

# **COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN**

**THE CITY OF CENTRAL FALLS**

**RHODE ISLAND**



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**AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**APPROVED**

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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**ELEMENT NO. 1**

**STATEMENT OF GOALS AND POLICIES**



Comprehensive Community Plan  
Element No. 1  
Statement of Goals and Policies

## I. BACKGROUND

The Central Falls Comprehensive Community Plan is the result of efforts of a number of individuals including those representing state and local government; non-profit organizations; service providers and consumers; quasi public organizations and individual residents of the community, who have given their time to participate in the development of this Plan.

While the basic structure of the Plan follows the agenda established in the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act of 1989, it also reflects characteristics that are clearly unique to the City of Central Falls.

The Plan development process essentially follows seven basic steps.

1. Inventory
2. Analysis of Inventory
3. Problem Identification
4. Development of Goals and Policies
5. Evaluation of Potential Improvement Strategies and Resources
6. Selection of Improvement Strategies
7. Establishment of Implementation Priorities

While the sequence of work has proceeded as outlined above, the presentation sequence of the Plan follows the outline presented in Handbook on the Local Comprehensive Plan for the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act, June 1989, as developed by the State Planning Council, Division of Planning, Rhode Island Department of Administration and is as follows.

- |               |                                 |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Element No. 1 | Statement of Goals and Policies |
| Element No. 2 | Land Use Plan                   |
| Element No. 3 | Housing                         |
| Element No. 4 | Economic Development            |
| Element No. 5 | Natural and Cultural Resources  |
| Element No. 6 | Services and Facilities         |
| Element No. 7 | Open space and Recreation       |
| Element No. 8 | Circulation                     |
| Element No. 9 | Implementation                  |

## II. GOALS AND POLICIES

The following municipal goals and policies are presented in relation to the State Goals contained in the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act of 1989.

### State Goal 1

To promote orderly growth and development that recognizes the natural characteristics of the land, its suitability for use and the availability of existing and proposed public and/or private services and facilities.

### Municipal Goals

1. Promote orderly development.
2. Provide for separation of and buffering between land uses that are incompatible.
3. Preserve the integrity of riverfront sites.
4. Whenever possible, reduce residential densities.
5. Encourage creative combinations of commercial and residential uses.

### Municipal Policies

1. Revise and adopt the existing Zoning Ordinance to further encourage the realization of municipal goals of municipal goals.
2. Continue to develop riverfront recreational opportunities.
3. Continue to reduce residential densities and increase open space.

### State Goal 2

To promote an economic climate which increases quality job opportunities and overall economic well-being of each municipality and the State.

### Municipal Goals

1. Establish self-help organizations within the business community.
2. Use the existing State and Federal resources to provide assistance to employees and employers.
3. Encourage small business development.
4. Continue the Dexter Street Revitalization Initiative begun in 1997.

### Municipal Policies

1. Continue efforts with State officials and regional business leaders to structure an organization which will concentrate on the development of new business ventures and expansion of existing industrial and commercial enterprises.
2. Maintain "Enterprise Zone" designation by the State of Rhode Island.
3. Continue to offer the Central Falls Job Creation Incentive Program.
4. Participate with area communities in the development of a regional economic development strategy.
5. Promote greater involvement by local financial institutions in local economic development.
6. Work with social service agencies to expand daycare and job training programs.
7. Establish an incubator which will encourage the expansion of small businesses, including entrepreneurial or satellite industries.
8. Expand the service sector of the City's economy.
9. Work with RIPTA to ensure that transit service is at least maintained at the current level. ✓

### State Goal 3

To promote a balance of housing choices, for all income levels and age groups, which recognizes the affordability of housing as the responsibility of each municipality and the State.

### Municipal Goals

1. Improve the existing housing stock.
2. Target specific areas of the City in phases for comprehensive renewal.
3. Encourage greater community involvement in neighborhood renewal.
4. Introduce "Design Review" in certain area to ensure that new construction and rehabilitation are compatible with their existing surroundings.

### Municipal Policies

1. Expand housing code enforcement.
2. Continue municipal housing rehabilitation programs.
3. Work with non-profit housing development organizations.
4. Encourage owner-occupancy of multi-family residential buildings.

#### State Goal 4

To promote the protection of the natural, historic and cultural resources of each municipality and the State.

#### Municipal Goal

To continue to promote the protection of the City's natural, Cultural and historic resources. Reinforce linkages throughout the system with particular emphasis on the Central Falls Heritage Walkway, the proposed Blackstone Valley Pedestrian/Equestrian Trail, the Blackstone Valley Bike Trail, the Path to Health and the City's Historic District.

#### Municipal Policies

1. Adopt proposed zoning regulations which will provide for riverfront buffer zones, historic district protection and the restriction of incompatible uses adjacent to recreation, conservation and open space facilities.
2. Acquire rights less than full ownership on selected developed or vacant parcels having recreation or open space value.
3. Continue efforts to acquire open space land through donation or under market value purchase.
4. Acquire additional riverfront land for the expansion of the City's recreation, conservation and open space system.
5. Continue to support the efforts of Historic Central Falls.
6. Support the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission in its efforts to develop coordinated signage and related activities which will strengthen the "sense of place" within the Blackstone River Corridor and more particularly within the City of Central Falls. Lobby for the continuation of the Corridor Designation by the U.S. Congress which is due to expire in 2005.
7. Provide technical assistance to public and private entities committed to the enhancement of the aesthetic character of the City.
8. Capitalize on the United States designation of the Blackstone River as an "American Heritage River".
9. Capitalize on the 2004 designation by the U.S. Department of the Interior of Central Falls as a "Preserve America Community".

#### State Goal 5

To promote the preservation of the open space and recreational resources of each municipality in the State.

### Municipal Goal

To preserve, maintain and upgrade the City's recreational facilities.

### Municipal Policies

1. Continue to explore the possibilities of expanding the City's outdoor recreation facility to serve the needs of the multi-cultural population.
2. Identify possible land acquisition suitable for recreation and open space development.

### State Goal 6

To encourage the use of innovative development regulations and techniques that promote the development of land suitable for development while protecting our natural, cultural, historical and recreational resources and achieving a balanced pattern of land uses.

### Municipal Goals

1. Establish and enforce land use regulations which provide for development and redevelopment that is compatible with current uses.
2. Promote redevelopment of blighted areas.

### Municipal Policies

1. Revise the existing "Zoning Ordinance" to encourage the use of innovative development techniques.
2. Expand the City's recreation and open space resources, utilizing State and Federal funds received through grants and appropriations.
3. Continue to emphasize revitalization of the City's main business arteries, Dexter Street, Broad Street, Lonsdale Avenue.

### State Goal 7

To promote consistency of State actions and programs with municipal comprehensive plans and provide for review procedures to ensure that State goals and policies are reflected in municipal comprehensive plans and State Guide Plans.

### Municipal Goal

The City's goal is consistent with that of the State.

### Municipal Policies

1. Applicable sections of the draft plan will be submitted to State Agency Contacts as required.
2. Final draft of the Central Falls Comprehensive Community Plan will be submitted to the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Administration for final review.

### State Goal 8

To ensure that adequate and uniform data is available to municipal and State government as the basis for comprehensive planning and land use regulation.

State of Rhode Island responsibility.

### State Goal 9

To ensure that municipal land use regulations and decisions are consistent with the Comprehensive Community Plan of the municipality and to ensure State land use regulations and decisions are consistent with State Guide Plans.

### Municipal Goal

To ensure that the City's land use regulations and decisions are consistent with the City's State Certified Comprehensive Community Plan.

### Municipal Policies

1. Develop land use regulations in concert with the land use proposals of the City's State Certified Comprehensive Community Plan.
2. Review and amend the City's Zoning Ordinance to reflect the land use concepts contained in the City's State Certified Comprehensive Community Plan and clarify administrative procedures to ensure efficient implementation of these concepts.

### State Goal 10

To encourage the involvement of all citizens in the formulation, review and adoption of the Comprehensive Community Plan.

### Municipal Goal

The City's goal is consistent with that of the State.

### Municipal Policies

1. Conduct a series of workshops and public hearings to obtain citizen input and opinions.
2. Use local media to communicate with the community groups.

## **III. CONSISTENCY WITH STATE GUIDE PLAN LAND USE 2025**

A major objective of the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act of 1989, is the achievement of consistency by local municipalities with the Land Use 2025. Each goal presented in Land Use 2025 is reviewed below. Comments regarding the City of Central Falls capacity to implement land use policy consistent with each goal is noted.

### Overall Goal

"To create and maintain within the State of Rhode Island conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony in order that present and future generations may enjoy clean air and water, productive land, and other natural resources with which this State has been endowed."

### Comment

As noted in Land Uses 2025, "Given the constancy of this goal as repeated in the adopted laws and plans, it is considered a consensus goal to which the people of Rhode Island have been and remain committed." The goals and policies which have evolved during the development of the Central Falls Land Use Element are fully consistent with this goal. Unlike the State's rural or suburban municipalities, however, the City of Central Falls has by necessity developed goals and policies which strongly address community revitalization, and maintenance of limited natural resources which have experienced significant deterioration over the years. In addition, the characteristics, trends and projections of population and employment within the City of Central Falls have had a particular significant impact on the goals and policies developed throughout the entire Comprehensive Plan.

### Planning for Population Growth

**Goal:** "Relate State land use policies to anticipated population growth in a manner that will maintain or enhance the distinction between urban and rural, and inland and shore environments."

**Comment:** The land use goals and policies for the City of Central Falls clearly recognize the distinction between Rhode Island's urban, rural, inland and shore environments. While these goals and policies are directed at maintaining or enhancing the beneficial distinctions between environments, they call for actions which will arrest the economic and social hardships now facing the residents of the community and reverse the more urban trends of high property taxes, high unemployment rates, high school dropout rates and deteriorating housing stock. While there is some correlation between changing characteristics of the State's population and those of the City of Central Falls, there are significant differences in the rates of change within the City and those of the City's suburban neighbors. This is particularly true in regard to the increase in minority population, single parent households and the increase in the aging population.

While a population ceiling may not be appropriate for the State of Rhode Island, it may be a concept which time has come to the State's most densely populated and most densely developed community.

### Planning for Economic Development

**Goal:** "Facilitate land use and development that will sustain and promote economic growth consistent with the State's characteristics and environmental objectives."

**Comment:** The City of Central Falls continues to work with representatives of the Rhode Island Department of Economic Development in an effort to strengthen the City's economic base and to expand employment opportunities for residents. The Department of Economic Development is assisting the City in exploring the potential for public/private partnerships which will expand economic opportunities particularly for the City's minority population. These and other related economic development pursuits are described in detail in Element No. 4, Economic Development of the City's State Certified Comprehensive Community Plan. Specific goals and policies have been developed under Element No. 2, Land Use Plan which will facilitate these efforts.

Because attractive industrial acreage is virtually unavailable within the City of Central Falls, the land use plan calls for enhancement of existing and viable industrial properties through zoning techniques, public/private investment in public improvements, and intensified promotional efforts.

Of particular importance, is the implementation of land use techniques which will strengthen the ability of existing business enterprises to flourish while encouraging small business development, both commercial and industrial, within the community.

This approach is based on the realization that the City's niche within the State's economy is in the small business sector and should include entrepreneurial or satellite industries and limited specialized activities of national or multi-national enterprises.

### Planning for the Environment

**Goal:** "Guide the development of land and water to produce a healthful, efficient, and aesthetically pleasing environment."

**Comment:** The established development pattern of the City of Central Falls is a legacy of the industrial revolution. A City of 1.27 square miles, Central Falls had a 1930 population of 25,989 - a historical high. Since 1930, the population has gradually declined until recently. The 1990 preliminary census count is 17,637 - a 3.8% increase over 1980. The Central Falls Office of Planning and Economic Development estimates an

actual 1990 population of 18,000 to 18,500. The 1996 Population estimates of 16,620 supplied by Statewide Planning indicated a 5.8% decrease in population. The recent 2000 Census produced a population figure of 18,928 which was a 7.3% increase.

With 98% of the land area developed, the focus of the land use element is concentrated on improvement of the existing cityscape. Proposed revisions to the City's Zoning Ordinance call for greater protection of natural resources, planned development of the remaining vacant land and implementation of provisions which would enhance the visual character of the community. In addition, the Open Space Element of the plan includes the Riverfront Park and related proposals to expand the City's public recreation and open space inventory.

Policies in Land Use 2025 are presented under the following seven headings:

General Land Development  
Water Resources  
Energy  
Housing  
Economic Development  
Transportation  
Open Space

The effort to achieve consistency with State Guide Plan Element 121 General Land Development policies G-1 through G-18 presents several problems with regard to the development of the Central Falls Land Use Element.

The State Land Development policies are reviewed below with comment:

**G-1** "Conserve natural resources and areas."

**Comment**

Consistency can be achieved. See Element No. 7, Open Space and Recreation.

**G-2** "Preserve and enhance the distinctiveness of urban, suburban, village and rural communities and landscapes."

**Comment**

Consistency can be achieved. Many of the goals, policies and implementation proposals of the Comprehensive Community Plan deal with the enhancement of Central Falls urban landscape and the preservation of its many physical and social attributes.

**G-3 "Control urban sprawl and scatteration."**

**Comment**

The land use pattern of the City of Central Falls was virtually in place by the early 1900's. The possibility of "controlling urban sprawl" is moot.

**G-4 "Develop residential, commercial and mixed-use areas which are compactly grouped, attractive, and compatible with the ability of land and water resource to support development."**

**Comment**

The land use pattern which evolved in the City of Central Falls is similar to that of most communities which grew out of the industrial revolution. Industries located along the river, neighborhoods grew on the basis of ethnic and religious preferences coupled with economic factors, major commercial development was established along the most heavily traveled roadways and smaller commercial enterprises sprung up to support neighborhood demands.

While this evolution is mirrored in cities such as Worcester, Woonsocket and Pawtucket, one critical factor distinguishes Central Falls from the others. That critical factor is size! As the other industrial communities had room to expand and diversify, their land use patterns continued to evolve. Meanwhile the City of Central Falls was faced with adaptation.

The movement to the suburbs which commenced in northeastern United States in the 1950's had a severe impact on the City of Central Falls. Unlike other urban communities which had significant residential movement by the affluent, away from the core city but still within city limits, Central Falls experienced the loss of the more affluent and their buying power to its rural/suburban neighbors. This exodus coupled with a waning industrial economy, the advent of suburban malls and industrial parks slowly sapped the economic vitality of the community. While this scenario repeated itself in the other industrial communities of Rhode Island, the process was slower and still today, of lesser import.

Central Falls, then, must continue to adapt. However, the pace must be hastened. New concepts must be coupled with the older traits of hard work, spirit and fellowship which are indigenous to the smallest city in the State.

The City's State Certified Comprehensive Community Plan stresses the revitalization and enhancement of residential, commercial, industrial and mixed use areas, already "compactly grouped" within "the ability of land and water resources to support them".

The Plan calls for the prevention of the incursion of commercial land uses into residential areas along Dexter Street and the Broad Street commercial corridors. The Plan encourages the revitalization of specific commercial, industrial, and residential areas through a varied package of public and private improvements. It includes the improvement of historical districts through a combination of public and private investment, and the expansion of the City's recreation and open space resources through State and Federal funding.

**G-5** "Use open space to control and shape urban growth."

**Comment**

The Recreation and Open Space Element includes strategies which will protect or reclaim major portions of the Blackstone Riverfront, support the systematic improvement of recreation facilities, and reinforce linkages which give definition and a sense of place within the urban landscape. See Element No. 7, Open Space and Recreation.

The potential for using "open space to control and shape urban growth" within the City is negligible.

**G-6** "Relate the use of land to its natural characteristics and varying suitability for development."

**Comment**

The vast majority of development within the City took place on land that has natural characteristics which are suitable for development.

Several undeveloped areas of the City which do require protection from development, due to natural characteristics are discussed in Element No. 7, Open Space and Recreation. Additional techniques for protection of environmentally sensitive areas will be promulgated through the adoption of proposed zoning amendments. (See Appendix 1, Zoning.)

**G-7** "Relate the use of land to the level of public facilities and services available or planned to be available."

**Comment**

This goal is similar in nature to G-4 in so far as its relationship to the City of Central Falls. Without repeating the comment under G-4, the same set of circumstances impact upon the problems of public facilities and services.

While historically, the infrastructure of the City expanded to meet the needs of a growing and prosperous urban community, the passing years have brought with them a gradual deterioration of several elements. Of particular concern is the structural integrity of the City's sewer and water systems.

These concerns along with an examination of other infrastructure characteristics are included in the appropriate sections of the Plan.

In general, land use throughout the City relates to the level of public facilities and services which became available over the years.

**G-8** "Promote the establishment of higher residential densities and smaller lot frontages in urban and suburban areas, and town centers, where public water and sewer service is present or planned."

**Comment**

This policy is in conflict with the municipality's goal of reducing residential densities whenever possible. The Plan calls for stabilization of population density and adjustment and enhancement of existing development.

**G-9** "Promote low overall densities where public services are unavailable and are not planned. Promote the clustering of development in these areas."

**Comment**

Public services are available virtually throughout the City.

**G-10** "Protect and enhance those values of the coastal region, including scenic values, which contribute to the quality of life of the people of the State. Examine proposals for changes in the coastal region in terms of their importance to the state-as-a-whole."

**Comment**

The City's State Certified Comprehensive Plan recognizes the value of the coastal region of the State and considers it to be a valuable resource, particularly for recreation purposes. (See Element No. 7, Open Space and Recreation Element.)

**G-11** "Prevent filling of coastal and inland waters and wetlands except when necessary to the health or welfare of the people of the State and there is no other alternative."

**Comment**

Consistency can be achieved. In most cases, the regulations of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management would prevail.

**G-12** "Limit the use of land along the coastline and shores of inland water bodies to water dependent uses, or to mixed development which a water dependent use is combined with other uses. Clarify land uses as "water dependent" and "non-water dependent" according to their characteristics and need for a location adjoining a water body in order to perform their basic functions."

**Comment**

The land use pattern which has evolved in the City of Central Falls reflects the development of manufacturing facilities along the Blackstone River which were formerly water dependent. Because of the eventual exodus of these water based industries and the development of modern technologies, the existing industries, primarily housed in former textile facilities, are not currently dependent on the waters of the Blackstone River.

Zoning regulations developed as part of the City's State Certified Comprehensive Community Plan called for re-zoning of portions of the riverfront. The updated plan proposed to continue this effort where:

1. The potential for mixed use has been identified with regard to obsolete manufacturing space along the Blackstone River especially along Roosevelt Avenue.
2. The continuation of the Blackstone River Bikeway through Central Falls will recreate a new recreational opportunity.
3. The City's open space system can be expanded through the elimination of blighting and marginal industrial activity.
4. The potential for the re-use of existing vacant manufacturing space has been identified.

In addition, proposed zoning regulations include provisions for a Park Zoning District and a Mill Building Re-use Development Overlay District.

**G-13** "Guide development in a manner that will prevent encroachment of floodways, dunes, barrier beaches, coastal and freshwater wetlands and other natural features that provide protection from storms, flooding and sea-level rise."

**Comment**

Consistency can be achieved as applicable. See comment re: G-12, above. Also, the City of Central Falls has an adopted Flood Plain Ordinance.

**G-14** "Preserve historic buildings, districts and archaeological sites."

**Comment**

Consistency can be achieved. The South Central Falls Historic district was listed in the National Register of historic Places in February 1991. The District, predominantly residential, includes 395 buildings of which 377 contribute to its architectural and historic character.

Historic Central Falls, Inc. (a local non-profit organization) has established the Historic Central Falls Plaque Program "to contribute to the sense of south Central Falls as a historic area". The plaques are available to owners of properties that contribute to the character of the District or are individually listed in the National Historic Register.

A second area, the Central Falls Historic Mill District, located along Roosevelt Avenue has been identified for additional public improvements including highway reconstruction, sidewalk improvements, the installation of additional period street lighting and landscape enhancements. No significant archaeological sites have been identified within the City of Central Falls.

**G-15** "Encourage development patterns that promote energy efficiency and help attain state air quality objectives."

**Comment**

Because the development patterns of the City are basically in place and are only subject to modification through proposed zoning changes and various community improvement programs promulgated in the City's State Certified Comprehensive Community Plan, there is little potential for new development which will impact on either energy efficiency or state air quality objectives.

**G-16** "Encourage development patterns that protect water resources."

**Comment**

Consistency can be achieved. Several programs currently underway within the City and many of the goals, policies and implementation strategies contained in the City's State Certified Comprehensive Community Plan are directed at modifying the existing development patterns to protect water

resources. These efforts include capital projects as well as regulatory measures.

**G-17** "Achieve a livable, coherent and visually pleasing environment."

**Comment**

The City's programs either currently underway or planned, reflect an inherent interest in improving the livability of the community - a street tree program, expansion of the open space system, a homeownership program, etc. etc. The comprehensive planning effort is directed at facilitation further advancement of the community through the implementation of realistic goals and policies.

**G-18** "Identify and seek to protect and expand greenways of State, municipal, and privately-owned protected land.

**Comment**

Consistency can be achieved. Element No. 7 of the Comprehensive Community Plan (Policy #2) states: "Expand the recreation and open space system and protect the City's open space resources through the implementation of legislative techniques and cooperative agreements with private land owners." Three implementation techniques are presented.

## BALANCE OF LAND USE 2025

The following listing reviews the balance of Land Use 2025 policies with regard to the State Certified Central Falls Comprehensive Community Plan's consistency with such policies.

### **Water Resources Water Supply**

	<u>Policies</u>	<u>Comments</u>
W-1	Identify and protect all current and potential high quality ground and surface drinking water supplies.	N/A
W-2	Manage and develop surface and ground water supply resources in a coordinated and efficient manner on a State, local and regional level, considering long term needs and environmental impacts.	N/A
W-3	Encourage more efficient use of water through conservation, management, and technological innovation. Maximize the water supply potential of existing supply sources, through promotion of conservation and good management practices.	Need for promotion of conservation and sound management practices recognized. See Element No. 4, Economic Development.
W-4	Promote State and local development programs and activities that encourage new growth in locations and at densities that will achieve appropriate utilization of existing water supply sources.	Potential for new growth extremely limited. See Element No. 2, Land Use Plan.
W-5	Promote efforts to match the quality of water used by major consumers and/or water use sectors with the water quality level required for such uses in order to conserve our highest quality existing and potential drinking water supplies.	Matching of quality of water to specific needs proposed. See Element No. 4, Economic Development.

	<u>Policies</u>	<u>Comments</u>
W-6	Prevent degradation of the State's surface and groundwater resources.	Proposals to improve water quality in Blackstone River included. See Element No. 5, Natural and Cultural Resources.
W-7	Achieve water quality standards set forth in the State water quality management plan.	Same as W-6 above.
W-8	Preserve the ability of freshwater and coastal wetlands to perform their valuable natural functions through stringent protective regulations and enforcement.	Protection of wetlands included. See Element No. 2, Land Use Plan and Element No. 7, Open Space and Recreation.
W-9	Promote effective enforcement of coastal resource protection. Maintain and improve water quality standards for the State's coastal waters.	Same as W-6 above.
W-10	Consider cumulative impacts of development on all surface and groundwater resources.	Proposals which would prevent deterioration of surface waters by development included. See Element No. 2, Land Use Plan, Element No. 6, Service and Facilities and Element No. 7, Open Space and Recreation.
W-11	Locate public water and sewer facilities so as to shape development in accordance with State land use policies, rather than simply to accommodate growth.	N/A
W-12	Locate development causing other than domestic waste discharges in areas served or planned for service by public sewer systems, or where appropriate waste treatment and disposal is provided and maintained in an effective, environmentally sound manner.	While proposals for new development are limited, all are consistent with this policy. See Element No. 2, Land Use Plan and Element No. 4, Economic Development.

	<u>Policies</u>	<u>Comments</u>
W-13	Minimize the possibility of contamination of water supplies from septic system failure, and from toxic or hazardous materials stored under or on the ground or traveling through the State.	N/A
W-14	Promote intergovernmental action to prevent further degradation of freshwater resources as a result of air or precipitation-borne contaminants.	N/A State and National action required.
W-15	Assure that the quality of water made available to an area and the capacity of the treatment and/or disposal system serving the same area are or will be made compatible.	Plan is consistent. See Element No. 6, Service and Facilities.
W-16	Mitigate the water quality impacts of storm water runoff and provide for appropriate drainage controls in all new development.	Problem of storm water runoff reviewed. See Element No. 6, Service and Facilities.

#### **Energy**

N-1	Promote land use development that contributes to energy conservation and increased reliance on renewable energy resources, while assuring dependable sources of fuel supplies to meet long-term energy needs.	See Element No. 2, Land Use Plan.
N-2	Recognize the varying demands for energy associated with different land use patterns, and encourage patterns which tend to reduce the need for energy.	Same as above.
N-3	Promote hydropower development where measures to resolve or mitigate negative impacts to anadromous fish restoration projects, riverine recreation, and public access, are provided.	Same as above.
N-4	Utilize guidelines for energy facility design and construction which seek to prevent adverse environmental effects and land use conflicts.	Same as above.

	<u>Policies</u>	<u>Comments</u>
N-5	Establish locational criteria for power generation plants, and identify the best sites based on statewide, regional, and local considerations.	See Element No. 2, Land Use Plan.
N-6	Capitalize on the potential for combining power facilities in a beneficial way with other land and water use.	Same as above.

### Housing

H-1	Promote construction of high quality, energy-efficient and aesthetically-pleasing residential structures and neighborhoods, to meet the varying needs of all citizens. Encourage the use of the State of RI Weatherization Program.	The proposals for revitalization of Central Falls housing stock is consistent. See Element No. 3, Housing.
H-2	Preserve the identity and special character of the State's towns and places. Foster a sense of identity and individuality in new housing development.	The Plan's consistent with this policy. See Element No. 2, Land Use Plan, Element No. 3, Housing, Element No. 5, Natural and Cultural Resources, And Element No. 7, Open Space and Recreation.
H-3	Encourage and support the optimum use of the existing housing stock, existing neighborhoods, and existing structures suitable for residential use, in meeting housing needs, including rehabilitation of historic buildings for housing.	The Plan is consistent with this policy. See Element No. 3, Housing, and Element No. 5, Natural and Cultural Resources.
H-4	Integrate new housing development in a manner that will preserve and enhance historic and cultural resources.	The Plan is consistent with this policy. See Element No. 2, Land Use Plan, Element No. 3, Housing, and element No. 5, Natural and Cultural Resources.

	<u>Policies</u>	<u>Comments</u>
H-5	Stimulate development of a variety of housing in terms of cost, size, location, and design to meet the the broad range of needs and desires of homeowners and renters, and of all income groups and family sizes.	While the potential for new residential development is limited, proposals in Elements No. 2 and and No. 3 are consistent with this policy.
H-6	Develop and promote innovative land development techniques and apply available technology to make decent housing affordable for low and moderate-income households.	As noted by the Central Falls Review Commission in January 1991, "Central Falls Serves a major source of affordable housing..." See Element No. 2, Land Use Plan, Element No. 3, Housing, and Element No. 6, Service and Facilities.
H-7	Relate the location of residential developments and neighborhoods to employment and commercial centers, community centers, community facilities and services, and mass transit corridors.	Existing development is consistent with this policy.
H-8	Promote neighborhood development by locating housing, recreation and education facilities, and shopping areas, in close proximity to one another, with provision for safe pedestrian movement.	Proposals which would strengthen linkages with specific land uses or areas of the community are included in the Plan. See Elements No. 2, Land Use Plan, Element No. 6, Service and Facilities, Element No. 7, Open Space and Recreation, and Element No. 8, Circulation.

## Economic Development

	<u>Policies</u>	<u>Comments</u>
E-1	Conserve and enhance desirable existing industrial areas and regional shopping areas, office complexes, and concentrations of service activities so as to maximize the investment and utilization of existing infrastructure.	As noted in Element No. 1, the Central Falls Comprehensive Community Plan stresses revitalization, reinforcement and enhancement throughout all sectors of the community.
E-2	Relate industrial and commercial development to overall land use by promoting the use of development controls and performance standards that mitigate conflicts with other land uses and activities.	The use of development control and performance standards are expanded in the proposed zoning regulations. See Element No. 2, Land Use Plan.
E-3	Reserve sites and buildings suitable for economic development including urban infill and redevelopment areas. Prevent their preemption by or conversion to uses with much less demanding locational requirements.	Evaluation of building and sites suitable for economic development is included in Element No. 4, Economic Development.
E-4	Stimulate the expansion of economic development activities including cultural, educational, and research centers, in the central business districts of Rhode Island's municipalities.	Proposals included in Element No. 4, Economic Development are consistent with this policy.
E-5	Encourage investment by the public and private sectors that will stabilize and improve economic opportunities in deteriorating urban areas, including preservation and re-use of historic buildings.	Proposals throughout the Plan are consistent with this policy. See Element No. 2, Land Use Plan, Element No. 3, Housing, Element No. 4, Economic Development, and Element No. 5, Natural and Cultural Resources.

	<u>Policies</u>	<u>Comments</u>
E-6	Assure suitable housing opportunities to meet the needs of labor force growth when accommodating major new industrial or commercial development, including development in state owned industrial parks. Provide a variety of housing options in proximity to major employment generators.	Proposals in Element No. 2, Land Use Plan, and Element No. 3, Housing are consistent with this policy.
E-7	Plan new or expanded public sewer and water services, highway improvements, and mass transit service, for industrial and commercial development where such development is appropriate in terms of natural constraints of the land, air, and water, and where the area is being developed at an intensity that is consistent with State land use policy and will not promote wasteful use of resources.	The Central Falls Plan calls for improvements to the existing infrastructure to support revitalization, reinforcement and enhancement throughout all sectors of the community.
E-8	Promote industrial development in proximity to rail transport availability.	While most of the City's industrial base is located in proximity to rail transport facilities, generally, the expansion of the industrial base as proposed in the Plan would not require rail transport facilities. See Element No. 4, Economic Development.
E-9	Encourage natural resource-based industry, including fishery, forestry, and an agricultural base in dairy farming, livestock, field crops, pomology, and viniculture, consistent with environmental safeguards.	N/A

	<u>Policies</u>	<u>Comments</u>
E-10	Reserve suitable port access areas for commercial fishing vessels. Encourage coastal development that will provide access and support facilities for commercial and recreational fishery.	N/A
E-11	Concentrate coastal industrial development within existing major port facilities that are under-utilized.	N/A
E-12	Make the most efficient use of State economic development property by matching characteristics and needs of firms with facilities available on site. Limit fully serviced sites, where feasible, to use by enterprises requiring these services and that will contribute most positively to State economic development goals and policies, especially increasing employment.	The Plan is consistent with this policy. See Element No. 4, Economic Development.
E-13	Make available for industrial development suitable surplus government land which will not be needed for future public use.	N/A
E-14	Recognize the importance of recreation, open space, public access to the shore, and historic resources to the State's economy, in tourism development, and in attracting and retaining industry, and endeavor to protect and enhance these resources in economic development siting and design activity.	The Plan is consistent with this policy. See Element No. 4, Economic Development, Element No. 5, Natural and Cultural Resources, and Element No. 7, Open Space and Recreation.

	<u>Policies</u>	<u>Comment</u>
E-15	Stimulate development of a variety of industrial and commercial facilities in terms of cost, size, location and services, to meet the broad range of needs and desires of business owners and employees.	The Plan is consistent with this policy. See Element No. 4, Economic Development.
<b>Transportation General</b>		
T-1	Develop and maintain a balanced, integrated, safe, and cost-efficient transportation system, giving full recognition to long-term land use and environmental impacts associated with transportation facilities.	See Element No. 8, Circulation
T-2	Locate residential, industrial commercial and institutional development in a way that will minimize the need for transportation.	While the Plan embraces this policy in concept, it calls for a detailed investigation of potential transportation improvements which would expand the resident population opportunities for employment, education, health care, etc. See Element No. 4, Economic Development, Element No. 5, Natural and Cultural Resources, and Element No. 8, Circulation.
T-3	Develop transportation systems that will help to shape and serve development in accordance with State land use policies, rather than simply to accommodate growth.	Same as T-1 above.

	<u>Policies</u>	<u>Comments</u>
T-4	Provide a variety of transportation modes designed to meet the differing needs of different people, activities and purposes of travel, and the needs of industry and commerce, within the framework of current and planned land development patterns.	See Element No. 8, Circulation.
T-5	Relate the design and location of transportation facilities positively to the natural and cultural landscape. Avoid intrusion of noise or other traffic impacts on recreation and open space resources. Provide a high aesthetic quality in the transportation system.	Same as above.
T-6	Consider likely future transportation needs in current land development projects. Provide adequate capacity to accommodate planned future growth.	Same as above.
T-7	Establish and enforce transportation safety measures, and design and maintain the transportation network to avoid or minimize transportation-related negative impacts on the environment, including adverse effects of noise, air emissions, road salting, storm-water runoff, and hazards to vehicles, travelers, pedestrians and wildlife.	Same as above.
T-8	Consider regional transportation requirements and coordinate with neighboring states in the earliest stages of system and project planning to ensure compatible planning and execution of transportation projects.	Same as above.
	<b>Auto</b>	
T-9	Maintain the functional integrity of existing and planned roadways through appropriate land use controls and design standards in order to alleviate congestion, promote safety, and reduce the need for new highways.	Same as above.

	<u>Policies</u>	<u>Comments</u>
T-10	Support highway beautification programs, including landscaping, cleanups, sign control, and screening of junkyards and other objectionable uses.	Plan is consistent. See Element No. 2, Land Use Plan, Element No. 7, Open Space and Recreation, and Element No. 8, Circulation.
T-11	Design parking areas and structures to enhance the attractiveness of the adjacent development, and to minimize runoff and other negative environmental impacts.	Plan is consistent. See Element No. 2, Land Use Plan.
T-12	Incorporate the transportation access requirements of emergency vehicles and services in transportation and land development projects.	Plan is consistent. See Element No. 6, Services and Facilities, and Element No. 8, Circulation.

**Mass Transit**

T-13	Promote concentrations of high density housing and employment near mass transit routes and terminals, and take other actions to support mass transit and to lessen dependence on the automobile.	See Element No. 8, Circulation.
T-14	Introduce innovative public transportation, such as waterborne vessels, light rail, and demand-responsive service, where feasible and where desirable to support land use development patterns.	Same as above.
T-15	Locate terminal facilities and operate public transit in a manner that will facilitate transfer of passengers between all travel modes.	Same as above.
T-16	Provide integrated transit service for population groups with special needs, to promote mobility and access to facilities and services.	Same as above.

	<u>Policies</u>	<u>Comments</u>
T-17	Maintain and improve the existing State airport system to meet the travel demand of residents, businesses, and tourists, in a safe, efficient, and environmentally sound manner, as part of the overall State transportation network.	See Element No. 8, Circulation.
T-18	Develop land in the immediate vicinity of airports in a manner that will be compatible with airport operations. Seek to minimize adverse impacts, if any, to pre-existing land uses.	Same as above.
T-19	Provide for the convenient intermodal transfer of freight at terminal facilities; improve access to terminals for a variety of modes.	Same as above.
T-20	Maintain and improve port facilities for port uses; promote diversification of use for surplus port property, providing that coastal access is maintained or enhanced.	Same as above.
T-21	Prevent destruction of rail lines and rights-of-way that may have potential for future use.	The Plan is consistent with policy. See Element No. 4, Economic Development, and Element No. 8, Circulation.
T-22	Establish and enforce safety regulations to control potential environmental damage from hazardous materials transported to or through the State.	The Plan is consistent with this policy. See Element No. 6, Services and Facilities.

## Fuel-Less Modes

### Policies

T-23

Recognize opportunities for non-mechanized forms of transportation needs-including walking, bicycling, and horse borne transportation-and actively promote options for their use in existing and new development.

### Comments

The Plan is consistent with this policy. See Element No. 4, Economic Development, Element No. 5, Natural and Cultural Resources, Element No. 6, Services and Facilities, and Element No. 7, Open Space and Recreation.

## Recreation and Open Space

R-1

Create open space systems and corridors that protect complete ecological units and provide structure and character to the built environment.

Element No. 2, Land Use Plan, Element No. 5, Natural and Cultural Resources, And Element No. 7, Open Space and Recreation of the Plan include policies which are consistent with all of the recreation and open space policies included in State Guide Plan Element 121 with the exception of policies R5, R11, R13 and R14 which do not apply to Central Falls.

R-2

Preserve and enhance wildlife, fish and plant species diversity and stability through habitat protection and enhancement and prevention or mitigation of adverse impacts of human activities.

Same as R-1 above.

R-3

Protect rare and unique geologic or other natural features.

Same as R-1 above.

	<u>Policies</u>	<u>Comments</u>
R-4	Retain open spaces large enough to serve as wildlife habitat, store flood waters, abate air and water pollution, provide a sense of openness and quietude, and serve as buffers and aesthetic amenities to existing development.	Same as R-1.
R-5	Preserve and protect significant coastal and island resources, including coastal marshlands, distinctive topographic features, flood plains, sand dunes, and bluffs, san beaches, and wildlife habitats.	N/A
R-6	Attach special importance to providing a diversity of recreational opportunities accessible to the inhabitants of urban and metropolitan areas.	Same as R-1.
R-7	Continue efforts to expand the quantity and quality of statewide, community-wide and neighborhood recreational opportunities.	Same as R-1.
R-8	Expand close-to-home recreation opportunities. Capitalize on multiple-use of appropriate existing public lands and facilities in residential areas and encourage provision of recreation areas in new development.	Same as R-1.
R-9	Preserve, and where necessary restore, rivers, and inland waterbodies and their adjacent shorelands for recreational use, wildlife habitat, water supply, and the open space corridors they provide.	Same as R-1.

	<u>Policies</u>	<u>Comments</u>
R-10	Expand public access to the coastline and to inland waterbodies by preserving existing recorded public access ways, seeking to maximize the access potential of existing committed shorelands, acquiring key access points, and stipulating access opportunities in new shoreline developments.	Same as R-1.
R-11	Recognize the State's scenic rural landscapes, roads, and vistas of Narragansett Bay as important cultural and economic resources, and act to preserve them.	N/A
R-12	Further the identification and strict protection of State and National Register properties and historic districts as an integral part of preserving Rhode Island's cultural landscapes.	Same as R-1.
R-13	Continue efforts to preserve the best farmland in the State for active agricultural use.	N/A
R-14	Protect and manage forest resources to meet the demands for forest products, recreation, water supply, wildlife habitat, and a high quality environment.	N/A
R-15	Manage coastal and inland floodplains to protect their natural functions and to minimize flood hazards to life and property.	Same as R-1.

#### **IV. SUMMARY**

As reflected by the Municipal Goals and Policies presented herein, the City of Central Falls State Certified Comprehensive Community Plan, as updated, stresses the revitalization, reinforcement and enhancement of the community throughout all sectors through the use of a variety of public, private and non-profit resources. It promulgates proposed actions which are realistic and which creates a viable framework for continued community improvement. The various goals, policies, recommendations and implementation techniques presented throughout the Plan have been incorporated in Element No. 9, entitled Implementation Program.

**ELEMENT NO. 2**

**LAND USE**



Comprehensive Community Plan  
Element No. 2  
Land Use

## I. LAND USE

### General

The City of Central Falls Comprehensive Planning Program goes back to the days of the State's Community Assistance Program which was funded under Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954.

The Rhode Island Development Council's Planning Division completed the City's initial Comprehensive Community Plan in 1968. This Plan was preceded by the adoption of the City's first Zoning Ordinance in 1964. On December 13, 1999 the City adopted its first five year State certified Comprehensive Community Plan which was preceded by the adoption of a revised Zoning Ordinance dated October 1, 1992

The 1968 Plan noted "Central Falls has no land area for new construction to expand its tax base. This observation is as true in 2005 as it was in 1968.

A Community Profile of the City of Central Falls was developed in 1983. Most of its general observations remain true in 2005. A significant demographic change not apparent in 1993 was the in migration of Hispanics which now make up approximately fifty percent of the City's total population. The 1983 study was conducted by the faculty and students from the Department of Sociology at Rhode Island College. While the profile did not take the form of a conventional comprehensive planning document, it did provide an in depth review of the history of the City, density and land use issues, housing and economic issues, and a broad investigation of social factors which have shaped the community. This study again emphasized the problems which limit the City's potential to expand its tax base. The second most important problem which the study underlined was that of image. "Even those who feel positive about Central Falls are aware that this small City does not enjoy an entirely enviable reputation either among all its residents or outside its boundaries." "The people of Central Falls desire a change in image through development and beautification." The study entitled In the Wake of the Mills, has served a valuable resource function in the development of this Comprehensive Community Plan.

A Community Development Plan was developed for the City of Central Falls in 1986 by Comprehensive Planning Studio students of the University of Rhode Island's Graduate Curriculum in

Community planning and Area Development. While this plan also has served as a resource in the development of the 1999-2004 Comprehensive Community Plan, it was somewhat faulted for its dated data sources and its constant comparison of Central Falls with its more affluent and suburban neighbors.

As in previous studies, the 1986 Community Development Plan noted, "Central Falls is a small city whose dependence on economic trends in surrounding communities makes it exceptionally vulnerable to external forces. While other communities in the Blackstone Valley are able to grow spatially, through the consumption of vacant or underutilized land, Central Falls is constrained by a legacy of dense development and little developable open space." In 2005 the emerging potential for new growth and development is to be found not in new land but in the adaptive reuse of underutilized and or vacant former industrial buildings.

As noted in prior studies, Central Falls does provide a valuable service within the State. "Its close-knit community, particularly the ethnic groups, and its provision of affordable housing (in a generally good state of repair), combine to create an atmosphere of strong, blue collar community identity. The regional need for low income housing is served greatly by this small City. Policies must recognize this "unique character" and not seek to displace the existing population. The State must continue to recognize that Central Falls cannot "go it alone" in serving the needs of the region's disadvantaged individuals." In 2005 the City's tax base continues to be insufficient to provide for the needs of the residents of the City with the States lowest per capita family income. In recognition of this "unique character" by the State, the City is the only community in Rhode Island with a State run school system.

The Report of the Central Falls Review Commission dated January 1991 states, "Because of its manufacturing base and the labor force requirements of surrounding communities, Central Falls serves as a major source of affordable housing for the labor force in the area."

"The City of Central Falls is an important part of the social and economic structure in the Blackstone Valley area. Without it, the surrounding towns would likely be paying higher costs for human services and education and would, out of necessity to preserve their manufacturing labor force, need to provide a substantial amount of affordable housing."

"The City's current problems stem directly from its history, geography and demography, and its excessive reliance on property taxes as the source of locally-derived revenues. Although many specific decisions of the past can be questioned, the City inevitably reached the point at which its property tax base had

no more room to grow, while its expenses continued to increase. Several cost-saving measures and tax increases were postponed, but could not ultimately avoid today's problems. These are of course exacerbated by the fact that the City's people have the lowest average income in the State."

Details of this definitive report are discussed in the Economic Development and Service and Facilities Elements of the Comprehensive Community Plan. Recommendations of the report are included in the Implementation Program portion of the Plan.

This Land Use element clearly acknowledges the fundamental facts and observations which have been expressed in prior studies as enumerated above. The Land Use Plan and the Zoning Ordinance should be focused on the implementation of the following policies:

1. The expansion of opportunities for economic development within the context of an intensely developed landscape with special consideration given to the adaptive reuse of underutilized and or vacant former industrial buildings.
2. The improvement of the physical image of the community through expansion of public and private open space, the protection of historic structures, and related public and private improvements.
3. The protection of environmentally sensitive areas.
4. The preservation of sound affordable housing in the context of livable neighborhood settings.
5. The implementation of physical and legislative measures which will promote community renewal. An example of such a legislative measure would be the establishment of a Municipal Economic Development Zone (MED Zone) which would bring new economic and community vitality to the City.
6. The stabilization of the growing residential population.

#### **Process**

A review of previously developed land use data was conducted by the Central Falls Department of Planning and Community Development in the spring of 1991. Field surveys were accomplished in those areas of the City where changes in land use were evident since the 1986 land use survey, where current use of vacant parcels recorded in 1986 was in question. In areas where the potential for reducing permitted residential densities through amendment to the existing zoning regulation could be

accomplished without creation of substantial areas of non-conformance and finally, in areas where the protection of natural or cultural resources is dictated.

A review of the 1986 Land Use survey is presented below and compared to land use inventory data previously developed in 1961 and 1975.

**Land Use, Single Use Parcels, by Acreage and Percent  
Of Area, Central Falls 1986**

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>% of Total Area in Single Use</u>	<u>% of Total Area</u>
<b>Residential</b>			
Single Family	59.95	7.88	7.32
Two Family	82.93	10.90	10.14
Three Family	93.74	12.31	11.46
Multi-Family	52.88	7.00	6.47
<b>Total Residential</b>	<b>289.50</b>	<b>38.09</b>	<b>35.39</b>
<b>Industrial</b>	64.30	8.43	7.86
<b>Transportation &amp; Utilities</b>	18.78	2.47	2.30
<b>Commercial</b>	30.64	4.02	3.74
<b>Services (Office)</b>	13.34	1.75	1.63
<b>Public Institutions</b>	54.14	7.12	6.62
<b>Recreation</b>	9.42	1.23	1.15
<b>Roads</b>	167.67	22.04	20.51
<b>Vacant Land</b>	<b>113.01</b>	<b>14.85</b>	<b>13.82</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>760.80</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>93.02</b>

Source: University of Rhode Island, Community Planning and Area Development Land Use Survey, February, 1986.

Mixed land use within the City of Central Falls is prevalent. Generally mixed uses are either residential/commercial or industrial/commercial. This situation is reflected in the following table.

**MIXED LAND USE BY PRIMARY USE**

<u>Mixed Land Use</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>of Mixed Parcels</u>	<u>of Central Falls</u>	<u>%of Total Area</u>	<u>%of Total Area</u>
Residential	31.15	54.57	3.81		
Industrial	22.19	38.88	2.72		
Commercial	3.63	6.36	0.44		
Services	.11	.19	0.01		

The 1986 University of Rhode Island inventory data was compared to inventory data previously developed in 1961 and 1975.

Source: University of Rhode Island Community Planning and Area Development Land Use Survey February, 1986.

**LAND USE CHANGE, CENTRAL FALLS, 1961-1986**

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Percentage of Total Area</u>		
	<u>1961</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1986</u>
Residential	37.20	38.52	39.20
Commercial	5.20	5.70	4.18
Industrial	13.70	12.38	10.52
Roads	20.50	20.50	20.50
Other	23.20	22.90	25.60

As noted in the URI report, "It is difficult to make accurate comparisons over time because the 1961 and 1975 figures do not account for mixed uses as was done in the 1986 study. Incompatibility also arises because different methodologies were applied in doing the land use surveys. To allow for comparison over time, the 1986 single and mixed use for residential, commercial and industrial categories have been aggregated."

Nonetheless, the trends which were identified in the University of Rhode Island study were confirmed through the field work accomplished in the spring of 1991.

## TRENDS IN LAND USE CHANGE, 1961-1991

1. Continuing increases in residential use, basically through conversion of existing structures.
2. Continuing decreases in industrial land uses.
3. Continuing increases in "other" land uses which included health care facilities, semi public uses and public uses.
4. Continuing fluctuations in commercial land use.

Note: In 2004, the above trends continue with acceleration in the decreases in industrial uses.

### Land Development Potential

The land use survey conducted in 1986 by the University of Rhode Island Graduate Curriculum in Community Planning and Area Development, reported that 13.82% of the total area of the City was either vacant, developed sites with vacant buildings or wetland. This would account for 113.01 acres.

A survey of these lots conducted in the spring of 1991 indicated that many of the "vacant" lots were either used as "accessory" to land uses on adjacent lots, (i.e. gardening, outside storage, parking, etc.); were publicly owned and undeveloped or were subject to development limitations either because of financial feasibility or environmental characteristics such as steep slopes, high water table, wetlands or other limiting characteristics.

The 1991 survey indicated that only 17+ acres of land is vacant and suitable for future development by private interests. In 2005, the total acres of vacant land is approximately (3.5) acres as noted below.

### Allocation of Land Resource

Clearly with only 3.5+ acres of vacant land which has private development potential, there is little which can be done to allocate land for the expansion of specific land uses. This is particularly true because of limited size of most vacant parcels in the City - generally ranging in the area of 4,500 square feet to 8,000 square feet. There is one exception:

1. Contiguous vacant lots between Hooker Street and the Valley Marshes, totaling approximately three and one-half (3.5) acres. (See Map on Page 2-7.)

The Open Space and Recreation Element of the Comprehensive Community Plan proposes that the City negotiate leases or acquire for less than market value, those portions of these lots which border the Valley Marshes. The Valley Marshes are owned by the State. Current zoning of this area including the marshland located in Central Falls is R-1C.

While most of Hooker Street is currently a "paper street", this property has the potential for a creatively designed small scale multi-family housing development. Both sewer and water lines are accessible from this property although significant grades would most likely dictate the use of a sewerage lift station or pumping system.

Coordinated development of this land for conservation, recreation and residential use would be consistent with Comprehensive Community Plan proposals related to the Blackstone River Valley Corridor.

#### Land Use and Energy Resources

Because of existing development patterns and limited potential for new development or the expansion of industrial land use, the implementation of the Central Falls Land Use Plan would have little impact on increasing or decreasing the energy consumption within the City's borders. However, the question of both short and long range cost of energy and the potential for adverse environmental impacts and risks involved to human life associated with the development of various energy resources, the question of energy is nonetheless important to the residents of the City.

Central Falls residents have the lowest per capita family income in the State and are thus seriously impacted by any increases in energy costs.

The Comprehensive Community Plan supports all of the energy related policies contained in State Guide Plan 121.

#### Land Use Compatibility with Zoning

As part of the development of the 1999-2004 Comprehensive Community Plan, a review of the compatibility of current zoning designations with existing land uses was undertaken. The review was done in concert with the development of proposed changes in the City's Zoning regulations.

The Zoning Ordinance adopted on October 1, 1992 for the City of Central Falls is designed to comply with the Rhode Island Zoning Enabling Act of 1991.

The Department of Planning and Community Development continues to monitor the Zoning Ordinance for the necessary amendments.

In developing and monitoring the Ordinance, the City has followed a set of guiding principles:

1. Encourage development, but do it with standards that are realistic and promote community renewal.
2. Reduce allowable housing densities, wherever that is feasible.
3. Promote the values of environmental protection and historic preservation.
4. Introduce planning concepts and planning analysis into the zoning process.
5. Revise administrative procedures so that zoning principles are not lost to economic and political pressures.

**ELEMENT NO. 3**

**HOUSING**



## I. INTRODUCTION

The 1987 Master Plan's discussion of housing conditions in Central Falls began this way:

"The influence of the Boston metropolitan area's heated real estate market on northern Rhode Island is profoundly affecting the cost of housing in Central Falls. Property values are appreciating rapidly. Combined with lower interest rates, more intense levels of real estate investment may be seen."

In 2005 the Rhode Island housing market has been experiencing a boom cycle reminiscent of the housing market described in the 1987 Comprehensive plan. There is currently a state wide housing affordability crisis for both buyers and renters with purchase prices and rents growing substantially faster than family incomes.

In this element of the Comprehensive Community Plan, we will discuss existing conditions and needs. A general outline of steps which may be taken to improve conditions will be set forth. How such measures may be implemented or whether they may be implemented at all is not predictable.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

The 2000 United States Census counted 7276 housing units in Central Falls. Of these units, 6702 or 92.1% were occupied. 574 or 7.9% were vacant. Of the occupied units, 1461 or 21.8% were owner-occupied. The owner-occupied units were larger than the rental units: the average owner-occupied unit had six rooms, the average rental unit had four rooms. The difference in size may in part be accounted for by the current real estate boom and the prior boom of the eighties which created economic incentives to split larger family units in older buildings into smaller units. Some of these smaller units are clearly illegal and are cited when found by the City Housing Code Inspector.

When we include the current vacant units in our look at the housing universe, the percentage of owner-occupied units would hardly increase if all housing units in the City were filled. Of the 574 vacant units, 229 are listed as being "for rent", 74 are listed as "for sale only", 40 are listed as "rented or sold" and 229 are listed as "other vacant". For the purpose of this analysis, we will assume that the "other vacant" are units which would be for rent but are currently being withheld from the

market. Only 74 units are listed as being "for sale only". Adding the "for sale only" to the owner occupied units yields 1535 potential owner-occupied units of the total number of 7276 units: 21.1%.

Both the actual and the potential number of owner-occupied units is very low. The City should continue to make efforts to increase the percentage of owner-occupants, but the reality will always be a City that is mostly renters.

The predominant form of housing is a wood frame, three to six unit multi-family building, but a number of large complexes do exist. The larger complexes are elderly housing. Forand Manor, Wilfred Manor, Rand Place, Chateau Anne and Blackstone Falls contain 617 units, making them an important resource in a City with a 15% elderly population.

The City contains no public housing "projects" for families. Instead, emphasis has been placed on scattered site rehabilitation and the placement of low-income families in privately-owned buildings with the assistance of United States Department of Housing and Urban Development Section 8 Certificates and Vouchers, administered by the Central Falls Housing Authority. This policy has promoted the integration of Central Falls lower income families into the community at large.

The creation of large public housing developments for families, would most likely involve the destruction of existing affordable housing units and the subsequent stigmatizing of the residents of the new developments. This plan rejects the concentration of low income families in such developments.

Approximately 75% of the City's housing stock was constructed before 1940. In the last decade, 77 new housing units were constructed in Central Falls. Given the fact that the City is 98% developed, such a large ratio is unlikely to change.

**Central Falls Income Levels:**

According to the 2000 Census, the median income for a household in the City was \$22,628, and the median income for a family was \$26,844. Males had a median income of \$23,854 versus \$18,544 for females. The per capita income for the city was \$10,825. About 25.9% of families and 29% of the population were below the poverty line, including 40.8% of those under age 18 and 29.3% of those age 65 or over.

## **AFFORDABILITY GAP: PURCHASE**

Data developed by Rhode Island Housing in the State of Rhode Island's 5 Year Consolidated Plan: Program Years 2005-2009 shows the following for 2003:

Median House Sale Price	\$230,000
Median Family Income (Central Falls)	26,844
Income Needed to Purchase	70,000
Down Payment at 10%	23,000

The City should continue its' policy to expand owner-occupancy to the extent possible. Programs to convert absentee owned multifamily properties to owner-occupied should be promoted when available. The City should encourage its residents to participate in the various affordable mortgage programs available through the RI Housing Corporation, non-profit housing corporations and some banks. Unfortunately, because of family income constraints and the predominant multi-family nature of the housing stock, promoting home ownership cannot pragmatically be the primary response to housing problems in the City.

Preservation of the existing housing stock and proactive enforcement of the City's Housing Code to insure safe, clean and sanitary rental units should be the City's primary housing policy emphasis.

## **AFFORDABILITY GAP: RENTING**

2003 data from Rhode Island Housing shows the following:

Average 2 bedroom rent	\$ 1,032
Income needed to afford rent	40,500
Median renter income	27,715

The State of Rhode Island's 2005-2009 5 Year Consolidated Plan makes the following comments which are applicable to the Central Falls rental housing market:

"In Rhode Island, an extremely low income household (earning \$18,210, 30% of the Area Median Income of \$60,700) can afford monthly rent of no more than \$351. In Rhode Island, a minimum wage earner (earning \$6.75 per hour) can afford monthly rent of no more than \$351 and must work 103 hours per week in non-metro areas and 97 hours per week in the State overall in order to afford a two-bedroom apartment based on HUD's fair market rents. An SSI recipient (receiving \$621 monthly) can afford monthly rent of no more than \$186, while the Fair Market Rent for a one-bedroom unit is \$730.

For a family of three receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or for Supplemental Security Income recipients, Rhode Island rents are not affordable without a rent subsidy. In September 2003, only 28 percent of FIP households had a housing subsidy."

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the average small two bedroom apartment in Central Falls rents for approximately \$600 a month without heat and utilities.

Clearly a majority of Central Falls renter households are "rent burdened."

#### INTRA-CITY COMPARISONS

The Comprehensive Community Plan of 1999-2004 reviewed the four census tracts that makeup Central Falls to see if significant differences existed among these four areas of the City. The plan compared median house cost, average rent, number of persons per unit and percent of single family homes.

The highest median property values are found in tract 111. Tract 111 is located in the City's northwest corner, near the Lincoln line. The presence of large, well-maintained houses in this area seemed to account for the difference.

Tract 109 has the highest percentage of single family houses. 109 includes the City's northeast corner and the North Central Section (Jenks Avenue, Madeira Avenue, etc.).

#### STATE AND AREA COMPARISONS

The following housing market information compares the Central Falls housing market and that of the surrounding area:

##### MEDIAN EXISTING SINGLE FAMILY SALES PRICE

Rhode Island	\$264,700
Providence	\$185,000
Central Falls	\$195,000

##### MEDIAN EXISTING MULTI-FAMILY SALES PRICE

Rhode Island	\$255,000
Providence	\$235,000
Central Falls	\$249,450

(Source: The above year end 2004 sales statistics are from the RI Association of Realtors.)

##### AVERAGE 2BR RENT

Rhode Island	\$ NA
Providence (City Wide)	\$1,012
Central Falls	\$ 796

(Source: The above year end 2003 rent survey is from RI Housing.)

OWNER OCCUPIED UNITS

Rhode Island	54.2%
Providence County	49.8%
Central Falls	21.5%

SINGLE FAMILY HOUSES

Rhode Island	55.5%
Providence County	44.6%
Central Falls	8.2%

(Source: 1998 Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corp.)

CONDITION OF THE HOUSING STOCK

The City of Central Falls housing stock consists primarily of wood frame detached structures. According to the 2000 Census of the City's of the 7275 housing units, 47 % were built prior to 1939, 79% were built prior to 1959. The city's older housing stock, by its nature, is expensive to maintain. Many structures have obsolete plumbing, heating and electrical systems. Many rental units are heated by space heaters which pose serious health and fire hazards because of illegal hook-ups and poor maintenance. Many of the City's housing units are not energy efficient having old inefficient window systems and insufficient insulation in the building envelope. In addition, as the majority of units were built before lead paint was outlawed in 1978 a substantial number have lead paint.

The City Building Inspector has found that a concentration of building code violations is to be found in properties owned by absentee landlords. Especially problematic are the large six family units that are subject to severe over crowding and under maintenance.

The current housing boom has encouraged investors, priced out of other markets, to buy "investment properties" in Central Falls. The purchase of these properties at inflated prices results in higher rents for tenants. Such properties are generally occupied by "rent burdened" households that need multiple jobs to pay the rent. These families are the first to lose their jobs during a downturn in the economic cycle. During such times when landlords can't collect their rent the properties historically go into a precipitous decline which ultimately leads to abandonment.

In Central Falls the coupling of the lowest median income families in the state with an older costly to maintain housing stock insures that the City of Central Falls will always have difficulty insuring that its housing stock is safe, sanitary and reasonably maintained.

## II. HOUSING NEEDS

### 1. The Elderly

Approximately 15% of the City's population is elderly. Currently, the elderly receive 53% of the City's total of subsidized units. Because of the unlikelihood of major increases in their fixed incomes, the disproportion may not be totally inappropriate. Still, the production of additional subsidized units for the elderly who are capable of independent living would not appear to be Central Falls greatest need. Instead, emphasis should be placed on the low income elderly who reside in their own homes and wish to continue to do so and on what are termed the frail elderly, those with health problems who require supportive services.

In 1990, 14% of Rhode Island's population was 65 years of age or older: approximately 150,000. Projections for the year 2020 show an increase to 200,000 with 90,000 of that total being 75 years of age or older. Many of these residents will require in-house or community-based social service support.

As with all other groups, constant attention to the condition of the housing stock should be paid. The City should continue its Senior Home Maintenance Paint Program which provides grants of up to \$1,500 for the correction of building code violations. In addition, the City should maintain its support of such programs as the Senior Program at the Ralph Holden Community Center.

Nursing homes located in the City house a total of 360 residents. The Nursing Home population is predominantly elderly.

Senior citizens who suffer from a lack of monthly income, but have substantial equity in their homes, may choose to increase their monthly income and make some necessary repairs to their home through participation in Rhode Island Housing's Reverse Equity Mortgage Program.

### 2. The Homeless

Rhode Island tracks information on its homeless population through the Rhode Island Emergency Shelter Information Project. In July 2003, Rhode Island implemented a Statewide HMIS System. The system allows organizations to electronically collect data regarding the homeless while maintaining client confidentiality in order to better assess homeless needs and gaps in services.

According to the Emergency Shelter Information Project, 5,686 total clients were served in the Rhode Island shelter system from

July 12, 2002 to June 30, 2003, a 5% percent increase from the 2001-2002 period, but a 29% increase from 2000-2001. The state also set an all-time high in the number of shelter nights provided at 192,034. The average daily census of shelter beds was 526 occupied beds per night, also the highest in state history. The shelter system is also becoming more populated by the chronically homeless, those who have been without permanent housing for longer time periods. The mix of shelter clients, which was heavily oriented to the newly homeless in past years, is now more evenly divided between newly and chronically homeless persons. The chronic homeless tend to be middle-age men without income who enter the system from the street, other shelters, correctional facilities or detox centers.

As with other shelter populations, the number of single men and women in the shelter system has continued to rise, up 17% for single men and 10% for single women from 2001-2002 to 2002-2003. However their numbers as a percentage of the total shelter population have remained relatively stable. In 2002-2003, 879 single women (22 percent of all clients) and 2507 single men (64 percent of all clients) were emergency shelter clients.

The number of clients accessing emergency shelters for domestic violence increased 6 percent from 2001-2002 to 2002-2003, with over 42 percent of female heads of household and 29 percent of single women seeking shelter due to domestic violence in 2002-2003.

(Source: State of Rhode Island 5 Year Consolidated Plan: Program Years 2005-2009)

Two shelters currently serve Central Falls. The Blackstone Valley Advocacy Center serves battered women and their families. Its capacity is ten beds and two cribs. The New Hope Emergency Shelter of Pawtucket and Central Falls, located on Barton Street, has a capacity of 35 and serves all segments of the homeless population.

These shelters should be supported by the City. But, shelters are only a temporary solution. Where possible the City needs to encourage the reintegration of the homeless into the community. Permanent supportive housing should be encouraged. To preserve a housing stock resource which serves this population and to prevent homelessness, existing Single Room Occupancy buildings in the City should be maintained and, where possible, rehabilitated and linked with social service providers.

### **3. Other Special Needs Populations**

There is a diverse special needs population within Rhode Island, that includes the frail elderly, veterans, persons with physical,

mental or developmental disabilities, substance abuse problems, and HIV/AIDS and persons returning to the community. While each of these populations may have its own unique needs, they share some issues relating to housing development and maintenance of stable living environments. Many share a need for case management and ongoing support services. Since the success of special needs housing depends on a strong support services and case management component, housing sponsors need a commitment of resources that will ensure the provision of supportive services over the extended lifetime of a housing development.

#### **4. Families**

Prior sections have highlighted the extreme affordability gaps that exist for low and moderate income families attempting to buy or rent a decent place to live. Policy groups at the State level have suggested that the supply of housing must be increased to satisfy the need for affordable housing. The city of Central Falls is essentially a "built environment" and thus does not have the option to increase the supply of housing.

Central Fall's greatest housing asset is its existing housing stock. The majority of its existing housing stock was built to house families. The City can not expand this stock in any significant way but it can implement policies that try to preserve it in a "family friendly" way.

The City should proactively enforce its Housing Code to insure that its housing is safe and sanitary. It should also enforce occupancy requirements to diminish over crowding and close illegal housing units. The City should discourage the division of larger rental units into smaller units. "Family friendly Housing" should exist in a neighborhood context that is also safe, secure and conducive to family living.

The majority of family housing units were built before lead paint was outlawed in 1978 a substantial number have lead paint. According to Childhood Lead Poisoning in Rhode Island: The Numbers 2004 Edition, "The incidence of lead poisoning among children under age six years of age in Central Falls decreased dramatically over the last ten years. In 1994, the incidence of lead poisoning in Central Falls was 36.8%; in 2003, the rate was 5.9%. This decrease is quite impressive, but the incidence of lead poisoning in Central Falls is still slightly higher than the state wide average of 3.7%. In spite of the considerable decline in incidence over time, 59 children living in Central Falls were lead poisoned for the first time in 2003. Although we have made great strides in the fight against childhood lead poisoning, we must continue to work together to protect the children in our community and to achieve our goal of eliminating lead poisoning by 2010."

In densely populated Central Falls issues such as inadequate parking, nonconforming uses and over building must be carefully monitored to keep its residential areas livable. In addition, State and Federal programs to combat childhood lead poisoning must be pursued.

### **III. LAND USE AND HOUSING**

Land use patterns in Central Falls are a legacy of when the City was predominately a "mill town" where a large percentage of it's residents walked to work. The layout of the City predates the automobile as the primary source of transportation for the American family. Thus today manufacturing buildings are found throughout the city with residential areas surrounding the former places of employment.

Many of the residential areas today do not meet the parking requirements of its' current residents. The issue of parking is not simply an issue of inconvenience but presents public safety issues and neighborhood quality of life issues.

The City is currently experiencing a shift in land use in its M1 and M2 zoning districts. There are increasing requests to convert former manufacturing buildings to mixed use with a residential component. Though it is in the City's interest to maintain manufacturing jobs for as long as possible, this out migration in manufacturing jobs is expected to continue. There is obviously a potential conflict between the residents of a mixed use residential building and some manufacturing activities that generate noise, smells, truck traffic etc. The issue needs to be addressed under the Zoning ordinance though the creation of a "Mill Building" overlay district for the City's M1 and M2 districts. There is some potential for family housing in these buildings but it seems they are more suited for empty nesters, professional couples without children and artists.

The land use element calls for the refining of the zoning of areas currently zoned for multi-family residences where a majority of the structures are one and two families. Allowable density should be reduced to two families.

Finally, parking regulations of the Zoning Ordinance should be used to address public safety issues and insure livable residential areas.

The goal of City housing policies should be to insure decent, safe and affordable housing of appropriate sizes for all Central Falls residents. It can not be to increase the supply of housing units which is obviously prevented by the lack of developable land. In addition it must be recognized that decent housing requires a livable residential area that meets the resident's yard space, parking and compatible use requirements.

## **THE CONNECTION BETWEEN HOUSING GOALS AND OVERALL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

In a City which consists of only 1.27 square miles, 98% of which is developed, no opportunity for radical change to the cityscape may be anticipated. It is to be expected that the overall form and structure of Central Falls will remain far into the future. The City will remain densely populated; the population will remain predominantly low/moderate income; the pattern of the placement of land uses will remain the same.

It is not expected that most areas of the city will change dramatically as to their general use or pattern of development.

The most significant change in the foreseeable future will fall in two general categories 1.) the adaptive reuse of former manufacturing buildings and 2.) the potential for redevelopment of a 10 to 30 acre parcel for a Municipal Economic Zone. Here is where the juxtaposition of housing goals with land use goals and the general planning concepts may be seen. A few overriding concepts should connect these all:

1. **PLAN FOR SELF SUSTAINABILITY.** The City must encourage new development that is self sustaining. The City's tax base has no room for development that will cause the City any net increase in City expenditures. The State takeover of the Central Falls School Department was a most dramatic example of the limited ability of the smallest State's smallest city to meet basic municipal service needs. The State's highest tax rate has proved insufficient to staff or fund fully any City Department; few, if any, infrastructure improvements have been funded by municipal revenues in the last decade; City buildings are in need of repair; much municipal equipment has outlived its usefulness.
2. **ENCOURAGE LIVABLE RESIDENTIAL AREAS.** Zoning requirements that promote "livability" such as parking requirements, front and side yard set backs, fence requirements and lot coverage must be strictly enforced. Illegal units should be removed, wherever possible. Interpretation of the term "hardship" by the Zoning Board of appeals must be strict. Nonconforming uses should be eliminated when possible. New construction in residential areas where allowed should be encouraged at lower densities.
3. **SORT OUT LAND USES.** The Zoning Map must be refined to better define the City's existing residential areas. Because of the close proximity of Central Fall's residential areas to commercial and manufacturing zones there will always be pressure to expand nonconforming uses into the residential areas. Such incursions of nonconforming uses should be strongly discouraged.

The current zoning ordinance should be updated to create a "Mill Building" overlay district to be used in the M1 and M2 zones. Such a district would be designed to allow for the mixed use of the large manufacturing buildings which are no longer viable for industrial uses. The future of many of these properties will probably include loft style residential units targeted to empty nesters, young professionals and artists.

4. **WHEREVER POSSIBLE, CONNECT RESIDENCES WITH OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.** The Open Space Element of this plan emphasizes the development of the riverfront as a front yard of open space for the populace. The Blackstone River is emerging scenic and recreational resource. City residents will have even greater access to the river as the Blackstone River Bikeway is build along a good portion of Centrals part of the river. Most City residents will be within a five to ten minute walk of this new biking, jogging and walking path.

5. **TARGET AREAS AND IMPROVE STREETSCAPES.** Resources being as limited as they are, it is strongly recommended that the goals of the Comprehensive Community Plan be accomplished in phased and or targeted areas. Public improvements, such as streetscapes, sitting areas and signage, should be linked with housing code enforcement and housing rehabilitation.

#### **IV. POLICIES**

To encourage and implement improvements in housing and residential area conditions, the following policies are recommended:

The Department of Code Enforcement and the Office of the City Solicitor should pro-actively utilize the Municipal Court to prosecute housing code violations.

Establish systematic minimum housing code enforcement.

The emphasis of Central Falls housing programs and policy must be the preservation and maintenance of the existing housing stock in the context of livable residential areas.

Where possible, convert absentee owned properties to owner-occupied properties.

Participate in the housing and community development initiatives of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Programs.

Continue to participate in the programs of the Rhode Island Housing Mortgage Finance Corporation, including the Home Repair Program and Lead Program.

Retain and rehabilitate existing Single Room Occupancy structures as an important measure of homelessness prevention.

Continue to support the two homeless shelters which serve the City.

Encourage Mixed Use Developments in the City's obsolete manufacturing buildings which combine residential and commercial uses.

Establish a "Mill Building" reuse overlay district for the City's M1 and M2 zones.

Use Community Development Block Grant Funds to provide staffing so that access to housing rehabilitation funds may be maintained for the benefit of City residents.

Continue efforts to help elderly homeowners stay in their homes through the continuation of the Community Development Block Grant funded Elderly Home Maintenance Grant Program and support of other social services.

Pursue additional Federal and State rental subsidies for low income tenants.

#### **FINANCIAL PROGRAMS**

##### **1. Community Development Block Grant (United States HUD)**

The City of Central Falls receives CDBG funds from the State of Rhode Islands Small City's Grant Program funded by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. The City receives an entitlement amount and a competitive amount.

Continue the Senior Home Maintenance Program

Create a Space Heater Conversion Program

Continue to use for staffing to access other public and private financing.

Use for technical assistance for First Time Homebuyers Programs.

##### **2. Rhode Island Housing Mortgage Finance Corporation**

Rhode Island Housing is the States principal housing agency with the mission of assisting low and moderate families with their affordable housing needs. Some of their programs include:

First Time Home Buyer Programs  
Home Equity loans  
Multi-Family Mortgages  
Reverse Equity Mortgages for the Elderly  
Affordable Housing Development Financing  
Affordable Housing Tax Credits  
Lead Paint Abatement Program  
others

**3. Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston**

FHL Banks conduct two programs designed to meet the pressing housing and local economic needs of low-moderate income Americans and neighborhoods. Those programs are the Affordable Housing Program (AHP) and the Community Investment Program (CIP). Each FHL Bank has an Affordable Housing Advisory Council made up of housing and community improvement advocates to provide guidance and direction on both AHP and CIP. AHP and CIP financing supports a wide range of housing and community development projects

**4. Section 8 vouchers and certificates and State Rental Subsidies**

The demand far exceeds availability but certificates, vouchers and any other rental assistance should be pursued as part of the financing of total development packages and as housing assistance for individual families.

**V. CONCLUSION**

There is currently an affordable housing crisis for buyers and renters of housing in Rhode Island. Central Falls residents have not escaped the crisis and are in fact some of the most vulnerable residents because of their low household income. Solutions to the current affordability crisis are beyond the City of Central Falls resource base to address.

The City of Central Falls greatest resource is its existing housing stock. The City should encourage its residents to available themselves of resources available through other agencies primarily the RI Housing Corporation to build, buy and make repairs to Central Falls homes. In addition, the City should make a serious effort to educate its residents of the serious problem posed by lead paint. It should further participate with RI Housing in the utilization of RI Housing's Lead Paint Program to make as many Central Falls homes as possible "Lead Safe".

The City should utilize it's zoning code and housing code enforcement to address residential area "livability issues". All Central Falls residential areas should become places where people choose to live and make their future not housing areas of last resort.

The flight of manufacturing uses from the City's "mill buildings" though unfortunate from a job stand point needs to become an opportunity from an alternative housing perspective. This "new opportunity" should be reflected in the zoning code through establishment of a "mill building" reuse overlay district for the City's M1 and M2 zones.

Lastly, the City of Central Falls needs to plan for "self sustainability" by encouraging projects that do not require the City to directly or indirectly incur any net increase in City expenditures.

**ELEMENT NO. 4**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**



## **I. INTRODUCTION**

In the past, economic activity in Central Falls has been directly linked to its' status as a manufacturing center. Drawn by the power of the Blackstone River, manufacturers located along the riverbanks. From there, within walking distance of the mills that began the story, housing for the owners, managers, and workers sprung up.

The legacy of this development history is an urban area nearly completely built-upon, with few undeveloped parcels for new commercial or manufacturing development.

Thus, the primary focus of economic development activities in the City must be one of redevelopment and adaptive reuse of existing manufacturing buildings.

The manufacturing industries which located in Central Falls tended to attract immigrant workers. Wave after wave of new arrivals Irish, French, Polish, Syrian - have been lured here by the prospect of employment and the proximity of affordable housing.

Today, Central Falls is home to a new group of first generation immigrant workers drawn to Central Falls more for its housing than for the jobs it has to offer. Most Central Falls residents must look to other communities to find employment. Thus Central Falls has assumed the role of the houser of workers whose jobs are located in surrounding communities, such as the Town of Lincoln, where new industrial and commercial parks have been made possible because of the availability of vacant land.

In considering what actions may be feasible to promote economic development in the City, we must keep in mind it's land use legacy, and the accelerating tend away from manufacturing in the city and region. Central Falls economic future will never again be found in manufacturing. It should try to preserve such jobs where possible but the City's economic future will be elsewhere.

## **II. MUNICIPAL ECONOMIC ZONE (MED ZONE)**

On July 17, 2003 the State legislature enacted Municipal Economic Zone legislation tailored for Central Falls and two other

"financially distressed communities" to provide tax incentives for businesses that locate in redeveloped MED Zone areas. In summary, the legislation allows new businesses in redevelopment areas (the MED Zone) to charge one half of the existing State sales tax for a ten year period. In addition, the reduced sales tax is given to the City for municipal services.

The "Med Zone" legislation presents a unique financial incentive for the redevelopment of a 10 to 30 acre parcel in Central Falls. The identification of an area appropriate for the creation of a MED Zone should be vigorously pursued.

A potential redevelopment site should be created from an area primarily zoned M1 and M2. Such a site should be serviced by easy access to Interstate 95 as the businesses in the Zone would have the potential to service a metropolitan market.

The City should update its Zoning Ordinance to allow for the establishment of a Municipal Economic Zone (MED Zone) to take advantage of the unique redevelopment opportunity such a zone brings. The MED zone is mainly a strong economic development incentive but the spin off in the form of new jobs and tax revenues will ultimately strengthen the City as a whole.

### **III. MILL BUILDING REUSE ZONE**

Central Falls has a legacy of multi-story "mill buildings" that are not readily adaptable for modern manufacturing methods that generally want vertically integrated (one story) manufacturing facilities. Efforts to market such buildings for manufacturing use are generally unsuccessful. Many of these buildings do present an economic development opportunity when redeveloped for mixed use. There are various combinations, mixing commercial offices, retail, and residential uses. There is also the more limited market potential for other uses such as artist lofts, a business incubator or a private institution such as a technical school.

The current zoning ordinance should be updated to create a "Mill Building" overlay district to be used in the M1 and M2 zones.

### **IV. THE TWO MAIN STREETS: COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY**

Roughly paralleled on the east and west sides of the City, Broad and Dexter Streets are Central Falls' main commercial districts.

#### **Broad Street:**

Broad Street is a major cross City route between Pawtucket and Cumberland. It has attracted such businesses as McDonalds, a

Blockbuster Video store, and a Brooks Pharmacy constructed on the former site of Conrad's, which was the City's largest restaurant and banquet facility. At the northern end of Broad Street is the large Osram/Sylvania light bulb manufacturing plant. This plant is still one of the City's largest employers but its workforce has been dramatically reduced. Hasbro, a former major employer, owns a large manufacturing building near the Osram plant but it is no longer in operation. Today Broad Street is a vital commercial Street but the impact of manufacturing is greatly diminished as in other areas of the City.

The Broad Street Business District remains a viable main street but businesses must rely on attracting customers that traverse the City in automobiles not walk from a nearby manufacturing business.

Providing more municipal and private parking is needed as potential customers who can't park near a store will not stop and will shop elsewhere.

**Dexter Street:**

Dexter Street has more of a neighborhood shopping area feel to it than Broad Street.

In the early 1980's, the City invested a substantial amount of Community Development Block Grant Funds in storefront and street improvements. A state-of-the-art United States Post Office, was constructed in 1997. This along with the City's acquisition of land for new commercial construction and the designation of Dexter Street as a "Main Street" Project funded by the City's Community Development Block Grant helped to invigorate the Street. The Dexter Credit Union completed an expansion which created new office space in the City. The Ella Risk elementary School, built on the site of the former school at the corner of Hunt Street and Dexter Street, opened September 1999. These developments and the streetscape improvements of the last decade have created a much improved commercial street. These past efforts need to be maintained and built upon.

There are still some properties that don't conform to Dexter Street's "new image". Such businesses need to be targeted for proactive code enforcement and encouraged to meet an acceptable standard.

Though some municipal parking has been created there is still a lack of adequate parking for many businesses. Like Broad Street there is a need for additional municipal and private parking areas.

The economic vitality of the City's commercial streets also depends on the perception by the public that they are in a safe

environment to stop the car and shop or eat at a local restaurant. At times, especially during the summer months there is a public perception that Dexter Street is less than safe. This perception is caused by groups of youths who hang out in the area. Thus it is imperative that the police utilizing "community policing methods" aid the local merchants in creating a welcoming shopping atmosphere.

It is also imperative to the economic vitality of both streets that they be perceived as "welcoming" or "user friendly".

Merchants must be discouraged from using security fences along the street or around parking lots. In addition bars on windows or doors facing the street should not be allowed. These physical security barriers send the wrong message to the shopping public about the potential safety of the street.

The City government has within the last year, taken actions which, benefit it's commercial areas as a whole. The annual Antique Car Show, held in September, has attracted crowds of 5,000 to 10,000 introducing many people to Central Falls for the first time.

The City has also obtained additional Community Development Block Grant funding for it's Dexter Street Revitalization effort. It should continue to seek additional funding for additional efforts on Broad and Dexter Streets.

#### **Washington Street**

The remaining shopping district is the small area of Washington Street directly north of Cowden Street. This district serves a very Small neighborhood market area within walking distance of it. It consists of small stores of the "Mom and Pop" variety.

## **V. INDUSTRIAL REDEVELOPMENT**

The City's four largest manufacturing employers as of 2004 are:

Osram/Sylvania (formerly GTE)	543
Wardwell Braiding	150
Murdock Webbing	140
Fuller Packaging	100

They represent a diversity of manufacturing processes: Osram/Sylvania, glass; Murdock and Wardwell, textiles; Fuller Packaging, cardboard. In addition, the "spin off" from these enterprises helps to support other businesses in the area. The exact linkages have not been traced; this is an area which requires further investigation in the context of the Regional Economic Development Plan now being prepared by the Blackstone Valley Development Foundation.

## **VI. SMALL BUSINESS INCUBATORS**

The adaptive reuse of a prior manufacturing building for a business incubator should be encouraged. The concept is relatively simple. Small, start-up businesses have difficulty getting off the ground because of the cost of the necessary services that go along with business operation (e.g., Clerical help, photocopies, fax machines), the inexperience of new entrepreneurs, and the difficulty of attracting start-up capital. An incubator is a centralized location in which resources are pooled to overcome the inability of each individual business owner to provide the necessary support services and where technical assistance is extended by incubator management to each businessperson. The provision of these services helps to make it easier for the new entrepreneur to attract the outside investment necessary for getting started.

The incubator is designed exclusively for start-up, small businesses: When the business becomes successful and, so, needs to expand it moves from the incubator to a place of its own, then to be replaced by another new venture which needs the support the incubator provides.

The future of economic development is partially to be found in the adaptive reuse of existing manufacturing buildings. A business incubator is one effective way of doing this.

## **VII. KINDS OF DEVELOPMENT**

Although manufacturing continues to be the greatest source of jobs in Central Falls, its relative importance has declined dramatically. In 1970, manufacturing accounted for 74% of the City's jobs; by 1984, this proportion had dropped to 64%, and according to the 2000 Census it is now down to 38.8%. The trend was accentuated by the closing of Health-Tex in 1988 and with the closing of Elizabeth Webbing: another 600 positions were lost.

Retail employment has remained constant: about 10% of all jobs in the City are in retail trade.

Given the population's educational level (49.10% have graduated high school, 2000 Census), the experience of Central Falls workers in manufacturing, and the City's continuing role as an entry point for immigrants to the American economy, the retention of employment in the manufacturing sector poses a dilemma for the population's well-being. The problem is that negative growth in this sector may be expected.

Throughout the 1980's, the manufacturing sector of the American economy eroded. Strong competition from overseas and the export of manufacturing jobs to lower wage Third World countries both contributed to this loss. In addition, increasing automation and high tech methods of production let to the manufacture of the same amount of goods by fewer people.

In 2005 it is clear that Central Falls cannot pin its hopes for the future on the manufacturing sector. As stated in the introduction, the primary focus of economic development activities in the City must be focused on redevelopment and the adaptive reuse of existing manufacturing buildings.

### **VIII. FEDERAL DETENTION CENTER**

The decline of Central Fall's manufacturing sector is made manifest at the corner of High and Blackstone Streets. There, the closed American Spinning Industries Mill, once hoped to be a harbinger of a new, mechanized textile industry which would lead the way in the re-tooling of Central Falls industries was demolished. In its place is the Wyatt Detention Center where persons awaiting trial in Federal courts are held. The \$20 million facility, opened in late 1992, holds 220 prisoners and employs 70 persons. The construction provided a boost to the regional economy; the permanent jobs created thereafter provided an ongoing benefit to the economy

The facility is owned and operated by an out of state Detention Center Management firm, the Central Falls Detention Facility Corporation, a quasi-public body that ultimately is responsible to the City's residents oversees the operation. Through a complex arrangement, the City government benefits through the provision of services for which the Federal government will then reimburse the City. The Detention Center provides millions of dollars per year into the City's economy. The Corporation contracts for such services as laundering and food. In addition, the inmates require social services which are provided by local non-profit agencies; not only does this create jobs for the non-profits, it also strengthens their financial positions so that they may continue to provide the important services they are already contributing to the well-being of the City's residents.

The Central Falls Detention Facility Corporation has an excellent opportunity to channel these spin off benefits to Central Falls concerns. Other things being equal, a preference should be given to City residents. That preference should begin with the hiring process, which offers the possibility of outreach to the minority community.

The Detention Facility is currently undertaking a major expansion project. The acquisition of the adjacent King's Junk Yard will allow them to move employee/visitor parking to that area and allow expansion of the prison which will result in the creation of new jobs, not only in the construction phase of the project but in the service area as well. In addition to the proposed parking, the Detention Facility will also create a recreation area and public parking for access to the proposed bike path.

The Wyatt Detention Center is an excellent example of development that is "self sustaining". This concept of "self sustaining development" must be a core principle that cuts across all new development in Central Falls development.

## **IX. EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

In 1991, the Central Falls Schools were taken over by the State Department of Education. As of January 2005, the Central Falls School System is still run by the State of Rhode Island, but in September of 2003, a Board of Trustees was appointed by the State Board of Regents. The Board of Trustees will have the authority of a School Committee including the right to develop educational and staffing policies.

In 2005, the school system has major financial problems. It has a cumulative deficit that is expected to grow over \$10.4 million dollars by the end of 2005. This is attributed to the increased salaries, benefits and retirements for teachers and special education costs.

Of the 3,600 students in the Central Falls School system, 33% or 1,200 receive special education services. The cost of special education services rose from \$2.9 million in fiscal year 2003 to \$5.9 million in 2004.

The City of Central Falls has the highest rate of children in special education in the State and its rate is twice as high as the national average.

In 2003-2004, the percentage of the minority students (primarily Hispanic) in the Central Falls Public School System was 79.24% which indicated a 9.85% increase from the 1999-2000 year.

Adult Education and job training are very important for Central Falls residents which in general have a low educational attainment and skills level.

Particularly important in a City which is nearly one-half Hispanic is the expansion of English As A Second Language Programs. Progreso Latino and Project Hope offers ESL programs aimed at producing better educated citizens with skills valued in the workplace.

## **X. ENTERPRISE ZONE**

Because of the City of Central Falls perilous financial condition, the City has been (and, for the foreseeable future, will remain) unable to extend the kinds of financial incentives traditionally associated with municipal economic development efforts, e.g., tax abatements and large low-interest loans. In 1991, the State began to step into the breach by enacting an Enterprise Zone Program, which offers State tax breaks to companies locating or expanding in designated areas. A council, appointed by the Governor, designated five zones, none of which may exceed five census tracts in size. Central Falls comprises four census tracts.

The City applied for, and was initially designated an Enterprise Zone on January 1, 1992 and subsequently was notified by the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation that the expiration date for designation was December 31, 1996. The City applied for re-designation and was granted an additional five year term of State Enterprise Zone status. Currently, the entire City is designated an Enterprise Zone.

The enterprise zone incentives will not return Central Falls to it's manufacturing past but is a tool to help retain some vital manufacturing jobs in the City.

## **XI. REGIONAL COOPERATION**

Central Falls should take advantage of its "Blackstone Valley" context. Central Fall's worker housing and to a lesser degree jobs benefit neighboring communities and vice-versa. More to the immediate point, the City of Central Falls, as noted above, does not possess the resources to launch and manage a successful economic development program on its own.

The key to redevelopment, thus, is active cooperation with such agencies as the State Department of Economic Development, the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, and the Blackstone Valley Development Foundation. The Foundation has recently received a \$150,000 grant from the United States Economic Development Administration to prepare a Regional Economic Development Plan. One component of that plan will be the

preparation of an urban strategy which will address the problems held in common by Central Falls, Pawtucket, and Woonsocket. The City should participate fully in this study and urge that strong regional mechanisms be developed which will work to implement the recommendations of that urban strategy.

Another regional effort in which Central Falls should participate is the development of tourism. The lead agency is the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council. The Corridor Commission is also involved. Bus tours of the valley have already provided additional trade at City restaurants. As tourism expands, additional injections of funds into the City economy may be expected. The Council's Tourism Plan offers more detailed information.

## **XII. ANALYSIS OF PROPOSALS**

In reviewing proposals for development projects and in attempting to attract same, a number of factors should be considered. Among these are:

1. Project must be a "self sustainable development". The City's tax base has no room for development that will cause the City any net increase in City expenditures. New developments must provide a net gain in revenues to the City.
2. The potential for job creation. This includes not only the number of jobs, but the rate of pay, opportunities for advancement. And the skills required to perform the tasks.
3. Possible linkages with educational and job training programs in the area.
4. The use of natural resources that is proposed. Particular attention should be paid to water usage. All proposals which involve an expansion of industrial activity should include an evaluation of water usage and the development of methods to ensure that water quality is matched with the specific needs of the industrial activity proposed.
5. Compatibility of the proposed project with adjacent land uses.
6. Linkages with other, existing sectors of the regional economy.

7. Diversification of the economic base, with particular attention paid to the further expansion of the service sector of the City's economy.

### **XIII. CONCLUSION**

Central Falls greatest asset is to be found in it's built environment. It provides the Blackstone Valley with a necessary source of "worker housing". Its legacy of manufacturing buildings provide a valuable stock of building for new mixed use development. Some of this development will be refocused on the Blackstone River which is dramatically being transformed into a recreational river that people are choosing to live along.

There is an opportunity for a redevelopment project with a regional market for its goods through the use of Central Fall's unique Municipal Economic Zone designation.

Job retention and creation initiatives won't stop the trend away from manufacturing in Central Falls but they can slow the trend and preserve some jobs in the short term. The City clearly should participate in programs such as the Enterprise Zone program that directly assist it's workforce.

Lastly, Central Falls two commercial streets are vital commercial areas. The City should do all in its power to maintain and enhance their vitality.

### **XIV. POLICIES**

With regard to Economic Development the following municipal policies should be developed:

1. To improve the desirability of Central Falls as a location for business, continuing efforts must be made to improve the City's image. Among other things, the physical upgrading of the City's two main entrances, on Broad Street and at Roosevelt Avenue near the I-95 exit ramp, must continue to be pursued. Measures discussed in other sections of this plan such as riverfront renewal will also contribute to the renewal of the community's image.
2. In furtherance of Policy One, the City should jointly with Pawtucket, pursue the redevelopment of the Pawtucket/Central Falls train depot that straddles the cities' border. The restoration of rail service through a development with a intermodal transportation component should be strongly encouraged.

3. The continued revitalization of Dexter Street and Broad Street should be an ongoing priority. The city should utilize all the means at its' disposal to create and maintain a "welcoming" commercial environment. Proactive enforcement of the zoning and housing code along with "community policing" are tools it should readily use.
4. The City should pursue the services made available by the National Main Street Center.
5. The City applied for and was granted Enterprise Zone designation in 1992 under legislation enacted in 1991. The City most recently was re-designated an Enterprise Zone in October 2006. The City should encourage participation in the Enterprise Zone program by Central Falls businesses.
6. The City should cooperate fully in the Regional Economic Development Plan prepared by the Blackstone Valley Development Foundation.
7. The City should compile a data base of the existing manufacturing buildings in Central Falls. Such a data base is essential in marketing the building for prospective manufacturers and developers.
8. Promote greater involvement by local financial institutions in local economic development.
9. Work with social service agencies to expand day care and job training programs.
10. Expand the service sector of the City's economy.
11. Establish a Municipal Economic Development Zone (MED Zone). Utilize this unique economic incentive for the redevelopment of a 10 to 30 acre commercial development.
12. Establish a Mill Building Reuse zone for the City's M1 and M2 districts to direct the adaptive reuse of the City's "Mill Buildings" on a case-by-case basis. The City should encourage the re-use of these buildings for adaptive reuse such as mixed use, residential, live/work space, artist lofts and professional office space. High priorities should be given to creative uses that would generate employment. Any re-use of these buildings would require that the building be brought into compliance with all local and state fire, building, environmental and zoning codes.

**ELEMENT NO. 5**

**NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**



Comprehensive Community Plan  
Element No. 5  
Natural and Cultural Resources

## I. GENERAL

As mentioned previously in the context of the overall goal of State Guide Plan Land Use 2025 regarding the creation and maintenance of conditions "under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony in order that present and future generations may enjoy clean air and water, productive land, and other natural resources..." it was noted that "unlike the State's rural or suburban municipalities, the City of Central Falls has by necessity developed goals and policies which strongly address community revitalization, and maintenance of limited natural resources."

The brevity with which certain natural and cultural resources are treated within this element i.e. soils, wildlife, archaeology, is directly related to the density of existing development within the community rather than a disregard for the import of these resources.

## II. NATURAL RESOURCES

### THE BLACKSTONE RIVER

The Blackstone River, together with its wetlands, flood plain and ecology is the City's singularly most important natural resource. Element No. 7, Open Space and Recreation sets the framework for expansion of the public open space system along the riverfront. The protection of this resource is furthered by Element No. 2, Land Use Plan, proposed changes in the City's zoning regulations and proposals contained in Element No. 6, Services and Facilities regarding the elimination of combined sewerage overflows.

According to research done by the Rhode Island Division of Water Resources, the two most polluted freshwater rivers in Rhode Island are the Pawtuxet River and the Blackstone River in this order. A brief description of some of the major problems impacting the Blackstone River is included below.\*

According to the State of the State's Waters document, Blackstone River extends from the Rhode Island/Massachusetts border at the City of Woonsocket to its confluence with the Seekonk River in Pawtucket, passing through the towns of North Smithfield, Cumberland, and

\*Source: The State of Rhode Island's Rivers Draft March, 1989

Lincoln on route. The Blackstone River is 25.2 miles long, and 7.2 of these miles fully support its designated goals. A total of 18 miles are not supporting. The non-supporting section, presently classified as having Class C water quality conditions, which are not expected to get any better, ranges from the Massachusetts/Rhode Island state line to the Main Street Dam in Pawtucket (18.8 miles). (Class C - the water is suitable for boating and "other secondary contact recreational activities," "for industrial processes and cooling," and for supporting fish and wildlife habitats.) The highest causes of non-support are metals originating from non-point sources in Massachusetts (90%) and point-sources originating from in-place contaminants in the Blackstone River (10%).

An intensive river survey by Quinn et. al. in 1987 collected samples from nine stations along the Blackstone River on three separate occasions. Samples were analyzed for heavy metals and organic substances and the results serve as the basis for the Department of Environmental Management determination of the river's designated use support status. All 3 samples taken by the 8 stations located between the Massachusetts/Rhode Island border to the dam in Pawtucket exceeded acute criteria for copper. All 3 samples taken by 3 of the stations located along this section of the river exceeded acute criteria for cadmium. The majority of samples collected from the stations located along the river also exceed chronic criteria for cadmium, lead and silver.

There is one sewerage treatment plant (Woonsocket) and one major industry (Osram/Sylvania formerly G.T.E.) permitted by RIPDES along this section of the river. As sources of non-support, industrial and municipal contributions are moderate. The Woonsocket Treatment Facility's "not so bad" in Save the Bay's 1987 "the Good, the Bad and the Ugly" Survey. According to this same report, the Woonsocket facility has been experiencing problems with toxics. It appears that textile dye shops in the Woonsocket area handle a great deal of imported dyes and the contents of these dyes are closely guarded trade secrets. Research conducted during 1988 at the treatment plant and the mill that contributes the majority of dye wastes determined that a black dye especially used in the fall for dyeing evening gown materials caused problems by killing the microorganisms the Woonsocket Facility relies on to treat wastes. The Woonsocket Facility has since then restricted the quantities of this particular dye that can be used to levels that have been proven not to disrupt treatment.

While the condition of the State's waters notes that the Class C water quality conditions in the Blackstone are not expected to improve, the mandated goal of the Federal Clean Water Act calls for the elimination of the C classification and an upgrading of water quality conditions to a Class B. (Class B -the water is suitable for swimming and other "primary contact recreational activities," for agricultural uses, for drinking after appropriate treatment and for supporting fish and wildlife habitats.)

Much of the problem with the quality of water in Rhode Island's portion of the Blackstone originates across the State line in Massachusetts. An interstate study currently being conducted in conjunction with the Boston Office of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, will hopefully point to methods which will improve water quality throughout the entire length of the river.

Because of the many governmental and quasi governmental agencies involved in attempting to resolve the issues, the City of Central Falls is dependent on leadership and direction from an amalgamation of these agencies.

While the City proposes methods through which improvement of water quality in the Blackstone River can be achieved, (i.e. stricter land use control, the implementation of the Samoset Sewer project, the reduction of non-point discharges, etc.) the final test will involve the extent of cooperation of all players involved and the availability of financial resources to meet their goals.

#### SOILS

According to the United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service, the predominate soil unit within Central Falls is the Merrimac-Urban land complex - 470 acres. A complete inventory for SCS follows:

#### ADRIANMUCK. (Aa) 5 ACRES

"This nearly level, very poorly drained soil is in depressions and small drainage ways of glacial till uplands and out wash plains. Most areas are oval and range from 2 to 20 acres. Slopes are dominantly less than 2 percent."

"Included with this soil in mapping are small areas of poorly drained Ridgebury and Raypol soils and very poorly drained Carlisle, Scarboro, and Whitman soils."

**CANTON-URBAN LAND COMPLEX, VERY ROCKY. (CC) 45 ACRES**

"This complex consists of well drained Canton soils and areas of Urban land. The complex is one side slopes and crests of glacial upland hills in the more densely populated areas of the State. Areas are irregular in shape and mostly range from 10 to 150 acres. Slopes are mainly about 6 percent but range from 0 to 15 percent. The complex is approximately 40 percent Canton soils, 30 percent Urban Land, and 30 percent other soils and rock outcrops."

**CARLISLE MUCK. (Co) 20 ACRES**

"This nearly level, very poorly drained soil is in depressions of out wash plains and glacial upland till plains. Areas are irregular in shape and mostly range from 5 to 100 acres. Slopes are less than 2 percent.

Included with this soil in mapping are small areas of poorly drained Walpole and Leicester soils and very poorly drained Adrian, Scarboto, and Whitman soils. Included areas make up about 10 percent of this unit."

**HINCKLEY GRAVELLY SANDY LOAM, ROLLING. (HkC) 15 ACRES**

"This excessively drained soil is on terraces, out wash plains, kames, and eskers. Areas are irregular in shape and mostly range from 2 to 20 acres. Slopes range from 3 to 15 percent.

Included with this soil in mapping are small areas of excessively drained Windsor and Quonset soils, somewhat excessively drained Merrimac soils, and well drained Agawam soils, and moderately well drained Sudbuty soils and small areas with a few stones on the surface."

**HINCKLEY GRAVELLY SANDY LOAM, HILLY. (HkD) 20 ACRES**

"This excessively drained soil is on terraces, out wash, plains, kames, eskers, and recessional moraines. Areas are irregular in shape and mostly range from 5 to 40 acres. Slopes range from 15 to 35 percent.

Included with this soil in mapping are small areas of excessively drained Windsor and Quonset soils and small areas of soils that have slopes of less than 15 percent."

**MERRIMAC-URBAN LAND COMPLEX (MU) 470 ACRES**

"This complex consists of well drained Merrimac soils and areas of Urban land. The complex is on terraces and out wash plains in

densely populated areas. Areas are irregular in shape and mostly range from 10 to 400 acres. Slopes are mainly about 1 percent but range from 0 to 15 percent. The complex is about 40 percent Merrimac soils, 40 percent Urban land and 20 percent other soils. Urban Land consists of areas covered by streets, parking lots, buildings and other urban structures.

Included in this complex in mapping are areas up to 10 acres in size, of Udorthents, excessively drained Hinckley and Windsor soils, well drained Agawam and Enfield soils, and moderately well drained Sudbury and Ninigret soils."

**PODUNK FINE SANDY LOAM. (Pp) 5 ACRES**

"This nearly level, moderately well drained soil is on flood plains. Slopes range from 0 to 3 percent but are dominantly less than 2 percent. Areas are long and narrow and range mostly from 5 to 40 acres.

Included with this soil in mapping are small areas of well Drained soils and poorly drained Rumney soils. Also included are small areas of soils with a surface layer and subsoil of silt loam."

**RUMNEY FINE SANDY LOAM. (Ru) 5 ACRES**

"This nearly level, poorly drained soil is on flood plains. Slopes range from 0 to 3 percent but are dominantly less than 2 percent. Areas are long and narrow and range mostly from 5 to 30 acres.

Included with this soil in mapping are small areas of moderately well drained Podunk soils and very poorly drained Adrian soils. Also included are small areas of soils with a surface layer and subsoil of silt loam."

**UDORTHENTS-URBAN LAND COMPLEX, (UD) 40 ACRES**

"This complex consists of moderately well drained to excessively drained soils that have been disturbed by cutting or filling, and areas that are covered by buildings and pavement. The areas are mostly larger than 5 acres. The complex is about 70 percent Udorthents, 20 percent Urban Land, and 10 percent other soils."

**URBAN LAND (UV) 115 ACRES**

"These areas consist mostly of sites for buildings, paved roads and parking lots. The areas are mostly rectangular and range from 5 to 100 acres. Slopes range from 0 to 10 percent but are dominantly 0 to 5 percent.

Included with this unit in mapping are small, intermingled areas of Udorthents; somewhat excessively drained Merrimac soils; well drained Canton, Charlton and Newport soils; and moderately well drained Pittstown, Sudbury, and Sutton soils."

#### SOIL PERMEABILITY AND INFILTRATION RATES

With the exception of Urban Land which requires on site investigation regarding soil permeability, the surface layer of soils throughout the City have rapid to moderately rapid permeability and in general, moderately rapid to very rapid permeability in the substratum. At least 77% of the land area of the City has soils which have a high or moderate infiltration rate - soil groups A and B. Twenty five acres range from hydrological soil group A through C while 155 acres are not classified by Soil Conservation Service.

While these soil characteristics are beneficial insofar as limiting storm water run off, they do increase the potential risk for pollution of the Lower Blackstone-Moshassuck ground water reservoir which lies beneath the surface of the City.

#### WILDLIFE HABITAT\*

Soils directly affect the kind and amount of vegetation that is available to wildlife as food and cover, and they affect the construction of water impoundments. The kind and abundance of wildlife that populate an area depend largely on the amount and distribution of food, cover, and water. If any one of these elements is missing, is inadequate, or is inaccessible, wildlife either are scarce or do not inhabit the area.

If the soils have the potential, wildlife habitat can be created or improved by planting appropriate vegetation, by maintaining the existing plant cover, or by helping the natural establishment of desirable plants.

In the table Wildlife Habitat Potentials, the soils which exist in the City are rated according to their potential to support the main kinds of wildlife habitat in the area. This information can be used in planning for parks, wildlife refuges, nature study areas, and other developments for wildlife; selecting areas that are suitable for wildlife; selecting soils that are suitable for creating, improving, or maintaining specific elements of wildlife habitat; and determining the intensity of management needed for each element of the habitat.

\*Source: Soil Survey of Rhode Island, United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service in cooperation with Rhode Island Agricultural Experiment Station, July 1981

The potential of the soil is rated good, fair, poor, or very poor. A rating of good means that the element of wildlife habitat or the kind of habitat is easily created, improved or maintained. Few or no limitations affect management, and satisfactory results can be expected if the soil is used for the designated purpose. A rating of fair means that the element of wildlife habitat or kind of habitat can be created, improved, or maintained in most places. Moderately intensive management is required for satisfactory results. A rating of poor means that limitation are severe for the designated element or kind of wildlife habitat. Habitat can be created, improved, or maintained in most places, but management is difficult and must be intensive. A rating of very poor means that restrictions for the element of wildlife habitat or kind of wildlife are very severe, and that unsatisfactory results can be expected. Wildlife habitat is impractical or even impossible to create, improve, or maintain on soils having such a rating.

The elements of wildlife habitat are briefly described in the following paragraphs.

Grasses and legumes are domestic perennial grasses and herbaceous legumes that are planted for wildlife food and cover. Major soil properties that affect the growth of grasses and legumes are depth of the root zone, texture of the surface layer, available water capacity, wetness, surface stoniness, flood hazard, and slope. Soil temperature and soil moisture are also considerations. Examples of grasses and legumes are fescue, lovegrass, brome grass, clover, and alfalfa.

Wild herbaceous plants are native or naturally established grasses and forbs, including weeds, that provide food and cover for wildlife. Major soil properties that affect the growth of these plants are depth of the root zone, texture of the surface layer, available water capacity, wetness, surface stoniness, flood hazard. Soil temperature and soil moisture are also considerations. Examples of wild herbaceous plants are bluestem, goldenrod, beggarwood, wheatgrass, and grama.

Hardwood trees and the associated woody under story provide cover for wildlife and produce nuts or other fruit, buds, catkins, twigs, bark, or foliage that wildlife eat. Major soil properties that affect growth of hardwood trees and shrubs are depth of the root zone, available water capacity, and wetness. Examples of native plants are oak, poplar, cherry, sweetgum, apple, hawthorn, dogwood, hickory, blackberry, and blueberry. Examples of fruit producing shrubs that are commercially available and suitable for planting on soils rated good are Russian-olive, autumn-olive, and crabapple.

Coniferous plants are cone-bearing trees, shrubs or ground cover plants that furnish habitat or supply food in the form of browse, seeds, or fruit like cones. Soil properties that have a major effect on the growth of coniferous plants are depth of the root zone, available water capacity, and wetness. Examples of wetland plants are smart weed, wild millet, wild rice, salt grass, and cord grass and rushes, sedges, and reeds.

Shallow water areas are bodies of water that have an average depth of less than 5 feet and that are useful to wildlife. They can be naturally wet areas, or they can be created by dams or levees or by water-control structures in marshes or streams. Major soil properties affecting shallow water areas are depth to bedrock, wetness, surface stoniness, slope, and permeability. The availability of a dependable water supply is important if water areas are to be developed. Examples of shallow water areas are marshes, waterfowl feeding areas, and ponds.

The kind of wildlife habitat are briefly described in the following paragraphs.

Open land habitat consists of cropland, pasture, meadows, and areas that are overgrown with grasses, herbs, shrubs, and vines. These areas produce grain and seed crops, grasses and legumes, and wild herbaceous plants. The kinds of wildlife attracted to these areas include bobwhite quail, pheasant, meadowlark, field sparrow, cottontail rabbit, and red fox.

Woodland habitat consists of areas of hardwoods or conifers, or a mixture of both, and associated grasses, legumes, and wild herbaceous plants. Wildlife attracted to these include ruffed grouse, woodcock, thrushes, woodpeckers, squirrels, raccoon, and deer.

Wetland habitat consists of open, marshy or swampy, shallow water areas where water-tolerant plants grow. Some of the wildlife attracted to such areas are ducks, geese, herons, shore birds, muskrat, mink, and beaver.

The following table (on Page 5-9), based on information included in the Soil Conservation Survey Soil Survey of Rhode Island has been included to indicate the wildlife habitat potential related to the soils of the City. A comparison of this table with the soils map will indicate the degree of wildlife habitat potential as it relates to various areas of the community.

Map Symbol	Grasses/ Legumes	Wild Herbaceous Plants	Hardwood Trees	Coniferous Plants	Wetland Plants	Shallow Water Areas	Openland Wildlife	Woodland Wildlife	Wetland Wildlife
Aa	VP	VP	P	P	G	G	VP	P	G
CC	P	G	G	G	P	VP	P	G	VP
CO	VP	P	P	P	G	G	VP	P	G
Hkc	P	F	P	P	VP	VP	VP	P	VP
Hkd	P	F	P	P	VP	VP	P	P	VP
Mu	F	F	F	F	VP	VP	F	F	VP
Pp	F	F	G	G	P	P	F	G	P
Ru	F	F	F	F	G	F	F	F	F
Ud	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Uu	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

The Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program notes that the Valley marshes located in the northwest portion of the City "is recognized as one of the most significant freshwater wetlands in the State. The emergent vegetation consists largely of cattail, which in itself provides excellent food and cover for wildlife". The Natural Heritage Program is "aware of at least five species of rare birds which use this marsh" and notes, "this wetland and associated stretches of the Blackstone River should be protected from development, contamination, and other alteration through careful planning and wise land use."

In addition, other wetlands, such as those near Higginson Avenue and Old Crow Point Road, should be protected and accommodated in any future development.

### III. CULTURAL RESOURCES

The cultural resources of the City of Central Falls are many and varied. They include:

1. The Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor.
2. The South Central Falls Historic District.
3. The Central Falls Historic Mill District.
4. Jenks Park/Cogswell Tower.
5. Pierce Park.
6. Moshassuck Cemetery.
7. Individual Historic and Architectural Properties.

#### BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR

The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor was established by the United States Congress in 1986 for the purpose of "preserving and interpreting for the educational and inspirational benefit of the present and future generations the unique and significant contributions to our national heritage of certain historic and cultural lands, waterways and structures" within this area.

The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor encompasses nineteen 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 Providence and Worcester Railroad which serve as a focus and initiator for the historic forces that have shaped the Valley.

The Valley is historically significant for many reasons. It is the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution, influencing the rest of the country through industrial use of water power and the development of the Rhode Island System of Manufacturing. In addition, it is an area filled with ethnic and religious diversity. Moreover, the Valley's remarkable history is revealed by the concentration of historic, cultural and natural resources that have survived the past two centuries. Today, it remains unique as efforts are undertaken to preserve and protect these special resources "right where people live and work". The context of a "working valley of mill villages, farms, cities and towns, transportation systems, river and canal" 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 successful, coordination and consistency is to be promoted between the Federal government,

the States of Rhode Island and Massachusetts, the Corridor Commission, other interested private parties, and the 19 municipalities of Worcester, Millbury, Sutton, Grafton, Northbridge, Upton, Douglas, Uxbridge, Millville, Blackstone, Mendon, and Hopedale, Massachusetts and Woonsocket, North Smithfield, Cumberland, Lincoln, Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and East Providence, Rhode Island. A valley wide commission - the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission - was established by Congress and consists of local and state members nominated by the Rhode Island and Massachusetts governors, and appointed by the United States 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 National Heritage Corridor. This resulted in the creation of the Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan for the corridor officially adopted in 1990.

#### THE SOUTH CENTRAL FALLS HISTORIC DISTRICT

In February, 1991 the Director of the National Park Service announced that the South Central Falls Historic District had been listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Covering approximately 9% of the total land area of the City, the District includes 395 buildings of which 377 contribute to its architectural and historic character. Two individually listed National Register properties - the Central Street School (1881) and the Samuel B. Conant House (1895) - are included in the District.

As noted by the National Register document for the South Central Falls Historic District, "Residences can be categorized as one of several house types that were built for Central Falls growing population in the later nineteenth century. Types are categorized by the number of living units, as one, two, or multiple family dwellings. These types can be further examined as vernacular interpretations of the Greek Revival, Italianate Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival architectural styles. Institutional and civic buildings range from a wood-frame Queen Anne vernacular church, a stone church in the Gothic Revival style, schools in the Italianate and Queen Anne modes as well as a library in the Classical Revival style".

"First developed with a few large estates and more modest single-family dwellings in the 1850's and 60's, South Central Falls remained an area of dispersed development through the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The major development of the area took place in the period from 1860-1910, paralleling Central Falls growth

as a manufacturing center. Most construction in the district was complete by 1920. The area has evolved from a community at the periphery of a small industrial city to an urban neighborhood."

A description of each property contributing to the historic significance of the District is included in the publication; South Central Falls Historic District, Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission/Historic Central Falls Inc., February, 1991.

#### THE CENTRAL FALLS HISTORIC MILL DISTRICT

The Central Falls Historic Mill district has been included in the National Register of Historic Places since the mid 1970's. The District contains a large concentration of architecturally and historically important industrial structures. Its boundaries include the six original water-power privileges along Roosevelt Avenue created in 1823 and the stone dam constructed in 1863. Among the notable buildings within the District are:

Stafford Mill Complex, 581 Roosevelt Avenue, 1824 and 1860's

Pawtucket Thread Manufacturing Company Mill, 527 Roosevelt Avenue, 1825

Central Falls Woolen Mill, 523 Roosevelt Avenue, 1870

Pawtucket Hair Cloth Mill, 501 Roosevelt Avenue, 1864

Royal Weaving Mill, 471 Roosevelt Avenue, 1897

The historical background of each of the above listed mills is included in Statewide Historical Preservation Report P-CF-1, Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, January 1978.

#### JENKS PARK/COGSWELL TOWER\*

In 1890, Alvin Jenks donated four acres of land on Broad Street to memorialize his family which had contributed significantly to the early development of Central Falls. The first park in Central Falls, Jenks Park is adjacent to City Hall. Located on a deep, narrow site, it is threaded with broad paths which

\*Source: Statewide Historic Preservation Report P-CF-1  
Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission  
January, 1978

meander among its rock outcrops. The small, picturesque park is a popular retreat for residents. In vivid contrast with the dense development surrounding it, it is the City's "breathing space". Many of the park's original ornaments, such as the fish ponds, have been lost, but the iron umbrella shaped gazebos cast by Fales and Jenks remain. The focus of the park is the massive, stone Cogswell Tower which was originally capped by a large carved eagle. Given by Caroline Cogswell, a former resident, and designed by Albert Humes, a Pawtucket Architect who was Mayor of Central Falls in 1903-1904, it stands atop Dexter's Ledge and is visible for miles. Its observation balcony under the four-faced clock provides an unusual view of the City. Since its completion in 1904, the tower has become by common assent an important symbol, the sign and emblem of the City and a source of pride and civic identity. Decked with lights annually, it is the City's Christmas Tree. Jenks Park and Cogswell Tower were entered in the National Register in July, 1972.

#### **PIERCE PARK/SAUL TARLOW FIELD**

The parcels which form Pierce Park/Saul Tarlow field were acquired by the City in 1967 and 1990. The completion of development will result in the establishment of a river front park consisting of both active and passive recreation facilities.

The park commemorates the earliest recorded event in what is now Central Falls - the massacre of a band of colonists led by Captain William Pierce in 1676 during King Phillip's War.

#### **MOSHASSUCK CEMETERY**

The Moshassuck Cemetery chartered in 1868 is the only surviving cemetery in the City. Its principal ornament is the 1888 Soldiers and Sailors Monument memorializing Central Falls and Lincoln's Civil War dead.

The cemetery was the scene of conflict between textile workers and the National Guard called up by Governor Theodore Francis Green in 1934. When the National Guard was generalized it was commanded by General of the Army, Douglas MacArthur.

#### **INDIVIDUAL HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURALLY SIGNIFICANT PROPERTIES**

The following properties located outside the City's two historical districts are listed in the National Register.

Valley Falls Mill Housing Complex (1849)  
Broad and High Streets

Valley Falls Mill Complex Office and Bathhouse (1849)  
Broad and High Streets

St. Matthew's Church (1929)  
Dexter and West Hunt Streets

Holy Trinity Church Complex (1889, 1892, 1905, 1926)  
134 Fuller Avenue (Church and Rectory razed April 1989)

Benjamin F. Greene House (1868)  
85 Cross Street

Central Falls Congregational Church (1883)  
376 High Street

David G. Fales House  
476 High Street

An inventory of Central Falls historic or architectural significant properties, developed by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission is included on the following pages. Many of these properties are also included in the Historic Resources Inventory for the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor prepared by Slater Mill Historic Site in October 1989.

Of these buildings, the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission has determined that three are potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places; the Cartier, DeNevers, and Monast Buildings, all of which are located in the Central Broad Street area.

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Both the Rhode Island State Historical Preservation Commission and the Narragansett Indian Tribe were contacted in an effort to identify archaeological sites within the City. The Principal Archaeologist of the Preservation Commission, Paul A. Robinson noted, "that a review of the Preservation Commission's files indicates that there are no recorded archaeological sites in the City. Central Falls does, however, contain significant buildings and sites, particularly pertaining to the period of industrialization. Some of these sites may contain archaeological deposits." To date, no response from the Narragansett Indian Tribe had been received.

**ELEMENT NO. 6**

**SERVICES AND FACILITIES**



## I. PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

On July 1, 1991, the State of Rhode Island took over the 2,700 pupil Central Falls School district. On this date a State Administrator appointed by the governor, to be overseen by the State Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, started managing the Central Falls school system. As a result, the Central Falls School Committee has been abolished and a nine member advisory panel chosen by the State Board of Regents was appointed to assist the State Administrator.

This action was the result of two studies which examined the financial dilemmas of both the City and the local school district:

1. The Report of the Central Falls Review Commission which was created by Article 67 Public Law 90-65 "to help the City of Central Falls deal with immediate budgetary and debt service problems and achieve long term financial viability". (Excerpts from this January 1991 report are presented in Element No. 4, Economic Development.)
2. The Report of the Fact Finding Panel convened by the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, upon the August 6, 1990 request of the Central Falls School Department.

As of January 2005, the Central Falls School System is still run by the State of Rhode Island, but in September of 2003, a Board of Trustees was appointed by the State Board of Regents. The Board of Trustees will have the authority of a School Committee including the right to develop educational and staffing policies.

Today, the school system has major financial problems. It has a cumulative deficit that is expected to grow over \$10.4 million dollars by the end of 2005. This is attributed to the increased salaries, benefits and retirements for teachers and special education costs.

Of the 3,600 students in the Central Falls School system, 33% or 1,200, receive special education services. The cost of special education services rose from \$2.9 million in fiscal year 2003 to \$5.9 million in 2004. The City of Central Falls has the highest rate of children in special education in the State and its rate is twice as high as the national average.

In 2003-2004, the percentage of the minority students (mostly Hispanics) in the Central Falls Public School System was 79.24% which indicated a 9.85% increase from the 1999-2000 year.

### Inventory

In the spring of 2006 the City of Central Fall's schools are facing a serious over crowding issue that is system wide. Plans are underway to create a ninth grade academy to shift over 300 students from the high school. The over crowding is a result of the dramatic demographic shift that has resulted in young Hispanic families replacing many older couples with no children at home. The demographic shift is approximately 85% complete thus it is expected that Central Fall's school age population will continue to grow in the short run.

Increases in public elementary and secondary school attendance within the City of Central Falls has shown a dramatic increase since 1991-1992 enrollment figures. Continued increases in enrollment are anticipated due to the escalation of the number of young Hispanic families with school age children.

An inventory of public elementary and secondary schools within the City of Central Falls is shown below.

SCHOOL	GRADES	YEAR BUILT	ENROLLMENT
<b>2004-2005</b>			
Feinstein School	1-5	1875	225
Dr. Earl F. Calcutt Middle School	6-8	1976	848
C. Falls Jr./Sr. High	7-12	1927/1975	970
Harold G. Hunt	Pre-K/K	1974	184
Ella Risk	1-5	1999	463
Margaret Robertson	KG-5	1928	463
Veterans Memorial	1-5	1990	498
Cowden Street School	KG-01	1895	140

The Feinstein School (formerly Broad Street School), Ella Risk, Cowden Street and Margaret Robertson schools are older elementary schools built with the traditional floor plan consisting of central corridors with large rooms on either side. Rooms average 600-900 square feet. The newer schools, Harold G. Hunt and Dr. Earl F. Calcutt, have considerably more variation in classroom size and room grouping. The Junior/senior High School contains old and new wings providing a variety of classroom space while the most recently built school, Veterans Memorial, reflects the more open plan of the modern school facility.

A 12 million dollar school construction bond issue passed by Central Falls voters in 1996 has provided funds for the ambitious school construction and renovation project which was completed in 1999. The details of the work at each of the schools was as follows:

**Ella Risk School**

A modern three story school that provided 31 teaching stations for first, second, third, fourth and fifth graders.

The receptionist, principal and school nurse have offices at the main entrance.

In addition to classrooms and resource rooms, there is a large multi-purpose room for the cafeteria and gym, special rooms for art and music, and a large media center.

**Dr. Earl F. Calcutt School**

Additions and renovations provided 28 new teaching stations with new large areas for science labs, home economics, art, music and industrial arts. The existing multi-purpose room will be divided into two levels, with a cafeteria and enlarged kitchen on the first floor, and a media center on the second.

A major feature of the building is that there will be a full-sized gym, with bleachers and large locker room areas. The gym and the industrial arts area can be closed off from the main school building which could allow community use during evening hours.

**Margaret Robertson School**

Additions and renovations provided a school that has 16 teaching stations, a media center, art and music rooms, and an administrative area, located at the entrance, with offices for the principal, receptionist and school nurse and a conference area for better control and security.

Schools in Central Falls are located on relatively small sites. In all cases, outdoor recreation facilities are deficient to some degree., However, the major problem is on site parking for both teachers and students.

The Junior/Senior High School has an indoor gymnasium. With the exception of Veterans Memorial, all elementary schools have been provided with multi-purpose rooms which function as classroom, cafeteria, auditorium, and gym. Veterans Memorial, on the other hand separates these functions. Because of the lack of outdoor recreation areas at the Junior/Senior High School, students must travel to athletic facilities located approximately one-half mile away on High Street.

In addition, the Junior/Senior High School lacks facilities to house an adequate industrial arts and health curriculum - a problem which should be addressed immediately.

In view of the State takeover, it is possible that the industrial arts program could be accommodated at the William M. Davies Jr. Vocational School located in the Town of Lincoln.

### Enrollment

The total enrollment for each of the three most recent school years is as follows:

SCHOOL YEARS	TOTAL ENROLLMENT
2002-2003	3,651
2003-2004	3,715
2004-2005	3,656

### Racial Characteristics

On October 1, 2004, the school population had the following racial characteristics.

RACE	QUANTITY	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
American Indian	12	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	7	1%
Black not of Hispanic Origin	477	13%
White not of Hispanic Origin	753	20%
Hispanic	2407	65%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,656</b>	<b>100%</b>

The City of Central Falls has experienced a dramatic increase in the Hispanic population between the years 1992 and 2004 and this is clearly reflected in the racial characteristics of the school population.

### Transportation

The Central Falls School district provides transportation for all elementary students who reside outside a one-half mile radius of

their school. Students in grades 7-12 who reside outside a one mile radius of their school are transported. A total of 587 students, including parochial school students were bussed on an average school day in the 1997-1998 school year.

### Special Programs, Problems and Prospects

With regard to substance abuse, the Junior/Senior High school has a full-time Student Assistance Coordinator.

The City's Channel One Program also provides guidance to the schools, in dealing with problems of substance abuse.

In addition to the lack of adequate facilities for industrial arts and health curriculum, the State Administrator is faced with the problems of limited space for Special Education Programs and the potential for continuing increases in annual enrollments at the Junior/Senior High School - problems which require immediate study.

## II. PRIVATE/PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS

The City of Central Falls previously had two Catholic Schools. They were the St. Matthews/Notre Dame Consolidated School and the Holy Trinity School. These schools were combined in 1995 to form the Elizabeth Ann Seton Academy which has a current enrollment of 257 students.

## III. PROTECTION SERVICES

### POLICE

The Central Falls Police Department is located in the City's Public Safety Complex on Illinois Street. The station, built as an addition to the City's Fire Station in the late 1970's houses parking facilities, vehicle repair facilities, a pistol firing range and mechanical equipment and storage areas in the basement. Holding rooms, the patrol office, the shift commander's desk, the records office, the detainee processing area, a conference room and dispatcher facilities are located on the first floor level. Locker facilities, a photo lab, an exercise room, women's holding areas, juvenile holding areas, the detective bureau, a library/classroom and administrative offices are located on the second floor. The spatial characteristics of this facility are currently more than adequate for the efficient operation of the Central Falls Police Department.

As of January 2005, the Department has a complement of 39 officers including the Chief, 6 dispatchers and 1 animal control officer and is supported by a fleet of 25 patrol cars (14 marked for patrol and 11 unmarked).

In 2004, the Central Falls Police Department answered over 25,590 calls which was a 6% increase over the 24,139 calls received in 2003.

The Police Department has been able to make many improvements to aid them in their job, such as upgrading the computer system, obtaining new vehicles, installing laptop computers in the vehicles, upgrading the portable radios, and placing receivers on top of the housing authority's buildings so there are no "dead spots". These improvements were done through grants and seizure money with minimal costs to taxpayers.

The short term goals of the Central Falls Police Department are directed at the updating of all operational equipment, (communications, radar, vehicles, etc.), renovations to the police station, and the attainment of a higher level of general security of the police facility and vehicles including keyless entries, a reverse 911 system, upgrading or replacing the generators, securing the dispatch area, archiving paper records and eventually even eliminating paper.

The long term goal is the efficient expansion of public safety services through administrative techniques and the hiring of additional personnel.

### **FIRE AND RESCUE**

The Central Falls Fire Department is located in the City's Public Safety Complex on Illinois Street. The station was originally built in 1975. Exterior renovations to the structure were made in conjunction with the construction of the new police station.

The basement of the fire station is shared by the Fire Department and the City's Office of Civil Defense. Facilities include a Director's office, a communication office, a first aid room, a classroom, a training office, a television room, a lounge, a kitchen and mechanical equipment areas.

The ground level of the building includes three main bays with front and rear access, a repair bay which also houses the City's rescue vehicle, three administrative offices, the shift officer's office and dormitory, a main dormitory, the dispatcher's office, a hose room, locker and shower facilities and mechanical equipment areas.

In 2005, the Fire Department will be installing an auxiliary structure to be used for the storage of vehicles and training facility and the fire alarm system will be upgraded.

The Department currently has a complement of 37 fire fighters including the Chief. There is a nine member minimum personnel at all times. All fire fighters are cross trained and serve as rescue personnel when needed. The Department is supported by three pumper trucks, one ladder truck, two rescue vehicles, a pickup truck, a command truck, a fire alarm truck, a special service truck and a boat. In 2004 the Central Falls Fire Department answered 4,245 calls compared to 4,190 in 2003.

#### **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

The Rhode Island Emergency Response Commission has confirmed that extremely hazardous chemicals are located at a total of three sites within Central Falls.

The Commission oversees the development of Local Emergency Planning Commission plans and site specific plans for hazardous material incidents. These emergency contingency plans address all phases of emergency management including evacuation, response, clean up, and preparedness.

Emergency plans are complete for all three sites in Central Falls.

#### **NATURAL HAZARD MITIGATION**

To meet the standards of the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act (DMA 2000) the City of Central Falls established a (13) member Natural Hazard Mitigation Committee who authored and completed the City's Hazard Mitigation Plan for submittal to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The plans main elements consisted of 1.) Historical Review of Hazardous Events for central Falls 2.) Vulnerability/Risk Assessment and 3.) Mitigation Actions.

The adoption and implementation of this hazard mitigation plan will assist Central Falls in receiving assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency in pre and post-disaster assistance such as FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS), FEMA's Pre-Disaster Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Program, and FEMA's Post-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP).

In addition, the City will build an Emergency Operations Center as part of its new Department of Public Works Building complex at the former Dytex manufacturing site.

#### **IV. PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM**

The City of Central Falls is totally dependent for its drinking water and virtually all of its industrial and commercial water supply on the Pawtucket Water Supply Board's system of reservoirs and ponds, located in the Town of Cumberland. This water supply is in turn dependent on the Abbott Run Groundwater Reservoir and associated recharge areas.

The Pawtucket Water Supply Board supplies over 100,000 customer's within a service area that includes Pawtucket, Central Falls, and a portion of Cumberland. At this time, this service area is almost completely developed.

The Pawtucket Water Supply Board's supply source includes two large reservoirs and four ponds, all located within the Town of Cumberland but owned by the Board. The total capacity of the Board's storage system is in excess of three billion gallons. The water supply is treated at the Pawtucket Water Supply Board's treatment facility on Mill Street in Cumberland - The plant's structure has deteriorated and the Pawtucket Water Supply Board will have more difficulty meeting stricter regulations coming into effect in 2010 with the existing process, therefore, the Pawtucket Water Supply Board has contracted with the firm, Earth Tech to operate the existing facility and to construct a new treatment plant, pump station, storage tank and pipeline.

While a more than adequate water supply exists, the promotion of conservation methods and the possible implementation of alternative management practices on the part of system users could possibly reduce supply treatment costs, user fees and sewage treatment costs.

The water demand of the City of Central Falls, including domestic, commercial and industrial use averages approximately 3.9 mgd or approximately 1.4 billion gallons annually.

The largest Central Falls consumers of water are:

- Osram/Sylvania (formerly G.T.E.)
- Murdock Webbing
- Wilfred Manor, Forand Manor (Central Falls Housing Authority)

All Central Falls users of the Pawtucket Water Supply Board water are billed directly by the Board. The City of Central

Falls is reimbursed annually by the Pawtucket Water Supply Board at a rate of twenty-five percent of the total cash receipts for the sale of water to Central Falls consumers.

The Central Falls water distribution system consists of over 6-8 twenty-three miles of water lines, (mostly cast iron), owned by the City. There are no privately owned water supplies within the City, i.e. wells.

As noted previously, a portion of the Lower Blackstone ground water reservoir is located in Central Falls. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management has not delineated recharge areas for this ground water reservoir because it is "known or presumed to be unsuitable for drinking water without treatment".

The lines of the Central Falls water distribution system range in age from a few years old, (generally short replacement lengths), to many miles of lines from seventy to over one hundred years old. Four and six inch lines which have been replaced because of poor pressure or extremely limited capacity have been found to have had their diameters reduced to fractions of an inch as the result of mineral deposit buildup over the years.

In 1967 a "Report on Engineering Study Water Distribution System" by C.A. McGuire & Associates concluded:

1. The carrying capacity in the trunk's main system has been reduced to approximately fifty percent of the original values, while in the distribution mains, it is considerably lower.
2. Because pipe friction coefficients are very low in the 4, 6, and 8 inch distribution mains, inadequate water is available for required fire protection, and dirty water conditions exist when high rates of flow are encountered.
3. The major weaknesses of the existing system were found to be as follows:
  - a. Lack of sub-feeder main capacity within the distribution system.
  - b. Long unsupported lengths of 4 and 6 inch distribution mains.
  - c. Low carrying capacity of all old tar-coated cast iron mains.
  - d. Lack of proper maintenance of valves and fire hydrants.

The report called for major improvements to the system:

1. Install an 8 inch main in Hunt Street from Hadwin Street to Hawley Street.
2. Install an 8 inch main in Crossman Street to connect up the dead end to Lonsdale Avenue.
3. When streets are re-paved or as funds become available, replace all existing 4 inch mains with 8 inch mains.
4. To eliminate dirty water complaints and increase carrying capacity of all old cast iron mains, 6 inches in diameter and larger where they have not been replaced by new mains, recondition by means of cleaning and cement lining.

The McGuire report recommended a two step approach to "effectively and economically reinforce the water distribution system and to eliminate deficiencies".

1. Construct feeder mains from existing trunk mains to supply adequate fire protection and reduce velocities in small distribution mains thereby minimizing dirty water complaints.
2. Replace all 4 inch existing distribution mains with 8 inch mains and recondition sections of 6 and 8 inch mains where co-efficients are low and dirty water complaints persist.

During the mid-seventies many of the City's water lines were concrete-lined. In the mid-eighties several lines including a major line in Roosevelt Avenue were replaced.

However, the problems of "ancient" heavily tuberculated unlined cast iron and lead lines, unexercised and inoperable valves, and a significant number of system dead ends continue to interfere with the functional operation of the Central Falls water distribution system and the quality of water flowing throughout the City.

In view of the financial status of the City and the potential impact of the Clean Water Act, it is incumbent upon the city to heed the recommendation of the Central Falls Review Commission to seriously consider the transfer of the water system to the Pawtucket Water Supply Board or to seek alternative solutions to resolve problems throughout the system.

## **V. SANITARY SEWERAGE AND STORM WATER DRAINAGE**

The City of Central Falls has a city-owned combined sewer and storm water drainage system. This system serving virtually all of the developed area of the City, flows from the system and goes into the Narragansett Bay Commission's Moshassuck Valley and Blackstone Valley interceptors. Wastewater originating in Central Falls is treated at the Narragansett Bay Commission's Bucklin Point facility in East Providence.

An inventory of the Central Falls system shows:

- 13 miles of combined sewers
- 11 miles of sanitary sewers
- 1 mile of storm drains

Most of the Central Falls sewer network consists of eight to thirty-six inch diameter clay pipe and brick culverts ranging from twenty by thirty inches to sixty by ninety inches. Point sources of effluent are the residential, commercial, and industrial users of the City. Non-point sources include dry weather infiltration, dry weather non-storm related inflow and wet weather inflow.

The problem of combined sanitary sewerage and storm water Drainage systems is not unique to Central Falls. The cities of Pawtucket and Providence are basically serviced by similar systems which date back to the late eighteen hundreds. Today, these systems, (Central Falls, Pawtucket, and Providence), serve a resident population of approximately 250,000 plus commercial and industrial users.

The separation of sanitary sewerage and storm water drainage systems by the City of Central Falls is not financially feasible. The price tag for such a project would be astronomical when compared to the financial resources of the community. (In 1977, Anderson-Nichols and Co. Inc. estimated sewer separation project cost of 130 million. It would be substantially more in 2005)

Clearly, the problems caused by combined systems must be resolved on a regional basis.

### **NARRAGANSETT BAY COMMISSISON**

On June 17, 1991 legislation passes by the General Assembly mandating the merger of the Blackstone Valley District Commission was signed into law by the Governor. The merger became effective January 1, 1992. Narragansett Bay Commission is now responsible for the acquisition, planning, construction,

financing, extension, improvement, and operation and maintenance of publicly owned sewage treatment facilities in the Blackstone Valley District. The merger expands NBC's service area to include the cities of Pawtucket, Central Falls, the Towns of Lincoln and Cumberland and portions of the City of East Providence and the Town of Smithfield.

INCORPORATION OF NARRAGANSETT BAY COMMISSION REQUIREMENTS, GOALS,  
POLICIES, AND CONCERNS IN THE CENTRAL FALLS

COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Narragansett Bay Commission maintains authority over all direct connections to the sewer system in the Bucklin Point Waste Water Treatment Facility District in accordance with its adopted Rules and Regulations for Use of Wastewater Facilities. Narragansett Bay Commission has revised its Rules and Regulations to expand its approval authority to include indirect connections within the Bucklin Point Waste Water Treatment Facility District as well. This includes the quantity as well as the quality of wastewater discharged to the sewer system whether directly (connected to Narragansett Bay Commission owned facility) or indirectly (connected to privately owned or municipally owned sewer prior to a connection to a Narragansett Bay Commission owned sewer).

In addition, as part of Narragansett Bay Commission's regulatory program for minimizing the discharge of toxic and/or industrial wastewater, a discharge permit application must be submitted for all industrial facilities (existing or proposed) as well as, certain commercial facilities (e.g. hospitals, photo finishers, etc.). This is the first step in the possible issuance of a discharge permit which will regulate the quality and quantity to be discharged including pretreatment requirements. The basic goal of the program is to eliminate or limit the amount of toxic pollutants discharged to the sewer system through source reduction and recycling and where possible eliminated process water discharges to the sewer system.

As the Narragansett Bay Commission is regulated under the Rhode Island Pollutant Discharges Elimination System (RIPDES), it is subject to the provision of the RIPDES Permit issued by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. The most recent permit, (1990) placed new discharge limitations on the Narragansett Bay Commission. As a result of these new limitations, the Commission is required to promulgate new discharge limitations for its industrial and commercial users.

As of June 1992, the Bucklin Point Waste Water Treatment Facility was treating 69% of its design flow capacity of 46

million gallons per day. It is anticipated that additional flow may result from sewer system expansions completed and underway within the Lincoln and Cumberland sewer systems. For this reason, new development or expansion of the Central Falls sewer system must be closely coordinated with the Narragansett Bay Commission.

The import of the Narragansett Bay Commission Plan for the Bucklin Point Waste Water Treatment Facility derives from the need to abate Combined Sewer Overflow. This abatement will have a positive impact on Central Falls. The responsibility for abatement is part of the Narragansett Bay Commission Rhode Island Pollutant Discharges Elimination System permit for the Bucklin Point Waste Water Treatment Facility.

The Narragansett Bay Commission plan is spelled out in the 1997 Facilities Plan amendment to the previous 1993 Facilities Plan. The Narragansett Bay Commission developed the plan and adopted the plan recommendations after a careful study. The study included a stakeholder process and was conducted by the Narragansett Bay Commission.

In the final Narragansett Bay Commission recommendations, the Combined Sewer Overflow in Central Falls will consist of a deep rock underground storage tunnel (13,000 linear feet) which goes from Bucklin Point to Central Falls. The terminus is at the border of Central Falls at Central Avenue and Front Street in Pawtucket just south of Blackstone landing. The interceptor will be on High Street and go from Blackstone Street to Cross Street. Some construction impacts will occur. However, this construction is part of Phase III and will not take place for 10-15 years, well outside of the time frame for this plan.

#### SEWER USE CHARGES

All users with direct or indirect connections to the Narragansett Bay Commission's sewer system are charged a sewer use fee. The Narragansett Bay Commission's enabling legislation requires its tariffs to be reviewed and approved by the Public Utilities commission.

#### MUNICIPAL FACILITIES PLAN

1. Insure all on site sewage disposal systems within the City of Central Falls are functioning in compliance with the Rhode Island General Laws.
2. Document the current status of the City's sewer facilities.
3. Develop alternative management strategies which would have a positive economic impact on the City.

4. Develop alternative management strategies which will complement the State's efforts to remedy existing pollution and prevent future pollution of Narragansett Bay.
5. Dovetail the Municipal Facilities Plan with the State Guide Plan and the Central Falls Comprehensive Community Plan.

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

##### **Planning Projects/Facilities Plan**

With regard to Central Falls, the State's 208 Plan deals primarily with the problem of Combined Sewer Overflows - a problem that still persists. The Narragansett Bay Commission is currently attempting to structure a program which would resolved this problem.

##### **SAMOSSET PLAT**

The northeast corner of the City, known as the Samoset Plat, has never been sewered. The land, which is in the floodplain, lies below the Blackstone Sewer District Commission's interceptor on nearby Samoset Avenue. Because the area is so small, it was never deemed economically feasible to construct a pumping station for it.

Fortunately, technology now offers a solution to the problem. The installation of grinder pumps in the individual houses will propel the sewage through a two inch line up to the interceptor at the higher grade.

In 1995, with the help of Aqua Fund monies, all five of these property owners installed grinder pumps which eliminated this serious health problem that existed.

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

## **VI. PUBLIC WORKS FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

### **Responsibilities**

The Central Falls Public Works Department is responsible for the following municipal functions:

1. Highway maintenance, plowing, sanding, street sweeping and patching of the City's twenty-seven mile road network.

2. Maintenance of all municipally owned sewer and water lines.
3. Rubbish collection, recycling and disposal.
4. Maintenance of City owned public works, police, and administrative vehicles.
5. Maintenance of all city owned buildings and recreation facilities with the exception of those under the jurisdiction of the school district.

### Problems and Prospects

The Public Works Department has eighteen employees covering a broad range of labor intensive responsibilities. Staff limitations within this Department have resulted in the majority of employees being involved in a multiplicity of duties.

The Public Works Department, had for years suffered from the lack of up-to-date equipment in it's garage facility and it's fleet of vehicles. The deplorable condition of the garage, equipment, yard and vehicle fleet created an unsafe work environment for City employees. In addition, the existing DPW facility located directly in a flood plain of the Blackstone river posed a potential environmental problem from yard and garage run off.

The voters of Central Falls in 2004 approved a \$10 million bond issue. Part of these funds will allow the Department of Public Works to move from its present site along the Blackstone River to a new facility at the former "Dytex" building at the corner of Hunt and High Streets. This move will increase the Department's efficiency by having new service equipment, building code compliant service bays and safe work areas. It will also remove the potential environmental hazard the old garage posed.

In 2004, the City acquired 2 recycling trucks and 1 new trash truck. This was a necessity because the City had outsourced the trash removal for 6 years under a previous Administration. When the new Administration came in it was discovered that the City would realize a saving if City employees picked up the trash and recyclables. In addition, the City also acquired a used backhoe and one new snow plow.

The City should do all in its power to insure that the new facility and vehicle fleet is maintained to industry standards to insure a safe and efficient public works operation for present and future Central Falls residents.

## **VII. THE ADAMS LIBRARY**

The Adams Library, (1910) one of the most beautiful buildings in the City, is located within the South Central Falls Historic District. The library was built with the bequest from Stephen L. Adams, an important industrialist, as a memorial to his family in Central Falls throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

This privately owned, publicly supported institution houses approximately 40,000 volumes including a 3,000 volume Spanish collection and a small Portuguese collection. In addition, the library owns 200 video tapes and approximately 250 phonograph records.

The library is a participating member of the Cooperating Libraries Automated Network, (CLAN) which provides for the sharing of library resources among 49 public libraries. This system makes approximately 4.4 million volumes and a variety of other library resources available to the residents of Central Falls. In addition, the Adams Library has access to the On-Line Computer Library Center which has the largest data base in the world.

Library supported activities include periodic art exhibitions, a summer reading program, storytelling, social events for children and a Federally supported "Reading is Fundamental" program.

The library has a six person full-time staff and 1 part time Person. The 1997 acquisition of property on either side of the Library has allowed for the creation of additional off-street parking and the rehabilitation of a building which is now the Lysander-Flagg Museum.

## **VIII. DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

The City's Department of Planning and Community Development functions as a Division of the Mayor's Office. This two person office is charged with securing grants-in-aid, administering the City's Community Development Block Grant Program and developing the City's Comprehensive Community Plan and providing technical assistance to the Planning Commission and Zoning Board. The Department works on a day to day basis on programs to improve the economic, social service and environmental character of the community.

The Planning Department currently does not have the requisite equipment and software to reproduce or modify City maps. This technical shortfall should be addressed. A possible solution is to

work in concert with the Public Works Department to implement a GIS system for the City as part of the new Public Works Garage project.

• **Grants to Public Service Agencies from Community Development Block Grant Funds - FY 2004**

Among those agencies who received financial assistance in FY 2004 are:

**Blackstone Valley Advocacy Center**

Provides emergency shelter and related services to women and their children in crisis as a result of domestic violence and/or homelessness.

**Ralph J. Holden Community Center Senior and Youth Programs**

Provides a full range of recreational activities for youth and a broad range of services for the elderly such as informal counseling, emergency food, health assessments, letter writing, etc.

**New Hope Emergency Shelter of Pawtucket and Central Falls  
Emergency Shelter of Pawtucket and Central Falls**

Provides an appropriate place for homeless families and assures the necessary support and guidance to assist them in attaining self sufficiency.

**Other Public, Quasi Public and Private Health and Social Service Agencies**

In addition to the health and social service agencies mentioned above, there exists a broad range of additional public, quasi public and private social service agencies which serve the residents of Central Falls. Many of these agencies have National affiliations, others are satellites of local hospitals, some are independent single purpose organizations while still others are divisions or departments of the State or Federal government.

United Cerebral Palsy of Rhode Island Inc.  
American Cancer society, Rhode Island Division  
The Salvation Army  
St. Vincent De Paul  
Proyecto Esperanza  
Project Hope  
Big Brothers of Rhode Island  
Rhode Island Department of Elderly Affairs  
Veterans Administration Medical Center

Finally, the work of the many social, fraternal, veterans and religious organizations throughout Blackstone Valley should be recognized for their efforts which often to unheralded, but which play an important role in mending the holes in the health and social service "safety net" which serves the City of Central Falls.

## **IX. OTHER MUNICIPAL FACILITIES**

### **CITY HALL**

The Central Falls City Hall was constructed in 1889 and housed the Lincoln High School. It is a red brick three story Queen Anne building with a tall tower situated on a prominent knoll at 580 Broad Street. The building currently houses the City's municipal offices including the Mayor's office, City Council Chambers, Tax Assessor, Clerk's office, Board of Canvassers, Personnel office, City Solicitor, Code Enforcement, Planning and Economic Development, Traffic and Municipal Court.

Currently the City Hall is cramped for office space partially because its third floor does not meet current building code requirements and can not be used for office space. The City is in the process of bringing the space up to code through funding provided by the recently passed 10 million dollar bond issue. The building will also have sprinklers installed utilizing these funds.

The City Hall currently has inadequate off street parking for its staff and the public. There is no easy solution to the parking problem but it should be remedied should the opportunity arise.

### **MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

The Central Falls Municipal building was constructed in 1914 and housed the police department and municipal court at 507 Broad Street. It was built in the same simplified classical mode as the Adams library. The building most recently housed Channel One and provided some school department class space. Currently this building is being phased out as a "municipal building" thus is available for other undetermined uses. The building may be suitable to serve the City's burgeoning school population. It also could be considered for sale for private development.

## RALPH HOLDEN COMMUNITY CENTER

The Ralph Holden Community Center at 363 Cowden Street was originally the Community Center for the former Holy Trinity Parish Church. The center was previously utilized as a YMCA but fell on hard times and the building was subject to serious deterioration. In the fall of 2004 the property was taken control of by the City. Since that time the City has brought the property back to an acceptable standard and dedicated bond funds to upgrade the facility and plan for a needed expansion. The City has moved its Channel One activities to the community center from the Municipal building. The Community Center provides a variety of programs to Central Fall's youths, senior citizens and adults.

According to data taken from the *2005 RI Kids Count Fact book*; nearly one third of children in Central Falls live at or below the poverty line. The city's child poverty rate (40.9%) is nearly 250% of the state as a whole (16.9%).

Despite the many factors making residents vulnerable to a variety of social problems, Central Falls has remarkable resources and supports available to its constituents primarily through its "Channel One Program".

Channel One - Central Falls is the only social services department of city government in the state of Rhode Island.

For almost 29 years, Channel One - Central Falls (CH1-CF) has been the primary youth and family social services provider in Central Falls. As such, CH1-CF has developed and implemented numerous programs - many of them funded by state and federal agencies - aimed at school-aged youth, teens, adults and more recently; the senior citizens of the community. The department has an operating budget of \$800,000.00 of which 85% comes from grants and outside (non-tax revenue) sources.

In the fall of 2004, the city's administration positioned CH1-CF to take over the failing community center and committed to making the department a key provider and gatekeeper of social services in the community. As a branch of city government, CH1-CF receives some administrative funding directly from the city.

Presently, Channel One - CF has a staff of 20 full time and 25 part-time workers who have experience in implementing programs and services and in cooperating with local and national evaluators to demonstrate results. The staff is diverse, and most are bilingual or trilingual speakers of Spanish, English, and Cape Verdean/Creole.

CH1-CF offers physical fitness/recreational programs, substance abuse prevention education activities, parenting programs, after school child care, mentoring for youth and teens, drop-in services, comprehensive senior services and case management, a food pantry, a meal-site, and workforce training for teens.

CH1-CF currently serves more than 400 youth, adults and seniors daily. Many of CH1-CF programs are done in collaboration with some of the city's other departments (Police, Recreation and School Department) as well as other community based organizations and providers throughout the city and state.

The Community Center's vital programs need continued financial support to the extent possible by the City through the use of Community Development Block Grant funds and other Federal and State funds where applicable.

The Center like many Central Falls properties does not have adequate parking. It shares parking with the abutting school and has a small lot but needs to develop more parking when the opportunity arises.

## **X. MUNICIPAL OFFICE FUNCTION**

A review of municipal office functions and administrative procedures for the City of Central Falls was conducted as part of the Central Falls Review Commission's study in 1991. Since then, the City of Central Falls has implemented all of the short term goals and is working on a continuing basis in an effort to implement the long term goal recommendations of the study.

See the Report of the Central Falls Review Commission, January 1991, Department of Planning, Rhode Island Department of Administration.

### **COMPUTERIZATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS**

The City of Central Falls has recognized the necessity to computerize as many of its administrative functions as possible to more efficiently deliver services to its citizens. All city offices are now utilizing a networked computer system. The Tax Assessor's office was updated with the new Vision System to track properties and revaluations. The Finance Department is now utilizing the Phoenix System to track purchasing and expenditures. The Code Enforcement Department is now utilizing the Opal system to track housing and building code activities including permits and fees. The City Clerk's office has computerized the land evidence records and

is in the process of indexing records back to 1988. The Police Department and Fire Department both utilize the IMC program to track incidents and hazards by address, do payrolls and attendance and write various reports. The Public Works Department has fallen behind other City Departments in the use of computers to track its work. This is expected to change dramatically with the relocation of its outmoded facility to a new facility at the former Dytex manufacturing site. The DPW computers will be upgraded and will be directly linked to the City network. It is expected that the DPW will enhance its project management capacity by adding a GIS program and computerized mapping system at its new facility.

#### **CITY ACTIONS FOR LONG TERM STABILITY**

There are two remaining long term goals/action steps identified by the Central Falls Review Commission that the City can take by itself to improve long term stability.

1. Seriously consider selling the water system to the Pawtucket Water Supply board. The critical questions to be answered are: What is the value of the system? What is the annual cost of maintenance and repair? What sale price can be agreed upon? How does this compare with the income that the City receives from the system and the annual operating costs? If the results are favorable, the decision to sell should be made, and the transfer completed as soon thereafter as possible.
2. Modernize the City charter. This fundamental document was drawn up in 1953 and became effective in January, 1954. It has not been amended since. A Charter Commission should be created to review the entire charter, with professional assistance from the Administration of Rhode Island, Office of Municipal Affairs, Division of Planning. The emphasis should be on updating the organizational and substantive provisions, streamlining procedures, and strengthening accountability whenever necessary.

#### **STATE ACTIONS FOR LONG TERM STABILITY**

The Central Falls Review Commission identified the following two remaining actions by State government as having the potential to provide some financial relieve to the City.

1. Prohibit lawsuits by one Rhode Island municipality against another, except when authorized by resolution of the General Assembly. This can be accomplished by amending Chapter 45-15 of the General Laws.

2. Do a comprehensive analysis of regionalization of municipal-level services, identifying the advantages and disadvantages of this approach. If the study shows that this is a cost-effective way to perform public safety, utility, public works, recreation, library, or other function typically operated or financed by local governments, establish procedures for selective or general regionalization in conjunction with adjoining municipalities, since the City's limited land area (1.1 square miles) and compact development pattern may make this a particularly feasible way to more effectively utilize personnel, equipment, and buildings.

**ELEMENT NO. 7**

**OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION**

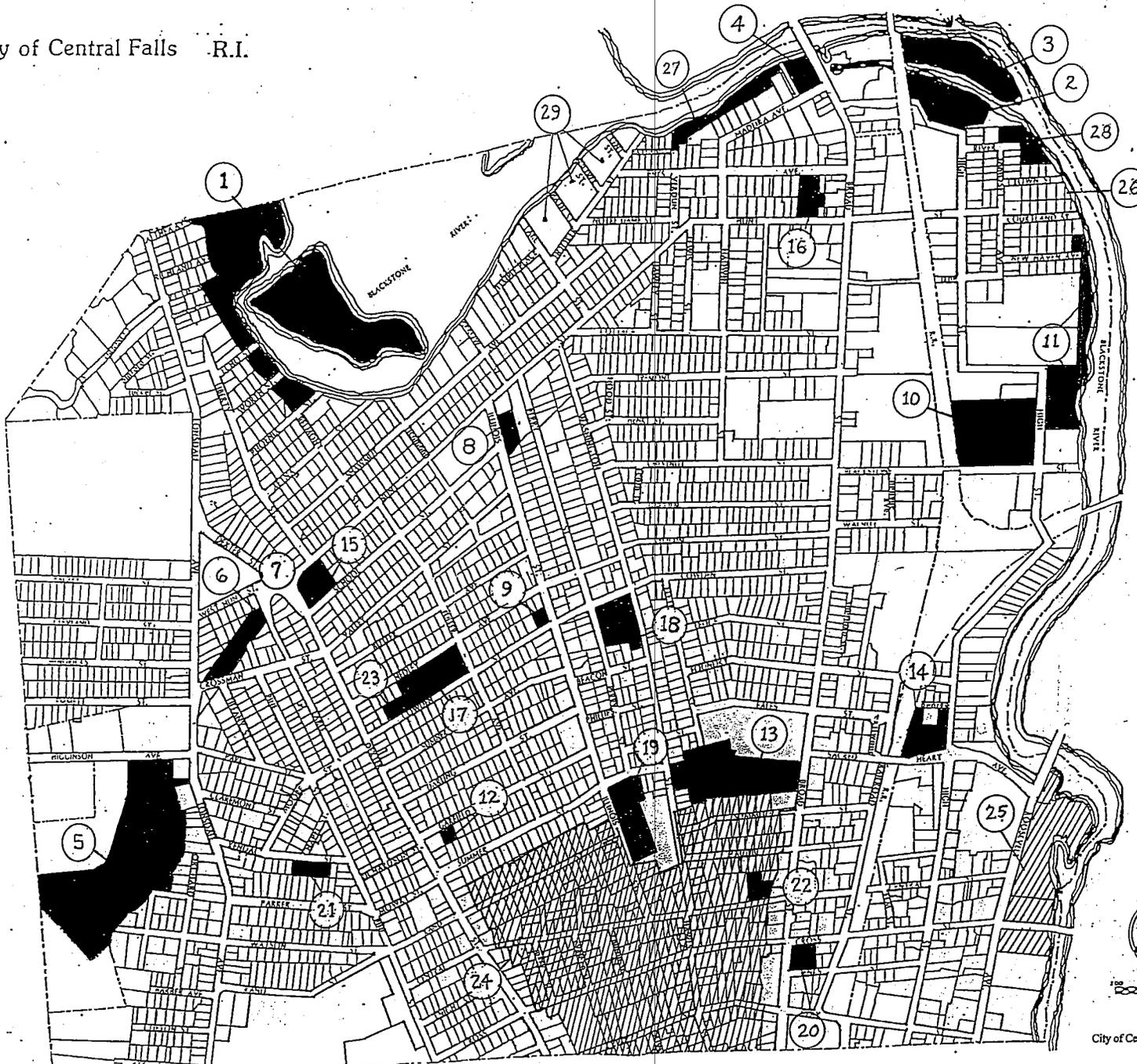


Comprehensive Community Plan  
Element No. 7  
Open Space and Recreation

See Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plan  
City of Central Falls, Rhode Island  
May, 1991

The City of Central Falls adopted a Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plan in May, 1991. The Plan, updated in 1998, is incorporated into this one by reference. The City continues to take positive actions to both preserve open space and to provide for recreation.

A copy of the Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plan, map only, has been included in this section for reference purposes, along with a map reflecting amendments to the Plan.



**State Jurisdiction**  
1. Valley Marshes

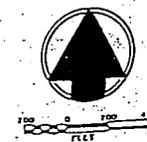
- Local Jurisdiction**
- 2. River Island Community Park
  - 3. River Island Nature Trail
  - 4. Central Falls Riverfront Commons and Landing Docks
  - 5. Higginson Avenue Community Sports Complex
  - 6. Crossman Street Playground
  - 7. Quinn Square
  - 8. Illinois Street Playground
  - 9. Cowden Street Basketball Court
  - 10. Macomber Stadium
  - 11. Pierce Park/Saul Tarlow Field
  - 12. Garfield Street Tot Lot
  - 13. Jenks Park
  - 14. Sacred Heart Playground

- School Department**
- 15. Ella Risk Elementary School
  - 16. Margaret I. Robertson School
  - 17. Veterans Memorial School
  - 18. Dr. Earl F. Calcutt School
  - 19. Central Falls Junior/Senior High School
  - 20. Alan Shawn Feinstein School
  - 21. Harold G. Hunt School

- Private Jurisdiction**
- 22. Adams Library and Lysander Flagg Museum
  - 23. Central Falls YMCA Community Center

- Historical Areas**
- 24. South Central Falls Historical District
  - 25. Central Falls Historic Mill District

- Proposed Actions**
- 26. Blackstone River Bikeway
  - 27. Blackstone River Pedestrian Trail
  - 28. Re-use of City Owned Land
  - 29. Long Range Acquisition



**ELEMENT NO. 8**

**CIRCULATION**



**Comprehensive Community Plan  
Element No. 8  
Circulation**

**I. GENERAL**

Auto and truck transportation in Central Falls reflect the land use and density patterns of the community and the location of the City among surrounding communities.

The generation of high traffic volumes from within the City is the result of high residential and commercial/industrial densities. Although many industrial businesses have left the City, there is still a high volume of trucks on the city streets. (24.86 percent of the City's tax base is industrial.)

These industrial uses in turn result in a high percentage of truck traffic. In addition, traffic movements along major arteries are often slowed or temporarily halted due to the lack of off-street loading facilities at many business and industrial locations and difficult turning movements of large commercial vehicles caused by inadequate street widths at major intersections.

Locally generated traffic and frequent congestion on the major streets of the City are exacerbated by inter-community traffic, as Central Falls serves as a major funneling point for north-south commuter traffic within the Blackstone Valley.

**II. HIGHWAY CLASSIFICATION**

There are 28 miles of streets and highways in Central Falls. Approximately 1 mile of this total is State owned and maintained.

The three major highways that carry the brunt of the north-south travel are:

1. Lonsdale Avenue, State Route 122, which starts at the State line in Woonsocket and connects portions of Lincoln and Cumberland with the cities of Pawtucket and Providence.
2. Broad Street, State Route 114, which also starts at the State line in Woonsocket and connects the Town of Cumberland with the cities of Pawtucket and East Providence.

3. Dexter Street, which carries substantial traffic originating in Lincoln to the City of Pawtucket.

These highways are classified as Principal Arteries by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation. This is the highest level of highway classification within the City of Central Falls. Principal arterials serve urban areas, carry high volumes of traffic and serve as direct routes through the City. Dexter and Broad Streets also serve as routes for the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority bus system.

The next level in the highway classification system is the minor arterial. These highways interconnect with and augment the principal arterial system. Minor arterials also distribute traffic to geographic areas smaller than those identified with principal arterials.

The minor arterials in Central Falls are Hunt Street in the north, Cross Street in the south, and Higginson Avenue on the western border of the City. These are the major east-west routes to the principal arteries and are the only east-west highways carrying through traffic. Roosevelt Avenue which travels north and south, is also classified as a minor arterial.

The collector street is the next level of highway classification. The collector street distributes traffic from minor arterials to ultimate destinations within the community. These destinations may either be located on the collector itself or on local streets. The collector's basic function is to provide land access. Collector streets within the City include Cottage Street, Chestnut Street, Cowden Street, Central Street, Sacred Heart Avenue, Hedley Avenue and Rand Street, Washington Street, Illinois Street, High Street and Crossman Street.

All other streets within the community are classified as local streets. These streets serve abutting land and provide access to highways of a higher order.

The highway circulation pattern which exist today was, with few exceptions, established with regard to function and location in the early 1900's.

### **III. RIDOT HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

The City should submit projects to the Transportation Advisory Committee based on priorities for possible inclusion in the TIP Program.

#### IV. PARKING FACILITIES

There are parking problems throughout the City of Central Falls.

The residential and commercial areas in Central Falls were constructed for people who worked in the mills and shopped locally. Many of the people walked to wherever they had to go. Unfortunately, many of the residential and commercial sites were not designed to accommodate today's parking needs. The City has tried to mitigate this problem through the enforcement of the parking regulations of the Central Falls Zoning Ordinance. When new homes are constructed, builders are required to provide two parking spaces per dwelling unit. In addition, any new businesses have to provide off-street parking. Unfortunately, many of these business sites are unable to accommodate the necessary parking required in the Zoning Ordinance. In response to the parking needs the City has tried to find sites to create off-street parking areas for businesses and governmental organizations such as the Ralph J. Holden Community Center and the Central Falls School Department.

##### MUNICIPAL PARKING

<u>Lot</u>	<u>No. of Spaces</u>
Pacific and Broad Streets	9
Ledge off Broad Street	77
Sumner and Dexter Street	10
Darling and Dexter Street	12
Earle off West Hunt Street	12
Summer Street	17
Cowden Street	10

In general, industrial facilities and major commercial facilities throughout the City have adequate off-street parking facilities, i.e. Osram/Sylvania, Murdock Webbing, Dexter Credit Union, Credit Union Central Falls. Bank of America, McDonalds, Fuller Box Co., etc.

It is within those areas of strip commercial development in which on street parking is the predominate parking resource, that difficulty parking is most evident. Small business owners know that customers that can't park close to their store will frequently bypass their store. Thus, Central Falls has created some public parking lots on Dexter Street. Efforts should continue to develop additional public lots on Dexter and Broad Streets.

In addition, during a snow emergency, residents have access to a minimum of eighteen designated municipal and private locations for a period not to exceed twenty-four hours, while municipal and State crews clear the streets.

As noted throughout the Comprehensive Community Plan, the City of Central Falls is an urban place and cannot be viewed in the context of its suburban neighbors. It is within the urban context that its strengths and weakness should be evaluated.

The Zoning Ordinance of October 1, 1992, developed in concert with the Comprehensive Community Plan, included specific requirements which further facilitated off-street parking throughout the community.

## **V. CONGESTED AREAS OF SPECIFIC CONCERN**

There are specific streets in Central Falls where lack of adequate off street parking presents a public safety concern. The following Streets have been identified in 2005 by the Central Falls Police Department as streets where traffic congestion presents a serious impediment to fire, police and rescue vehicles that need to traverse these streets.

### Streets with Serious Congestion:

Worth Street  
Phoenix Street  
Aetna Street  
Echo Street  
Bagley Street  
Cleveland Street  
Fales Street  
Hendricks Street  
Lincoln Avenue  
Sylvian Street  
Sumner Avenue

### Streets Around Schools with Serious Congestion:

Cowden Street  
Summer Street  
Jenks Street  
Washington Street

The above streets present serious public safety concerns that are not easily addressed. The City needs to strictly enforce its zoning regulations along these streets. Any new development that would diminish existing on or off street parking needs to be prevented. In addition the City needs to reduce residential density through active enforcement of the housing code. Lastly, the City should encourage the development of additional public and private parking along these streets when the opportunity arises.

## **VI. TRAFFIC CONTROL**

A review of major intersections throughout the City did indicate the need for one additional traffic signal installation. It was installed at the corner of High and Broad Street. Residents at the Blackstone Falls Elderly Housing Complex found it a problem to exit High Street onto Broad Street without the signal. As reported by the Central Falls Chief of Police, recent improvements to the City's major thoroughfares included upgrading of equipment at most of the City's signalized intersections. While it was noted that there are a few older equipment installations, no area of critical need was identified.

The major deficiency identified with regard to traffic control was in the area of signage. Clearly there is a need for new or improved directional and informational signs throughout the community.

The City plans to explore the use of signage as one element to improve both vehicular and pedestrian movement, to reinforce the "sense of place" and elevate the image quality of the community.

In addition, the Zoning Ordinance of October 1992 included provisions which would provide for safe and unobstructed sight distances at street intersections and the halting of further visual pollution caused by inappropriately placed advertising structures. The use of highway rights-of-way for advertising purposes - overhanging signs, political posters, etc. - was severely restricted under these provisions.

In recent years, the Central Falls Police Department has been able to curtail overtime parking at metered locations, reduce the occurrence of illegal parking within twenty feet of street intersections and improve enforcement of related parking regulations. Combined, these efforts have resulted in smoother traffic flows and greater safety and convenience to both the walking and motoring public.

## **VII. ACCIDENT RATES**

Surprisingly, considering the high volume of traffic and the many functional inadequacies of the Central Falls highway system, the Central Falls Police Department has identified the top ten accident locations in Central Falls. Of these ten locations, only two have had more than 10 accidents. These locations are Broad at Hunt Street and Broad at Cross Street.

The City of Central Falls Police Department's report indicates a substantial reduction of traffic accidents within the City in recent years. i.e. in 2002 there were 930 accidents, in 2003 there were 877 accidents and in 2004 791 accidents. This reduction is undoubtedly linked to highway improvements and more strict enforcement of local speed limits. In addition, the very narrowness of local streets throughout the City tends to reduce traveling speeds which in turn lessens the probability of serious accidents.

## VIII. RAIL

Rail freight service is provided daily to Rhode Island industrial sites by the Providence and Worcester Railroad. The Providence and Worcester rail network allows access to the entire United States and Canadian rail system through competitive east/west routes via Central Vermont/Canadian National System, Conrail or the Boston and Maine Railroad.\*

The Providence and Worcester Railroad services the rail freight needs of the City. Freight services are available to any facility having a siding. Service is available on a daily basis under standard common carrier procedures.

Central Falls is accessible by three rail lines.\*\*

### 1. Shore Line (Northeast Corridor Main Line)

The Shore Line is presently the main line of Amtrak's Northeast Corridor. While the Shore Line is principally a key passenger route, it still serves as the route for freight within Rhode Island. Amtrak has title to the Shore Line within Rhode Island.

The Shore Line runs for 49.7 mile in Rhode Island, from the Connecticut State Line in Westerly to the Massachusetts State Line in Pawtucket. It serves the municipalities of Westerly, Charlestown, Hopkinton, Richmond, South Kingstown, North Kingstown, Exeter, East Greenwich, Warwick, Cranston, Providence, Pawtucket and Central Falls.

\* Source: Rhode Island Department of Economic Development, Central Falls Monograph, June, 1987

\*\*Source: State Rail Plan March, 1988 with updated Information developed by the Central Falls Department of Planning and Community Development

As far as operating rights on the Shore Line are concerned Providence and Worcester has trackage rights (acquired from Conrail on May 1, 1982) on the entire 49.7 miles of Amtrak-

owned track in Rhode Island. The Rhode Island Department of Transportation has passenger track rights over the entire Line within Rhode Island.

Rights have been exercised through agreements which have resulted in the provision of commuter rail service by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority between Providence and Boston.

The City of Central Falls, in a joint venture with the City of Pawtucket, are attempting to redevelop the former Pawtucket and Central Falls Railroad Station site. It is the intent of both cities to restore commuter rail service to the site.

## 2. The Providence and Worcester Main Line

The Providence and Worcester Main Line extends 12.5 miles from the Massachusetts State Line in Woonsocket through North Smithfield, Cumberland and Central Falls to its Shore Line connection at "Lawn Tower" (in the City of Pawtucket). Sidings also serve customers in the Town of Lincoln. This line is owned and operated by the Providence and Worcester Railroad. No other railroads have trackage rights on it, and no passenger services is offered other than periodic excursions which have been sponsored by the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council.

The Providence and Worcester Main Line is built along the route of the Blackstone River. As such, it crosses the river numerous times and is often located adjacent to the river.

While the majority of freight traffic on this line is through freight from Providence and Worcester's Worcester, Massachusetts yards (and beyond) to the Providence area, local users of all descriptions exist all along the line. With some Sunday exceptions, local freight service is available throughout at least once per day.

The Providence and Worcester Main Line extends north from the Massachusetts State Line to Worcester where connections exist with Conrail and the B&M as well as with another Providence and Worcester line that connects with the Central Vermont Railway. Within Rhode Island this line connects at Lawn Tower with the Shore Line. At Valley Falls, connections exist with Providence and Worcester East Providence Branch and Wrentham Secondary Track. In Woonsocket, a connection exists with Providence and Worcester's Slatersville Secondary Track.

3. The Moshassuck Industrial Track

The Moshassuck Industrial Track extends 2.0 miles along the river valley which give it its name. At the southern end it connects with the Providence and Worcester "Northup Avenue Yard" on the Shore Line in Pawtucket. Its northern end is in a place known as "Saylesville" in the Town of Lincoln. The Moshassuck Industrial Track, formerly called the Moshassuck Valley Railroad, was acquired by Providence and Worcester on September 1, 1981. No other railroads are known to have trackage rights and no passenger service is offered. The Providence and Worcester is currently proposing abandonment of this line.

**IX. AIR**

Central Falls is serviced by three air transport facilities.

1. Theodore Francis Green International Airport located in the City of Warwick is approximately 16 miles to the south of the City of Central Falls.
2. Logan International Airport located in the City of Boston, Massachusetts is approximately 50 miles to the north of the City of Central Falls.
3. North Central State Airport (a General Aviation Airport), located in the Town of Lincoln approximately 8 miles to the northwest of the City of Central Falls.  
Town of Lincoln.

The following information regarding these facilities was provided by the Rhode Island Department of Economic Development Research Division.

Thirteen airlines provide over 134 scheduled flights daily at T.F. Green Airport. Nine major airlines, American, Continental, Delta, Independence Air, Northwest, Southwest, Spirit, United, and U.S. Airways schedule flights daily to and from T.F. Green State Airport, which handles all of Rhode Island's commercial air traffic. Direct flight service is provided to over 30 eastern cities. Four commuter express airlines provide frequent scheduled service to most northeastern cities, such as, Albany, Syracuse, Burlington and Hartford.

In 2004, over 5 1/2 million passengers traveled through Green, indicating an increase in passenger travel of 6.43% over 2003.

Logan International Airport is located in Boston, about one hour's driving time from Providence. Logan provides flights to all parts of the United States, Europe, Hawaii and the west.

In addition to T.F. Green Air Carrier Facility, the Department of Transportation operates 5 General Aviation Airports in Rhode Island. Private plane and charter facilities are available at each of these airports.

T.F. Green Airport is centrally located in Rhode Island with direct access from Interstate 95, making it less than a half hour trip from any part of the State and only a 12 minute drive from downtown Providence. It is an all weather airport with full equipment for ground controlled instrument landings.

Recent improvements to the airport completed in November 1997, include a new terminal with 4 additional gates and expanded parking facilities.

Nearby accommodations include a Sheraton Inn and a Comfort Inn located adjacent to the airport. The Holiday Inn, Susse Chalet and a Marriott Residence Inn are located nearby. Most of the hotels provide free shuttle service.

Four commuter express airlines provide frequent scheduled service to New York, Boston and cities in the northeast: Continental Express, Delta Connection, United Airlines Express and US Airways Express.

Federal Express and Emery Worldwide provide scheduled Air Freight Service. UPS has a major processing facility in Warwick. Service generally provides for first morning delivery at all major points south to Miami, New Orleans and Houston, or west through Chicago to mid-western cities. First afternoon delivery is the rule for points on the west coast.

## **X. WATER**

The Port of Providence which services much of Rhode Island has 25 wharves and docks for accommodating medium and deep-draft vessels and has more than 10 miles of commercial waterfront. The port is easily accessible from Central Falls via Interstate 95.

### **PORT OF PROVIDENCE**

#### **LOCATION**

Located at the head of Narragansett Bay the port has a 40 foot channel, 600 to 1,300 feet wide.

Geographically situated between New York and Boston:

Directly on the North Atlantic commercial shipping lanes.

28 miles in from Brenton Reef, within the protected, year round harbor of Narragansett Bay.

Adjacent to Interstate 95 with easy access to all of southern and central New England.

**MODES SERVED**

Vessel, barge, tanker, truck and rail.

**CHARACTERISTICS**

Deep water channel dredge depth, 30 to 40 feet.

6 quay-wall continuous berths, total length over 3,300 feet.

2 container cranes, ample apron and back land for open storage.

70 contiguous acres privately owned for development.

**STORAGE**

180,000 square feet of enclosed warehouse facilities with 14 truck loading bays.

**RAIL FACILITIES**

Serviced by Providence and Worcester Railroad with connections to all rail lines.

**XI. MASS TRANSIT**

Mass Transportation in Central Falls is provided by the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA). Local bus routes provide service between Central Falls and all points on the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority system.

Although RIPTA states that its overall ridership has decreased over the past ten years, the City of Central Falls still has a large number of residents that utilize the service. Due to the large percentage of families below poverty level (25.9%) in Central Falls many do not have cars and must use the public transportation system. According to RIPTA's automatic passenger counting system, the City of Central Falls Broad Street bus has an average boarding and alighting activity as follows with approximately 42% of the activity happening in Central Falls.

**Average Boardings and Alightings**

Weekday - 1179

Saturday - 570

Sunday - 306

In addition to the normal routes serviced by RIPTA, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation has subsidized summer bus runs to State beaches at Sand Hill cove, Scarborough and Gallilee.

## **XII. TRANSPORTATION FOR ELDERLY AND HANDICAPPED**

Transportation of elderly and handicapped persons is facilitated through a number of agencies serving the City of Central Falls.

The Ralph J. Holden Community Center Senior Program has two vans which provide the elderly and handicapped transportation to shopping facilities, medical services, meal sites on request and to social activities within the City.

The Central Falls Senior Program organizes periodic day trips for shopping and social activities outside the immediate geographic area. In addition, RIDOT provides handicapped accessible buses along its established routes.

## **XIII. PEDESTRIAN, AND BICYCLE WAYS**

Element No. 7, Open Space and Recreation was completed by the City of Central Falls in May, 1991 under the title of Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plan.

The Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plan was completed by the Central Falls Department of Planning and Community Development in May, 1991. As noted by the State of Rhode Island, Department of Administration, Division of Planning, "This plan has been prepared as a new element which completely supersedes and replaces the City's 1983 plan. The new plan has been prepared to serve a dual purpose of recreation grant program eligibility and conformance with the guidelines for the Recreation/Open space Element of the local Comprehensive Community Plan."

The State Division of Planning has recommended acceptance of the plan and the establishment of Continuing eligibility, (for funding) valid through July 1, 1995. This recommendation has been submitted to the State Recreation Resources Review Committee. The Central Falls City Council adopted the plan in August, 1991.

Included in the Plan are the Blackstone River Bikeway, the Blackstone River Pedestrian/Equestrian Trail and the Central Falls Heritage Walkway. While the development of these facilities have not gone much further than the conceptual stage, several important improvement projects are currently underway or are scheduled to commence in the near future which will help to

facilitate and reinforce these concepts.

These include the following:

1. The expansion of public recreation facilities along the Blackstone River Pedestrian/Equestrian trail.
2. The City recently completed the River Island Community Park which contains a walking track and a pedestrian bridge to the Blackstone River Island Nature Trail.
3. The City is working on the Central Falls Riverfront Commons which includes the Central Falls Landing. This is the first river landing on the historic Blackstone River. Once developed, the "Landing" will be a mixed use development that takes advantage of its riverfront location. In addition, it will be home to the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council's River Science Center.
4. The relocation of the Department of Public Works from its site along the Blackstone River to the former Dytex building at Hunt and High Street. In 2004, a \$10 million dollar bond issue was approved by the voters of Central Falls. Some of these funds are specifically for this project. This will free-up land along the historic Blackstone River for the proposed bike path through Central Falls.
5. The acquisition of King's Junk Yard located along the Blackstone River by the Donald W. Wyatt Detention Facility. The Detention Facility is proposing to move parking for their employees to this site along with public parking for the bike path, a small recreation area and training center for the security guards and Central Falls police and fire officials.

These projects, along with related improvement programs currently being contemplated by the Central Falls Department of Planning and Community Development are aimed at enriching the experience of travelers throughout the City and as previously mentioned, reinforcing the "sense of place" and elevate the image quality of the community.

#### **XIV. STATE TRANSPORTATION POLICIES**

While the Central Falls Comprehensive Community Plan is consistent with a number of State Guide Plan Land Use 2025 transportation policies, most of these can only be supported in concept because of their limited impact on the City at this time.

The application of these policies, however, may be of significance to the City with regard to specific State or regional projects. Issues involving innovative public transportation, terminal facilities, abandonment of railroad rights-of-way, etc., are examples.

**ELEMENT NO. 9**

**IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**



## **I. SUMMARY OF POLICIES**

All of the policies developed in the Comprehensive Community Plan have been reviewed and grouped by functional element.

### **Land Use**

In 2005 the emerging potential for new growth and development is to be found not in undeveloped land but in the adaptive reuse of underutilized and or vacant former industrial buildings and the potential for area redevelopment through creation of a Municipal Economic Development Zone.

Projects must be "self sustainable developments". The City's tax base has no room for development that will cause the City any net increase in City expenditures. New developments must provide a net gain in revenues to the City.

Review and update the City's Zoning Ordinance to reflect the land use concepts contained in the Comprehensive Community Plan.

Improve the physical image of the community through expansion of public and private open space, the protection of historic structures and related public and private improvements.

Protect environmentally sensitive areas along the Blackstone River while promoting the "rediscovery" of the Blackstone River and adjacent area for passive and active recreational uses.

Implement physical and legislative measures which will promote community renewal. An example of such a legislative measure would be the establishment of a Municipal Economic Development Zone (MED Zone) which would bring new economic and community vitality to the City.

Encourage the preservation of sound affordable housing in the context of livable neighborhood settings.

Promote values of environmental protection and historic preservation.

Discourage the incursion and expansion of the business districts on Dexter and Broad Streets into adjacent residential areas.

Enforce landscaping, fencing and setback requirements to make parking areas in commercial and residential areas more visually appealing.

Strictly enforce the Zoning Ordinance's parking requirements in residential areas especially the prohibition against front yard parking to promote public safety and enhance the livability of residential areas.

### Housing

Central Falls greatest housing resource is its existing housing stock. The primary goal of City housing policies should be the preservation of its existing homes in a decent, safe and sanitary condition. In addition, it must be recognized that decent housing requires a livable residential area that meets the resident's yard space, parking and compatible use requirements.

The Department of Code Enforcement and the Office of the City Solicitor should pro-actively utilize the Municipal Court to prosecute housing code violations.

Establish systematic minimum housing code enforcement in designated target areas.

State and Federal programs to combat childhood lead poisoning should be pursued.

Where possible, convert absentee owned properties to owner-occupied properties.

Participate in the housing and community development initiatives of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Programs.

Continue to participate in the programs of the Rhode Island Housing Mortgage Finance Corporation, including the Home Repair Program and Lead Program.

Retain and rehabilitate existing Single Room Occupancy structures as an important measure of homelessness prevention.

Continue to support the two homeless shelters which serve the City.

Encourage mixed unit development in the City's obsolete manufacturing buildings.

Establish a "Mill Building" reuse overlay district for the City's M1 and M2 zones.

Continue efforts to help elderly homeowners stay in their homes through the continuation of the Community Development Block Grant funded Elderly/Handicapped Deferred Loan Program and support of social services such as outreach workers.

Use Community Development Block Grant Funds to provide staffing so that access to housing rehabilitation funds may be maintained for the benefit of City residents.

Pursue additional Federal and State rental subsidies for low income tenants.

Where possible, convert absentee landlord owned properties to owner occupied properties.

### Economic Development

With regard to Economic Development the following municipal policies should be pursued:

To improve the desirability of Central Falls as a location for business, continuing efforts must be continued to improve the City's image. Among other things, the physical upgrading of the City's two main entrances, on Broad Street and at Roosevelt Avenue near the I-95 exit ramp, must continue to be pursued. Measures discussed in other sections of this plan, such as riverfront redevelopment will also contribute to the renewal of the community's image.

The City should work jointly with Pawtucket to pursue the redevelopment of the Pawtucket/Central Falls train depot as an intermodal transportation project with associated stores and possibly market rate housing. An intermodal development would provide a tremendous economic development catalyst to adjacent areas in Central Falls and Pawtucket.

The continued revitalization of Dexter Street and Broad Street should be an ongoing priority. The city should utilize all the means at it's disposal to create and maintain a "welcoming" commercial environment. Proactive enforcement of the zoning and housing code along with "community policing" are tools it should readily use.

The City applied for and was granted Enterprise Zone designation in 1992 under legislation enacted in 1991. The City applied and was re-designated an Enterprise Zone in 1996. The City should encourage participation in the Enterprise Zone program by Central Falls businesses.

The City should cooperate fully in the Regional Economic Development Plan prepared by the Blackstone Valley Development Foundation.

The City should compile a data base of the existing manufacturing buildings in Central Falls. Such a data base is essential in marketing the building for prospective manufacturers and developers.

Promote greater involvement by local financial institutions in local economic development.

Work with social service agencies to expand day care and job training programs.

Encourage expansion of the service sector of the City's economy possibly within the context of the emerging adaptive reuse of obsolete manufacturing buildings.

Establish a Municipal Economic Development Zone (MED Zone). Utilize this unique economic incentive for the redevelopment of a 10 to 30 acre commercial development.

### **National Historic/Cultural**

Continue to work with the State of Rhode Island and private interests to utilize the "Blackstone River Island" access project and similar projects as a catalyst for further redevelopment along the Blackstone River.

Support the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission to develop coordinated signage and related activities which will strengthen the "sense of place" within the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor and more particularly within the City of Central Falls.

Continue to encourage restoration of the historic Pawtucket/Central Falls Train Station.

Provide technical assistance to public and private entities committed to the enhancement of the aesthetic character of the City.

Continue efforts to acquire open space lands through donation or under market value purchase.

Acquire additional river front land for the expansion of the City's recreation, conservation and open space system.

Continue support of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council.

### **Services and Facilities**

Continue efforts to update operational equipment of the Fire, Police and Public Works Departments.

Expand public safety services through administrative techniques

and hiring of additional personnel.

Update and improve the fire alarm communication system.

Study the feasibility of transferring the City's water system to the Pawtucket Water Supply Board or seek alternative solutions to resolve problems throughout the system.

Cooperate with the Narragansett Bay Commission in efforts to improve water quality in the Blackstone River.

Undertake a Municipal Facilities Plan.

Continue allocation of Community Development Block Grant funds to agencies serving the needs of the residents of Central Falls.

### Open Space and Recreation

Aggressively pursue resources to support the systematic improvement of facilities throughout the City's recreation and open space system.

Expand services and facilities at the Higginson Avenue Sports Complex.

Solicit human resource and financial support from private interest and organizations for the purpose of supplementing municipal efforts to achieve a high level of maintenance throughout the recreation and open space system.

Explore cooperative methods which have the potential to promote resident use of recreation facilities beyond the borders of the City.

Reinforce linkages with the Blackstone River with particular emphasis on the proposed Blackstone Valley Bicycle Trail and Blackstone Valley Tourism Council river tours.

With full recognition of local financial constraints, the City will cooperate, support or otherwise participate in State, Federal or private programs which will assist in developing or maintaining the City's recreation and open space system.

Continue to ensure equal recreation opportunities and access to these opportunities for all residents of the community.

### Circulation

Cooperate with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation on

the implementation of the RIDOT Highway Improvement program for Central Falls.

Continue efforts to improve public parking areas along the City's commercial streets, around municipal buildings and schools.

Strictly enforce parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance especially in residential areas. Inadequate parking is not just a matter of convenience but is a public safety concern. Streets clogged with automobiles can prevent public safety vehicles from reaching a fire or victim of an accident or crime in a timely manner.

Improve traffic control signage throughout the City.

Enforce zoning provisions which provide for safe and unobstructed sight distances at street intersections and halt "visual pollution" caused by inappropriately placed advertising structures.

Support the development of the Blackstone River Bikeway.

## II. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

The following Implementation Program Table has been developed as a result of evaluating the potential for the policies listed in I, Summary of Policies, above, to be implemented within the **next five years**.

Consideration in evaluating each policy's potential for implementation included:

1. The current economic conditions in Central Falls, the State of Rhode Island, and the Nation.
2. The anticipation of continued cutbacks in Federal Funds to local communities.
3. Cooperative relationships which already exist within the community and the region.
4. Administrative expertise currently available in the community.
5. Resources which the City of Central Falls has currently and anticipates in the future.

All of these considerations have been undertaken within the context of the broad goals of community revitalization and population stabilization. In several cases, the policies presented herein, represent a combination of those which have been previously identified.

The implementation program for the policies of the Plan is formulated to reflect Short, Medium and Long Range planning goals. Policies that are currently being addressed, evaluated, or that may require ongoing attention are also identified along with those that have been completed. The method of identification and the responsible resource is included in the attached chart.

## **IMPLEMENTATION CHART**

### **LEGEND**

#### **RESPONSIBLE ENTITIES:**

1. Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission
2. Central Falls Housing Authority
3. Central Falls Planning Commission
4. Central Falls Zoning Board of Review
5. City Council
6. City Solicitor
7. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
8. Division of Code Enforcement
9. Division of Planning and Economic Development
10. Fire Department
11. Mayor's Office
12. Parks and Recreation Department
13. Police Department
14. Public Works Department
15. Rhode Island Department of Economic Development
16. Rhode Island Housing
17. State of Rhode Island

#### **GOALS:**

- (S) Short - 1 to 2 years
- (M) Medium - 2 to 5 years
- (L) Long - 5 to 10 years
- (O) Ongoing
- (C) Complete

LAND USE GOAL/POLICY	ACTION	RESOURCE	GOAL
The potential for new growth and development is to be found not in undeveloped land but in the adaptive reuse of underutilized and or vacant former industrial buildings and the potential for area redevelopment through creation of a Municipal Economic Development Zone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage innovative reuse development plans for obsolete manufacturing buildings.</li> <li>Actively promote the City to perspective developers</li> </ul>	3,4,9	L
Projects must be "self sustainable developments". The City's tax base has no room for development that will cause the City any net increase in City expenditures. New developments must provide a net gain in revenues to the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work closely with developers to insure that developments will not be contingent on city subsidies.</li> <li>• Promote Federal and State programs to assist projects</li> </ul>	3,4,5,9,11	O
Review and update the City's Zoning Ordinance to reflect the land use concepts contained in the Comprehensive Community Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update zoning ordinance for City Council action.</li> </ul>	8,9	S
Improve the physical image of the community through expansion of public and private open space, the protection of historic structures and related public and private improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate the public process necessary to accomplish the CF bike path</li> <li>• Work to acquire additional land for the bike path</li> <li>• Apply for Federal and State funds for river access and bike path</li> </ul>	3,4,5,9,11	O
Protect environmentally sensitive areas along the Blackstone River while promoting the "rediscovery" of the Blackstone River and adjacent area for passive and active recreational uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work closely with Blackstone Valley Tourism.</li> <li>• Provide additional access points to the Blackstone.</li> <li>• Vigorously enforce flood plain regulations</li> </ul>	1	O

<p>Implement physical and legislative measures which will promote community renewal. An example of such a legislative measure would be the establishment of a Municipal Economic Development Zone (MED Zone) which would bring new economic and community vitality to the City.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote City to developers as a good place to do business.</li> <li>• Utilize Enterprise Zone and HUB Zone designation as an incentive.</li> </ul>	<p>3,4,5,9,11</p>	<p>M</p>
<p>Encourage the preservation of sound affordable housing in the context of livable neighborhood settings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rigorously enforce the housing and zoning codes</li> <li>• Promote RIHMFC and State home owner assistance and rehab programs</li> </ul>	<p>4,7,8,9,16</p>	<p>0</p>
<p>Promote values of environmental protection and historic preservation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate environmental protection and historic preservation into development plans and planning studies</li> </ul>	<p>3,4,8,9</p>	<p>0</p>
<p>Discourage the incursion and expansion of the business districts on Dexter and Broad Streets into adjacent residential areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rigorously enforce the housing and zoning codes</li> </ul>	<p>3,4,8,9</p>	<p>0</p>
<p>Enforce landscaping, fencing and setback requirements to make parking areas in commercial and residential areas more visually appealing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rigorously enforce the housing and zoning codes</li> </ul>	<p>4,8,9</p>	<p>0</p>
<p>Strictly enforce the Zoning Ordinance's parking requirements in residential areas especially the prohibition against front yard parking to promote public safety and enhance the livability of residential areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the Building Official and Planning Director to work in concert to identify problems</li> </ul>	<p>4,8,9</p>	<p>0</p>

Urban Development's (HUD) Programs.	of HUD's Community Development Block Grant program		
Participate with the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation's Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to participate in the programs of the Rhode Island Housing Mortgage Finance Corporation, including the Home Repair Program, Lead Program and home ownership programs.</li> </ul>	2,9	0
Continue to support the two homeless shelters which serve the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support grant applications</li> </ul>	7,9,16,17	0
Establish a "Mill Building" reuse overlay district for the City's M1 and M2 zones.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include in zoning update</li> </ul>	3,4,5,9,11	S
Continue efforts to help elderly homeowners stay in their homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the Community Development Block Grant funded Elderly/Handicapped Deferred Loan Program and support of social services such as outreach workers.</li> </ul>	7,9,16	0
Access Federal and State housing rehabilitation funds for the benefit of City residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use Community Development Block Grant Funds to provide staffing</li> </ul>	7,9,12	0
Pursue additional Federal and State rental subsidies for low income tenants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support State and Federal initiatives</li> <li>Apply for available grants</li> </ul>	2	0

<p>(MED Zone). Utilize this unique economic incentive for the redevelopment of a 10 to 30 acre commercial development.</p>	<p>developers</p>		
<p>Establish a Mill Building Reuse zone for the City's M1 and M2 districts to direct the adaptive reuse of the City's "Mill Buildings".</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include in Zoning Ordinance update</li> </ul>	<p>3,4,5,6,9,1 1</p>	<p>S</p>

<b>NATURAL AND CULTURAL GOAL/POLICY</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESOURCE</b>	<b>GOAL</b>
Continue to work with the State of Rhode Island and private interests to utilize the "Blackstone River Island" access project and similar projects as a catalyst for further redevelopment along the Blackstone River.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply for grant funds to increase river access</li> <li>• Continue efforts to complete the bike path along the river in CF</li> <li>• Encourage reuse projects along the Blackstone to "feature" the river</li> </ul>	1,9	0
<b>Support the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission to develop coordinated signage and related activities which will strengthen the "sense of place".</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a tri-city plan for Broad Street renewal</li> <li>• Apply for grant funds for a Broad Street Study</li> <li>• Support grant applications of the Corridor Commission and Blackstone Valley Tourism</li> </ul>	1,9	0
<b>Provide technical assistance to public and private entities committed to the enhancement of the aesthetic character of the City.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work closely with organizations such as the Northern RI Chamber, Blackstone Valley Tourism and the Blackstone Valley Corridor Commission</li> </ul>	9	S
<b>Continue efforts to acquire open space lands through donation or under market value purchase.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue the City's Planning office in such efforts</li> </ul>	1,9	0
Acquire additional river front land for the expansion of the City's recreation, conservation and open space system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue the City's Planning office in such efforts</li> <li>• Utilize CDBG and DEM grant funds as available</li> </ul>	1,9,13	0
Continue support of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support grant applications of the Corridor Commission and Blackstone Valley Tourism</li> </ul>	1	0

<b>SERVICE AND FACILITIES GOAL/POLICY</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESOURCE</b>	<b>GOAL</b>
Update operational equipment of the Fire, Police and Public Works Departments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue efforts to update operational equipment</li> <li>• Utilize Home Land Security grant</li> </ul>	5,10,11	O
Expand public safety services through administrative techniques and hiring of additional personnel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire Chief and Personnel Director to work for greater efficiencies through managed manning plan</li> </ul>	5,10,11,13	O
Update and improve the fire alarm communication system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate with update of fiber optic upgrade of municipal office telephone system</li> </ul>	5,10,11	O
Transfer the City's water system to the Pawtucket Water Supply Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize the transfer of system</li> </ul>	5,6,11,14	S
Improve water quality in the Blackstone River.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperate with the Narragansett Bay Commission in it's efforts</li> <li>• Support fish ladders and dam removal efforts</li> </ul>	5,11,14	O
Undertake a Municipal Facilities Plan.		9,14	L
Continue allocation of Community Development Block Grant funds to agencies serving the needs of the residents of Central Falls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include such agencies in annual CDBG application</li> </ul>	5,7,11	O

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION GOAL/POLICY	ACTION	RESOURCE	GOAL
Aggressively pursue resources to support the systematic improvement of facilities throughout the City's recreation and open space system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to apply for Federal and State grants as they become available especially DEM grant programs</li> </ul>	9,12	0
Expand services and facilities at the Higginson Avenue Sports Complex.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of Recreation will continue to seek grants and programs to facilitate expanded Recreational opportunities</li> <li>• Recreation Director will work closely with CF School Dept to facilitate school sports</li> </ul>	9,12	S
Supplement municipal efforts to achieve a high level of maintenance throughout the recreation and open space system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solicit human resources and financial support from private interests and organizations</li> <li>• Explore cooperative methods which have the potential to promote resident use of recreation facilities beyond the borders of the City.</li> </ul>	12	0
Reinforce linkages with the Blackstone River with particular emphasis on the proposed Blackstone Valley Bicycle Trail Blackstone Valley Tourism Council river tours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work closely with the Blackstone Tourism Council and N RI Chamber and the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission</li> </ul>	1,12	0

<p>With full recognition of local financial constraints, the City will cooperate, support or otherwise participate in State, Federal or private programs which will assist in developing or maintaining the City's recreation and open space system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to apply for Federal and State grants as they become available especially DEM grant programs</li> </ul>	<p>12</p>	<p>0</p>
<p>Continue to ensure equal recreation opportunities and access to these opportunities for all residents of the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work closely with the Ralph J Holden Community Center</li> <li>• Continue to work closely with the School Department</li> <li>• Continue to provide general recreational opportunities</li> </ul>	<p>12</p>	<p>0</p>

<b>CIRCULATION GOAL/POLICY</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESOURCE</b>	<b>GOAL</b>
Cooperate with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit proposals to the Transportation Advisory Committee for possible inclusion in the TIP program</li> </ul>	14	0
Continue efforts to improve public parking areas along the City's commercial streets, around municipal buildings and schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to apply for Federal and State grants as they become available especially DEM grant programs</li> </ul>	3,4,9,14	0
Strictly enforce parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance especially in residential areas. Inadequate parking is not just a matter of convenience but is a public safety concern. Streets clogged with automobiles can prevent public safety vehicles from reaching a fire or victim of an accident or crime in a timely manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue Community Policing program</li> <li>• Planning Director should continue to work closely with the Building Official and Zoning Board to identify problems</li> </ul>	13	0
Improve traffic control signage throughout the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue efforts to replace street signs</li> <li>• Include in tri-city planning effort</li> </ul>	13,14	0
Enforce zoning provisions which provide for safe and unobstructed sight distances at street intersections and halt "visual pollution" caused by inappropriately placed advertising structures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Director should continue to work closely with the Building Official and Zoning Board to identify problems</li> </ul>	4,9	0
Support the development of the Blackstone River Bikeway.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to acquire requisite parcels and easements</li> <li>• Continue public planning process</li> </ul>	1,5,9,11,16	M

<p>Pursue the redevelopment of the Pawtucket/Central Falls train depot site that straddles the CF Pawt. Border</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue joint planning &amp; implementation process with the City of Pawt.</li> <li>• Plan for intermodal development</li> <li>• Continue effort to locate MBTA stop in Central Falls</li> </ul>	<p>12</p>	<p>0</p>
<p>Reinforce linkages with the Blackstone River</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link CF to Blackstone Valley Bicycle Trail</li> <li>• Continue Blackstone Valley Tourism Council river tours</li> </ul>	<p>9,12</p>	<p>0</p>

# MAPS

## CITY PROFILE

### City of Central Falls

The City of Central Falls was formerly a part of the Town of Lincoln, and was incorporated as a city February 21, 1895. Central Falls, the smallest municipality in the state (1.3 square miles), is also one of the most densely populated cities in the country. This tiny city just west of Pawtucket, on the Blackstone River has a history of industrial development. Central Falls was at one time called Chocolate Mill, after the chocolate factory established there in 1790. Due to this inherent characteristic, Central Falls and Pawtucket are often alluded to as the "Twin Cities". Historically, it is best known as one of the areas where King Philip wreaked vengeance upon the white settlers, and a tablet at High and Aigan Streets marks the stop where Captain Michael Pierce, and a company of Plymouth soldiers were ambushed and almost annihilated by Indians, March 26, 1676. Central Falls has several large manufacturing plants, with its economy sustained primarily by a diversified manufacturing industry.

### Government

Established in 1730, Incorporated in 1895

**Form of Government:** City Council headed by a Mayor

**Council Meetings:** The second Monday monthly at 7:00 pm

**Fiscal Year Begins:** July 1

#### City Hall

580 Broad Street

Central Falls, RI 02863

FAX: 727-7410

Hours: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm (from Sept. 16) 9:00 am - 4:00 pm (from June 16)

- **City of Central Falls** <http://www.centralfallsri.us>
- **Central Falls Municipal Departments and Officials** <http://www.muni-info.state.ri.us>
- **Find Central Falls' State Senator and Representative** <http://www.sec.state.ri.us>

### General Demographic Characteristics

- **Population:** The population count for The City of Central Falls as of April 1, 2000, was 18,928. This represented a 7.32% increase (1,291 persons) from the 1990 population of 17,637.
- **Rank :** In 2000 Central Falls ranks 19th in population among Rhode Island's 39 cities and towns.
- **Median Age:** In 2000 the median age of the population in Central Falls was 30.2.
- **Age Distribution:** In 2000, 70.8% or 13,397 persons residing in Central Falls were 18 years of age or older. 12,485 were 21 and over, 2,502 were 62 and over, and 2,177 were 65 and over.
- **Population Density:** The 2000 population density of Central Falls is 15,652 persons per square mile of land area. Central Falls contains 1.21 square miles of land area (3,132,076 Sq. meters) (773.96 acres) and 0.08 square miles of water area (211,996 square meters) (51.2 acres).
- **Housing Units:** The total number of housing units in the The City of Central Falls as of April 1, 2000, was 7,270. This represented a decrease of 67 units from the 7,337 housing units in 1990. Of the 7,270 housing units 574 were vacant. 6 of the vacant units were for seasonal or recreational use.
- **Households:** In 2000, there are 6,696 households in Central Falls with an average size of 2.74 persons. Of these, 4,356 were family households with an average family size of 3.38 persons.
- **Race:**
  - >Total Population of One Race: 17,532W
  - >White: 10,820
  - > Black of African American: 1,101
  - > American Indian and Alaska Native: 108
  - > Asian: 128
  - > Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander : 8
  - > Some Other Race: 5,367
  - >Total Population of two or More Races: 1,396
  - >Hispanic or Latino: In 2000, 9,041 persons of Hispanic origin resided in Central Falls. This represented 47.8% of the population. An increase of 3,922 or 76.6% from the 1980 Hispanic population of 5,119.

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# City of Central Falls



RI DEM 2003

## Legend

Settlement Agreement Sites

### Tax Credit Mills

#### Status

Certifiable

Completed

Designated

Partially Complete

Preliminary

Unknown

All Roads

### CERCLA Sites

#### Hyperlink to EPA

Yes

No

L-UST (1999)

Ponds

### Streams

#### Stream Order

2

3

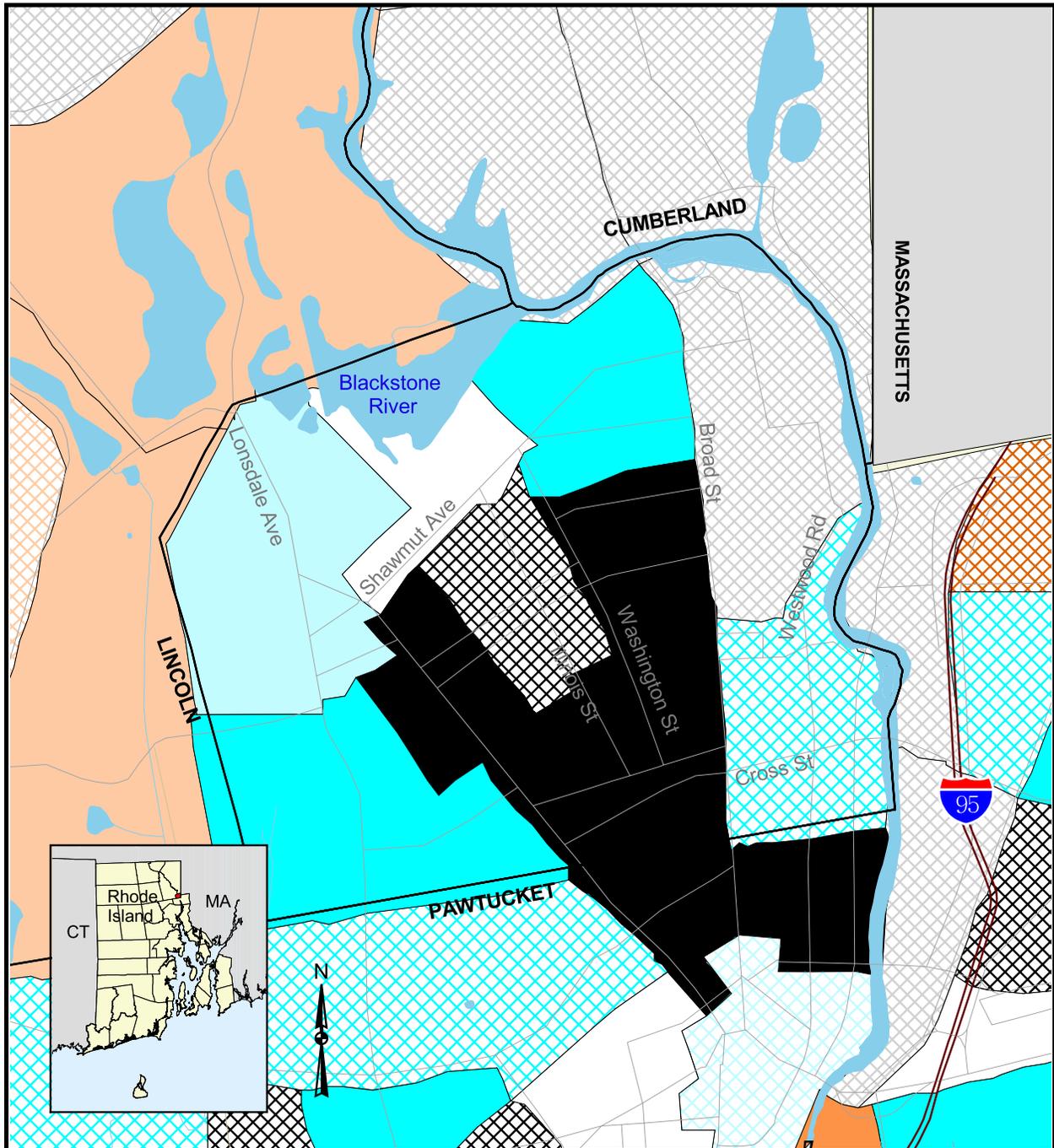
4

5

RI Municipalities

Massachusetts

# 1990 Population Distribution in Central Falls, Rhode Island



Population Density (per square mile)

	Less than 250		5001 - 6500
	251 - 500		6501 - 8000
	501 - 1000		8001 - 9500
	1001 - 1500		9501 - 11000
	1501 - 2500		11001 - 15000
	2501 - 3500		15001 - 20000
	3501 - 5000		More than 20000

- Primary Roads
- Streams
- Ponds

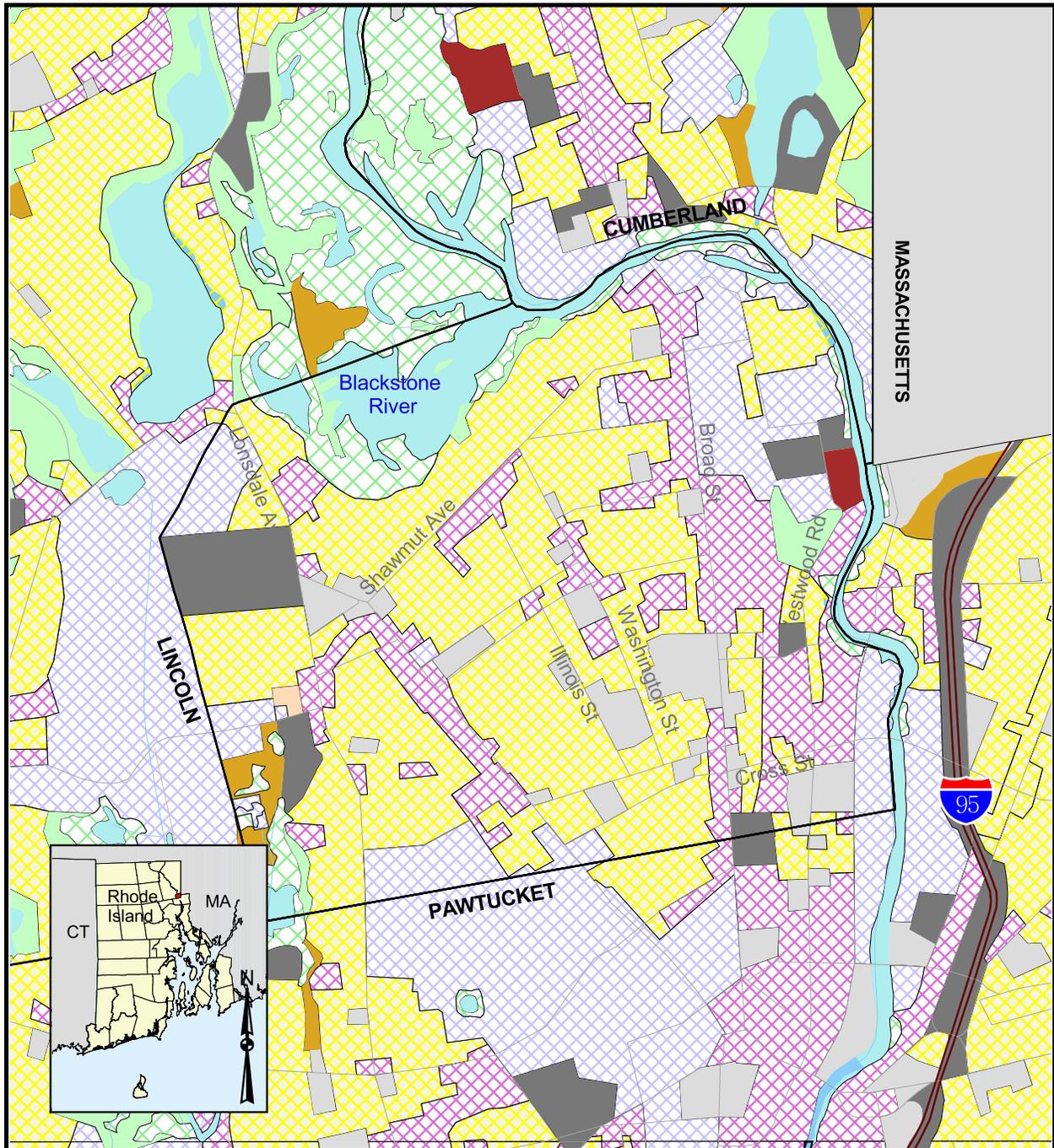
0 0.25 0.5 Kilometers

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Scale = 1:20,000

Source: All data layers used to create this map were produced by the University of Rhode Island's Environmental Data Center for the Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS). Population data were collected by the U.S. Census Bureau.

# 1995 Land Use in Central Falls, Rhode Island



Land Use Classes			
Agriculture	Industrial	Vacant Land	Primary Roads
Barren Areas	Infrastructure	Waste Disposal	Streams
Beaches	Mining	Fresh Water	Ponds
Brushland	Residential	Wetland	
Commercial	Rock Outcrops		
Commercial/Industrial	Salt Water		
Developed	Sandy Areas		
Forest	Urban		

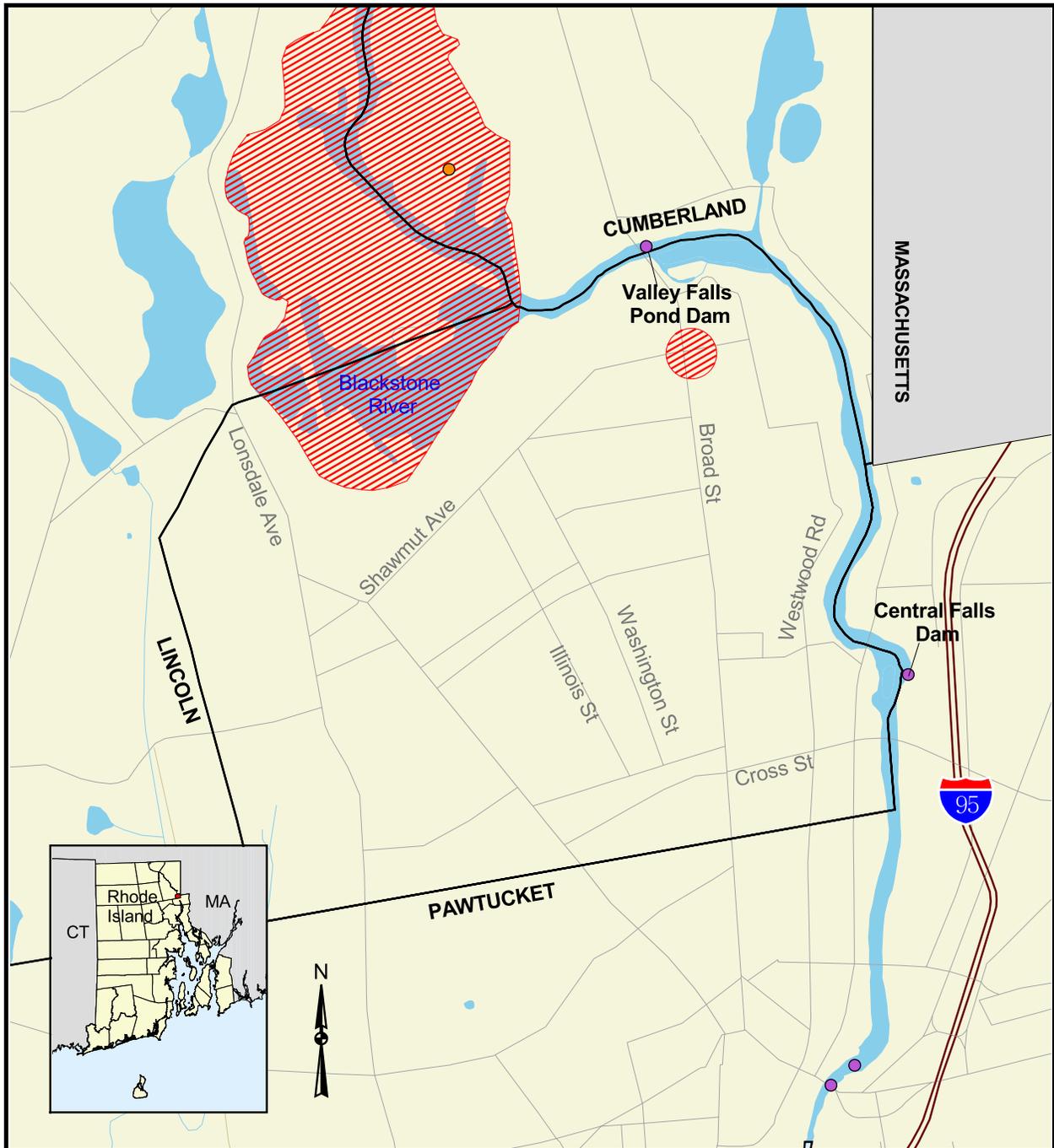
Source: All data layers used to create this map were produced by the University of Rhode Island's Environmental Data Center for the Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS). Land use data were developed from 1988 aerial photography and updated using 1992-1995 orthophotography.

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

0 0.25 0.5 Kilometers

Scale = 1:20,000

# Rare Species Habitat Distribution and Restoration Sites in Central Falls, Rhode Island



## Restoration Type

- Artificial Reef
- Salt Marsh
- Seagrass (Eelgrass)
- Anadromous Fish Habitat
- Grassland
- Riverine Floodplain
- Shellfish/Water Quality
- ▨ Rare Species Habitats

0 0.25 0.5 Kilometers

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Scale = 1:20,000

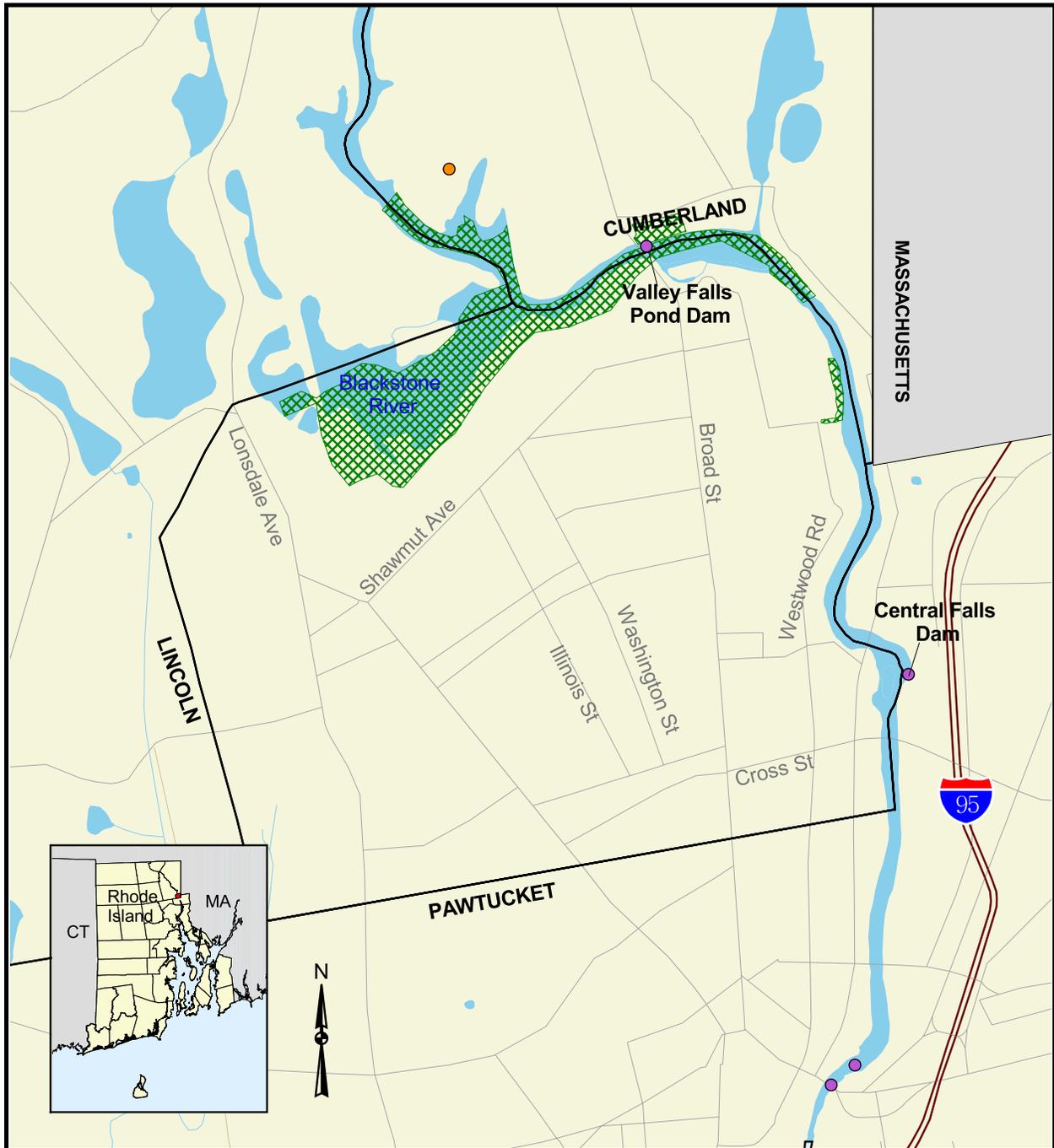
Primary Roads

Streams

Ponds

Source: All data layers used to create this map were produced by the University of Rhode Island's Environmental Data Center for the Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS).

# Restoration Sites and Public Land in Central Falls, Rhode Island



## Restoration Type

- Artificial Reef
- Salt Marsh
- Seagrass (Eelgrass)
- Anadromous Fish Habitat
- Grassland
- Riverine Floodplain
- Shellfish/Water Quality

Public Lands

0 0.25 0.5 Kilometers

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Scale = 1:20,000

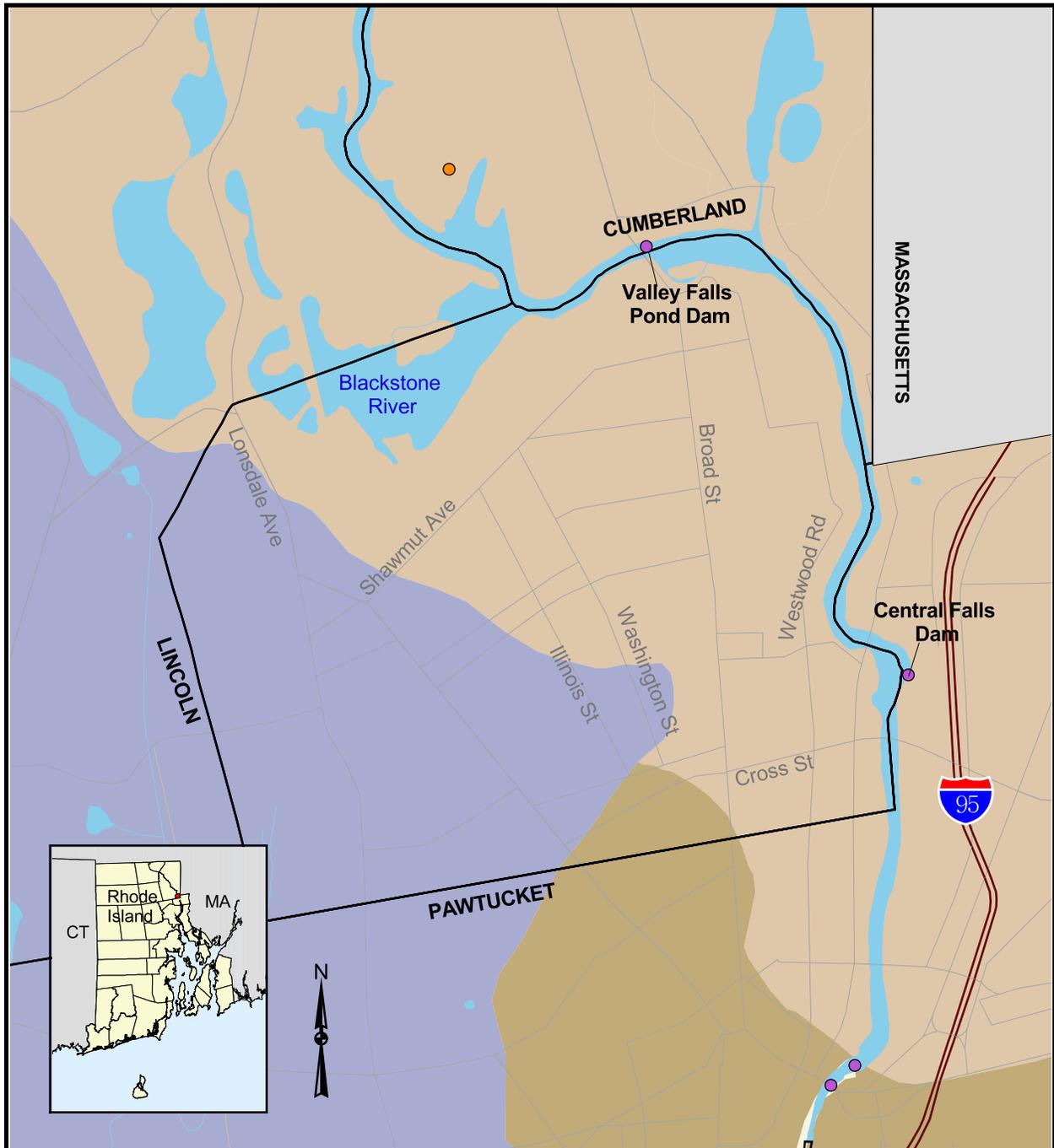
Primary Roads

Streams

Ponds

Source: All data layers used to create this map were produced by the University of Rhode Island's Environmental Data Center for the Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS).

# Restoration Sites and Watershed Basins in Central Falls, Rhode Island



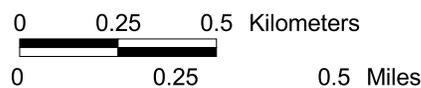
## Restoration Type

- Artificial Reef
- Salt Marsh
- Seagrass (Eelgrass)
- Anadromous Fish Habitat
- Grassland
- Riverine Floodplain
- Shellfish/Water Quality

## Watershed Basins

- Blackstone River
- Moshassuck River
- Providence & Seekonk Rivers

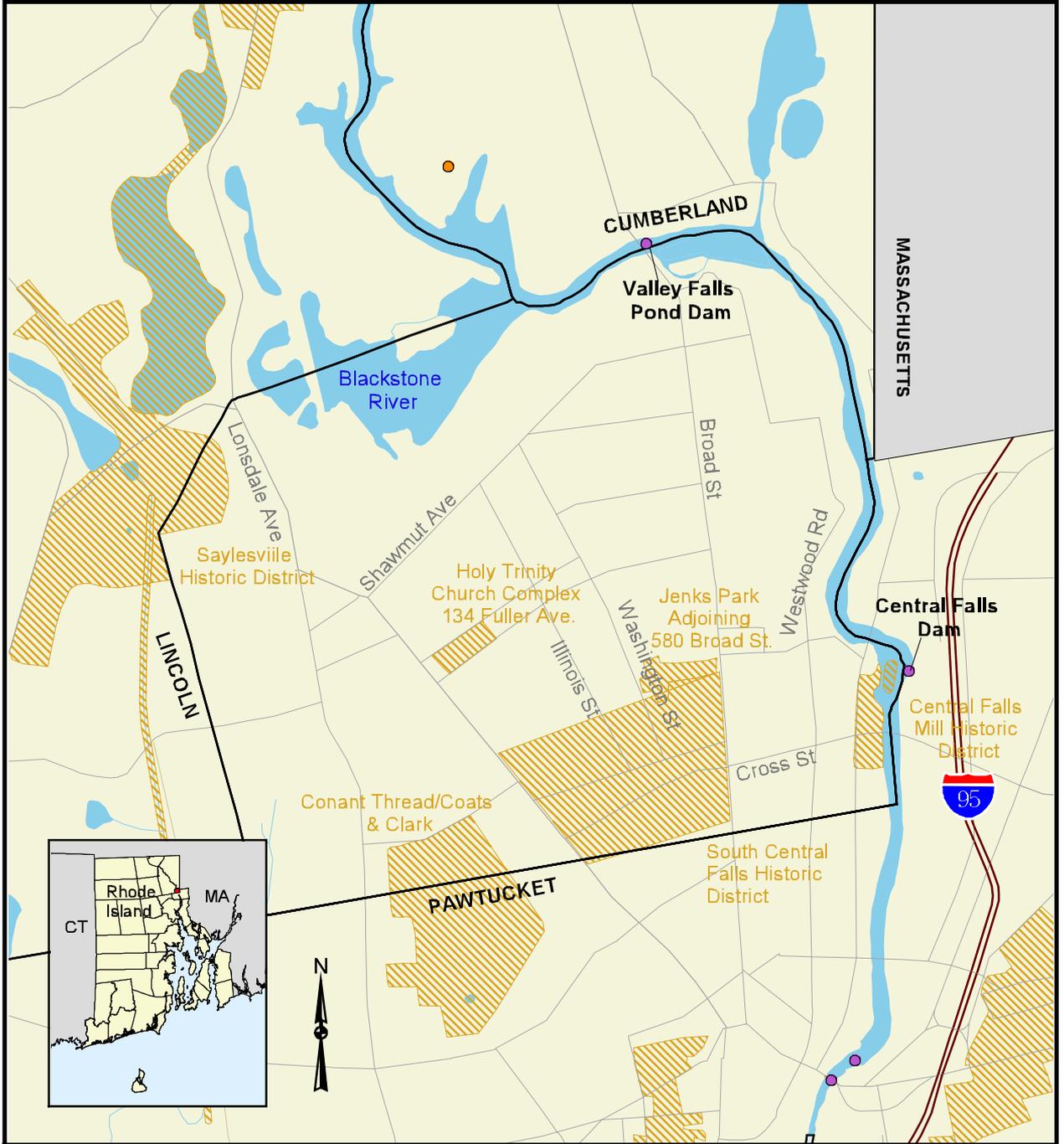
- Primary Roads
- Streams
- Ponds



Scale = 1:20,000

Source: All data layers used to create this map were produced by the University of Rhode Island's Environmental Data Center for the Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS).

# Restoration Sites and Historic Districts in Central Falls, Rhode Island



## Restoration Type

- Artificial Reef
- Salt Marsh
- Seagrass (Eelgrass)
- Anadromous Fish Habitat
- Grassland
- Riverine Floodplain
- Shellfish/Water Quality

▨ Historic Districts

0 0.25 0.5 Kilometers



0 0.25 0.5 Miles



Scale = 1:20,000

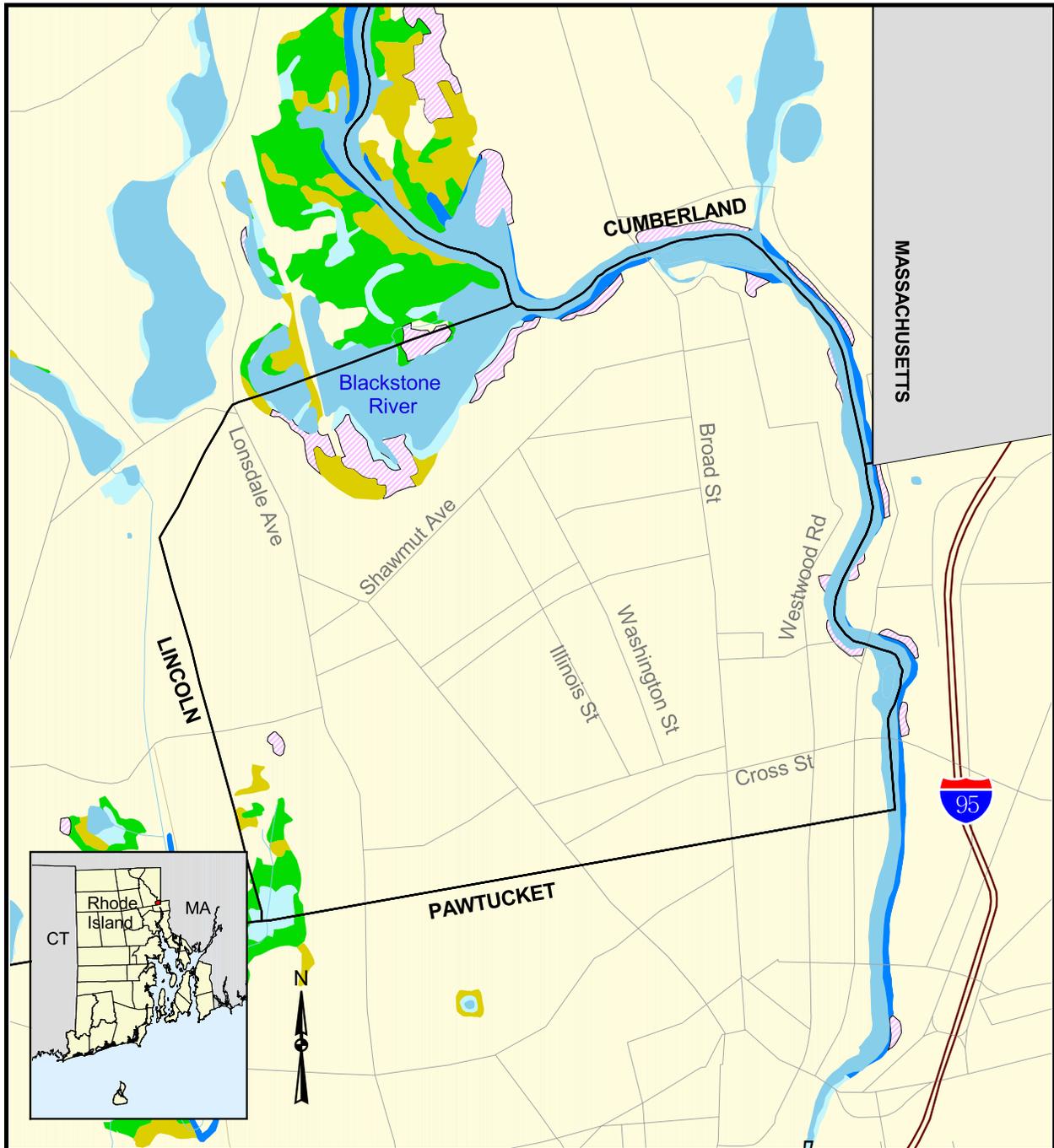
▬ Primary Roads

▬ Streams

● Ponds

Source: All data layers used to create this map were produced by the University of Rhode Island's Environmental Data Center for the Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS).

# Wetland Distribution in Central Falls, Rhode Island (1988)



## Wetland Types

- Emergent Fen
- Emergent Marsh
- Estuarine Emergent
- Estuarine Scrub-Shrub
- Coniferous Forested
- Dead Forested Wetland

- Deciduous Forested Wetland
- Marine/Est. Rocky Shore
- Marine/Est. Unconsolidated
- Open Water
- Riverine Nontidal
- Riverine Tidal
- Scrub-Shrub Wetland
- Upland

- Primary Roads
- Streams
- Ponds

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

0 0.25 0.5 Kilometers

Scale = 1:20,000

Source: All data layers used to create this map were produced by the University of Rhode Island's Environmental Data Center for the Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS). Wetland data were developed from 1988 aerial photography.

# City of Central Falls



RI DEM 2003

0 1,857 Feet



8

## Legend

### Primary Road

### Road Class

- Interstate Highway
- US Route
- State Route

### Ponds

### Streams

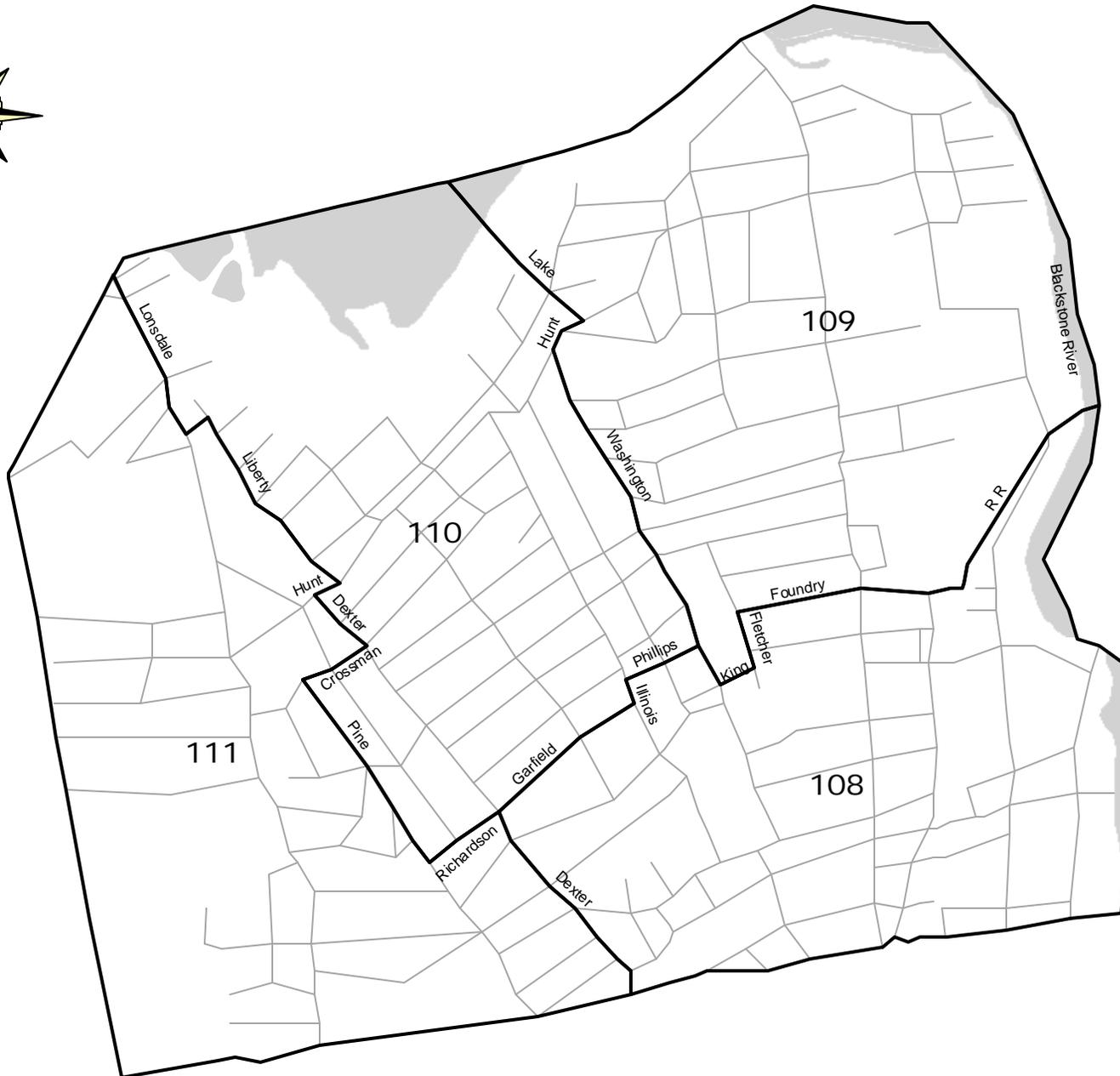
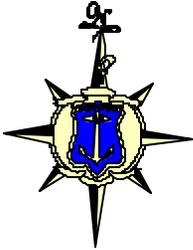
### Stream Order

- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

### Soil Map Units



# Central Falls 2000 Census Tracts



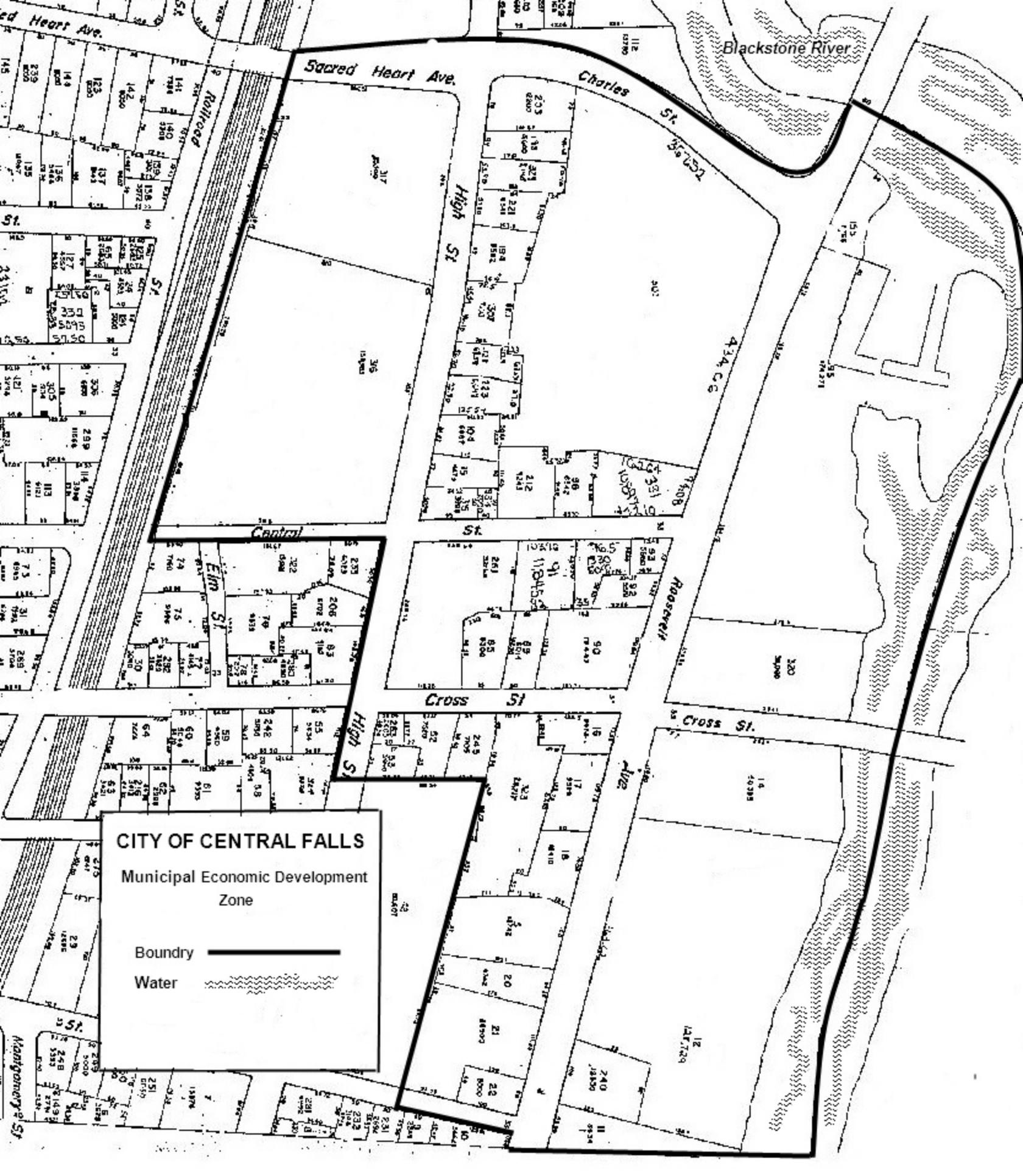
# City of Central Falls



8

## Legend

- All Roads
- Ponds
- Streams**
- Stream Order**
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Wetland
- FEMA Floodzone**
- FloodZone**
- A
- V
- X500
- Watershed
- RI Municipalities
- Massachusetts



**CITY OF CENTRAL FALLS**

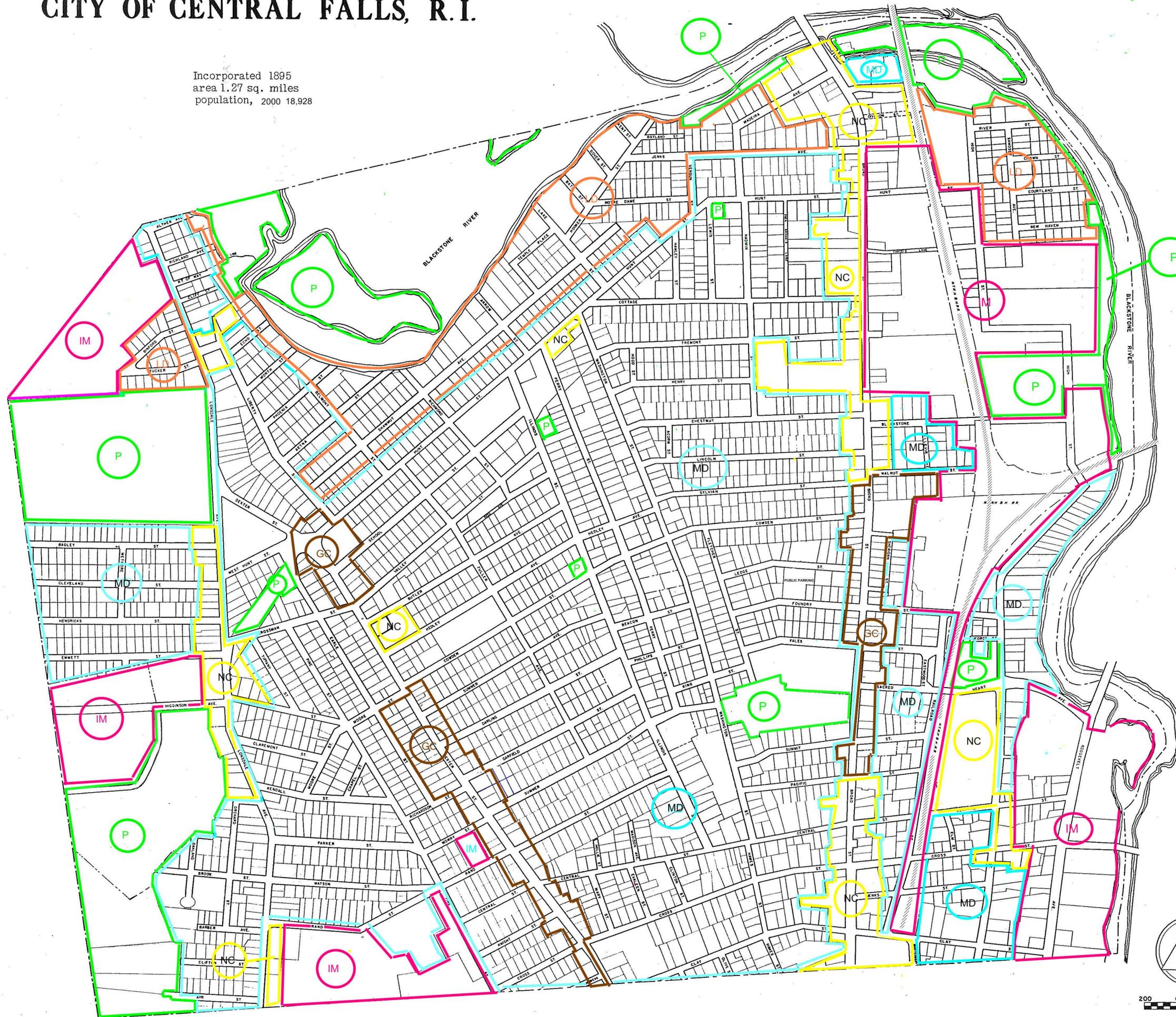
Municipal Economic Development  
Zone

Boundry

Water

# CITY OF CENTRAL FALLS, R.I.

Incorporated 1895  
area 1.27 sq. miles  
population, 2000 18,928



**FUTURE LAND USE PLAN  
2007 - 2012**

- LD Low density residential  
maximum 8 units per acre
- MD Medium density residential  
maximum 8-21 units per acre
- NC Neighborhood commercial
- GC General and Downtown Commercial
- IM Industrial and mill building reuse
- P Parks and open space

