
Clinton Street - Truman Drive	6
East School Street - Pond Street	6
Front Street - Transit Street	6
Main Street - Railroad Street	6
Park Avenue - Vose Street	6
Providence Street - Smithfield Road	6
Rathbun Street - Elbow Street	6
Cumberland Street - Kendrick Avenue	5
Cumberland Street - Locust Street	5
Diamond Hill Road - Rathbun Street	5
Hamlet Avenue - Davison Street	5
Manville Road - Gadoury Boulevard	5
Manville Road - Willow Street	5
Mason Street - Second Avenue	5
Mendon Road - Aylsworth Avenue	5
Mendon Road - Village Road	5
Park Avenue - Bernon Street	5
Park Avenue - Transit Street	5
River Street - South Main Street	5
Wood Avenue - Mill Street	5

Source: Woonsocket Police Department

High hazard locations in the City generally point to a need for increased capacity at intersections, improved traffic signals and better enforcement of regulations. However, it is also important to consider that it would follow that intersections locations which have greater total traffic counts will normally see higher traffic accidents. Nonetheless, it is important to consider areas with high numbers of traffic accidents when considering how to prioritize future roadway improvement projects. The following intersections saw the highest number of accidents in 2008:

- Diamond Hill Road @ Mendon Road (49)
- Cumberland Hill Road @ Mendon Road (30)
- Clinton Road @ Cumberland Street (23)
- Diamond Hill Road @ Walnut Hill Road (21)
- Diamond Hill Road @ Rock Ridge Drive (21)
- Cumberland Street @ Cass Avenue (21)
- Mendon Road @ Cass Avenue (20)*

*It is worth noting that a left-turn signal was recently installed at the traffic light at the intersection of Cass Avenue and Mendon Road to benefit northbound travelers on Mendon Road wishing to make a left onto Cass Avenue. With this signalization improvement, a reduction in accidents is expected at this intersection in future years.

Truck routing through the City necessitates several isolated intersection improvements. Observations of truck movements indicate poor turning radii along Park Avenue, making through truck turns difficult and dangerous when a truck has to cross lanes to make a turn. Action to move stop lines back and widen certain intersections would improve this situation. State numbered routes should be designated along streets where through truck turns can be made safely.

Emergency Services

Emergency services provided by the City include police, fire, and rescue services. The City road network is an important factor in the response time of these services to an emergency. Woonsocket's road network is also important to rescue organizations outside the City because the Landmark Medical Center, Woonsocket Unit provides the only 24 hour hospital emergency room be made safely.

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The Superintendent of Fire Alarms maintains City operated traffic signals. The abundance of antiquated, malfunctioning lights can pose additional delays in response time. Computer control of traffic lights from the fire station is a priority at the intersections of Hamlet Avenue and Manville Road, Cass Avenue and Cumberland Hill Road, Kendrick Avenue and Cumberland Hill Road and others. This would conceivably help to improve circulation overall and allow fire fighters to clear the lights for their emergency vehicles.

Given the older infrastructure in the City, some roadways need improvement. The Public Works Department anticipates repaving several roadways this calendar year including Diamond Hill Road, Carrington Avenue, Cumberland Street, Hamlet Avenue, Cherry Hill Road, Miller Lane (in conjunction with a sewer project), and a portion of Hazel Street. Additional roadways will be improved over time. Improved roadways will facilitate a smoother traffic flow, limit wear and tear on vehicles and may improve emergency response time.

The roadway layout and design is a problem in some instances. Congestion at Hamlet Avenue and Cumberland Hill Road creates problems for Station No. 2, as does congestion at Hamlet Avenue/Manville Road and Manville Road/Davison Avenue. Depot Square and the Court Street Bridge create problems for Station No. 3. Station No. 3 is at North Main Street and Shorr Court, a blind corner, and Station No. 6 is in the Fairmount neighborhood where street widths are very narrow. Problem areas for Station No. 4 include the intersections of Mendon Road and Elder Ballou Meeting House Road, and Wood Avenue and Diamond Hill Road. Bridges are a particular problem for fire vehicles due to weight limitations. Some of the vehicles weigh 14 tons and exceed the weight limitations on certain City bridges. Additionally, there are bridges that the apparatus cannot pass under, specifically the Sayles Street Bridge. The City has obtained special exemptions from RIDOT for emergency use of these bridges by fire trucks.

Administration

Various federal agencies have authority over roadway and circulation programs and projects. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) plays a major funding role in State highway and bridge improvements, including repair, upgrade and new construction of roads and bridges. FHWA has detailed planning and design requirements for projects it is involved with. RIDOT typically assumes a lead role in ensuring FHWA requirements are met on federally funded projects. Major federally funded projects with a potential for significant environmental impacts may also trigger the involvement of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, among others.

The RIDOT has the lead role in roads and bridges which come under State jurisdiction. RIDOT's planning and design sections have on-going programs for road and bridge upgrades and new construction. RIDOT also provides funding in conjunction with the FHWA and contract administration for construction projects. RIDOT is responsible for maintenance of roads and bridges under their jurisdiction.

The Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Statewide Planning, is responsible for preparing a State long-range ground transportation plan. The Division of Statewide Planning also has a role in roadway planning, including computer modeling of traffic

circulation, forecasts of future travel demands, and preparation of the State Ground Transportation Plan. In addition, this office is responsible for the review of local comprehensive plans for consistency with State policies.

While the Engineering and Highway Divisions of the Public Works Department have the most direct control over Woonsocket's road and bridge system, various aspects of circulation, traffic safety, road and bridge maintenance, and transit services are controlled by several departments in the City. Public Works is responsible for road maintenance but does not have the equipment for bridge maintenance. Major road repairs are presently contracted out. The department coordinates with RIDOT and with other City departments on major road upgrades and new road development.

The City Council and the Mayor's office have the responsibility of setting City policy with regard to roads and bridges, as carried out in their approval of general fund and special fund budgets, and the Finance Department provides financial control and purchasing services. The Police Department has primary responsibility for traffic safety, including enforcement, maintenance of signs and accident statistics. The Police Department Traffic Bureau maintains records on accidents and patrol officers enforce traffic regulations. The Fire Department has primary responsibility for City traffic light maintenance.

The Department of Planning and Development is responsible for transportation planning, zoning, and subdivision review, and the Department of Human Resources oversees 34 human service agencies, many of which provide transportation services. Finally, the Department of Education is responsible for school bus operations including schedules and routes. This Department sets policy on how far children of a certain grade must live from school before they are eligible for bus service. The Education Department also has a lead role in determining where schools are located, thus influencing bus, automobile, and pedestrian travel patterns to some degree.

This sharing of responsibility can result in a certain level of inefficiency when problems arise. Projects can occur that are outside of an individual department's purview, and two or more departments may end up duplicating efforts. There is a need for coordination of all transportation and traffic functions under one responsible party, to better enable coordination with State and local agencies, and to ensure that the City's needs are addressed in State projects.

Traffic, safety, and parking regulations are only effective when consistently enforced. The City must ensure sufficient staff for the enforcement of parking and traffic regulations. The need for enforcement staff stands out as an important aspect of the overall goal to improve circulation and parking in the City.

System Improvements

The RIDOT is responsible for the distribution of federal highway funds within the State, according to a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which is approved by the State Planning Council/Metropolitan Planning Organization. The TIP, is a multi-year program of all

planned highway, bicycle, pedestrian, and intermodal transportation projects. While the State prepares the program, the individual communities throughout the State have an opportunity to submit project requests to the State. Because Rhode Island receives a limited amount of federal highway moneys, funding is limited for the addition of projects to the program. For a project to be considered for the TIP, it must be on a federal-aid system. Once a project is included on the State's program, the State is responsible for the funding, design and construction of the project. The implementation time for a project is generally 36 months; however controversial projects take considerably longer.

An evaluation of existing and future conditions within the City highlights the need for several new or improved road access projects. The process of developing new or improved access to major generators or to developing areas is a long and often complicated process. The time frame for planning and construction of Route 99 demonstrated the amount of lead time required for complicated projects and underscores the importance of carefully considering all factors before deciding on any course of action.

Throughout the City changes in land use, traffic, and standards for roadway design have left many City streets in need of improvements beyond resurfacing. Many of the arterial and collector roads in the City are inadequate for today's operating condition. Projected changes in land use and traffic volume will further exacerbate this problem. Observations of roadway problems include: physical obstructions (i.e.: utility poles) that are close to the roadway creating hazardous operating conditions, shoulders that are used for travel lanes where traffic has grown beyond the roadway capacity, inadequate street lighting and poor drainage systems.

The TIP is the primary mechanism the City currently has to fund improvements. The City has had opportunities in the past to request projects for State consideration and will have similar opportunities in the future. Invariably the needs of a community outweigh funding limitations, and competition for scarce resources is great. A systematic program for collecting data on pavement conditions, traffic volumes, accidents and land use, combined with a process for evaluating these variables, will enable the City to accurately document its road improvement needs, and thus remain a strong competitor under the TIP program.

Planned and on-going RIDOT road projects in the Woonsocket area are as follows:

<u>Roadway Projects</u> -
•**Rt. 114 – 1R Improvements** – Pavement Management Program, improvements along Diamond Hill Road from Peters River to Bound Road. Work to be completed in 2010.

•**Rt. 99 – 1R Improvements** – Pavement Management Program, improvement to Rt. 99 from Route 146 to Mendon Road. Work to be completed in 2012.

•**Diamond Hill Rd.** – Study & Development Program to look at stretch of Diamond Hill Road from Peter's River Bridge to Social Street.

The completion of Route 99 in the early 1990s provided a new and necessary highway access point in to the City of Woonsocket. Route 99 provides direct highway access to the City's

Highland Corporate Park and the Woonsocket Industrial Park on Cumberland Hill Road. It is a vital part of Woonsocket's transportation network.

Diamond Hill Road functions as a principal arterial and serves as the primary east-west route in the northern section of the City. Increased development of shopping areas and residential growth in both Woonsocket and southern Bellingham will result in increased traffic. The section of Diamond Hill Road between Mendon Road and Social Street is incompatible with the eastern portion of the road. In order to best serve future traffic, Diamond Hill Road must be upgraded to a consistent standard, a project currently listed in the TIP.

As part of the Main Street Riverfront Initiative Group (formerly Main Street 2000) Revitalization Program, improvements have been implemented for the Main Street area from Market Square to Monument Square. Improvements included redesign of the traffic rotary at Monument Square and improvements to traffic flow along Main Street from Depot Square to Market Square. Main Street was changed from one-way to two-way traffic as a way of improving circulation through the downtown area.

Maintenance

There has been no continuous process within the City for the implementation of a comprehensive program of planned improvements to roads, bridges and traffic circulation. In the absence of a comprehensive maintenance program, the pavement condition on many City streets has deteriorated. Funding and personnel constraints have seriously limited the Department of Public Works' ability to keep up with the need for a regular program of resurfacing City streets. Funds have been allocated on a crisis basis, rather than in accordance with a planned improvement program.

The Public Works Department is working toward the development of a Pavement Management Program to assist the City in safeguarding its investment in streets by both assessing need and prioritizing projects. The City is working with RI Statewide Planning and the Rhode Island Technology Center on Pavement Management. In the absence of funding, the City will seek outside sources of funding including CDBG and the TIP. In the absence of funding, the City will continue to face a serious road maintenance problem.

Public Transportation

Public transportation and para-transit services provide transportation alternatives to private automobile travel. Reducing automobile traffic can help reduce pollution and demand for petroleum products. Public transportation services provide opportunities for residents who do not drive or who do not own automobiles. It is important for such services to access the residential areas and destinations described above, especially where concentrations of elderly or low-income residents require service.

The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) provides the only fixed route bus service to and within Woonsocket. Table H-7 and the Public Transportation Map (Map H-3) present the routes, frequency of trips, and the average daily number of riders on each route. These RIPTA routes provide transportation from some of the most densely developed neighborhoods such as Fairmount and Constitution Hill to such destinations as downtown Woonsocket, Diamond Hill Road, the vocational and high school (when school is in session), Park Square, Lincoln Mall, CCRI in Lincoln, and Providence.

TABLE H-7
RIPTA BUS ROUTES SERVIING THE CITY OF WOONSOCKET

Route #	Name	Avg. # Rides per Day	Number of Runs per Day	Daily/Weekend Service
54	Lincoln/Woonsocket	1,620	35	Daily/Sat/Sun
87	Fairmount/Walnut Hill	918	29	Daily/Sat/Sun

Rides includes both inbound and outbound passengers

Source: RIPTA, 2009.

Since the original writing of this Comprehensive Plan, RIPTA has made significant cuts to bus service in Woonsocket. Currently, the existing bus service is insufficient to meet the needs of many city residents, especially the 17% of residents in Woonsocket who do not have access to a vehicle. Woonsocket residents are disproportionately impacted by cuts to public transit because of the significantly higher percentage of Woonsocket residents who do not have a car as compared to just 11% in the State as a whole. The existing bus service is insufficient to meet the needs of job seekers looking for second or third shift work as the busses do not run frequently enough, there are not enough express routes, the busses do not enter many of Woonsocket's neighborhoods, and do not arrive at several major employment centers such as Highland Corporate Park, Woonsocket Industrial Park, or the job centers in nearby Franklin, Massachusetts. Every effort should be made to advocate for the improvement of RIPTA bus service to Woonsocket and to protest any further cuts to service.

Several transit agencies operate in the City, generally providing some transportation for elderly, disabled, or low-income residents. Senior Services provides round trips every morning and afternoon for disabled and elderly adults in the Adult Day Care program. The agency provides transportation for grocery shopping, medical appointments, and emergencies. Two weeks notice is required for trips to medical appointments.

Northwest Transportation Service, Inc., a private non-profit transportation provider, serves low-income elderly, handicapped, and disabled residents. It brings clients to medical appointments with two weeks notice. Daily trips are made into Providence for appointments. The agency also provides some transportation to meal sites. Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP) provides a limited amount of transportation services to fill gaps. The group has a Meals on Wheels service and brings senior volunteers to their work sites. In addition, some of the local grocery stores provide van service to bring elderly residents to and from the stores.

The City rents school buses, which are used to make round trips to and from school each day. Students who live within a defined walking distance from their schools do not take buses,

and many travel as pedestrians. During the school year, the 87 Route RIPTA bus makes one stop at the high school each morning and afternoon on school days.

Transportation services available in Woonsocket were compared with land use and housing information to identify residential areas and destinations not adequately served. Transportation services are especially important for elderly and low-income residents, who may not have the option of driving. While transit agencies provide a certain amount of transportation services for low-income, disabled, and elderly, several areas of unmet transportation needs remain. Many elderly or disabled clients have difficulty in getting to medical appointments due to scheduling problems. Trips to specialists in Boston, Providence, or elsewhere often prove difficult.

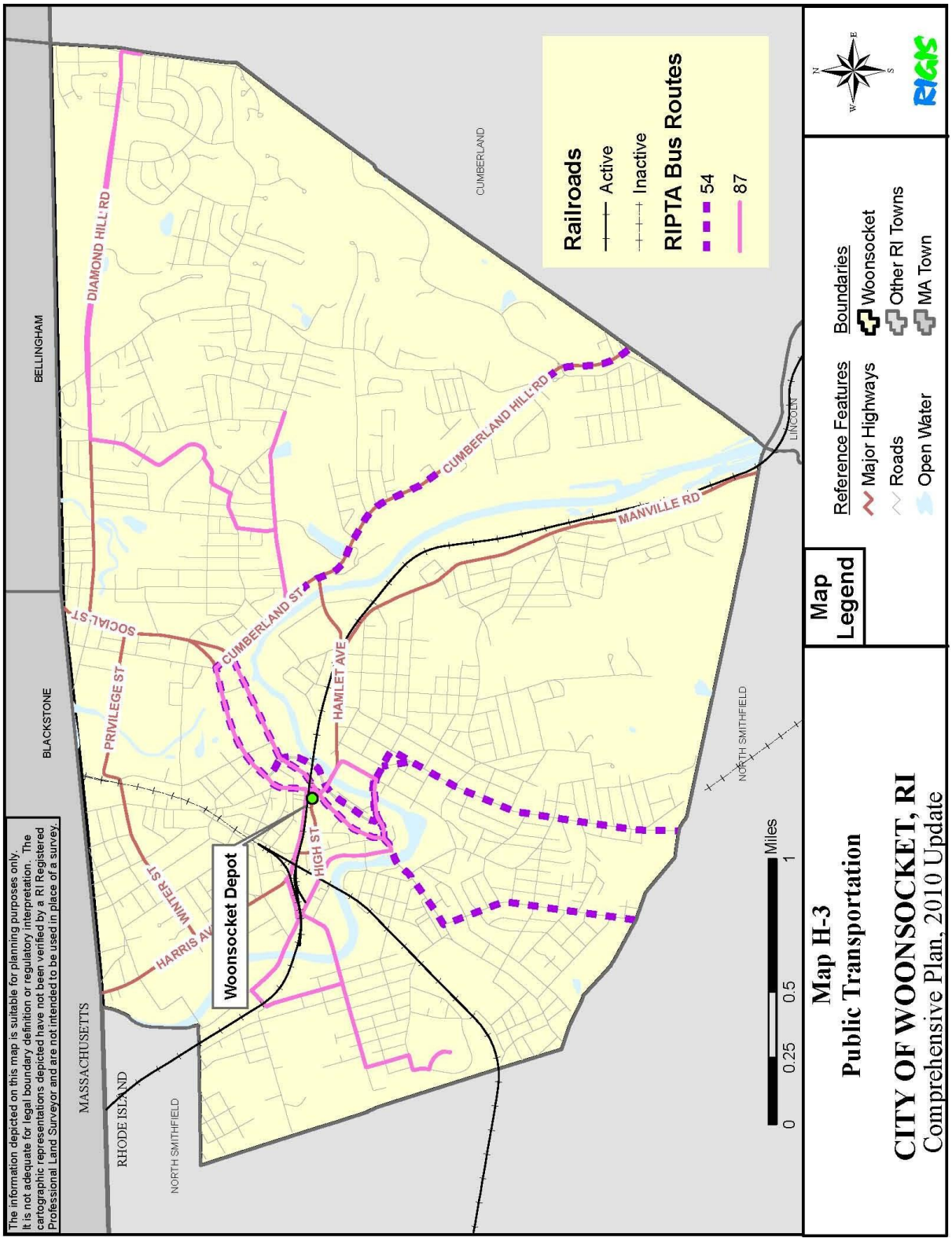
Residents also require trips to shopping centers, banks, job training, public offices, and employment areas. Presently, the low-income residents have fewer options than the elderly or disabled and should be targeted for future programs. Unemployed residents who cannot get to a job site to fill out an application or to work will remain unemployed.

RIPTA provides the most continuous transportation service. However, many subsidized/elderly housing complexes are not on the bus routes, requiring long walks to bus service. In some cases, the buses cannot access the housing units due to narrow roads or driveways. The Cumberland Hill Road bus only provides service on Saturday, offering limited options for residents of Plaza Village and providing no service to the Highland Industrial Park.

Since Woonsocket was not designed around the automobile, its ability to expand roadway capacity and add new roadways in the future is limited. Improved and expanded transit services, both inter-city and intra-city, may reduce the need for additional roadway improvements. Future studies are needed to evaluate employee incentives for increasing transit usage and developing new intra-city routes to provide efficient connections between the population centers of the City and major employment areas.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Traffic

RIDOT and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management are underway in the planning and construction of the Blackstone River Bikeway (see Open Space & Recreation and Heritage Corridor Elements). As of 2009, the Bikeway has been constructed to Davison Avenue and plans for its construction across the rest of the city are underway. The Bikeway will generally follow the course of the Blackstone River. Its path will alternate between independent rights-of-way and existing roadways. The next segment of the Bikeway will provide access to downtown Woonsocket: River Island Park, Main Street, Market Square, and the Museum of Work and Culture.


The information depicted on this map is suitable for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation. The cartographic representations depicted have not been verified by a RI Registered Professional Land Surveyor and are not intended to be used in place of a survey.
MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
BLACKSTONE
BELLINGHAM
NORTH SMITHFIELD
CUMBERLAND
LINCOLN
NORTH SMITHFIELD
Woonsocket Depot
DIAMOND HILL RD
SOCIAL ST
PRIVILEGE ST
WINTER ST
HARRIS AV
CUMBERLAND ST
HIGH ST
HAMLET AVE
CUMBERLAND HILL RD
MANVILLE RD
Railroads
Active
Inactive
RIPTA Bus Routes
54
87
Map Legend
Reference Features
Major Highways
Roads
Open Water
Boundaries
Woonsocket
Other RI Towns
MA Town
0
0.25
0.5
1
Miles
Map H-3
Public Transportation
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update

Locations where the Bikeway might encompass existing streets in Woonsocket include Truman Drive, Bernon Street, Water Street, Fairmount Street, and River Street. In each of the locations where the Bikeway will share the road with vehicular traffic, the principal consideration will be safety for both bikers and motorists. When the Bikeway is on its own right-of-way, access to certain sections might be restricted to selected locations. In other sections, access will be unrestricted from adjoining areas and streets. The Bikeway is intended as an alternative transportation facility, and the design and route will be based on safety, grades, accessibility, cost, route continuity, and environmental impacts.

Coordinating the design of the Bikeway will need to be considered in conjunction with other city projects and improvements. Because the proposed Bikeway design will include the use of local streets as well as independent rights-of-way, the City should become an active participant in the design phase of the study. The City will need to identify local concerns and ensure that State and City objectives are compatible in determining the final location and design of the Bikeway. In certain locations, it is proposed that the Bikeway will be constructed atop the city's flood control levees. The City should play an active role in advocating that the Bikeway be constructed as close as possible to the Blackstone River, while at the same time ensuring that the City's flood control system remains effective in protecting the city from flood events. The City should work with all parties to support the continuation of the Bikeway to the Massachusetts line and through to Worcester, Massachusetts.

The Bikeway is expected to have a very positive effect on adjoining land uses. However, as interest and use increase, businesses and activities that would benefit from the bicycle traffic are likely to locate closer to the path. The proximity of the Bikeway to the Blackstone River will make it an attraction. As final planning begins, the City should evaluate opportunities to tie residential areas to the Bikeway with local street improvements and should consider the development of a City signage plan.

As part of the City's "Wayfinding Master Plan for Downtown Woonsocket," improved pedestrian and bicycle connections within the downtown area are being planned. A concerted effort should be made to capitalize on the Bikeway as a means of revitalizing downtown Woonsocket and the Blackstone Riverfront area. Creative and consistent Bikeway signage that connects the Bikeway into the downtown fabric is critical to successfully capitalizing on the benefits of Bikeway.

Railroads

Woonsocket has two active railroad lines in the City, the P&W Main Line and the Slatersville Secondary Track. Both lines are owned and operated by the Providence and Worcester Railroad. The P&W Main Line is 12.5 miles long. It runs from the Massachusetts State line in Woonsocket through North Smithfield, Cumberland, Lincoln and Central Falls to its connection with the State Line in Pawtucket. The majority of freight traffic carried on the Main Line is classified as through traffic going from P&W's Worcester freight yards to the Providence area. Local service, however, is still provided at least once a day, excepting Sunday.

The Slatersville Secondary Track is approximately 4 miles long. It is located in the City of Woonsocket and extends into the Town of North Smithfield. Service on this line is currently provided on an "as needed" basis and is available 6 days a week. A portion of the Slatersville Secondary Track was abandoned by the P&W in 2007, severing its connection north of East School Street.

Deregulation of the railroads in the 1970s and changes in the economic environment of the area (as well as the entire Northeast) have resulted in a general decline in all rail services. Information on the businesses in the City of Woonsocket that are currently using rail service is not available. The State does not have statistics on users of rail freight service in the City nor on the amount of freight being carried by commodity type. There is presently no rail passenger service provided on any of these railroad lines. Traffic previously handled exclusively by the railroads has been diverted to trucks. Except for some bulk commodities, like coal and scrap, the trucking industry competes with railroads in almost all areas. Industries in Woonsocket that were once serviced only by rail are now shipping via truck. New industries coming into Woonsocket are less likely to use rail freight as a means of transporting or receiving their products.

The most pressing obstacles to continued rail service in Woonsocket involve height and width clearances at several locations in the City. Interconnected rail service is a key to the future viability of the Main P&W Line. The ability to compete with trucking and other rail carriers in the northeast will require that certain local height and width restrictions be removed, particularly at Arnold Street and Blackstone Street, so that the rail line can accommodate higher and wider shipments from Worcester to East Providence. P&W has identified this as part of their strategic plan for remaining competitive with other carriers.

The continuation of railroad services to Woonsocket is dependent upon the strength of the economy and demand for the use of rail freight service. In turn, the attraction to Woonsocket of industries which require use of the railroad will be dependent on the continuation of these services by the P&W Railroad. Ongoing track and bridge maintenance projects are planned by P&W, in cooperation with the State, to insure that the rail lines are kept in service.

The return of passenger rail service along the P&W line is an extremely desirable goal for the future. Passenger service would provide a new transportation opportunity for the Blackstone Valley, facilitating an alternative method of commuting between Woonsocket and Providence. Two preliminary feasibility reports have been completed, which state that commuter rail service from Woonsocket to Providence is both feasible and has significant ridership numbers to be competitive. Commuter rail, if resumed along the P&W line would link Woonsocket with the T.F. Green airport in Warwick via the new intermodal Warwick station and potentially, to Boston by transferring at the proposed Pawtucket/Central Falls MBTA station. Commuter rail service in Woonsocket would greatly benefit both Woonsocket’s residents and businesses alike. It would also aid tourism activities in Woonsocket and the surrounding area. The City should continue to work towards bringing commuter rail service to Woonsocket along the P&W line and should oppose any projects that might limit this possibility.

Air Transportation

The only commercial airport in Rhode Island is T.F. Green State Airport. Woonsocket is approximately 20 miles from T.F. Green. The next closest commercial airport is Logan which is located in Boston and is 40-50 miles from Woonsocket (depending upon the route taken).

Industries using corporate or charter air services can currently use North Central Airport in Lincoln, R.I. located on Route 116 (George Washington Highway). Emergency medical needs are served by a designated helicopter landing area near the Landmark Medical Center, off of Cumberland Hill Road.

Economic Development

Access is a crucial factor in encouraging economic development. The City has identified several areas for development where improved access is required. Those areas include Diamond Hill Road.

As various mills in the City are redeveloped, the need for access by employees and trucks will have to be evaluated on a case by case basis. Safe access to individual businesses is needed to develop or redevelop areas in the City. It may be necessary to combine internal circulation for businesses along heavily traveled roads where increased development might otherwise result in an excessive number of new curb cuts.

Economic development in the Main Street area depends on the availability of adequate parking and useful directional signage to guide visitors in and out of the downtown area. A close look should be given to the adequacy of the city's existing directional signage.

NEW INITIATIVES

Study and Development for Commuter Rail in Woonsocket

Now that two commuter rail feasibility studies have concluded that commuter rail from Woonsocket to Providence is feasible, the next step is to get funding under Study and Development in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The City should continue to build a coalition of support for this project with adjacent communities and like-minded advocacy groups and foundations. The goal is to gain support from the local, state, and federal elected officials and from key agencies of state government, in particular the Department of Transportation.

RIPTA Improvements

The City has recognized that the existing level of RIPTA bus service in the City is insufficient to meet the needs of the city's residents. The Planning Department should continue to play an active role in partnering with local community groups to address this issue. The City should undertake an analysis of the adequacy of the existing bus stops and shelters in the city and work with RIPTA to devise a plan for improvement. The City should also oppose any efforts by RIPTA to make any further cuts to bus service and the City should advocate and support expansions of bus service in Woonsocket.

Bikeway mapping and signage

The Blackstone River Bikeway has the potential to bring significant benefits to Woonsocket. In order to fully capitalize on this opportunity, the City needs to be an active partner in marketing and educating the public about the bikeway. Once the Bikeway is fully constructed throughout Woonsocket, the City should seek funding to produce a local bicycling map that shows where the Bikeway exists in the community, how to access the Bikeway, and where it is in relation to local features, including recreational, commercial, and cultural. The City should also seek funding to install innovation signage that capitalizes on the Bikeway as it passes through downtown Woonsocket.

ADA Compliance

Because Woonsocket is an older community, most of the City's sidewalks and streets were constructed prior to the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, many of the city's sidewalks and intersections present a challenge to those with disabilities. The most common concern is uneven sidewalks resulting from tree root heaves, utility poles and other permanent structures installed in or close to the sidewalks that make passage by wheelchair difficult or impossible. In selecting sidewalk and roadway improvement projects, priority should be given to those areas known for not meeting ADA compliance.

Safe Routes to School

In 2008, the City, in partnership with a local non-profit group, began the Woonsocket Safe Routes to School Program. This project is designed to encourage school-aged children to safely walk and bicycle to school. The current grant will provide for intersection and sidewalk improvements for the Fairmount Elementary Schools, and for a signalized pedestrian crossing of Cumberland Street at Kendrick Avenue where Woonsocket Middle School students access the foot bridge. Grant funding is being sought for additional improvements at Citizens Memorial and Governor Pothier Elementary Schools. The City should continue to apply for these funds as they are released.

GOALS & POLICIES

The following goals and policies have been developed to assure the protection and enhancement of Woonsocket's circulation network.

GOAL C-1
Woonsocket enjoys a safe, adequate, and efficient circulation network that meets the varied needs of its residents, businesses, and visitors.

POLICY C-1.1
Develop and implement a coordinated approach to traffic systems management and roadway maintenance

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.1a
Increase annual budget allocations for street re-surfacing and bridge maintenance based on a Pavement Management Program sufficient to ensure safe, easily traveled roads

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.1b
Develop a priority list of necessary major roadway and traffic system improvements and request as RIDOT projects the rehabilitation and/or reconstruction of major arterial and collector roads indicated as having the greatest need

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.1c
As funding permits, upgrade traffic signals, acquiring modern traffic signal equipment to replace or repair outdated and poorly functioning equipment in accordance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)

POLICY C-1.2
Provide adequate routing and signage within and through the City for residents, visitors, and trucks

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.2a
Periodically reassess the appropriateness of major routes into and through the City based on the continuity of roads, one-way/two-way travel, road/bridge capacity, safety, and other transportation system design factors

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.2b
Upgrade and maintain road signing on a regular basis to permit easy identification of State routes and destinations

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.2c
Analyze the effectiveness of the existing directional road signs directing traffic to important areas of the City and make regular improvements as necessary

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.2d
Provide adequately signed truck routes throughout the City

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.2e
Work closely with the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission to coordinate local and regional road signage

POLICY C-1.3
Work to minimize congestion and maximize safety for vehicular traffic in the city

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.3a
Adopt a policy regulating the design and traffic impact of drive-thru establishments and amend the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations accordingly

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.3b
Remedy problems with traffic signal timing, geometry (widening, tight corners, etc.), and sight distance to the extent possible, focusing particular attention on those areas/intersections shown in Tables C-3 and C-6 where there is the highest traffic volume and highest incidents of accidents

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.3c
Develop zoning and subdivision requirements for land along Mendon Road, Cumberland Hill Road, and Cumberland Street to control the number and location of curb cuts as a result of increased traffic from Route 99

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.3d
Adopt and enforce on-street parking regulations for residential areas. Utilize off-street parking capabilities to remove on-street parking, resulting in adequate travel lanes and appropriate clearances for trucks

POLICY C-1.4
Improve pedestrian safety and accommodation on city sidewalks and streets

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.4a
Amend Subdivision Regulations and Land Development Regulations to, where applicable, require commercial and industrial developers to rebuild sidewalks to meet the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.4b
Complete an inventory and assessment of the condition of city sidewalks by neighborhood and create a priority list of areas where sidewalk replacement, repair, and creation efforts should be focused

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.4c

Discourage the granting of waivers for requiring sidewalk construction in the subdivision review process

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.4d
Continue to apply for grant funding through the Safe Routes to School Program, or others, they improve pedestrian safety in and around school zones

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.4e
Work to implement the redesign of Truman Drive as proposed in the 2009 Wayfinding Master Plan for Downtown Woonsocket

POLICY C-1.5
Work towards improving Woonsocket's linkage to and function within the regional transportation system

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.5a
Monitor the effects of Route 99 on the City's circulation network and request RIDOT studies and funding for roadway improvements as necessary, particularly as a result of increased traffic on Mendon Road, Cumberland Hill Road, Cumberland Street, and other nearby roads

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.5b
Coordinate with neighboring towns, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to plan for improved access to regional highways

POLICY C-1.6
Ensure adequate opportunities for alternative modes of transportation

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.6a
Oppose any changes to rail rights-of-way that would jeopardize the possibility for future passenger rail between Woonsocket and Providence and between Woonsocket and Worcester

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.6b
Investigate alternative uses of railroad rights-of-way, while preserving the rights of the City to use this land

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.6c
Apply for Study and Development funding for commuter rail from Woonsocket to Providence and the Warwick airport in the next Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.6d

Build and sustain a formal partnership with other Blackstone Valley municipalities and advocacy groups to promote commuter rail along the Providence & Worcester Railroad

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.6e
Work to ensure that the Blackstone Valley Bikeway is constructed to the Massachusetts border and on to Worcester, Massachusetts

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.6f
Work closely with the State to ensure that the final design and construction of the remainder of the Blackstone River Bikeway capitalizes on intermodal connectivity in the city

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.6g
City streets designated by the State as either Class II or Class III bikeways should be resurfaced or reconstructed by the State to City standards. The City Engineer should track progress of the Bikeway project with RIDOT

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.6h
Evaluate public transportation/para transit services in terms of targeted use groups (e.g., low-income, elderly, students) to determine if transportation needs are met in high use areas and advocate improvements where necessary

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.6i
Add requirements to local regulations that multi-family or subsidized housing be directly accessible to transit lines and/or provide entry and turning space for buses or para-transit vehicles

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.6j
Oppose any proposed cuts to current levels of RIPTA bus service within the City and advocate for increases in bus service

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.6k
Request that RIPTA extend bus service to the Highland Industrial Park.

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.6l
Provide shelters for transit users

POLICY C-1.7
Ensure that the circulation network supports economic development efforts

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.7a
Study the parking capacity in the downtown area and assess if more is needed

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.7b
Determine parking requirements appropriate to specific types of commercial sites and businesses and modify Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations accordingly

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.7c
Implement a parking program to improve existing off- street parking to meet described needs, including enforcement

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.7d
Develop additional off-street parking capacity in the Main Street area

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.7e
Routinely assess Woonsocket bridges to ensure there is sufficient structural capacity to satisfy truck weights

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.7f
Designate truck routes to permit access to downtown destinations and industrial zones but discouraging through truck trips downtown

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.7g
Develop adequately signed truck routes to avoid low clearance bridges

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.7h
Oppose any changes to rail rights-of-way that jeopardize freight rail infrastructure and support State efforts to upgrade rail lines within the City to remove clearance restrictions for freight service along P&W's Main Line, while seeking State support and funding to address the low bridge clearance on (lower) Main Street.

IMPLEMENTATION C-1.7i
Support rail efforts to upgrade the P&W mainline in manner that has minimum impact on City operations. Request direct involvement in any study conducted by the State

LAND USE ELEMENT

Designates the proposed general distribution and general location along with the interrelationship of land use for residential, commercial, industrial, open space, recreational, community facilities and other categories of public and private uses of land. The Land Use Element is based upon the other elements contained in Section 45-22.2-6 and it shall relate the proposed standards of population density to the capacity of the land and available or planned facilities and services. A land use plan map, illustrating the future strategy and land use policy of the municipality as defined by the comprehensive plan, is required. The land use plan must contain an analysis of the inconsistency of existing zoning districts, if any, with the land use plan. The land use plan should specify the process by which the zoning ordinance and zoning map shall be amended to conform to the comprehensive plan. (Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act 45-22.2-6)

CURRENT CONDITIONS & ISSUES

Introduction

Woonsocket is a visibly aging city, densely developed, with much of its area committed to old building stock and old patterns of development. Its evolving history can be read in the layering of strip malls and redevelopment areas, over industrial boomtown, over the original mill villages and outlying agricultural areas that merged to form its present boundaries.

The City must decide where there is a liability to correct, and where there is an opportunity to protect, display, and demonstrate a pride in Woonsocket's past. The complexity of natural and built forms, and the attendant confusion of the street system, present a challenge to the City to make understandable to both visitors and inhabitants the meaning and organization of its physical presence.

As stated throughout this Plan, the most salient point that affects the future development of Woonsocket is that the City is land poor. With 41,186 residents and concentrations of industry and commerce on only 7.9 square miles of land and water, the City is greatly restricted in new development, and must concentrate on better and more productive land use and redevelopment of existing property.

The Blackstone River provides a focal point to the City, and contributes its own unique potential for challenges and opportunities. While an Army Corps of Engineers Flood Control Project has limited the recurrence of the destructive floods of the past, flood zones and the flood control project itself pose constraints to riverside development. The linked issues of pollution control and clean up of the Blackstone River, provision of access to the riverfront and encouragement of water-related recreational activities, are central to the City's plans for the future.

The Land Use Element is intended to be all-inclusive. Its provisions are directly interrelated with the goals, policies and strategies of the other elements of this Comprehensive

Plan. This Element focuses on many of the issues addressed in those other elements (i.e.: resource protection, economic opportunity, etc.) as they specifically affect the land itself.

Zoning Ordinance

The City of Woonsocket first adopted a Zoning Ordinance in 1923. Major revisions to the Ordinance were passed in 1960 and 1971, and minor revisions have been made in the intervening years. Section 1 of the Zoning Ordinance states as its purpose:

> "These districts and regulations are designed to lessen congestion in the streets, to secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers, to provide adequate light and air, to prevent overcrowding of land, to avoid undue concentration of population, to facilitate adequate provision of transportation, water sewerage, schools, parks and other public requirements. They are made with reasonable consideration, as to the character of each district and its peculiar suitability for particular uses, and with a view to conserving the value of buildings and encouraging the most appropriate use of land through the city."

This ordinance divides the City into various residential, commercial, industrial, and public recreation zones. Four residential zones, two mixed-use zones, two commercial zones, two industrial zones and two public recreation zones are used to regulate development.

Planned Residential Development, a concept involving cluster development and conservation of open space, is permitted only in the R-1 and R-2 zones. Distinctions between land uses permitted in the two industrial districts are based on the products produced, rather than on the level of intensity of a particular land use.

Table I-1 is a list of current zoning designations, while Map I-2 is the City's Current Zoning Designation Map.

The public recreation zones have been structured to include government-owned land only. Typically, no privately owned land is included. Any proposed development on public recreation lands must be deemed appropriate by the Department of Planning and Development, the Planning Board and the City Council, and must also conform to the recreational needs of the City as determined in this Plan.

With the addition of the city's two mixed use zones, Woonsocket is now able to permit a mix of uses, residential and commercial together in the MU-1 zone and commercial and industrial with the option for residential as an accessory use in the MU-2 zone. Upper story residential is also permitted in the C-1 zone, and certain retail sales, as accessory uses, are allowed in industrial zones.

Development Patterns

Woonsocket developed as a series of mill villages, constructed along the banks of the Blackstone and Mill Rivers, and later along the railroad lines that connected the City with Providence, Worcester and Boston. These mill villages, with their tight intermingling of

industrial and residential land uses, were largely responsible for the patterns of land use that exist in Woonsocket today.

TABLE I-1: LIST OF CURRENT ZONING DESIGNATIONS

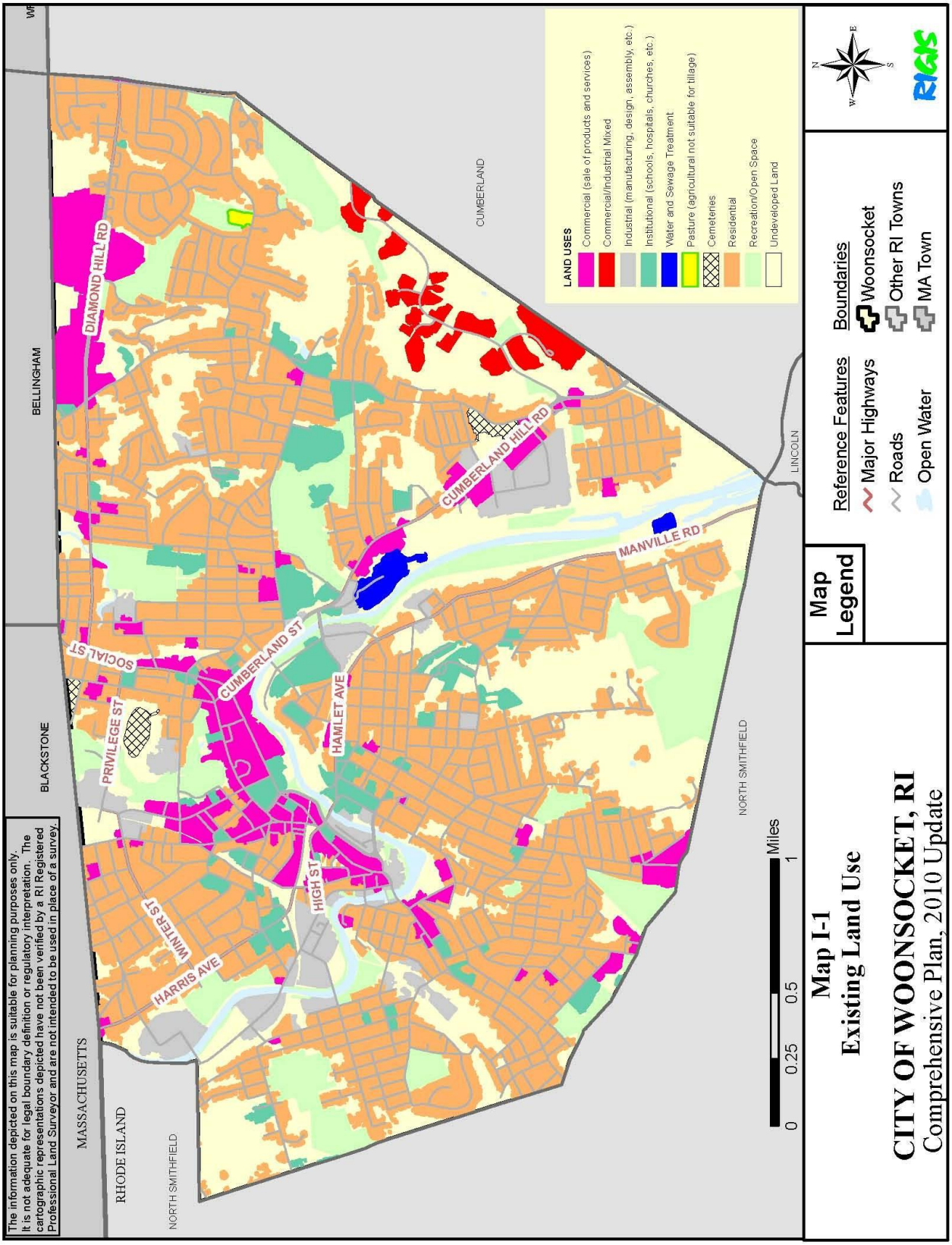
Residential Districts	
Very Low Density Single-Family Residential District	R-1
Low Density Single-Family Residential District	R-2
Medium Density Single-Family and Two-Family Residential District	R-3
High Density Single and Multi-Family Residential District	R-4
Commercial Districts	
Urban Commercial District	C-1
Major Commercial District	C-2
Mixed-Use Districts	
Mixed Use Commercial/Residential District	MU-1
Mixed Use Industrial/Commercial District	MU-2
Industrial Districts	
Light Industrial District	I-1
Heavy Industrial District	I-2
Public Recreation Districts	
Active Public Recreation District	PR-1
Passive Public Recreation District	PR-2

Source: City of Woonsocket Zoning Ordinance, revised 1994

A breakdown of the City in terms of zoning designation is provided in *Table I-2*. Total land area in the City includes river zones and undimensioned water bodies. Housing units are based on sewer hook-ups, and may reflect some non-residential uses or abandoned structures that remain tied in to the system. Residences are not allowed in industrial zones and their inclusion represents a non-conforming use.

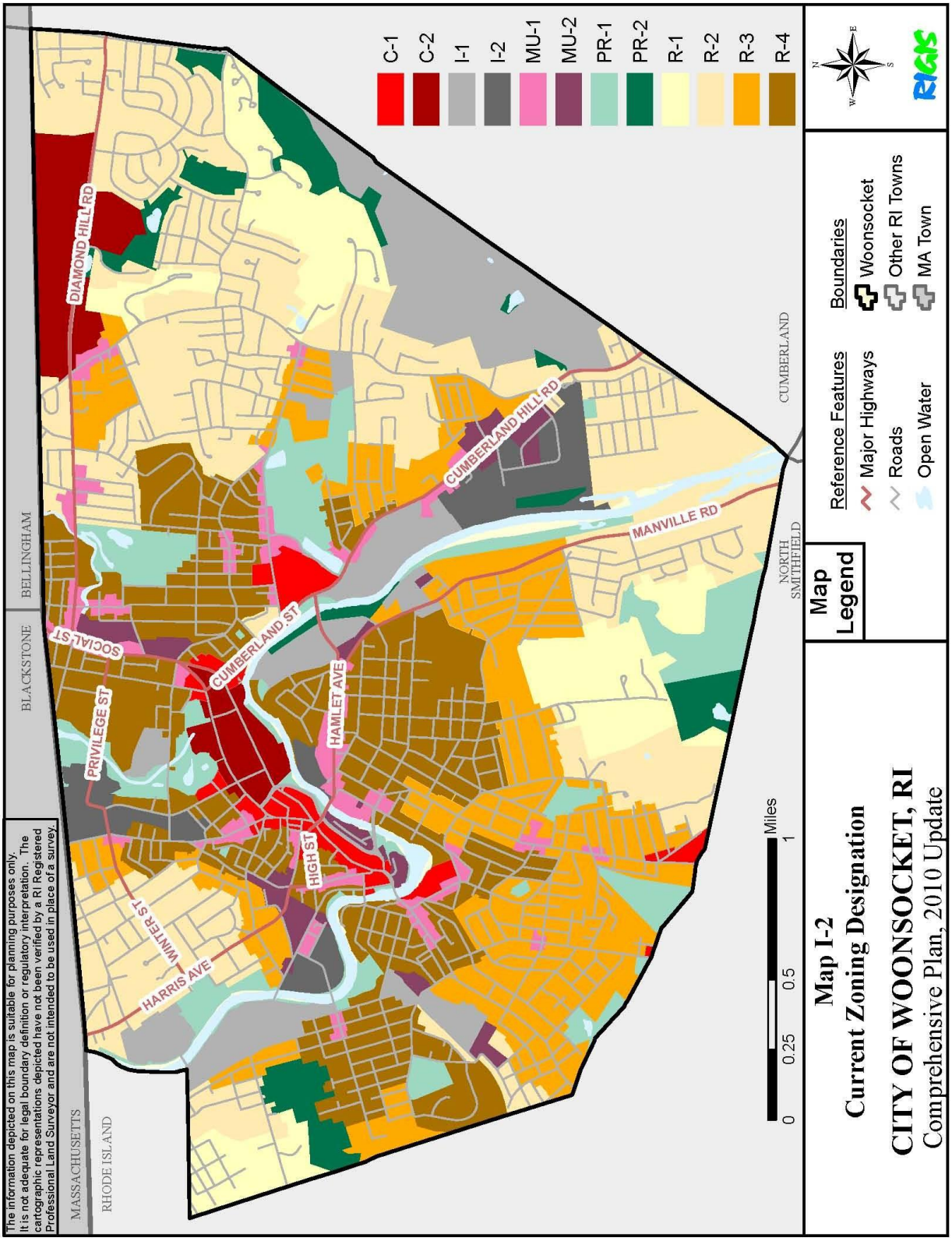
Much of the City's population lives in the older areas of the north and west sides of the City. These areas are characterized by distinct neighborhoods of small lots and multi-family dwellings. Eastern Woonsocket, and to some extent the southern portion of Woonsocket, are where most of the new residential development areas are located. The majority of these newer developments are composed of single-family units, and are more suburban in nature than their earlier counterparts (see Housing Element). Map I-2 shows the City’s existing residential zones.

The minimum lot size in the most densely zoned residential district is 6,000 square feet. Under the old platting system, however, 5,000 square feet was recognized as the minimum lot size. From *Table I-3* it can be seen that nearly 1/3 of the City's housing units are dimensionally


The information depicted on this map is suitable for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation. The cartographic representations depicted have not been verified by a RI Registered Professional Land Surveyor and are not intended to be used in place of a survey.
MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
NORTH SMITHFIELD
BLACKSTONE
BELLINGHAM
CUMBERLAND
LINCOLN
NORTH SMITHFIELD
DIAMOND HILL RD
SOCIAL ST
PRIVILEGE ST
CUMBERLAND ST
HAMLET AVE
HIGH ST
WINTER ST
HARRIS AVE
CUMBERLAND HILL RD
MANVILLE RD
LAND USES
Commercial (sale of products and services)
Commercial/Industrial Mixed
Industrial (manufacturing, design, assembly, etc.)
Institutional (schools, hospitals, churches, etc.)
Water and Sewage Treatment
Pasture (agricultural not suitable for tillage)
Cemeteries
Residential
Recreation/Open Space
Undeveloped Land
Map Legend
Reference Features
Major Highways
Roads
Open Water
Boundaries
Woonsocket
Other RI Towns
MA Town
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
Map I-1
Existing Land Use
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update

non-conforming on that basis alone. In addition, a significant number of units are non-conforming because they are either undersized for the required minimum lot size in multi-family zones, or are multi-family structures in single-family zones.

The distribution of Woonsocket's commercial establishments has changed over the past 40 years. Prior to the late 1960s, the downtown Main Street Area was clearly the center of Woonsocket's commercial activity. Since that time, the development of strip malls along Diamond Hill Road, and the redevelopment of the Social District, have led to the relocation of many financial, retail and service establishments, and the spiraling decline of the Main Street Area.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CUMBERLAND ST
HAMLET AVE
HIGH ST
WINTER ST
HARRIS AVE
CUMBERLAND HILL RD
MANVILLE RD
C-1
C-2
I-1
I-2
MU-1
MU-2
PR-1
PR-2
R-1
R-2
R-3
R-4
Map Legend
Reference Features
Major Highways
Roads
Open Water
Boundaries
Woonsocket
Other RI Towns
MA Town
0
0.25
0.5
1
Miles
Map I-2
Current Zoning Designation
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update

TABLE I-2
BREAKDOWN OF ZONING DESIGNATIONS BY LOT AND AREA
CITY OF WOONSOCKET

	Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Public Recreation	Mixed Use
Total Lots	9,317	251	223	99	610
Total Acres	2,798	252	554	533	192
% Total Acreage	64.6	5.8	12.8	12.3	4.5
Total Housing Units	18,757				

Source: RIGIS, 2000 Census

TABLE I-3
RESIDENTIAL LAND USES
CITY OF WOONSOCKET

	Citywide	Zoned Residential	Zoned Residential Under 6,000 Square Ft.
Total Lots	10,500	9,317	3,300
Total Acreage	4,315	3,100	370
Total Housing Units	18,757		

Source: RIGIS, 2000 Census

Over the years, smaller commercial corridors and centers have also developed at Park Square and along Park Avenue, Providence Street, Mendon Road, and Cumberland Hill Road. In addition, a number of commercial enterprises have been established in numerous pockets throughout the City's neighborhoods and along its major thoroughfares.

The majority of the City's industrially zoned property consists of numerous old mill complexes, many of which are sited along the Blackstone River and railroad lines. While a significant number of these mill complexes are vacant and considered candidates for redevelopment, no sizable parcels of unimproved industrially zoned land can be found for new development. A certain number of vacant parcels do exist, but these sites are relatively small, scattered pieces. Poor access, wetlands, severe topography on relatively small parcels, and proximity to residential neighborhoods are constraints to their future industrial development. Therefore, redevelopment of existing industrial facilities and industrially zoned parcels appears to be Woonsocket's only real option. (See Economic Development Element.)

Two exceptions to the City's lack of prime industrial land are found in the Woonsocket and Highland Park Industrial Parks. The Woonsocket Industrial Park, off of Cumberland Hill Road, was developed as the site of a number of automobile dealerships. The Highland Industrial Park in East Woonsocket is the newest and most attractive modern industrial facility in the area. This park is currently at capacity, and has limited potential for expansion in Woonsocket.

Issues

Changing Needs

Today's society wrestles with increased concerns for the preservation of open space, agricultural land and natural resources, and for a solution to shrinking energy reserves. In light of these concerns, the concentration of industry, homes and commerce represented in Woonsocket's historic pattern of growth, the prototypic "cluster" development has a new attractiveness. There is a growing positive recognition and appreciation of Woonsocket's dense, urban character, and unlike its more rural neighbors, Woonsocket welcomes the expansion of industry and business in the City.

Woonsocket's population has been declining from a high of 50,211 in 1950 to 41,186 in 2010. At the same time, Woonsocket's elderly population has been increasing and the City's total minority population has increased to 22.3%. The need for affordable housing in the Northern Rhode Island region is great, thus Woonsocket, like the rest of the Northeast, has seen an increase in demand for housing that is related to life-style changes, rather than to increases in population. (See Housing Element.)

Future Development

Woonsocket has very few large undeveloped sites available for new development, and the few areas that exist have severe site constraints. (See Open Space Element.) The remaining large tracts of undeveloped, privately held land fall in four areas of the City: including the areas north of Rhodes Avenue, east of Jillson Avenue, land to the east of Mendon Road around the Iron Rock Brook, and land west of the Booth Pond Conservation Area.

Redevelopment

Apart from the possible development of the parcels referenced above, most future residential development in Woonsocket will consist of rehabilitation and infill in the City's older, dense neighborhoods. The critical issue today in regard to density is not the number of people housed in a certain area, but the number of cars to be accommodated. This is demonstrated in *Table I-4*.

TABLE I-4
AUTOMOBILE AVAILABILITY: 1960 – 2000
CITY OF WOONSOCKET

Number of Cars per Occupied Housing Unit	1960		1970		1980		1990		2000	
	Number	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*
No Car	4,366	28.5	3,566	23.2	3,529	20.4	2,740	15.6	3,076	17.3
One Car	9,318	61.2	8,561	54.7	7,889	45.5	7,481	42.6	7,320	41.2
Two Cars	1,334	8.7	3,252	20.6	4,394	25.4	5,481	31.2	5,515	31.1
Three or More Cars	293	2.1	444	2.8	1,516	8.7	1,870	10.6	1,839	10.4
Total Occupied Housing Units	15,311	100	15,823	100	17,328	100	17,572	100	17,750	100

Note: Numbers and/or percents may not add to total due to rounding
Source: US Census

Standards for minimum residential parking areas should be established to limit the impact on area traffic congestion, storm-water runoff, and the loss of green space in the City. Rental garage facilities may be needed in the most densely developed neighborhoods.

Woonsocket faces enormous challenges to the stimulation of economic development within its boundaries. Redevelopment of the City's plentiful supply of mill buildings appears to be the most viable option for new industry. Since many of these older mills require extensive rehabilitation to meet building codes and to adapt to current manufacturing or business needs, special incentives and creative financing options must be investigated. (See Economic Development Element.)

Access and Circulation

In addition to its lack of readily developable industrial property, Woonsocket suffers from a lack of adequate access. The railroad service that once connected many of the City's industrial areas has been cut back, and the City has been by-passed by the major highway systems in the area. Woonsocket's street system is confusing and difficult for truck navigation. The completion of Route 99 changed the orientation of the City, by providing a new and more direct access.

While it is intended to serve the Industrial Park, it also connected 146/146A and 295 with the eastern and northern sections of the City, resulting in a significant entry to the downtown via Mendon Road, Cumberland Hill Road, and through the Social District. Its completion relieved some of the traffic burdens on Park Avenue and Hamlet Avenue, and, at the same time, increased traffic on Cumberland Hill and Mendon Roads. (See Circulation Element.)

The circulation pattern in the Main Street area has improved since Main Street's re-establishment as a two-way street. Improvements have also been made at both Market Square and Depot Square to improve existing operating conditions and provide an acceptable level-of-service.

Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor

Untapped potential may be found in Woonsocket's wealth of historic and natural resources. These resources require protection and enhancement of their character, and may themselves provide economic development opportunities. It is not only Woonsocket's architecture, but the dense integration of commerce, industry housing, civic and social centers -- the very way its builders adapted its topography and harnessed the power of the Blackstone River -- that provide evidence of the history of the City. This history has been granted national recognition and significance with the establishment of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. Heritage Corridor development can provide the stimulus and multiply the benefits of resource protection programs. (See Heritage Corridor and Natural & Cultural Resource Elements.)

The Heritage Corridor, with its numerous historic buildings, natural beauty and aesthetic potential, ties together the cities and towns of the Blackstone Valley and places a heightened importance on the development of the riverfront. The significance that the City attaches to the Heritage Corridor, the value the City places on its industrial heritage and the importance of the river as a natural resource will be reflected in that development. Woonsocket's interest in preserving its distinctive character should be protected through appropriate land use initiatives.

The City should produce a combined master plan for parks, interpretation and tourism development along the river as was done with the cleanup and development of the River's Edge Recreational Complex. The development of this master plan should be coordinated with the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, the Woonsocket Heritage Corridor Planning and Advisory Commission, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM), and the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT). The master plan should include plans for the development of land adjacent to the planned Blackstone River Bikeway. (See Open Space & Recreation Element.)

Municipal Facilities

The City's chief facility concerns, now and in the future, are for its schools. The City struggles to provide modern grade school education in visibly aging buildings, some of which are over 100 years old. Yet there is a strong sentiment in the community not to abandon these old sites. As elementary enrollment is expected to increase gradually in the near future, the School Department must develop a plan for refurbishing the old structures, while undertaking limited new construction to meet future programmatic and population demands. In August 2007, the voters of Woonsocket passed a major bond referendum, authorizing the city to replace the outdated Woonsocket Middle School with a new middle school campus, complete with two smaller, 800-pupil capacity middle schools and athletic fields. The new middle schools opened in

the fall of 2009 and are located at the site of the former Lafayette Worsted mill complex at Hamlet Avenue and Florence Drive.

Another area of concern involves waste disposal. Woonsocket currently depends on the State landfill to meet its need. There is no possibility that the City, with its limited available space, can accommodate landfill operations within its borders. (See Services and Facilities Element.)

Compatibility of Land Uses with Adjacent Communities

Informal meetings were held with planners from neighboring communities in Rhode Island. The expansion of the Highland Industrial Park has been a joint effort between the City of Woonsocket and the Town of Cumberland with assistance from the Blackstone Valley Development Corporation. Nearly all vacant parcels in Woonsocket's Highland I have been sold and developed, and there is little opportunity for expansion in the Woonsocket portion of the industrial park. More vacant land is available in Cumberland's Highland II area.

The Forte Brothers quarry site lies both in Cumberland and in Woonsocket. The site is zoned for industrial use in Cumberland but exists as a non-conforming use in a residential zone in Woonsocket. Appropriate future use of the quarry site could be as an office or research park.

Woonsocket is fortunate to have an ample water supply and has made strides in providing water for residential uses to North Smithfield with an improved delivery system. There is potential to sell water to the Town of Blackstone, MA as well.

Woonsocket and the Town of Lincoln share a limited boundary, and the area along this boundary is along the Blackstone River and primarily undeveloped. The City installed a direct temporary water connection to provide water to Lincoln at a time when water was not being supplied to the town from the Scituate Reservoir.

The East Coast Greenway bike trail is anticipated to extend to the boundary Woonsocket shares with the Town of Blackstone, MA in the year 2013. The Town of Bellingham, MA plans to improve pedestrian and bicycle access along Pulaski Boulevard (Rt. 126). This project has the potential to connect to improved pedestrian and bicycle projects in Woonsocket.

Proposed Zoning Revisions

Procedure

As required by the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act of 1988, the City of Woonsocket will be revising its Zoning Ordinance and Map within eighteen months of the acceptance of the Comprehensive Plan. Major revisions in the definition of commercial zones and the addition of mixed-use zones are among the initiatives the City will be incorporating into the text of its revised Zoning Ordinance. Definitions and regulation of newer uses, such as home day-care, drive-thru services and franchises, and the revision of parking allowances are also recommended.

Furthermore, amendments to the ordinance should promote smart growth principles that may include the use of form based codes and strive towards becoming a sustainable community.

The anticipated schedule for the process of revising the City's Zoning Ordinance is as follows:

•Months 1-5:	Staff member of the Department of Planning and Development will write the first draft.
•Month 6:	Series of neighborhood meetings to receive citizen input about specific Zoning revisions.
•Month 7:	Citizen Advisory meetings about the Year One update of the Implementation Schedule of the Comprehensive Plan. Any proposed amendments will be discussed at this time.
•Month 10:	Meeting with the Zoning Officer and members of the Zoning Board of Review to solicit input and alleviate potential inconsistencies.
•Month 11:	Second draft of the revised Zoning Ordinance presented at a public hearing before the Planning Board.
•Month 12:	Year One Implementation Schedule update and amendments to Comprehensive Plan presented at a public hearing to the Planning Board.
•Month 13:	Recommendation of Plan and Zoning Ordinance revisions to City Council by Planning Board.
•Month 14:	Public hearing before City Council.
•Month 15:	Adoption of Revisions by ordinance by City Council by second passage.

Ordinance Revisions

The City's existing Zoning Ordinance is based on underlying assumptions about the separation of land uses and the perceived need to decrease the density of human habitation. The

overlay of this ordinance on Woonsocket's built environment of intermixed land uses results in a pre-existing situation where much of the City does not conform to the Zoning Ordinance. Map I-3 is the City's Future Land Use Plan, serving as a basis for changes to the zoning map.

The assumptions reflected in the current Zoning Ordinance have been characterized as inflexible and unnecessarily burdensome to the people affected. A prevalence of non-conforming uses has led to considerable expense and inconvenience for both the City and property owners, through the filing of an excessive number of applications for variances with the Woonsocket Zoning Board of Review. Considerable support exists for the development of a more flexible set of regulations for the convenience and welfare of the people living and doing business in Woonsocket.

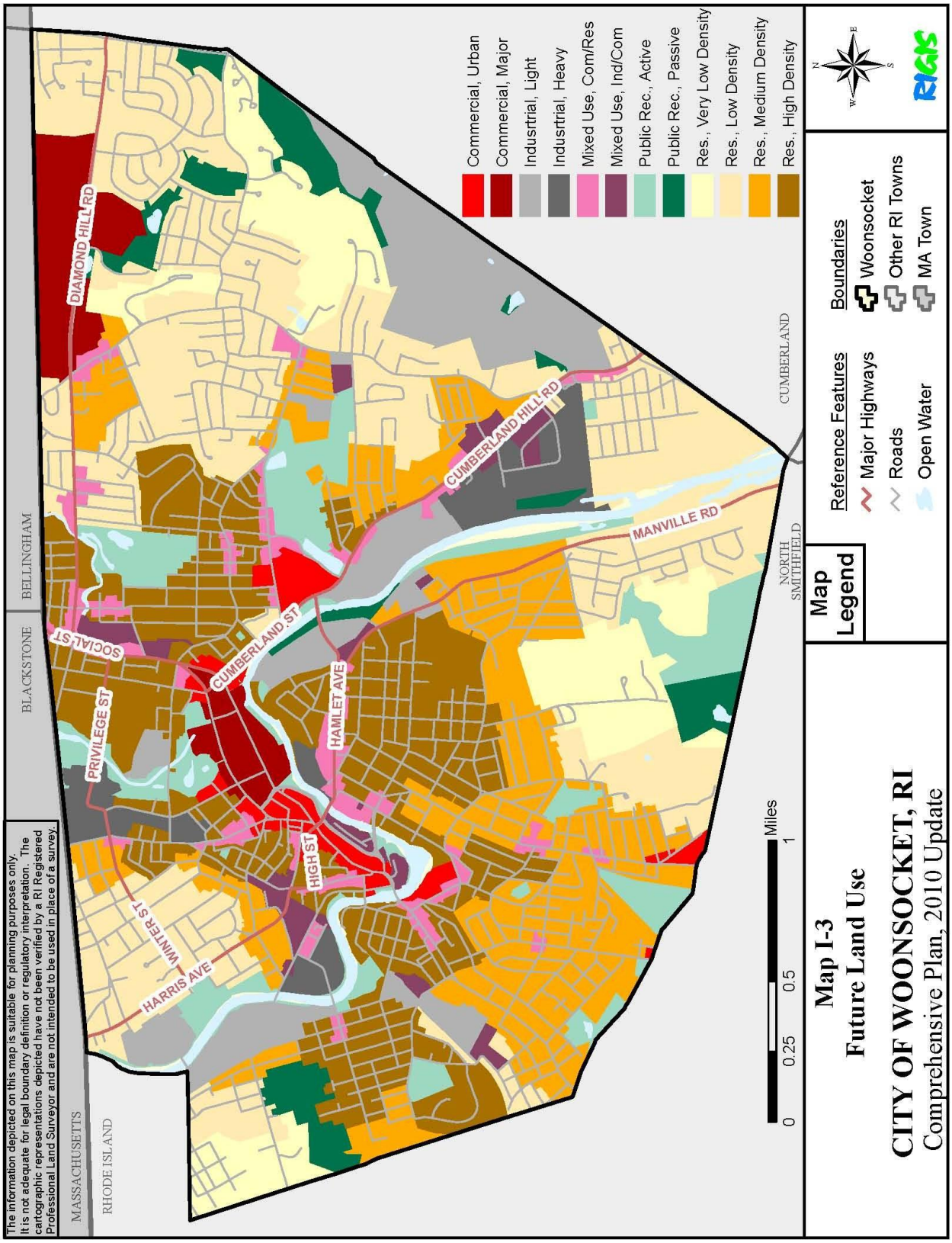
While piecemeal revisions and individual amendments have been made to the Zoning Ordinance since 1971, no overall coordinated revision has been undertaken. Changing social trends, such as the impact of the smaller family unit, have been reflected in applications for variances and special exceptions. The City now has an opportunity to assess and plan for such social changes in ordinance form, and to rezone the City to reduce the number of non-conforming uses, where feasible and consistent with the purposes of zoning. Woonsocket's patterns of pre-existing mixed land use should be reflected as a positive feature in a revised Zoning Ordinance.

A number of specific revisions are recommended for responding to development pressures and controlling land use in Woonsocket. Some are protective, while others facilitate and encourage development and provide direction. The proposed amendments are as follows:

1. Historic District Zoning: A Historic District zone should be delineated to protect cultural resources within the City. (refer to Natural and Cultural Resources chapter)
2. Main Street Overlay: A Main Street Overlay district should be delineated to protect the architectural character of the downtown area. (refer to Natural and Cultural Resources or Heritage Corridor chapter)
3. Design Review Guidelines: Specific guidelines should be adopted to guide the Design Review Commission. (refer to Heritage Corridor chapter)
4. Subdivision Regulations: The Subdivision Regulations should be amended to better define Major Land Developments.

Zoning Ordinance Revisions:

5. Mixed Use-1 Zoning District: The language of the MU-1 zoning district should be improved to better meet needs of commercial developments.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SOCIAL ST
PRIVILEGE ST
CUMBERLAND ST
HAMLET AVE
HIGH ST
WINTER ST
HARRIS AVE
CUMBERLAND HILL RD
MANVILLE RD
Commercial, Urban
Commercial, Major
Industrtrial, Light
Industrtrial, Heavy
Mixed Use, Com/Res
Mixed Use, Ind/Com
Public Rec., Active
Public Rec., Passive
Res., Very Low Density
Res., Low Density
Res., Medium Density
Res., High Density
Map Legend
Reference Features
Major Highways
Roads
Open Water
Boundaries
Woonsocket
Other RI Towns
MA Town
0
0.25
0.5
1
Miles
Map I-3
Future Land Use
CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RI
Comprehensive Plan, 2010 Update

Performance Criteria for Industrial Use

Woonsocket's traditional built pattern of industrial intermixed with residential uses requires better controls on industrial impacts. The current Zoning Ordinance regulates industrial development chiefly by product. This method is both out of date and difficult to apply. Furthermore, there is not always an accurate linkage between the product manufactured and whether the process can be regarded as a "light " or "heavy" industrial use.

The City should establish performance criteria to regulate the level of intensity of industrial land uses, in place of the current method of industrial classification based on materials produced by an industrial user. These performance criteria should define the Light Industrial and Heavy Industrial zones in regard to varying levels of noise (including operation and shipping), traffic generation, air pollution, sewer usage and solid waste production, water quality, odors, hazardous materials, storm-water management, erosion control, site design criteria, landscaping, and exterior lighting.

Through the adoption of performance criteria, the City can avoid the reduction of limited industrial land by allowing parcels in close proximity to environmentally sensitive areas, such as properties along the Blackstone River, to be developed under stringent performance criteria.

Amend the Existing Mixed Use Residential and Commercial Zone (MU-1)

Prior to the advent of the automobile and the expanded transportation system, people lived, worked and shopped in close proximity to each of life's activities. People generally walked more and traditional neighborhood commercial nodes were the center of activity. Updating the Mixed Use (MU-1) zone is in keeping with this traditional design, and will provide opportunities for neighborhood commercial land uses. Some of the language within the Zoning Ordinance should be modified as part of a future Zoning Ordinance update. More specifically, regulations such as the maximum gross floor area allowed per establishment within the MU-1 zone is limiting at 3,000 square feet should be revisited, along with other regulations, to provide more realistic standards for today's commercial needs and to reduce the need for variances from the Zoning Board of Review. Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance should also address inconsistencies in the current ordinance, clarifications for any ambiguous language, expanded language where deemed necessary, and the elimination of sections that are no longer pertinent.

<u>Revision of Design Review Ordinance</u>
Development in commercial areas, and development of certain commercial uses in non-commercial areas, is currently regulated by the City's Design Review Commission. Specific guidelines for Design Review should be developed to assist the property owner in appropriate design from the start of a project. These guidelines should guide development according to separate criteria for the varying Urban Commercial, Shopping Plaza and Mixed Use zones.

In addition, limited authority, at the discretion of the Design Review Commission should be given to the Planning Department to approve minor design review applications, in lieu of full Commission approval.

Franchises and Context

The City recognizes that franchise logos and other signifiers are important to guide customers and to aid recognition. However these logos and signifiers must not do violence to the local character and context of the community. A franchise stands to benefit from the good will it can engender by demonstrating that it understands and respects the community's values and is willing to be a "good neighbor". Thus, the Zoning Ordinance should discourage franchise operations from demolishing existing buildings to build new ones. The Ordinance should further ensure that historic properties are redeveloped under the appropriate standards for rehabilitation, and that corporate design elements, for new or old buildings, meet Design Review guidelines.

Review of Parking Requirements

Parking requirements for commercial establishments have been described as overly restrictive. The City should undertake a review of these requirements, and amend them, where necessary, according to accepted standards.

Policy on Unbuildable Parcels

There are currently lots in the City which are too small, dimensionally awkward, land-locked, or located without frontage on an accepted street. The Zoning Ordinance should include a policy statement regarding the disposal of these parcels, which are presently undevelopable by right. Definitions of allowable uses and creative approaches should be listed, such as:

•Combination with adjacent lot;
•Provision of accepted street access; and
•Use for garden, garage, neighborhood parking structure, children's playhouse or other structures.

Increased Set-back Requirements on Major Streets

Certain streets in Woonsocket are already handling traffic volumes over their design capacity, or can be expected to do so in the near future. In order to limit the potential impacts of street widening and other improvements, it is recommended that appropriate setback requirements be applied to new construction on those streets to allow for future street widening.

Definitions

The revised Zoning Ordinance should contain all appropriate definitions, with pictorial displays to clarify definitions, where necessary. To prevent misinterpretation and confusion, the definition of a term appearing in the Zoning Ordinance should be identical to the definition of the same term as it appears in any other City ordinance. Among the terms that should be defined include the following:

•Mapped Streets;
•Paper streets;
•Approved streets;
•Grand-fathered uses; and

- Areas of impact on flood zones, wetlands, and other natural, cultural, or archaeological resources.

The last step in revising Woonsocket's Zoning Ordinance should be the correction of any inconsistencies been subsections of the Ordinance and between the Zoning Ordinance and other City ordinances. Revision of the Subdivision, Planned Residential Development and Minimum Housing Ordinances, to conform with the revised Zoning Ordinance will also be necessary.

Future Land Use and Zoning Map Changes

For years, Woonsocket did not have direct access to the interstate system. The completion of Route 99 has clearly provided direct access resulting in increased traffic along Mendon Road, Cumberland Hill Road and Diamond Hill Road. The most significant land use change with the Comprehensive Plan 2011 Update is the expansion of portions of the primary transportation corridors in the City to Mixed Use.

1. Mendon Road: With the completion of Route 99, traffic volume has increased significantly along Mendon Road. The additional traffic makes these roadways less suitable for strict residential uses and more appropriate for mixed and commercial uses. Additional amendments from Mixed Use to Major Commercial are recommended along Mendon Road near Diamond Hill Road adjacent to at the former Vermette's Restaurant site.

2. Cumberland Hill Road: With the completion of Route 99, traffic volume has increased significantly along Cumberland Hill Road as well. As with Mendon Road, the heavily traveled roadway is less suitable for residential uses and more appropriate for mixed uses. Amending the land use designation for these parcels from Residential to Mixed Use, and from Industrial to Mixed Use will provide for neighborhood commercial opportunities. Additionally, some parcels located along Mendon Road, and adjacent to Highland Park, are suitable for expansion of the Highland Park Industrial Park. Several parcels, therefore, are proposed to be amended from R-2 to I-1.

3. Park Avenue: Park Avenue is a major transportation route into the City receiving traffic from Route 146A and connecting Park Square to the downtown area. The land use designation for parcels along the west side of Park Avenue, from Park square to the existing Mixed Use district near the intersection with Vose Street, is recommended to be amended from Residential to Mixed Use.

4. Social Street: Much of Social Street is currently designated as Mixed Use or Commercial. Given the steady flow of through traffic along this thoroughfare, a portion of the west side of Social Street that is currently designated as Residential would be amended to Mixed Use.

In addition to the sites recommended to be amended to Mixed Use, the site of Our Lady Queen of Martyrs is currently designated as Residential. This location, at Park Square, is one of the primary access points into the city with high traffic volume. A church use is appropriate in

any zone; however, should the church ever close, the site would be most suitable as a commercial use. Therefore, it is appropriate to amend the land use designation for this site from Residential to Commercial.

Map I-3: Future Land Use shows the desired future land uses for the City of Woonsocket. Due to the scale of Map I-3, the following serves as a list of all the official changes to the Future Land Use Map in the 2011 Update. All changes are reflected on Map I-3. As required by State law, the City's Zoning Map will be amended to reflect these proposed changes in land use within eighteen months of the date of approval of the 2011 Update.

LAND USE CHANGE	LOCATION/ACREAGE	REASON
Active Public Recreation to Passive Public Recreation	Booth Pond Conservation Area Plat 26 Lot 2 & Plat 33 Lots 1, 5 & 19	Area is part of City's Booth Pond Conservation Area
Medium Density Residential to Mixed Use Res./Com.	Westerly side of Park Avenue from south of Ormond St northward to St. Vose St Plat 11 Lots 29, 93, 94, 97, 98, 110, 114, 141, 143, 144, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151,152,153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 268, 269, 337 and Lots 16-146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 152, 372, 390, 391, 392, 395 & 401	To allow for greater commercial activity and to make conforming existing nonconformities. Park Avenue is a central thoroughfare into the city, connecting the commercialized Park Square area with the center of the city, as such additional small-scale commercial activities would be appropriate on this corridor
Medium Density Residential to Urban Commercial	Northwest corner of Park Avenue and Eddie Dowling Hwy: Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Church and School Plat 11 Lot 91	Parcel sits at a major intersection off of Rte 146A in commercialized Park Square. Should church ever close, this parcel's best use would be commercial
Medium Density Residential to Urban Commercial	Southwest corner of Providence St and Avenue A Plat 5 Lot 48	Expands commercial growth potential of this area, which is close to the commercialized intersection at Smithfield Rd and Providence St
Low Density Residential to Mixed Use Com./Ind.	All residential lots along Carriere Ave to Cumberland Hill Road Plat 43 Lots 4, 7, 10, 11, 14, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 27, 51 & 52	Limited areas available for industrial expansion. This area is surrounded by commercial and industrial activities.
Active Public Recreation to Passive Public Recreation	Between Transit, St. Vose, and Ward Streets Plat 16 Lot 33	Area is surrounded by residential homes, most appropriate use is for passive recreation
High Density Residential to Mixed Use Res./Com.	East of Buxton St along the northerly side of Parker St - Plat 10 Lots 316, 367, 368 & 378	Expands existing mixed use to allow for commercial activities

Medium and High Density Residential to Mixed Use Res./Com.	North and south sides of New St. - Plat 10 Lots 328, 411, 413, 416, 439, 445, 446 & 447	Improves existing non-conforming land use
Mixed Use Res./Com. to Urban Commercial	Northeast corner of Front and Transit Streets - Plat 16 Lots 59, 60, 61, 127 & 324	Correct land use nonconformity
Mixed Use Ind./Com to Low Density Residential	Southeast and northeast of the intersection of Asylum and Roberta Streets Plat 4 Lots 31, 67, 136, 171, 250, 271, 272, 273 & 274	Correct land use nonconformity and remove industrial/commercial zoning from established residential neighborhood
Medium Density Residential to Mixed Use Res./Com.	Easterly side of Cumberland Hill Road from Arthur Ave to past Park Dr Plat 41 Lots 26, 29 (a portion), 114, 164, 211, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217 & 223	Expands commercial activity potential of Cumberland Hill Road, a major thoroughfare through the city.
Light Industrial to Mixed Use Com./Ind.	Westerly side of Cumberland Hill Rd roughly across from Cady St and extending southward Plat 41 Lots 21, 147, 149 & 150	Expands commercial activity potential of Cumberland Hill Road, a major thoroughfare through the city.
Light Industrial to Mixed Use Res./Com.	Southeastern intersection of Hamlet Ave and Davison St Plat 28 Lot 12	To assist with the redevelopment and reuse of the French Worsted mill complex for mixed use, residential and commercial
Mixed Use Com./Ind. To Mixed Use Res./Com.	The Allen Street Lofts Plat 14 Lots 15, 16, 154, 155, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 184, 185, 186, 342, 390, 407, 416, 418 & 428	To correct land use nonconformity
Mixed Use Com./Ind. To Mixed Use Res./Com.	Plat 15 Lot 16 on Front Street	To correct land use nonconformity
Heavy Industrial to Passive Public Recreation	"The Island" parcel on Fairmount Street, Plat 8 Lot 151	To create new park along Blackstone River for Fairmount Neighborhood.
Low Density Residential to Mixed Use Res./Com.	West side of Mendon Road Plat 43 Part of Lot 17 and Plat 44 Lots 6, 7, 52, 320, 321, 322, 324, 327, 330 & 338	Includes properties with access along Mendon Road that are currently commercial use.
Passive Public Recreation to Active Public Recreation	Bissonette Field/East Woonsocket Park, plat 57 Lot 2 (a portion)	Area is an active playfield
Medium Density Residential to Mixed Use Res./Com.	Areas near the intersection of Cass Ave and Mendon Rd Plat 49 Lots 89, 118, 121, 124, 125 & 134 (a portion)	Expands commercial activity potential of Mendon Rd, an important corridor that connects Rte 99 with Diamond Hill Rd.

Mixed Use Res./Com. to Major Commercial	Parking lot for the former Vermette's southeastern corner of Diamond Hill and Mendon Rd, Lot 46-183	Expand city's primary major commercial area
Urban Commercial/ Active Public Recreation to Passive Public Recreation	Blackstone River embankment Plat 22 Lots 49, 47, 48, 69, 162, 172 and Plat 27 Lots 153, 154, 155, 164, 166 & 174	Correct error on zoning map, land is part of city's flood control area
Light Industrial, Passive and Active Public Recreation to High Density Residential	New Middle School Campus at Hamlet Ave and Florence Dr Plat 27 Lot 165	All city schools are zoned residential, changing this land use with the opening of the new middle schools to remain consistent with other school's land use coding.
High Density Residential to Mixed Use Com./Ind.	Mill property on East Mill St, Plat 35 Lot 250	To correct land use nonconformity
Mixed Use Com./Ind. to High Density Residential	River Bend Apartments on Mill St, Plat 35 Lot 12	To correct land use nonconformity
High Density Residential to Mixed Use Res./Com.	Westerly side of Social St between East School and Privilege Streets Plat 21 Lots 48, 110, 154, 159, 161, 165, 176, 179, 180, 181, 189, 197, 198, 206, 209, 253 & 283	To allow for greater commercial activity and to make conforming existing nonconformities. Social Street is a central thoroughfare into the city, connecting the center of the City with Massachusetts, as such additional small-scale commercial activities would be appropriate on this corridor
Low Density Single-Family Residential and Passive Public Recreation to Light Industrial	Areas around Cumberland Hill Road and Mendon Road Plat 51 Lots 1, 4 & 17	To expand industrial opportunities adjacent to Highland Park
Medium Density Residential to Light Industrial	Second Avenue at Rhodes Avenue. Plat 6 Lot 52	To correct land use nonconformity
Low Density Residential to High Density Residential	Plat 37 Lot 4	To conform to existing high density residential use
Light Industrial to High Density Residential	Plat 6 Lots 63, 252 & 254	To conform to existing high density residential use

Goals and Policies

The City's Land Use Plan can be seen as the physical, geographical interpretation of the other subject areas of this plan. Therefore, through the City's powers to regulate land use, the City will strive toward the following goals and policies:

GOAL LU-1
To allow for flexible development by increasing options available to property owners.

GOAL LU-2
To retain the City's character through the application of its regulatory functions.

POLICY LU-2.1
Developing specific design guidelines for Design Review to assist property owners in appropriate design.

IMPLEMENTATION LU-2.1.a
Grant limited authority to the Planning Department, at the discretion of the Design Review Commission, for the review and approval of minor Design Review applications in lieu of full Commission review.

IMPLEMENTATION LU-2.1.b
Continue to ensure that minimum landscape requirements are included in new development and redevelopment projects within the City's commercial and mixed-use districts.

GOAL LU-3
To ensure housing availability appropriate to the income levels of the residents of the City by:

POLICY LU-3.1
Providing for a balanced range of housing; and

IMPLEMENTATION LU-3.1.a
Amend the Zoning Ordinance to provide criteria for group homes, homeless shelters, and day care facilities in conformance with State law.

POLICY LU-3.2
Encouraging the provision of affordable housing opportunities in the Northern Rhode Island region.

GOAL LU-4
To support the industrialized nature of the City and make necessary adaptations to meet modern developmental constraints by:

POLICY LU-4.1
Establishing and protecting for industrial use those few remaining undeveloped areas in the City that can feasibly support such use; and

IMPLEMENTATION LU-4.1.a
Develop and enforce broad base performance criteria for the regulation of all industrial uses, with regard to varying degrees of noise, traffic generation, air pollution, sewer usage. Solid waste production, effects on water quality, production of odors, the use or storage of hazardous materials, stormwater management, erosion control, site design, landscaping and exterior lighting.

POLICY LU-4.2
Allowing for innovative adaptation and mixed uses in the City's aging mill structures.

GOAL LU-5
To protect Woonsocket's few remaining natural areas and preserve and enhance the physical remains and sites associated with its cultural heritage by:

POLICY LU-5.1
Incorporating natural and cultural resource protection in its development and redevelopment processes; and

IMPLEMENTATION LU-5.1.a
Continue to administer the Soil Erosion Control Ordinance prevent non-point source pollution of the City’s water bodies, and to preserve the integrity of Woonsocket’s landscape.

POLICY LU-5.2
Exploring the possibly of acquisition of critical resource areas.

POLICY LU-5.3
Delineating the boundaries for Historic Districts within the City, establish Historic District zoning, and reestablish a Historic District Commission.

POLICY LU-5.4
Ensure that the City will not extend water or sewer into “Very Low Density” or “Low Density” unless accompanied by a Comprehensive Plan amendment to the Future land use map.

GOAL LU-6
To effectively implement the Goals of the City while protecting the rights of individuals by:

POLICY LU-6.1
Developing a revised Zoning Ordinance, consistent with the Goals of the Comprehensive Plan;

POLICY LU-6.2
Reviewing and revising all land use regulatory measures to ensure consistency;

POLICY LU-6.3
Streamlining the regulatory process; and

POLICY LU-6.4
Providing training for agents of the City on the consistent application of their powers.

GOAL LU-7
To provide access to open space for all its residents and bring environmental values into the City by:

POLICY LU-7.1
Providing a variety of recreational areas and facilities for all residential areas in the community; and

POLICY LU-7.2
Preserving and protecting significant undeveloped and environmentally sensitive areas through acquisition and regulatory programs.

GOAL LU-8
To plan for Land Use pressures anticipated with the development of new access routes to the City and improve its accommodation of automobiles by:

POLICY LU-8.1
Reviewing land use policies along those areas directly affected by the completion of Route 99 and the Heritage Corridor Bikeway; and

IMPLEMENTATION LU-8.1.a
Amend the Land Use designation for some parcels along heavily traveled roadways to Mixed Use Residential and Commercial.

POLICY LU-8.2
Setting appropriate standards for parking and site layouts in its regulatory processes.

GOAL LU-9
To encourage the development of the Heritage Corridor by:

POLICY LU-9.1
Continuing to develop recreational areas related to the Corridor system; and

IMPLEMENTATION LU-9.1.a
Produce a Master Plan for parks, interpretation and tourism development along the river.

POLICY LU-9.2
Continuing to review all development proposals on parcels within the Heritage Corridor River Overlay District to ensure environmental protection and visual integrity to this critical area.

IMPLEMENTATION LU-9.2.a
Explore opportunities to provide public access to the river.

GOALS AND POLICIES

HERITAGE CORRIDOR

GOAL HC-1
The City's historical, cultural, and natural resources are protected and preserved in an integrated manner.

POLICY HC-1.1
Protect the Blackstone River and its tributaries as the primary natural resource in the Blackstone Valley.

POLICY HC-1.2
Preserve Woonsocket's significant historic structures as valuable heritage resources in the Blackstone Valley.

GOAL HC-2
Woonsocket maintains its Blackstone Valley character through an integrated approach to land use management.

POLICY HC-2.1
Protect key historic, cultural and natural resources utilizing zoning regulations and incentives as tools.

POLICY HC-2.2
Encourage land use near rivers, streams, wetlands, and restrictive soil areas to be environmentally sensitive.

POLICY HC-2.3
Develop and maintain conservation areas and parkland along the Blackstone River and its tributaries, consistent with Heritage Corridor goals.

POLICY HC-2.4
Support economic development projects and initiatives that complement the unique character of the Blackstone Valley.

POLICY HC-2.5
Take a pro-active role in local transportation and RIDOT projects to ensure the consideration of historic, cultural and natural features in the design process.

GOAL HC-3
Woonsocket is fully integrated into and identified as a critical part of the broader Blackstone Valley region.

POLICY HC-3.1
Interpret the Valley's importance and sponsor activities which lead to public education and engagement about Woonsocket's and the Valley's local historic, cultural, and natural resources and their proper use.

POLICY HC-3.2
Pursue and support local projects that support the broader goals of the Heritage Corridor.

POLICY HC-3.3
Expand heritage tourism opportunities as a means of preserving Woonsocket's heritage resources and as a sustainable economic development tool.

GOAL HC-4
Woonsocket is an active supporter of and participant in regional planning efforts within the Blackstone Valley which link the Valley's resources and communities together.

POLICY HC-4.1
Encourage cooperation and consistency with other local communities in planning efforts.

POLICY HC-4.2
Actively engage in Valley-wide partnership projects and initiatives which are consistent with the goals of the Heritage Corridor.

POLICY HC-4.3
Encourage recreation development and programs which emphasize Valley resources and provide links to other communities.

HOUSING

GOAL H-1
Diversify housing options for present and future City residents.

POLICY H-1.1
Encourage the construction of "workforce" housing for middle income residents

POLICY H-1.2
Expand opportunities for the creation of in-law apartments as a means of providing options for extended family members to reside together

POLICY H-1.3
Support the development of live/work dwelling units in structures suitable to such living arrangements as a means of attracting micro-business enterprises and artists to Woonsocket

POLICY H-1.4
Support residential conversion in select underutilized former mill buildings that are no longer practicable as commercial or industrial use

GOAL H-2
Preserve the City's existing housing stock in order to protect the health, safety and financial well-being of City residents

POLICY H-2.1
Promote small scale development that enhances and supports the existing economic and social fabric of the City's neighborhoods

POLICY H-2.2
Recognize and preserve housing and neighborhood resources that contribute to the City's viability and heritage

POLICY H-2.3
Encourage and support the rehabilitation of existing housing units and enforce minimum housing requirements and building codes

GOAL H-3
Improve the stability and desirability of the City's older neighborhoods as places to live

POLICY H-3.1
Institute comprehensive community development and neighborhood revitalization programs

POLICY H-3.2
Structure policies and efforts to benefit existing residents without displacing them

POLICY H-3.3
Institute neighborhood level planning programs

POLICY H-3.4
Develop programs with strong citizen participation components

POLICY H-3.5
Work to increase homeownership in the community to bring the renter to homeowner ratio closer to 1:1

POLICY H-3.6
Develop programs to prevent and mitigate the impact of foreclosures in the community

GOAL H-4
Ensure that existing low income and special needs residents have safe, decent, and affordable places to live

POLICY H-4.1
Prioritize the City's assisted housing units to be designated for the rehabilitation of existing older units

POLICY H-4.2
The City will continue to meet RIGL 45-53 of the Rhode Island Low and Moderate Income Housing Act.

POLICY H-4.3
Ensure that city's homeless shelters have the capacity to meet the needs of the homeless population in Woonsocket

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL ED-1
Stabilize Woonsocket's economic base

POLICY ED-1.1
Retain and ensure the health of Woonsocket's existing businesses

GOAL ED-2
Grow Woonsocket's economy in a balanced and beneficial manner

POLICY ED-2.1
Attract new businesses to the City

POLICY ED-2.2
Expand existing commercial corridors, where appropriate, in the city

GOAL ED-3
Diversify Woonsocket's economy

POLICY ED-3.1
Transition the city from its former history as a manufacturing center

POLICY ED-3.2
Redevelop the city's mill resources for modern uses

POLICY ED-3.3
Promote light industry and small-scale manufacturing in appropriate areas in the city

GOAL ED-4
Identify Woonsocket as a "business-friendly" community

POLICY ED-4.1
Provide a variety of local economic development programs to support business development

POLICY ED-4.2
Work in partnership with the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce on regional and local economic development initiatives

POLICY ED-4.3
Build positive relationships between City Hall and the business community

GOAL ED-5
Support Woonsocket's Main Street as an economic heart of the City

POLICY ED-5.1
Encourage and try to guide new economic activities to the City's historic Main Street area

POLICY ED-5.2
Utilize heritage tourism and the arts as an economic development tool in the Main Street area

POLICY ED-5.3
Support tourism activities in Woonsocket that strengthen Woonsocket's role in the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor

GOAL ED-6
Develop a well-trained workforce

POLICY ED-6.1
Expand employment opportunities with competitive wages and safe quality working environments

GOAL ED-7
The City will integrate the implied and overt value of economic development into all goals and policies within the Comprehensive Plan.

POLICY ED-7.1
Assign the highest priority in the City's municipal capital budgeting and the preparation and submission of grants for state and federal funding for future economic development projects

POLICY ED-7.2
Assign top priority and provide existing City staffing required identify, develop, and pursue all options and opportunities in future economic development

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

GOAL NCR-1
Protect and preserve Woonsocket's unique cultural, historic, and heritage resources.

POLICY NCR-1.1
Support the preservation and awareness of Woonsocket's historic and cultural resources

POLICY NCR-1.2
Utilize innovative land use management tools to ensure that cultural resources are recognized, protected, and preserved.

POLICY NCR-1.3
Value and prioritize Woonsocket's historic Main Street and Blackstone Riverfront as the central focus for historic preservation and revitalization

POLICY NCR-1.4
Focus redevelopment efforts on the adaptive reuse of vacant and underutilized historic structures, especially former mill buildings

GOAL NCR-2
Protect and improve the quality of the City's natural environment

POLICY NCR-2.1
Support efforts to improve the water quality of the Blackstone River and its tributaries

POLICY NCR-2.2
Foster recognition and appreciation of the Blackstone River as a valuable natural resource

POLICY NCR-2.3
Maintain an active local Brownfields Program as a vehicle for investigating, cleaning up, and redeveloping contaminated sites

POLICY NCR-2.4
Increase stewardship of the City's conservation lands, forested areas, and tree resources

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

GOAL OSR-1
Maximize integration of the City Park System with the Heritage Corridor

POLICY OSR-1.1

Develop park facilities that enhance the historical and cultural importance of the Blackstone River to the City's growth and development

POLICY OSR-1.2
Develop and interpret historical elements and features of the City through its park facilities

GOAL OSR-2
Improve the level and quality of maintenance and attention to the City's parks

POLICY OSR-2.1
Increase citizen participation and support for the City's parks and recreation system

POLICY OSR-2.2
Improve the City's ability and commitment to fund park maintenance and development

POLICY OSR-2.3
Develop necessary park and conservation area support facilities to enhance patronage, personal safety and ease of use

GOAL OSR-3
Increase visitation and the appropriate use of the city’s parks, conservation areas, and open space lands.

POLICY OSR-3.1
Improve public knowledge and awareness of the city’s recreational and open space resources

GOAL OSR-4
Make a consistent and progressive commitment to the provision of efficient, well-managed recreational services and facilities

POLICY OSR-4.1
Utilize all available methods, including as appropriate, aggressive pursuit of sufficient funding, coordination of municipal recreation services with other providers, private collaboration, and direct citizen participation

GOAL OSR-5
Preserve and protect significant undeveloped and environmentally sensitive areas.

POLICY OSR-5.1
Pursue open space acquisition and appropriate management of open space lands

GOAL OSR-6
Diversify the activity focus of the City's Park System through the provision of opportunities for passive recreation

POLICY OSR-6.1
Continue acquiring properties where feasible and implement new open space preservation techniques to protect land for future public access.

GOAL OSR-7
Ensure that City and State parks and recreational facilities meet the diverse needs of Woonsocket residents

POLICY OSR-7.1
Provide a variety of recreational areas and facilities for all demographic groups and residential areas in the community

POLICY OSR-7.2
Promote equity in park, recreation and open space expenditure by targeting the City's densely developed, low income neighborhoods

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

GOAL SF-1
Provide city residents with an efficient delivery of services and adequate community facilities

POLICY SF-1.1
Establish a set of priorities to guide actions

POLICY SF-1.2
Resolve to make changes in municipal functions under the direction of an orderly plan

POLICY SF-1.3
Pursue new avenues of resource generation for the support of needed programs

POLICY SF-1.4
Commit to on-going maintenance programs for all City facilities

POLICY SF-1.5
Provide creative options for private sector investment in the City

POLICY SF-1.6
Adopt an annual or periodic maintenance program to ensure the greater life expectancy of all existing facilities

POLICY SF-1.7
Complete detailed physical evaluations of facilities, recognizing replacement or renovation actions required

POLICY SF-1.8
Plan and evaluate capital improvement needs, including the identification of preferred options for the most cost-effective expenditure of public funds

GOAL SF-2
Produce a school system recognized for its excellence

POLICY SF-2.1
Institute programs and policies aimed at decreasing the drop-out rate and making universal completion of high school a highest priority

POLICY SF-2.2
Develop and implement programs aimed at improving the skills of graduating students

POLICY SF-2.3
Ensure that the education system prepares the City's youth to become well-rounded, well-adjusted, productive members of society

POLICY SF-2.4
Expand opportunities for Woonsocket residents to pursue post-graduate training and further intellectual development

POLICY SF-2.5
Develop a progressive educational system to enhance the quality of life for the whole community

POLICY SF-2.6
Provide adequate facilities to address increasing school enrollment

POLICY SF-2.7
Develop a school housing program to implement the neighborhood school concept

GOAL SF-3
Provide efficient professional management of City finances with an integrated network of data and information systems

POLICY SF-3.1
Engage in sound financial planning and budgeting

POLICY SF-3.2
Complete fair and equitable tax assessments

POLICY SF-3.3
Achieve efficient collection and reporting of revenue

POLICY SF-3.4
Make wise and prudent investment of City funds

POLICY SF-3.5
Monitor the enforcement of prescribed procedures for the obtainment of the best product at the lowest cost to the taxpayer

POLICY SF-3.6
Utilize fair and equitable procedures for employment of the most capable and well trained personnel

POLICY SF-3.7
Increase the technology and data sharing capabilities across city departments

POLICY SF-3.8
The city's website is upgraded and improved to make it user-friendly and informative for residents, businesses, and visitors alike

GOAL SF-4
Provide a safe, accessible, and efficient public infrastructure and public works system

POLICY SF-4.1
Provide a high level of maintenance and operation for all City infrastructure through a comprehensive, periodic maintenance program

POLICY SF-4.2
Replace obsolete or worn out system components with state-of-the art equipment and materials through a comprehensive capital facilities plan, as part of the City's Capital Improvement Program

POLICY SF-4.3
Achieve compliance with all requirements for handicapped accessibility for all public buildings, parks, and facilities

POLICY SF-4.4
Maintain clean and safe public roadways and facilities.

POLICY SF-4.5
Encourage and support recycling in the city

GOAL SF-5
Provide a high-quality public library system for the benefit of all community members

POLICY SF-5.1

Effectively disseminate all types of information in order to meet basic human needs

POLICY SF-5.2
Expand days and hours of operation and library programs in order to better serve all segments of the population with a special emphasis should be placed on the minority and adult population sectors

POLICY SF-5.3
Provide increased levels of service to the community by providing special programs and assistance in locating available information

GOAL SF-6
Provide basic human services to all persons in need

POLICY SF-6.1
Maximize the contributions of the various human service providers and provide a coordinated response to clients' needs

POLICY SF-6.2
Alleviate the confusion associated with the complex human services system by providing efficient direction and client referral

POLICY SF-6.3
Enforce fair housing principles and the rights of the disabled in all forms of service provision

GOAL SF-7
Provide basic public safety services that efficiently maintain or improve existing quality in order to meet community needs

POLICY SF-7.1
Continue to provide basic police services for the enforcement of laws and ordinances; the preservation of peace and public order; the protection of life, liberty, and property; the prevention and repression of crime; the detection of violations of the law; the apprehension of violators; and the prosecution of those apprehended

POLICY SF-7.2
Continue provision of basic fire fighting services, including the obtainment of the quickest possible response time in responding to fires so as to result in a well protected community and the education of the public on fire prevention measures and emergency medical techniques

POLICY SF-7.3
Implement policies that will increase the efficiency of service provision, including the adoption of a detailed maintenance and replacement program for police and fire fighting vehicles and other apparatus; the implementation of widespread and more efficient fire

warning systems; and the restructuring of personnel so as to obtain greater levels of efficiency

POLICY SF-7.4
Establish a safe, drug-free community

POLICY SF-7.5
Increase public education of safety procedures and drug awareness

POLICY SF-7.6
Continue pressure on criminal activities through vigorous investigation and prosecution

POLICY SF-7.7
Institute community outreach programs in an effort to educate the community and to gain their help and cooperation in fighting crime

GOAL SF-8
Maintain a Planning and Development Department that satisfactorily plans for Woonsocket's optimum physical, economic, and community development

POLICY SF-8.1
Increase the importance of, and adherence to, the 5-year Capital Improvement Program in the development of the City's annual municipal budget

POLICY SF-8.2
Coordinate planning and development efforts with the city’s Economic Development Department

POLICY SF-8.3
Coordinate the actions of the various boards and agencies in areas where overlap occurs

POLICY SF-8.4
Ensure that the City boards and agencies are well informed of the components and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan, so they may routinely follow the Plan’s intent in decision-making processes

GOAL SF-9
Provide efficient administration and coordination of all City departments, agencies, and boards and their delivery of services

POLICY SF-9.1
The Mayor’s Office is responsible for establishing and implementing overall City policies and priorities for the various service providers

POLICY SF-9.2

The Mayor serves as the City's advocate and receive designated funding from State and federal governmental agencies

POLICY SF-9.3
The Mayor provides overall public leadership

POLICY SF-9.4
The Mayor works with other chief elected officials from neighboring communities on regional initiatives

POLICY SF-9.5
The Law Department provides effective and efficient legal representation to all departments, boards and agencies of the City of Woonsocket

POLICY SF-9.6
The Law Department effectively prosecute all charged individuals in the various State and local municipal courts

POLICY SF-9.7
The City Clerk’s Office provides efficient storage and cataloging of all important City records and legal documents

POLICY SF-9.8
The Board of Canvassers provides efficient service to voters and candidates in the administration and implementation of the election process

POLICY SF-9.9
The Economic Development Department guides appropriate economic growth and development within the city based on professional best practices

GOAL SF-10
The Woonsocket Housing Authority provides safe, decent housing for Woonsocket's low-income families and elderly population

POLICY SF-10.1
Continue annual application for, and expenditure of, available federal funding to support the continued occupation of the Housing Authority's 1300+ housing units.

POLICY SF-10.2
Evaluate and pursue new federal funds for future projects that are in conformance with the City's Housing Assistance Plan

CIRCULATION

GOAL C-1

Woonsocket enjoys a safe, adequate, and efficient circulation network that meets the varied needs of its residents, businesses, and visitors.

POLICY C-1.1
Develop and implement a coordinated approach to traffic systems management and roadway maintenance

POLICY C-1.2
Provide adequate routing and signage within and through the City for residents, visitors, and trucks

POLICY C-1.3
Work to minimize congestion and maximize safety for vehicular traffic in the city

POLICY C-1.4
Improve pedestrian safety and accommodation on city sidewalks and streets

POLICY C-1.5
Work towards improving Woonsocket's linkage to and function within the regional transportation system

POLICY C-1.6
Ensure adequate opportunities for alternative modes of transportation

POLICY C-1.7
Ensure that the circulation network supports economic development efforts

LAND USE

GOAL LU-1
To allow for flexible development by increasing options available to property owners.

GOAL LU-2
To retain the City's character through the application of its regulatory functions.

POLICY LU-2.1
Developing specific design guidelines for Design Review to assist property owners in appropriate design.

GOAL LU-3
To ensure housing availability appropriate to the income levels of the residents of the City by:

POLICY LU-3.1
Providing for a balanced range of housing; and

POLICY LU-3.2
Encouraging the provision of affordable housing opportunities in the Northern Rhode Island region.

GOAL LU-4
To support the industrialized nature of the City and make necessary adaptations to meet modern developmental constraints by:

POLICY LU-4.1
Establishing and protecting for industrial use those few remaining undeveloped areas in the City that can feasibly support such use; and

POLICY LU-4.2
Allowing for innovative adaptation and mixed uses in the City's aging mill structures.

GOAL LU-5
To protect Woonsocket's few remaining natural areas and preserve and enhance the physical remains and sites associated with its cultural heritage by:

POLICY LU-5.1
Incorporating natural and cultural resource protection in its development and redevelopment processes; and

POLICY LU-5.2
Exploring the possibly of acquisition of critical resource areas.

POLICY LU-5.3
Delineating the boundaries for Historic Districts within the City, establish Historic District zoning, and reestablish a Historic District Commission.

POLICY LU-5.4
Ensure that the City will not extend water or sewer into “Very Low Density” or “Low Density” unless accompanied by a Comprehensive Plan amendment to the Future land use map.

GOAL LU-6
To effectively implement the Goals of the City while protecting the rights of individuals by:

POLICY LU-6.1
Developing a revised Zoning Ordinance, consistent with the Goals of the Comprehensive Plan;

POLICY LU-6.2
Reviewing and revising all land use regulatory measures to ensure consistency;

POLICY LU-6.3

Streamlining the regulatory process; and

POLICY LU-6.4
Providing training for agents of the City on the consistent application of their powers.

GOAL LU-7
To provide access to open space for all its residents and bring environmental values into the City by:

POLICY LU-7.1
Providing a variety of recreational areas and facilities for all residential areas in the community; and

POLICY LU-7.2
Preserving and protecting significant undeveloped and environmentally sensitive areas through acquisition and regulatory programs.

GOAL LU-8
To plan for Land Use pressures anticipated with the development of new access routes to the City and improve its accommodation of automobiles by:

POLICY LU-8.1
Reviewing land use policies along those areas directly affected by the completion of Route 99 and the Heritage Corridor Bikeway; and

POLICY LU-8.2
Setting appropriate standards for parking and site layouts in its regulatory processes.

GOAL LU-9
To encourage the development of the Heritage Corridor by:

POLICY LU-9.1
Continuing to develop recreational areas related to the Corridor system; and

POLICY LU-9.2
Continuing to review all development proposals on parcels within the Heritage Corridor River Overlay District to ensure environmental protection and visual integrity to this critical area.

REPORT CARD ON 1992 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN'S IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE OF STRATEGIES

HERITAGE CORRIDOR

Strategy - Explore Enterprise Zone status for Main Street and lobby to change State regulations to incorporate historic preservation as a goal of Enterprise Zones.

The City of Woonsocket applied for re-designation of Enterprise zone status October 24, 2006 and was approved for 5 more years. The new dates are January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2011. It was a joint application with the City of Cumberland and is actually the Woonsocket/Cumberland Enterprise zone. When the City is to be recertified, a request could be made for historic preservation and for State Historic Tax Credits.

Strategy - Help local manufacturers to become aware of and participate in State programs to keep mature industries and businesses utilizing old structures.

The Department of Economic Development was created in 1993/1994 and acts as a liaison between businesses and government. One of Matt Wojcik's functions is to meet with local businesses and to help them become aware and participate in various state programs. The mayor established a separate economic development department in order to put a greater emphasis on economic development in the City.

Strategy – Establish grant/loan programs for the internal adaptation of structures to meet industrial needs, using the Woonsocket Mill Survey as a basis for evaluation.

A small business loan program has been established. It is CDBG funded, and the City has made 39 loans. The City also assists in funding actions that help current or new businesses to create additional jobs. The level of funding is based on job creation. To provide financing that businesses couldn't get on their own, the City has piggybacked loans with loans made through RI Economic Development Corporation (EDC). There has been very little demand for the funds lately. Loans are still being made through the EDC.

Strategy – Collaborate with the Main Street 2000 Development Corporation (now the Main Street Riverfront Initiative), and other interested parties, to explore funding sources and mechanisms for the provision of capitol improvements in the Market Square area.

A grant was obtained through the Department of Transportation and was used for roadway realignment, historical lighting, street trees and parking lot improvements. Work has also been done through a special appropriation.

Strategy – Work cooperatively to complete the Woonsocket Visitor Center/Labor History Museum, and its surrounding interpretive features (including River Island Park and the Riverwalk) as the City's premiere interpretive site for public educational activities.

The Museum was completed in 1997 and was expanded in 2006 to include Mercy Train Box Car, in commemoration of WW2. In addition, the city has performed 3 major upgrades of River Island Park,

the most recent of which added an outdoor refrigerated skating rink. The park has grown in stature to the point of being heavily utilized for civic events, and there are natural river interpretive events conducted by the Park Service.

Strategy – Increase public awareness and appreciation of natural resources through education.

Local schools have been running special events through class trips to give students opportunities to appreciate nature.

Strategy – Develop a Heritage Corridor River Overlay Zone for natural resource protection and physical design considerations.

The Overlay Zone was enacted in the 1990s. The Planning Board, acting as a commission, oversees and regulates all development and proposals for property along the entire Blackstone River Corridor.

Strategy – Continue the City's aggressive program of rehabilitation and development of riverfront parks, including River Island Park, the Island, Cold Spring Park, and Costa Park.

River Island Park has seen over $1,000,000 in improvements, including a skating rink. Cold Spring Park has seen a $600,000 investment. River's Edge and Costa Park have both benefited from ongoing improvements, and the Island is being explored for private open space development. The City will continue to utilize potential RIDEM grants and matching federal CDBG funds to provide future upgrades of the park facilities.

Strategy – Explore alternative funding sources through the Heritage Corridor Commission on an information-sharing basis, and develop a coordinated lobbying effort to secure federal funding for Heritage Corridor projects.

The City has and will continue to lend support for Heritage Corridor projects.

Strategy – Continue to play an active role in the partnership with the Woonsocket Industrial Development Corporation, the State of Rhode Island, the Heritage Corridor Commission and the Main Street 2000 Development Corporation (Main Street Riverfront Initiative).

The State and Woonsocket developed Highland Corporate Park in Woonsocket and Cumberland in 1992. The development in this park to date has provided 5,000-6,000 new jobs of which almost half have been created as a result of the construction of the CVS corporate headquarters. Main Street Riverfront Initiative is funded through CDBG and numerous partnerships. The Heritage Corridor Commission was a major monetary and support contributor to the museum and has also provided monetary contributions to city park development, including the recent River's Edge Recreation Complex. The City, working in conjunction with the Main Street Development Corporation has expanded the focus of this organization to include the adjacent riverfront area running from South Main Street Bridge to Hamlet Ave.

Strategy – Seek assistance from the Heritage Corridor Commission for support of National Register nominations and local historic zoning proposals.

During the past few years, the City has assisted applicants in getting the RI Historic Preservation Commission to make nominations to the National Historic Registry. Nominations include Allen Street, the former Bancroft Mill, and the Tech Industries Mill, which has resulted in adaptive reuse for

residential purposes. Other properties benefiting from nominations include the former 6th District Court House and former police station on Front Street.

Strategy – Identify properties that are threatened by development pressures, deterioration or inadequate resources, such as the Stadium Theatre, the Providence and Worcester Railroad Depot Building and the Courthouse.

The Stadium Theatre has been substantially rehabilitated and outfitted with a sound operational organ. The former Providence and Worcester Railroad Depot has been substantially rehabbed and now houses the Blackstone River Heritage Corridor Commission. The Courthouse was renovated for residential use. The former Bernon Mills are currently being converted for residential reuse by a local developer. At this point, most buildings with historic significance have either been favorably addressed through renovation projects or work is currently underway.

Strategy – Disseminate the Heritage Corridor's Design Guidelines and Standards to interested property owners.

Copies are available in the office for interested property owners.

Strategy – Encourage and work with RIDEM and participate in establishing a collaborative regional approach to hazardous waste as a high-priority Heritage Corridor issue.

There has been no real progress to date. Hazardous waste has been treated on a site-by-site basis.

Strategy – Support planned projects to monitor and control the water level in the Blackstone River.

The City will continue to operate and fully regulate the flood control mechanisms, within city limits, which were constructed by the Army Corp of Engineers in the early 1960s.

Strategy – Create new zoning districts appropriate for mixed use associated with riverfront development in the Market Square area.

The City has created new mixed use and overlay districts.

Strategy – Collaborate with the Heritage Corridor Commission to establish a reporting schedule with the RIDEM on Bikeway progress.

The Bikeway was extended to Davison St. in the summer of 2007. The plan to extend it to Market Square is under design. The Bikeway was extended north to the City's water treatment plant on Manville Road in October of 2007. The City, as part of the implementation of its River's Edge Complex is extending the bikeway from the treatment plant to Davison St. Work is scheduled to be completed by early spring 2008. Currently, the City is working with RIDEM and RIDOT on plans that will extend the Bikeway from Davison St. through downtown to Market Square. Proposed work includes construction of a new bridge crossing the Blackstone River behind the City library, modifications to the Truman bypass and inclusion of the bikeway through River Island Park. Work on this segment is scheduled for 2009. At this point, further extension of the bikeway northward from Market Square to the MA state line will be delayed until MA has shown significant progress in construction of the bikeway from the state line to Worcester.

Strategy – Adopt appropriate zoning along the proposed Bikeway path for compatibility and economic opportunities.

This was considered and is reflected in the recent zone changes that have been implemented.

Strategy – Work with RIDEM to examine access to the Bikeway from key areas off-site, and to ensure compatibility with existing street traffic in the design development of the Bikeway.

As part of the River's Edge Recreation Complex a major parking lot is being provided off of Davison Street to provide readily available access to the bikeway. Substantial modifications are being proposed to the alignment and width of the current Truman bypass to permit full traffic separation between bikes/pedestrians and vehicular traffic. Similar actions will continue as future segments of the bikeway are designed.

Strategy – Establish a City liaison to actively communicate with RIDEM during the design development stage of transportation projects.

Transportation related projects are administered by the City of Woonsocket Department of Public Works and the Planning and Development Department. The projects are either developed entirely by the City or the City has input on the design when it is submitted by RIDOT.

Strategy – Promote land conservation and historic park restoration through the Conservation Commission and Recreation Advisory Committee.

The City continues to promote recreation and conservation But RAC no longer exists and the Conservation Commission no longer plays an active role. Special project committees are established, made up of residents and officials to oversee major plans for all park development and restoration.

Strategy – Continue to utilize the Task Force approach in soliciting input and generating public support for park development projects.

The City creates new task forces as an integral part of park development projects. These task forces are formed by a variety of community members and other stakeholder organizations.

Strategy – Develop a realistic, short-term tourism plan based on a Valley-wide strategy.

The City defers to the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council for this plan, but will participate with them when appropriate.

Strategy – Identify the key features with tourism potential that could be tied into a larger series of tourism activities.

The City defers to the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council for this plan, but will participate with them when appropriate.

Strategy – Create a Valley-wide site identification system through the use of the Heritage Corridor Features Map.

The map has been developed and is available at the Museum of Work and Culture.

Strategy – Develop and disseminate a Woonsocket tourism map with identified Valley-wide and regional tourism sites.

Brochures are available at the Heritage Corridor Commission and at the Museum of Work and Culture.

Strategy – Collaborate with the Heritage Corridor Commission to develop theme brochures linking Valley-wide sites, both in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, with sites in Woonsocket.

Brochures are available at the Heritage Corridor Commission and at the museum of Work and Culture.

Strategy – Ensure the continued presence of the Blackstone Valley in the tourism plans for Rhode Island.

The City is doing this and will continue to do so.

Strategy – Utilize the Council's Tourism Plan as a basis for developing appropriate strategies and programs.

The City is doing this and will continue to do so.

Strategy – Pursue technical assistance and funding to continuously update and evaluate the Statewide Historical Preservation Report.

The City plans to ask that additional properties be added. The City has continued to request designations of historic properties on the National Historic Registry and will continue to press for and assist in the funding of significant projects.

Strategy – Develop an interpretive education curriculum for grades K-12 involving the Conservation Commission, the Historical Society and other key historians.

This has not been found to be practicable.

Strategy – Establish a task force of local, State, federal and Heritage Corridor officials to identify contacts for information sharing, and to develop recommendations for facilitating development of Heritage Corridor-related projects.

This has not been found to be practicable, but the City will continue to work with HCC officials etc.

Strategy – Incorporate interpretive features of historic information into public projects when appropriate, with the assistance of the Woonsocket Historical Society.

The City has and will continue to work with the Historical Society in developing information to be disseminated to the public and to assist the Society in the public presentation of their exhibits. The City has made available to the Historical Society space in the lower level of the Museum of Work and Culture for use as their headquarters.

Strategy – Collaborate with the Heritage Corridor Commission in the establishment of a Heritage Corridor identity (logo/signs) in conjunction with park development.

There are already a few signs and more will be put up. The HCC has fully developed a sign program much of which has been erected in significant sites throughout Woonsocket. Additional signage will be installed during future projects.

Strategy – Sponsor multi-community events to generate support for the linear park concept.

Individual community events have taken place. Many cultural, recreational and other events have been held primarily at River Island Park, which have been aimed at gaining public support and awareness of the linear park. Additional events will continue in the future.

Strategy – Utilize the Northern Rhode Island Planners Coalition as a forum for discussing inter-agency coordination at RIDEM.

Economic director attends meetings.

Strategy – Utilize the Heritage Corridor Commission, RIDEM, the League of Cities and Towns, and others, to provide technical assistance on conservation easements, liability and other land acquisition and management issues.

The development of conservation areas at Booth Pond and in Fairmount off of Rose Ave., have been implemented using RIDEM money. Technical assistance was not required.

Strategy – Co-sponsor a year long project with the Heritage Corridor Commission designed to promote an understanding of regulatory jurisdiction and procedure, and to outline an agreed upon procedure for Heritage Corridor Communities to follow.

Efforts have been made to promote ongoing public awareness.

Strategy – Initiate a demonstration project to create a water protection plan for the Mill River.

Due to reduced water demand, water from the Mill River has not been used by the City as a drinking water source for a few years. The water quality is currently regulated by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.

Strategy – Collaborate with the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council for special events promotion, and encourage the continuation of activities such as the Autumn Foliage Train.

The City has operated and supported Autumnfest for the last 30 years. Other events have included the Autumn Foliage Train, the French Farmer's Market and the Greenway Challenge. Currently the City is utilizing federal funds for plans to construct a new dock facility for the Blackstone Explorer, operated by the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council from Market Square.

Strategy – Utilize the Heritage Corridor Commission for promotion and coordination with other Heritage Corridor Community plans.

The City has done this, and will continue to do so.

HOUSING

Strategy – Continue federal, state and locally funded rehabilitation programs, and target efforts in the City's older inner-city neighborhoods.

The City has applied for and received CDBG, lead abatement, RIHMFAC housing and mortgage financing and other funds and will continue to do so. The City also operates rehabilitation programs through the Department of Planning and Development, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

Strategy – Develop, and strictly adhere to, a local housing assistance program that limits the creation of additional assisted units to rehabilitation only. Implement a policy against City participation in the construction of new assisted units, until such time as Woonsocket's vacancy rate reaches an acceptable level and the desired balance of housing types has been achieved in the City, while aggressively pursuing Section 8 certificates for use in existing units.

A program has been developed and is an ongoing policy.

Strategy – Discourage prepayment of the estimated 416 units subsidized by the US department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), to prevent the loss of these affordable rental units in the City. Work with Rhode Island Housing to ensure a "friendly transfer" of these properties with the long-term affordability commitments on the part of buyers.

The City has registered opposition in the past and will continue to do so.

Strategy – Support community based initiatives that contribute and improve the quality of life in the City's neighborhoods (i.e., crime watches, beautification efforts, etc.).

Approximately five years ago the City started a neighborhood crime watch program, including a component that monitors and reports on problematic housing in the various neighborhoods. The City's Minimum Housing Division has been, and will continue to be a partner in enforcing the identified dilapidated properties under this program.

Strategy – Provide continued Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) financial support for the neighborhood facilities that enhance the quality of life

During the past ten years the City has averaged expending approximately $500,000 per year for roadway and park improvements in the various residential neighborhoods.

Strategy – Investigate relaxing rehabilitation program eligibility guidelines to address properties that are in distress due to current economic conditions.

All federal CDBG guidelines require that all expenditure of federal funds be directly tied to the maximum family income levels as adopted by the federal government.

Strategy – Provide continued financial support for the existing operation of shelters for the homeless, and other agencies serving the at-risk population.

During the past five years the City has provided funding to two homeless shelters located in the Fairmount neighborhood, as well as to a home for battered women.

Strategy – Develop new or redefined zoning and/or land use regulations that will encourage the construction of new upscale housing that is environmentally sensitive to the constraints that exist with most of the City's remaining undeveloped large parcels.

The City has created a Planned Unit Residential Ordinance, which facilitates the development of portions of parcels while maintaining the rest of the parcel for open space use.

Strategy – Lobby for federal legislation to allow the Elderly Reverse Mortgage Program to assist multi-family properties owners.

The use of this mortgage program is currently permitted in the state of Rhode Island. Woonsocket's Department of Development, through its housing division, makes information about it available to elderly and other eligible families.

Strategy – Lobby the state for financial incentives for those communities which meet or exceed their Fair share responsibilities.

Woonsocket is a community that has exceeded the State requirement, however the State has shown no interest in providing incentives or financial rewards for those communities who have done so, and it is unlikely that they ever will.

Strategy – Implement "one stop shopping" to make access to funding for housing rehabilitation easier.

The Housing Office in the City's Department of Planning and Development provides information concerning RIMFC programs that are available, as well as other public housing that is operated by the Woonsocket housing authority. This is in addition to operating the various housing rehabilitation programs as funded by the Federal Government.

Strategy – Target the use of CDBG funds and City Public Works initiatives to promote neighborhood revitalization in the City's older neighborhoods.

The City has done this. The City has utilized CDBG funds to fund public work initiatives such as park improvements and street and sidewalk rehabilitation.

Strategy – Investigate the establishment of a financing program for the first time buyers of multi-family structures, to further the rehabilitation of these properties and increase owner occupancy in the City's older neighborhoods.

Approximately five years ago the City developed and implemented a first time homebuyers program funded by CDBG and HOME funds under which up to $5,000 is provided to eligible applicants for closing costs for home purchase.

Strategy – Take action to help reduce the loss of units to arson.

The City has increased public outreach by the fire department to identify potential hazards.

Strategy – Investigate revising the City's Elderly/Handicapped Property Tax Property Tax Exemption.

It was examined and the decision was to maintain it at the same level.

Strategy – Investigate updating and strengthening the Minimum Housing Ordinance, and provide additional staffing for the City's Minimum Housing Division.

The Minimum Housing Ordinance is now a State ordinance. The City has increased its staffing in the Minimum Housing Division to a total of four employees.

Strategy – Investigate expediting transfer of abandoned properties from current owners to owner occupants/groups who will repair and maintain these properties.

The current City administration has adopted a policy of foreclosure on all severely tax delinquent properties. After gaining full ownership the City then makes the properties available to prospective homeowners who wish to renovate them for residential use.

Strategy – Review the performance of neighboring towns to assure that they assume their fair share of the region's low income and special needs housing.

The City has annually reviewed statewide statistics but cannot unilaterally compel the compliance of neighboring towns.

Strategy – Study the establishment of a comprehensive municipal policy with regard to Fair Housing.

The City follows federal regulations.

Strategy – Utilize zoning and other city ordinances, combined with the development of a vacant land disposal policy, to encourage a reduction in the density levels in the City's older inner-city neighborhoods.

Frequently, right after the City has demolished vacant and abandoned structures, the land is made available to abutting residential property owners to be combined with their existing lots so as to provide adequate off street parking and yard area.

Strategy – Lobby for federal legislation to increase the $15,000 per structure RIHMFC loan limit to $15,000 per unit for greater economies of scale in project administration.

Not realistic at this time.

Strategy –Investigate linking municipal banking with exemplary Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) records of banks.

The City has elected to redeposit its money with Citizens Bank which has an exemplary community reinvestment record.

Strategy – Investigate expanding Home Mortgage Opportunity Committee (HMOC) to Woonsocket.

Redlining problems have decreased so this is no longer necessary.

Strategy – Evaluate municipal efforts that will best assist the ongoing efforts of the Woonsocket Housing Authority.

There is an ongoing positive relationship.

Strategy – Review the current Impact Fee structure to ensure that infrastructure and service costs are properly assessed.

The residential impact fee ordinance that was implemented in 1986 was subsequently repealed approximately ten years later due to a legal action brought by affected residential developers. The basis of their successful complaint was that the overall population of the City had been declining incrementally during the ten-year period so no additional public facilities and resultant expenditures were needed.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Strategy – Work with the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce and other established business alliances to conduct an attitude survey of businesses to identify priorities, needs, and concerns of the business community.

This has been accomplished over the years by economic development targeted surveys. Further work is desired, possibly with the Northern RI Chamber of Commerce (NRICC) and new groups that have formed. In addition the mayor has formed a separate Department of Economic Development to better coordinate the development of the City with related business groups and organizations.

Strategy – Work with the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce and other established business alliances to identify Woonsocket's assets for marketing, both within and outside of the community.

The City has worked with the NRICC with the development of the original Highland Corporate Park in 1981 and the Highland Corporate Park expansion in 1994.

Strategy – Work with the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce and other established business alliances to explore economic development incentives for attraction and retention purposes, and advertise available options to the business community.

The City implemented a job creation incentive program approximately ten years ago that provides for a phase-in of new property taxes generated by the construction of new industrial and commercial buildings, and the substantial rehab that results in increased tax assessment. A significant factor in the calculation of the tax benefits are based upon the location, type and number of jobs being created as a result of each action.

Strategy – Retain existing economic development programs administered through the Department of Planning and Development, including the Small Business Revolving Loan Program and the Commercial Facade Restoration Grant Program for Main Street.

The programs have been retained and a job creation program was added. Other economic development programs include the lack of taxes on high-tech equipment, and a reduced tax rate on products and equipment for artists.

Strategy – Inventory all mill sites and maintain a space analysis of each mill so that potential uses may be identified

This has been done, but upkeep has been poor due to limited participation by owners and realtors. A limited inventory of priority properties continues to be maintained. In addition, NRICC also retains information concerning available commercial and industrial properties.

Strategy – Make every effort to realize the rehabilitation and industrial reuse of vacant and underutilized mill buildings.

There has been little interest in the rehabilitation of mill buildings for industrial reuse. Residential and other adaptive reuses have been employed for six mill buildings, the courthouse and the police station, in the past eight years. These projects have been greatly assisted by the state historic tax credits provided to developers.

Strategy – Encourage the Northern Rhode Island Regional Economic Development Division and established business alliances to market the mill resource and to secure grants for rehabilitation. One mill should be selected and rehabilitated, as a showcase example of what can be done, and to generate pro-formas and cost estimates.

There have been few federal grants (EDA) available for small fledgling businesses, and to date it's been hard to find partners and money to accomplish this.

Strategy – Work with the Northern Rhode Island Regional Economic Development Division and established business alliances toward the creation of a regional approach to economic development.

The parochial attitudes of individual towns have prevented alliances that would create a regional approach to economic development. Clearly a tax sharing plan needs to be developed for new taxes to be created. To date, when a new business moves into the region such a plan has met great resistance.

Strategy – Work closely with the Woonsocket Industrial Development Corporation, the Blackstone Valley Development Foundation, surrounding Northern Rhode Island Communities and the State of Rhode Island to develop a regional economic plan.

This has not been accomplished due to a lack of interest by other Northern RI communities.

Strategy – Make every effort to insure that the future workforce receives a decent and competitive education

The City has and will continue to support education in Woonsocket and the Greater Woonsocket Vocational School. We have partnered with businesses to address meeting their needs in the classroom.

Strategy – Work closely with all established State, regional and local groups including the Northern Rhode Island Private Industry Council, the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, and the business community to upgrade the skills level of the workforce and to match future workers with future business needs.

A Workforce Development program was created in conjunction with the NRICC, but was unsuccessful. Criminal action ensued, but was unsuccessful. The Northern Rhode Island Private Industry Council

folded due to mismanagement and the various cities and towns involved with it have been forced to fund outstanding unpaid debt. Future implementation of a future organization is extremely unlikely.

Strategy – Create a task force made up of City officials and members of the education and job training community to study existing programs and identify future needs.

The City created a separate Economic Development Department. A priority function of the Department is to develop committees and other task forces to review existing programs, identify future needs and develop new programs.

Strategy – Coordinate, support and encourage State efforts and efforts of agencies such as the Northern Rhode Island Private Industry Council to create stronger education to education linkages and industry to education linkages.

The City continues to be supportive of the creation of stronger education to industry linkages by the State, but is unprepared to enter into future regional partnerships.

Strategy – Establish a Strategic Development Commission made up of City officials, businesspeople, labor, and community leaders.

This was established when the Department of Economic Development was created.

Strategy – Simplify and coordinate all City functions that impact business.

The Department of Economic Development provides one-stop assistance to existing businesses and prospective developers during plan review and permitting.

Strategy – Work with State organizations to encourage business outreach/linkage with public and private job-training agencies.

The Economic Development Department Director meets regularly with the staff of the State Department of Economic Development.

Strategy – Encourage education-business relationships and job opportunities.

The Greater Woonsocket Vocational School works with local businesses to place graduates.

Strategy – Make efforts to involve existing businesspeople, whenever possible, in the study and decision-making processes.

This is done when it is applicable.

Strategy – Study potential product/supply linkages to recruit businesses that will support existing businesses in the region.

The City lacks the expertise to perform this function. It is more appropriate for the State Department of Economic Development to do this because of their expertise and numbers of staff available.

Strategy – Encourage the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce to define and expand the role of the Regional Economic Development Division, and the Northern Rhode Island Marketing Council.

As a result of reduced funding, the activities of the NRICC have been substantially scaled back.

Strategy – Work closely with the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, and other established business alliances to include Woonsocket as a destination for regional tours, meetings and seminars of economic development professionals.

The City works very closely with the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council and the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission towards this goal. The City has agreed to partially fund the construction of a docking facility on the Blackstone that will be used by the riverboats owned and operated by the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council. The National Heritage Corridor Commission was a substantial partner in the City's implementation of the Museum of Work and Culture.

Strategy – Lobby the State of Rhode Island to take the lead in encouraging more progressive attitudes in the business community concerning such issues as day care and flextime

Not under local purview.

Strategy – Lobby for new legislation and monitor current legislation on day care, flex time and other workplace issues.

Not under local purview.

Strategy – Encourage the Private Industry Council, the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, and other established business alliances to survey the workforce to identify priorities and present the information to the City.

The Private Industry Council is no longer in existence due to mismanagement and the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce doesn't have sufficient staff to conduct surveys of the workforce.

Strategy – Explore local funding possibilities using the Workforce 2000 Job Development Fund.

Funds under this program are not available to local cities and towns.

Strategy – Produce a handbook to inform the business community of available City services and options to help offset the costs of doing business while providing greater job opportunities to Woonsocket residents

The Building Inspection Department has a booklet available and the Economic Development Director is available to address specific issues.

Strategy – Work with the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce and other established business alliances to create a business-to-business communication network, including the development of lists of local suppliers to help small businesses pool resources and realize greater economies of scale.

The NRICC has prepared a list of information that is available to local businesses.

Strategy – Strive, in conjunction with area colleges and training agencies, to educate the business community (particularly small businesses) and to encourage businesses to address such issues as day care, flex time, and on the job training.

The NRICC has developed a relationship between local businesses and the business program at Bryant University.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Strategy – Establish a Heritage Corridor River Overlay Zone to regulate and remove incompatible land uses with regard to natural resource protection and physical design considerations, and to prevent visual and environmental impediments to the successful implementation of the Heritage Corridor Linear Park. (See Proposed River Overlay Zone Map).

A River Corridor Overlay District has been established so the interests and concerns indicated in this strategy are incorporated within that overlay district.

Strategy – Increase the feasibility of adaptive reuse of the City's vast supply of historic properties, through the adoption of more flexible mixed use zoning designations, where appropriate and beneficial to the welfare and convenience of the public.

The City has adopted multi-use zoning designations, MU-1 (commercial/residential) and MU-2 (industrial/commercial). The City has also supported and encouraged the adaptive reuse of historic mill buildings, including the former police station and courthouse for reuse for residential purposes.

Strategy – Continue to foster a cooperative relationship with the Main Street 2000 Corporation to accomplish historic preservation and sympathetic development in the central business district.

This has been a continuing effort since the inception of the Main Street 2000 Corporation.

Strategy – Establish an enterprise zone encompassing Main Street and several of the City's mill complexes, to increase the potential feasibility of the productive future use of currently vacant or underutilized historic properties.

A State Enterprise Zone has been created and maintained which covers the Main Street and inner city census tracts, which include the majority of the City's mill buildings.

Strategy – Develop tax incentives for historic properties, including a program for tax stabilization or deferment of taxes on increased property assessments following historic rehabilitation.

The City's creation of the program includes a component for increased property assessments resulting from substantial rehabilitation. Also the State of RI has developed and operated a lucrative tax credit program that encourages appropriate historic renovation and reuse of historic properties.

Strategy – Support efforts to restore and find permanent users for Woonsocket's most significant historic buildings, including the Stadium Theatre, the Providence and Worcester Railroad Depot and the Court House.

This strategy has been successfully implemented and has resulted in permanent reuses of the former District Courthouse, Police Station, Bernon Mills, Allen Street Mills, the former P&W Railroad Depot and the substantial rehabilitation of the Stadium Theatre.

Strategy – Work cooperatively with the Woonsocket Industrial Development Corporation, the Heritage Corridor Commission and RIDEM to complete the Woonsocket Visitor Center/Labor History Museum, and its surrounding interpretive features (including River Island Park and the Riverwalk) as the City's premiere interpretive site for public educational activities.

The Museum of Work and Culture was successfully completed over ten years ago and has been in continuous operation since. Continuous improvements have been made in recent years to River Island Park.

Strategy – Encourage the adaptive reuse of vacant and underutilized historic structures, especially of the City's plentiful supply of mill buildings.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Adopt a Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance, and broad based performance criteria for all industrial uses, to reduce the potential pollution of the City's water system.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Strictly enforce Pretreatment Standards for industrial sewerage entering the Woonsocket Municipal Wastewater Treatment Facility.

The operation of the City's municipal wastewater treatment facility follows the standards as prescribed by RIDEM and EPA. This resulted in the privatization of the facility three years ago, which then saw a substantial upgrade by Synagro, in order to meet new EPA guidelines. It is anticipated that a new sewer treatment plant will need to be constructed within the next five years.

Strategy – Strengthen the review process within City departments when historic properties are involved or affected by development.

This function has been successfully performed by the Design Review Commission.

Strategy – Review current standards and procedures for water withdrawal and recommend measures to limit water pollution caused by the sediment stirring which occurs with changes in the flow of the River. Assist the State to consistently enforce minimum flow and water release requirements for all regulated dams along the Blackstone, Mill and Peters Rivers by documenting and reporting all suspected violations.

The hydroelectric plants along the Blackstone River are no longer in operation due to financial reasons. Because of a substantial decline in water usage, the City used little if any supplies from the Mill River.

Strategy – Require controlled containment structures along all new highways within the watershed, to prevent pollution of the water supply by roadway runoff and accidental spills of hazardous materials.

This has been done for Route 99 and no other new highways are planned.

Strategy – Publicize all Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor projects in and around Woonsocket.

The City works in partnership with the National Heritage Corridor Commission and the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council to do this, and also disseminates information at the Museum of Work and Culture and on message boards.

Strategy – Target individuals and professional groups that deal with local properties for preservation education.

Information on preservation is provided to property owners as projects come up.

Strategy – Disseminate helpful preservation materials to the owners of historic properties

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Produce environmental pamphlets and brochures for distribution to residents and businesses.

The City assists in the distribution of pamphlets and brochures as developed by RIDEM, the Heritage Corridor Commission and the non-profit group Zap the Blackstone.

Strategy – Foster recognition and appreciation of the Blackstone River through the establishment of increased public access.

The City is currently completing the redevelopment of the former landfill off of Davison Avenue, which abuts the Blackstone River, for recreation purposes. This 20-acre park will include the Blackstone River Bikeway, soccer fields and other recreational elements.

Strategy – Encourage the Historic Districts Commission and the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission to take a more pro-active role in the protection of historic resources through co-sponsored workshops and grants assistance to historic property owners.

The Historic District Commission was abolished by the City several years ago. Grant application assistance is provided to property owners by the staff of the Department of Planning and Development.

Strategy – Form alliances with local businesses, landowners, regional foundations and groups such as the Trust for Public Land and the Nature Conservancy to insure that key properties are protected.

In recent years the City has created three separate conservation areas. They include Rhodes Avenue, Booth Pond and Iron Rock Brook.

Strategy – Work with the Heritage Corridor Commission and RIDEM on the development of a collaborative, regional approach to hazardous waste as a high-priority Heritage Corridor issue.

This is ongoing.

Strategy – Work closely with RIDOT and RIHPC on the design of road and bridge projects to ensure the preservation of Woonsocket's historic resources and the maintenance of its character.

The City successfully collaborated with RIDOT on the design of the new Court Street Bridge. The bridge was designed to maintain its historic features.

Strategy – Cooperate with the Heritage Corridor Commission and RIDEM on the design of the Bikeway to ensure compatibility with, and to showcase, the City's existing historic resources.

The City actively participates in the design and implementation of the Bikeway, working with the Commission and RIDEM to showcase historical resources. The next phase is Davison Avenue to Massachusetts.

Strategy – Participate in the formation of an interstate task force to address issues relating to pollution prevention and cleanup of the Blackstone, Peters and Mill Rivers.

Little interest has been shown by surrounding Massachusetts communities. This initiative has not been implemented and it is unlikely to be in the future.

Strategy – Establish a Regional Watershed Protection Committee.

The Blackstone River Watershed Council reviews all plans and makes sure the river is protected.

Strategy – Lobby for immediate listing of the former landfill as a Superfund Site, and for funding to initiate the cleanup of that site.

The City issued a five million dollar bond for the capping and closure of the former landfill. The bond also provided local matching funds from grants received from DEM for the creation of the recreation complex off of Davison Avenue.

Strategy – Work with the real estate community to find interested buyers and appropriate uses for historic properties.

This has been an ongoing effort. The City operates and maintains a Main Street Façade Program for the upgrade, reuse and improvement of existing historic Main Street properties.

Strategy – Target specific neighborhoods for rehabilitation and historic preservation, and concentrate CDBG resources and Public Works initiatives in those targeted neighborhoods.

The City Council abolished the City's Historic District zoning, however historic preservation considerations continue in the review regulation process. Substantial preservation has occurred in the Main Street area as well as the downtown riverfront area, in part using federal and other funds received through the City.

Strategy – Undertake prudent capital improvement projects to protect the City's precious natural resources.

Upgrades have been made to the sewage treatment facility and City Hall has been rehabilitated.

Strategy – Encourage the establishment of revolving loan programs for historic preservation and rehabilitation of residential, commercial and industrial properties, such as the Historic Districts Commission's Cato Hill Rehabilitation Loan Program.

All residential properties, regardless of their historic designation, are eligible for the federally assisted housing programs as operated by the City's Department of Planning and Development.

Strategy – Seek assistance from the Heritage Corridor Commission and the RIHPC for support of additional National Register nominations and local historic zoning proposals.

Assistance has been requested and received for a number of designations supported and advanced by the City. Recent National Registry designations include Allen Street, Fairmount, and the Island Place Mill.

Strategy – Compile a complete Inventory of all Natural and Cultural Resources in Woonsocket.

It has been sufficient to use existing inventories maintained by the State Historic Preservation Office and the National Registry.

Strategy – Clearly identify and map the location of all sensitive natural, cultural and archaeolocal resources, beginning in the undeveloped areas of the City, for use in the review of proposed subdivisions and site plans.

The three largest tracts of undeveloped acreage, which include Booth Pond, Rhodes Avenue and Iron Rock Brook, have been formally designated as conservation areas that will preclude any future development. There are no remaining large tracts of acreage remaining that require protection. As such, this strategy no longer needs to be continued.

Strategy – Expand the jurisdiction of the Historic Districts Commission to provide for protection of additional locally significant historic districts, where such expansion is desirable and will not be overly burdensome to property owners.

The Historic Districts Commission was formally revoked as per City Council action.

Strategy – Investigate the feasibility of requiring appropriate pollution prevention devices, and the preparation and approval of Hazardous Material Spill Control Plans, in the development of new or expanded industrial land uses.

The City has deferred to RIDEM to enforce state regulations regarding pollution prevention devices and hazardous material spills.

Strategy – Investigate the feasibility of establishing an Aquifer Protection Overlay Zone, under which the extent of paved areas would be limited to allow for increased groundwater recharge.

This has been determined to not be practical because over 99% of City residents use water from the public water system.

Strategy – Develop a natural and cultural resource appreciation curriculum for grades K-12.

Woonsocket High School has provided courses within the science program concerning local natural and cultural resources. They have also offered additional courses concerning local history.

Strategy – Work with the Heritage Corridor Commission to develop interpretive signage and to identify scenic and historic viewpoints in the City.

Signage as designed and provided by the Heritage Corridor Commission has been produced and placed throughout the City marking the various mill villages, Woonsocket Falls, Market Square, the Blackstone River Bikeway, and the Museum of Work and Culture.

Strategy – Convene focus groups with the owners of major historic properties and the City's churches to determine individual and joint needs regarding the preservation and rehabilitation of their properties.

Meetings have been held with individual owners of historic properties on an ongoing basis.

Strategy – Develop a Regional Emergency Response Plan, in conjunction with surrounding communities, to include the emergency interconnection of water supply lines and the installation of devises to isolate contaminated supplies.

Emergency waterline connections have been constructed which permits Woonsocket to connect directly with the water systems in the towns of Lincoln and Cumberland. The purpose of these connections is to provide emergency water to an individual community and to isolate contaminated supplies.

Strategy – Lobby the EPA to upgrade the classification of the Blackstone River to Class B, along its full length from Worcester to Providence, so that future siting of municipal and industrial operations, and future permit approvals will require adherence to more stringent standards than are provided under the current Class C regulations.

Non-profit groups are advocating for this, and the City supports their endeavors.

Strategy – Lobby the Heritage Corridor Commission, in conjunction with other Blackstone Valley Communities, for the establishment of Valley-wide matching funds for the rehabilitation of historic structures.

The Heritage Corridor Commission makes matching funds available for limited projects and continues to do so within the limited resources of their annual budget.

Strategy – Develop a volunteers program involving government, private business, and members of the community focused on natural and cultural resource preservation.

Some existing non-profit groups address these issues. This is currently not viewed as a function of local government.

Strategy – Encourage the use of water conservation, pollution prevention, and energy efficiency devices through the provision of tax incentives to homeowners and businesses.

This is a National and State issue and as such is not a focus of local actions.

Strategy – Set an example to the private sector through appropriate treatment of City-owned historic properties.

The continuing rehabilitation of City Hall, the major renovation through the adaptive reuse of the mill building now housing the Museum of Work and Culture, as well as the substantial funding assistance for the restoration of the Stadium Theatre has followed this strategy.

Strategy – Develop a water protection plan for the City's rivers and ponds.

Individual actions have been taken as warranted, ensuring watershed protection for the City's rivers, ponds and reservoirs.

Strategy – Limit the use of road salt and practice environmentally sound methods of storing road salt. Encourage the State and surrounding cities and towns to do the same

Construction of a new Public Works Depot has included providing a special enclosed salt storage facility which has stopped the seepage of salt into the Blackstone River which occurred previously at the former Department of Public Works Depot site.

Strategy – Institute a Woonsocket Historic Preservation Awards or Historic Building Plaque program to recognize the efforts of local residents and businesses.

This is no longer a strategy.

Strategy – Establish an Award Program for innovative businesses and industry initiatives for pollution prevention and hazardous waste reduction.

In order to encourage pollution prevention and hazardous waste reduction RIDEM has a program under which penalties are assessed to violators. This strategy is not in the purview of local government.

Strategy – Improve solid waste management through more efficient, state-of-the-art handling and maximum recycling to the extent that such is cost effective.

This has been implemented through the creation of a new position in the Department of Public Works that focuses on the management of the City's solid waste and recycling program.

Strategy – Plan physical gateways to the City according to the Blackstone River Valley Report recommendations, and in accordance with the historical patterns of Woonsocket's monuments and squares.

Woonsocket's historical monuments and squares have been considered during the planning of various transportation upgrades.

Strategy – Perform a shoreline survey during the dry season to identify all point source discharges and possible sources of contamination. Follow up on all discovered uncharted outfall pipes and signs of illegal dumping.

The City periodically attempts to identify and take corrective action against illegal discharge and dumping.

Strategy – Pursue technical assistance and funding to continuously update and evaluate the Statewide Historical Preservation Report.

The responsibility for this strategy rests with the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission.

Strategy – Cooperate with the RIDEM in the organization of household collection programs to minimize hazardous dumping.

The City has developed a program for the disposal of large appliances, computers and other technological equipment.

Strategy – Support State and federal programs and volunteer efforts to continually assess and monitor the water quality of the Blackstone River. Lobby for enforcement of RIDEM Minimum Data Base Guidelines and EPA Water Quality Criteria for the protection of freshwater aquatic life.

Implementation of this strategy best rests with the various non-profit groups which have worked to favorably address this issue.

Strategy – Develop a series of maps which identify the City's natural and cultural resources.

Maps have been developed which identify the various resources and are available in the City's Planning Department.

Strategy – Encourage newspaper, radio and cable television programs to promote education in the areas of historical preservation and environmental conservation.

This should be removed as a strategy as it is not a function of local government.

Strategy – Work with utility companies to encourage conservation through the revision of water, electricity, oil and gas rate schedules, so that users are rewarded for reduced consumption levels.

Responsibility for this action rests with the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission. The City prepares and submits comment periodically and as required.

Strategy – Develop a procedure for the stockpiling of historical artifacts belonging to the City for use in historic areas and as interpretive features in City parks.

The Museum of Work and Culture and the Woonsocket Historical Society have provided storage space for the stockpiling and assembly of important historic artifacts.

Strategy – Investigate the impact of antiquated pipes on the quality of the City's water supply.

Lead and antiquated water pipes are being replaced throughout the City when practical.

Strategy – Investigate the feasibility of limited treatment of stormwater prior to discharge into the rivers.

This strategy has been determined to be unfeasible.

Strategy – Although there are currently no known rare plants or animals, or significant habitats in Woonsocket, the City should consider the establishment of procedures for the protection of plants, animals and habitats which might be identified in the future. The City should be prepared for the reintroduction of fish and wildlife communities in response to an improved natural environment.

RIDEM has made efforts to reintroduce various fish species into the Blackstone River and contributing streams and waterways.

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Strategy – Develop a Comprehensive School Facilities Plan to address the capital improvements needed in the City's schools. Special efforts must be made to ensure that the Facilities Plan includes realistic and financially obtainable goals that will be acceptable to elected officials and the general public. This Facilities Plan must be made a part of the City's 5-year Capital Improvement Program.

Comprehensive school facility plans have been developed periodically in preparation of the City's five-year capital improvement program.

Strategy – Support and implement programs to decrease the high school drop-out rate, and increase the skills of the graduating students.

The Woonsocket Education Department has developed and implemented various programs aimed at decreasing the high school dropout rate and increasing graduating students' specific skills development.

Strategy – Expand opportunities for higher education, post-graduate vocational training, and business linkages.

The Woonsocket High School is a site for various college and post-graduate vocational courses offered by Rhode Island Junior College and other state institutions.

Strategy – Conduct a detailed architectural review of the Harris Public Library, in light of the current and projected levels of use, in order to ascertain the need to modify existing space through the construction of new additions. This process should be completed and physical improvements programmed as part of the Capital Improvement Program.

The Woonsocket Harris Public Library underwent a two million dollar renovation and upgrade, and was completed in 2001. This expansion increased the floor space of the original library by approx 60%.

Strategy – Coordinate human service provision with the Woonsocket School Department.

The School Department actively participates with the City and State social service agencies.

Strategy – Support funding for Early Intervention services and programs.

Implementation of this strategy rests with the state of Rhode Island, with support by the Woonsocket Education Department.

Strategy – Generate a City-wide municipal priority list for implementation based on critical need, feasibility, and public interest. Items on the list may move ahead or be delayed to take advantage of funding opportunities.

Annually, the Woonsocket planning board prepares and submits a comprehensive Capital Improvement Program to the Mayor and City Council.

Strategy – Pursue the development of additional systems and programs by the MIS Division to improve the City's data information systems. While the implementation of the "Cogebec" package has fully computerized City expenditures, the current manual generation of requisitions and payment vouchers by

the individual departments has yet to be computerized. The City has computerized the receipt of individual tax revenues, however, additional reporting systems must be implemented in order to properly monitor these revenue elements on a periodic basis.

Major modifications to the system are ongoing and have received significant funding in recent annual state budgets.

Strategy – Implement a comprehensive management update study of the Public Safety Department.

A current comprehensive management study of the Woonsocket Police Department has been proposed and funded. It is anticipated that the study will be completed prior to the end of 2008.

Strategy – Place an increased importance on the activities and enforcement of Minimum Housing Codes through increased staffing due to deteriorating older housing stock.

The City hired a third housing inspector in 2004.

Strategy – Pursue development and implementation of a Heritage Corridor River Overlay Zone.

This has been implemented.

Strategy – Develop further private fund raising initiatives and increase volunteer services at the Library.

Utilizing an active volunteer base, the library undertakes multiple fundraising initiatives on a yearly basis.

Strategy – Consolidate local history materials with the Woonsocket High School, the Woonsocket Historical Society, the Department of Planning and Development and other groups and individuals.

Significant historic materials are now stored in a special section of the Woonsocket High School Library.

Strategy – Increase public relations efforts to provide greater public awareness of the materials, services, and special programs offered by the Library.

The library developed and maintains an active web site promoting the various activities scheduled at the library.

Strategy – Analyze City-wide services and make recommendations for more efficient service provision (i.e. elimination of any unwarranted social service duplication).

Reviews have taken place annually during the CDBG budget preparation.

Strategy – Work towards further integration of the City's computer system to allow for the efficient transfer of accurate, current data and information between departments.

Ongoing improvements are planned.

Strategy – Perform individual department management studies and consider restructuring personnel for the most efficient delivery of public services.

The current mayor has adopted a policy of periodic review for the restructuring of individual City departments, with an eye towards efficient cost delivery of public services.

Strategy – Include in the Planning Board's annual review of the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan a detailed year-by-year implementation schedule. For those sections of the Capital Improvement Program that are to be updated yearly, identify what has been accomplished in previous years, what has not, and why. Address any delays that may occur and respond to both opportunities and newly revealed critical needs. This analysis section must be a part of the annual update. It must incorporate supporting data and evidence of public participation, and must demonstrate consistency with the goals and strategies of this Plan as well as with State requirements. Proposed amendments should be reviewed at a public meeting attended by affected parties and members of the Plan's Citizen Advisory Groups, and should be forwarded for action by the Mayor and City Council.

The plan is to upgrade content for the 2008 CIP.

Strategy – As required by the 1988 Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act, the City's Comprehensive Plan must be revised every five years. At year four, the Planning Board should initiate all processes for review and public participation that are necessary for the Plan's revision.

This is currently in process.

Strategy – The Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council, the City's Fiscal Advisory Board, or an outside management firm should conduct an updated management study of all components of the Finance Department.

There no longer is a Woonsocket Fiscal Advisory Board. Substantial management changes were made eight years ago reflecting current needs.

Strategy – Fully utilize the City's Investment Board and Fiscal Advisory Board by increasing their involvement in the development and implementation of fiscal policy.

Although neither board still exists, the policies they developed are still in use today.

Strategy – Prepare a prioritized list of all capital improvement needs, and undertake the implementation of high priority improvements as funding becomes available.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Provide an appropriate level of annual funding in the City budget for street reconstruction and other necessary improvements.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Gain State approval for the listing of additional City arterial roads to be owned and maintained by the State of Rhode Island, in an effort to alleviate growing local budgetary shortfalls.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Carefully review and consider proposals for additional usage of Woonsocket's valuable commodities -- water and sewerage treatment.

The City actively markets the expansion of water delivery to North Smithfield and has accepted sewage from North Smithfield and Cumberland.

Strategy – Develop a Master Plan for human service provision in Woonsocket.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Continue current plans for the redefinition of all human services as provided by each service agency, in order to eliminate any unnecessary duplication of services, and to provide the most efficient delivery of required services.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Develop public information initiatives that inform the general public of the multiple services available.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Investigate the availability of additional funding sources for public and private non-profit human service operations.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Expand Human Service programs as necessary to meet the needs of Woonsocket's growing elderly population.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Complete a detailed review of all proposals that might effect greater efficiency. These proposals include regionalization of services, the creation of a singular Public Safety Department, and a careful review of all fire stations and required levels of fire protection.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Initiate a public education campaign in conjunction with the City's Building Inspection Services Division to gain greater public awareness of the various fire prevention measures that should be undertaken.

There are brochures and other public education information on fire safety, code compliance, etc., available at City Hall.

Strategy – Initiate public training programs for greater public ability in CPR and first aid techniques.

Various City employees have received CPR training and defibrillators have been placed in all public buildings.

Strategy – Carefully review and update the Zoning, Design Review, Subdivision, and Planned Residential Development ordinances as part of the Comprehensive Planning process.

There have been periodic updates to the zoning and subdivision ordinances.

Strategy – Conduct workshops for the purpose of familiarizing the various boards and agencies with the City's goals and policies as established in this Plan.

Special educational workshops have been held with the planning board and the zoning board.

Strategy – Develop outreach programs aimed at those sectors of the community not currently utilizing the Library.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Review and revise rate schedules for City service fees on an annual basis to reflect current area rates and costs, and modify fees and fine schedules in order to assure a fair assessment for all regulated activities.

Periodic modifications have been made to building permit, subdivision, zoning, water and sewer fees.

Strategy – Reclassify an existing position to establish the position of "City Facilities Coordinator" to oversee the maintenance of City facilities and the scheduling and implementation of all Capital Improvements.

Specific oversight of the various City facilities and the scheduling of improvements are performed by departmental designees.

Strategy – Provide for periodic policy meetings between appropriate governing agencies in order to bring them into agreement on related policy matters and to improve operational functions.

The Mayor conducts weekly staff meetings.

Strategy – Update the budget format and modify the budget preparation process as warranted.

The format of the budget has been substantially modified and minor updates are made on an annual basis.

Strategy – Aggressively pursue any federal grants that might be available for funding special public improvement projects along Main Street and in other targeted areas.

The City sought and received grants from the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Parks Service for improvement projects. As needs arise future grant applications will be prepared and submitted.

Strategy – Conduct a detailed management study of the Harris Public Library in order to effectively identify the staffing required to provide the desired level of service.

The Harris Public Library underwent a renovation and expansion project in 2002. Upon completion of the project, library staffing was significantly adjusted.

Strategy – Carefully plan and schedule the refurbishment and replacement of all police and fire apparatus, (alarm console, trucks, aerial ladder, pumper, rescue vehicles, and protective clothing), as part of the City's 5-year Capital Improvement Program.

Equipment and vehicle replacement has continuously been performed. The majority of replacement fire apparatus has received funding under the CDBG program, and drug forfeiture funds have been used to replace police vehicles.

Strategy – Establish a schedule and procedure for coordinated development of the 5-year Capital Improvement Program as part of the annual budget process.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Conduct an annual review of building permit and other fees, and investigate alternatives to the current Impact Fee structure.

Building permit and other fees are reviewed annually, and the City's impact fee was abandoned several years ago due to the lack of population growth.

Strategy – Perform a detailed management study for the various departments to determine if any additional personnel, full-time versus part-time, or a reassignment of work load is required.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Work with appointed commissions to study the potential establishment of a regional system for the sharing of equipment and services leading to enhanced and more cost effective service provision.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Conduct periodic public surveys of appropriate segments of the population to gauge service satisfaction and assess the needs of those surveyed.

This action is being conducted as part of the current update of the City's comprehensive plan.

Strategy – Implement the City's Affirmative Action Program.

Approximately five years ago, the City's affirmative action program was rewritten and has been implemented since that time.

Strategy – Implement an appropriate Residency Incentive Program.

The City's residency requirement has been removed due to a State court ruling.

Strategy – Appoint a committee to evaluate the potential for merging duplicate purchasing offices and analyze the benefits of regionalization in this area.

All non-Education Department purchasing is done through the finance department. There has been some discussion and evaluation made regarding the merging of the Education Department with the City's central Purchasing Department.

Strategy – Develop operating procedures that fully integrate the financial data and records of the School Department with those of the City government.

In recent years, there has been a strong integration of the financial data and records of the School Department with those in City government.

Strategy – Review and implement, if desirable, the proposal to create a separate Department of Parks and Recreation.

The Parks Department was separated but then recombined with the Public Works Department due to a greater seasonal need for personnel.

Strategy – Expand the City's recycling program, and create a composting facility to reduce the City's tonnage of solid waste which is trucked out of town for costly disposal.

In late 2007 the City created the position of Solid Waste Director and undertook new initiatives to increase recycling. Preliminary results show that the percentage of solid waste being recycled has substantially increased from approximately 10% to 35%, making Woonsocket one of the top recycling communities in Rhode Island.

Strategy – Establish an inter-agency system for the sharing of information and resources between various human service agencies.

The City's director of Human Resources is responsible for the coordination and transmittal of information for the various City human service agencies.

Strategy – Study the possibility of establishing a regional body to oversee the inventory, coordination and master planning of the complex network of public and private human service providers.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Implement a phased program to perform additional required physical modifications at City polling places.

Improvements have been made in the past few years to bring Woonsocket into compliance with State regulations.

Strategy – The Woonsocket Housing Authority should work closely with the City and federal funding sources to gain funds for the implementation of public improvements as required.

All new WHA projects are first discussed with the City administration before applications are prepared and sent to the federal government for funding.

Strategy – The Woonsocket Housing Authority should continue implementation of the comprehensive Capital Improvement Program under which many of the units have been renovated, and housing components have been upgraded, during recent years.

During the past three years, major renovations have taken place at the Morin Heights and the Bourdon Boulevard public housing sites, which included the reconfiguration of many units. Periodic improvements have also been made at all five of the elderly high-rises located in Woonsocket.

Strategy – The Woonsocket Housing Authority should continue the use of existing Housing Authority units for much needed public housing in Woonsocket.

1) During the recent housing upgrades, the WHA has effected a slight reduction in the number of public family housing units and has initiated a program to provide new owner-occupied assisted units. This action follows the strategy of the housing element of this plan.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Strategy – Develop a combined master plan for recreation, interpretation and tourism development along the Blackstone River, coordinated with the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, the Woonsocket Heritage Corridor Planning and Advisory Commission, RIDEM and the Rhode Island Department of Transportation.

This has not been done but should be and is listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update.

Strategy – Protect river-frontage with appropriate land use controls, including the establishment of a Heritage Corridor River Overlay District.

The Riverfront Overlay District was created and made part of the City's zoning ordinance. It provides river protection controls for proposed developments.

Strategy – Implement a program to increase public awareness of the natural resources and recreational opportunities associated with the Heritage Corridor.

This has not been done but should be and is listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update.

Strategy – Support the development of a multi-faceted Visitor Center/Labor History Museum in the Falls Yarn Mill Building to attract regional tourism in conjunction with the Woonsocket Industrial Development Corporation, the Heritage Corridor Commission and RIDEM.

The Museum of Work and Culture opened to the public in October, 1997.

Strategy – Continue with plans to develop River Island Park, the riverfront park adjacent to the Visitor's Center.

The park has been continuously upgraded in recent years. The latest element that has been added is the refrigerated ice-skating rink.

Strategy – Establish public educational programs in the areas of conservation and park history, as a means of increasing understanding and appreciation of these valuable resources.

This has not been done but should be and is listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update.

Strategy – Lobby for immediate listing of the former transfer station as a Superfund site, and investigate the possibility of establishing a riverside multi-purpose recreational facility on that site.

The transfer station, the former landfill off of Davison Street, has been capped and has been converted into a recreation facility.

Strategy – Make a long term commitment to gradually increase the general fund appropriation for park and recreation operations, to a level comparable with per capita appropriations for parks and recreation in other Rhode Island communities.

Due to budgetary constraints an increase in the annual appropriation is now possible. However, this is an implementation action that should be considered once the municipal fiscal outlook improves.

Strategy – Remove the Parks and Recreation Division from the Department of Public Works and form an independent department combining the management function of the present Parks Division with the planning and fund generation functions that have been carried out by the Department of Planning and Development.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Require developers of large, residential developments to donate land for public open space

This has not been done but should be and is listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update. This has not been made an actual requirement through regulations, but the planning board has strongly urged developers to make open space donations.

Strategy – Change zoning for Plat 58, Lot 4 from R-1 to PR-2 in order to add 8.97 acres to the Iron Rock Conservation Area, in East Woonsocket

The zoning change took effect on September 7, 2005.

Strategy – Acquire 6.4 acres of land from Highland Corporate Park for conservation purposes.

This action was completed in June, 2006.

Strategy – Upon the sale of the remaining parcel at the Highland Corporate Park, add 5 acres of open space from this area to the Iron Rock Conservation Area.

This action was completed, however only a four acre parcel was added.

Strategy – Upon implementation of the Holley Springs development project, secure 8-10 acres of land for public open space.

This has not been done but should be and is listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update.

Strategy – Upon final approval of Oak Grove subdivision plan, secure 8 acres of open space along Blackstone River for public open space and river access.

This has not been done but should be and is listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update. This action has been mandated by the Planning Board's Master Plan approval.

Strategy – Create outdoor classrooms and study trails to compliment the School Department's outdoor education programs in parks adjacent to school sites.

Trails and outdoor classrooms have been developed adjacent to the Burns Park Elementary School, the East Woonsocket Elementary School and an area adjacent to Woonsocket High School.

Strategy – Participate in the development of a revenue generation master plan for the Heritage Corridor.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Continue with rehabilitation efforts in the City's riverfront parks -- Cold Spring and Costa.

Major renovations to Cold Spring Park were completed eight years ago. Periodic improvements have been made to Costa Park in recent years, including the replacement of playground equipment. However, this should continue to be listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update, with reference to Cass Park.

Strategy – Lobby for the reinstatement of the Roger Williams Fund for support of Northern Rhode Island tourism development.

This fund no longer exists.

Strategy – Establish an annual festival and events calendar and public awareness campaign for Woonsocket in conjunction with the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council.

Annual events such as Jazz on the Blackstone, the French Farmers Market, Autumnfest, Mardi Gras and approximately six musical events at River Island Park have been held. These events have been promoted locally and include the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council. However, a formal calendar and public awareness campaign has not been initiated. This should continue to be listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update.

Strategy – Investigate the establishment of an annual plan for police protection in parks with specific inclusions for levels of effort, schedules and reporting mechanisms.

A police reserve was established in part to police the City parks, however, it had to be discontinued due to insurance and liability issues.

Strategy – Replace or recondition deteriorated play equipment and sports facilities in the City's parks.

This is ongoing and is funded through the CDBG program. This should continue to be listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update.

Strategy – Continue with planned improvements and rehabilitation work at Cass, Cold Spring, Costa, Dunn and Globe Parks.

A major, four million dollar comprehensive Cass Park improvement project is currently being planned. The first phase is scheduled to begin later in 2008 with three additional annual phases to follow. A new

playground was installed at Globe Park in 2007, and Dunn and Cold Spring Parks have received periodic upgrades. This should continue to be listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update.

Strategy – Continue aggressive pursuit of State and federal park development grants to supplement existing municipal funding sources.

Applying for and receiving matching RIDEM outdoor and recreation funds has always been a major funding source of all City park projects. The City will continue to pursue this and other outside funding sources. This should continue to be listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update.

Strategy – Establish appropriate zoning regulations to guide the development of Woonsocket's remaining undeveloped areas, to limit the intensity of their development and protect their natural resources.

The Planned Unit Residential Development Ordinance has been implemented which addresses this strategy. It permits the concentration and placement of housing units on those portions of large tracts of acreage that are best suited for development, while preserving those portions containing natural and/or scenic resources.

Strategy – Continue acquiring properties where feasible and implement new open space preservation techniques to protect land for future public access.

The City has continued to pursue this strategy as the opportunities present themselves. This should continue to be listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update.

Strategy – Utilize local and State-wide resources to inventory the natural resources contained in the conservation areas and to survey the remaining large tracts of undeveloped land for significant natural resources.

This has not been done but should be and is listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update.

Strategy – Develop a small portion of the Heritage Corridor to act as the first public benefit of the City's plans along the river and to encourage tourism.

The City has developed River Island Park and the Museum of Work and Culture and holds events in both locations that encourage tourism.

Strategy – Continue support, both technical and monetary, for Corridor-related developments.

The City has continued its strong support for Corridor-related developments. This should continue to be listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update.

Strategy – Monitor progress in the development of the Heritage Corridor Bikeway.

The City has been actively involved in the construction of segment 7c of the Blackstone River Bikeway. The City has contracted out this work to a private contractor and it has been combined with the work currently being performed on the Riverside Recreation Complex. Currently, the City has actively participated in the planning of the next segment which will run from Davison Street to Market Square. This should continue to be listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update.

Strategy – Coordinate efforts with local schools for the use of conservation areas for their outdoor education curricula.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Develop feature parks that promote environmental protection and enhance scenic and recreational opportunities and access along City waterways.

This strategy has been pursued at Cass Park and with the scenic enhancement and protection of Iron Rock Brook and Sylvester's Pond.

Strategy – Institute a City-wide planting program for the replacement of dead and dying plant material and the planting of trees in the parks, to improve the aesthetic quality of the parks, and to provide comfort and shade to park users.

The City has continued the funding of the planting of significant landscape material as part of the various park improvement projects. An arborist has been contracted with for the maintenance of street trees and the landscape material in the parks.

Strategy – Implement plans for the development of The Island and parks along River Street.

The City has had discussions with the owner of the former Tech Industries for the conversion of this mill complex into housing. As part of the development proposal, adjacent land, referred to as "The Island" should be made part of this development and become part of a privately funded, passive recreation area. Parkland along River Street can be developed as part of the Blackstone River Bikeway. This should continue to be listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update.

Strategy – Investigate the creation of a municipal improvement corporation to acquire parkland along the Blackstone River in Woonsocket.

This action is not required as the Department of Planning and Development has continued to be the designated department for the preparation of funding applications from outside sources.

Strategy – Develop park concession guidelines for the future management of visitor services along the Heritage Corridor.

The City attempted to contract with a concession vendor to be located in River Island Park, but due to a lack of regular use, was unable to identify an interested vendor. This will probably continue to be the case in the near future.

Strategy – Create model "Adopt A Park" projects (park advocacy group) to capitalize on the community's desire to participate in park cleanup and improvements, for City parks and conservation areas.

Citizens groups have been active in the planning and limited construction of playgrounds and other improvements, in playgrounds and other parks. The City implemented an "Adopt an Island" program approximately five years ago, which has proven to be very successful.

Strategy – Implement management plans in the City's conservation areas.

This has not been done but should be and is listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update. This strategy will be pursued in future years.

Strategy – Make use of spoils from the Public Works Department, Highway Division as material for paths and regrading of parks wherever possible.

Used cobblestones and curbing are routinely utilized in various park improvement projects.

Strategy – Compose a transition plan to establish a Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department and re-establish and expand the duties of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

The local Parks and Recreation Advisory Board was established and lasted for only two years due to a waning level of interest.

Strategy – Reestablish the Recreation Advisory Commission for community involvement and coordination, and strengthen its role in recreation planning and provision.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Create revised policies and guidelines for the role of the Conservation Commission in relationship to the parks and recreation system.

The Woonsocket Conservation Commission is an independent body that maintains its own rules and policies.

Strategy – Establish a parks and recreation services revenue policy with established categories for various levels of tax subsidization and user fees.

This strategy was explored however it was determined that the administration costs would not make such an action feasible. There has been a consensus of local government officials that all park facilities should remain free and open to all users.

Strategy – Separate non-park, non-recreation functions from the parks and recreation operating budget.

To a limited degree, this action has been taken.

Strategy – Establish a cost of services accounting procedure to provide decision makers and citizens with accurate information on the use of parks and recreation funds.

This is no longer required due to a local decision to keep all park facilities free and open to the general public.

Strategy – Investigate funding options for park acquisition and development.

The City's Department of Planning and Development is aware of and capitalizes on RIDEM funding and funding from outside private sources when available.

Strategy – Establish a system to quantify volunteer efforts expended for park and recreational services, and begin an awards program to recognize the contributions of individuals and groups.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Explore opportunities for the use of volunteers or in-kind labor forces for park development (i.e.: Civilian Conservation Corps).

This strategy has been explored utilizing organizations such as the National Guard but has proven to be either not practical or no volunteers were available.

Strategy – Encourage the continued supply of technical support for open space and conservation efforts (i.e.: the Environmental Review Team), and lobby for streamlining of RIDEM wetland review and approval for park development.

Periodically the City has entered comments concerning the RIDEM wetlands regulations and review policies.

Strategy – Conduct annual parks and recreation demand surveys of the general public.

Individual surveys have been utilized when the renovation of individual parks has been planned.

Strategy – Plan and implement improvements to the access, trails, parking, and interpretive exhibit features of the conservation areas to allow for increased public use.

This has not been done but should be and is listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update.

Strategy – Establish a task force to explore the creation of a Youth Center.

A City-operated youth center failed approximately 15 years ago. Since that time the YMCA and Boys and Girls Club have initiated a series of youth programs and youth centers to address the needs of the area youth. However, this issue should be listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update.

Strategy – Conduct annual planning workshops with parks and recreation interest groups in an effort to determine and meet the needs of all segments of Woonsocket's population.

Not practical.

Strategy – Continue redevelopment of existing neighborhood parks with an emphasis on family and passive recreation features.

This has been done on an ongoing basis and will continue to be listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update.

Strategy – Continue conservation area acquisition by land use planning and either direct or easement purchase measures.

Acquisition of additional acreage for conservation purposes is an ongoing goal and will continue to be listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update.

Strategy – Continue with park rehabilitation and development as financial opportunities arise.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Replace or recondition deteriorated play equipment and sports facilities in the City's parks.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Assess the need for improvements to Bissonette Field.

This was done two to three years ago and the neighborhood does not want further improvement.

Strategy – Produce a park and recreation guide/map for public use.

This has not been done but should be and is listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update.

Strategy – Create a conservation area/nature preserve guide booklet on Woonsocket's natural areas.

This has not been done but should be and is listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update.

Strategy – Work with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation to ensure the continued provision of "beach buses" and to expand transportation services as needed.

Bus service has continued to be provided during the summer beach months.

Strategy – Create a position in the Parks Department for an expert in horticulture to maintain and improve the plant resources in the City's parks and natural areas, and to establish a City-wide tree planting program.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Establish a parks classification system including categories for play lots, neighborhood parks, City-wide parks, conservation areas and special parks as a priority function of the newly formed Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

This has been reflected in the Parks and Recreation plan.

Strategy – Analyze all existing City property for potential neighborhood park classification, and land bank suitable parcels for future development whenever possible.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Determine and implement a supervisory management system for the City's parks, including the small neighborhood playgrounds.

The City’s Parks Department operates programs for the City’s youth during the summer season.

Strategy – Explore other opportunities to fund park development.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Investigate the creation of a municipal improvement corporation.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Explore the demand for the acquisition of parkland adjacent to a conservation area for the development of a "district level" park.

There are no parcels available adjacent to the City's three conservation areas for acquisition for the development of a "district level" park.

Strategy – Create a park planning workbook and guidelines for park improvements including community participation procedures.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Encourage the State to continue, and to expand where possible, recreation services at World War II Veterans Memorial State Park (especially in regard to swimming and cultural events) and other State recreational facilities.

In recent years the State of Rhode Island has expressed a desire to turn over ownership of the World War II Veterans Memorial State Park to the City. The City has declined this offer and has continued to pressure the State for continued operation of swimming and other cultural events at this location. This will continue to be listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update.

Strategy – Work with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation to ensure the continued provision of "beach buses" and to expand transportation services as needed.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Consider allocation of hotel/motel tax revenues to assist in the development and operation of Heritage Corridor plans.

This strategy has been implemented.

Strategy – Investigate the creation of a parks and recreation foundation to attract and manage private participation in parks, recreation and tourism development.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Acquire and develop a new neighborhood park in Oak Grove or East Woonsocket in response to population growth.

The City maintains ownership of approximately 4-5 lots in the Oak Grove area, however there has not been sufficient resident interest for the creation of a new neighborhood playground in this area.

Strategy – Reconstruct a new Ayotte Field in a suitable alternate location after the original site of Ayotte Field is redeveloped for commercial use.

This has not been done but should be and is listed as an implementation action in the Plan Update.

CIRCULATION

Strategy – Improve traffic flow between Market Square and Depot Square.

As part of a Main Street Improvement Program, Main Street was made two-way from Market Square to Depot Square and Market Square was substantially redesigned to permit smoother traffic flow through the Square to South Main Street. The changes have proven to be highly beneficial in improving traffic flow through the area.

Strategy – Increase annual budget allocations for street re-surfacing and bridge maintenance based on a Pavement Management Program.

Approximately five years ago a 10 million dollar street improvement bond was approved by Woonsocket voters. Since that time numerous streets throughout the City have been reconstructed and resurfaced. The City also has adopted a policy of using federal CDBG funds to resurface approximately three city streets per year.

Strategy – Implement recommendations of the Main Street 2000 Study for circulation and parking needs.

The major recommendations of the Main Street 2000 Study have been implemented with the exception of providing public and employee parking off of High Street.

Strategy – Eliminate confusion of getting into and/or through the City using destination, street identification and State numbered route signs as guideposts. Place destination or directional signs at key locations coming into (and leaving) the City.

New signage has been installed which has assisted in improved traffic flow through the City. The signage features prominent destination points such as the Stadium Theatre, City Hall, the Museum of Work and Culture, the library and the police station.

Strategy – Ensure adequate access in areas targeted for economic development.

A major financial commitment was made by the City of Woonsocket in the development of the Highland Corporate Park expansion which included the extension, Park East Drive, continuing and traversing through Cumberland, tying it directly to the intersection of Route 99 and Mendon Road (Route 122). This direct tie to the federal interstate highway system has made the Highland Corporate Parks extremely accessible from RI and the Southern New England region.

Strategy – Support rail efforts to upgrade the P&W mainline in manner that has minimum impact on City operations. Request direct involvement in any study conducted by the State.

The City of Woonsocket, with the assistance of state funding, recently conducted a feasibility study to upgrade service of the Providence & Worcester railway line and also to investigate construction of a new rail line that would link Woonsocket to the MBTA system in Franklin, MA. Although it was determined that projected ridership would not support the major cost in construction of the new connecting line to the MBTA system, increased expenditures should be made to further develop commuter ridership on the existing P&W line from Worcester to Providence.

Strategy – Take maximum advantage of State transportation programs for funding major road and bridge improvement needs. Submit Road and Bridge Needs as determined by this study.

The City has submitted a comprehensive list of roadway and bridge improvement projects to the State DOT each year for inclusion in the State's annual transportation improvement program.

Strategy – Allocate yearly funds to repair traffic lights.

Repair costs have been annually budgeted by the City.

Strategy – Request that RIPTA extend bus service to the Highland Industrial Park.

RIPTA has rerouted one bus line to provide a bus stop at the entry to the Highland Corporate Park at Mendon Road.

Strategy – Coordinate with neighboring communities to improve regional transit opportunities, and explore opportunities to improve regional access.

Coordination with neighboring communities has been ongoing when special regional transportation projects are reviewed. A recent example is the study performed by the City on commuter rail travel.

Strategy – City streets designated by the State as either Class II or Class III bikeways should be resurfaced or reconstructed by the State to City standards. The City Transportation Engineer should track progress of the Bikeway project with RIDOT.

RIDOT and RIDEM are currently preparing final plans for the extension of the Blackstone River Bikeway from Davison Street through downtown Woonsocket to the RI/MA border. Most of the proposed bike path is off-road, however small segments will be located on city streets. Improvement to these streets will be made concurrent to the bikeway construction.

Strategy – Upgrade traffic signals, acquiring modern traffic signal equipment to replace or repair outdated and poorly functioning equipment in accordance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

The City of Woonsocket has upgraded traffic signals and replaced obsolete equipment on an as needed basis as funding has been made available.

Strategy – Designate long-term and short-term parking areas, and loading/unloading areas along Main Street. Enforce parking regulations.

Long and short-term parking areas have been designated throughout the Main Street area and loading/unloading areas have been properly designated. Enforcement of these parking regulations have been ongoing.

Strategy – Reduce parking requirements for retail development.

Parking requirements for new retail development have been reduced on a project by project review to levels below that required by the city's zoning ordinance. This is done as part of a detailed review of the actual parking requirements and needs of each proposed new business.

Strategy – Request as RIDOT projects the rehabilitation and/or reconstruction of major arterial and collector roads indicated as having the greatest need.

The City of Woonsocket, in its list of annual roadway and bridge replacements submitted to the State, has included all arterial roadways which have been designated eligible for state and federal funding.

Strategy – Monitor the effects of Route 99 on the City's circulation system.

The implementation of Route 99 and the resultant increase of business and traffic in the Highland Corporate Park area has resulted in increased traffic and rush hour pressure in the Cumberland Street and lower Mendon Road areas. Future roadway upgrades are anticipated in the next ten years.

Strategy – Improve safety and capacity of narrow/congested roadways with improved intersection geometry and/or updated traffic controls.

There have been improvements made to various intersections throughout the city during reconstruction and resurfacing projects.

Strategy – Work with neighboring communities to improve regional transportation .

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Coordinate with neighboring towns, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to plan for improved access to regional highways.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Establish the position of City Transportation Engineer within the Department of Public Works, either through the creation of anew position or the reassignment of existing personnel.

Due to budget restrictions the creation of a new position is not possible. However, there has been a reorganization of existing personnel that clearly defines transportation responsibilities.

Strategy – Establish a liaison representative (possibly the City Transportation Engineer) to meet quarterly with RIDOT. The City can and should become more involved in projects of local concern. The City should also discuss with the League of Cities and Towns the possibility of designating a League representative as a RIDOT contact to further facilitate the lines of communication.

This is not practical.

Strategy – Encourage development of off-street parking in residential areas. Discourage illegal on-street parking.

Strict adherence to the parking requirements in the zoning ordinance has been maintained.

Strategy – Improve intra-city transit between high density residential areas and major employment centers.

The City has continuously requested the increase and addition of bus routes throughout the City.

Strategy – Complete implementation of a pavement management program needed to prioritize City expenditures for repaving of streets.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Develop zoning and subdivision requirements for land along Cumberland Hill Road and Cumberland Street to control the number and location of curb cuts in anticipation of increased traffic from Route 99.

This strategy has been addressed during the individual planning and zoning review of new proposed projects.

Strategy – Adopt and enforce on-street parking regulations for residential areas. Utilize off-street parking capabilities to remove on-street parking, resulting in adequate travel lanes and appropriate clearances for trucks.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Support State efforts to upgrade rail lines within the City to remove clearance restrictions for freight service along P&W's Main Line, while seeking State support and funding to address the low bridge clearance on (lower) Main Street.

This is a continuous effort.

Strategy – Work with the State and P&W Railroad to eliminate bridge restrictions.

This is a continuous effort.

Strategy – Require access to public transportation for subsidized housing and new apartment complexes.

Already addressed in a previous question.

Strategy – Re-evaluate numbered route designations every five years or more frequently as needed.

This has been performed as needed.

Strategy – Designate the Circulation Element Citizens Advisory Group as a standing committee, reporting to the City Transportation Engineer and City boards, to be used as a sounding board and otherwise provide local input.

This strategy has been eliminated. Public comment and input can be gained through the City Council or direct contact with the city engineer and /or planning and zoning boards.

Strategy – Seek ways of reducing travel demand by encouraging businesses to provide employees with incentives to use alternative roads, carpools and vanpools, or staggered work hours to minimize peak hour congestion.

This initiative is not required at this time.

Strategy – Study the need for an additional Blackstone River crossing, connecting Routes 122 and 126.

This action is not warranted at this time due to limited federal and state funds for new bridge construction.

Strategy – Evaluate the feasibility of traffic demand reduction methods such as employee incentives for using public/para-transit or staggered work hours.
This strategy is not required at this time.

LAND USE

Strategy – Create a Heritage Corridor River Overlay Zone to ensure that development and redevelopment along the Blackstone River is visually and environmentally appropriate.

A River Corridor Overlay District was created approximately 15 years ago. All development proposals on parcels that abut the Blackstone River must be reviewed and approved by the River Corridor District Commission for their environmental and aesthetic appropriateness. In addition, proposals are examined in order to take advantage of opportunities to provide public access to the river.

Strategy – Amend the Zoning Map to include the boundaries of the proposed Heritage Corridor River Overlay Zone.

This overlay zone has been made part of the City's zoning ordinance and due to the fact that the overlay zone is designated by parcels that abut the river, as opposed to a distance setback from the river, it cannot be reflected on the zoning map.

Strategy – Rezone the lots composing the Woonsocket Industrial Park from limited General Commercial (C-3 limited) to Light Industrial (I-1).

This has been done.

Strategy – Rezone certain parcels in the vicinity of Iron Rock Brook from Low Density Single-Family and Multi-Family Residential (R-5A) to Conservation District (PR-2), upon acquisition by the City. (See Proposed Land Use Map.)

Land in the Iron Rock Conservation area has been rezoned to a conservation area (PR-1).

Strategy – Rezone certain parcels in and adjacent to the Highland Industrial Park from Conservation District (PR-2) to Light Industrial (I-1), upon transfer of conservation easements by the City to Iron Rock Brook conservation land. (See Proposed Land Use Map.)

This has been done.

Strategy – Establish new Mixed Use Residential/Commercial (MU-1) and Mixed Use Commercial/Industrial (MU-2) districts to provide flexibility and more closely reflect existing patterns of development.

This has been done.

Strategy – Rezone approximately 6 acres of City-owned land south of Diamond Hill Road and north of Patton Drive from Active Public Recreation (PR-1) land to Major Commercial (C-2).

This has been done.

Strategy – Rezone approximately 26 acres west of Wanda Avenue from Very Low Density (R-1) to Active Public Recreation (PR-1), and rezone approximately 4 acres from Active Public Recreation (PR-1) to Very Low Density Residential (R-1). Add new PR-1 land to the Booth Pond Conservation Area.

This has been done.

Strategy – Adopt a Soil Erosion Control Ordinance to prevent non-point source pollution of the City's water bodies, and to preserve the integrity of Woonsocket's landscape.

A soil erosion control ordinance was adopted in 1993 (and amended in 2003) and is administered by the City's building inspection division.

Strategy – Develop and enforce broad base performance criteria for the regulation of all industrial uses.

No action has been taken on this strategy to date, and it remains a long term objective.

Strategy – Eliminate the present Neighborhood Commercial (C-1) and Restricted Commercial (C-2) districts.

Zoning designations have been revised so as to comply.

Strategy – Replace the present General Commercial (C-3) district with an Urban Commercial (new C-1) district, with regulations aimed at ensuring that new development is appropriate to the urban context of surrounding properties within this district.

Zoning designations have been revised so as to comply.

Strategy – Replace the present Major Commercial (C-4) district with a Shopping Plaza (new C-2) district, with regulations aimed at ensuring that new development is appropriate to the contemporary, automobile-oriented context of surrounding properties within this district.

Zoning designations have been revised so as to comply.

Strategy – Revise the Design Review Ordinance.

The design review ordinance was substantially revised approximately 15 years ago to include only commercial and mixed-use properties, as well as uses in non-conforming zoned parcels.

Strategy – Review current parking requirements for commercial properties and revise as necessary, in accordance with accepted traffic engineering standards.

This was performed as part of recent amendments to the zoning ordinance.

Strategy – Grant discretionary authority to the Zoning Officer for the approval of minor dimensional variances, in cases where no abutters to the applicant property are opposed to the requested variance, as consistent with State law.

This strategy has been implemented.

Strategy – Rezone properties currently zoned Neighborhood Commercial (C-1) to Residential/Commercial Mixed Use (MU-1).

Major changes in the zoning designations have been implemented to generally conform to this strategy

Strategy – Rezone properties currently zoned Restricted Commercial (C-2) to Urban Commercial (new C-1).
Major changes in the zoning designations have been implemented to generally conform to this strategy.

Strategy – Rezone properties currently zoned General Commercial (C-3) to Urban Commercial (new C-1).

Major changes in the zoning designations have been implemented to generally conform to this strategy.

Strategy – Rezone properties currently zoned Major Commercial (C-4) to Shopping Plaza (new C-2)

Major changes in the zoning designations have been implemented to generally conform to this strategy.

Strategy – Rezone parcels to Residential/Commercial Mixed Use (MU-1) and Commercial/Industrial Mixed Use (MU-2) as appropriate. (See Proposed Land Use Map.)

Major changes in the zoning designations have been implemented to generally conform to this strategy.

Strategy – Rezone the land encompassing the former Transfer Station from Light Industrial (I-1) to Park District (PR-1).

Major changes in the zoning designations have been implemented to generally conform to this strategy.

Strategy – Consider rezoning various individual lots, where appropriate, to reflect their current, desirable uses, and to reduce the number of non-conforming properties.

Consideration was given when zoning designations were updated and changed during the past 13 years.

Strategy – Correct any internal inconsistencies within the Zoning Ordinance, and revise all associated ordinances for conformance with the revised Zoning Ordinance.

Several amendments to the zoning ordinance have been passed in recent years to correct internal inconsistencies in the ordinance.

Strategy – Provide orientation sessions in the application of all revised ordinances and the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan for various City boards and agencies.

Orientation is a part of when all revisions to zoning ordinances and the comprehensive plan have been considered by the city boards and agencies.

Strategy – Investigate the possibility of reducing the number of residential zoning classifications from 7 to 4 or 5, to make the residential zoning in Woonsocket more easily understood and less cumbersome.

The number has been reduced from seven to five as proposed.

Strategy – Review set-back requirements and minimum lot sizes in residential districts and amend as necessary to more closely reflect existing patterns of development.

Changes in minimum lot sizes and setbacks in residential districts have been made to the zoning ordinance. The R-5 and R-5a zones have been eliminated which serves to prevent more than one building being built on a single lot. Lot sizes have increased for the single-family only zones, R-1 and R-2. For example, R-1, the lowest density single-family zone has gone from a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet to 25,000 square feet, with setbacks increasing significantly as well. R-2 has gone from 8,000 square feet minimum to 10,000, although the setback distances have remained the same. The R-3 single and two-family zone and the R-4 multi-family zone have remained the same.

Strategy – Amend the Zoning Ordinance to provide criteria for group homes, homeless shelters, and day care facilities in conformance with State law.

This has not been done but remains a long term objective.

Strategy – Provide clarification of terms and phrases appearing in the Zoning Ordinance through the inclusion of definitions for those terms within the ordinance.

This has been done.

Strategy – Establish regulations which encourage franchise operations to adapt their building designs to harmonize with surrounding development, and discourage them from demolishing existing buildings to build new ones.

Specific regulations are not practical, however the design review board closely examines proposed building designs so as to harmonize with surrounding development.

Strategy – Expand the jurisdiction of the Historic Districts Commission to encompass National Register districts and areas of significant local importance within the City, where desirable, without overburdening property owners.

The Historic Districts Commission was recently disbanded by the Woonsocket City Council and at this time, reinstating the commission is unlikely.

Strategy – Adopt minimum landscape requirements for new development and redevelopment within the City's commercial and mixed use districts.

Minimum landscape requirements for new development is a major item that is considered by the Design Review Commission during their project review.

Strategy – Establish a policy for the disposal of undevelopable parcels, including lots which are undersized, dimensionally awkward, land-locked, or located without frontage on an accepted street.

The City has developed a policy for the disposal of undevelopable lots that makes the property available to adjacent property owners who often own buildings located on undersize lots.

Strategy – Amend the Zoning Map to include the boundaries of additional local Historic Districts.

The Woonsocket Historic District Commission has been disbanded and there no longer are historic district boundaries that are part of the City's zoning maps.

Strategy – Avoid unnecessary duplication and burden to property owners through the establishment of a consolidated review process for cases involving overlapping jurisdictions of various City boards and agencies.

An attempt to avoid duplication, by amending procedural review by the various boards and agencies, has been implemented.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

HERITAGE CORRIDOR		**Responsibility**	**Timing**
HC-1.1a	Form alliances between government, local businesses, landowners, regional foundations, and environmental advocacy groups such as the Trust for Public Land and the Nature Conservancy to ensure that key natural resources are protected.	Planning Dept.	Ongoing
HC-1.1b	Increase public awareness and appreciation of natural resources by supporting public education and outreach on environmental issues in the community.	Planning Dept./ Conservation Commission	Intermediate/ Ongoing
HC-1.1c	Advocate with surrounding communities, the EPA and RIDEM for a collaborative, regional, watershed-based approach to hazardous waste cleanups and brownfields remediation.	Planning Dept.	Long term
HC-1.1d	Explore tax incentives, including deferment, for businesses instituting stricter pollution controls.	Planning Dept.	Intermediate
HC-1.2a	Pursue technical assistance and funding to continuously update and evaluate the Statewide Historical Preservation Report.	Planning Dept.	Immediate/ Ongoing
HC-1.2b	Collaborate with the public to gather public support for a local Historic Districts Commission.	Planning Dept.	1 year
HC-1.2c	Identify and establish additional local historic districts under the authority of a local Historic Districts Commission.	Historic Districts Commission	Long term
HC-1.2d	Support and encourage applications of National Register nominations and, once applicable, local historic zoning proposals.	Planning Dept.	Intermediate
HC-1.2e	Identify historic properties that are threatened by development pressures, deterioration or inadequate resources, and take proactive steps to prevent the loss of these resources.	Planning Dept./ Planning Board/ City Council	Immediate/ Ongoing
HC-2.1a	Ensure that all new developments within the River Corridor Overlay District are reviewed by the River Corridor Commission.	Planning Dept./ Planning Board	Ongoing
HC-2.1b	Develop design guidelines for the Design Review Overlay District in accordance with the Heritage Corridor's Design Review Manual.	Planning Dept./ Planning Board	1 year

HC-2.2a	Require that low-impact development measures are implemented in new subdivisions and in sensitive environmental area.	Planning Dept./ Planning Board	Ongoing
HC-2.3a	Rehabilitate and maintain the City's existing riverfront parks, including River Island Park, River's Edge, Cold Spring Park, and Costa Park.	Parks & Recreation Dept.	Ongoing
HC-2.3b	Identify and protect land suitable for conservation along the Blackstone River and its tributaries.	Planning Dept./ Conservation Commission	Immediate
HC-2.4a	Help thriving established local manufacturers, mature industries and businesses to maintain their utilization of old structures.	Planning Dept./ Economic Development	Immediate/ Ongoing
HC-2.4b	Establish grant/loan programs for the internal adaptation of older, historic mill buildings and structures to meet industrial needs.	Planning Board/ City Council	Long term
HC-2.4c	The Design Review Commission's review of new and expanded commercial and mixed-use developments encourages the design of these developments to be sensitive to the historical design context of Woonsocket.	Design Review Commission	Immediate/ Ongoing
HC-2.5a	Establish a City liaison to actively review proposed plans and communicate with RIDOT during the design development stage of transportation projects.	Planning Dept./ Engineering Dept.	6 months - 1 year
HC-3.1a	Incorporate interpretive features of historic information into public projects when appropriate, with the assistance of the Woonsocket Historical Society and the Heritage Corridor Commission.	Planning Dept.	Intermediate
HC-3.1b	Develop an interpretive education curriculum for grades K-12 involving the School Department, the Conservation Commission, the Historical Society and other key partners.	Planning Dept.	Intermediate
HC-3.2a	Research opportunities and apply for grant funds from the Heritage Corridor Commission and other agencies to fund heritage corridor-related local projects.	Planning Dept.	Ongoing
HC-3.3a	Continue to support the Woonsocket Visitor Center / Museum of Work and Culture.	City Council	Priority/ Ongoing
HC-3.3b	Develop a realistic, short-term tourism plan based on a Valley-wide strategy that identifies the key features with tourism potential in Woonsocket that could be tied into a larger series of tourism activities.	Planning Dept.	6 months - 1 year

HC-3.3c	Develop and disseminate a Woonsocket tourism map with identified Valley-wide and regional tourism sites.	Planning Dept.	6 months - 1 year
HC-3.3d	Advocate at the State level for the continued presence of the Blackstone Valley in the tourism plans for Rhode Island.	Planning Dept./ Heritage Corridor Commission	Ongoing
HC-3.3e	Utilize the Blackstone Valley Council's Tourism Plan and the Heritage Corridor Commission's plans as a basis for developing appropriate local tourism strategies and programs.	Planning Dept.	Intermediate
HC-3.3f	Collaborate with the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council and the Heritage Corridor Commission for special events promotion, and encourage the continuation of activities such as the Autumn Foliage Train, the Autumnfest, the Dynamite Cook-off, the French Farmer's Market, the Polar Express, the Blackstone Valley Explorer boat tours, and the Greenway Challenge.	Planning Dept.	Ongoing
HC-4.1a	Utilize the Blackstone Valley Partnership as a forum for achieving regional-level planning in the Valley.	Planning Dept.	Intermediate
HC-4.2a	Attend the regular meetings and events of the Heritage Corridor Commission, the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Main Street Riverfront Initiative Group, and other similar groups.	Planning Dept.	Ongoing
HC-4.2b	Actively pursue commuter rail service in the Blackstone Valley by working with local, state, and federal partners to obtain funding for additional study, design, and construction.	Planning Dept.	Priority/ Ongoing
HC-4.3a	Support the Bikeway as an alternative transportation route and recreational and educational feature.	Planning Dept.	Ongoing
HC-4.3b	Establish a reporting schedule with RIDOT and RIDEM on Bikeway progress.	Planning Dept./ Engineering Dept.	6 months - 1 year
HC-4.3c	Work with RIDOT and RIDEM to examine access to the Bikeway from key areas off-site, and to ensure compatibility with existing street traffic in the design development of the Bikeway.	Planning Dept./ Engineering Dept.	Immediate
HC-4.3d	Collaborate with and support the Heritage Corridor Commission in the establishment of a greenway along the Blackstone and Mill Rivers.	Planning Dept.	1 - 2 years

HOUSING

H-1.2a	Revise the Zoning Ordinance to ease the ability to develop in-law apartments in single-family residential districts (R1 & R2).	Zoning Board/ Planning Board/City Council	6 months - 1 year
H-1.3a	Complete an inventory and assessment of existing structures, focusing on former mill buildings and commercial blocks, to determine which would be most appropriate for live/work space and then amend Zoning Ordinance to permit and regulate this type of use.	Planning Dept./ Zoning Board/Planning Board/City Council	Intermediate
H-1.4a	Complete an inventory and assessment of all underutilized former mill buildings/complexes and determine which would be most appropriate for residential reuse existing structures, focusing on former mill buildings and commercial blocks, to determine which would be most appropriate for live/work space and then amend Zoning Ordinance to permit and regulate this type of use.	Planning Dept./ Zoning Board/ City Council	Intermediate
H-2.2a	Continue federal, State and locally funded rehabilitation programs, and target efforts in the City's older inner-city neighborhoods.	Planning Dept.	Ongoing
H-3.1a	Support community based initiatives that contribute and improve the quality of life in the City's neighborhoods (i.e., crime watches, beautification efforts, etc.)	Planning Dept.	Ongoing
H-3.3a	Coordinate local planning efforts in the Fairmount and Constitution Hill neighborhoods with the Sustainable Communities Program's Quality of Life Plan being developed by LISC and NeighborWorks.	Planning Dept.	Ongoing
H-3.5a	Support the conversion of units in multi-family dwellings from rental to homeownership by adopting flexible guidelines regarding utility separation requirements.	Planning Board	Immediate
H-3.6a	Track and map foreclosures on a quarterly basis and use this data to develop targeted policies and foreclosure prevention/mitigation programs.	Planning Dept.	Immediate
H-4.3a	Provide continued financial support for the existing operation of shelters for the homeless, and other agencies serving the at-risk population.	City Council	Ongoing

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ED-1.1a	Hold quarterly meetings with the city's business community to understand their needs and concerns.	Planning Dept./ Economic Development	Priority/ Ongoing
ED-1.1b	Lower Woonsocket's commercial/industrial tax rate to make it more competitive in the State.	Finance Dept./ City Council	Immediate
ED-2.1a	Work with the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, the RI Economic Development Corporation, and other business alliances to explore economic development incentives for attraction and retention purposes, and advertise available options to the business community.	Planning Dept./ Economic Development	Immediate/ Ongoing
ED-2.2a	Rezone areas of Park Avenue, Mendon Road, and Cumberland Hill Road to allow for greater opportunities for commercial activity.	Planning Dept./ Zoning Board/ Planning Board/City Council	1 year
ED-2.3a	For those existing mill and other industrial sites, when it has been determined that the rehabilitation of existing mill structures is not a viable option, that the demolition of these obsolete buildings occur and redevelopment sites for future industrial or commercial purposes be created.	Planning Dept/ Economic Development	Intermediate
ED-3.1a	Develop and implement a long-range economic development plan for the retention of existing businesses and the attraction of new investment.	Economic Development Dept.	Immediate/ Ongoing
ED-3.2a	Annually, inventory all mill sites and maintain a space analysis of each mill so that most appropriate potential uses may be identified.	Planning Dept.	Immediate/ Ongoing
ED-3.2b	Make every effort to realize the rehabilitation and reuse of vacant and underutilized mill buildings for mixed use or small business incubator space.	Planning Dept./ Economic Development	Intermediate
ED-3.3a	Complete and maintain an inventory of the city's available industrial land to be used as a basis for identifying areas that could support new industrial activities and place this on the city's website.	Planning Dept.	6 months
ED-4.1a	Retain and expand existing economic development programs, including the Small Business Revolving Loan Program, the Job Creation Program, and the Commercial Facade Restoration Grant Program for Main Street.	Economic Development Dept.	Immediate/ Ongoing

ED-4.2a	Work with the business community and other business alliances to conduct an attitude survey of businesses to identify priorities, needs, and concerns of the business community.	Economic Development Dept.	Immediate
ED-4.3a	Re-establish a full-time position for the Economic Development Director and an administrative staff person.	City Council/ Personnel Dept.	Immediate
ED-5.1a	Complete and maintain the Main Street Inventory database to assist with spurring economic development along Main Street.	Planning Dept./ Main Street-Riverfront Initiative	Immediate/ Ongoing
ED-5.1b	Implement innovative programs and policies to encourage upper floor uses on Main Street, including artist live-work spaces.	Planning Dept.	Intermediate
ED-5.2a	Foster the ongoing development of heritage tourism within the boundaries of the City	Economic Development Dept./Planning Dept.	Ongoing
ED-5.2b	Foster the ongoing development of a lively arts community within the boundaries of the City's state-designated Arts District	Economic Development Dept./Planning Dept.	Ongoing
ED-5.3a	Work closely with the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, and other established business alliances to include Woonsocket as a destination for regional tours, meetings and seminars of economic development professionals.	Planning Dept./ Economic Development	Immediate/ Ongoing
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES			
NCR-1.1a	Encourage and support owners of historic properties to have those properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places.	Planning Dept./ Woonsocket Historical Society	Immediate
NCR-1.1b	Regularly update the City's inventory of National Register-listed sites and historic districts.	Planning Dept.	Ongoing
NCR-1.1c	Encourage developers and property owners to place preservation easements on their historic properties.	Planning Dept.	Long term
NCR-1.1d	Develop a series of maps which identify the City's historic and cultural resources.	Planning Dept.	6 months - 1 year

NCR-1.2a	Outreach and educate the community about the benefits and importance of local historic district zoning.	Planning Dept.	Intermediate
NCR-1.2b	Identify most appropriate area of the city to adopt a local historic district.	Planning Dept./ Planning Board	1 year
NCR-1.2c	Once public support has been garnered, adopt a local historic district and commission in an appropriate area in the city.	Planning Dept./ Zoning Board/Planning Board/City Council	1 - 2 years
NCR-1.2d	Strengthen the review process within City departments when historic properties are involved or affected by development.	Planning Dept.	Immediate
NCR-1.2e	Clearly identify and map the location all sensitive natural, cultural and archaeological resources, beginning in the undeveloped areas of the City, for use in the review of proposed subdivisions and site plans.	Planning Dept.	Intermediate
NCR-1.3a	Create a Main Street/Riverfront Overlay District as a way to guide revitalization and ensure appropriate use of historic resources along Main Street and the Blackstone Riverfront.	Planning Dept./ Zoning Board/ Planning Board/City Council	1 year
NCR-1.3b	Apply for funding to implement the changes recommended in the Wayfinding Master Plan for Downtown Woonsocket.	Planning Dept.	6 months
NCR-2.1a	Seek funding to complete necessary upgrades and improvements to the water and wastewater treatment facilities.	Planning Dept./ Public Works Dept.	Immediate
NCR-2.1b	Support the efforts of organizations working to make the Blackstone River fishable and swimmable.	Planning Dept./ Conservation Commission	Ongoing
NCR-2.2a	Support projects that achieve this policy such as river walkways, scenic overlooks, education and interpretation programs, fishing piers, and canoe launches.	Planning Board	Intermediate
NCR-2.3a	Apply for brownfields grant funding through the USEPA, RIDEM, and other sources on a regular and continuous basis.	Planning Dept.	Ongoing
NCR-2.3b	Update the city's existing brownfields inventory on an annual basis.	Planning Dept.	Ongoing

NCR-2.3c	Consider brownfields issues as related to public health risks during the course of subdivision and land development reviews.	Planning Dept./ Planning Board	Ongoing
NCR-2.3d	Outreach to the owners of suspected or documented brownfields sites to educate them about the benefits, incentive programs, and funding mechanisms available for brownfields remediation.	Planning Dept.	1 year
NCR-2.4a	Adopt a tree ordinance to regulate tree preservation and new tree plantings during subdivision and land development reviews.	Planning Dept./ Planning Board/ City Council	Intermediate
NCR-2.4b	Strengthen the membership, formalize the role of, and adopt procedures for the Woonsocket Conservation Commission.	Planning Board	1 year
NCR-2.4c	Develop a series of maps which identify the City's natural resources.	Planning Dept.	6 months - 1 year
OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION			
OSR-1.1a	Develop a combined master plan for recreation, interpretation and tourism development along the Blackstone River, coordinated with the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, the Woonsocket Heritage Corridor Planning and Advisory Commission, RIDEM and the Rhode Island Department of Transportation.	Planning Dept./ Planning Board	Intermediate
OSR-1.1b	Implement a program to increase public awareness of the natural resources and recreational opportunities associated with the Heritage Corridor.	Planning Dept./ Heritage Corridor Commission	1 year
OSR-1.1c	Establish an annual festival and events calendar and public awareness campaign for Woonsocket in conjunction with the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council.	Planning Dept.	6 months - 1 year
OSR-1.1d	Monitor progress in the development of the Blackstone River Bikeway, and work closely with State agencies to plan a specific route that maximizes public access to the riverfront and economic development opportunities in the City.	Planning Dept.	Ongoing
OSR-1.2a	Continue support, both technical and monetary, for Corridor-related developments.	Planning Dept./ City Council	Ongoing
OSR-2.1a	Establish public educational programs in the areas of conservation and park history, as a means of increasing understanding and appreciation of these valuable resources.	Education Dept.	Immediate

OSR-2.2a	Make a long term commitment to gradually increase the general fund appropriation for park and recreation operations, to a level comparable with per capita appropriations for parks and recreation in other Rhode Island communities.	City Council	Long term
OSR-2.3a	Continue with regular improvements and rehabilitation efforts in the City's parks.	Parks & Recreation Dept.	Ongoing
OSR-2.3b	Replace or recondition deteriorated play equipment and sports facilities in the City's parks.	Parks & Recreation Dept.	Ongoing
OSR-2.3c	Complete the Cass Park Improvement Project.	Parks & Recreation Dept.	Immediate
OSR-2.3d	Develop nature trails, parking areas, and signage to encourage appropriate use of the city's conservation areas.	Planning Dept.	Intermediate
OSR-3.1a	Produce a park and recreation guide/map for public use.	Planning Dept.	6 months - 1 year
OSR-3.1b	Install signage at conservation areas.	Public Works Dept.	1 year
OSR-3.1c	Create a city website that highlights the parks, recreation amenities, and conservation areas in the community.	Planning Dept./ Technology Coordinator	Intermediate
OSR-4.1a	Continue aggressive pursuit of State and federal park development grants to supplement existing municipal funding sources.	Planning Dept.	Ongoing
OSR-4.1b	Continue public open space and conservation area acquisition by land use planning and either direct or easement purchase measures.	Planning Dept./ Planning Board	Ongoing
OSR-4.1c	Reconstruct a new Ayotte Field in a suitable alternate location after the original site of Ayotte Field is redeveloped for commercial use.	Planning Dept.	TBD
OSR-5.1a	Require that large residential developments/subdivisions must donate land for new public open space.	Planning Board	Intermediate

OSR-5.1b	Upon implementation of the Holly Springs development project, secure 8-10 acres of land for public open space.	Planning Board	Priority/ TBD
OSR-5.1c	Upon final approval of the Oak Grove subdivision plan, secure 8 acres of open space along the Blackstone River for public open space and river access.	Planning Board	Priority/ TBD
OSR-5.1d	Implement management plans in the City's conservation areas and public open space.	Parks & Recreation Dept.	1 - 2 years
OSR-6.1a	Utilize local and State-wide resources to inventory the natural resources contained in the public open space and conservation areas and to survey the remaining large tracts of undeveloped land for significant natural resources.	Parks & Recreation Dept.	1 - 2 years
OSR-6.1b	Plan and implement improvements to the access, trails, parking, and interpretive exhibit features of public open space and conservation areas to allow for increased public use.	Planning Dept.	Intermediate
OSR-6.1c	Create a conservation area/nature preserve guide booklet on Woonsocket's natural areas.	Planning Dept./ Conservation Commission	1 year
OSR-7.1a	Engage community organizations to aid in the creation of a Youth Center.	Planning Dept.	Intermediate
OSR-7.1b	Continue redevelopment of existing neighborhood parks with an emphasis on family and passive recreation features.	Parks & Recreation Dept.	Ongoing
OSR-7.1c	Encourage the State to continue, and to expand where possible, recreation services at World War II Veterans Memorial State Park (especially in regard to swimming and cultural events) and other State recreational facilities.	Planning Dept.	Immediate/ Ongoing
OSR-7.2a	Develop plans for the “The Island Park” on Fairmount Street and additional park area along River Street in the Fairmount neighborhood.	Planning Dept.	Intermediate

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

SF-1.1a	Conduct periodic public surveys of appropriate segments of the population to gauge service satisfaction and assess the needs of those surveyed.	Planning Dept.	Ongoing
SF-1.1b	As required by the 1988 Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act, the City's Comprehensive Plan must be revised no less than every five years. At year four, the Planning Board should initiate all processes for review and public participation that are necessary for the Plan's revision. The Planning Board may initiate an annual "State of the Comprehensive Plan" review. There may be instances when an update is warranted sooner than mandated by the 1988 law.	Planning Dept./ Planning Board	Ongoing
SF-1.2a	Work towards further integration of the City's computer system to allow for the efficient transfer of accurate, current data and information between departments.	Technology Coordinator	Immediate
SF-1.8a	Annually prepare and adopt comprehensive 5-year capital improvement programs for the City.	Planning Board/ City Council	Ongoing
SF-2.1a	Support and implement early intervention for at-risk students and after-school tutorials.	Planning Dept.	Ongoing
SF-2.2a	Support and implement vocational skills training and apprenticeship programs with local business as alternatives to college preparation.	Education Dept.	Intermediate
SF-2.3a	Support and implement Head Start and other pre-school programs.	Education Dept.	Ongoing
SF-2.4a	Establish post-graduate programs through the schools.	Education Dept.	Intermediate
SF-2.5a	Attract higher educational institutions and programs to Woonsocket (i.e.: Community College, New England Tech, Bryant College, Sawyer School, etc.)	Education Dept./ Economic Development	Long term
SF-3.6a	Continue to implement the City's Affirmative Action Program in city hiring practices.	Personnel Division	Ongoing
SF-3.7a	Invest in technology upgrades as warranted in city government.	City Council	Ongoing
SF-3.7b	Move towards a universal data system for all city departments.	Technology Coordinator	Intermediate

SF-4.1a	Aggressively pursue any federal grants that might be available for funding special public improvement projects along Main Street and in other targeted areas.	Public Works Dept.	Ongoing
SF-4.2a	Prepare a prioritized list of all capital improvement needs, and undertake the implementation of high priority improvements as funding becomes available.	City Council	Ongoing
SF-4.2b	Replace the city's existing water treatment plant with a new facility, one that will meet higher water quality and environmental standards.	Public Works Dept./ City Council	Intermediate
SF-4.2c	Continue to upgrade the wastewater treatment plant to address environmental health concerns and public complaints regarding odor.	Public Works Dept.	Immediate
SF-4.4a	Provide an appropriate level of annual funding in the City budget for street reconstruction and other necessary improvements.	City Council	Ongoing
SF-4.4b	Gain State approval for the listing of additional City arterial roads to be owned and maintained by the State of Rhode Island, in an effort to alleviate growing local budgetary shortfalls.	Public Works Dept.	1 - 2 years
SF-4.4c	Identify areas of the city most in need of sidewalk reconstruction to achieve ADA compliance and prioritize these areas in project selection.	Public Works Dept.	Immediate
SF-4.5a	Periodically review and update the city's Solid Waste Plan to achieve high levels of recycling across the city.	Public Works Dept.	Ongoing
SF-5.2a	Develop outreach programs aimed at those sectors of the community not currently utilizing the Library.	Planning Dept./ Harris Public Library	Intermediate
SF-6.1a	Support funding for Early Intervention services and programs.	Planning Dept.	Intermediate
SF-7.1a	Complete all necessary steps to get the Police Department accredited.	Police Dept.	Immediate
SF-7.2a	Complete a review of the fire stations, to determine where there are needs for upgrades, closures, consolidations, etc.	Fire Dept.	Ongoing
SF-7.2b	Pursue funding through the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, or other suitable funds, for the construction of a new fire station headquarters.	Planning Dept./ Fire Dept.	Immediate

SF-7.3a	Carefully plan and schedule the refurbishment and replacement of all police and fire apparatus, (alarm console, trucks, aerial ladder, pumper, rescue vehicles, and protective clothing), as part of the City's 5-year Capital Improvement Program.	Planning Dept./ Police Dept./ Fire Dept.	Ongoing
SF-7.4a	Utilize the services of the Woonsocket Prevention Coalition (WPC) to strive towards a safe, drug-free community with measures outlined in WPC's Three Year Prevention Plan.	Woonsocket Prevention Coalition	Ongoing
SF-7.5a	Utilize the support and services of the Woonsocket Prevention Coalition (WPC) to increase pubic awareness of services for prevention and treatment of substance abuse and of the dangers of substance abuse.	Woonsocket Prevention Coalition	Ongoing
SF-8.1a	Establish a schedule and procedure for coordinated development of the 5-year Capital Improvement Program.	Planning Dept.	2 years
SF-8.3a	Conduct annual reviews of building permit and other fees.	Planning Dept.	Ongoing
SF-8.4a	Carefully review and update the Zoning, Design Review, Subdivision, and Planned Residential Development ordinances as part of the Comprehensive Planning process.	Planning Dept./ Planning Board/ Zoning Board	Ongoing
SF-8.4b	Conduct workshops for the purpose of familiarizing the various boards and agencies with the City's goals and policies as established in this Plan Update.	Planning Dept.	Immediate/ Ongoing
SF-8.4c	Provide opportunities for board members to participate in outside training including those offered by Grow Smart Rhode Island or others as deemed appropriate.	Planning Dept	Ongoing
SF-9.4a	Investigate the expansion of the Municipal Court to include other Northern Rhode Island communities on a regionalized basis.	City Solicitor/ City Council	Intermediate
CIRCULATION			
C-1.1a	Increase annual budget allocations for street re-surfacing and bridge maintenance based on a Pavement Management Program sufficient to ensure safe, easily traveled roads	Public Works Dept./ City Council	Long term
C-1.1b	Develop a priority list of necessary major roadway and traffic system improvements and request as RIDOT projects the rehabilitation and/or reconstruction of major arterial and collector roads indicated as having the greatest need	Public Works Dept.	Immediate/ Ongoing

C-1.1c	As funding permits, upgrade traffic signals, acquiring modern traffic signal equipment to replace or repair outdated and poorly functioning equipment in accordance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)	Public Works Dept.	Ongoing
C-1.2a	Periodically reassess the appropriateness of major routes into and through the City based on the continuity of roads, one-way/two-way travel, road/bridge capacity, safety, and other transportation system design factors	Planning Dept./ Public Works Dept.	Immediate/ Ongoing
C-1.2b	Upgrade and maintain road signing on a regular basis to permit easy identification of State routes and destinations	Public Works Dept.	Ongoing
C-1.2c	Analyze the effectiveness of the existing directional road signs directing traffic to important areas of the City and make regular improvements as necessary	Planning Dept./ Public Works Dept.	Intermediate
C-1.2d	Provide adequately signed truck routes throughout the City	Public Works Dept.	Intermediate
C-1.2e	Work closely with the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission to coordinate local and regional road signage	Planning Dept.	Intermediate/ Ongoing
C-1.3a	Adopt a policy regulating the design and traffic impact of drive-thru establishments and amend the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations accordingly	Planning Board	1 - 2 years
C-1.3b	Remedy problems with traffic signal timing, geometry (widening, tight corners, etc.), and sight distance to the extent possible, focusing particular attention on those areas/intersections shown in Tables C-3 and C-6 where there is the highest volume and highest incidents of accidents	Planning Dept./ Public Works Dept.	Intermediate/ Ongoing
C-1.3c	Develop zoning and subdivision requirements for land along Mendon Road, Cumberland Hill Road, and Cumberland Street to control the number and location of curb cuts as a result of increased traffic from Route 99	Planning Dept./ Zoning Board/ Planning Board/City Council	Intermediate
C-1.3d	Adopt and enforce on-street parking regulations for residential areas. Utilize off-street parking capabilities to remove on-street parking, resulting in adequate travel lanes and appropriate clearances for trucks	Zoning Board/ Police Dept.	Intermediate
C-1.4a	Amend Subdivision Regulations and Land Development Regulations to, where applicable, require commercial and industrial developers to rebuild sidewalks to meet the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	Planning Board	1 year

C-1.4b	Complete an inventory and assessment of the condition of city sidewalks by neighborhood and create a priority list of areas where sidewalk replacement, repair, and creation efforts should be focused	Public Works Dept.	6 months
C-1.4c	Discourage the granting of waivers for requiring sidewalk construction in the subdivision review process	Planning Board	Ongoing
C-1.4d	Continue to apply for grant funding through the Safe Routes to School Program, or others, they improve pedestrian safety in and around school zones	Planning Dept.	Priority/ Ongoing
C-1.4e	Work to implement the redesign of Truman Drive as proposed in the 2009 Wayfinding Master Plan for Downtown Woonsocket	Planning Dept.	Immediate
C-1.5a	Monitor the effects of Route 99 on the City's circulation network and request RIDOT studies and funding for roadway improvements as necessary, particularly as a result of increased traffic on Mendon Road, Cumberland Hill Road, Cumberland Street, and other nearby roads	Planning Dept./ Public Works Dept.	1 - 2 years
C-1.5b	Coordinate with neighboring towns, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to plan for improved access to regional highways	Planning Dept.	Intermediate/ Ongoing
C-1.6a	Oppose any changes to rail rights-of-way that would jeopardize the possibility for future passenger rail between Woonsocket and Providence and between Woonsocket and Worcester	Planning Dept./ Planning Board	Ongoing
C-1.6b	Investigate alternative uses of railroad rights-of-way, while preserving the rights of the City to use this land	Planning Dept.	Long term
C-1.6c	Apply for Study and Development funding for commuter rail from Woonsocket to Providence and the Warwick airport in the next Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	Planning Dept.	Immediate
C-1.6d	Build and sustain a formal partnership with other Blackstone Valley municipalities and advocacy groups to promote commuter rail along the Providence & Worcester Railroad	Planning Dept.	Immediate
C-1.6e	Work to ensure that the Blackstone Valley Bikeway is constructed to the Massachusetts border and on to Worcester, Massachusetts	Planning Dept.	Immediate/ Ongoing
C-1.6f	Work closely with the State to ensure that the final design and construction of the remainder of the Blackstone River Bikeway capitalizes on intermodal connectivity in the city	Planning Dept.	Ongoing

C-1.6g	City streets designated by the State as either Class II or Class III bikeways should be resurfaced or reconstructed by the State to City standards. The City Engineer should track progress of the Bikeway project with RIDOT	Public Works Dept.	Ongoing
C-1.6h	Evaluate public transportation/para transit services in terms of targeted use groups (e.g., low-income, elderly, students) to determine if transportation needs are met in high use areas and advocate improvements where necessary	Planning Dept.	Immediate/ Ongoing
C-1.6i	Add requirements to local regulations that multi-family or subsidized housing be directly accessible to transit lines and/or provide entry and turning space for buses or para-transit vehicles	Planning Board	Immediate
C-1.6j	Oppose any proposed cuts to current levels of RIPTA bus service within the City and advocate for increases in bus service	Planning Dept.	Priority/ Ongoing
C-1.6k	Request that RIPTA extend bus service to the Highland Industrial Park.	Planning Dept.	Intermediate
C-1.6l	Provide shelters for transit users	Planning Dept.	Intermediate
C-1.7a	Study the parking capacity in the downtown area and assess if more is needed	Planning Dept.	1 year
C-1.7b	Determine parking requirements appropriate to specific types of commercial sites and businesses and modify Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations accordingly	Zoning Board/ Planning Board/City Council	Intermediate
C-1.7c	Implement a parking program to improve existing off-street parking to meet described needs, including enforcement	Planning Dept.	Intermediate
C-1.7d	Develop additional off-street parking capacity in the Main Street area	Planning Dept.	1 - 2 years
C-1.7e	Routinely assess Woonsocket bridges to ensure there is sufficient structural capacity to satisfy truck weights	Public Works Dept.	Ongoing
C-1.7f	Designate truck routes to permit access to downtown destinations and industrial zones but discouraging through truck trips downtown	Planning Dept./ Public Works Dept.	Intermediate
C-1.7g	Develop adequately signed truck routes to avoid low clearance bridges	Public Works Dept.	Intermediate

C-1.7h	Oppose any changes to rail rights-of-way that jeopardize freight rail infrastructure and support State efforts to upgrade rail lines within the City to remove clearance restrictions for freight service along P&W's Main Line, while seeking State support and funding to address the low bridge clearance on (lower) Main Street	Planning Dept./ Public Works Dept.	Ongoing
C-1.7i	Support rail efforts to upgrade the P&W mainline in manner that has minimum impact on City operations. Request direct involvement in any study conducted by the State	Planning Dept./ Public Works Dept.	Ongoing
LAND USE			
LU-2.1.a	Grant limited authority to the Planning Department, at the discretion of the Design Review Commission, for the review and approval of minor Design Review applications in lieu of full Commission review.	Planning Dept.	Ongoing
LU-2.1.b	Continue to ensure that minimum landscape requirements are included in new development and redevelopment projects within the City's commercial and mixed-use districts.	Planning Board Zoning Board	Ongoing
LU-3.1.a	Amend the Zoning Ordinance to provide criteria for group homes, homeless shelters, and day care facilities in conformance with State law.	Planning Board Zoning Board/ City Council	Long term
LU-4.1.a	Develop and enforce broad base performance criteria for the regulation of all industrial uses, with regard to varying degrees of noise, traffic generation, air pollution, sewer usage. Solid waste production, effects on water quality, production of odors, the use or storage of hazardous materials, stormwater management, erosion control, site design, landscaping and exterior lighting.	Planning Dept./ Public Works Dept.	Long term
LU-5.1.a	Continue to administer the Soil Erosion Control Ordinance prevent non-point source pollution of the City's water bodies, and to preserve the integrity of Woonsocket's landscape.	Planning Dept./ Public Works Dept.	Ongoing
LU-8.1.a	Amend the Land Use designation for some parcels along heavily traveled roadways to Mixed Use Residential and Commercial.	Planning Dept.	Immediate
LU-9.1.a	Produce a Master Plan for parks, interpretation and tourism development along the river.	Planning Dept.	1-2 years
LU-9.2.a	Explore opportunities to provide public access to the river.	Planning Dept./ Public Works Dept.	Intermediate

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

Introduction

Public outreach was an integral component present throughout the Comprehensive Plan Update process. The first element in the outreach process was the development, dissemination and analysis of a community survey. The results of this survey helped direct conversation during a series of focus groups that were held with relevant stakeholders and were focused on the individual elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The final phase of public participation was the convening of public meetings.

Community Survey

The first outreach initiative was to elicit public opinion via a community survey that was to be mailed to a small sample of randomly chosen city residents. The survey was generated through a process that included methodology research, familiarization with similar existing surveys, drafting of a sample questionnaire and finally, refinement of the draft survey with input from key members of state and local government.

Research into survey methodology, including an excellent article by Dr. James K. Doyle of Worcester Polytechnic Institute entitled "Introduction to Survey Methodology and Design", led to a sample size of one percent being chosen, as well as the incorporation of other techniques to ensure a greater level of participation and accuracy given the small sample size. The most current phone directory was utilized to randomly select survey participants. Admittedly, this method would exclude some segment of the population (those that have unlisted phone numbers or exclusively use a cellular phone), but was the best option given the other resources available. The technique used to increase the response rate was simply to set up a system of reminders. Even those individuals willing to participate in the survey may place the survey aside temporarily only to forget or be unable to locate the survey at a later time. The first reminder was a postcard (see attached) announcing the impending receipt of the survey and the importance of participation and was mailed to the selected city residents on April 25, 2008 as a means of generating interest in the survey. The survey was then distributed with a cover letter and SASE on May 8, 2008. The cover letter reiterated the importance of the survey and its exclusivity. Results were recorded by staff as the surveys were returned. Beginning the first week of June, the final reminder, a follow-up phone call, was placed as a polite reminder to those in receipt of the survey yet to return the completed form, again with the goal of increasing the response rate.

Of the 430 residents selected to participate, 159 returned the completed questionnaire for a response rate of 37%. The questions that garnered the most positive response were those in support of new and existing small business, as well as protection of the Blackstone River. Those found to be least important concerned certain types of residential development and increasing parking in the City.

During public hearings on November 17, 2009 and February 9, 2010, some residents and business owners expressed concern that the previous survey was sent to people listed in the telephone directory and, as such, it excluded individuals who have cells phone only as is becoming more common. To provide an opportunity for additional public input, an online survey was created in February 2010 that was accessible through the City's website. The online survey used the questions from the original survey.

To date, 134 people have completed the online survey. The results have been generally consistent with the previous mailed survey with regard to the areas that garnered a favorable response. In addition to the areas that were previously supported, a favorable response was given for the development of middle-income housing, improving the stability of older neighborhoods, attracting new business and retaining existing business, promoting the City as 'business-friendly', encouraging industrial and manufacturing-related industries, support of job training programs, support of programs to improve student academic performance, pursuing renewable/alternative energy sources for city government facilities, providing access to the Blackstone River for recreational purposes, and developing a continuous roadway maintenance program. Of least importance was developing local initiatives related to global warming, building new parks, and expanding bus service.

Focus Groups

A series of focus groups were scheduled in order to share the results of the public survey and gather additional feedback and information from important stakeholders relevant to each element within the Comprehensive Plan. Invitations were sent to key personnel from both public and private sector organizations that could lend their specific expertise in discussing the existing infrastructure and current community needs, as well as any future direction addressed within the text of the element under discussion. The focus groups took place on the following dates and addressed the accompanying elements:

Tuesday, October 14, 2008	Heritage Corridor & Natural and Cultural Resources
Thursday, March 5, 2009	Open Space and Recreation
Monday, March 9, 2009	Services and Facilities & Circulation
Monday, March 16, 2009	Housing
Monday, March 23, 2009	Economic Development

Focus groups were structured in the form of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats), a common planning tool, and were facilitated by Catherine A. Bell, City Planner/Deputy Director of Community Planning. Each discussion was robust and extremely informative. Each point raised was outlined and thoughtfully considered and in combination with

the community survey results, have informed substantive changes to the content of each Comprehensive Plan element. Some of the broader sentiment that found its way into each group's discussion was Woonsocket's struggle with both issues of internal and external perception, which could be overcome with the immense amount of potential that was also identified in the capacity of the City's people and other resources.

Public meetings to review the Comprehensive Plan Update were held on November 17, 2009, February 9, 2010, March 9, 2010, April 20, 2010, May 18, 2010 and June 22, 2010 where comments were heard by the Planning Board members and the public. At its June 22, 2010 meeting, the Planning Board unanimously approved the Comprehensive Plan Update. On August 2, 2010, the City Council held a public hearing and the First Reading of Ordinance No. 10 O 055 to approve and adopt the Comprehensive Plan Update. At its September 7, 2010 meeting, the City Council conducted the Second Reading and Ordinance No. 10 O 55 was approved. The update will be forwarded on to Rhode Island Statewide Planning (RISP).

Pursuant to § 45-22.2-9 of the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act, within 15 days of receipt of the plan, RISP shall give public notice of a 30-day comment period of the document, after which RISP will have 120 days to review the document and provide comment back to the City. The Rhode Island Department of Administration (State) provided comments to the City on February 7, 2011 that included recommendations regarding policies, the need for consistency regarding text and maps in the Plan, and with formatting of the document and permitted 60 days to respond. The City requested a six-month extension to properly address the comments and make revisions to the Plan, and the State granted an extension to October 4, 2011. The City was granted a further extension until April 4, 2012. Additional public meetings were held on July 12, 2011 and August 2, 2011 to review the recommended revisions. The revised draft of the Plan will be forwarded to the State for review before returning to the City Council for final adoption of the Plan.