

## **PUBLIC NOTICE: INVITATION OF COMMENTS**

Pursuant to *Section 45-22.2-9(c)(2) of the General Laws of Rhode Island*, the Division of Statewide Planning hereby invites comments from the public, regional and state agencies, contiguous municipalities, and other interested parties regarding the local comprehensive plan document listed below.

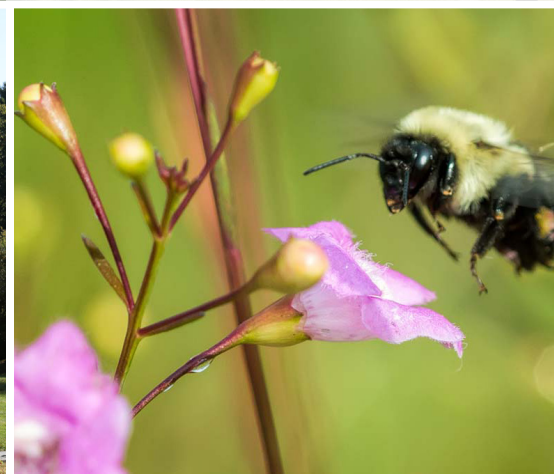
### **Richmond – COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE ID#: RMD-CP-21**

*Posted April 20, 2021*

The Richmond *Comprehensive Community Plan Update* is currently under review by the State to ensure “consistency with the goals and intent established in the [Comprehensive Planning Act] and in the State Guide Plan.” The comment period shall extend for thirty days from the posted date. All comments should reference the **document title and identifier number**, and should be submitted to:

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# COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE

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Town of Richmond, RI

ADOPTED MARCH 2021





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# 1

## Introduction



Richmond is a rural town, part of Washington County, in southern Rhode Island, approximately 40.6 square miles. It has historically been a farming and forestry community with small mill villages along its waterways. Today, residents value its open spaces and natural features. They choose to live here because of its small-town feel and quiet streets. Its abundant natural areas, historic villages, scenic views and vistas of forests, fields and farms, and active agricultural businesses define Richmond's rural character. Residents envision Richmond as a community that balances the protection of its rural characteristics while encouraging development that builds its tax base.

The guiding document to reach this vision is the 2021 Richmond Comprehensive Community Plan. This plan is an update to the 2016 amended plan and supersedes all other versions. Overarching goals that are carried forward into this plan are to:

- › Relate future land uses to the environmental capacity of the land and the capacity of existing and planned public facilities and services;
- › Safeguard natural and cultural assets;
- › Promote the production of affordable housing; and
- › Encourage economic development.

The Richmond Comprehensive Community Plan sets a long-range, 20-year guide for community actions, divided into seven elements:

- › Open Space and Recreation;
- › Natural and Cultural Resources;
- › Economic Development;
- › Circulation;
- › Public Services and Facilities;
- › Housing; and
- › Land Use.

Each element describes existing conditions, public input received from the public participation program, a vision, and how the Town is meeting, or will meet, that vision. Implementation is provided by a series of goals, policies, and action items. Each action item is assigned a timeframe within which it will be implemented. Short-term actions are estimated to be completed within one to five years of the adoption of the Comprehensive Community Plan. Mid-term items will be completed within six to 10 years. Long-term actions will be implemented within 10 to 20 years. Influencing the timeframe are municipal financial and staffing resources.

The Richmond Comprehensive Community Plan is used regularly by the Town in a variety of ways. It serves as a foundation and blueprint for sound and informed land use decisions. The Comprehensive Community Plan also umbrellas the Zoning Ordinance, Zoning Map, and Land Development and Subdivision Regulations. Any amendments to these documents must be reviewed for consistency with the Comprehensive Community Plan and future development must be consistent with its policies. The Town also shall review and, if necessary, amend these documents each time that the Comprehensive Community Plan is amended to ensure that they align with the Town's articulated vision and goals.

The Town also uses the Comprehensive Community Plan to leverage State and Federal funding. By identifying specific actions in the Comprehensive Community Plan, the Town demonstrates it is committed to its implementation.

## Consistency with State Plans

The Richmond Comprehensive Community Plan must be consistent with the State Guide Plan, as amended, which encompasses many of the elements required in the Comprehensive Community Plan. State Guide Plans and other state plans referenced in this document are:

- › Land Use 2025 (State Guide Plan Element 121)
- › Moving Forward Rhode Island 2040: Long Range Transportation Plan (State Guide Plan Element 611)
- › Rhode Island Water 2030 (State Guide Plan Element 724)
- › Forest Resources Management Plan (State Guide Plan Element 161)
- › Solid Waste Management Plan (State Guide Plan Element 171)
- › State Housing Plan (State Guide Plan Element 421)
- › Economic Development Plan (State Guide Plan Element 211)
- › A Vision for Rhode Island Agriculture: Five-Year Strategic Plan (May 2011)
- › Statewide Strategic Plan for Office and Industrial Site Development (November 2009)

## Regional Coordination

The Town of Richmond works closely with its neighboring communities. Recent and on-going projects include, but are not limited to:

- › Shannock Village Design Guidelines with Charlestown (Land Use Element)
- › Affordable housing efforts with the Washington County Regional Planning Council and Washington County Community Development Corporation (Housing Element)
- › Economic development strategies, also with the Washington County Regional Planning Council (Economic Development Element)
- › Protection of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed with Hopkinton, Westerly, the Wood-Pawcatuck Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council and the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association (Natural and Cultural Resources Element)
- › Clark Memorial and Langworthy Libraries

Richmond also shares social and public services with neighboring communities, including the Chariho Regional School District with Charlestown and Hopkinton. As discussed in the Public Services and Facilities Element, many medical and social services are not located in Richmond and residents must travel to obtain these services.

## Public Participation

The Richmond Comprehensive Community Plan is a public document and was developed with public input. The public participation program involved a workshop, community survey, working sessions with the Richmond Planning Board, and two public hearings, one each before the Richmond Planning Board and Richmond Town Council.

## Public Workshop

The public workshop was held during the evening on June 25, 2019 at the Richmond Middle School. The workshop involved a formal presentation followed by an open discussion with over 50 attendees. Each element was addressed through a series of questions led by a moderator. Comments were received during the open discussion as well as in response to a live polling exercise. After the open discussion, attendees were asked to visit stations set up around the room that addressed each of the plan's elements. The following is a summary of the major findings of the public workshop. Further details are provided in Appendix A.

Residents are primarily concerned with future development, including its location and appearance. They repeatedly emphasized that development should be consistent with the Town's rural character. A challenge, and a concern, is retaining the character of the Town's existing villages as new growth occurs. Residents are in favor of higher density infill development along the Route 138 and I-95 interchange. Outside of Wyoming, residents felt that the different areas of town should be approached differently. Conservation efforts should target forested and farmland areas while villages and growth centers should be targeted for new development and infill.

Residents encourage smaller businesses with better quality jobs. In addition to attracting new businesses, the Town needs to focus equal attention on incentives for existing businesses. Residents would welcome family entertainment establishments (theaters, cinema, etc.) and businesses that support visitors to the local parks and campgrounds. Residents also support the concept of home-based businesses.

Traffic is a concern to residents, specifically along Route 138. The highway is primarily a pass-through for travelers to the University of Rhode Island, Newport and Cape Cod. Some residents felt these travelers may be a missed opportunity as potential customers for local businesses. Many residents expressed a desire for more bike path trails and connections between villages and parks and other natural resources. For example, the North/South Trail is in the vicinity of Wyoming and therefore should be a connection to the village itself. Other transportation issues focus on Wyoming and traffic conflicts associated with numerous driveway accesses and the lack of sidewalks under I-95. Increased access and safety for pedestrians needs to be evaluated for this area.

Affordable housing opportunities were found to be a significant concern amongst many residents, particularly for those aged 55 and older. The Town's housing stock is comprised mostly of single-family residential homes, which places a restriction on people or families interested in alternative housing types such as assisted living facilities, multi-family apartments, condominiums or accessory dwelling units. Villages such as Wyoming and Shannock may offer opportunities to diversify the Town's housing opportunities and should be evaluated accordingly.

Finally, residents are satisfied overall with the level of public services offered, including police, fire protection, and schools. They want to maintain a rural, small town but still increase the tax base to reduce the tax burden on residential properties. Growth, however, should not adversely affect the valued abundance of Richmond's natural resources.



## Community Survey

Between the months of March and June, 2019, the Town of Richmond conducted an online survey of its residents for the Comprehensive Community Plan Update. The purpose of the survey was to gauge public opinion on the direction of growth and the Town's efforts to protect its character. Participants were asked questions relevant to specific sections of the Comprehensive Community Plan as a means to determine where revisions, deletions, or additions were needed. Additionally, they were asked to rank the Town's performance and efforts in fulfilling goals and providing services. The following is a summary of the survey findings. Details are found in Appendix A.

A total of 375 people took the survey and their responses reflected views expressed during the public workshop, in that residents value Richmond's rural character and want to protect it. When asked what three things they liked the most about Richmond, the majority responded with rural character, natural beauty, and safety. Many also commented on its friendly people, quietness, and scenic beauty, including views and vistas of farmland, wooded areas, rivers, historic buildings, and villages. Other respondents focused on the many state parks in town, close proximity to highway access, good school system, and the overall high quality of life.

Respondents to the survey were also asked to list the greatest challenges facing the Town. Many cited the need to manage growth while maintaining the character of the community, improving the visual appeal of the Town, and improving access and quality to recreational opportunities. Keeping taxes low and recognizing the lack of local employment opportunities were also frequent responses.

With regard to the pace and look of development, respondents were mostly neutral or in general agreement that commercial and residential development was located in areas appropriate for new growth. Nearly 81 percent of respondents felt that future growth was supported in areas with existing development (starting with infill) and immediately adjacent to existing villages that have public water (Wyoming and Shannock).

There was strong support for agriculture as well as promoting outdoor recreational opportunities to attract tourists. Other types of businesses favored by respondents included restaurants, retail, and medical and dental offices and services, as well as more light industry and manufacturing companies. Respondents were supportive of the Town investing in public services and facilities to encourage economic development in targeted locations.

Finally, respondents strongly supported the Town's continued effort to protect open space and preserve scenic views and vistas that contribute to the local rural character. To meet this goal, many were in support of the Town acquiring properties or purchasing development rights. Respondents concurred that the Town needs to do more to protect historic sites and buildings.

## Community Profile

The community profile shows trends in Richmond's socio-economic characteristics. Some of these details are also included in other elements of the Comprehensive Community Plan, but are discussed here to provide a comprehensive overview of the Town as an introduction and to set the stage for the plan and its vision.

Richmond is a small town. The 2017 US Census estimate reported Richmond's population at 7,608 - a slight decrease from 2010. In context with this trend, development slowed statewide at the end of the last decade, including in Richmond. The housing boom peaked in 2006 and was followed by the market and credit crash in 2008. This pushed Rhode Island and the nation into an economic recession and attributed to slower growth. In Rhode Island, these problems were compounded by a State budget crisis as well as record flooding in March 2010, which caused extensive damage to public and private property and temporary (and in some instances permanent) business closures.

**Table 1-1 Richmond's Total Population Change, 1980-2017**

Year	Population	Change
1980	4,018	-N/A
1990	5,351	33.00%
2000	7,222	34.90%
2010	7,708	6.70%
2017	7,608	-1.30%

Source: 2010 Census, ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2017

The state has been slow to recover, and Washington County continues to be relatively stable in its population despite a slight decrease since 2010. Table 1-1 compares 2017 estimated population changes in other Washington County communities. Like Richmond, most communities throughout Washington County experienced slight decreases in its populations between 2010 and 2017. On the other hand, Exeter and South Kingstown experienced slight increases in growth.

**Table 1-2 Comparison of Population Growth in Washington County Towns**

City/Town	2000	2010	2017 (Estimate)	Change 2010-2017
Charlestown	7,859	7,827	7,812	-0.19%
Exeter	6,045	6,425	6,527	1.59%
Hopkinton	7,836	8,188	8,119	-0.84%
Narragansett	16,361	15,868	15,504	-2.29%
New Shoreham	1,010	1,051	830	-21.03%
North Kingstown	26,326	26,486	26,160	-1.23%
Richmond	7,222	7,708	7,608	-1.30%
South Kingstown	27,921	30,639	30,788	0.49%
Westerly	<u>22,966</u>	<u>22,787</u>	<u>22,567</u>	<u>-0.97%</u>
Rhode Island	1,048,319	1,052,567	1,057,315	0.45%

Sources: 2010 Census, ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2017

In 2013, the Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program (SPP) projected that population throughout the state would continue to grow at a relatively constant rate. Richmond's 2010 population was estimated to be 7,708 residents. For planning purposes and the Richmond Comprehensive Community Plan, the Town is presuming slower growth than projected by the state in its 20-year outlook, which estimated a 2030 population of approximately 9,838 residents and a 2040 population of approximately 10,855 residents. The Land Use Element and Housing Element of this plan outline policies to direct where this population will locate. It should be noted that the Town expects economic conditions to gradually improve and home construction to increase.

Richmond's population remained very homogeneous; in the 2010 Census, 96.5 percent identified themselves as white, 0.5 percent as black or African American, 0.5 percent as American Indian or Alaska Native, and 0.5 percent as Asian. Less than 2 percent indicated that they were Hispanic or Latino. And, fewer than 2 percent listed themselves as being of mixed race. These percentages are relatively unchanged from the 2000 Census.

The Town's population is aging. Table 1-3 shows the changes in age distribution between 2010 and 2017. In 2017, the median age was 44.3 years old, up from 41.2 in 2010. The percentage of school-aged children (19 years and younger) decreased, which is reflective of school enrollment decline discussed in the Public Services and Facilities Element. Further, the number of young adults and young families decreased. Many who grew up in Richmond in the 1980s and 1990s have not returned to live here, perhaps discouraged by high housing costs and increased tax burdens. The number of residents 45 years and older, however, increased from 33.3 percent in 2010 to an estimated 35.2 percent in 2017.

**Table 1-3 Age Distribution of Richmond Population**

Age	2010	2017 (ACS Estimate)
19 years and younger	26.0%	23.8%
20 to 44 years	31.1%	27.9%
45 to 64 years	33.3%	35.2%
65 years and older	9.8%	13.2%
Median age	41.2	44.3

Sources: 2010 Census, ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2017

Richmond is a relatively well-educated community. In 2009, more than half (62.5 percent) of Richmond's population 25 years or older was estimated to have taken some college courses or completed higher education degrees, including Associate's, Bachelor's, Graduate, or professional degrees. About 30 percent of the population was estimated to have only a high school diploma or equivalency.

According to the 2017 Census, the make-up of Richmond households changed little from the 2010 Census. The number of households increased from 2,911 to 3,025. The average family household size, however, decreased slightly from 2.84 persons to 2.67 persons. While these changes are small, the increase in households is not reflective of additional families

moving into Richmond. Overall, the number of families is decreasing and the size of these households is shrinking as well.

The distribution of household incomes is listed in Table 1-4. The American Community Survey (ACS) estimated that in 2017, median incomes increased from 2010. This could be influenced by recent economic recovery and lower unemployment and foreclosure rates in the state. The Town's population maintains a higher median income than the state.

In 2020, the country was heavily impacted by the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). In Rhode Island, the pandemic resulted in tens of thousands of infections, over 2,000 lives lost to the illness (and counting), pressure on the healthcare and education system and significant increases in unemployment claims. The pandemic required changes in the way institutions and businesses operate, which are still ongoing at the present time. Although the number of reported cases of COVID-19 are more prevalent in larger communities such as Providence and Pawtucket, Richmond is adjusting to the impacts brought on by the pandemic and will continue to do so over the next couple of years. It is not clear how these impacts will affect the population, municipal and educational operations or the local economy.

**Table 1-4 Comparison of Household Incomes in Richmond**

	2000	2010	2017 (Estimate)
Less than \$14,999	8.0%	5.5%	–
\$15,000-24,999	15.0%	3.9%	–
\$25,000-49,999	42.0%	28.0%	–
\$50,000 or more	35.0%	62.5%	–
Median Household Income	\$70,892 <sup>1</sup>	\$77,058 <sup>1</sup>	\$98,234 <sup>1</sup>
State Median Household Income	\$55,677 <sup>1</sup>	\$52,438 <sup>1</sup>	\$61,043 <sup>1</sup>

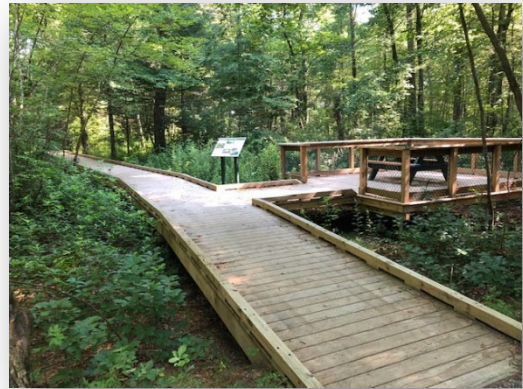
Sources: 2000 & 2010 Census, ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2017

<sup>1</sup> All dollar amounts adjusted to 2017 dollars via CPI Inflation Calculator, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

# 2

## Open Space and Recreation

The purpose of the Open Space and Recreation Element is to establish a long-range guide of community actions to develop policies and initiatives that manage and protect open space and recreation resources in Richmond. To understand the role of this element and its links to other elements within this



Comprehensive Community Plan and other guiding documents, definitions needed to be articulated and agreed upon.

Sources such as the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) and *Ocean State Outdoors: Rhode Island's State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)* helped to develop definitions. Open space as referred to in Richmond's Comprehensive Community Plan is defined as:

"...undeveloped or partially developed real property that includes, but is not limited to, the following: conservation land, forested land, wetlands, recreation land, management areas, agricultural land, critical habitat, recreational areas, and corridor parks. Such lands may include amenities such as small parks, green buffers along roadways, or any open area that is owned by an agency. While many parcels are specifically designated as open space, open space may also refer to undesignated, undeveloped land with particular conservation or recreation interest."

Recreation can also be classified different ways based on the level of site development needed. Recreation opportunities are divided into *developed recreation* and *natural areas*:

Developed recreation offers some site development with amenities. Examples include active recreation areas such as, but not limited to, game fields and courts, pools, boat

ramps, campsites, picnic areas or shelters, paved trails, restrooms, and meeting rooms. Some level of organization or programming can also be provided.

Natural areas are open spaces and other sites that allow for passive recreation such as, but not limited to, walking, hiking, biking, fishing, bird watching, and kayaking/canoeing with little or no public facilities. Parking may be provided, but typically these sites do not offer additional amenities to the users. Examples include forested areas, beaches, riverways, open fields and other wildlife habitats.

Of course, some areas may overlap these definitions. As an example, a state park of mostly forested areas can provide paved parking and restroom facilities near their entrances, but the remainder of the site is left in its natural state for hiking or bird watching.

Based on these definitions, the Open Space and Recreation Element is closely linked with the Natural and Cultural Resources Element because most of Richmond's recreation and open space resources are associated with its natural environment. Both Elements should be considered when balancing the need for open space with natural resource protection. Further, this element is also linked to the Public Services and Facilities Element, which includes the recreation areas managed by the Town in its efforts to diversify recreation opportunities.

## Community Survey and Pubic Workshop

The Richmond Community Survey and public workshop allowed residents and property owners to comment on policies that can protect important natural and cultural resources (see Appendix A for Public Participation Summary). Results show support for protecting the Town's rural character, which is reflected in its abundant natural resources, open spaces, and historic and cultural amenities. Most cited these resources as the reason why they live in Richmond, and felt the Town was doing a good job in protecting its rural character.

Most of those responding to the community survey felt that the Town should promote the numerous outdoor recreation opportunities in the area to attract tourists, including farms and building agricultural tourism in Richmond. Residents felt that the Town should try to attract and/or create developed recreation facilities, including sports fields, playgrounds, water parks and swimming pools.

Respondents felt the Town was doing a good job in protecting water quality and would support practices such as the transfer or purchase of development rights, property acquisition, and conservation easements to protect farm land, forested areas, and lands abutting rivers and streams.

## Regional Opportunities for Open Space and Recreation

Richmond cannot ignore its regional role and responsibility in preserving open space and providing recreation opportunities. The Town's location on Interstate 95 (I-95) Exit 3, only 10 miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean, offers the Town's residents recreation and open space experiences within 20 to 30 minutes traveling time from home. For example, swimming opportunities within a 15 to 20 minute travel radius include some of the finest ocean front



beaches in the region; a state-maintained freshwater beach at Burlingame and picnicking complexes at Arcadia, Burlingame and Beach Pond.

There are five golf courses in Richmond: four eighteen-hole courses (Richmond Country Club, Meadowbrook, Beaver River, The Preserve) and one nine-hole course (Pinecrest). Each offers clubhouse and restaurant facilities (see Economic Development Element.)

Also in the area of developed recreation, the three Chariho Towns sponsor organized sports leagues, such as Little League Baseball, Girl's Softball, Chariho Youth Soccer Association, Chariho Cowboys football/cheerleading as well as all the programs offered by the regionalized Chariho school system. These organizations use fields in all the participating towns, and are owned either by the leagues themselves, the towns, or the Chariho Regional School District.

Such regional cooperation is more essential in order to ensure a variety of facilities and to prevent duplication of services and facilities at a time of increasingly scarce funding and rising costs. Coordination of recreation and conservation projects should be a regional goal.

Richmond lies in the midst of some of the largest federal and state-owned forest management areas and conservation areas in the state. Parts of the Arcadia and Carolina Management Areas are located in northern and western Richmond. In recent years RIDEM has been very active in acquiring key parcels to annex land adjacent to existing state preserves, and on the rivers and ponds. They have also acquired agricultural development rights. Regionally, the southwestern corner of Rhode Island has the state's most extensive network of permanent open space in forest and beaches due to state and federal conservation activities dating back to the 1930s. Many of the existing large management areas started as large federal land holdings from this period. At the time, there was a plan to create a north-south greenbelt of undeveloped forest land generally following the Connecticut-Rhode Island border. The north-south hiking trail proposed in the 1974 plan of the state's Trail Advisory Commission followed on this concept. The state's land use plan, Land Use 2025, also embraces this concept. RIDEM management areas in Richmond are Arcadia Management Area and Carolina Management Area.

In 2014, RIDEM acquired title to the 1,825-acre parcel held in trust for the State since 1937 by the Estate of Theakston de Coppet. The estate along Hillsdale Road was bequeathed to RIDEM for permanent land protection and passive recreation. The property consists of primarily woodlands, wetlands and streams, with frontage on the Beaver River and contains remnants of nineteenth century rural industrial development. While RIDEM is developing a stewardship plan, the property is open for hiking and wildlife viewing.

It is very fortunate that Richmond, a large town in area with a small population, has ready access to a wide variety of regional, recreational and conservation facilities. It is becoming increasingly important for the Town to work within the framework of regional organizations to maximize the value of available funds and staffing and volunteer efforts.

## Regional Provider of Open Space and Recreation Opportunities

Richmond also plays a much larger role than most communities in providing recreation and open space facilities to other Rhode Islanders and, to a considerable extent, people from other states. Situated near the ocean and I-95, with small villages and thousands of still rural upland acres, the southwest corner of the state has long been a favorite vacation and

recreation spot. Although Richmond has never been a resort in the way waterfront towns like Westerly, Charlestown and Narragansett have, it has been part of the upland country backdrop to the shoreline towns. Richmond's rivers and ponds provide excellent areas for canoeing and fishing. Forested areas offer great hunting, walking and hiking trails to observe wildlife and rural scenery. The many farms throughout town also offer rural views and vistas. Farming activities and accessory uses, such as farm stands, seasonal activities, like corn mazes, and educational programs, also support economic development in town through agritourism. Visitors are attracted to the experience of what the farms have to offer.

## Current Conditions and Trends

Understanding major trends is the best way to be effective at planning for recreation and open space. Recreation providers, especially small municipalities, need to be practical about the short and long term responsibilities involved with such facilities. In the next few years the general economic situation will require the careful planning and coordination of all providers in order to maximize the effects of the time, effort and money dedicated to activities and facilities. Among the trends likely to affect recreation and open space use are the following:

### Recreation

Traditionally, recreation activities in Rhode Island have focused on its natural resources. Since the 1960s, many state agencies have been working to develop an open space system that connects Narragansett Bay, Little Narragansett Bay and Block Island Sound to the forested areas in the western parts of the state. Today, through the SCORP, the state continues to pursue a statewide greenway system that effectively connects all the state's natural resources, parks, and open spaces. It is anticipated that this trend will continue.

The last decade saw major changes in recreation trends, particularly in the types and locations of recreation facilities. An example is the Arcadia Branch of the Ocean Community YMCA. These changes were driven largely by family economics requiring parents to work outside of the household, widespread use of daycare centers, and longer commuting distances to work, all resulting in generally less time for recreation, especially unstructured activity. Existing facilities, particularly sports fields, are generally over-extended during peak hours.

Tremendous growth in organized league sports, particularly for girls and women, has created a demand for more active recreation facilities. Many more children participate in all kinds of structured after-school recreation programs, ranging from baseball/softball and soccer to ballet and art classes, increasing the demand for certain facilities and staff. Municipal governments and school departments are likely to be pressured into providing more after-school programs for children.

Although Rhode Island has provided matching state grant funding for recreation facility acquisition and development, federal assistance is not assured. The years of massive federal funding are history and the responsibility of financing programs is falling, increasingly, to the state and municipal governments. Funding for new facilities or acquiring new open spaces as well as maintaining existing resources has become a hurdle for financially squeezed

municipal governments. It is highly likely that, unless programs are privately subsidized or fee-supported, fiscal resources will not be available for expansion of many new programs.

## Open Space

Open space resources discussed in this element is closely linked with the Natural and Cultural Resources Element and additional discussion of the items below can be found in that element. It describes conservation policies and activities, including the roles of the Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust and Conservation Commission.

Richmond residents overwhelmingly support Town-led conservation efforts. Open spaces are critical to preserving the Town's rural character. These spaces include critical fish and wildlife habitat, biological and water resources, cultural resources, historic features, scenic views and vistas of farmlands.

There is also growing awareness of the importance of the Wood-Pawcatuck watershed and protection of groundwater. The seven major rivers of the Wood-Pawcatuck watershed were designated as federally-recognized Wild and Scenic Rivers in 2019. Many of these rivers run through Richmond, including the Beaver, Pawcatuck, Queen-Usquepaugh and Wood. Tributaries include Glen Rock, Meadow, Roaring, White and Taney Brooks. The purpose of the designation is to preserve, protect and enhance the special environment, cultural and recreational values of the Wood-Pawcatuck watershed, and its Wild and Scenic Rivers and tributaries in Rhode Island and Connecticut for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

The State of Rhode Island, with strong voter support, continues to purchase and assist with purchases of key conservation lands in Richmond. These lands generally are adjacent to other state-owned land or water bodies. The state has also purchased development rights to farms in Richmond.

## Inventory and Assessment of Open Space and Recreation Resources

As discussed in the Natural and Cultural Resources Element, Richmond has several avenues to protect and enhance important natural areas and open spaces. Map 1 in Appendix B shows the major categories of ownership or jurisdiction of the more than 8,280 acres (32 percent of Richmond's total land mass) of protected lands in Richmond; a full listing is provided in Appendix C. There are an additional 6,835 acres (roughly 22 percent of Richmond's land mass) under the Farm, Forest and Open Space Program, although these lands are not permanently protected from development. Also not permanently protected but contributing to the open space and rural character of town are approximately 800 acres of private properties with recreational businesses. These include golf courses, campgrounds and fairgrounds. Overall, these properties included those owned and managed by:

- › RIDEM: Forestry Division and the Fish and Wildlife Division;
- › Town of Richmond and Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust;
- › Private, non-profit/non-governmental organizations (NGOs);

- › Private property owners who have sold or donated conservation easements;
- › Private owners of commercial recreational properties; and
- › Owners of properties registered under the Farm, Forest and Open Space Tax Program.

The Natural and Cultural Resources Element also offers further discussion of these resources and their protection.

## **Summary of Current Recreation and Open Space Activities in Richmond**

### **Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust**

The Land Trust is active throughout the year. Its mission is to identify, preserve, and protect open space, including forests, wildlife habitat, wetlands, and farmland, within the Town of Richmond, in perpetuity, to maintain the Town's rural character and ecological assets for the benefit of the public. The Trust's recent activities include:

- › Habitat improvement projects to benefit rare wildlife
- › Conservation of land in open space and to provide outdoor recreational activities
- › Invasive species control on Land Trust properties
- › Guided hikes on Land Trust properties
- › Friends of the Land Trust mailings in tax bills
- › Ongoing maintenance and construction of Town-owned trails

### **Richmond Conservation Commission**

The mission of the Richmond Conservation Commission is to be responsible for and promote conservation of Richmond's natural resources, help protect its valuable watershed resources, support conservation and preservation of the Town's natural areas, and strive to promote environmental stewardship and public understanding of sustainable land use practices. To fulfill its mission and core values, the Conservation Commission is engaged in a number of activities including:

- › The Town's annual Earth Day event, which includes volunteer cleanups and collection of recyclables along town roads and properties
- › Sponsorship of education programs about important topics such as night sky values, best management practices for groundwater protection, habitat conservation and planning for climate change
- › Providing public awareness of programs and announcements such as the state's annual Eco-Depot event held in town and various environmental topics through its website
- › Development of the Richmond Heritage Trail
- › Implementation of wildlife habitats such as the demonstration pollinator garden at Town Hall
- › Providing advisory review for development projects in Richmond to ensure that best design and management practices are implemented

### **Richmond Recreation Commission**

As of 2020, the Town does not have an active Recreation Commission. Current summer programs or annual activities, primarily for school-aged children, are organized by a part-time recreation director and include the following:

- › Summer Camp Program: Crafts, Field Trips, Summer Reading, First Aid Classes, Drug Education, Basketball and Co-ed Volleyball, Tennis, Fishing Skills/Bassmaster.
- › Huck Finn Fishing Derby, Bunny Breakfast and Egg Hunt, Tree Lighting Ceremony and visit with Santa.

### **Chariho Little League**

Chariho Little League provides the following programs to males and females in the three Chariho towns, ages 8 to 15:

- › T-Ball – 8 year olds – approximately 50 participants per year
- › Major/minor league program – 9 to 12 year olds – approximately 225 participants per year
- › Senior league program – 13 to 15 year olds – approximately 75 participants per year

### **Chariho Girls' Summer Softball League**

The Girls' Softball League provides programs for approximately 200 girls, ages 8 to 16 in the three Chariho towns. The League sponsors an average of 150 recreational, and 50 competitive softball games each summer. At present the League uses four sites: Richmond School Field, Chariho VoTech Field, Wicklund Field in Charlestown and the Chariho Athletic League Fields in Hopkinton.

### **Chariho Cowboys Football League**

The Chariho Cowboys Football League Mitey Mite division is open to youth ages 7 through 9 in the three town areas. Games are played against teams from throughout the state. A cheerleading squad is also offered as part of the program.

### **Chariho Youth Soccer Association**

The Chariho Youth Soccer Association is open to boys and girls in the three town areas for five age groups: under six, under eight, under ten, under 12 and under 14. Indoor and outdoor programs are offered.

### **Girl Scouts**

Girls ages five through 18 are active in scouting in Richmond. Each troop plans its own outdoor activities, usually several times a year.

### **Boy Scouts**

Boys ages five through 18 are active in scouting in Richmond. They are part of the Narragansett Council Boy Scouts of America Program. Older scouts have committed time

and leadership skills to complete open space and recreation projects in town, such as the Richmond Heritage Trail, as part of their Eagle Scout award.

### **Chariho Future Farmers of America (FFA)**

The FFA is an organization for high school students enrolled in agricultural organizations. Many teenagers in Richmond, both boys and girls, are members. The group volunteers often assist with community projects.

### **YMCA**

Located in Wyoming is the Arcadia Branch of the Ocean Community YMCA. The Branch offers a variety of programs including after-school programs, activities for teens, and adult wellness and exercise programs.

## **North-South Trail: A Regional Resource**

A continuous long-distance hiking trail in Rhode Island, linking state, town and private open spaces, was proposed nearly 30 years ago. The North-South Trail is a 77-mile (approximate) trail route from the Buck Hill Management Area in Burrillville to the Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge in Charlestown. It was mapped out in the 1974 plan of the state's Trail Advisory Commission. Along with renewed interest in the greenway concept, there is interest and demand for new recreational trails in Richmond. As a result, RIDEM, some Rhode Island towns and the National Park Service did a feasibility study for the state. A portion of the trail extends from Charlestown to Exeter through Richmond. Currently, there are proposed plans to reroute on-road portions of the trail to off-road locations. Map 2 in Appendix B shows the trail through Richmond.

## **Analysis of Richmond's Recreation Needs**

The Town has made progress to address its recreational needs since the last Comprehensive Community Plan was adopted. Through grant funding assistance by RIDEM, for example, the Town completed the Richmond Heritage Trail located along Route 138 in 2017. The trail provides a two-mile loop throughout the Town-owned property on Country Acres Road. As the Town evaluates its future needs over the next decade, the following provides a discussion of the standards used in the analysis and results.

### **National and State Standards**

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends that demands or needs be determined by a "level of service" analysis. While such an analysis can be useful, it can also be costly and time-consuming. As an alternative, Richmond has chosen to utilize NRPA's historic guidelines that consider needs based on a per capita basis. These standards are outlined in Table 2-1. However, beyond the listed recreational activities and needs found in these national standards, the recreation conditions that vary from one community to another are not addressed. Also, the compact rural nature of the Town is not addressed by the national standards. Some of the conditions are not easily quantifiable and are more appropriate for urban communities and must be assessed by the quality of the open space and recreation they provide.



**Table 2-1 2019 NRPA Agency Performance Review – Park Facilities**

	New England Average	US Average
<b>Park Metric</b>		
Acres of Park Land per 1,000 Population	10.0 Acres	10.1 Acres
<b>Resident population per one of the following:</b>		
Park	1,492	2,181
Playground	3,458	3,706
Basketball Court	5,637	7,375
Tennis Court (Outdoor Only)	3,211	4,803
Youth Baseball Field	4,118	6,608
Multi-purpose Rectangle Field	3,202	7,878
Recreation Center	13,023	30,470
Community Center	12,823	28,750
Senior Center	12,446	58,091
<b>Percent of agencies offering/operating/maintaining one of the following:</b>		
Park Sites	85.0%	95.7%
Recreation Programming and Services	97.5%	92.8%
Indoor Facilities	77.5%	87.3%
Trailing, Greenways, Blueways	65.0%	78.0%

Source: National Parks and Recreation Association, 2019

As mentioned under "Community Profile," in 2013, the Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program (SPP) projected that Rhode Island's population would continue to grow at a relatively constant rate. Richmond's 2010 population was estimated to be 7,708 residents. For planning purposes and the Richmond Comprehensive Community Plan, the Town is presuming a slower growth rate than projected by the state in its 20-year outlook, which estimates a 2030 population of approximately 9,838 residents and a 2040 population of 10,855 residents. Conservatively, the Town can expect an additional 2,130 residents by 2030. The needs assessment for recreation and open space is based on this figure.

### Summary of Richmond's Developed Recreation and Open Space

Table 2-2 provides a summary of developed recreation and open space in Richmond as compared to national standards. This analysis points to a need for additional small, neighborhood parks and playgrounds, particularly in those areas of the Town where residential and commercial populations concentrate, such as villages and subdivisions that were constructed without recreational areas or land set aside. Plan reviews should include adequate recreation land and facilities in new subdivisions. However, care should be exercised to place facilities in safe areas and consider the impact they may have on natural resources.

**Table 2-2 Summary of Developed Recreation and Open Space in Richmond Compared to National Standards**

Type	Existing	Amount	Residents of Richmond Population, 2019
<b>Fishing</b>			
	Beaver River	1.00 acre	
	Wyoming	2.48 acres	
	Pawcatuck	0.50 acres	
	Wood River	2.00 acres	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5.98 acres</b>	<b>1,273 Residents per Acre</b>
<b>Camping</b>			
	Wawaloam (Private)	300 Sites	26 Residents per Site
<b>Major Parks and Playgrounds</b>			
	Richmond Elementary	5.00 acres	
	Chariho School	52.00 acres	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>57.00 acres</b>	<b>134 Residents per Acre</b>
<b>Minor Parks and Playgrounds</b>			
	Beaver River Playground and Trails	19.34 acres	394 Residents per Acre
<b>Boat Launch Areas</b>			
	Wyoming	1.10 acres	
	Pawcatuck	0.50 acres	
	Canob Pond	1.38 acres	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2.98 acres</b>	<b>2,554 Residents per Acre</b>

Source: 2019 NRPA Metrics, 2012 Richmond Comprehensive Community Plan

According to national standards, access to boat launch areas is adequate. Almost all of the waterfront sites in Richmond are appropriate for canoe/kayak access at multiple points. Few have launch areas for trailored boats; however, since motorized boats are forbidden on many of the waterways, these launch areas are unnecessary. It is reasonable to assume that a portion of boat users in Richmond will choose to launch boats from private access points.

Table 2-3 compares beaches and state parks in Richmond to national standards. Almost all beaches in Carolina will remain in use by the residents of Richmond. However, it is reasonable to assume that, in accordance with historic trends, residents will also choose to utilize both freshwater and saltwater beaches beyond the Richmond Town borders. As for state parks, the existing acreage in Richmond is expected to meet future demands.

**Table 2-3 Summary of Beach and State Parks in Richmond**

Type	Existing	Amount	Residents of Richmond Population, 2019
<b>Beaches</b>			
	Arcadia	500 LF	
	Carolina	100 LF	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>600 LF</b>	<b>13 Residents per LF</b>
<b>State Parks</b>			
	Arcadia	1,158.40 acres	
	Carolina	1,956.32 acres	
	Dawley	447.20 acres	
	Great Swamp	3,349.00 acres	
	Hannah Brow	101.20 acres	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7,012.12 acres</b>	<b>1.09 Residents per Acre</b>

## Local Needs Assessment

An assessment of recreation and open space for Richmond needs is based on the findings of the 2019 Richmond Community Survey and public workshop held for the update of the Comprehensive Community Plan. Many residents agreed that the Town needs to attract or create developed recreation facilities, defined as sports fields and playgrounds but may also include water parks and swimming pools.

This needs assessment was based on national standards that focus only on quantitative measurements of publicly controlled active recreation in urban areas. Richmond's recreation needs are much more complex and reflect its rural character. For a more comprehensive view, one must consider such things as the regional context, facilities shared with other communities, the quality as well as the quantity of facilities, indoor as well as outdoor recreation opportunities, the role of private and commercial recreation providers, and the extent of unstructured recreation such as walking, jogging, bicycling, kayaking and fishing, none of which require public facilities.

## Trends That May Affect Open Space and Recreation

In 1990, Richmond ranked #15 of all Rhode Island cities and towns in per capita income at \$16,117. However, in 2000, Richmond experienced a 38 percent population increase, and per capita income rose to \$22,351. By 2010, per capita income was estimated to be \$31,731. It is assumed that Richmond will experience similar changes in the economic status, age, and racial makeup of the community in the coming decade. The following trends should be considered when assessing and planning future open space and recreation needs.

- › The 2010 Census showed that the overall state's population has become stagnant with slow or no growth. This can be linked to the credit and housing market crash of the last part of the decade, which led to an economic recession and ultimately slow recovery statewide. Richmond's population, however, showed a 6.7 percent increase in the 2010 Census, indicating the Town is a desirable place to live. Future affordable housing opportunities, in accordance with meeting the state's 10 percent affordable housing goal (see Housing Element), may attract new residents to

Richmond. As such, it is anticipated that Richmond's population will continue to grow at a rate of approximately 7 percent over the next decade. This increase in population will also increase demand for additional, and even perhaps more diverse, recreational opportunities.

- › The Town's conservation development ordinance, that replaced its cluster development ordinance, will result in more meaningful open space designations in new residential developments. This type of land development utilizes prescribed site planning techniques to conserve more contiguous open land and to protect site features.
- › The growth in the number of participants in girls' and women's sports is likely to continue and will place greater demand on facilities that, up to now, were used primarily by mens' and boys' groups.
- › Demand for athletic fields will probably continue to be concentrated on late afternoons, evenings and weekend mornings. The trend toward more organized sports and recreational activities is also likely to continue.
- › The major demand in new and upgraded facilities will be for complexes with multi-purpose fields rather than neighborhood parks.
- › Interest is generally growing throughout the state for multi-use complexes.
- › The popularity of walking, biking and jogging will probably continue, particularly as the general population ages and more people turn to moderate non-team exercise for health reasons. There is a strong interest in creating an integrated walking and hiking trail network throughout town.
- › Interest in canoeing and fishing, traditionally popular locally, is likely to grow again due to such factors as an aging population who may be less interested in organized sports. There is an increasing interest in activities in the natural environment and a growing appreciation for the special qualities of the Wood-Pawcatuck watershed.
- › Equestrian activities are popular and will probably continue to expand if trails are available to riders. The Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust is incorporating equestrian trails on some Town-owned land.

Generally, the present amount of dedicated open space land in Richmond is adequate for the current population and for the foreseeable future. However, the quantity, quality, concentration, and maintenance of the existing recreational facilities are very much in need of improvement. Thus the goals, policies, and recommended actions of this element suggest a limited acquisition program with many actions aimed mainly at reorganizing town efforts, developing or redeveloping existing facilities and encouraging more private commercial recreational and nonprofit facilities. The following needs have been identified as priorities for open space and recreation in Richmond:

- › Development of one or more multipurpose athletic fields suitable for organized league play.
- › Concentration of a few high quality regional recreation facilities and funds to better maximize the efforts of seasonal staff and limited budget.
- › Better coordination with state authorities and the owners of large conservation tracts to increase the use of their facilities by Richmond residents.
- › Integration of the Open Space and Recreation Element implementation schedule into the Capital Improvement Plan for the Town.
- › Continued coordination with neighboring towns to share recreational facilities so as to expand opportunities and avoid duplication and over utilization.

## Goals, Policies, and Actions

**GOAL OSR1:** Provide residents of all ages with adequate recreational and open space opportunities

**Policy OSR1:** Focus town recreation efforts on priority projects in order to maximize resources and to increase dedicated open space and recreational facilities.

**Action OSR1:** Develop new community recreation facilities on Town-owned land.

- › Conduct appropriate studies of wetlands and drainage conditions on site.
- › Prepare conceptual and schematic plans for the proposed development of these sites, including cost estimates.
- › Apply for state recreation grants.
- › Establish a program for regular maintenance.

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Town Council, Recreation Commission, and Public Works Department

**Action OSR2:** All public recreational facilities, both developed and natural areas, must be inventoried to insure adequate and safe access as well as utilization by all citizens, including, but not limited to, those who fall within the parameters of the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA).

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Recreation Commission

**Action OSR3:** Monitor the adopted Five Year Capital Improvement Plan/budget to ensure proper upkeep of town recreation facilities.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Recreation Commission and Town Council

**Policy OSR2:** Maintain standards for determining the acceptability of proposed land associated with major developments and subdivisions for dedication as open space or recreation.

**Action OSR4:** Include guidelines within the Town's Subdivision and Land Development Regulations for all land developments where dedication of public recreation land is required.

- › Guidelines should include buffering, relationship to adjacent properties, adding to overall "greenway" system and configure open space for most effective use in substantial, usable parcels, etc.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Board

**Action OSR5:** Accept land dedication when a proposed site is very well suited to proposed uses, and ensure maintenance through homeowner's association or other organizations. Where this is not feasible, consider payment in lieu of on-site dedication within the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations for applications where land dedication would not be in optimum interest of the Town.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Board

**Action OSR6:** Establish clear procedures for the use of payment in lieu of taxes or impact fee funds.

*Timeframe:* Short Term

*Responsibility:* Town Council

**Policy OSR3:** **Coordinate recreation planning with surrounding communities to increase opportunities for local residents and to maximize efficient use of these facilities.**

**Action OSR7:** Work to continue and expand on the regional Chariho programs.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Recreation Commission

**Action OSR8:** Coordinate efforts for large scale active, private recreation facilities that would serve several communities (i.e. multi-purpose complex, skating rink, swimming pool, YMCA).

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Recreation Commission and Town Council

**Action OSR9:** Establish an overall plan for a network of biking and hiking trails throughout Richmond connected with adjacent communities.

*Timeframe:* Short Term

*Responsibility:* Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission and Land Trust

**Policy OSR4:** **Increase public access opportunities to natural areas, including water bodies, river and stream corridors, and hiking trails.**

**Action OSR10:** Identify and map existing trails (including the North/South Trail) or routes open to public use in lands owned by the Land Trust, Audubon Society of Rhode Island and The Nature Conservancy, etc.

*Timeframe:* Short Term

*Responsibility:* Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission and Land Trust

**Action OSR11:** Collaborate with property owners adjacent to public open space to maintain public access through private properties by use of conservation easements.

*Timeframe:* Short Term

*Responsibility:* Land Trust

**Policy OSR5:** Encourage an interconnected network of natural areas with protected open space and recreation lands within the Town and adjacent communities.

**Action OSR12:** Support RIDEM efforts to acquire key tracts that will connect existing protected parcels for the combined purposes of hunting, hiking, greenways, rivers, and wildlife corridors (see Circulation Element).

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Land Trust, Conservation Commission and Town Council

**Action OSR13:** Encourage development proposals to dedicate open space in areas that are contiguous or adjacent to existing open space to create a network of permanently preserved open space within the Town.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Board and Conservation Commission

**Action OSR14:** Consider designation of scenic roadways within town and establish appropriate buffers and front yard setbacks to protect the scenic natural and built features of the roadways. Carefully review with state agencies proposed improvements to these roads that might disrupt the scenic character.

*Timeframe:* Long Term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board, Town Council, and Planning Department

**Policy OSR5:** Foster the continuation of working farms, the establishment of new farms, and preservation of existing, large tracts of forests and open space.

**Action OSR15:** Promote the use of the state Farm, Forest and Open Space Program and support the acquisition or transfer of development rights by state and private agencies.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Board and Town Council

**Action OSR16:** Use conservation easements to obtain property most appropriate for greenways connecting natural areas to other natural areas.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Town Council and Land Trust

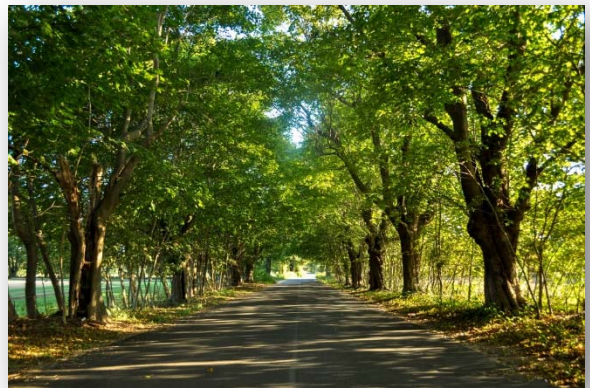
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# 3

## Natural and Cultural Resources

The purpose of the Natural and Cultural Resources Element is to provide guidance and support for conservation efforts that protect and manage the Town's natural, historic and cultural resources. This element is closely linked to



the Open Space and Recreation Element; accordingly, when assessing the need to protect and conserve open spaces and natural and cultural resources, both elements should be considered. Significant natural resources include wetlands, aquifers, floodplains, ponds and lakes, rivers and streams, forests, prime agricultural soils, and natural vegetation systems that are habitat to a variety of wildlife. Richmond's natural amenities include many state parks that attract visitors from around the region to hike, kayak, canoe, hunt, fish, and camp. Culturally important and historically significant districts and structures are also addressed in this element. These include villages, individual residential and industrial structures, areas of cultural significance, and pre-contact artifacts.

## Community Survey and Public Workshop

The Richmond Community Survey and public workshop offered residents and property owners an opportunity to comment on policies that can be developed to protect important natural and cultural resources (see Appendix A for public participation summary). Results show support for protecting the Town's abundant natural resources, open spaces, and historic and cultural amenities. Most respondents cited these resources as the reason they live in Richmond. In the Community Survey, nearly 60 percent of respondents felt that the Town was doing a good job in protecting its rural character.

Respondents to the community survey were highly supportive towards promoting outdoor recreation opportunities, including hiking, fishing, kayaking, small neighborhood parks and agricultural tourism to attract tourists. Further, nearly half of the respondents felt that the Town should try to attract and/or create developed recreation facilities, including sports fields, playgrounds, swimming pools, etc. Respondents also noted interest in the promotion of activities such as arts and cultural events and historic tours.

Practices such as the transfer or purchase of development rights, property acquisition, and conservation easements are all listed as favorable strategies to protect farm land, forested areas, and lands abutting rivers and streams. Survey respondents noted the importance of protecting historic sites and buildings and supporting active farms.

## Current Conditions and Trends

Located in southwestern Rhode Island, Richmond was originally part of Westerly and then incorporated as a separate town in 1747. Settled by planters, the Town remained largely agrarian well into the early 20th century. Eighteenth and nineteenth century farmhouses, outbuildings, open pastures, and stone walls such as those visible along the Beaver River (within the Beaver River Agricultural District) and the north side of Shannock Hill Road (Shannock Hill Rural Landscape District) are important reminders of the Town's early agricultural era.

Historically, the people of Richmond benefited greatly from the use of the fresh water rivers and streams that make up the Town's borders. Horseshoe Falls in Shannock was used by the Narragansetts for fishing long before the arrival of European settlers. Later, the Wood, Pawcatuck, and Queen's Rivers powered sawmills, gristmills, iron works, and eventually textile mills. The population clusters in these areas eventually grew into the villages of Wyoming, Woodville, Alton, Kenyon, Arcadia, Hope Valley, Shannock, and Carolina. The Hillsdale, Usquepaug and Wood River Junction settlements were also established on smaller waterways. Today, many of the original structures within these mill villages remain intact, providing the Town with an impressive array of historically significant sites, such as those found within the Carolina Village Historic District, Shannock Village Historic District and the Hillsdale Historic and Archeological District, all of which are included on the National Register of Historic Places.

Not only do Richmond's natural and cultural features reveal the Town's history and values, but they also have framed its pattern of development. In the late twentieth century, the nation and region had seen a long decline in the small family farm. But over the past decade, there has

been a resurgence in farming, primarily led by a growing interest in understanding the origins of our food and how it is produced, resulting in the successful “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” campaigns across the country, and especially in Rhode Island. The result is a growing number of new farms. As of 2019, the Town has approximately 45 farms registered. These farms enhance the cultural landscape in Richmond and our region. The Town should encourage the prosperity and perpetuation of all farms, small or large. See the Economic Development and Land Use Elements for further discussion on farmland and its importance in Richmond.

The choice of coordinated land use guidelines begins with an awareness and appreciation of environmental features. For many town residents today, their vision of Richmond is filled with rural images. A landscape of open spaces, farms, fields, forests, and flowing waters defines the kind of town that land use planning should strive to preserve. Overall, the respondents to the survey and attendees at the public workshop urged Town officials to protect natural resources, manage growth and maintain Richmond's rural character. These attitudes are compatible with the goals of Land Use 2025 and other state guide policies.

Having estimated the potential increase of Richmond's population, work force size and housing needs, the Town is concerned with the spatial distribution of land uses. Sites for future employment, housing, and recreation will depend, in part, on development suitability and water availability. In other words, what areas of Richmond are able to accommodate a growing population without impairing natural and cultural resources? As discussed in the Land Use and Economic Development Elements of this plan, future commercial development will be concentrated in villages with availability of existing public services (drinking water), such as in Wyoming and the vicinity of the I-95 Exit 3 corridor. By concentrating commercial development in these areas, there will be less pressure to develop other areas of natural and cultural resources. See the Land Use Element for more details on future development in Richmond.

## Natural Resources

The Town of Richmond encompasses 40.6 square miles of land. The landscape is predominately hardwood with soft wood appearing along the rivers on sandy soils. Open land cleared for agriculture and village settlement appears in the valleys close to streams and rivers. The Town is bounded on the west by the Wood River, on the south by the Pawcatuck River, and the Usquepaug River forms part of the Town's boundary on the east. Gardiner Road serves as the remainder of the eastern boundary. Two additional waterways, the Meadow Brook and the Beaver River, flow through the center land mass of Richmond. Prominent topographical features include Shannock, Wilbur and Kenyon Hills in the south, and Pine and Tefft Hills in the north. Ellis Flats is a large flat lowland stretch between the Wood River and Pawcatuck River in the southwest. A great number of wetland systems, streams and smaller hills are spread throughout town.



Like many other upland New England towns, the general suitability of Richmond's landforms for development has been influenced by natural processes. The underlying bedrock surface and the movement of massive glaciers are ice age events that have determined the presence

of groundwater reservoirs, the heights of hills, as well as the paths of rivers and streams to lakes and ponds. The interplay among Richmond's natural resources - geologic and hydrologic - marks the suitability or unsuitability of land for development and forms the environmental base of the Comprehensive Community Plan and the Town's Zoning Ordinance.

Richmond's hydrogeological features include its surface and groundwater basins and floodplains, all of which are in the Wood-Pawcatuck watershed. These resources also limit development of land because they can be easily contaminated and, if altered, may jeopardize lives and properties.

Geologic factors include the bedrock structure, the contours of the terrain, as well as the nature and distribution of the soils and intervening materials. Geologic factors may restrict the development of land where topographic features are severe. Examples include rock outcrops, steep slopes, poorly draining land, high groundwater and where soils cannot support structures, are difficult to excavate, or are susceptible to erosion.

Farming contributes not only to Richmond's rural and cultural aesthetic but also to its economic development. Large contiguous areas of prime agricultural soils are found primarily in the southern part of town. Development in these areas should be limited and agricultural operations given priority.



Maps 3 through 7 in Appendix B illustrate the following characteristics which limit the development of land:

- › Groundwater reservoirs and their recharge zones (Map 3);
- › The 100-year flood plain and soils that are frequently flooded, have a high seasonal water table, or have a very slow or slow rate of permeability (Map 4);
- › Slopes greater than 14 percent (Map 5);
- › Natural resources such as surface waters (lakes, ponds, rivers and streams), wetlands, protected areas and rare or endangered species habitats (Map 6); and
- › Prime agricultural soils (Map 7).

## Cultural Resources

Richmond's character is also defined by its historic and cultural resources; the rural waysides and the early industrial villages that in the words of the Rhode Island Landscape Inventory, "...create a sense of place." Such roads, trails and known sites of historic and archaeological significance (refer to Map 8 in Appendix B and listing in Appendix D) are reminders of native and colonial settlements, as well as testaments to the economic importance of the Wood and Pawcatuck Rivers during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Fragile landscapes with agricultural, recreational or ecological worth complement historic and cultural resources and contribute to the Town's rural charm. Preserving and protecting these rivers and streams, farms, productive agricultural soils, forests, wetlands, natural

heritage sites, and scenic landscapes can perpetuate Richmond's agricultural traditions and enhance its small-town nature.

### National Register of Historic Places

The Carolina Village Historic District straddles the border of Richmond and Charlestown along the Pawcatuck River. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974 and is comprised of 71 properties including a former mill complex and associated residences.

The Hillsdale Historic and Archaeological District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. It is located on the Beaver River and was originally known as Moore's Mill. It was the site of a grist mill built circa 1800, later a wool-carding mill and eventually converted to textile manufacturing. The site contains a few houses, the stone ruins of the textile mill, and a mill pond.

The Shannock Village Historic District is another historic village along the Pawcatuck River. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. It is a small, well-preserved mid-nineteenth century rural textile mill village. Shannock Road, a state-designated scenic roadway, passes through the District. The Towns of Richmond and Charlestown have coordinated efforts since 2008 to determine how to best preserve the District. Using a Preserve America Grant administered through Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC), the Towns drafted historic design guidelines unique to that village, and are incorporated by reference into this Comprehensive Community Plan.

Wyoming Village Historic District is bound to the north by Nooseneck Hill Road and to the south by Route 138. The District is located in both Richmond and Hopkinton and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.

The John Hoxsie House (or Old Kenyon Farm), east of Route 112, was added in 1978 to the National Register of Historic Places. The Samuel Clarke Farm located at 106 Lewiston Avenue was added in 2019. These sites are representatives of Richmond's agricultural history.

Properties determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places include Beaver River Road Historic District and Kenyon Historic District. The Beaver River Road Historic District includes both sides of Beaver River Road at Nos. 19, 133 and 165 Beaver River Road. In 2020, a nomination was filed with the RIHPHC to include the Beaver River Historic District onto the National Register of Historic Places.



Wyoming RI. The Segar Store as originally built with columns.



Wyoming RI. The Segar Store adds the modern sophistication of glass show windows for more adequate display purposes.



Properties recommended for evaluation by the RIHPHC for listing on the National Register include:

- › Richmond Town Pound, Carolina-Nooseneck Road;
- › Reynolds Farm, 161 New London Turnpike; and
- › Wood River Six Principle Baptist Church and Cemeteries.

### Archaeological Sites

A listing of known archeological sites within the Town of Richmond is found in Appendix D. It was originally compiled in December 2003 by Charlotte Taylor, an archeological consultant, at the request of the Richmond Planning Department and subsequently revised with the assistance from the State Archeologist as part of this Comprehensive Community Plan update. In addition, these sites and suspected subsurface sites are depicted on maps corresponding to US Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangle sheets (7.5 series) for use and consultation in the review of development plans submitted to the Town for review and approval. The State Archeologist can advise the Town when a development proposal may be affected by one of these archaeological and historic sites.

### Cemeteries

Richmond has more than 90 identified local cemeteries, many of them small and historic, and others larger and pleasantly landscaped. They all certainly contribute to the open space and the historic and aesthetic character of the Town. A listing is included in Appendix D.

### Farms as Cultural Views and Scenic Vistas

Farmland contributes to the historic, cultural and rural setting of the Town. Responses to the Richmond Community Survey indicate a strong support for farming and farm-related activities. Active farms contribute scenic values to the landscape with their pastures and fields providing “open land versus the current predominately forested land” in the Town.

Targeted acquisition to the development rights in these farms should be considered. State programs are available which permit farmers to sell the development value of their property with the stipulation that the land must stay in agricultural use or other open space for perpetuity. Tax benefits are available as well. According to the Richmond Tax Assessor database (2019), there are nine properties, totaling 983 acres that have sold “development rights” to the state (purchase of development rights) or have agricultural easements on their properties, ensuring that the land is protected in perpetuity as open space. In addition to these nine properties, many property owners in Richmond also participate in the Farm, Forest and Open Space (FFOS) Program. In all, the Richmond Tax Assessor reports that 164 properties, totaling 6,835 acres are registered in the program, which offers lower property assessments for keeping open space, managed forests, or active farms.



### **Richmond Historic District Commission and Ordinance**

Currently there is no active Richmond Historic Commission or historic district ordinance to protect existing historic and cultural structures. It would be in the Town's best interest for the protection of historic and cultural resources to amend the Town Charter to reestablish the Commission and develop a workable ordinance. There is a private Richmond Historical Society that maintains and provides access to historical archives as well as offering educational programs.

### **Scenic Vistas and Scenic Roadway Designation**

It has been a long-standing practice in both Rhode Island and other states to recognize and preserve aesthetically-pleasing vistas and scenic views which are visible from public roadways and rivers. These may include forests, open space, farms or historic properties. The Town should inventory and prioritize those areas with such views and properties, such as the farm fields on Route 138 or the historic village of Carolina on Route 112. Shannock Hill Road, Beaver River Road, Pine Hill Road, North Road and Lewiston Avenue, to name a few, offer views of farms, forest management areas and historic structures. It is in the Town's interest to note and preserve these unique roadway and river vistas because they not only enhance the quality of life for residents, but are valuable assets to the tourism industry.

## **Conservation and Protection**

Preservation of Richmond's rural character is the most consistently mentioned local priority in recent and past community surveys. In spite of suburban housing development over the past two decades, Richmond remains primarily rural and heavily wooded, and community life is still somewhat focused around the villages and schools, especially the centralized village of Wyoming.

Subdivision activity has occurred in the Town's more accessible areas, with their gentler topography and well-drained soils. Often the scenic farms drew residents to the Town in the first place. But in spite of the constraints of land characteristics, a considerable number of developments have been proposed on more difficult land, an inevitable trend as most of the easier terrain is already developed. State parks and acquisitions by the local Land Trust and conservation groups have resulted in many large tracts of preserved land in the northern sections of town.

Although today nearly half of Richmond's land has some official recreation, open space, or conservation status, the majority of this land is not restricted to those uses in perpetuity. Land under the jurisdiction of RIDEM, the Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, the Town, and open space in cluster/ conservation development subdivisions and residential compounds may reasonably be considered permanently protected land. However, large private landholdings, whether owned by non-profit organizations, commercial enterprises, or participants in the state's Farm, Forest and Open Space Program, cannot be assumed to remain permanently as recreation or open space land. In addition to the 6,835 acres under the FFOS Program, there are approximately 800 acres of private properties with a recreational business, including golf courses, campgrounds and fairgrounds. If the opportunities present themselves, the Town should consider developing partnerships for the continued protection of these uses.

There are several other types of land that, although not individually significant as conservation areas, add to open space area and rural character. These include cemeteries. Other sites are not necessarily appropriate as publicly accessible sites due to their size, inaccessibility or fragility. Among these are some Town-owned parcels, as well as a vast network of regulated wetlands and floodplains.

Richmond has several avenues to protect and enhance important natural areas and open spaces. Map 1 in Appendix B shows the major categories of ownership or jurisdiction of the more than 8,000 acres of protected lands in Richmond. The Town GIS system can provide more detail about individual properties. Overall, these properties included those owned and managed by:

- › RIDEM: Forestry Division and the Fish and Wildlife Division;
- › Town of Richmond, Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust;
- › Private, non-profit/non-governmental organizations (NGOs); and
- › Private property owners who have sold or donated conservation easements.

The following offers discussion of the organizations and agencies that participate in conservation efforts, namely, Richmond's Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Rural Preservation Land Trust, as well as some regional and state agencies.

### **Richmond Conservation Commission**

Richmond's local Conservation Commission was developed in 1978. Town Ordinance Chapter 4.14 states that the "purpose of the conservation commission is to promote and develop the natural resources, protect the watershed, and preserve the natural aesthetic areas of the town of Richmond."

The Mission Statement of the Commission is:

*The Richmond Conservation Commission is responsible for and promotes conservation of Richmond's natural resources, helps protect our valuable watershed resources, supports conservation and preservation of our Town's natural areas, and strives to promote environmental stewardship and public understanding of sustainable, environmentally-sound land use practices in Richmond.*

The Conservation Commission interacts with other municipal boards and commissions on an advisory level, reviewing and commenting on the impact of proposed actions on natural resources. The commission offers input to the Planning Board on proposed developments and potential impact on the Town's natural resources. The Commission also advises and make recommendations to the Town Council, Planning Board, Zoning Board, and the Land Trust.



## Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust

The Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust was created in 1998 by state enabling legislation. Section 4.30.010 of the Code of Ordinances states the authority and purpose of the Land Trust is:

*(including but not limited to) acquiring development rights to agricultural property within the town, acquiring agricultural property and other property, or interest therein, to preserve open spaces, fresh water wetlands and ponds, adjoining uplands, wildlife habitats, groundwater recharge areas, land providing access to open space land, land for bicycle and hiking paths and for future passive public recreational facilities and use.*

The Land Trust's mission is to identify, preserve, and protect open space, including forests, wildlife habitat, wetlands, and farmland, within the Town of Richmond, in perpetuity, to maintain the Town's rural character and ecological assets for the benefit of the public. The Land Trust will act as responsible stewards of lands acquired or placed in conservation easement. Since its inception, the Land Trust has acquired nine properties, totaling over 500 acres, by donation, purchase or conservation easement (Table 3-1).

**Table 3-1 Properties Acquired by the Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust**

Property Name	Year Acquired	Acres	How Acquired
Bradner Preserve	2000	64	Donated
Stetson Preserve	2000	17	Donated
Crawley Preserve	2003	84	Purchased
James and Vetta Scudder Property	2005	66	Donated
Oviatt Property	2007	42	Donated Conservation Easement
Kenyon Family Preserve	2011	62	Purchased
Niles Property	2013	4	Donated
Saila Family Preserve	2015	112	Purchased
Chan Preserve	2018	112	Purchased

## Regional Efforts

Specific features and areas of the Richmond landscape which have been repeatedly cited to be of regional significance include:

- › The Wood-Pawcatuck River Watershed. The rivers of the Wood-Pawcatuck watershed comprise the most natural and scenic river system for canoe and kayak navigation in southeastern New England, and as of 2019, are designated Wild and Scenic Rivers by an Act of the United States Congress. This designation identified seven rivers, including the Beaver, Chipuxet, Green Fall-Ashaway, Pawcatuck, Queen-Usquepaugh, Shunock and Wood as nationally-recognized Wild and Scenic Rivers. The combined length of the rivers is 110 miles, with 53 miles navigable by canoe or kayak. In Richmond, the Wild and Scenic Rivers include the Beaver, Pawcatuck, Queen-Usquepaugh and Wood Rivers, as well as

the tributaries that include Glen Rock, Meadow, Roaring, White and Taney Brooks. The undisturbed nature of the river corridor lands contribute to the watershed's high water quality, abundant fisheries and extensive wildlife habitat. While most of the manufacturing formerly active along the rivers has now ceased operations, the majority of older mill housing and villages associated with these businesses are still occupied.

- › The presence of many important and valuable rare species habitat areas and associated natural areas are significant to the Town of Richmond. These sites are both publicly and privately owned.

An important regional conservation entity is the privately incorporated Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA) which coordinates with the nine Rhode Island and two Connecticut towns in the watershed. The WPWA mission is to educate the public about the watershed, protect the water quality of the rivers, lobby for improvements, and assist the communities in planning for river corridor and water quality protection.

Designation as a wild and scenic river will provide added federal protection to the watershed through the National Park Service's review of federally involved projects. It may also provide additional funding for management projects and open space purchases by giving priority to purchases near or adjacent to the rivers.

The 12 towns in the watershed, including Richmond, have adopted the Wood-Pawcatuck Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Plan. The stewardship plan provides a blueprint for the long-term protection of the watershed's special natural, cultural and recreational resources, and provides guidance for towns in designing and implementing measures for watershed management and protection. The Wood-Pawcatuck Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council was subsequently established in order to guide the towns in implementation of the stewardship plan. All 12 towns, including Richmond, have a representative on the Stewardship Council. The Town will partner with the Wood-Pawcatuck Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council and the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association to ensure the long-term protection of the Wood-Pawcatuck River Watershed.

### **State Conservation Efforts and Acquisitions**

According to the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program, Richmond is home to more natural habitat and more rare and endangered species than any other town in the state. By permanently protecting open space in town, Richmond provides invaluable conservation opportunities for the entire state as well as protecting habitats for endemic and endangered species. In turn, this also provides recreational opportunities for all Rhode Island residents (see Open Space and Recreation Element). The Town should continue to promote the protection of land, natural resources, and natural habitats through conservation efforts and acquisition opportunities when presented.

### **Public Open Space Management Areas**

In recent years a considerable amount of conservation land has been acquired by the Forestry and the Fish and Wildlife Divisions of RIDEM and by conservation groups such as the Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, and the Land Trust. Most of the purchases have been

concentrated around the lakes and ponds in the west section of town. RIDEM, the Audubon Society, and The Nature Conservancy all manage conservation lands for open space or recreational purposes to varying degrees. Acquiring and/or protecting private land abutting these managed areas is a current RIDEM priority. If the abutting lands cannot be acquired, screening and buffering can be required for any proposed development of the properties.

An abundance of hiking trails, hunting areas, waterway access for canoeing, kayaking or fishing, and camping opportunities attract many visitors to Richmond. These resources are an economic opportunity for the Town. Further discussion regarding these potential opportunities can be found in the Economic Development Element of this plan.

## Unique Natural Areas Requiring Protection

Based on an assessment of conservation lands as well as open space and recreational resources, the Conservation Commission and Land Trust have made recommendations regarding the protection of unique natural areas in town.

### Riparian Land along Water Resources

The rivers and streams of the Wood-Pawcatuck River watershed provide important habitat and outdoor recreation (fishing, canoeing, hunting, etc.) resources to the local and statewide community. The watershed is recognized statewide and nationally for its recreation value and relatively pristine conditions.

Most of the property adjacent to the Wood River is privately owned. To sustain native brook trout populations and other unique and/or rare species, a river/stream buffer is recommended for the protection of the water quality of the Wood and Pawcatuck Rivers and the streams that feed into it. The Conservation Commission supports and advocates for the restoration of wooded riparian buffers along streams and rivers.

The WPWA has recommended that a 300-foot open space buffer be left along rivers and streams if development occurs on those private parcels. The buffer would begin at the river's edge and extend landward on either side of the river. Where opportunities exist, the Planning Board should utilize conservation development practices during land development review to provide regulatory river buffers within the required open space to create a continuous river/stream corridor in the watershed.

### Unique Natural Areas with Ecological Significance

The Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program (RINHP) – administered by the Rhode Island Natural History Survey – has recognized unique natural areas containing rare species and ecologically significant areas. A map showing the exact location of these areas is available at RIDEM. The Town of Richmond will request recommendations from the RINHP any time a proposed development is located on or near a site harboring rare species or areas of ecological significance to determine how best to protect these areas. The Town will incorporate the RINHP recommendations into their approval of a proposed development when the RINHP determines that a potential threat exists to a rare species or an ecologically significant community.

## Farmland as a Land Use with a Special Value

The Zoning Ordinance supports farmland use through two distinct sets of regulations. The Agricultural Overlay District is intended to preserve large contiguous areas of prime agricultural soils for farming uses by requiring subdivision and development methods that create large farm lots intended for both agricultural and residential use. The Residential Compound regulations are designed to create and retain large parcels that can also be used for agriculture. These policies are discussed below. See the Land Use Element for more discussion of farmland protection.

## Planning Policies

The Richmond Planning Board is the body most able to ensure well-planned development and prevent negative impacts on valuable natural resources. The Board writes the Comprehensive Community Plan as well as updates and administers the Town's subdivision regulations. The Board also reviews various development plans, advises the Town Council on proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and reviews special use permits and variances at the request of the Zoning Board. On a town-wide basis, the re-zoning and revision of development regulations is perhaps the most critical local mechanism for counteracting the effects of scattered, mundane suburban development and avoiding negative impacts on important resources. The Town's regulations that promote conservation and preservation are listed below.

### *Zoning Ordinances:*

- › Conservation Development
- › Residential Compound
- › Agricultural Overlay District
- › Aquifer Protection Overlay
- › Tiered Residential Densities
- › Limited and Light Industrial Zones
- › Development Plan Review
- › Special Use Permits
- › Flood Hazard Overlay

### *Town Ordinances:*

- › Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance
- › Protection of Historical Cemeteries Ordinance
- › Earth Removal Ordinance
- › Town Tree Protection Ordinance

### ***Land Development and Subdivision Regulations***

Additionally, the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations were amended to include references and details to the RI Stormwater Design Manual adopted in December 2010.

### **Cluster/Conservation Development**

Conventional subdivisions are no longer “permitted by right” as an option for new major subdivisions development in Richmond. Since 1980, cluster development was the preferred development option and resulted in open space dedications to the Town for passive recreational use by residents of the cluster. Within the 21 cluster subdivisions approved, a total of 418 acres have been dedicated to open space. Homeowners’ associations are responsible for all maintenance and enforcement of open space agreements made with the Town at the time of subdivision approval.

In 2003, the Town amended its Land Development and Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinance which replaced cluster development with conservation development. This type of land development is intended to protect the rural character of the Town, conserve open land, protect site features, and provide flexibility in the siting of structures, services, and infrastructure. A minimum percentage of open space area is required and the total amount depends on the zoning district. Conservation developments are intended in part to conserve open land on a community-wide basis and contribute to a greenway system within the Town. The Town continues to require that all new proposed minor or major subdivisions be designed as conservation developments, unless conventional designs are appropriate in context with the site and its surroundings.

### **Residential Compounds**

The Residential Compound regulations permit low-density development on large parcels, which helps to protect rural character, while relieving compliance with the design and improvement standards of other subdivisions. In the R1, R2, and R3 zoning districts, five acres is the minimum density for residential compound lots. Nineteen residential compounds have been created since the inception of these regulations.

### **Agricultural Overlay District**

The Town’s Agricultural Overlay District is designed to preserve large contiguous areas of prime agricultural soils and working farms. Large farm lots intended for both agricultural and residential uses are required in this district. Residential density is defined as one residential unit per five acres of land suitable for development. Conservation development subdivisions within the overlay district must design open space that contains both prime agricultural soils and one or more farm lots intended for both residential and agricultural use. One acre of each farm lot is reserved for a principal residential structure. One accessory dwelling unit is permitted by right rather than by a special use permit. Residential compounds lots must have a minimum of 11 acres making them eligible for participation in the Farm, Forest and Open Space Program. Further discussion of agricultural uses can be found within the Land Use Element of this plan.

### **Aquifer Protection Overlay District**

Richmond is dependent on groundwater for all of its drinking water and protecting the high quality of groundwater in town is a priority for all the Town's agencies. The Aquifer Protection Overlay District provides additional safeguards to protect water quality by prohibiting certain uses likely to pollute groundwater. Examples include requiring development plan review for industrial and commercial uses and limiting the discharge per acre per day into onsite wastewater treatment systems.

### **Flood Hazard Overlay District**

The purpose of this district is to protect public safety, minimize property damage, protect watercourses from encroachment, and preserve the ability of floodplains to retain and carry off floodwaters. Any development within Special Flood Hazard Areas designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency will be reviewed for compliance with the current edition of the state building code regarding flood-resistant siting and construction.

### **RI Storm Water Design Manual**

This Manual offers best management practices for decreasing flooding as well as reducing pollutants in storm water runoff, particularly during the construction phases. The Manual requires no net increase in storm water runoff and further requires that any runoff must be treated on-site before discharged. Low impact development (LID) strategies are recommended as a comprehensive approach to both managing runoff and minimizing the hydrological impacts. These strategies include minimizing impervious surfaces in developments and using natural filtration systems such as rain gardens. In light of the historic flooding that occurred in March of 2010, these strategies are particularly important. The Land Development and Subdivision Regulations reference the use of the Manual for storm water design and calculations for all development applications.

### **Historic District and Resource Protection**

A historic district is not enabled by the Town Charter, but efforts continue to protect the cultural resources of the villages on the National Register of Historic Places. Village district design guidelines, in cooperation with the Town of Charlestown, have been prepared for Shannock. The intent of these guidelines will be to retain the village mixed-use development pattern and aesthetic qualities of the historic districts. The Town should also consider guidelines for other historic or historically eligible districts, including Wyoming, Carolina and Alton.

## Goals, Policies, and Actions

### GOAL NCR1: Protect and enhance the Town's Natural and Cultural Resources

#### Policy NCR1: Limit the development of environmentally sensitive areas.

**Action NCR1:** Determine compatible land uses, and develop land acquisition and management programs to identify open space and river corridors (see **Open Space and Recreation Element**).

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Land Trust and Town Council

#### Policy NCR2: Protect rare and unique natural resources.

**Action NCR2:** Monitor rare native plant and wildlife communities, determine compatible land usage and develop land acquisition and management programs.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Conservation Commission, Land Trust, and Town Council

#### Policy NCR3: Protect water quality of the Town's surface and groundwater resources.

**Action NCR3:** Review Town GIS mapping and ordinances to strengthen the Aquifer Protection Overlay District.

*Timeframe:* Short Term

*Responsibility:* Planning Department, Planning Board and Town Council

**Action NCR4:** Amend the Subdivision, Planned Unit Development, and Development Plan Review regulations to include appropriate buffer zones along major rivers.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Department and Planning Board

**Policy NCR4:** While protecting the Town's natural resources, encourage their use in a sustainable and environmentally sensitive way that promotes economic development opportunities. Strategies should support local businesses catering to users (see **Economic Development Element**).

**Action NCR5:** Develop economic strategies that promote the sustainable use of the Town's abundant local and state parks and other open spaces.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission, Town Council, Town Administrator

**Policy NCR5: Encourage the active use of prime farmlands for farming.**

**Action NCR6:** Incorporate new policies that are designed to sustain agricultural operations and preserve open spaces.

*Timeframe:* Short Term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board and Town Council

**Action NCR7:** Partner with farmers to preserve their lands from development.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Board, Town Council, Land Trust, and Conservation Commission

**Policy NCR6: Identify and maintain scenic rural landscapes, vistas, and key cultural and historic resources.**

**Action NCR8:** Take the necessary steps to create Historic Districts, including an amendment to the Town Charter and adoption of appropriate ordinances.

*Timeframe:* Long Term

*Responsibility:* Town Council and Planning Board

**Action NCR9:** Reestablish the Historic District Commission.

*Timeframe:* Long Term

*Responsibility:* Town Council

**Action NCR10:** Identify sections of streets and highways with scenic vistas for possible designation as a scenic roadway or scenic overlook areas.

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission

**Action NCR11:** Adopt design guidelines that will be applied to areas in and near existing historic village areas to retain and protect historic and cultural resources and to maintain the unique aesthetic look of these places.

*Timeframe:* Long Term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board or Historic District Commission

**Policy NCR7: Manage natural and cultural resources in cooperation with government agencies, private groups and residents.**

**Action NCR12:** Continue to maintain a GIS inventory of environmentally sensitive areas and sites that are of historical, cultural or archaeological value to the Town.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Department



**Action NCR13:** Consider developing partnerships with private property owners with recreational businesses for the continuation/protection of these uses.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Department and Land Trust

**Policy NCR8: Use a comprehensive strategy for protecting natural, historic and cultural features.**

**Action NCR14:** Maintain and update the Town's GIS mapping and prioritization of potential conservation lands and consult with the non-governmental organizations which own these properties in Richmond.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Department, Land Trust, and Conservation Commission

**Policy NCR9: Promote conservation of Richmond's natural features and its traditional rural character (see Land Use Element)**

**Action NCR15:** Concentrate major developments and community facilities within and adjacent to established villages and Town-designated growth areas to alleviate pressure to develop the more rural areas of town (see **Land Use Element**).

*Timeframe:* Short Term and Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Board and Town Council

**Action NCR16:** Review the Zoning Ordinance and Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to establish mixed-use development standards appropriate for existing villages to promote infill and the conservation of natural and cultural resources.

*Timeframe:* Short Term and Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Department, Planning Board, and Town Council

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## 4

## Economic Development



The Economic Development Element is intended to promote a positive environment to attract and retain businesses. The Town seeks to meet its economic goals of increasing employment opportunities while observing environmental stewardship principals. The Economic Development Element should be cross-referenced with the Land Use Element, Natural and Cultural Resources Element, and Public Services and Facilities Element.

### Community Survey and Public Workshop

Respondents to the Community Survey and participants at the public workshop cited the need to balance economic development with maintaining the rural character of the Town. The majority of respondents agreed that future commercial and industrial development should be concentrated in the vicinity of Route 138 and Interstate 95, and the rejuvenation of existing commercial areas was cited as very important to respondents. Survey results for the types of businesses that residents would like to see in town included restaurants, bars and taverns, mom and pop retail, public recreational facilities, urgent care, medical and dental offices, a

movie/playhouse and retail chains. Residents at the public workshop also felt that the Town's rural qualities are important assets on which to build economic opportunities. The Town's abundant natural and cultural resources, for example, can create a niche for geotourism related businesses. State management and local conservation areas provide visitors with numerous opportunities to fish, hunt, hike, cycle, canoe, and interact with nature. Providing opportunities for businesses to accommodate and support these activities is a positive way to build an economic base while protecting natural resources.

Agricultural activities are another important aspect of rural economic development. Residents support Town policies that will encourage the prosperity and perpetuation of all farms, small or large, as well as agricultural tourism.

Overall, residents would like to see a wide variety of new businesses. In addition to those mentioned above, survey respondents named light industry, manufacturing and office or technology parks. Generally speaking, residents felt that economic development opportunities should be developed and supported by the Town in order to grow the tax base and ease the tax burden on Richmond residents. There were also those respondents who, on the contrary, believe there should be no further business development in Richmond at all.

Residents were concerned with not only the types of businesses, but also where they may be located in town. As noted above, Wyoming and the area around I-95 can support new growth and should be the focus of new business development. Some respondents thought that small businesses may have difficulty surviving, particularly in remote areas like Shannock. They also expressed concern with the empty store fronts in Wyoming village. There was discussion about the need for sidewalks and a beautification effort (such as street trees) in this area of town, since it serves as a gateway to the community. Other suggestions included a vision and design standards for the Wyoming/Main Street area to promote a sense of cohesiveness for development in the town center. Rehabilitation and redevelopment of vacant buildings and storefronts in this area was also important to residents.

## Economic Conditions

### State Trends

Economic conditions in the state and region certainly affect economic development activities in Richmond. According to the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (RIDLT),<sup>1</sup> the state unemployment rate reached a peak of 13 percent in 2009 during the Rhode Island recession, but has since recovered to 4.1 percent in 2018. Between July 2009 (the lowest employment level during the Rhode Island recession) and July 2019, 14 employment sectors added jobs while 3 employment sectors reported job declines. Through 2018, the state continued to show positive growth in employment, as well as declines in unemployment; however, employment levels still trailed pre-recessionary levels established in 2006. Private sector employment in the state was 87.5 percent of total employment in 2018, while the public sector represented 12.5 percent. Within the private sector, most workers are employed by, in descending order of employment numbers, the Health Care and Social Assistance, Accommodation and Food Services, Retail Trade, Manufacturing, Administrative and Waste Services, Finance and Insurance, Professional and Technical Services, and Educational Service sectors. Nearly half of the private sector workers in the state are employed by

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1 *Rhode Island Employment Trends and Workforce Issues 2018* (a publication by the RIDLT Labor Market Information Unit, October 2019)

large firms (100+ employees), although these large companies account for only 1.6 percent of private firms in the state. The majority (90.4 percent) of private sector employers in the state are small companies that employ less than 20 people. The state's largest private sector companies are found in the Health Care and Social Assistance, Finance and Insurance, Private Education, and Retail Trade sectors.

The novel coronavirus pandemic of 2020 impacted the state and national economy significantly. Statewide impacts resulted in thousands of jobs lost across several industries, particularly within the small retail, personal service and restaurant sectors. Prior to the onset of the pandemic, Rhode Island employment was projected to increase 5.9 percent (an increase of 30,464 jobs) to 550,715 jobs from 2016 levels (520,251 jobs) by the year 2026. The largest gains were expected in the Accommodation and Food Services; Healthcare and Social Assistance; Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; and Retail Trade sectors. The fastest growing occupational groups were expected to be Construction and Extraction, Computer and Mathematical, Architecture and Engineering, Personal Care and Service Occupations, and Food Preparation and Serving related occupations. As of 2021, it is not fully understood how those projections will be affected as the state economy recovers from the pandemic.

### **Local Trends**

A majority of the businesses in Richmond are small and employ fewer than 50 people. According to RIDLT, the number of private businesses in Richmond over the past five years has fluctuated between 148 and 154 (Table 4-1), with most jobs in the Construction, Retail Trade, and Accommodation and Food Services industries (Table 4-2). Business growth occurred primarily in Professional and Technical Services, while employment growth primarily occurred in Construction and Professional and Technical Services. Overall, in 2018 businesses in Richmond employed 1,259 people. Although this number has increased from 1,034 in 2010, it has declined from a peak of 1,316 in 2016.

**Table 4-1 Number of Establishments in Richmond, First Quarter 2010-2018**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total Private &amp; Government</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>Total Private Only</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>152</b>
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	9
Mining	*	*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Utilities	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
Construction	24	22	23	22	22	23	23	24	24
Manufacturing	6	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Wholesale Trade	6	7	6	6	5	4	5	6	7
Retail Trade	21	22	20	20	22	20	22	22	22
Transportation & Warehousing	*	*	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Information	*	*	1	1	2	2	2	2	1
Finance & Insurance	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	6	6
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	*	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
Professional & Technical Services	9	10	9	10	11	11	12	14	16
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative Support & Waste Management.	11	13	14	15	15	14	13	13	12
Educational Services	3	*	2	2	1	1	1	1	0
Health Care & Social Assistance	9	10	10	13	11	13	10	10	11
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	*	7	6	6	7	7	7	7	6
Accommodation & Food Services	15	16	17	20	19	20	20	19	17
Other services, (except Public Administration)	19	12	12	11	12	12	15	14	12
Unclassified Establishments	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	1
Government	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	8	7

Source: RI DLT

\* Some data not shown due to unavailable employer information.

**Table 4-2 Average Employment for Richmond Businesses, First Quarter 2010-2018**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total Private &amp; Government</b>	<b>1,751</b>	<b>1,718</b>	<b>1,755</b>	<b>1,779</b>	<b>1,919</b>	<b>1,974</b>	<b>2,002</b>	<b>1,982</b>	<b>1,935</b>
<b>Total Private Only</b>	<b>1,034</b>	<b>1,010</b>	<b>1,043</b>	<b>1,077</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,273</b>	<b>1,316</b>	<b>1,304</b>	<b>1,259</b>
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	12	16	19	14	16	26	31	25	25
Mining	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Utilities	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0	0
Construction	75	67	68	69	75	89	94	95	101
Manufacturing	78	77	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Wholesale Trade	32	30	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Retail Trade	311	308	287	288	303	297	302	303	294
Transportation & Warehousing	*	*	*	*	*	123	*	*	*
Information	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Finance & Insurance	42	42	49	50	49	51	53	40	44
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	*	0	—	0	0	0	0	0	0
Professional & Technical Services	44	49	52	60	63	69	80	90	93
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative Support & Waste Management.	39	43	51	50	44	43	46	42	46
Educational Services	2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	0
Health Care & Social Assistance	80	87	82	94	79	77	66	65	59
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	*	74	53	59	73	78	78	94	58
Accommodation & Food Services	172	177	220	238	251	250	257	242	228
Other services, (except Public Administration)	48	27	26	21	28	31	28	30	28
Unclassified Establishments	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0	*
Government	717	709	712	702	719	701	686	678	676

Source: RI DLT

\* Some data not shown due to unavailable employer information.

With nearly 250 employees, Kenyon Industries, located on the Charlestown/Richmond border, is the largest employer in Richmond, followed by grocery retailer Stop & Shop, and Vibco, Inc. Excluding local government, Table 4-3 lists businesses with more than 25 employees.

**Table 4-3 Businesses with More Than 25 Employees (2019)**

Company Name	Line of Business	Approximate Number of Employees
Kenyon Industries, Inc.	Finishing Plants, Manmade	245
The Stop & Shop Supermarket Company LLC	Grocery Store	140
Wendy's	Restaurant	30
Vibco, Inc.	Construction Machinery	100
Ocean Community YMCA, Arcadia Branch	Civic and Social Associations	50
State Police, Rhode Island	Police Protection	35
CVS Pharmacy	Drug Stores and Proprietary Stores	25-30
Richmond Country Club, Inc.	Golf Club, Non-Membership	35-40
Meadow Brook Country Club	Golf Club, Non-Membership	25
Riverhead Building Supply Corporation	Building Materials, Supplies and Services	28
The Preserve at Boulder Hills*	Sporting Club, Shoppe, & Residences	30

Source: Communication with local businesses May - July 2019

\* Estimated

### Richmond Labor Force

The RIDLT<sup>2</sup> estimates the Town's labor force to be 4,281, with an unemployment rate for October 2019 of 1.8 percent, an improvement over the 2018 annual average of 2.7 percent. Compared to the state's rate of 3.6 percent (October 2019), Richmond's labor force appears to be returning to work.

U.S. Census statistics show that Richmond's labor force is relatively well-educated. According to the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS), 67 percent of residents 25 years and older had completed a higher education degree or taken college courses. Close to 39 percent held a bachelor's degree or higher. Table 4-4 lists the industries which employ residents ages 16 years and older. Nearly one-third are employed in Education Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance businesses, all of which require some advanced training or degree. Other growing employment sectors are the Construction and Manufacturing industries. Retail Trade, Finance & Insurance, Real Estate & Rental & Leasing, and Professional, Scientific & Management, and Administrative & Waste Management Services saw the largest declines in employment from 2009 to 2017.

Richmond residents, for the most part, are not employed in town. One goal is to increase employment opportunities for residents as well as retaining existing businesses. Statistically, the ACS reports that a majority of residents (89.2 percent) commuted alone to work by car. The average commute is 29 minutes and it appears that fewer workers are using available, but limited, public transportation. The ACS reports 0.2 percent took public transportation to work, a small decrease from 2009 (0.7 percent). Fewer are carpooling, and there was little change in the number of home-based workers.

2 RIDLT, Labor Market Information Unit "Richmond Labor Force Statistics (not seasonally adjusted) 1990- Present," 2019 (<http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/pdf/towns/richmond.pdf>, obtained 12/16/2019)



**Table 4-4 Industries of Employment for Richmond Residents Ages 16 Years and Older**

Industry	2009	2017
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Mining	0.3%	0%
Construction	4.8%	7.4%
Manufacturing	8.6%	10.5%
Wholesale Trade	2.8%	3.0%
Retail Trade	14.3%	10.5%
Transportation & Warehousing, and Utilities	4.6%	4.8%
Information	1.8%	2.6%
Finance & Insurance, Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	8.5%	4.0%
Professional, Scientific, & Management. and Administrative & Waste Management Services	9.3%	8.0%
Educational Services, and Health Care & Social Assistance	24.7%	30.8%
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation, and Accommodation & Food Services	9.9%	10.5%
Other Services, Except Public Administration	5.0%	5.4%
Public Administration	5.2%	2.5%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2012 Richmond Comprehensive Community Plan

## Economic Development Commission (EDC)

The purposes of the Richmond Economic Development Commission (EDC) are to retain and attract economic activities that are consistent with the environmental policies in the Comprehensive Community Plan, and to expand and diversify Richmond's economic base. Generally the duties of this commission are to:

- › Develop site criteria for business development along with suggesting suitable locations for nonresidential development;
- › Promote responsible economic growth;
- › Identify potential ventures with the University of Rhode Island to stimulate commercial and industrial development; and
- › Research federal and state economic development funding assistance.

The activities of the commission include:

- › Advocating measurable economic objectives for the Town and coordinating economic development policies;
- › Preparing a marketing plan for the Town;
- › Assisting in the planning of employment sites;
- › Encouraging "Development Partnerships;" and
- › Seeking technical assistance and funding.

The EDC and the Town strive to make Richmond a good place to do business. The commission also can advise in areas of licensing, building code requirements, and land development processes to make the Town more attractive to business interests. The EDC can assist with the Town's website, e-mailings and links to regional and state programs to assure that timely and accurate information is available to prospective as well as established local businesses.

Richmond will continue to promote its local businesses. A "shop local" campaign can highlight services available in town. By marketing local businesses, residents can support the local economy, which is important towards fostering and developing community pride.

## Economic Development Strategies

It is important to encourage economic development strategies that retain existing businesses, increase the number and quality of local jobs and expand the local tax base. Abundant natural resources, such as golf courses, conservation areas and working farms can help to support these strategies. A municipal water supply system and existing businesses in the Wyoming area can help to attract new business growth. The Town also has zoned industrial, light industrial, planned development, and flex tech areas to stimulate economic development. Proposed projects need to be assessed in relation to the availability of water, accessibility, and storm water and wastewater management (see Land Use Element).

### Agriculture

In Richmond there are approximately 45 working farms and many offer seasonal activities that support their operations. These include corn mazes, hay rides, educational programs and farm stands. The Town wants to sustain and encourage these businesses. Rhode Island farmers lead the country in the prices they obtain through direct marketing. The demand for locally grown food is rising because of an increased awareness and interest in food security and where and how food is produced. Food security means increasing and strengthening the capacity and sustainability of local food systems so that everyone can have access to locally raised, healthy, safe, affordable, and culturally acceptable food. Farming in Richmond also includes many nurseries, tree farms, greenhouses, and turf grass businesses as well as one major dairy farm. Other agricultural activities may include vineyards, aquaculture, or horse breeding/boarding (see also the Land Use and Natural and Cultural Resources Elements).



Richmond is in a good position to promote *A Vision for Rhode Island Agriculture: Five Year Strategic Plan*. This strategic plan was developed by a statewide consortium of agricultural producers and service providers, the Rhode Island Agricultural Partnership, to lay out a course for agriculture in the state over the next five years. The strategic plan outlines issues and opportunities, goals and strategies, and implementation actions. Recognizing the challenges and opportunities in maintaining a vital agriculture community, Richmond supports the efforts of the Rhode Island Agricultural Partnership and champions the goals and strategies of its plan. The Town will continue to:

- › Support farmer's markets;
- › Identify and encourage agriculture as a viable economic driver in the community; and
- › Support existing and new agricultural businesses through agriculturally sensitive land development policies.

## Agricultural Tourism

Farms are more than just places of production and employment. In recent years, farms have become destinations. Across the state, farms and nurseries are developing new forms of recreation, entertainment, hospitality and educational programs that have made them popular destinations for residents and tourists alike. According to the Strategic Plan, between 2002 and 2007, the number of farms offering agritourism activities increased sevenfold. Farming activities alone usually cannot sustain a local agricultural business. The concept of agricultural tourism allows farmers to increase the availability of their goods and services to the public. Some farms offer seasonal events, such as corn mazes, cheese tastings, pumpkin or blueberry picking, maple syrup production, and Christmas trees. Others may allow visitors to stay on the farm and experience a lifestyle that is part of the local heritage or offer educational programs to local schools. There is an increasing interest in leisure horseback riding and competitive equestrian activities that could encourage equestrian centers. Some local farms with sufficient resources could provide conference centers for private nonagricultural related events. The Town will seek to support existing and new agricultural businesses through agriculturally sensitive land development policies which encourage agritourism activities.

## Geotourism

As discussed in the Natural and Cultural Resources Element, many residents originally located in Richmond to take advantage of the pristine rivers and forest resources. There are numerous access areas for canoeing, hunting, kayaking and fishing along the Wood, Pawcatuck and Beaver Rivers, as well as local freshwater ponds. In 2019, the Wood-Pawcatuck River watershed was designated as a Wild and Scenic River. Several public trails for hiking and mountain biking pass through Richmond. Adding more seasonal campgrounds or other lodging facilities may encourage visitors to extend their visit and boost the local economy. With this type of interest in Richmond, the Town should consider "Geotourism" or "Cultural Heritage Tourism," similar to that promoted in the Blackstone River Valley. This concept focuses on exposing the visitor to the unique local natural or historic resources of an area. Richmond should assess its place in the regional tourist market relative to Washington County and the state as a whole. Working with the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation and local tourism councils is one way to promote the Town and build on existing resources. The EDC should seek businesses that cater to outdoor enthusiasts and depict the Town as a central hub for these types of activities in Washington County.



Commercial recreation development, such as seasonal campgrounds, equipment rental, outfitters, and outdoor supply stores would complement these goals. Other kinds of private recreation areas, such as zip line areas, outdoor skating rinks, a destination water park, kayaking center, or an indoor recreation venue also should be encouraged. Many residents who participated in the Community Survey supported these activities. Indoor entertainment opportunities, such as a movie theatre, may also offer some “rainy day” alternatives, particularly for families with children.

## Golf Businesses

There are five golf courses located in the Town. In addition to the economic benefits they provide, these facilities provide positive social and environmental benefits as well. Research has shown that walking a golf course leads to better health. Walking 18 holes is equal to 40 to 70 percent of an intense aerobics exercise class. Golf courses also have a positive environmental impact. The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America surveyed more than 16,000 golf courses and learned that the average course covers 150 acres, of which approximately 100 acres is maintained turf grass. The turf grass on a golf course helps to control flooding, filters runoff, and green spaces provide a cooling effect for surrounding properties. The remaining 50 acres of an average golf course are devoted to forests, woodlands, wetlands and/or water bodies which can support wildlife habitats. Additionally, golf course landscapes can be designed with a minimal need for irrigation. According to a United States Geological Survey, golf course irrigation accounts for only 0.5 percent of the 408 billion gallons of water used per day in the United States.

Golf courses have a positive economic impact. The National Golf Foundation’s 2019 Golf Industry Report found that the U.S. golf economy alone generates \$84 billion in goods and services annually and employs two million people. An estimated 24 million people played at least one round of golf in 2018 and the sport continues to gain popularity, particularly among children and young adults. The golf industry also generates local construction and building maintenance jobs.

Golf courses increase neighboring property values. Studies nationwide support the positive impact that green spaces and parks have on home and real estate values. The following are the current operating golf clubs in the Town (see Map 1 in Appendix B):

- › **Richmond Country Club** is an 18-hole, 6,826 yard, par 71 golf course. It is sculpted out of a pine forest abutting the Wood River. The clubhouse has panoramic views of the golf course, ponds and a footbridge. Richmond Country Club also offers a pro shop, banquet facilities and a full-service restaurant.
- › **Beaver River Golf Club** is an 18-hole, 6,006 yard, par 70 golf course located on Route 138, three miles east of I-95. It has a clubhouse containing a full-service bar and grill and pro shop.
- › **The Preserve at Boulder Hill’s Golf Course** is an 18-hole, par 3 golf course designed by well-known golf course architect Robert McNeil. Located on Route 138 approximately one mile east of I-95, it has a clubhouse containing a full-service bar and grill and pro shop.
- › **Meadow Brook Golf Course** is an 18-hole, 7,400 yards, par 72 golf course located 2 miles east of I-95 also on Route 138. Opened in 1929, Meadow Brook was completely renovated in 2006 by world renowned course designers, Roger Rulewich and Dave Fleury.

The existing clubhouse was also renovated, retaining much of the original granite work. The clubhouse serves breakfast and lunch and has a full bar.

- › **Pinecrest Golf Club** is 9-hole, 2991 yard, par 35, golf course at 25 Pinehurst Drive near the Village of Carolina. It has a clubhouse containing a full-service bar and grill.

There are also four golf courses and a driving range facility located within a ten-mile radius in the Towns of Hopkinton and South Kingstown. With this concentration of golf facilities, Richmond should evaluate its place in the regional and statewide golf market. As discussed above, working with the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation and local tourism councils is a way to promote the Town and build on existing resources. The Town should encourage development of additional golf courses and other businesses that cater to the golfing enthusiast. Richmond could be a central hub for golfing activities in southern Rhode Island.

## Commercial Development

Richmond's existing business center is at the Route I-95/138 interchange and within the Village of Wyoming. This area has municipal water service as well as easy access to the interstate. Existing commercial uses are located either in stand-alone buildings or in small strip development centers with large parking areas. In the Land Use Element, the Town would like to encourage a mix of uses, incorporating housing and offices, such as medical or dental. As of 2020, there are some vacant storefronts and opportunities for infill development in Wyoming. The Town is considering a way to focus commercial development and mixed uses in these areas.

The Town's Development Plan Review ordinance contains commercial design standards regarding the appearance of new or renovated structures as they are redeveloped. Building siting, façades, landscaping, and parking layouts are all important considerations to ensure a harmonious relationship with the surrounding area. Residents contend that the appearance of existing development needs improvement. Management of curb cuts, driveways and vehicle access are also concerns and are discussed in the Circulation Element. Overall, future development strategies, as discussed in the Land Use Element, should respect the Town's rural character.

In 2013, Richmond approved a unique commercial and residential development known as Richmond Commons. It is located in a unique zoning district, Planned Unit Development Village Center, which was created specifically for the property. As of 2020, construction has not yet commenced. At full buildout, it will feature a concentrated commercial area complimented by age-restricted residential community. Its proximity to Wyoming will expand and enhance the existing business center. Richmond Commons will have privately-owned roads and stormwater management areas, as well as a community onsite wastewater treatment system. It also will have access to the Richmond public water system. The current plans include development of a village center with a variety of smaller scale retail or commercial anchored by two larger retail or commercial establishments. To mitigate traffic congestion, the developer is required to upgrade Route 138 from the main access point of the development to the exit ramps for I-95, including realignment of the Stilson Road and Route 138 intersection.

## Industrial or Business Parks/Manufacturing

The Flex Tech Zone would be the most appropriate place to establish an industrial or business park in town. This zone allows a mixture of light industrial uses with a unified design, clustering of buildings, and requires incorporation of open space areas. Its proximity to the Richmond Common development and access to major highways would make it attractive to small scale manufacturers and distribution centers (see also the Land Use Element). The Town needs to be strategic and seek development that qualifies for state economic development assistance as well as focusing on the growing “Knowledge Economy” sector. Qualifying for this type of assistance allows developers to obtain capital as well as other incentives that encourage projects that might not otherwise happen. The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation published the *Statewide Strategic Plan for Office and Industrial Site Development* in 2009, which outlined and described real estate requirements for advancing economic development statewide. While no Richmond property specifically is cited in this plan, the report highlights properties along the Route 138 corridor to the nearby University of Rhode Island in Kingston. New businesses created from University expansion may well find suitable locations in Richmond. The Flex Tech area, for example, is readily accessible to the University. Because Route 138 is a major thoroughfare, traffic impacts should be reviewed for any proposed development.

## Regional Cooperation

A critical aspect of economic development is regional cooperation among communities. Through its membership in the Washington County Regional Planning Council, Richmond has participated in several regional studies, including the Washington County Sustainable Economy Project (March 2004), by Taintor and Associates, Inc. (herein referred to as the Taintor Report). The Taintor Report highlights the issues and challenges of economic development in Washington County, specifically preserving the County’s community character. The Report advocates for economic development in village centers in order to protect open space and rural character. Another challenge for the County is access to public water and sewers, as needs vary widely by community. Richmond has a limited public water district and no sewers (see Public Services and Facilities Element). The Taintor Report cautions against large-scale economic development projects and urges careful examination of all construction and maintenance impacts, water availability, wastewater disposal, and infrastructure maintenance issues.

Opportunities also exist in developing links between Richmond and regional transportation hubs. Making connections between the Westerly and Kingston Train Stations through public transportation, bike paths, and pedestrian ways can enhance accessibility to Richmond (see Circulation Element).

## Goals, Policies, and Actions

**Goal ED 1: Promote economic activities that enhance and complement the rural character and natural environment of Richmond.**

**Policy ED 1: Advocate for business models and types that complement the Town's rural character.**

**Action ED 1:** Survey Richmond's population to determine the business growth potential for home-based enterprises, and identify if there are specific categories to prioritize.

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission

**Action ED 2:** Investigate business ventures that could be established to support prioritized needs of the community.

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission

**Policy ED 2: Support and enable the creation, growth, and success of home-based business enterprises.**

**Action ED 3:** Provide links to state resources, regulations, and educational information about home-based businesses in Rhode Island.

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission

**Policy ED 3: Partner with state and regional organizations to identify strategies for attracting new industries and support joint opportunities for economic development activity.**

**Action ED 4:** Actively promote Richmond as a location to expand industry to companies directly, or through surrogate partners (Rhode Island Commerce; Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce, etc.).

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission

**Action ED 5:** Review annually the stated goals, vision, and mission of the Economic Development Commission and share those items on the EDC webpage.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission and Town Council



**Action ED 6:** Make regular contact with the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation and other state agencies and departments regarding the relationship between economic development and meeting the state-mandated goal for affordable housing. Coordinate these efforts with regional officials.

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission and Town Council

**Policy ED 4: Invest in public infrastructure to support appropriate light industrial and commercial development at specific locations in the Town.**

**Action ED 7:** Identify areas for major commercial and industrial activity in the vicinity of State Routes 138, Interstate 95 and Route 3 (see Land Use Element).

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Board and Town Council

**Action ED 8:** Facilitate dialogue with property owners in the Interstate 95 and Route 138 interchange and Route 3 area to identify and eliminate any infrastructure constraints prohibiting future commercial development.

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission and Town Administrator

**Policy ED 5: Optimize the supply and choice of land capable of supporting business and industries.**

**Action ED 9:** Review current land development controls and recommend amendments that will complement the economic development goals.

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board, Planning Department, and Town Council

**Action ED 10:** Continue to investigate the feasibility of mixed use zoning in villages to allow for flexibility in design and to maintain and review appropriate village-scaled open space (see Land Use Element).

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board and Town Council

**Policy ED 6: Identify a strategy for industrial development through use of existing environmental site analyses.**



**Policy ED 7: Maximize the investment and use of existing public services and facilities for economic development opportunities.**

**Action ED 11:** Identify road improvements in business districts and coordinate efforts with RI Department of Transportation as appropriate (see Circulation Element).

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Public Works Department and Town Administrator

**Policy ED 8: Support policies and initiatives that promote agriculture and agricultural businesses (see Natural and Cultural Resources and Land Use Elements).**

**Action ED 12:** Continue to promote farmers markets, fairs and craft events that support locally sourced and produced goods within Richmond. Provide a tool by which local businesses can make the community aware of these activities.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Town Council and Economic Development Commission

**Policy ED 9: Encourage economic development opportunities for ecotourism based on the Town's abundant natural and cultural resources (see Natural and Cultural Resources Element).**

**Action ED 13:** Coordinate with Rhode Island Commerce Corporation and local tourism councils to promote Richmond as a destination for ecotourism.

*Timeframe:* Short Term

*Responsibility:* Town Council, Town Administrator, and Economic Development Commission

**Policy ED 10: Encourage new businesses to locate in Richmond as well as retain and promote existing businesses.**

**Action ED 14:** Develop material for the Town's website that explains the requirements for opening a business in Richmond. Materials should include a list of local, regional, and state resources.

*Timeframe:* Short Term

*Responsibility:* Town Council, Planning Department, Economic Development Commission, and Town Administrator

**Action ED 15:** Create and fund a "shop local" campaign that encourages residents to shop and do business with local establishments.

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Town Council and Economic Development Commission

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## 5

## Circulation

The creation of new roads, the condition of existing roads, and pedestrian or bicycle pathways, together with access to public transportation all can have a profound effect on the Town's character. Furthermore, the effectiveness of land use decisions depends on the circulation network. Determining where employment and housing sites should be located or estimating "who or what" will be going "where, when, and how" depends in part on levels of service, access, and mobility. These concepts play a major role in linking travel and land development with road improvements and other transportation options.



The goals and policies outlined in the Circulation Element must be consistent with the State's Long Range Transportation Plan, as amended. The Town's transportation network is shown on Map 9 in Appendix B.

### Community Survey and Pubic Workshop

During the 2019 public workshop, participants expressed interest in having improved multi-modal transportation options throughout town. These options included installing sidewalks and bike lanes along Route 138, increased RIPTA service, and access to the Ride paratransit program. This feedback complemented the Community Survey responses, which identified transportation for seniors as a high priority. Survey respondents also identified a desire to

have greater frequency of RIPTA buses available, including service to and from area beaches. The survey also identified a need for improved roadway conditions and reducing traffic congestion along Route 138. Survey participants identified a potential improvement of transportation safety through better roadway and wayfinding signage.

There are numerous duplicate curb cuts and driveways in the Wyoming area, but the Town has found that it is difficult to persuade adjacent property owners to share driveway accesses. Residents are concerned about how future development in the area will increase traffic congestion. Alternate routes should be considered for through traffic. High volume generating drive-through businesses should be prohibited in this area, and shared curb cuts should be encouraged to improve circulation in the area.

Workshop participants agreed that pedestrian amenities should be enhanced in the villages, specifically in Wyoming. Residents noted that lack of sidewalks under the I-95 overpass or at the on and off ramps make it dangerous to walk from one side of Wyoming to the other. Residents also would like to see increased pedestrian ways outside of the village in the form of trails. Residents, both at the workshop and in response to the Community Survey, also liked the idea of bike paths throughout town with specific links into villages.

Current development standards require that new roads must maintain the rural character of the Town. It is also current policy that, outside of the villages, residential developments do not need sidewalks or street lights, a concept with which most residents agreed.

## Roads and Traffic

### Roads

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) Functional Classification is a grouping of roads according to their actual or expected use. Roads in Richmond are classified as Interstate, Arterial, Collector or Local. The Interstate, Arterial and Collector streets are shown on Map 9 (Appendix B) and listed in Table 5-1. The lengths in this table only reflect those portions of the roadways classified by RIDOT; the distances are not necessarily the entire lengths of the roads. For example, only a half mile of Shannock Village Road functions as a Collector. The remaining portion is considered a local street.



**Table 5-1 RIDOT Functional Classification of Richmond Roads**

Classification	Road	Length (miles)	Route #
Interstate	Interstate 95	5.23	
Arterial	Kingston Road	5.45	Route 138
	Main Street	0.72	Route 138
	Nooseneck Hill Road	0.16	Route 138
	South County Trail	2.63	Route 2
Collector	Carolina Main Street	0.37	Route 112
	Richmond Townhouse Road	0.17	Route 112
	Richmond Townhouse Road	2.57	Route 112
	Nooseneck Hill Road	5.53	Route 3
	Church Street	2.39	Route 91
	Heaton Orchard Road	1.4	Route 91
	Kings Factory Road	0.06	Route 91
	Kingstown Road	0.09	Route 91
	New Kings Factory Road	0.39	Route 91
	Shannock Village Road	0.48	Route 91
	Switch Road	4.05	Route 91
	Arcadia Road	1.79	Route 91
	Bridge Street	0.08	Route 91
	K and G Ranch Road	0.25	Route 91
	Kenyon School Road	0.49	Route 91
	Lewiston Ave	1.21	Route 91
	Pine Hill Road	2.23	Route 91
	Shannock Hill Road	2.48	Route 91
	Sherman Ave	0.14	Route 91
	Skunk Hill Road	0.09	Route 91
	Woodville Road	1.05	Route 91

Source: RIDOT

## Traffic

The goal of any roadway system is to provide adequate access to move people and goods safely and efficiently. Level of access determines the functional classification of roads. Referred to as "Level of Service" (LOS), a road's LOS describes traffic circulation standards based upon anticipated delays (see Appendix E). It is calculated generally by comparing actual or anticipated traffic volume with a road's capacity, taking into account times of the week and day, and unique elements such as traffic signals, turning lanes and curb cuts. Just as periodic economic and social factors may affect travel behavior, traffic volumes will also vary in response to seasonal changes, holidays and a variety of other factors. If a proposed development is found to decrease the existing level of service in congested areas, a traffic mitigation plan should be prepared and reviewed by the Planning Board prior to rendering a decision.



Table 5-2 lists traffic flow growth in Richmond. Historically, the Town experienced its greatest increases in traffic volume between 2000 and 2012. Since 2015, however, traffic throughout Richmond has remained relatively stable.

**Table 5-2 Change in Daily Average Traffic, AADT Values**

Route	1979	1987	1994	1995	2000	2007	2012	2014	2015	2017
Beaver River Road	160	–	–	–	–	–	–	200	–	–
Bridge Street	–	–	800	–	–	–	1,700	1,810	–	–
Heaton Orchard Road Road	–	–	–	600	–	–	1,200	1,200	612	624
Lewiston Ave	–	250	250	–	–	400	300	–	305	–
Pine Hill Road, between Meadow Brook Trail and Mill Lane	–	490	580	–	700	1,800	500	–	–	–
Shannock Hill Road, between W. Shannock Road and North Road	–	800	1,000	–	1,100	2,000	–	–	–	–
Route 112, Richmond Townhouse Road	–	–	2,100	–	–	–	4,800	5,000	3,491	3,554
Route 138, one-half mile east of Stilson Road	5,100	5,800	8,600	–	–	13,900	11,500	–	7,589	7,836
Route 91, Carolina–Alton Road	–	3,000	4,100	–	3,100	7,400	3,600	–	3,736	3,804
Switch Road	–	–	2,800	2,300	2,700	2,600	–	2,932	3,824	3,893
Woodville Road, between Sandy Pond Road and Hopkinton Town Line	–	–	1,000	–	700	–	900	900	800	–
Route 2 (South County Trail)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3,603	3,674

Source: RIDOT

AADT: factored average daily traffic volume for calendar year.

## Traffic Collisions

According to the Richmond Police Chief, the following are total motor vehicle collisions for the years 2016 through 2019:

- › 2016: 196
- › 2017: 194
- › 2018: 183
- › 2019: 191

The Chief states that the largest number of collisions, up to 44 percent, occurred along Route 138 (Main Street and Kingstown Road). The largest percentage of these mishaps involved minor collisions during daylight hours on dry roads. Three fatalities were reported during this time period.

## Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a document developed and adopted by the State Planning Council with the assistance of its Transportation Advisory Committee. Its programs provide federal funding to state and local transportation projects. Prospective projects are initially rated according to the following criteria: mobility benefits, cost-effectiveness, economic development impact, environmental impact, and degree of support to local and state plans. Projects in Richmond on the TIP for fiscal years 2018-2027 (Amendment 21, November 15, 2019) include the following:



### Bridge Capital Program

- › Baker Pines Bridge, I-95 northbound and southbound at Route 3
- › Kings Factory Road Bridge at the Pawcatuck River
- › Kingstown Road Bridge, I-95 northbound and southbound at Route 138
- › Carolina Bridges (3) at Route 112 along Mill Canal and the Pawcatuck River
- › Maintenance to Usquepaug River, Heath's Brook, Canal Brook (Shannock Mill), Beaver River, Kenyon Arch, Meadowbrook Sluiceway, Alton Trench, Mechanic Street, Biscuit City Road and Wood River Road
- › Maintenance to Heaton Orchard Bridge at Route 2 along Usquepaug River
- › Maintenance to Miantonomi Bridge at Route 2 along Amtrak railway
- › Kings Factory Road Railroad Bridge
- › Wyoming Bridge



### **Drainage Capital Program**

- › Upper Wood River
- › Lower Wood River
- › Pawcatuck River Mainstream

### **Pavement Capital Program**

- › Woodville Road (Route 3 to Switch Road)
- › I-95 (Connecticut State Line to Route 138)
- › Shannock Road (Route 112/Carolina Back Road to Route 2)
- › Old Switch Road (Mechanic Street to Switch Road)
- › Route 2 (Charlestown Town Line to South Kingstown Town Line)

### **Traffic Safety Capital Program**

- › Roundabout at Intersection of Route 138 and Route 112

## **Public Transportation**

Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) is the only public transportation serving Richmond. A public Park and Ride lot at the Route 138/I-95 interchange is one of many stops RIPTA offers along I-95 into Kennedy Plaza in Providence. Weekday service includes four inbound and outbound buses at the I-95 Park and Ride in Wyoming between 6:00 AM and 6:00 PM. There is no weekend or holiday service for this bus route. RIPTA also offers a local service to and from the Westerly Train Station and Wyoming on Fridays only.

In the Community Survey, residents expressed interest in increasing public transit options. The Land Use Element encourages increased density as infill in Wyoming, which will increase need for RIPTA service. Other options are to provide pedestrian access or bike paths. These alternatives should be considered when redevelopment is proposed in Wyoming and when the Town moves forward with future growth center studies.

Transit Forward RI 2040 is a collaborative effort between RIPTA, RIDOT and Statewide Planning to develop a statewide Transit Master Plan. Through public outreach efforts, this collaboration recognizes the increased demand for transit alternatives throughout Richmond and neighboring communities across Washington County. Through the guidance of the Transit Master Plan, Richmond should remain active in its participation of future multi-modal transit strategies conducted by RIPTA, RIDOT and Statewide Planning.

## **Bikes and Pedestrians**

The concept of mobility includes bicycles and pedestrians. In a rural community these mobility choices are far different than those designed for a more urban environment. In the village centers and growth areas, mixed-use or compact development are preferred (see Land Use Element); therefore, the pedestrian should be the focus of the circulation pattern.



Development should consider the Level of Service required together with the scale, access, and safety of sidewalks and crosswalks. These areas include Wyoming, the area around the I-95 and Route 138 interchange, large scale developments such as Richmond Commons and The Preserve at Boulder Hills, and the future growth areas subject to further study.

Sidewalks, however, are not considered appropriate or necessary for the more rural residential areas of the Town. Walking or bike trails are a better alternative for linking villages and other places of interest. Both the Natural and Cultural Resources Element and the Open Space and Recreation Element discuss trails in Richmond. Each offers suggestions to build a local network connecting open space with conservation areas and local villages. For economic and safety reasons, dedicated bike lanes are not suggested for Richmond's narrow arterial and collector roads. Off-road bike paths or multi-purpose paths are better alternatives.

## **Parking Alternatives**

In recent years, residents have expressed a concern about availability of parking spaces in villages, particularly within Shannock. Municipal parking lots might be a way to attract businesses where space is limited. The concept of shared parking areas, particularly near the I-95/Route 138 interchange, will reduce congestion, paved surface areas, stormwater runoff and pollutants. Parking alternatives should be specific to existing villages or future growth centers, and linked to bikeways, pedestrian ways, and RIPTA service.

## **Regional Intermodal Opportunities**

The Town should look to link with regional transportation hubs and make intermodal connections or enhancements. This includes the Westerly and Kingston Train Stations as well as the commuter station at Wickford Junction. Links through public transportation, bike paths, and pedestrian ways should be explored to enhance mobility for residents and visitors.

## Goals, Policies, and Actions

**Goal C1: Provide for safe and accessible mobility opportunities for all residents.**

**Policy C1: Ensure that road construction and maintenance meets safety standards but does not negatively affect the Town's rural character.**

**Action C1:** Encourage developers, non-profit agencies, and housing agencies to locate new affordable housing units in growth areas with access to public transportation and water (see Housing Element and Land Use Element).

*Timeframe:* Short Term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board and Town Council

**Policy C2: Ensure that the construction of new roadways and the maintenance of existing roadways meet current and future demands without negatively affecting the Town's rural character.**

**Action C2:** Approve new developments and/or road construction projects that result in improved safety and minimize environmental effects.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Board, Town Council, and DPW

**Action C3:** Maintain an inventory of Town roads according to the hierarchy and Level of Service of each; see Table 5-1.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Board and DPW

**Action C4:** Adopt Level of Service standards for the Town's roadways, specifically including design and construction standards for new streets, necessity for signalization, shared curb cuts, and off-street and on-street parking.

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board

**Action C5:** Maintain street design standards that are consistent with the rural character of the Town.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Board, DPW

**Action C6:** Work with RIDOT to prioritize new or existing projects in the State Transportation Improvement Plan.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Town Administrator, Planning Board and Town Council

**Policy C3: Promote alternative modes of transportation.**

**Action C7:** Encourage compact development design which prioritizes pedestrian access and safety in village centers and growth areas (see Land Use Element).

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Board

**Action C8:** Encourage pedestrian and bicycle links to existing bikeways, hiking/biking trails, and pedestrian ways in new and redevelopment projects, as appropriate (see Natural and Cultural Resources Element).

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Board

**Action C9:** Work with RIDOT and RIPTA to improve access to the RIPTA Park and Ride from neighboring businesses.

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Town Administrator and Town Council

**Action C10:** Explore intermodal connections between regional transportation hubs and Richmond to enhance economic development opportunities (see Economic Development Element).

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board, Town Council, and Economic Development Commission

**Policy C4: Promote parking alternatives in village centers and future growth areas.**

**Action C11:** Evaluate the feasibility of parking strategies for new and redevelopment projects which use less land area and encourage better use of limited available land.

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board and DPW

**Action C12:** Evaluate the feasibility of municipal parking in village centers and future growth areas.

*Timeframe:* Long Term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board and Town Administrator

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# 6

## Public Services and Facilities

The Public Services and Facilities Element provides details of the services that are offered and evaluates the improvements needed to meet future demands. This element addresses education facilities, library services, fire districts, police, public works, drinking water supplies, other municipal services, and energy. Public services and facilities in Richmond are identified on Map 10 in Appendix B.

### Community Survey and Public Workshop Summary

Most respondents to the community survey and attendees to the public workshop agreed or strongly agreed that Richmond should invest in public services and facilities to encourage economic development. Results from the survey and workshop suggest that additional investment is needed to provide for a community center and increased recreation facilities, along with an improvement to Town infrastructure and a revitalization of the “downtown” Wyoming business district. Assets to the Town of Richmond include the Police Department, fire districts, and library. Challenges facing Richmond include the adequacy of available public and private water for future needs and the lack of conveniently-located medical services in the Town.

### Education

The Chariho Regional School District manages and oversees public education for the Towns of Richmond, Hopkinton and Charlestown. There are four elementary schools in the District, one of which is located on Route 138 in Richmond at the junction of Route 112. The regional Middle and High Schools, Chariho Alternative Learning Academy, and Chariho Tech Vocational School, as well as the administrative offices are located on Switch Road in Richmond.

Richmond Elementary School has approximately 404 students enrolled (2019). A facilities assessment conducted in 2011 for the District identified a need for physical improvements to all District buildings and grounds, including roof replacement, asphalt repaving and resurfacing of play areas for Richmond Elementary School. The report also identified a need for a walkway from the gravel parking area to the school building. Other recommendations

included upgrading electrical, HVAC, plumbing, and fire suppression systems. To support these changes, the school was allocated funding through the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) in a series of five-year grants. Between fiscal years 2011 and 2015, approximately \$2.4 million was spent on the identified upgrades. Major upgrades included a replacement of the heating and steam system piping, heating system controls, parking and traffic improvements, and a repaired septic system. For the current five-year funding cycle (fiscal years 2016 to 2021), approximately \$1.5 million is allocated for upgrades. Completed improvements at the elementary school include redesigned traffic circulation areas to improve students' safety, replacement of the asphalt shingle roof, and replacement of the septic system.

Table 6-1 generally shows declining school enrollment over the last decade; however, school enrollment has fluctuated in recent years. Richmond children make up roughly one-third of the school district student population and their numbers have proportionately declined. The District struggles with maintenance, modification and upkeep of existing structures, particularly in response to state education mandates.

**Table 6-1 School Enrollment in the Chariho Regional School District (2010-2019)**

School Year	District	Richmond	Tri-Town Richmond Proportion <sup>1</sup>
2010-2011	3,639	1,282	–
2011-2012	3,613	1,244	35.16%
2012-2013	3,522	1,228	35.58%
2013-2014	3,532	1,233	36.03%
2014-2015	3,394	1,193	36.26%
2015-2016	3,291	1,163	36.53%
2016-2017	3,334	1,216	37.37%
2017-2018	3,284	1,179	37.22%
2018-2019	3,273	1,184	–

Source: Chariho Regional School District Office of the Superintendent

<sup>1</sup> Proportion is for Charlestown, Hopkinton, and Richmond students only.

## Libraries

The State of Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) is the state library agency for Rhode Island. It is responsible for developing a statewide plan for library development, interlibrary cooperation, and resource sharing to serve the library and information needs of all Rhode Islanders.

The OLIS Five-Year State Plan establishes three goals for local library services based on priorities established by the federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) but encompasses both federal and state statutory objectives:

1. Access: provide access to library materials and information resources for all Rhode Islanders through physical and virtual spaces.

2. Learning: support the continuing education of librarians, library staff and trustees and the development of statewide programming for libraries.
3. Engagement: empower libraries to be incubators for economic, educational and cultural development and community discourse.

The Clark Memorial Library is located in Carolina. It is a private, non-profit organization. As of 2019, the library had 1,736 cardholders and 20,500 visitors annually. Its collection includes 24,792 circulated items. The library participates in the Ocean State Libraries System, which increases residents' access statewide. Some cardholders don't live in Richmond and some Richmond residents have library cards issued from other libraries but use the Clark Memorial Library regularly. According to the librarian, the meeting room is used extensively by local groups and audio-visual services are in high demand. The Richmond Historical Society archives are housed at the library and the local archivist is available one day per week to answer questions on documents or the Town's history. The librarian indicates that there is a need to expand library space, as the children's room is very small and there is more room needed for people to read the newspaper, use the internet, and study. A dedicated space for local history would also be welcomed.

The Langworthy Public Library is a private, non-profit organization in Hope Valley that serves the Hope Valley and Wyoming sections of Richmond. As of 2019, the library had 1,323 cardholders; 223 cardholders (or about 17 percent) have Richmond addresses. Based on 2018 state report filings with OLIS data, the library had 19,247 visitors annually. Its collection includes 20,129 circulated items and it owns 25,950 physical items. The librarian indicates that there is a need for additional or redesigned space in order to preserve the integrity of the archives and to provide a welcoming community program space. This has been explored over the years but the library is constrained by its physical footprint and lack of funds.

## Fire Districts

Firefighting in Richmond is provided by two fire districts; the Hope Valley-Wyoming Fire District and the Richmond-Carolina Fire District. Each fire district is a quasi-municipal organization chartered by the State of Rhode Island General Assembly. Each district has its own taxing authority and is staffed primarily through volunteer firefighters. Like other municipal fire departments, the districts provide fire prevention and suppression services and State Fire Code administration and enforcement. Emergency medical services are provided by the Hope Valley Ambulance Squad, a separate organization.

## Hope Valley-Wyoming Fire District

The western third of the Town is covered by the Hope Valley-Wyoming Fire District (see Map 10 in Appendix B). Coverage in Richmond is provided from the main facility located on Main Street in Hopkinton, and a second station located on Route 91 in Alton. As of 2020, the department has 30-35 volunteer firefighters, one full-time firefighter, and two full-time staff persons at the main station that include the Fire Chief and Secretary/Tax Collector.



Ladder 911

The District has the following equipment:

- › One 109 ft. rear mount ladder truck with a 2,000 gpm pump and 300 gallon water tank
- › Three engines:
  - Two with a 1,500 gpm pump and 1,000 gallon water tank
  - One with a 2,000 gpm pump and 2,000 gallon water tank
- › One tanker with a 1,250 gpm pump and 3,000 gallon water tank

## Richmond-Carolina Fire District

The remainder of the Town is covered by the Richmond-Carolina Fire District (see Map 10 in Appendix B). Coverage is provided from three facilities: 1) Station 3, located on Bell School House Road, serving the northern portion of town; 2) Station 2 on Route 138; and 3) the original Station 1, which is on Route 112 in Carolina. Station 1 also houses administrative offices for the District. ADA accessible meeting rooms in Station 1 are also available to the Town and other local organizations. Like the Hope Valley-Wyoming District, the Richmond-Carolina District shares its equipment with all Washington County companies through mutual aid agreements.

## Police Department

The Richmond Police Department is headquartered on Main Street in Wyoming. The Department occupies the ground floor and basement of a former bank building. The Town's Community and Senior Center occupies the second floor. The Police Department has 14 sworn police officers, including a chief, one lieutenant, two patrol sergeants, two patrol corporals, one detective, and seven patrol officers. One of the patrol officers also serves as a school resource officer for the Chariho school district, which is largely funded by the school budget. There are five full-time civilian employees that include an administrative assistant, three dispatchers, and an animal control officer. The department also has three part-time police dispatchers, one part-time animal control technician, five part-time safety officers, and four reserve police officers. The latter are employed primarily for assistance with traffic control during the Washington County Fair.



In 2018, the Town purchased and trained a police dog with a private grant. The grant accommodated equipment, food and veterinarian care, along with additional reimbursement for overtime incurred when the K-9 handler was away for certification training. K-9 Bico, a Belgian Shepherd dog, is trained to track and search – a valuable skill in a community with large tracts of thickly-wooded areas that can be difficult to search. Prior to acquiring K-9 Bico, it was often difficult to obtain a police K-9 from neighboring communities in a timely manner. In 2019, K-9 Bico completed narcotics detection training which further enhances his value to the Town.



K-9 Bico  
Photo is courtesy of Richmond PD

The Department owns and operates the following equipment:

- › Twelve marked police cruisers assigned to patrol which include:
  - Six all-wheel-drive Dodge Chargers (model years 2014, 2015, and 2019)
  - Two 2013 rear-wheel drive Dodge Chargers
  - Four all/4-wheel-drive Ford Explorers (model years 2010-2019)
- › Two unmarked police cruisers
  - 2008 Ford Taurus front-wheel-drive
  - 2019 Dodge Durango AWD
- › One 2012 Dodge Ram van for Animal Control
- › Five cruisers including four Ford LTD Crown Victoria's (model years 2005-2011) and one 2010 Dodge Charger that are used exclusively for traffic details that are high mileage but earn direct revenue that totaled \$74,000 in 2019 (per hour cost for vendors requiring a police cruiser at a detail location)
- › Four specialty vehicles that include one 2007 Chevrolet Impala (for surveillance) and three vehicles that were acquired at no cost from the US Military's 1033 program; including a 1995 Dodge pickup and two Humvee trucks.

The Department has contemplated the benefit of purchasing ATVs or motorcycles to assist and enhance search capabilities in emergencies involving large parcels of open space and woodlands in the Town's 40-square-miles.

The following renovations and improvements were performed to the Police Station since the 2012 revision of this plan:

- › Improvements were made to the Dispatch Center and Radio Console by installing a used console donated by the Westerly Police Department that was an upgrade to the prior system
- › The HVAC units were replaced in the building
- › The building roof shingles were repaired or replaced
- › The old illuminated police sign from the front of the property was removed due to high maintenance costs and poor aesthetics and was replaced with a more aesthetically

pleasing sign (made of high-density foam) that is black with gold lettering and is supported by two granite posts with up-lighting fixtures from the ground level

- › A RISE energy grant was used to offset the cost of replacing the broken, bent, and unattractive light poles in the parking lot with LED energy-efficient light fixtures atop classic looking fluted metal light poles with new bases to enhance safety and appearance

Despite the recent improvements to the building, the Police Station is inadequate to meet current needs. Security remains the biggest concern. Because of physical limitations, police are not able to safely transfer prisoners throughout the building. Privacy is also compromised due to the shared use of the building, which cannot be remediated without a single-use building exclusively for the Police Department. Needed improvements include relocation of holding cells, construction of a new fingerprinting and processing area, installation of an ADA-compliant restroom on the first floor, and the addition of conference and meeting rooms. The parking lot also requires repaving and striping. Capital budgets in the near future should also provide for regular replacement of police cruisers and an upgrade to the police radio system to replace outdated components.

## Social and Health Services

According to HousingWorks RI, in 2017, 3.4 percent of Richmond families and 4.1 percent of all Richmond residents lived under the poverty line. Facilities such as the Westerly Area Rest Meals (WARM) Center and the Welcome House of South County offer shelter and meals to the homeless. The WARM Center has 19 beds located in their shelter and also provides daily meals and community outreach services. The Welcome House of South County offers a shelter with 17 beds, a soup kitchen, transitional and supportive permanent housing as well as case management and advocacy services. A winter emergency shelter is also offered in collaboration with the Peace Dale Congregational Church. Assistance is also available from Rhode Island Center Assisting those in Need (RICAN) located in Charlestown. RICAN maintains a food pantry and a clothing loft.

Richmond has several group homes maintained under the direction of the State Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals. There are 24 group home beds in Richmond. There is also The Providence Center - Roads to Recovery: Women, which is a residential program developed specifically for women in recovery that focuses on trauma, domestic violence, developing positive relationships, pregnancy health, employment, education, and parenting skills. The center is located on Baker Pines Road. Under the definitions in Rhode Island General Law, these beds also qualify as “affordable housing” units.

There are no medical facilities that include physicians, dentists, urgent care or hospitals in Richmond. Some residents use Wood River Health Services (WRHS) in nearby Hopkinton. WRHS offers general medical, dental, and social services. Services also include audiology, nutrition, family planning, mammography, radiology, clinical psychology, laboratory testing, food bank, and general social services.

South County Community Action provides area residents, including Richmond residents, with services that include Head Start, home weatherization programs, food, clothing and housing assistance, homelessness prevention, youth programs, emergency services, and job training

and placement. Other social service agencies serving Richmond residents that receive grant funding from the Town of Richmond include the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA) of Washington County, South Shore Mental Health Center, Frank A. Olean Center, Women's Resource Center, Bradford Jonnycake Center, Sympatico, Hospice of Washington County, and Westerly Adult Day Care. Qualified Richmond residents also may apply for heating assistance and home improvement funds (primarily through Community Development Block Grant funds) through the Washington County Community Development Corporation.

Public health and well-being can be encouraged through zoning and planning concepts. For example, residential development design that encourages residents to walk or bicycle to schools, libraries, commercial areas and work, rather than driving a motor vehicle. A buildout of the Route 138 corridor from the Town Hall through Wyoming could offer residents with the ability to walk, bike, and use public transportation to access a variety of services. The Town has discussed the possibility of placing a community center on the property adjacent to the Town Hall. With the adoption of the Planned Unit Development-Village Center district, this would offer residents a large section of town to spend time in and not require the use of privately owned vehicles. Another way to promote healthier life styles is to encourage businesses which supply healthy food sources, health and social services and recreational opportunities (see the Economic Development Element).

## Community Center

The Richmond Community Center occupies the second floor above the Richmond Police Department. The Center is primarily used as a senior center; however, some programs are open to all ages. In November 2018, an ad hoc committee reviewed the Town's need to improve upon the current community center. The ad hoc committee findings are as follows:

1. A new community center is needed because the current community center does not have adequate space.
2. The current community center located on the second floor of the Police Department is incompatible with law enforcement functions that take place within the same building.
3. If the Police Department remains in the current building, the second-floor space would provide much needed additional space for police operations.
4. The five-acre lot directly across the street from the Town Hall would be a viable option and ideal location for a community center.
5. It would be in the best interest of the residents to own the facility or, if a potential partnership should transpire to include the five-acre lot, it is recommended that the Town retain ownership of the land and building in perpetuity.
6. The committee met with the Ocean Community YMCA and determined that a partnership with the YMCA may be a viable option.

Although it is not a public facility owned by the Town, the Arcadia Branch of the Ocean Community YMCA, located in Wyoming, offers a variety of programs including child enrichment, family events, and health & wellness.

## Seniors in the Community

The Richmond Senior Activities Committee currently oversees the operation of the Richmond Senior Center. Outreach services are provided by the VNA, University of Rhode Island School of Pharmacy, and the Rhode Island Department of the Elderly. There is also a meal program offered at the Crandall House in Hopkinton, Meals on Wheels and several other nursing services agencies.

The Town Council established an Elder Affairs Commission in Chapter 4.16 of the Code of Ordinances and charged its members with the responsibility of reviewing and evaluating existing programs for the senior citizens of Richmond, and presenting short and long-term recommendations for improvements to services and programs.

## Drinking Water Supply

A sufficient and dependable supply of water is critical to the Town's future development. In Richmond, 100 percent of the water supply is obtained from groundwater sources. Underground aquifers in the Beaver and Wood Rivers supply all of the Town's potable water. The most productive aquifer areas are the central parts of these river valleys where the saturated thickness and water transmitting capacity of the sediments are greatest. These include the Chipuxet, Usquepaug-Queen, Beaver-Pasquisset, Upper Wood, and Lower Wood basins. In addition to providing drinking water, these ground and surface waters sustain thriving ecosystems, as well as support domestic, industrial, and fire suppression needs.

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) describes most water resources in Richmond as "known or presumed to be suitable for drinking water use without treatment." The uncontaminated surface water and groundwater is soft and slightly acidic. There are excessive levels of naturally occurring iron and manganese in some areas of town.

According to the USGS Water Use and Availability Study for the Pawcatuck Basin (2004), Richmond residents (either through public water service or private wells) withdrew 6 percent of total withdrawals in the Upper Wood sub-basin and 0.4 percent of total withdrawals in the Pawcatuck Basin.

### Richmond Water Department

The Richmond Water Department (RWD) is a community water system created in the early 1980s by the RI Water Resources Board in response to groundwater contamination from gasoline stations in the Wyoming area. It now supplies water to the Wyoming area and a small section of Hope Valley in Hopkinton. The RWD operates under Article 4, Section 2.D of the Richmond Charter and Chapter 13.05 of the Municipal Code of Ordinances as a Town Department. There are no emergency connections to other systems or redundant backup sources of supply at this time. The groundwater source is two wells in the Upper Wood Aquifer off of Foley Drive. The primary well produces 350 gallons per minute (GPM) and the back-up emergency well produces 250 GPM when the primary well is not in service. The emergency well is not used during normal daily operations but can run simultaneously with the primary well in the event of an extreme emergency such as a large fire. The RWD does not operate any water treatment facilities. The Town's water supply is administered by the

Finance Department and operated by a private contractor whose employees work with Town officials. The Old Kenyon Road water tank is a 300,000-gallon water storage facility that consists of one above ground standpipe with an overflow elevation of 281 feet. There is approximately 32,000 feet of 12-inch water main and approximately 9,000 feet of 8-inch water main. Well pumping and the standpipe elevation operate the gravity feed distribution system. It has a single pressure zone. The average daily demand is approximately 65,000 gallons per day. Customers are billed quarterly for water service.

The Town improved the existing water system by installing an additional elevated storage tank that has a capacity of 500,000 gallons. A new chlorination system is also being installed. Recently, the Town reached a mutual aid agreement with the Town of Westerly for potable water in the case of emergencies. Table 6-2 compares the estimated water usage with maximum anticipated water demands. The water system must maintain the ability to supply the anticipated maximum demand.

The average gallons per day (GPD) is calculated over the course of a year, as demands change seasonally. Currently, the annual demand is approximately 207,000 GPD. It is anticipated that average winter demand would be 75 percent of the average annual daily demand or 155,850 GPD. The average summer demand is expected to be in the range of 150 percent of the average annual demand or 311,700 GPD.

**Table 6-2 Estimated Water Usage**

Description	Average GPD	Maximum GPD
Existing System	65,000	155,000
The Preserve at Boulder Hills <sup>1</sup>	3,500	34,000
Richmond Elementary School	1,300	41,000
Richmond Commons	130,000	225,000
Fox Run Development <sup>1</sup>	8,000	55,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>207,800</b>	<b>510,000</b>

Source: Water Department and Finance Department

1 Based upon existing conditions

In 2011, the Town completed a 9,500-foot long extension of a 12-inch water main from Wyoming easterly to the Richmond Elementary School to meet public health concerns. The extension is available to accommodate infill development along Route 138. Future plans may include extending the water line to service the Town Hall and a Town-owned property across the street from the Town Hall. As of 2020, there are no plans to extend the water line any further down Route 138 or Route 112 (see Land Use Element).

The Town currently maintains supply to meet a maximum daily demand of 510,000 gallons from the existing primary well source. Based on current usage, if the average daily withdrawal rate is 207,000 GPD, it would allow the Town a surplus of 303,000 GPD to accommodate future growth.

Although state law does not require public water systems the size of Richmond's to maintain a water management plan, the system would benefit from having one. Water system management plans are used to facilitate conservation, development, protection of drinking

water resources and a guide for proper decision making. The supply service area boundaries should be clearly defined on the water service supply area map. This plan and the map should be consistent with this Comprehensive Community Plan and include the following:

- › Source water and wellhead protection strategies;
- › A description of the system's infrastructure;
- › Water production data, including volume of water withdrawn and water use by category of users;
- › Water quality standards;
- › Description of rates and charges;
- › Capital improvement plans;
- › Drought contingency procedures;
- › Supplemental supplies; and
- › Emergency and demand management programs.

The Water Management Plan should be reviewed and updated as necessary or at least every five years. A map of the Richmond Water System's general boundaries is available on Map 10 of Appendix B.

In the Land Use Element, the Town encourages infill in the area around the I-95 and Route 138 interchange and Wyoming, both serviced by the Richmond Water Department. In recent years, the Town considered developing a new growth center at the intersection of Routes 138 and 112; however the growth center in this area is no longer being pursued. Further, the Housing Element identifies the area around the I-95 and Route 138 interchange as the location of future low and moderate income units. Development within this area must be assessed in relation to the availability of water and the capacity of the water system.

### **Shannock Water District**

The Shannock Water District was established by the Rhode Island General Assembly in 2004. Currently, the Shannock Water District provides water to an estimated 90 households and businesses in Shannock Village, and the Columbia Heights neighborhood in Charlestown (see Map 10 in Appendix B). The system has two wells installed through USEPA and US Department of Agriculture grants. The main well yields approximately 75 gallons per minute and the second well serves as a backup. In 2016, the Town approved an expansion of the Water District to accommodate 32 low to moderate-income dwelling units.

### **Water Availability and Need**

Private wells serve most residents and businesses. Property developers are responsible for making sure there are sufficient water sources available to support a development project. This includes meeting fire suppression requirements, potable drinking water standards and RIDEM approval for Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS). Since groundwater is the exclusive water supply source for Richmond's residents, groundwater protection is of paramount importance to the well-being of Richmond's citizens. The Town of Richmond has adopted land development policies designed to protect water quality and quantity. The

Aquifer Overlay Zoning District, for example, controls uses in sensitive groundwater recharge areas (see the Land Use Element).

Severe droughts always raise concerns about the capacity of public water systems. The Richmond Water District needs to plan carefully for emergencies, especially drought. Individual private wells are generally located to ensure adequate water supply, even in drought conditions. Over many years, it has become obvious that population density cannot exceed the ground's capacity to supply adequate well water and those density requirements are largely reflected in minimum house lot areas and setbacks.

The location of water service should support the land use goal of promoting compact growth but of a sufficient minimum density to protect water supply. Town facilities should be located within the Urban Service Boundary of the State's Land Use Plan, growth centers, and public water distribution should be confined to those immediate areas.

The Town's land use planning and other efforts are consistent with the State's Element 721: *Rhode Island Water 2030* in reducing the Town's vulnerability in periods of low precipitation, and minimizing its effects on public health and safety, economic activity, and environmental resources.

## Wastewater

Richmond does not offer any sanitary sewer services. All waste is either contained in cesspools or treated in an Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS). These waste systems have a potential to contaminate ground and surface water if improperly operated, functionally obsolescent or improperly installed or designed. Cesspools have been outlawed by the state and can no longer be installed. Poor design, siting, installation or maintenance can result in an OWTS failure. Disposal of wastewater through inadequately maintained or failing on-site disposal systems can adversely affect the Town's drinking water supply.

The Town completed a Wastewater Management Facilities Plan in 2011. This report comprehensively covers the issue of wastewater management in the Town. Several of the recommendations of this study have been incorporated into this Comprehensive Community Plan.

The Town has an Onsite Wastewater Management Plan, approved by RIDEM, that includes education and outreach efforts to encourage homeowners to properly maintain septic systems and recommends voluntary system inspections. The Town participates in the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank Community Septic System Loan Program (CSSLP) through RI Housing. The CSSLP allows residents of communities without wastewater treatment facilities to access low-interest State Revolving Funds. The program allows for the repair or replacement of failing, failed or sub-standard septic systems, including cesspools. The borrowing cost for the homeowner is a fixed rate of 1 percent up to \$25,000 for a maximum term of 10 years, along with a \$300 loan origination fee. The Town may not raise or lower the current homeowner CSSLP rate of 1 percent but may combine the CSSLP with other sources of money to provide additional funding.



## Solid Waste Disposal

Until 1989, when it was closed by RIDEM, the Town owned and operated a sanitary landfill located on Buttonwoods Road. Since then, refuse has been collected at a transfer station operated adjacent to the former landfill site. It is operated by the Town and supervised by the Town's Department of Public Works. Waste is transported to the RI Resource and Recovery Corporation facility in Johnston (see Table 6-3 for total collected). A voluntary recycling program also operates at the transfer station in which residents are able to recycle a variety of materials at no cost. A list of the tipping fees for various materials is available on the Town website. Richmond does not provide municipal trash pickup, but several private haulers are licensed by the Town, or residents may transport their own trash to the transfer station.

**Table 6-3 Delivery of Solid Waste and Recyclables to RIRRC (tons)**

	Calendar Year						
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Refuse</b>	<b>1,144</b>	<b>1,083</b>	<b>1,280</b>	<b>1,333</b>	<b>1,247</b>	<b>1,340</b>	<b>1,207</b>
<b>Diverted Materials, Total</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>1,016</b>	<b>1,001</b>	<b>949</b>	<b>1,010</b>	<b>994</b>
MRF Recycling	674	770	831	762	765	774	772
Composted	–	1	1	1	1	12	6
Scrap Metal (White Goods)	–	–	104	182	156	181	153
Clothing	–	–	7	11	–	10	8
Tires	–	2	5	3	–	–	–
Other Recycling	26	29	68	42	27	33	55
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,844</b>	<b>1,885</b>	<b>2,295</b>	<b>2,335</b>	<b>2,197</b>	<b>2,349</b>	<b>2,202</b>
MRF Recycling Rate	37.1%	41.6%	39.4%	36.4%	38.0%	36.6%	39%

Source: RIRRC

## Emergency Management

The Town of Richmond currently has Hazard Mitigation (HMP), Emergency Management (EMP) and Hazardous Materials (HAZ-MAT) Plans that are administered by the Town's part-time Emergency Management Director. The Hazardous Materials (HAZ-MAT) Plan addresses the issue of hazardous materials in both the work place, and on state and local roadways. Both fire districts and the following Town departments have copies of the EMP available for public reference:

- › Town Administrator
- › Town Clerk
- › Public Works Department
- › EMA Director
- › Police Department



The Emergency Operations Center is located in the Public Works Department building on Buttonwoods Road where officials congregate in the event of an emergency. The Chariho Middle and High Schools, located on Switch Road, along with the Richmond Community Center are listed as Richmond community shelters. In particular, the Chariho Middle School is designated as the American Red Cross shelter in Richmond.

The Town completed a hazard mitigation strategy plan in 2018. A natural hazard is an event or series of events caused by forces of nature and have a negative impact on the residents, infrastructure or the environment. It is important that the Town is proactive and plan for these natural hazards as they cannot be prevented. This also includes identifying and planning for the effects of climate change. This study identifies short and long-term actions needed to reduce potential loss of life and property due to natural hazards and long-term climate change effects from winter storms, high wind events, flooding, thunderstorms, wildfires, droughts, hurricanes, and earthquakes. Extended power loss during any natural disaster is a primary concern in town as most residents depend on well water, but special needs and elderly populations are most at risk. The Police Department maintains a special needs registry, which is a list of residents with special needs registered with the Rhode Island Department of Health. Recommendations from this study have been incorporated into this Comprehensive Community Plan.

In December 2019, the Town of Richmond held an Emergency Management workshop led by the Town's Emergency Management Director to discuss power outages, tree mortality, and preparedness. The following list is a summary from the workshop:

1. All of Richmond is at the end of feeder lines (i.e. electrical power) that originate in Charlestown and West Greenwich.
  - Restoration begins at substations and typically Richmond is last to have power restored
  - National Grid has a power outage map that is available online
2. Residents are encouraged to stockpile water at a rate of 3 gallons per person per day.
  - To conserve potable water, use graywater (e.g., pond water, pool water, etc.) to flush toilets
3. Resources are available to residents in need during sustained power outages.
  - The Ocean Community YMCA typically opens shower facilities to residents
  - The Town's Community Center is used as a cooling/warming shelter and sometimes opens when power is out depending on length and severity
  - The Richmond Town Hall is open as a daytime shelter for cooling and can be used as an electrical charging station
  - The Clark Memorial Library is open for cooling during the daytime
4. Residents should refer to FEMA's preparedness website, Ready.gov, which is designed to educate and empower the American people to prepare for, respond to and mitigate emergencies, including natural and man-made disasters.
5. The Town has lost many trees due to caterpillar infestations combined with hot and dry summers over the past few years.
  - The high rate of tree mortality in Richmond may cause increased power outages and road blockages due to downed trees in the foreseeable future

## Municipal Offices

Municipal offices are located at the Town Hall, on Richmond Townhouse Road at the intersection of Routes 112 and 138. The Town Hall is a two-story building housing the following Town Officials and number of employees:

- › Town Administrator (1)
- › Town Clerk (4)
- › Finance Director (2)
- › Building, Planning & Zoning Clerk (1)
- › Tax Collector (2)
- › Tax Assessor (2)
- › Town Planner (1)
- › Building Inspector (1)
- › Zoning Enforcement Officer (1)
- › Plumbing/Mechanical Inspector (1)
- › Electrical Inspector (1)

## Public Works

The Public Works Department is located on Buttonwoods Road. The Department has a director and nine staff persons. Its primary responsibility is maintenance of municipal roads and stormwater structures as well as snow removal. The Department has the following equipment:

- › 6 trucks
- › 2 4x4 pickups
- › 1 payloader
- › 1 car
- › 1 backhoe
- › 1 grader
- › 1 tractor with brush mower
- › 6 snowplows
- › 1 street sweeper

The Department plans to upgrade and replace existing equipment as needed.

## Energy

The Town is host to a number of privately owned power producing facilities in the form of solar energy systems. The development of these facilities are a reflection of the Town's general support of the state's goal of obtaining 20 percent of its energy from renewable sources. Since 2017, however, the Town has incrementally adopted stronger land use controls to ensure that the siting of these facilities do not disrupt the rural character of the community.

Richmond considers the availability of energy infrastructure. Most new development requires an extension of infrastructure (e.g. electricity poles and wires), the cost of which is paid by town residents. It is already the Town's land use policy to locate employment, residential, and recreation sites to minimize the necessity of additional infrastructure improvements, including energy.

Land use patterns also have a significant impact on the types and locations of businesses together with the amount of energy required for vehicle miles traveled within the Town. Energy consumption increases when the vehicle miles increase, particularly in a rural community like Richmond, which has few public transportation options. However, the Future Land Use Map encourages growth centers, such as the Wyoming/I-95 area, to concentrate development and reduce vehicle miles traveled. Finally, the development of renewable energy infrastructure could spur local economic activity and employment opportunities in the Town.

## Current Energy Usage

The Town is committed to reducing energy consumption in Town facilities. To determine the annual energy use of the municipal operations, the Town has collected data on electricity, natural gas, heating oil, gasoline and fuel use from each department. The Town operates buildings in three locations: the Town Hall, the Police Station/Community Center, and two structures used by the Department of Public Works. Of the latter, one of the buildings is used to house the Animal Control and Emergency Operation Center facilities, and the other building is a garage. The energy usage and cost data in Table 6-4 is from fiscal year 2013-2014 and compiled from National GRID, Direct Energy (electric supplier); H.C. Woodmansee (propane and #2 fuel oil); A&B Oil (diesel for DPW), and State Fleet (police vehicles).

The Chariho Regional School District and Clark Memorial Library buildings are not under Town control. The regional campus of Chariho School District on Switch Road in Richmond installed a 15 kW AC solar photovoltaic system in 2005, with support from the Rhode Island Renewable Energy Fund.

**Table 6-4 Municipal Electric Usage and Cost**

Department	Location	Electric kWh	Electric Cost
Town	Town Hall	48,666	\$8,831
Town	Bell School House	3,027	\$1,913
DPW	Building 1	50,962	\$9,618
DPW	Building 2	15,261	\$2,453
Police/Community Center	Main Street	72,376	\$12,993
Streetlights	Various	27,783	\$18,875
Water System	Well	45,594	\$7,204
Water System	Tower - Old Kenyon Road	2,792	\$582
Traffic Lights		981	\$311

The Town Hall uses oil heat, and the Police Station/Community Center and DPW buildings are heated with propane. Town vehicles are used by the Department of Public Works and Police Department. No other departments own or operate vehicles. In fiscal year 2013-2014, the Police Department listed 16 vehicles, which included a humvee used for emergencies and a mini-van used by Animal Control. The DPW had eight dump trucks, two pick-up trucks, and six pieces of heavy construction equipment. The propane, heating fuel oil, and vehicle gasoline for the 2013-2014 fiscal year are summarized in Table 6-5.

**Table 6-5 Municipal Heating and Vehicle Fuel Usage and Cost**

Department/Location	Propane (Heating) Gallons	Fuels Oil (Heating) Gallons	Heating Fuel Cost	Vehicle Fuel Cost	Vehicle Cost
Town Hall		2,650	\$10,156		
DPW	4,204		\$12,592	\$11,160 <sup>1</sup>	\$41,846
		853	\$2,510		
Police/Community Center	1,801	5,847		\$17,198 <sup>2</sup>	\$61,082
1 Diesel Fuel					
2 Includes 456 gallons of fuels for gas cans for \$1,614					

## Energy Efficiency and Conservation

### Town Initiatives

#### Conservation Actions

- Over a decade ago the Town Hall had an energy assessment performed that resulted in the installation of occupancy sensors in the restrooms and lunch room and the replacement of incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs.

The Town of Richmond participated in an initiative administered by the Washington County Regional Planning Council (WCRPC) using funding from the RI Office of Energy Resources – U.S. Department of Energy “Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program (EECBG).” The amount of \$79,242 was awarded to Richmond under the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). As part of this initiative, in 2011 Johnson Controls performed a preliminary energy audit walkthrough of municipal buildings to assess the potential for a full energy audit. A 27-page report was generated containing a list of possible energy savings. They noted potential savings in energy-efficient upgrades by energy saving lighting and heating and cooling fixtures. Photovoltaic panels were recommended for the Town Hall.

- In 2009, the Town Council adopted the Richmond Energy Policy resolution, as part of the Regional Energy Policy adopted by the WCRPC. The resolution listed the following:
  - Full electrical and HVAC audits should be performed for all public buildings and all feasible improvements in weatherization, system management, replacing/upgrading heating, cooling, hot water, lighting and irrigation systems should be implemented.

- Hot water heating using solar energy should be assessed and implemented where feasible.
  - Landscape and grounds maintenance should be addressed to save water resources and control insolation.
  - Photovoltaic and wind-powered electricity generation on all public buildings should be assessed and implemented where feasible.
  - Geothermal heating and/or cooling sources should be assessed and implemented where feasible.
  - Municipal and school vehicles and equipment should be upgraded and/or managed to reduce energy over-usage.
  - Low-interest revolving loan funds should be specifically tailored to help low-income households, homeowners, landlords, and business owners cope with an uncertain energy future.
  - Public officials, including Building, Fire, and Planning officials should be trained to better address new and emerging energy technologies in building systems, HVAC, fire suppression, and site design. LEED certification should be sought in each municipal office.
  - Public information campaigns should be undertaken to show municipal progress towards energy independence and to involve residents and businesses in revolving loan programs.
  - Regional actions and programs to achieve these ends should be fostered.
  - Richmond and the Washington County Regional Planning Council should support all feasible and appropriate private and public/private sustainable energy ventures.
  - Financial resources should be secured to implement these policies as soon as possible.
3. The Municipal Streetlight Investment Act of 2013 authorized municipalities to purchase and manage streetlights within a city or town as a public safety resource. In September 2016, the Partnership for Rhode Island Streetlights Management (PRISM), an association of municipalities, was formed to develop a program to carry out the tasks required to manage the delivery, cost, and maintenance of streetlight systems. The purpose of this association is to research the location, status, and hardware of each light while helping municipalities stretch their budget and achieve greater energy independence.

Richmond has 261 streetlights, approximately 170 of which are listed by National Grid as having been temporarily turned off. Lights that are off incur a cost to National Grid, although it is less than an operating light because no kilowatt hours are charged. The "turn off" is for a three-year period which must be renewed. The Town needs to locate the lights, determine the operational status, and calculate the potential savings of maintaining them. The next step would be to determine further savings and return on investment for converting to more energy-efficient LED lighting fixtures. This will allow the Town to reduce energy consumption, save money long term, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with electrical power generation.

### ***Regulatory Actions***

The Town supports the use of alternative energy in buildings and locations in private ownership. The Town adopted language in the Zoning Ordinance in 2014 that addresses the various forms of solar energy. In Chapter 18.16, an Individual Solar Energy System is allowed as an accessory use for residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial uses, provided that the system is either off-grid or produces 125 percent or less of the average annual electric energy utilized by the primary use. Solar energy systems as a principal use are allowed by right in certain zoning districts, with a set of standards for development plan review found in Chapter 18.34. The Town also allows solar energy systems on working farms, subject to conformance with specific requirements.

The Town has not yet formulated any guidelines for other forms of renewable energy, such as wind turbines or gas cogeneration. Currently, wind energy is prohibited as a principal or accessory use pending a clear set of standards for various technologies, and definitive testing to evaluate suitable locations.

### **Participation in State and Federal Programs**

#### ***SunShot Initiative Rooftop Solar Challenge II Program***

Richmond is one of two Rhode Island communities participating in the multi-state US Department of Energy New England Solar Cost-Reduction Partnership using \$1.5 million under the Department of Energy SunShot Initiative Rooftop Solar Challenge II program (SunShot). The goal of the SunShot program is to reduce solar soft costs by building a five-state regional market with 13 million residents and creating more consistent, streamlined processes. Project objectives include increased coordination among Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont, by refining, combining, and deploying innovative tools and practices from previous efforts, and by also implementing best practices and consistent policies across the region. Ordinances and permitting regulations from participating communities will be documented to show local examples of the processes in effect for approval and installation of renewable energy systems.

#### ***RIPEP (Rhode Island Public Energy Partnership)***

The RIPEP was a 3-year (2012-2015) collaborative effort to achieve deep energy savings in state and municipal facilities and build a sustained, effective infrastructure for ongoing savings. In 2015, the Partnership assisted the Town with an energy audit performed by Energy Conservation Inc. State staff delivered a report that showed current energy usage trends and future potential electricity savings by using existing programs.

#### ***Citizen's Energy Challenge Committee***

The Citizen's Energy Challenge Committee was established by the Town in 2017. The Committee was comprised of volunteers who assisted in coordinating the Town's participation in the Rhode Island Energy Challenge. Primary responsibilities included:

- › Serving as public advocates for energy conservation;
- › Engaged with 5 percent of the households to participate in a free home energy assessment;

- › Provided public outreach and educational materials related to the Rhode Island Energy Challenge; and
- › Advised the Town Council and Town Administrator on short and long-term strategies to promote energy efficiency, save on energy costs and reduce environmental impacts associated with energy usage by the Town, households and businesses.

#### ***Rhode Island Municipal Energy Working Group***

Richmond Town staff participates in the Office of Energy's Rhode Island Municipal Energy Working Group. The group holds workshops to keep municipalities informed about state and federal energy policies and programs.

### **Renewable Energy**

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, ground mounted solar energy systems as a principal use are regulated by the Town of Richmond in Chapter 18.34 of the Zoning Ordinance. Other methods of renewable energy such as wind and gas cogeneration are not currently regulated by the Town and are not permitted as either a principal or accessory use. As of 2019, solar energy systems as a principal use are only allowed in general business, industrial, light industrial, and flex-tech zones. Table 6-6 provides the location and power generation of each principal and accessory solar energy system that is installed in Richmond as of 2020.

**Table 6-6 Solar Energy System Installations and Energy Production in Richmond**

Commercial	Solar - Land Use Change 2018		Tangible Tax 2019 Start
04B/043-000	56 Stilson Road WED STILSON SOLAR, LLC 3760 Quaker Lane North Kingstown, RI 02852	3.39 acres	Hannuksela PP acct # 23-0683-13 2 mW x \$5,000 = \$10,00 annual PP
06E/035-000	421 Kingstown Road WED KINGSTOWN SOLAR, LLC 3760 Quaker Lane North Kingstown, RI 02852	19.0 acres	Duncan PP acct # 23-0683-12 4.5 mW x \$5,000 = \$22,500 annual PP
07F/006-001 contact: Steve Kerr 401-480-507	3671 South County Trail RI SOLAR 1, LLC PO Box 2629 Addison, TX 75001	1.0 acre	The Lynch-Chase, LLC PP acct # 18-0746-67 250 kW x \$5.00 = \$1,250 annual PP
08E/007-000	139 Heaton Orchard Road RI SOLAR 1, LLC PO Box 2629 Addison, TX 75001	1.0 acre	Washington County Turf Farms et al PP acct # 18-0746-68 250 kW x \$5.00 = \$1,250 annual PP
08E/017-000	3738 South County Trail RI SOLAR 1, LLC PO Box 2629 Addison, TX 75001	1.0 acre	Bouchard PP acct # 18-0746-69 250 kW x \$5.00 = \$1,250 annual PP
08F/012-000	3700 South County Trail RI SOLAR 1, LLC PO Box 2629 Addison, TX 75001	1.0 acre	Bouchard PP acct # 18-0746-70 250 kW x \$5.00 = \$1,250 annual PP
09A/015-000	331 Switch Road RI SOLAR 1, LLC PO Box 2629 Addison, TX 75001	1.0 acre	Bouchard acct # 18-0746-71 250 kW x \$5.00 = \$1,250 annual PP
09D/030-000	28 West Shannock Road CAPTONA PARTNERS SOLAR, LLC 675 Third Avenue, Room 3004 New York, NY 10017	1.0 acre	Shannock Farms, LLC PP acct # 03-0340-21 196 kW x \$5.00 = \$980 annual PP
10E/001-000	230 Shannock Village Road CAPTONA PARTNERS SOLAR, LLC 675 Third Avenue, Room 3004 New York, NY 10017	1.0 acre	Shannock Farms, LLC PP acct # 03-0340-22 196 kW x \$5.00 = \$980 annual PP
11A/024-000 contact: Adam Wingard 720 454-2692	54 Bucknam Road AES DISTRUBUTED ENERGY 282 Century Place # 2000 Louisville, CO 80027	7.85 acres	Gilligan PP acct # 01-0279-45 4680 kW x \$5.00 = \$23,400 annual PP



**Table 6-6 Solar Energy System Installations and Energy Production in Richmond (Continued)**

Commercial	Solar - Land Use Change 2018		Tangible Tax 2019 Start	
	<b>SOLAR FARM W/RESOLUTION</b>		<b>TANGIBLE - 2016 START</b>	
04B/044-001	68 Stilson Road Richmond Solar, LLC 101 Summer Street Boston, MA 02110	2.05 acres	Rome Properties Inc. PP acct # 18-1290-87 Resolution # 2014-35 pp = \$3750/yr for 12.5 years/2016 start	
	<b>SOLAR LAND USE CHANGE F/2019 BILL</b>		<b>TANGIBLE - 2020 START</b>	
05B/004-LUA	1219A Main Street OSD MAIN STREET SOLAR, LLC 130 Roberts Street Ashville, NC 28801	3.12 acres	Pine Gate Real Estate, LLC PP acct # 15-0420-16 780 kW x \$5.00 = \$3,900 annual PP	final 12/4/19
	<b>SOLAR LAND USE CHANGE F/2020 BILL</b>		<b>TANGIBLE - 2020 START</b>	
04B/054-000	6A Buttonwoods Road GD RICHMOND BUTTONWOODS 1, LLC 3760 Quaker Lane North Kingstown, RI 02852	5.0 acres	Ansary, Norbert PP acct # 07-0692-31 1250kW x \$5.00 = \$6,250 annual PP	final 5/3/19
10D/002-000	26 West Shannock Road RI SOLAR 1, LLC PO Box 2629 Addison, TX 75001	0.89 acres	OSE Realty, LLC PP acct # 18-0746-72 216 kW x \$5.00 = \$1,080 annaul PP	final 6/26/19
	<b>PENDING FOR 2021</b>			
04B/061-000	35 Stilson Road ISM Solar Development, Inc. 940 Waterman Avenue East Providence, RI 02914	18.0 acres	Richmond 208 Realty, LLC PP acct #	no start 12/31/2019
10B/010-000	477 Church Street South County Solar 485 Church, LLC 119 Braintree Street Allston, MA 02134	2.7 acres	Almadub, LLC PP acct #	no start 12/31/2019

The Town of Richmond must balance the needs of its residents with the long-term renewable power generation requirements that will be needed to sustain energy consumption of a growing population. As part of the community survey, many residents were concerned with "solar sprawl" in which ground-mounted solar installations are being placed in areas of the Town that are considered rural and bucolic. Due to this concern, ground-mounted solar installations were restricted by principal use to zones of the Town that are more accommodating to industrial looking structures. However, any solar energy system is still allowed as an accessory use in all zones provided that it complies with Chapter 18.16.30.M. Commercial farms are allowed a solar energy system as an accessory use provided that it complies with Chapter 18.16.30.N and requires approval by the Town Planning Board through development plan review.

## Goals, Policies, and Actions

**Goal PSF 1: Protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Richmond and provide residents with public services that are consistent with the Town's need and financial ability.**

**Policy PSF 1: Support a high level of library services for residents.**

**Action PSF 1:** Consider the feasibility of locating a library or media center in the potential community center at Routes 112 and 138 (see **Land Use Element**).

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Town Administrator, Town Council, and Planning Board

**Policy PSF 2: Sustain adequate social services for town residents.**

**Action PSF 2:** Evaluate existing programs for all residents and develop short and long-term recommendations for improvements to services and programs.

*Timeframe:* Short Term

*Responsibility:* Town Administrator and Town Council

**Action PSF 3:** Support appropriate grant applications seeking to expand services for Richmond residents.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Town Administrator and Town Council

**Policy PSF 3: Balance new development proposals with available water supply and locate business, residential, and recreation sites to minimize the necessity of infrastructure improvements (see Land Use Element).**

**Policy PSF 4: Initiate source water augmentation if demand cannot be reduced by conservation measures.**

**Action PSF 4:** Manage Richmond's growth through regulations which ensure that there will be sufficient water quantity and quality.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Board and Planning Department

**Action PSF 5:** Ensure that existing water resources are protected and can support future sustainable development proposals.

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Town Council and Water Department

**Action PSF 6:** Encourage additions and tie-ins to existing and proposed water lines to facilitate infill development and the construction of affordable housing units (see Land Use Element and Housing Element).

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Affordable Housing Committee and Water Suppliers

**Action PSF 7:** Develop a water supply systems management plan with a service area map for the Richmond Water Department consistent with the Future Land Use Map within this Comprehensive Plan, including demand management and water conservation, wellhead protection, and a capital improvement plan.

*Timeframe:* Short Term

*Responsibility:* Water Department, Finance Department, Planning Board, and Town Council

**Action PSF 8:** Continue to evaluate the equitable costs of public services and facilities to finance infrastructure improvements that are directly related to development proposals.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Town Administrator and Town Council

**Action PSF 9:** Encourage developers, non-profit agencies, and housing agencies to locate new affordable housing units in growth centers and existing water mains. Use existing infrastructure as a guide to locate new affordable housing to reduce the need for infrastructure extensions and water supply augmentation.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Board

**Policy PSF 5: Identify capital improvement projects in order to maximize local resources.**

**Action PSF 10:** Continue to maintain an annual inventory of needed capital improvements ranked in order of priority and continue the five-year Capital Improvements Program.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Finance Board, Town Administrator, and Town Council

**Action PSF 11:** Require that all development proposals provide public facilities and services impacts with applications for subdivision or development plan review.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Board

**Action PSF 12:** Update and maintain the Town’s local natural hazard mitigation and emergency operation plans.

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Emergency Management Director

**Action PSF 13:** Pursue available funding to implement the strategies developed in the Richmond Hazard Mitigation Plan.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Emergency Management Director and Town Administrator

**Policy PSF 6: Promote proper wastewater management throughout the Town.**

**Action PSF 14:** Consider establishment of wastewater management districts and engage the RI Infrastructure Bank and Washington County Community Development Corporation to leverage funding to assist homeowners with repairs and maintenance.

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Town Council and Washington County Community Development Corporation

**Action PSF 15:** Prepare a wastewater management program.

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Town Council and Planning Board

**Goal PSF 2: Provide quality and affordable education.**

**Goal PSF 3: Promote energy efficiency, conservation, and renewable energy use by the Town and throughout the community.**

**Policy PF 7: Continue to look for opportunities to reduce energy use.**

**Action PSF 16:** Continue to develop energy saving projects to reduce energy consumption for municipal buildings and infrastructure.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Town Administrator

**Action PSF 17:** Retrofit electric switches in offices, hallways, and work spaces in municipal buildings with occupancy sensors where applicable.

*Timeframe:* Short Term

*Responsibility:* DPW

**Action PSF 18:** Consider energy efficiency and Energy Star standards when purchasing new vehicles and equipment for the Police and Public Works Departments.

*Timeframe:* Mid Term

*Responsibility:* Police, DPW and Town Council

**Action PSF 19:** Use savings from energy efficiency and conservation measures in municipal buildings to fund additional energy saving programs and upgrades.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Town Administrator and Town Council

**Policy PSF 8: Encourage renewable energy generation in the public and private sectors.**

**Action PSF 20:** Continue allowing tax incentives for commercial renewable energy production.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Town Council

**Action PSF 21:** Support public and commercial renewable energy production by amending the Zoning Ordinance with appropriate siting standards when necessary.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Board and Town Council

**Action PSF 22:** Continue to work with the RI Office of Energy Resources to explore alternative energy solutions and public and private education programs focusing on energy conservation and renewable energy sources.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Town Planner and Conservation Commission

**Action PSF 23:** Consider adopting zoning standards for cogeneration facilities as accessory uses to agricultural uses.

*Timeframe:* Long Term

*Responsibility:* Town Planner, Planning Board and Town Council

**Action PSF 24:** Continue to work with the Washington County Regional Planning Council and the Partnership for Rhode Island Streetlights Management group to determine the savings and efficacy of purchasing and managing streetlights within Richmond.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Town Administrator and Town Council

**Action PSF 25:** Make a conscious effort to promote the use of renewable energy sources and implementation of energy conservation measures without impacting the rural setting of the Town of Richmond or a significant reduction in forest for energy production.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* All Town officials

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## 7

## Housing

Richmond's goal is to provide working families, the retired and the disabled with safe and affordable housing while protecting the environment and preserving the Town's historic character as a small farming community.



Richmond residents who participated in the preparation of this Comprehensive Community Plan acknowledged that the community needs more affordable housing, particularly for seniors, and that the community would benefit from more diversity in housing choices. A majority of participants emphasized that development should be consistent with the Town's rural character.

A substantial portion of the land in Richmond is protected from development (see Map 1 in Appendix B). Significant amounts of land are located in floodplains or have wet soils or other physical constraints to development (see Maps 4 and 15 in Appendix B). The challenge for Richmond is to identify specific locations that would be the most appropriate for increased residential density and to encourage nonprofits and for-profit developers to provide low or moderate income housing at those locations.

## Community Survey and Public Workshop

During the preparation of this Comprehensive Community Plan, residents took part in a public workshop and a community survey. When asked to identify the highest priorities in housing needs, nearly half of the respondents noted that the Town needs more affordable housing options, especially for seniors. Respondents also noted a lack of adequate rental opportunities. More than a quarter of respondents expressed interest in seeing more types of housing, including multi-family buildings and mixed-use developments.

## Housing Supply

### Age of Dwellings

Table 7-1 compares the age of existing housing units in Richmond with the age of housing units statewide. More than half (53 percent) of homes in Richmond were built after 1980. Statewide, only about one-quarter (24 percent) of homes were built after 1980.

**Table 7-1 Estimated Percentage of Housing Units by Age**

Period Built	Richmond	Rhode Island
Before 1939	10.7%	30.8%
1940 - 1979	36.2%	43.4%
1980 - 1989	20.9%	10.8%
1990 - 1999	23.3%	7.7%
2000 - 2009	8.8%	6.3%
2010 or Later	0%	1.1%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates

### Housing Types

HousingWorks RI at Roger Williams University is a clearinghouse of information about housing in Rhode Island. Its mission is to advance housing affordability as a public policy priority.

HousingWorks RI's 2020 Housing Fact Book estimates that single-family homes make up 94 percent of Richmond's housing stock, while multi-family buildings, mixed-use buildings, mobile homes, and accessory dwelling units make up 6 percent of the Town's housing stock. Table 7-2 shows that single-family residential development has steadily increased since 2000, while all other forms of housing type have declined or remained stagnant.

The number of multi-family buildings is currently increasing. Construction is almost complete on the Town's first development of multi-family buildings, the Fox Run condominium complex. The 100-unit development will provide 25 low or moderate income, owner-occupied housing units. Construction is also underway at Richmond Ridge; another development of 32 multi-family buildings located near Shannock Village. This form of housing development correlates with the type of building permits recently issued by the Town. In 2018, the Town issued 98 building permits for residential construction. Of those



98 permits issued, 20 were for single-family houses and 78 were for dwelling units in multi-family buildings.

Because it is generally more economical to provide affordable housing in multi-family structures, an increasing willingness among Richmond residents to see construction of multi-family buildings would help facilitate an increase in the Town's stock of low or moderate income housing.

**Table 7-2 Housing Types in Richmond**

	2000	2010	2017
Single Family	87.3%	91.7%	92.2%
2 to 4 Units	6.2%	5.1%	4.2%
5 Plus Units	0.4%	0.6%	0%
Mobile Home/Other	6.1%	2.6%	3.6%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2012 Richmond Comprehensive Community Plan

Richmond's percentage of single-family, owner-occupied homes remains among the highest in Washington County. The number of rental units has slowly decreased during the past 40 years. Rental units accounted for 20 percent of the Town's occupied dwelling units in 1980. More recently, the percentage of rental units has consistently remained at about 10 percent. According to HousingWorks RI's 2020 Housing Fact Sheet, 89 percent of Richmond households are owner-occupied and 11 percent are occupied by renters.

Washington County has experienced significant population growth since 1990. Table 7-3 shows the U.S. Census Bureau's estimate of the total number of dwelling units in Richmond and in the adjacent towns of Charlestown, Exeter, Hopkinton, and South Kingstown between 1970 and 2017.

**Table 7-3 Housing Supply: Total Number of Dwelling Units, 1970-2017**

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2017	Change 2010-2017
Richmond	803	1,384	1,874	2,620	2,952	3,025	2.47%
Charlestown	1,971	3,064	4,256	4,797	5,142	5,187	0.88%
Exeter	795	1,390	1,919	2,196	2,511	2,734	8.88%
Hopkinton	1,693	2,264	2,662	3,112	3,458	3,616	4.57%
South Kingstown	6,020	8,138	9,806	11,219	13,218	12,999	-1.66%

Sources: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2012 Richmond Comprehensive Community Plan

## Housing Demand

In Richmond, like the rest of Washington County, residential construction increased dramatically in the 1990s. As a result of that population increase, which put a strain on the Town's ability to provide services and significantly impacted the regional school system, the Richmond Town Council adopted a growth rate control ordinance in 1995. The ordinance established a cap of 36 residential building permits per year. When the ordinance expired in 2007, the Town did not renew it. By that time, however, the increase in housing speculation and the rise in subprime lending had caused a

nationwide economic crisis that brought new home construction almost to a halt. A slow economic recovery followed. Table 7-4 shows how the economic recovery influenced the Rhode Island economy and the housing market between 2005 and 2017.

**Table 7-4 Select Housing and Economic Indicators of Rhode Island**

	2005	2008	2009	2015	2016	2017
Median Number of Home Sales	9,711	6,662	7,720	9,782	11,038	11,282
Building Permits for New Home Construction	2,836	1,058	958	1,050	1,226	1,153
Median Home Prices	\$282,900	\$234,700	\$199,900	\$225,000	\$239,900	\$255,000
Foreclosures	0.42%	3.49%	3.97% (13th in US)	1,182	1,561	1,153
Unemployment Rate	5.10%	9.40%	12.9%	8.5%	7.7%	6.8%

Source: US Census 2000 & 2010, ACS 5-Year Estimates

Since the 1970s, the 35-to-44 year-old age group has most strongly influenced the demand for housing in Richmond. Historically, Richmond has appealed to people in that age group because of the availability of moderately priced lots and dwellings, its accessibility to major highways, its environmental amenities, and the quality of its schools. The 2000 census showed that approximately 89 percent of workers ages 16 and older in Richmond commuted to work in an automobile alone with a mean travel time of approximately 30 minutes.

Other demographic trends that are likely to affect the future demand for housing in Richmond include:

- › Continuing migration into Richmond;
- › Declining household sizes;
- › The aging of the population; and
- › The economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Income level influences housing demand. Table 7-5 shows the distribution of household income in Richmond since 2000. Median income has been inflation-adjusted to show 2019 dollars for comparison. Due to inflation, direct comparison of income distribution cannot be made between the decennial census years (2000 and 2010) and the American Community Survey (ACS) five-year estimates.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The American Community Survey is conducted every year to provide period estimates that represent characteristics of the population and housing over a collection period. Data is released as single-year estimates for areas with populations of 65,000 and greater; three-year estimates for areas with populations of 20,000 and greater; and five-year estimates for all areas. The decennial census (every 10 years) obtains official counts of the population and housing.

**Table 7-5 Household Incomes in Richmond**

	2000	2010	2017
Less Than \$14,999	5.5%	2.7%	3.8%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	3.9%	4.0%	1.3%
\$25,000 - \$49,999	28.0%	13.5%	11.6%
\$50,000 or More	62.5%	79.7%	83.4%
Median Household Income <sup>1</sup>	\$91,863.92	\$84,589.37	\$101,823.33

<sup>1</sup> Income values adjusted to 2019 dollars

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2012 Richmond Comprehensive Community Plan

Between 2000 to 2017, the percentage of households in Rhode Island with an annual income of more than \$50,000 increased. Table 7-5 shows that during this period, the percentage of households in Richmond with an annual income of \$50,000 or more rose by almost 21 percent. The number of Richmond households with an income of less than \$14,999 decreased from 5.5 percent to 3.8 percent, while the percentage drop in the \$15,000 to \$24,999 income category was even more dramatic, from 3.9 percent to 1.3 percent.

Between 2009 and 2015, the number of annual mortgage foreclosures in Rhode Island fell from 2,852 to 1,182 - a decrease of 41 percent. The majority of foreclosures occurred in urban areas, with Providence, Cranston and Pawtucket recording the highest percentages.

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic of 2020-2021 will continue to have a significant impact on the state's economy. Recovery could be slow. It will depend on a number of factors, including the availability of employment opportunities, the availability of federal financial aid, and the willingness of banking institutions to lend money for business development. The extent to which the economic recession will affect the demand for housing probably will depend primarily on how quickly employment opportunities increase. A slow economic recovery is likely to lead to a greater demand for affordable housing.

## Housing Affordability

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines a low-income household as a household with an income that is 80 percent or less of the area median income. In 2020, a Richmond household of four persons with an annual income of \$69,600 or less is considered a low-income household.

A moderate-income household is a household with an income that is between 80 percent and 120 percent of the area median income. In 2020, a Richmond household of four persons with an annual income between \$69,600 and \$104,400 is considered a moderate-income household.

In 2019, HUD reported that of the estimated 2,850 households in Richmond, 495, or about 17.5 percent, were low-income households.

A household is considered cost-burdened if it spends 30 percent or more of its annual income on housing costs (mortgage, utility, tax, and insurance). In its 2020 Housing Fact Book, HousingWorks RI reports that the median price of a single-family home in Richmond is \$298,500. An owner who is spending less than 30 percent of his annual income on housing

would need an annual income of \$90,343 to afford a house that costs \$298,500. HousingWorks RI estimates that 25 percent of the households in Richmond are cost-burdened.

Table 7-6 compares the median sale prices of single-family homes in Richmond, Exeter, South Kingstown, Hopkinton and Charlestown, and in Rhode Island as a whole from 2010 to 2018. While the median sale price for a single-family home in Richmond has historically been lower than those of its neighboring communities, Richmond's median sale price has remained higher than the state median sale price.

**Table 7-6 Median Sales Prices for Single-family Homes: Richmond and Select Washington County Communities, 2010-2018 (Year End)**

Town	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
South Kingstown	\$290,000	\$280,000	\$300,000	\$295,000	\$301,875	\$305,000	\$315,000	\$349,000	\$367,500
Hopkinton	\$225,000	\$220,000	\$185,000	\$213,800	\$202,000	\$225,250	\$255,000	\$249,950	\$282,250
Richmond	\$239,000	\$230,000	\$214,000	\$222,000	\$239,500	\$239,900	\$279,800	\$288,000	\$305,000
Exeter	\$311,500	\$332,500	\$279,000	\$299,000	\$275,000	\$282,000	\$291,962	\$313,725	\$361,200
Charlestown	\$350,000	\$308,750	\$292,500	\$289,450	\$315,000	\$335,000	\$351,000	\$364,500	\$386,000
State of Rhode Island	\$210,000	\$195,000	\$190,000	\$205,000	\$215,000	\$225,000	\$239,900	\$255,000	\$270,000

Source: RI Living and RI Association of Realtors

## Housing Needs

All low or moderate income housing units are affordable, but not all affordable housing units are low or moderate income housing. Rhode Island law defines low or moderate income housing as housing that is built or rehabilitated with a municipal, state, or federal subsidy, is affordable to a household that meets income guidelines, and is reserved for occupancy by a low or moderate income family for at least 30 years by a deed or another recorded legal document.

In 1991, the Rhode Island General Assembly enacted the Low and Moderate Income Housing Act with the goal of expediting the construction of affordable housing. The statute establishes a unique permitting mechanism - the comprehensive permit - that authorizes municipalities to consolidate and streamline approval of residential development that provides at least 25 percent of its units for low or moderate income households. Initially, the approval process was reserved for development sponsored by public and nonprofit entities, but in 2004 the Act was amended to authorize comprehensive permit applications filed by for-profit developers.

The Act gives municipal boards the authority they do not otherwise have to waive the requirements of local ordinances and regulations for comprehensive permit developments. Any such waiver, including any approval to exceed the permitted residential density, is considered a municipal subsidy.

The Low and Moderate Income Housing Act establishes affordable housing goals for each city and town in Rhode Island. Each town, including Richmond, must aim to have 10 percent of its housing stock designated as low-income or moderate-income housing.

HousingWorks RI reported that in 2018, Richmond had 56 low or moderate income dwelling units. In 2019, Richmond lost 24 of those units; 6 group home beds were eliminated, and

affordability restrictions on 18 dwelling units in the Oak Ridge development expired but gained one single-family house. At the end of 2019, according to HousingWorks RI, the total number of low or moderate income housing units in Richmond was 33, or 1.13 percent of the Town's housing stock.

HousingWorks RI's report for 2020 does not include 41 low or moderate income housing units that were added in Richmond in 2018 and 2019 but were not reported to the agency:

- › Thirty-two low-income rental units added at the newly-constructed Richmond Ridge development in 2018 and 2019;
- › Eight low or moderate income, owner-occupied housing units in the Fox Run condominium development that were purchased in 2018 and 2019; and
- › One sale-restricted mobile home in the Hillsdale Mobile Home Park at 465 Gardiner Road.

In total, these units bring the actual number of low or moderate income dwelling units in Richmond as of December 31, 2019 to 74.

To calculate the percentage of low or moderate income in each community, Rhode Island Housing estimates the total number of housing units using the 2010 U.S. Census figures. For Richmond, that estimate is 2,911 households. Ten percent of that number is 292. That means Richmond had an actual deficit of 218 low or moderate income units as of December 31, 2019.

HousingWorks RI estimates that the number of households in Richmond in 2020 was 2,837. Ten percent of that number is 283. Using HousingWorks RI's household estimate, Richmond had an actual deficit of 209 low or moderate income units as of December 31, 2019.

The American Community Survey estimated the number of households in Richmond in 2017 at 3,025. Using the ACS estimate, Richmond needs 303 low or moderate income housing units, so the actual deficit was 229 low or moderate income housing units as of December 31, 2019.

In addition to the 33 low or moderate income units included in HousingWorks RI's annual report and the 41 low or moderate income units added in 2018 and 2019 but not reported, a total of 13 low or moderate income housing units were added during 2020. These include ten owner-occupied units added at Fox Run and three rental units rehabilitated at 215A Shannock Village Rd. Those new units bring the total of low or moderate income housing units in Richmond as of December 31, 2020 to 87. Those thirteen units have not yet been added to the state's official count of affordable units in Richmond.

Table 7-7 shows population data from 2005, 2010, 2014 and 2017 using U.S. Census and ACS estimates, as well as the assumptions used to project Richmond's 2030 housing needs. Using Statewide Planning's future population projection, the Town may assume that there will be 2,230 additional residents by 2030 resulting in approximately a total of 3,684 housing units.

Table 7-7 shows the estimated number of low or moderate income housing units Richmond will need to add by 2030 to reach the 10 percent goal. The figures in the table do not correspond to the figures in the text because the table only includes existing affordable units as of 2017, and because the table estimates the number of households based on different data.

**Table 7-7 Projected Affordable Housing Needs in Richmond**

	2005	2010	2014	2017	Projected 2030
Population	7,669	7,708	7,648 (ACS Est.)	7,608 (ACS Est.)	9,838 <sup>1</sup>
Housing Units (less seasonal)	2,830	2,911	2,862 (ACS Est.)	3,025 (ACS Est.)	3,684 <sup>2</sup>
Cumulative LMIH Units to Achieve 10% Goal	283	292	283	303	368
Existing LMIH Units	65	60	56	56	56
Needed LMIH Units to Reach 10% Goal	218	232	227	247	312

1 Based on Statewide Planning projections

2 Based on assumption of same household size in 2030 as 2018 (2.67), from the 2018 Richmond Buildout Analysis

Source: RI OHCD 2014 Data, ACS 5-Year Estimates, Statewide Planning

## Special Housing Needs

Richmond's stock of low or moderate income housing is much lower than it should be to meet the needs of current residents. But there are other residents, not necessarily in the low or moderate income category, who have difficulty finding affordable or appropriate housing in Richmond.

There is a need for additional rental units to serve people who cannot immediately afford home ownership or who no longer wish to be homeowners. There is little housing for young adults, either unmarried or recently married, and there are no assisted living facilities or age-restricted housing developments for older persons who are moving out of their homes but wish to remain in Richmond.

Table 7-8 provides a summary of Special Needs Households for the year 2017. The categories are not cumulative, but mutually exclusive.

**Table 7-8 Special Needs Households in Richmond, 2017**

Group	Number	Percent of Occupied Housing Units
Elderly - 65+	286	10.0%
1-person Household	424	14.9%
2-person Household	1,302	45.7%
3-person Household	397	13.9%
4-or-more-person Household	727	25.5%
Poverty Status	314 (individuals)	4.1% (of pop.)

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates

## Homeless

Richmond does not have a facility that provides emergency or temporary shelter for homeless individuals and families, but there are two such facilities in nearby communities. The WARM Center in Westerly, founded three decades ago as a soup kitchen and emergency shelter, is now a comprehensive non-profit social service organization that serves an estimated 2,300 people a year, many of them from surrounding communities. Richmond supports the WARM Center's annual applications for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Welcome House in South Kingstown, founded in 1987, provides emergency shelter, a soup kitchen, and transitional and supportive permanent housing.

## Disabled

Table 7-9 describes Richmond residents with disabilities. The data is from 2017 American Community Survey estimates. An estimated 807 individuals - about 11 percent of Richmond's population - have sensory, physical or self-care disabilities. Most of these individuals are over the age of 65.

**Table 7-9 Disability Population**

Age	Totals <sup>1</sup>	Percent of Age Group <sup>1</sup>
Under 18 Years	121	7.3%
18-64 Years	356	7.2%
65+ Years	330	32.8%
<b>All</b>	<b>807</b>	<b>10.6%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Of the civilian noninstitutionalized population  
Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2017

## Poverty

The American Community Survey estimates that 3.8 percent of Richmond residents were living below the poverty level from 2014 to 2018 - an increase from the 2.7 percent of the population reported in the 2005 and 2009 ACS reports. The percentage of Rhode Islanders living in poverty was estimated at 12.9 percent during the same period. Richmond has the lowest estimated poverty rate in Washington County.

## Household Composition

Table 7-10 shows the household composition in Richmond in 2000 and 2010. The 2000 Census and ACS five-year estimate for 2009 reported an average household size of 2.84 people. The ACS five-year estimate for 2014 through 2018 reported an average household size of 2.67 persons - a slight decrease. Two-person households continue to constitute more than one-third of all Richmond households. Two and three-person households account for 38 percent of Richmond households. The percentage of households in Richmond with five or more persons continues to be a relatively small proportion of the Town's population.

**Table 7-10 Household Size in Richmond (Owner Occupied Units)**

Number of Persons	Number of Households 2000	Number of Households 2010	Percent of Owner-occupied Households 2000	Percent of Owner-occupied Households 2010
1-Person	294	370	12.8%	14.8%
2-Persons	815	926	35.5%	37.1%
3-Persons	471	482	20.5%	19.3%
4-Persons	454	468	19.8%	18.7%
5-Persons	184	168	8.0%	6.7%
6-Persons	56	57	2.4%	2.3%
7-or-more-Persons	22	28	1.0%	1.1%

Source: US Census 2000 and 2010

### Mentally and Developmentally Disabled in Group Homes

The number of beds in group homes in Richmond has declined, probably because of reductions in state funding. In 2008, there were 45 beds in group homes in Richmond. In 2010, after one facility closed, there were 39 beds available in group homes. In 2018, Richmond had 30 group home beds, and in 2019, it had 24.

### Regional Need

Table 7-11 compares the percentage of low or moderate income housing units in Richmond and in surrounding communities between 2000 and 2020. Since 2009, the percentage of Richmond's low and moderate income housing units has been in decline; however, this percentage is anticipated to increase over the next few years as more affordable units that have recently sold or under construction are credited towards the Town's total housing count.

**Table 7-11 Percentage of Low and Moderate Income Housing Units, Richmond and Surrounding Communities**

Town	2000	2009	2014	2017	2020
Richmond	2.02%	2.31%	1.79%	1.89%	1.13%
Hopkinton	4.88%	2.20%	7.06%	7.12%	7.12%
Charlestown	0.94%	1.48%	2.00%	2.86%	3.69%
Exeter	1.68%	2.36%	2.32%	2.36%	2.53%
<b>State Average</b>	<b>8.03%</b>	<b>8.57%</b>	<b>8.28%</b>	<b>8.29%</b>	<b>8.38%</b>

Source: HousingWorks RI

Richmond will continue to support the Washington County Community Development Corporation's low and moderate income housing initiatives.



## Attempts to Provide More Affordable Housing

Because Richmond currently has such an acute shortage of low and moderate income housing and the Town's population is not expected to increase during the coming decade, the immediate need is to attain the 10 percent low and moderate income housing goal. The current deficit is between 238 and 258 housing units, depending on how the current number of households is estimated.

### Past Strategies

Some previous strategies to increase Richmond's affordable housing stock have been less than successful, while others have been unrealistic.

The privately developed Richmond Commons mixed-use complex received Final Plan approval in 2013, but no construction has taken place. The approval for that development originally required all residential development to be age-restricted, but the zoning ordinance established for the development was amended in 2012 to require 15 percent of the residential development to be designated for low or moderate income housing. A total of 40 low or moderate income housing units were expected to be constructed, but it now seems unlikely that those units will be provided in the foreseeable future.

The 2012 Comprehensive Community Plan's Housing Element advocated for a "creative structured subsidies" program to convert the 108 mobile homes in the Hillsdale Mobile Home Park to low or moderate income units. To become low or moderate income units, those mobile homes would have to be rehabilitated with federal or state subsidies, or new units would have to be purchased with state or federal subsidies. The residents who own the property as a housing cooperative corporation, would have to agree to legal restrictions on the resale prices of their mobile homes. It is not clear whether the plan ever had any possibility of success.

The 2012 Housing Element also advocated that Richmond cooperate with other Washington County towns to lobby the General Assembly for amendments to the Low and Moderate Income Housing Act that would make it easier for housing units to be designated as low or moderate income. However, such legislation has been introduced in the General Assembly each year for a number of years without success.

### Affordable Housing Under Construction

Richmond has had difficulty increasing and maintaining its supply of low or moderate income housing, but progress has been made recently. During the past four years, four comprehensive permit developments, creating a total of 61 new low or moderate income housing units, received Final Plan approval.

The Fox Run condominium complex, located off of Stilson Road in the Wyoming business district, is currently in the final stages of construction. When completed, the development will have 100 owner-occupied dwelling units in 14 multi-unit buildings, with 25 of the units reserved for low or moderate income families. As of 2020, 18 of those 25 units have been constructed and sold.

Final Plan approval was recorded in 2017 for a small comprehensive permit development on Main Street in Wyoming that would have created three, two-bedroom low-income rental units. The development was not completed because the Washington County Community Development Corporation was unable to obtain Community Development Block Grant funding for it.

A small privately sponsored comprehensive permit development on Hillsdale Road added one single-family, low or moderate income dwelling. That dwelling is included in Rhode Island Housing's 2019 low or moderate income housing count for Richmond.

Richmond Ridge, a comprehensive permit development that will provide 32 low-income rental units, is currently under construction near the village of Shannock. Women's Development Corporation is the developer.

When the Fox Run development is completed, it will add seven more low or moderate income units to the four reported by Rhode Island Housing as of 2019, eight units omitted from the 2019 report, and six units added between January and September of 2020. When the Richmond Ridge development is completed, it will add 32 low-income units. At such time, Richmond will have 90 low or moderate income dwellings, and assuming all current units are retained, the housing deficit will be between 193 and 213 housing units.

## **Regulations that Facilitate Construction of Affordable Housing**

### **Comprehensive Permits**

In 2004, the Town adopted an ordinance to implement the comprehensive permitting procedure mandated by the Low and Moderate Income Housing Act. The ordinance designates the Planning Board as the permitting authority for comprehensive permits, and it defines a municipal government subsidy as any assistance the Town provides for construction or rehabilitation of low or moderate income housing to encourage the creation of that housing and to mitigate the cost of the development. Examples include density bonuses, permission to construct multi-unit dwelling structures where not otherwise permitted, payments to not-for-profit developers from the Town's affordable housing fund, waiver of fees, or a property tax reduction pursuant to a Town ordinance.

In Richmond, the municipal subsidies granted for comprehensive permit developments have included residential density increases, permission to construct otherwise-prohibited types of housing, waivers of dimensional regulations (including lot size), waivers of building permit fees, and waivers of other town fees such as water system connection fees.

### **Inclusionary Zoning**

An inclusionary zoning ordinance requires a developer to include low or moderate income housing units in a new market-rate residential development. The purpose of the ordinance is to make sure that the Town maintains its percentage of low or moderate income housing units when new market-rate housing is constructed.

The Richmond inclusionary zoning ordinance applies to any development that results in the net addition of six or more market-rate dwelling units. The number of low or moderate

income units required is determined by multiplying the number of permitted market-rate units by 15 percent and rounding fractions up.

To mitigate the cost of providing the affordable units, the developer is allowed to increase the residential density in the development to accommodate the affordable units. Any such density increase is considered a municipal subsidy. The requirement to provide low or moderate income units can be satisfied by building the units on site, building the units at another location, donating land, or paying a fee in lieu of construction. Existing housing that is substantially rehabilitated can substitute for new construction.

The amount of the fee in lieu of construction is the difference between the maximum affordable home sale price for a family of four earning 80 percent of the area median income, and the average cost of developing a single unit of affordable housing. Rhode Island Housing calculates the minimum fee in lieu of construction annually for each city and town. For 2019, the fee in Richmond was \$63,000. The developer may decide whether to pay the fee in lieu of construction or to satisfy the inclusionary requirement in another way.

In Richmond, all fees in lieu of construction must be deposited in the Town's affordable housing fund, which was established by ordinance in 2008. Currently there is no money in the fund.

Very few inclusionary housing units have been built since the ordinance was enacted in 2008, because with one exception, no residential developments have been approved that create more than six new market-rate dwelling units. The reason for this trend could be because the housing market has not yet fully recovered from the 2008 recession, and developers intentionally limiting the size of developments to avoid having to comply with the inclusionary zoning requirement.

Only one market-rate development has been approved since 2008 that authorizes construction of more than six new dwellings, but that development—The Preserve at Boulder Hills—presents an unusual challenge. The Preserve at Boulder Hills is a private development where property owners must be members of a club that provides recreational and other amenities. The developer expects nearly all of the dwelling units to be occupied as second or third homes rather than primary residences. Rhode Island Housing considers the dwelling units at The Preserve to be year-round market-rate units that must be included in the calculation of Richmond's low or moderate income housing percentage. As of 2020, the developer is seeking an amendment to state law that would exempt The Preserve from having to contribute towards Richmond's 10 percent low or moderate income housing goal.

### **Affordable Housing Committee**

Richmond established an Affordable Housing Committee by ordinance in 2008. The five-member committee is comprised of one Planning Board member, one member of the Elder Affairs Commission and three additional residents chosen by the Town Council.

The Committee is responsible for reviewing the Town's Comprehensive Community Plan, ordinances, and regulations and recommending changes and updates to promote affordable housing throughout the Town. Committee tasks include administering distribution of money in the affordable housing fund, identifying regional, state, and federal technical or financial

assistance for the production of affordable housing, encouraging public and private sector partnerships to produce affordable housing, and educating and informing the public about the need for affordable housing.

## How Richmond Can Meet its Goal

Ensuring adequate affordable housing is consistent with Richmond's fundamental values, which include a commitment that residents will be able to stay in the community as they age and that the younger generation will be able to afford to live and raise their families in the Town.

Richmond faces the barriers to construction of low or moderate income housing that are common to small rural communities, including a lack of substantial infrastructure in the form of town water and sewer, a substantial amount of scattered wetlands, a variety of soil conditions and geological features that would make development more expensive, and substantial acreage held by government entities. Additionally, because of Richmond's very limited municipal budget, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for the Town to finance development of low or moderate income housing without outside assistance; however, there are a number of ways that Richmond can facilitate the provision of low or moderate income housing.

## Regional Cooperation

The regional strategy for southern Rhode Island is an essential element of Richmond's affordable housing plan. Richmond must take advantage of the leverage that can result from cooperation with neighboring communities. There are several possible approaches towns can take together. Establishing a regional HOME consortium and a regional affordable housing trust fund are two such approaches. The communities can also act together through initiatives sponsored by the Washington County Community Development Corporation.

## Property Rehabilitation and Reuse

Another area to examine is how vacant property can be rehabilitated for low or moderate income housing. The estimated number of vacant year-round housing units in Richmond rose between 2000 to 2017, as illustrated in Table 7-12. Richmond's vacancy rate during this period rose from 2.1 percent to 5.8 percent. Hopkinton, Charlestown, and Exeter all experienced increased vacancy rates throughout this time as well.

**Table 7-12 Count of Vacant Housing Units in Richmond and Surrounding Communities**

Town	Total 2000	Vacant 2000	Percent Vacant 2000	Total	Vacant 2010	Percent Vacant 2010	Total 2017	Vacant 2017	Percent Vacant 2017
Richmond	2,620	55	2.1%	2,952	132	4.5%	3,025	175	5.8%
Hopkinton	3,112	75	2.4%	3,458	174	5.0%	3,616	269	7.4%
Charlestown	4,797	140	2.9%	5,142	247	4.8%	5,187	1,916	36.9%
Exeter	2,196	73	3.3%	2,511	134	5.3%	2,734	150	5.5%

Source: US Census 2000 & 2010, ACS 5-Year Estimates

Although the Town does not have many substandard housing units, there are a few that would qualify for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) home repair programs. The Town will continue to support those efforts to upgrade its housing stock. Adaptive reuse of existing buildings is a way for the Town to increase its low or moderate income housing stock while preserving natural resources.

### Multi-family Housing

Two-family houses are permitted in the R-1 (1-acre), R-2 (2-acre) and R-3 (3-acre) zoning districts, but the minimum lot size is larger than what is prescribed for a single-family house. Amending the zoning ordinance to reduce the minimum lot size or the minimum yard dimensions could result in the construction of more two-family houses.

Buildings with three or four dwelling units are permitted in the R-1, R-2, General Business, Planned Development, and Shannock Village zoning districts on three-acre lots. Amending the zoning ordinance to reduce the minimum yard dimensions could encourage construction of more three-family and four-family buildings.



### Village Revitalization

The historic mill village of Shannock is located on the Pawcatuck River, which is the boundary between Richmond and Charlestown. The village is located in both towns. Richmond and Charlestown took part in a joint effort to revitalize the village of Shannock, using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Housing rehabilitation for income-eligible residents of the village was a major component of the project. CDBG funds also subsidized the new public water system that will serve the Richmond Ridge low-income housing development, as well as construction of a riverside park. The Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission awarded grants to the towns for the development of design guidelines to retain the historic character of the village.

This project can serve as a model for rehabilitation projects in other historic mill villages in Richmond.

### Transfer of Development Rights

Richmond is currently considering adoption of a town-wide Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program. Such a program would offer another tool for protecting natural resources and directing future growth toward areas that are already developed. See the Land Use Element for a more detailed explanation of TDR.

## Mixed-use Development in Wyoming

Much of the existing development on Route 138 between Interstate 95 and the Hopkinton town line was built before Richmond adopted its first zoning ordinance in 1970. The parcels abutting Route 138 are in the General Business zoning district, and the area to the north is in the R-1 zoning district - the district that permits the greatest residential density. The Town water line runs along Route 138. Existing development contains commercial and residential uses. The area is within an Urban Services Boundary, where the state promotes new growth and redevelopment efforts (see the Land Use Element). All of these characteristics make it an ideal location for infill construction, rehabilitation of existing buildings, and new mixed-use development.

Mixed-use development should be permitted in this area so that new and existing commercial buildings can contain residential components and create additional affordable housing opportunities. The Planning Board should develop and recommend to the Town Council a zoning ordinance amendment that would provide for mixed-use development in this area. In addition, the Town should evaluate privately owned undeveloped or underutilized parcels on the Route 138 corridor for possible rehabilitation or reuse. These locations could be appropriate for age-restricted independent housing, congregate care, or assisted living facilities.

## Community Education

The Richmond community supports affordable housing, particularly where the impact on the community infrastructure is taken fully into account. Some Richmond residents, however, may still harbor concerns that construction of affordable housing will have a negative impact on the Town's rural character. Education is vital to ensuring continuing public support for affordable housing initiatives.

## Siting of Increased-density Residential Development

The most practical way for Richmond to reach its 10 percent affordable housing goal within the next ten years is through construction of comprehensive permit developments. However, at the same time, the Town must continue to protect its pristine natural habitats, valuable ecosystems and its rural character.

In order to accomplish both objectives, Richmond should:

- › Identify the sites where residential construction can take place at increased densities without endangering critical resources or altering the Town's rural character and small-town atmosphere; and
- › Seek out nonprofit and private developers that are willing and able to construct developments on those parcels at densities appropriate to the location.

To identify the areas of the Town most suited for low or moderate income housing, the Town completed an update of its affordable housing siting analysis. The affordable housing siting analysis is based on the Buildout Analysis. The Buildout Analysis (see Appendix F) attempts to identify every parcel of land in Richmond that could be developed for residential construction, with or without further subdivision, in order to estimate how many additional dwelling units could be built in Richmond. Parcels where development is constrained because of wetlands, flood hazard areas, soils, parcels on which development is legally restricted, and portions of parcels that are already built on are eliminated, while the number

of dwelling units (including inclusionary units) that could be built on each parcel is estimated based on the density permitted by the zoning ordinance.

Map 11, the Indicator of Potential Suitable Areas for Affordable Housing, examines the parcels included in the Buildout Analysis and identifies the general areas most appropriate for low or moderate income housing based on proximity to public water, proximity to arterial and collector streets, and zoning district. The analysis identified and mapped areas that could accommodate about 100 new housing units at currently permitted residential density on parcels that score very highly suitable or highly suitable, and about 650 housing units could be built on parcels that score highly to moderately highly suitable.

The Indicator of Potential Suitable Areas for Affordable Housing, however, is not intended to identify specific lots or parcels for residential construction at increased densities or individual lots or groups of lots that are suitable for construction of low or moderate income housing. Instead, it is intended to illustrate general areas where there are fewer constraints to development and greater proximity to infrastructure; therefore, another method is needed to identify the lots best suited for consideration as affordable housing sites. One practical approach is to describe the characteristics that make sites most appropriate for construction of low or moderate income housing developments, and to articulate the criteria that should be applied to determine the degree of increase in residential density.

The characteristics that make a site appropriate for low or moderate income housing include, but are not limited to:

1. *The ability to directly connect to the public water main.* Direct proximity to the water main eliminates the need to install a water line to connect the development to public water or, in the alternative, the need to dig wells and separate the wells from the on-site wastewater treatment systems.
2. *The zoning district's suitability for higher density development.* Business, mixed-use and planned development districts generally are most suitable for increases in building density. Property in the R-1 zoning district generally is more suitable for increases in density than property in the R-2 zoning district. Property in the R-2 zoning district generally is more suitable for increases in density than property in the R-3 zoning district.
3. *Location in an infill and growth area or a potential future growth area.* The Alton, Wood River Junction, Shannock and Kenyon potential future growth areas and the Wyoming infill and growth area, all shown on the Future Land Use Map (Map 13 in Appendix B), can be appropriate for increased density.
4. *Frontage on an arterial or connector street.* Direct access to an arterial or connector street can prevent local streets and rural local streets from infrastructure deterioration due to overuse, and decrease in safety due to increased traffic.
5. *Natural buffering from surrounding uses.* A residential development in excess of the permitted density could be incompatible in use or appearance with nearby existing uses. Existing vegetative or other buffering could help to mitigate the incompatibility.
6. *Proximity to shopping.* Proximity to food stores, pharmacies, and other businesses that provide necessities to residents can reduce a reliance on automobiles and promote pedestrian connectivity.



7. *Location outside the Aquifer Protection Overlay District.* The restrictions on uses in the Aquifer Overlay Protection District are intended to protect the quality of the water in the sole source aquifer that provides all of Richmond's drinking water. Increases in residential density are generally inappropriate because of the increased volume of discharge into on-site wastewater treatment systems and the increased volume of stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces, among other potential harmful effects of increasing building density.
8. *Location outside the Agricultural Overlay District.* The Agricultural Overlay District preserves large contiguous areas of prime agricultural soils for farming uses. Residential development is not the best use of prime agricultural soils.

The permitted residential density for a comprehensive permit development should depend on factors including, but not limited to:

1. Whether the soils can accommodate the proposed number of on-site wastewater treatment systems.
2. Whether wells on the site can produce the necessary volume of potable water without affecting water available to abutting properties, based on the hydrogeological characteristics of the site.
3. Whether there are any critical resources on the site that would be negatively affected by increased density.
4. Whether a development that is incompatible in appearance with the rural character of the Town can be buffered from view by pedestrians or motorists on adjacent streets.
5. Whether the proposed density and yard dimensions will preserve the privacy of residents of the development and residents of adjacent properties.
6. Whether architectural details and site layout can be used to provide the development in character of a typical New England village and de-emphasize the appearance of buildings typically found in a suburban or urban environment.



## Goals, Policies, and Actions

**Goal H1: Provide residents of Richmond with adequate, safe, and affordable housing opportunities, while protecting the natural environment and town character residents value most.**

**Policy H1: Broaden the responsibilities and increase the number of members of the Affordable Housing Committee.**

**Action H1:** Increase the membership of the Affordable Housing Committee to include more residents who are not members of other boards or commissions, enabling the committee to devote more time to housing issues.

*Timeframe:* Short Term

*Responsibility:* Town Council

**Action H2:** Assist Town staff in collecting data for more accurate recording and reporting of housing data.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Affordable Housing Committee and Planning Department

**Action H3:** Sponsor public meetings and workshops to educate the public about the need for low or moderate income housing.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Affordable Housing Committee and Planning Department

**Action H4:** Obtain and disseminate information about home repair and rehabilitation loans and grants available to lower-income homeowners for dwelling units that might be designated as low or moderate income.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Affordable Housing Committee and Planning Department

**Policy H2: Take the initiative in identifying potential locations for affordable housing and seeking developers for those locations.**

**Action H5:** Identify and evaluate potential locations for comprehensive permit developments and seek out nonprofit and for-profit developers willing to consider development at those locations.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Affordable Housing Committee, Planning Department and Planning Board

**Action H6:** Explore the benefits of increasing affordable housing stock to stimulate business investment in Richmond.  
*Timeframe:* Ongoing  
*Responsibility:* Affordable Housing Committee and Economic Development Commission

**Action H7:** Evaluate Town-owned parcels for opportunities to construct affordable housing.  
*Timeframe:* Ongoing  
*Responsibility:* Planning Department, Town Administrator and Affordable Housing Committee

**Policy H3: Ensure that new housing construction maintains Richmond’s rural character, especially in its villages.**

**Action H8:** Seek funding for village revitalization projects, working in conjunction with neighboring communities if applicable.  
*Timeframe:* Ongoing  
*Responsibility:* Planning Department and Town Administrator

**Action H9:** Develop and enact mixed-use zoning ordinance amendments for Wyoming.  
*Timeframe:* Mid Term  
*Responsibility:* Planning Department, Planning Board and Town Council

**Action H10:** Pursue discussions with other Washington County towns concerning regional strategies to increase affordable housing production.  
*Timeframe:* Ongoing  
*Responsibility:* Town Administrator, Planning Department and Town Council

## 8

## Land Use

The Land Use Element incorporates population estimates, economic development targets, housing needs, natural and cultural features, suitability factors and the planned capacity of public facilities and services. It is the unifying chapter of this plan where all of the previous chapters are blended to and from the preferred development strategy of the Town. It is consistent with Land Use 2025, the state's land use policy document.



The major concepts outlined in this Element are:

- › Sustaining the rural character of the Town;
- › Achieving a thoughtful balance of green space and urban development through well planned community design with limited infrastructure; and
- › Protecting natural resources for conservation and habitat protection, as well as designating areas appropriate for development based on a buildout analysis of land capacity.

The Land Use Element explains how these concepts are supported through the Town's current land development policies and strategies. These policies and strategies include continuing rural low density development based upon the capacity of the natural resources of the Town, conservation development design, farmland protection, natural resources and open space conservation, and village redevelopment. The policies outlined in the **Natural and Cultural Resources and Element** as well as the **Open Space and Recreation Element** should be cross-referenced as future land development policies and decisions are made.

Existing land uses are shown on Map 12 in Appendix B. As the Comprehensive Community Plan's focal point, the Land Use Element answers two primary questions. The first is:

1. Since the last plan update, how much of the remaining unimproved land (that is, unimproved land which does not include properties participating in the farms, forests, and open space program, publicly owned land and open water) should be allocated for the various land uses that are to serve Richmond's residents and workers?

The answer to this question is drawn in part from the demographic and economic data presented in the previous sections of the plan. The second question is:

2. How should land be used so that Richmond's existing and future residents can continue to enjoy the natural and cultural resources that create the rural character of the Town?

To draft answers to these questions, land use planning goals were formulated and the suitability and availability of land for development were studied in a buildout analysis. The answers to these questions resulted in the Future Land Use Map and the official Zoning Map (see Maps 13 and 14, respectively, in Appendix B), which outline development strategies and land use policies consistent with the input from the residents of the town. The buildout analysis is a geographic information system tool which estimates the total number of potential residential dwelling units throughout the Town. Parcels were analyzed to estimate how many additional dwelling units might be developed. The buildout analysis is provided in Appendix F.

## Community Survey and Pubic Workshop

The Richmond Community Survey and public workshop allowed residents the opportunity to offer comments on the update of the Comprehensive Community Plan, including their assessment of Richmond's development since the prior update and what they would envision for desirable development in the next 10 to 20 years. The community input gathered for this update differs little from the previous input. Many responses mirror closely what was heard during the update of the plan in 2015. The majority of

respondents still listed rural character, quietness, rural living, and small-town feel as qualities they liked most about the Town. Residents still value the Town's friendly people, scenic beauty, and historic buildings and villages. Newer responses gathered indicate the Town residents place a high value on preserving the healthy rivers, rural beauty, farms and forests.

The greatest challenges cited do not vary from the previous input. These are the need for mixed-use economic development, controlling growth, and supporting existing and new businesses while still maintaining Richmond's rural character. Keeping taxes low was also another repeated concern. Respondents felt that in order of preference, more restaurants, bars and taverns, mom and pop businesses, public recreation facilities, and urgent care/medical and dental offices were needed in town.



At the public workshop, residents also voiced the need to contain and control growth, especially from nonresidential uses in residential areas, to maintain Richmond's rural character and protect natural resources. Residents still support the concentration of development in Wyoming because of its existing density, water service, and access to I-95. Residents also felt economic development efforts need to be linked with land development to revitalize the village centers. Economic development strategies that support local businesses and attract larger employers that help to ease the residential property tax burden are still desired. Residents further expressed a strong interest in protecting the Town's extensive natural resources from both overuse and the infringements of neighboring development. The largest threat to the Town was identified as the loss of natural land to development. The largest economic development challenge identified is the store vacancies in Wyoming. A detailed description of the survey is provided in Appendix A.

## Population

Richmond's population continues to increase over a 20-year period. Long-range planning for housing, employment and recreation is necessary if the consequences of Richmond's population gains are to conform to its residents' expectations and vision for the Town. The patterns and extent of population growth can be managed by strong land development policies, such as innovative zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations and growth management initiatives.

### Population Characteristics

The number of residents and the characteristics of the Town's population are influenced by a variety of trends. Prior growth has been documented in earlier editions of this plan. A recent trend is that Richmond attracts new residents who generally are highly educated and have a higher per capita income than the state-wide norms. Further description of the income characteristics of the population can be found in the Housing Element. Table 8-1 shows the shifts in age distribution from 1990 to 2017. The Town's population, like national trends, is aging. Nearly half of Richmond residents are aged 45 or older. Richmond's estimated population in the 2010 Census was 7,708 residents.

**Table 8-1 Age Distribution, 1990, 2000, 2009 and 2017**

Age	1990	2000	2010	2017
0-14	24.9%	23.5%	19.7%	18.1%
15-44	50.0%	44.9%	37.4%	33.6%
45-64	17.7%	24.6%	33.3%	35.2%
65+	7.4%	7.1%	9.8%	13.3%

Source: US Census, ACS Five-Year estimates

## The Desired Land Use

Richmond residents strongly expressed their desire to maintain rural character while fostering economic development in the Wyoming and I-95 area. The 2018 Buildout Analysis for the Town in Appendix F describes in detail where new growth could occur and how many new residents Richmond's unimproved land could possibly accommodate. This is consistent with the residents' general desire for a balanced local economy and a phased rate of growth.

Population growth will continue; Richmond continues to be a desirable place to live for all the reasons the residents wish to preserve it. In which areas of town should growth be encouraged? What public facilities are necessary to support and foster this growth? The Public Services and Facilities Element describes the limited amount of public facilities and services available in the Town. No significant expansions of existing infrastructure have occurred and none are planned. Ultimately, how does the Town intend to maintain its rural character, open space and small-town feel? Answering these questions means adopting goals and policies that:

- › Establish and guide a balanced economic base;
- › Manage the pace of residential development; and
- › Protect natural and agricultural resources.

This viewpoint is what forms the desired land use agenda. The Town of Richmond has an area of approximately 24,903 acres or just over 40 square miles. A total of 13,249 acres (53 percent) in all zoning districts are developed. Table 8-2 shows the distribution of the net area occupied by major land uses in zoning districts.

**Table 8-2 Current Land Uses: Actual Use in Zoning Districts**

Zoning District	R-1	R-2	R-3	GB	NB	LI	I	FT	PD	PDR	PUDVC	SV	Total
Developed	44	7,295	4,831	173	9	167	181	180	24	324		19	13,249
Undeveloped	54	4,389	6,229	25		66	75		142	275	298	102	11,654
<b>Total Acres per Zoning</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>11,684</b>	<b>11,060</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>599</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>24,903</b>

Notes: Developed lots classified based on Assessor's Class Codes and Value of Improvements (buildings, etc). Cemeteries were included in the Developed category.

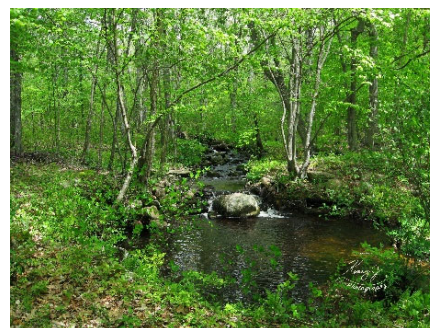
Undeveloped lots classified on the Value of Improvements (buildings, etc.) less than \$5,000. These were typically sheds, garages, minor structures, etc.

Total acres may differ due to rounding.

Source: Richmond Assessor's data as of 12/31/2018, and Richmond GIS, Zoning Polygon dataset (last amendment date 9/20/2016).

## Physically Constrained Land

The Natural and Cultural Resources Element also describes the importance and location of Richmond's environmentally-sensitive areas. The intrinsic characteristics of these areas are key to identifying potential development sites. Map 15 in Appendix B displays areas that, because of various physical constraints, are unsuitable or poorly suited for development. The 2018 Buildout Analysis (Appendix F), summarized in Table 8-3, calculated the acreage of these lands. A total of 7,406 acres (nearly 30 percent of the Town) are physically constrained land and generally considered unsuitable for development in the Buildout Analysis. These marginal or poorly suited properties can be developed; however, they incur much higher engineering, construction, economic and social costs. For instance, poorly drained soils may require more sophisticated on-site wastewater systems, while steeply sloped and rocky soils may require the same costly wastewater systems, costly foundations, increased pavement and/or greater stormwater management. State and federal regulations currently protect wetlands since these areas provide wildlife habitats, function as recharge areas, filter stormwater runoff, lessen flood damage and possess natural beauty.



**Table 8-3 Physically Constrained Land in Acreage by Zoning District (2019)**

Constraint	Zoning District						
	R-1	R-2	R-3	NB	GB	LI	I
Flood Hazard Areas	15	739	1,491	2	4	8	52
Wet Soils	14	1,754	2,278	2	11	31	62
Wetlands	10	869	1,574	2	3	28	46
Natural Heritage Areas	91	3,982	4,964	7	108	169	198
Open Water	10	87	118	–	1	1	12
Steep Slopes	13	1,240	1,048	–	38	23	21

Source: Town of Richmond Planning Department

Note: Constrained areas are not unique (i.e., areas may overlap) and cannot be totaled by zoning district

Map 7 in Appendix B identifies prime agricultural soils, which popular opinion indicates should be preserved as open space rather than developed. 98 percent of these prime agricultural soils are located within the R-2 and R-3 zoning districts, totaling 3,767 acres. Most farmland, however, does not enjoy the same general protections as wetlands and much of it can be easily developed. The Town struggles to find a balance in allowing economic development of farms and preserving prime agricultural resources in such a way as to be viable for future farming activities. See further details on how the Town has worked to protect these resources in the Preferred Development Strategy later in this Element.



## Limited Development Areas

The suitability of land for development is further limited by regulations and policies, which protect aquifer recharge areas, public water supplies, prime agricultural soils, and publicly owned land. It is assumed that properties within the Farm, Forest and Open Space program in Table 8-4 will retain their current development status during the plan's initial five years. Land that is either physically constrained and/or possesses limited development potential is detailed in Tables 8-3 and 8-4 (see Map 15 in Appendix B). Approximately 10,275 acres remain that are considered suitable for development according to the 2018 Buildout Analysis.



**Table 8-4 Limited Development Areas by Zoning District (2019)**

	R-1	R-2	R-3	NB	GB	LI	I	PUDVC	FT	PD	PDR	SV	Total (acres)
Aquifer Recharge and Community Wellhead Protection Areas	98	2,929	7,839	9	131	213	106	–	–	12	297	111	11,745
Recreation, Conservation and Natural Heritage Areas	1	2,900	4,883	–	2	–	3	46	–	–	202	10	8,047
FFOS Program	–	2,890	3,386	–	–	127	10	–	–	100	322	–	6,835
Historic and Archeological Sites	8	495	473	–	16	11	43	2	–	6	–	79	1,133
Scenic Landscapes	2	1,108	1,325	–	2	13	–	–	–	–	–	103	2,553

Source: Richmond GIS 2018 and Tax Assessor (2021)

Note: Limited development areas are not unique (i.e. areas may overlap) and cannot be totaled by zoning district

## Development Trends

In addition to Richmond's population and employment growth, the subdivision and use of land is another measure of growth. Its direction and pace generally coincide with the region's economic well-being. According to the 2018 Buildout Analysis, under the Town's Zoning Ordinance and Land Development and Subdivision Regulations, residential dwelling units still are the largest form of development and there may be potential for 2,150 additional residential lots. Table 8-5 provides a summary of developed and undeveloped parcels of land between 2004 and 2018. The table demonstrates that residential development continues to increase incrementally, but that non-residential development has declined since 2010.



**Table 8-5 Comparison of Parcel Inventories, 2004, 2010, 2018**

	2004	2010	2018	Change 2010 to 2018
<b>Developed Lots</b>				
Residential	2,422	2,708	2,769	61
Non-Residential	112	270	161	-109
Subtotal	2,534	2,978	2,930	-48
<b>Unimproved Lots</b>				
Residential	437	370	499	129
Non-Residential	188	182	241	59
Subtotal	625	552	740	188
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,159</b>	<b>3,530</b>	<b>3,670</b>	<b>140</b>

Source: Town of Richmond Planning Department

## Land Availability

As shown in Table 8-6, unimproved residential land covers nearly 43 percent of the Town's net land area. Close to 90 percent of the Town is zoned for residential uses. According to the 2018 Buildout Analysis, of this amount, 10,275 acres could potentially accommodate additional residential development. For the purposes of this plan, such land should be considered as "Rural Development Areas." The distribution of these areas and the developed land areas according to zoning districts is itemized in Table 8-6.

Based on the 2018 Buildout Analysis a sufficient amount of land is available to meet Richmond's near-term land needs for both residential and nonresidential development. Richmond's 20-year residential land use needs should be satisfied by the current zoning pattern given the supply of developed and planned residential lots and the availability of developable unimproved land and water supplies.

The land currently zoned for commercial uses (Neighborhood and General Business Districts) and industrial uses (Industrial and Light Industrial Districts) along with land zoned Flex Tech, Planned Unit Development Village Commercial, the Planned Resort and Planned Development Districts will meet long-term commercial and industrial land requirements.

**Table 8-6 Net Area Available for Residential Development**

Zoning District	Total Zoning District (Acres)	Land Suitable for Residential Development (Acres)	District Suitable for Development	Existing Lots	Projected Additional Lots
R-1	98	63	64%	88	19
R-2	11,685	6,263	54%	2,103	1,567
R-3	8,278	2,191	26%	978	262
NB	9	6	67%	6	1
PDR (1 du per 2 acres)	599	33	37%	4	14
PDR (1 du per 3 acres)		188			55
PUDVC	299	251	84%	8	11
SV (with public water)	121	42	40%	31	65
SV (with no public water)		7		16	0
Ag Overlay	2,782	1,231	44%	140	156
Subtotal	23,871	10,275	43%	3,374	2,150
Other (GB, FT, LI, I, PD, and uncoded lots)	1,032	–	–	171	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,903</b>	<b>10,275</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>3,545</b>	<b>2,150</b>

Source: 2018 Richmond Buildout Analysis

## The Preferred Development Strategy

Richmond residents prefer that future development be located in areas already serviced by water lines and near or within existing village centers. This is consistent with the goals and objectives of the State Land Use Plan, Land Use 2025. This means concentrating future growth in village centers and implementing conservation strategies to protect forests, fields, and farmlands.

## Managing Growth and Maintaining Rural Character

Uncontrolled growth and unplanned land use can strain local resources, including schools, water quality and supply, roadway maintenance and emergency services. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s the Town experienced a vigorous rate of residential growth until 2008. Richmond still has growth in residential development and is heavily dependent on the tax revenues generated by that development. Residents have expressed encouragement for allowing diverse land development which increases tax revenue but makes minimal demands on town services or the rural character of the Town. There are several strategies Richmond can pursue:

- › Concentrating redevelopment in existing villages where there is access to public transportation and in proximity to existing utilities and infrastructure. The Town will continue to assess incentives to focus infill growth in these areas. Doing so reduces costs associated with new infrastructure construction and additional maintenance requirements. Transfer or purchase of development rights could be a strategy.

- › Encourage non-residential development; commercial and industrial businesses increase the local tax base and add local jobs to the region. The Town needs to support growth and expansion of existing businesses and develop approaches to attract new businesses and industry without impacting the rural character (see Economic Development Element).
- › Use the village development model to provide smaller-unit housing in anticipation of future trends. Top-of-the-shop housing, cottage communities, or other multi-unit models could increase the municipal housing stock.
- › Require that development(s) which could reduce the Town's ability to deliver adequate services be phased and support their impacts through capital improvement fees. These types of projects may include, but are not limited to, a large residential subdivision(s), high-tech or industrial complex(es), large tourist based or commercial projects and/or large infill redevelopment.

Further discussion of these and other preferred development strategies are as follows.

## **Residential Development**

### **Conservation Design**

As a means of implementing the conservation and open space policies contained within the **Natural and Cultural Resources and Open Space and Recreation Elements**, the Town has adopted Conservation Design. Conservation design is a controlled-growth land use development for allowing sustainable development that protects the area's natural environmental features in perpetuity through conservation easements, including preserving open space landscape, protecting farmland or natural habitats for wildlife, and maintaining the character of rural communities. The management and ownership of the open space land is required by the Town from private land owners, or suitable conservation organizations. This type of development allows the underlying density of the original zoning district but in a more compact pattern, which preserves open space and other rural characteristics.

The Planning Board works to ensure that the protected land is also configured so that the required open space will, wherever practical, connect to other open space throughout the community, link to resource areas in adjoining subdivisions and/or provide buffers between new development and sensitive lands or developed neighborhoods. Like other strategies in this plan, conservation design is an important tool in preserving the rural character of the Town. By preserving large areas of open space, and siting development in compact areas, the Town creates desirable neighborhoods and avoids sprawl.

### **Residential Compounds**

The Town has adopted Residential Compound standards as another controlled-growth land use tool for land owners. A residential compound is a type of subdivision intended to preserve rural character of the Town by permitting low-density residential development on large parcels of land while relieving them from compliance with the full construction design and improvement standards of other subdivisions. Compounds are limited to seven lots. In the R1, R2, and R3 zoning districts, the number of house lots is calculated on a five-acre density.

Compounds “trade off” the requirement for undivided common open space, as in conservation subdivision design, in exchange for a very low density development pattern that preserves most of each building lot as unimproved natural land. Compounds are appropriate where commonly-owned open space lots are not practical or desirable. They preserve open space with a minimum of disturbance from development construction, reduce the overall number of dwellings, which substantially reduces community impacts and water use, while furthering the Town’s overall growth control policies. The Town requires that private roads be used in compounds so there will be no investment or maintenance by the Town in the roads.

## Agricultural Development

### Agriculture

Most residents strongly support active farming and agricultural tourism. Agricultural tourism refers to, but is not limited to, farms opening their properties to the public in order to sell their products and services. It can include farm stands, educational programs, and seasonal events. These activities support economic development which is appropriate for Richmond as well as tourism which maintains the rural character of the Town. Seasonal events should be required to obtain an annual license from the Town so impacts to abutters and public safety can be monitored by the Town Council.

According to RIDEM and the Tax Assessor (2019), there are approximately 45 active farms in Richmond. Commodities range from dairy, Christmas trees, apiaries, herbs, mixed vegetables and fruit, livestock, and turf. Recognizing the challenges and opportunities to maintain a vital agriculture community, the Town of Richmond supports the efforts of the agricultural community and will continue to identify and encourage agriculture as a viable economic driver in the community, and support existing and new agricultural businesses through land development policies.



### Agriculture Overlay District

Protection of agriculture is an important aspect of the rural character of the Town. The purpose of the agricultural overlay is to preserve and protect large areas of prime agricultural soils, as identified by the Soil Conservation Service. Two areas are delineated; one in the eastern portion of town, and one in the western portion. Both areas presently are turf farms with prime agricultural soils.

In addition to this element, the **Natural and Cultural Resources** and **Economic Development Element** have specific policies and action items that meet these objectives.

### *Agricultural Overlay District - Conservation Development*

The intent of the Agriculture Overlay District (AOD) is to protect Richmond’s rural character by preserving prime agricultural soils as a natural resource and protecting the cultural and economic benefits derived from farms and agricultural operations. Conservation

Development in the AOD prioritizes farming activities by establishing open space as farm lots and includes the greatest possible amount of prime agricultural soils. If more than one farm lot is created, one of the lots must be at least 25 acres, reinforcing the focus on rural character and protecting farms from suburban and residential encroachment. Open space lots can be used for stormwater management, fire cisterns, or unique site features.

### ***Agricultural Overlay District – Residential Compounds***

Residential Compounds are also allowed in the AOD. They preserve rural character and protect farming operations because they encourage very low density on properties large enough to be eligible for participation in the Farm, Forest and Open Space tax classification program. Residential compounds proposed in the overlay district must consist entirely of farm lots of 11 or more acres so that each lot can be eligible for participation in the Farm, Forest, and Open Space tax classification program. Further, to encourage the creation of farm lots, one accessory dwelling unit, located in either the residential structure or in an accessory structure, is permitted by right rather than requiring a special use permit in the one-acre residential area.

## **Other Strategies**

### **Transfer and/or Purchase of Development Rights**

Transfer of Development rights (TDR) transfers the right to develop from one property (sending property) to another (receiving property), typically taking development rights from an area where development is not desirable and applying them to an area where development is desirable and can be accommodated by existing public water service. The increased density in the receiving area serves as a “bonus” in return for protecting the contributing area. A conservation easement is placed on the contributing property. TDR can be used to protect open space, farmlands, natural resources or areas of historical importance. For farm land, sale or transfer of the right to develop the property means that the property will no longer be assessed based on its “highest and best use,” or for development. Instead, the property will be taxed as an agricultural use, which typically has a lower assessed value than development parcels. This will reduce the economic impact on farmers and allow them to operate their farms without added financial burdens.

A landowner may sell his/her development rights to another entity, typically a land trust, local or state government or some other entity which exists in perpetuity, but he/she retains the ownership of the land. The Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) places a permanent deed restriction, or conservation easement, on the property and permanently prohibits new development. The legally-binding agreement will maintain the property as open space or farmland even if it changes ownership. As with TDR, PDR allows the farmland, or other open space to be preserved and to be assessed based on current use and not on future development potential.

In the previous community survey most of the respondents supported TDR/PDR strategies to protect important landscapes and resources of Richmond. While not a specific question in the updated survey, the Town should continue to consider a TDR/PDR program to preserve its rural character. The first step in developing a TDR program would be to use the 2018

Buildout Analysis to identify potential sending and receiving areas within the Town. Additional support by the Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust may assist in identifying properties suitable to participate in the TDR/PDR program. The receiving areas of additional development should be accessible to public water and transportation and be able to accommodate higher density within the desired area of growth in Wyoming.

## Areas of Future Growth

### Village Centers

As new projects are proposed in village centers, building placement and architectural features should consider adjacent historic and cultural resources. Further, projects should also allow for environmental resources and site suitability limitations to protect their integrity (see the **Natural and Cultural Resources Element**). The Town worked with the Town of Charlestown to develop the *Shannock Village Design Guidelines* and these guidelines have been adopted as a special zoning district for the village of Shannock in Richmond.



The village of Wyoming, including the area around the Route 138/I-95 interchange, is located within Land Use 2025's Urban Services Boundary (USB). The state USB depicts areas that can accommodate additional development because some level of public services are provided. Water service was extended in 2011 along Route 138 to the intersection of Route 112 to correct water quality problems and meet fire protection needs at the Richmond Elementary School. The Town is in favor of infill development within the village to curb sprawl but not extending the water line further along Route 138 or Route 112 (see the **Housing Element**). It is important that new development maintains and promotes village character. A 2013 University of Rhode Island Landscape Architecture Department project prepared an analysis of Wyoming that included a public workshop to gauge opinions on the overall appearance and function of Wyoming as a village and what, if any, improvements could be made. Overall, residents liked the scale of development and want to protect the remaining historic structures while encouraging new infill development. Areas of concern were the aesthetics of existing buildings, circulation and traffic congestion problems, lack of open space, and lack of residential rental properties.

A distinct village district within Wyoming can give the Town the tools to promote mixed-use projects. Buildings with commercial on the first floor and residential units above should be compatible with existing uses and visually complementary to historic structures. A special village district can permit mixed-use projects and articulate village design standards, similar to those created for Shannock. These types of projects provide an opportunity for the Town to increase the number of affordable rental units and housing opportunities through mixed-use buildings and or multi-family structures (see the **Housing Element**). Because wastewater must be treated on-site, environmental impacts need to be evaluated during the site plan review process. A major concern, even at its current level of development, is traffic. New

development should not further diminish the existing levels of service on Route 138. Route 138 in Wyoming is the most congested area of town and needs careful attention. A way to reduce impacts is to implement access management strategies such as providing alternative access and interconnecting commercial properties. Over time, the Town has had limited success in talking with commercial property owners on this but should continue negotiations to decrease congestion on the roadway.

Route 138 is the only area in town serviced by public transportation. A Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) Park and Ride exists at the I-95 interchange with Route 138 and provides access to bus service for commuters to points north or south along I-95. The Town can also look for ways to add and strengthen links to bike and pedestrian ways to and from the area, although narrow rights-of-way and traffic congestion are limiting factors for both uses. The goals and policies of the **Circulation Element** as they apply to this area need to be incorporated and be considered in any development projects.

### **Growth Centers**

The Town should continue to evaluate opportunities where other appropriate growth areas can be located as opportunities permit. Areas should be suitable to accommodate sustainable higher densities and have access to public water and transportation. Strategies as to how developers will provide adequate water supply and wastewater treatment for higher density need to be considered. Existing villages such as Alton, Carolina, Wood River Junction, Kenyon, and Usquepaug could be studied for the potential as growth centers as time and resources allow.

### **Industrial Uses**

Current industrial areas are located near the convergence of Exit I-95 (Exit 3), Route 138 and Stilson Road. Other areas zoned for industrial uses include locations within historic mill villages along rail lines. These areas were once thriving mills that relied on water power and rail to receive and send goods and materials. Changes in the way products are produced and transported have resulted in a reduced dependency on rail and increased trucking. Because of these changes, the Town should acknowledge that current transportation and economic trends may necessitate reconsideration of these smaller industrial zones for alternative mixed uses (see **Economic Development Element**).

### **Balancing Water Availability, Wastewater Treatment, and Land Development**

The Town will ensure that new development is balanced with water availability and wastewater treatment over time. Public water service is only available in Wyoming and infill development there will be encouraged. In areas of growth, water demands and wastewater treatment need careful planning. Economic development should be based on a strategy that considers buildout and waste by all potential uses.

Outside of Wyoming, the Town is largely zoned R-2 and R-3, where there are two and three-acre minimum lot sizes. These zones were developed based on science to protect the



underlying Wood Pawcatucket Aquifer. This type of zoning, along with the Aquifer Overlay District, protects water quantity and quality by balancing the availability of water with the type of soils found within the Town. By spacing development far enough apart, water supply is not stressed to accommodate development, private wells are protected from over withdrawal and contamination by on-site wastewater treatment systems, and aquifer recharge can occur to maintain water supplies.

### **Low Impact Development Techniques**

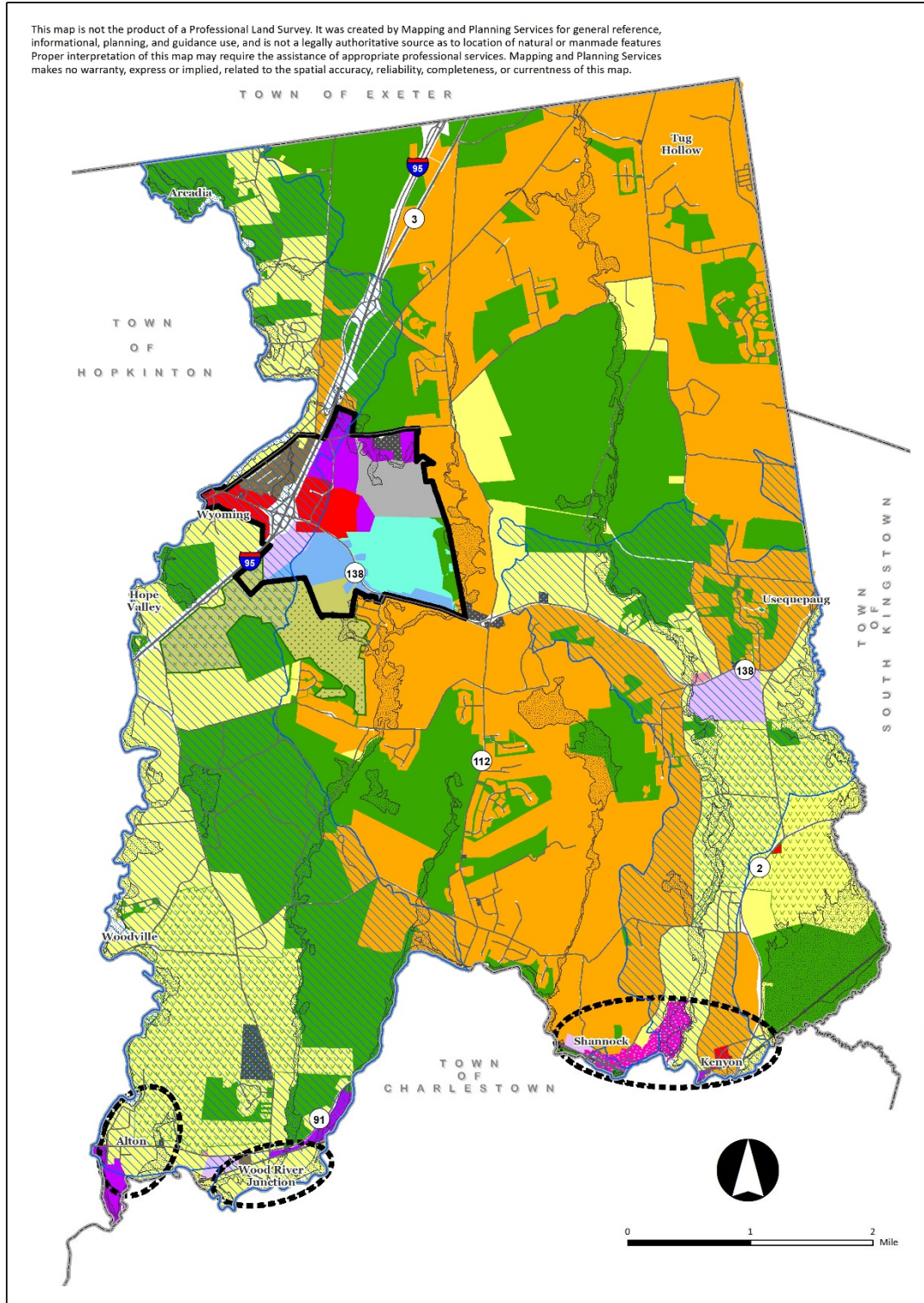
Protecting water quality is an important goal of Richmond (see **Natural and Cultural Resources Element**). Stormwater best management practices (BMPs) reduce pollutants in runoff from development, particularly impervious surfaces such as roadways, parking lots, and other urban area features. The Town has integrated strategies from the Rhode Island Low Impact Development (LID) Site Planning and Design Guidance Manual and the Rhode Island Stormwater Design and Installation Standards Manual into the Richmond Land Development and Subdivision Regulations and development plan review standards to avoid and reduce impacts to water quality. Continued LID strategies expect to be developed, implemented and monitored periodically.

## **The Future Land Use Concept Plan**

The Future Land Use Map, required by the Comprehensive Community Planning and Land Use Act, illustrates Richmond's land use strategy and policies. It attempts to allocate sufficient land areas in multiple use categories to satisfy the identified need for land in each category over the next 20 years. Shown on Map 13 in Appendix B, the plan consists of:

- › High Density Residential
- › Medium Density Residential
- › Low Density Residential
- › Wyoming/Route 138 Infill and Growth Area
- › Potential Future Growth Areas
- › General Business/Neighborhood Business Use
- › Industrial/Light Industrial Use
- › Flex Tech
- › Planned Development
- › Shannock Village
- › Agriculture Overlay
- › Aquifer Overlay
- › Flood Hazard Overlay
- › Planned Development Resort
- › Planned Unit Development – Village District
- › Conservation Open Space
- › Government and Institutional





## RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021

Map 13 - Future Land Use Plan



MH 1/2021

The Future Land Use Map is meant solely to complement the plan's text by visually interpreting the intentions of the plan's goals and policies.

### **Wyoming/Route 138 Infill and Growth Area**

The Wyoming/Route 138 Infill and Growth Area encompasses parcels in and around Wyoming and the I-95 interchange at Route 138. The Town has identified this area as the target for economic development, housing, and circulation improvements because it is the existing commercial center for Richmond and developed at a higher density than other areas of town. It has existing infrastructure and amenities such as sidewalks and access to the Town's water service. Using the state's Urban Services Boundary as a starting point, the Town has delineated this area for future infill and growth in the form of higher density commercial, multi-family and mixed-use development based on local preferences and needs.

### **Low Density Residential**

Low Density Residential, or R-3, is an important category of preferred development strategies as this zoning and level of density covers most of the Town's northwest, southwest and southeast quadrants, as well as the center of Richmond. These areas are a composite of significant natural features, cultural features, prime agricultural soils, open spaces, aquifer recharge and wellhead protection areas, as well as surface water buffer areas, all of which are compatible with low-density zoning.

### **Medium Density Residential**

Pockets of land suitable for medium density development, or R-2, are in the central areas of town and extend to the northern and eastern town borders with Exeter and South Kingstown. The central portion of town south of Route 138 is an intermediate density area, as is an area west of Route 2 south of Shannock Hill Road. The tract's development advantages are its proximity to the Wyoming commercial and industrial districts, proximity to the public water distribution system, access to principal roads and few natural constraints.

### **High Density Residential**

An area of high-density residential development, zoned R1, is located in the Canob Park residential neighborhood in Wyoming and portions of Alton and Shannock. Wyoming is the only area of town served by a municipal water supply system, and the residential areas are almost entirely developed.

### **Potential Future Growth Areas**

In the future, Richmond may consider examining rehab/reuse/infill and mixed-use strategies to increase the supply of affordable housing and neighborhood businesses and services within the villages of Alton, Wood River Junction, Shannock and Kenyon. The ability to support higher density development within these villages will require further study and ultimately depend on factors such as access to public transportation, water availability and wastewater disposal capacity. Using the Indicator of Potential Suitable Areas for Affordable

Housing (see Map 11 in Appendix B), and working in conjunction with property owners and the Affordable Housing Committee, the Planning Board may study land in the existing villages to determine areas that could support higher density development.

### **General Business/Neighborhood Business Uses**

The majority of proposed and existing businesses are located near I-95's Exit 3 and Route 138 junction. The General Business zone extends further west along Route 138 to the Town border with Hopkinton, and east, a short distance beyond Stilson Road. Several small areas for business uses - identified as Neighborhood Business and Shannock Village on the Future Land Use Map - are located in the villages of Shannock and Carolina. Another small business area exists on Route 112 near Town Hall. Residents who participated in the Community Survey and public workshop did not indicate support for expanding business areas outside of existing zones. Route 138 is an essential east-west travel corridor, and the Town should limit the amount of new commercial activity beyond the existing boundaries of the current business areas.

### **Industrial/Light Industrial Uses**

Industrial and light industrial uses are encouraged in several areas, primarily in the vicinity of Exit 3, adjacent to Interstate Route 95, along Route 138 and Stilson Road. The Richmond Airport and the area adjacent to it developed for solar energy are existing industrial uses. Finally, other smaller industrial areas are located in Alton, Wood River Junction and Shannock. Historically, these zones were created to accommodate the mills around which the villages originally developed. Changes in industrial use patterns as well as current transportation and economic trends may necessitate reconsideration of these smaller industrial zones for alternate uses such as solar energy.

### **Flex Tech**

Located in between Route 138 and Buttonwoods Road is the Flex Tech land use designation and zoning district. This land use designation encourages and provides a means for desirable office, commercial and light industrial developments that feature variations in siting and mixes of land uses based upon an approved master plan for the development. Flex Tech development provides a more efficient economic development technique and encourages land use development that is responsive to the Town's unique environmental resources and human needs.

### **Planned Development**

An area encompassing both sides of Route 138 just east of the business and industrial use areas at Exit 3 is zoned for Planned Development. Land in this area is proposed for a mix of uses to provide a transition from the business and industrial area to the surrounding residential areas. The Planned Development combines strict development requirements with site design flexibility.

## **Shannock Village**

Shannock Village is a historically and architecturally-significant area to both Richmond and Charlestown. The village features structures dating back to several architectural periods, and contributes to the area's mill history of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This land use designation promotes the village's economic vitality by permitting commercial and mixed-use development and redevelopment through design guidelines aimed to protect the Town's historical heritage.

## **Planned Development Resort District**

In 2016, the Town adopted a new mixed-use zoning district called the "Planned Development Resort District" for The Preserve at Boulder Hills. A new mapped zoning district was created to delineate uses permitted in the zone and development standards for the district, including maximum residential density and a minimum open space requirement. The area consisted of approximately 600 acres previously located in the Planned Development (PD) zoning district, the Light Industrial (LI) zoning district, and the R-2 and R-3 residential zoning districts. The district is intended to provide luxury private uses for its members without impacting town services. The area includes commercial and non-commercial recreational facilities, hotel and event facilities, restaurants, and limited commercial uses to provide amenities for residents, guests, and the public. The district also includes residential development for its members. The district is currently under development in multiple phases and contains luxury houses, an indoor shooting range, golf course, skeet shooting range, hotel and service station among other planned amenities.

## **Planned Unit Development – Village Center**

The Town adopted the Planned Unit Development – Village Center land use designation and zoning district for Richmond Commons, a mixed-use development along Route 138 in 2008. The area is approximately 300 acres in size. This area is intended to provide a range of residential and nonresidential uses of varying intensities as a placemaking opportunity for the Town. The area is largely undeveloped and is currently used as a quarry.

## **Conservation Open Space**

Generally, publicly-owned lands used for open space and recreation in the Town are currently zoned R-2 or R-3. Because zoning defines how land is to be used, it is crucial that the zoning on publicly-owned open space/recreational lands reflect the Town's goals for such lands. Designating these lands as open space for environmental protection and recreation rather than residential or other types of development will ensure protection of the the open lands and the Town's rural character that is so important to its residents.

## **Government and Institutional**

The Government/Institutional land use designation was introduced to the Future Land Use Map following community interest in identifying the extent of public or quasi-public land holdings and providing guidance for utilization to accommodate the future needs and



functions of the Town. Uses associated with this designation include municipal offices, buildings and facilities, schools, police and fire department stations and libraries. These areas may also accommodate public-private partnerships between the Town and private or non-profit entities on a case-by-case basis.

### **Agriculture Overlay**

Protection of agriculture is an important aspect of the rural character of the Town. The purpose of the agricultural overlay is to preserve and protect large areas of prime agricultural soils, as identified by the Soil Conservation Service. Two areas are delineated; one in the eastern portion of town, and one in the western portion. Both areas presently are turf farms with prime agricultural soils.

### **Aquifer Overlay District**

The entire Town is dependent on groundwater. The Aquifer Overlay areas primarily surround the river corridors in Richmond. The existing Overlay would benefit from an update as there is better mapping available since the adoption of the District. The District should follow the full aquifer recharge area, delineated by RIDEM and available through the Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS). Additionally, RIDEM has mapped where various types of groundwater and wellhead protection areas (WHPA) are located for the Town and should be included in the overlay. The RIDEM Groundwater Quality Rules classify the state's groundwater into four classes and establish groundwater quality standards for each class. Groundwater classified GAA and GA is to be protected to maintain drinking water quality, and underlies approximately 21 percent and 70 percent of the state, respectively. Groundwater classified GB (approximately 9 percent) and GC (less than 1 percent) are known or presumed unsuitable for drinking water. A WHPA is the portion of an aquifer through which groundwater moves to a well. Under the Wellhead Protection Program, RIDEM is responsible for delineating a WHPA for each of the public wells in the state. The most recent groundwater and WHPA data, as available, were published by RIDEM in 2010. These areas require protection as present and future drinking water supplies. The Zoning Map and Ordinance should be updated to reflect the most current maps available from RIDEM for the overlay district. If a property is located within or partially within such an overlay area, special regulations can limit certain high risk uses through special use permits and/or may be entirely prohibited for the protection of public health and safety.

### **Flood Hazard Overlay**

The purpose of this district is to protect the public safety, minimize property damage, protect water courses from encroachment, and preserve the ability of floodplains to retain and carry off flood waters. It is based on the Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Maps. Richmond adopted a Hazard Mitigation Plan



in 2018 to address public safety in flood hazard areas. The plan sets forth guidelines of short-term and long-term actions, which will reduce the actual or potential loss of life or property from a hazardous event such as flooding, severe winter storms/extreme cold, lightning, hurricanes/Nor'easters, drought/extreme heat, dam failure, brush fires, tornadoes, earthquakes, and solar flares. This plan was constructed using input from a variety of municipal and private stakeholders, and the general public. This plan serves as a guide to help the Town reduce their losses and vulnerabilities relating to natural hazards. The Town will continue to implement this plan and update it as necessary.

## **Analysis of Future Land Use and Zoning**

Over the past several years, Richmond has worked to eliminate inconsistencies between its zoning and future land uses. Despite these efforts, some inconsistencies remain, particularly in residential zoning districts where development predates the adoption of zoning. Because most of the areas identified involve conflicts with resource protection and other community goals many areas will stay as nonconforming. Explanations are provided below.

Neighborhoods such as Alton Village, Canob Park, and Valley Lodge Estates are currently zoned R-3, which requires a minimum 3 acre lot size. However, nearly all the lots in these areas are much smaller than 3 acres because they existed before the adoption of zoning in the Town. After the adoption of the Richmond Zoning Ordinance in 1970, these lots became legally nonconforming. All of these areas overlay important aquifer recharge areas and the R-3 designation will remain to protect the underlying groundwater quality and quantity.

Due to the adoption of Conservation Development, cluster subdivision development is no longer allowed under the Richmond Land Development and Subdivision Regulations. Cluster subdivision design allowed developers to create lots smaller than the minimum zoning requirements, provided that larger tracts of open space were preserved with the subdivision. While this appears to cause a conflict between the zoning map and land use, underlying density requirements were maintained, and the intent was consistent with the purpose of the zoning. The cluster designation will remain so as not to create nonconformity for lots which were created in compliance with the ordinance

By amending the Zoning Map over the past several years, Richmond has eliminated previous inconsistencies between the land use and zoning in the commercial and industrial areas and these areas generally are now in conformance with zoning. Most of the industrial areas were designated around existing uses. In designating new areas for Industrial, Light Industrial, Flex Tech, and the Planned Development Resort Districts, the Town has strived to locate these zones where they will be compatible with existing uses, available infrastructure and protection of natural resources. Consideration should be given to eliminating the Planned Resort District.

## Goals, Policies, and Actions

**GOAL LU 1: Support development without adversely affecting public health or degrading the quality of man-made and natural environments.**

**Goal LU 2: Support development that maintains the rural character of Richmond.**

**Policy LU 1:** Control development to minimize conflicts between new development and surrounding land uses and to make efficient use of public facilities and services.

**Policy LU 2:** Relate the use of land to the hierarchy of roads and circulation patterns in order to maintain or improve traffic levels of service.

**Policy LU 3:** Ensure that new developments bear a proportional share of the capital costs related to the construction or improvement of public facilities and services made necessary by the development proposal.

**Policy LU 4:** Conform land use decisions of the Town Council and its appointed boards and commissions to the Comprehensive Community Plan.

**Policy LU 5:** Locate affordable housing in areas where development will not adversely affect the natural environment, will use existing infrastructure, and will benefit from existing public water, public transportation and main transportation corridors. (See Housing Element)

**Policy LU 6:** Ensure that development does not exceed the capacity of the roadway system and public services and facilities. (See Public Services and Facilities and Circulation Elements)

**Policy LU 8:** Encourage development that protects the Town's historical and archaeological heritage (See Natural and Cultural Resources Element).

**Policy LU 9:** Allow innovative and mixed-use developments that provide necessary water and other infrastructure where appropriate.

**Policy LU 10:** Coordinate intergovernmental programs to promote regional solutions to land use problems affecting the Town of Richmond.

**Policy LU 11:** Preserve significant open space, agricultural, and natural resource and ensure that open space and recreation lands are used for those purposes.

**Policy LU 12:** Minimize inconsistencies between existing zoning and future land use where possible.

## Actions

There are 17 Land Use implementation actions detailed in the Implementation Program which follows.

## Implementation Program

The following is a schedule for implementation of the Richmond Comprehensive Community Plan. It identifies the Action Item of each element, the responsible party in its implementation and the time frame it is estimated that it will be completed, either short-term (one to five years), mid-term (six to ten years) or long-term (ten to 20 years). Action Items can also be ongoing.

Reference	Action Item Description	Responsibility	Short-Term (1-5 Years)	Mid-Term (6-10 Years)	Long-Term (10-20 Years)	Ongoing
<b>Open Space and Recreation</b>						
OSR 1	Develop new community recreation facilities on Town-owned land.	Town Council, Recreation Commission, and Public Works Department		✓		
OSR 2	All public recreational facilities, both developed and natural areas, must be inventoried to insure adequate and safe access as well as utilization by all citizens, including, but not limited to, those who fall within the parameters of the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA).	Recreation Commission		✓		
OSR 3	Monitor the adopted Five Year Capital Improvement Plan/budget to ensure proper upkeep of town recreation facilities.	Recreation Commission and Town Council				✓
OSR 4	Include guidelines within the Town's Subdivision and Land Development Regulations for all land developments where dedication of public recreation land is required.	Planning Board				✓
OSR 5	Accept land dedication when a proposed site is very well suited to proposed uses, and ensure maintenance through homeowner's association or other organizations. Where this is not feasible, consider payment in lieu of on-site dedication within the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations for applications where land dedication would not be in optimum interest of the Town.	Planning Board				✓
OSR 6	Establish clear procedures for the use of payment in lieu of taxes or impact fee funds.	Town Council	✓			
OSR 7	Work to continue and expand on the regional Chariho programs.	Recreation Commission				✓



Reference	Action Item Description	Responsibility	Short-Term (1-5 Years)	Mid-Term (6-10 Years)	Long-Term (10-20 Years)	Ongoing
OSR 8	Coordinate efforts for large scale active, private recreation facilities that would serve several communities.	Recreation Commission and Town Council		✓		
OSR 9	Establish an overall plan for a network of biking and hiking trails throughout Richmond connected with adjacent communities.	Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission and Land Trust	✓			
OSR 10	Identify and map existing trails (including the North/South Trail) or routes open to public use in lands owned by the Land Trust, Audubon Society of Rhode Island and The Nature Conservancy, etc.	Land Trust, Conservation Commission and Recreation Commission	✓			
OSR 11	Collaborate with property owners adjacent to public open space to maintain public access through private properties by use of conservation easements.	Land Trust	✓			
OSR 12	Support RIDEM efforts to acquire key tracts that will connect existing protected parcels for the combined purposes of hunting, hiking, greenways, rivers, and wildlife corridors (see Circulation Element).	Land Trust, Conservation Commission and Town Council				✓
OSR 13	Encourage development proposals to dedicate open space in areas that are contiguous or adjacent to existing open space to create a network of permanently preserved open space within the Town.	Planning Board and Conservation Commission				✓
OSR 14	Consider designation of scenic roadways within town and establish appropriate buffers and front yard setbacks to protect the scenic natural and built features of the roadways. Carefully review with state agencies proposed improvements to these roads which might disrupt the scenic character.	Planning Board, Town Council, and Planning Department			✓	
OSR 15	Promote the use of the state Farm, Forest and Open Space Program and support the acquisition or transfer of development rights by state and private agencies.	Planning Board and Town Council				✓
OSR 16	Use conservation easements to obtain property most appropriate for greenways connecting natural areas to other natural areas.	Town Council and Land Trust				✓
<b>Natural and Cultural Resources</b>						
NCR 1	Determine compatible land uses, and develop land acquisition and management programs to identify open space and river corridors (see Open Space and Recreation Element).	Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Land Trust and Town Council		✓		

Reference	Action Item Description	Responsibility	Short-Term (1-5 Years)	Mid-Term (6-10 Years)	Long-Term (10-20 Years)	Ongoing
NCR 2	Monitor rare native plant and wildlife communities, determine compatible land usage and develop land acquisition and management programs.	Conservation Commission, Land Trust, and Town Council				✓
NCR 3	Review Town GIS mapping and ordinances to strengthen the Aquifer Protection Overlay District.	Planning Department, Planning Board, and Town Council	✓			
NCR 4	Amend the Subdivision, Planned Unit Development, and Development Plan Review regulations to include appropriate buffer zones along major rivers.	Planning Department and Planning Board				✓
NCR 5	Develop economic strategies that promote the sustainable use of the Town's abundant local and state parks and other open spaces.	Economic Development Commission, Town Council, Town Administrator				✓
NCR 6	Incorporate new policies that are designed to sustain agricultural operations and preserve open spaces.	Planning Board and Town Council	✓			
NCR 7	Partner with farmers to preserve their lands from development.	Planning Board, Town Council, Land Trust, and Conservation Commission				✓
NCR 8	Take the necessary steps to create Historic Districts, including an amendment to the Town Charter and adoption of appropriate ordinances.	Town Council, Planning Board			✓	
NCR 9	Reestablish the Historic District Commission.	Town Council			✓	
NCR 10	Identify sections of streets and highways with scenic vistas for possible designation as a scenic roadway or scenic overlook areas.	Town Council, Planning Board, Conservation Commission		✓		
NCR 11	Adopt design guidelines that will be applied to areas in and near existing historic village areas to retain and protect historic and cultural resources and to maintain the unique aesthetic look of these places.	Planning Board or Historic District Commission			✓	
NCR 12	Continue to maintain a GIS inventory of environmentally sensitive areas and sites that are of historical, cultural or archaeological value to the Town.	Planning Department				✓
NCR 13	Consider developing partnerships with private property owners with recreational businesses for the continuation/protection of these uses.	Land Trust and Planning Department				✓
NCR 14	Maintain and update the Town's GIS mapping and prioritization of potential conservation lands and consult with the non-governmental organizations which own these properties in Richmond.	Planning Department, Conservation Commission and Land Trust				✓

Reference	Action Item Description	Responsibility	Short-Term (1-5 Years)	Mid-Term (6-10 Years)	Long-Term (10-20 Years)	Ongoing
NCR 15	Concentrate major developments and community facilities within and adjacent to established villages and Town-designated growth areas to alleviate pressure to develop the more rural areas of town (see Land Use Element).	Planning Board and Town Council	✓			✓
NCR 16	Review the Zoning Ordinance and Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to establish mixed-use development standards appropriate for existing villages to promote infill and the conservation of natural and cultural resources.	Planning Department, Planning Board, and Town Council	✓			✓
<b>Economic Development</b>						
ED 1	Survey Richmond's population to determine the business growth potential for home-based enterprises, and identify if there are specific categories to prioritize.	Economic Development Commission		✓		
ED 2	Investigate business ventures that could be established to support prioritized needs of the community.	Economic Development Commission		✓		
ED 3	Provide links to state resources, regulations and educational information about home-based business in Rhode Island.	Economic Development Commission		✓		
ED 4	Actively promote Richmond as a location to expand industry to companies directly, or through surrogate partners (Rhode Island Commerce; Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce, etc.).	Economic Development Commission		✓		
ED 5	Review annually the stated goals, vision, and mission of the Economic Development Commission and share those items on the EDC webpage.	Economic Development Commission and Town Council				✓
ED 6	Make regular contact with the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation and other state agencies and departments regarding the relationship between economic development and meeting the state-mandated goal for affordable housing. Coordinate these efforts with regional officials.	Economic Development Commission and Town Council		✓		
ED 7	Identify areas for major commercial and industrial activity in the vicinity of State Routes 138, Interstate 95 and Route 3 (see Land Use Element).	Planning Board and Town Council				✓

Reference	Action Item Description	Responsibility	Short-Term (1-5 Years)	Mid-Term (6-10 Years)	Long-Term (10-20 Years)	Ongoing
ED 8	Facilitate dialogue with property owners in the Interstate 95 and Route 138 interchange and Route 3 area to identify and eliminate any infrastructure constraints prohibiting future commercial development.	Town Administrator and Economic Development Commission		✓		
ED 9	Review current land development controls and recommend amendments that will complement the economic development goals.	Planning Board, Planning Department and Town Council		✓		
ED 10	Continue to investigate the feasibility of mixed use zoning in villages to allow for flexibility in design and to maintain and review appropriate village-scaled open space (see Land Use Element).	Town Council and Planning Board		✓		
ED 11	Identify road improvements in business districts and coordinate efforts with RI Department of Transportation as appropriate (see Circulation Element).	Public Works Department and Town Administrator				✓
ED 12	Continue to promote farmers markets, fairs and craft events that support locally-sourced and produced goods within Richmond. Provide a tool by which local businesses can make the community aware of these activities.	Town Council and Economic Development Commission				✓
ED 13	Coordinate with Rhode island Commerce Corporation and local tourism councils to promote Richmond as a destination for ecotourism.	Town Council, Town Administrator and Economic Development Commission	✓			
ED 14	Develop material for the Town's website that explains the requirements for opening a business in Richmond. Materials should include a list of local, regional, and state resources.	Town Council, Planning Department, Economic Development Commission and Town Administrator	✓			
ED 15	Create and fund a "shop local" campaign that encourages residents to shop and do business with local establishments.	Town Council and Economic Development Commission		✓		
<b>Circulation</b>						
C 1	Encourage developers, non-profit agencies, and housing agencies to locate new affordable housing units in growth areas with access to public transportation and water. (see Housing Element and Land Use Element).	Planning Board and Town Council	✓			
C 2	Approve new development and/or road construction projects that result in improved safety and minimize environmental effects.	Town Council, Planning Board and Department of Public Works (DPW)				✓

Reference	Action Item Description	Responsibility	Short-Term (1-5 Years)	Mid-Term (6-10 Years)	Long-Term (10-20 Years)	Ongoing
C 3	Maintain an inventory of town roads according to the hierarchy and Level of Service of each; see Table 5-1.	Planning Board and DPW				✓
C 4	Adopt Level of Service standards for the Town's roadways, specifically including design and construction standards for new streets, necessity for signalization, shared curb cuts, and off-street and on-street parking.	Planning Board		✓		
C 5	Maintain street design standards that are consistent with the rural character of the Town.	Planning Board and Department of Public Works				✓
C 6	Work with RIDOT to prioritize new or existing projects in the State Transportation Improvement Plan	Town Administrator, Planning Board and Town Council				✓
C 7	Encourage compact development design which prioritizes pedestrian access and safety in village centers and growth areas (see Natural and Cultural Resources Element).	Planning Board				✓
C 8	Encourage pedestrian and bicycle links to existing bikeways, hiking/biking trails, and pedestrian ways in new and redevelopment projects, as appropriate (see Natural and Cultural Resources Element).	Planning Board				✓
C 9	Work with RIDOT and RIPTA to improve access to the RIPTA Park and Ride from neighboring businesses.	Town Administrator and Town Council		✓		
C 10	Explore intermodal connections between regional transportation hubs and Richmond to enhance economic development opportunities (see Economic Development Element).	Town Council, Planning Board and Economic Development Commission		✓		
C 11	Evaluate the feasibility of parking strategies for new and redevelopment projects which use less land area and encourage better use of limited available land.	Planning Board and Department of Public Works		✓		
C 12	Evaluate the feasibility of municipal parking in village centers and future growth areas.	Planning Board and Town Administrator			✓	
<b>Public Services and Facilities</b>						
PSF 1	Consider the feasibility of locating a library or media center in the potential community center at Routes 112 and 138 (see Land Use Element).	Town Administrator, Town Council, and Planning Board		✓		
PSF 2	Evaluate existing programs for all residents and develop short and long-term recommendations for improvements to services and programs.	Town Administrator and Town Council	✓			
PSF 3	Support appropriate grant applications seeking to expand services for Richmond residents.	Town Administrator and Town Council				✓

Reference	Action Item Description	Responsibility	Short-Term (1-5 Years)	Mid-Term (6-10 Years)	Long-Term (10-20 Years)	Ongoing
PSF 4	Manage Richmond's growth through regulations which ensure there will be sufficient water quantity and quality.	Planning Board and Planning Department				✓
PSF 5	Ensure that existing water resources are protected and can support future sustainable development proposals.	Town Council and Water Department		✓		
PSF 6	Encourage additions and tie-ins to existing and proposed water lines to facilitate infill development and the construction of affordable housing units (see Land Use Element and Housing Element).	Affordable Housing Committee and Water Suppliers		✓		
PSF 7	Develop a water supply systems management plan with a service area map for the Richmond Water Department consistent with the Future Land Use Map within this Comprehensive Community Plan, including demand management and water conservation, wellhead protection, and a capital improvement plan	Water Department, Planning Board, Finance Department and Town Council	✓			
PSF 8	Continue to evaluate the equitable costs of public services and facilities to finance infrastructure improvements that are directly related to development proposals.	Town Administrator and Town Council				✓
PSF 9	Encourage developers, non-profit agencies, and housing agencies to locate new affordable housing units in growth centers and existing water mains. Use existing infrastructure as a guide to locate new affordable housing to reduce the need for infrastructure extensions and water supply augmentation.	Planning Board				✓
PSF 10	Continue to maintain an annual inventory of needed capital improvements ranked in order of priority and continue the five-year Capital Improvements Program.	Finance Board, Town Administrator, and Town Council				✓
PSF 11	Require that all development proposals provide public facilities and services impacts with applications for subdivision or development plan review.	Planning Board				✓
PSF 12	Update and maintain the Town's local hazard mitigation and emergency operations plans.	Emergency Management Director		✓		
PSF 13	Pursue available funding to implement the strategies developed in the Richmond Hazard Mitigation Plan.	Emergency Management Director and Town Administrator				✓

Reference	Action Item Description	Responsibility	Short-Term (1-5 Years)	Mid-Term (6-10 Years)	Long-Term (10-20 Years)	Ongoing
PSF 14	Consider establishment of wastewater management districts and engage the RI Infrastructure Bank and Washington County Community Development Corporation to leverage funding to assist homeowners with repairs and maintenance.	Town Council and Washington County Community Development Corporation		✓		
PSF 15	Prepare a wastewater management program	Town Council and Town Planner		✓		
PSF 16	Continue to develop energy saving projects to reduce energy consumption for municipal buildings and infrastructure.	Town Administrator				✓
PSF 17	Retrofit electric switches in offices, hallways, and work spaces in municipal buildings with occupancy sensors where applicable.	Department of Public Works	✓			
PSF 18	Consider energy efficiency and Energy Star standards when purchasing new vehicles and equipment for the Police and Public Works Departments.	Police Department, Department of Public Works and Town Council		✓		
PSF 19	Use savings from energy efficiency and conservation measures in municipal buildings to fund additional energy saving programs and upgrades.	Town Administrator and Town Council				✓
PSF 20	Continue allowing tax incentives for commercial renewable energy production.	Town Council				✓
PSF 21	Support public and commercial renewable energy production by amending the Zoning Ordinance with appropriate siting standards when necessary.	Planning Board and Town Council				✓
PSF 22	Continue to work with the RI Office of Energy Resources to explore alternative energy solutions and public and private education programs focusing on energy conservation and renewable energy sources.	Town Planner and Conservation Commission				✓
PSF 23	Consider adopting zoning standards for cogeneration facilities as accessory uses to agricultural uses.	Town Planner, Planning Board and Town Council			✓	
PSF 24	Continue to work with the Washington County Regional Planning Council and the Partnership for Rhode Island Streetlights Management group to determine the savings and efficacy of purchasing and managing streetlights within Richmond.	Town Administrator and Town Council				✓

Reference	Action Item Description	Responsibility	Short-Term (1-5 Years)	Mid-Term (6-10 Years)	Long-Term (10-20 Years)	Ongoing
PSF 25	Make a conscious effort to promote the use of renewable energy sources and implementation of energy conservation measures without impacting the rural setting of the Town of Richmond or a significant reduction in forest for energy production.	All Town officials				✓
<b>Housing</b>						
H 1	Increase the membership of the Affordable Housing Committee to include more residents who are not members of other boards or commissions, enabling the committee to devote more time to housing issues.	Town Council	✓			
H 2	Assist town staff in collecting data for more accurate recording and reporting of housing data.	Planning Department and Affordable Housing Committee				✓
H 3	Sponsor public meetings and workshops to educate the public about the need for low ad moderate income housing.	Planning Department and Affordable Housing Committee				✓
H 4	Obtain and disseminate information about home repair and rehabilitation loans and grants available to lower-income homeowners for dwelling units that might be designated as low or moderate income.	Planning Department and Affordable Housing Committee				✓
H 5	Identify and evaluate potential locations for comprehensive permit developments and seek out nonprofit and for-profit developers willing to consider development at those locations.	Planning Department, Planning Board and Affordable Housing Committee				✓
H 6	Explore the benefits of increasing affordable housing stock to stimulate business investment in Richmond.	Economic Development Commission and Affordable Housing Committee				✓
H 7	Evaluate Town-owned parcels for opportunities to construct affordable housing.	Planning Department, Town Administrator and Affordable Housing Committee				✓
H 8	Seek funding for village revitalization projects, working in conjunction with neighboring communities if applicable.	Planning Department and Town Administrator				✓
H 9	Develop and enact mixed-use zoning ordinance amendments for Wyoming.	Planning Department, Planning Board and Town Council		✓		
H 10	Pursue discussions with other Washington County towns concerning regional strategies to increase affordable housing production.	Town Administrator, Planning Department and Town Council				✓



Reference	Action Item Description	Responsibility	Short-Term (1-5 Years)	Mid-Term (6-10 Years)	Long-Term (10-20 Years)	Ongoing
<b>Land Use</b>						
LU 1	Amend the text and map of the Zoning Ordinance to conform to the Future Land Use Map if needed.	Town Council and Planning Board				✓
LU 2	Enforce design standards which ensure that developments are compatible with surrounding land uses; mitigate nuisances; provide required site amenities; protect natural and cultural resources; buffer adjacent land uses in terms of density, size, scale, height, mass and compliance with the International Dark Sky Association lighting principles.	Town Council and Planning Board	✓			
LU 3	Implement the Housing Element in a manner consistent with Land Use and Zoning policies.	Town Council, Planning Board, and Affordable Housing Committee				✓
LU 4	Recommend to the Town Council changes to the Future Land Use Map identifying areas in Town which can support higher density development based upon the Buildout Analysis.	Planning Board and Town Planner		✓		
LU 5	Periodically review and update the Buildout Analysis to ensure consistency with the evolving goals and policies of the Town (see Housing Element).	Town Planner and Planning Board			✓	
LU 6	Periodically review the efficiency and effectiveness of the development review, approval and permitting processes.	Planning Board and Planning Department				✓
LU 7	Coordinate with the Richmond Water Department to ensure that water use and demand does not exceed water supply capacity.	Planning Board and Town Administrator				✓
LU 8	Coordinate with adjacent communities on new development and redevelopment in historic villages that cross municipal boundaries. Consider village plans for Alton, Wood River Junction, Carolina, Usquepaug, Wyoming, and Kenyon.	Planning Board, Town Planner, and Town Administrator				✓
LU 9	Ensure that future development in the vicinity of these villages follows the historical development patterns. Use conservation development design techniques to ensure that new development is compatible with the villages.	Planning Board and Historic District Commission		✓		
LU 10	Evaluate locations in Town that may be suitable as growth centers.	Town Planner and Planning Board			✓	
LU 11	Continue to participate in regional planning associations, such as, but not limited to, the Washington County Regional Planning Council.	Town Council and Town Administrator				✓

Reference	Action Item Description	Responsibility	Short-Term (1-5 Years)	Mid-Term (6-10 Years)	Long-Term (10-20 Years)	Ongoing
LU 12	Continue to work with neighboring communities to implement land use strategies.	Town Planner and Planning Department				✓
LU 13	Enforce land use management plans for lands owned by the Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust and Town.	Land Trust, Town Council, and Town Administrator				✓
LU 14	Support the preservation of new open spaces within proximity to existing open space and state-owned land so as to avoid fragmentation of open space. Ensure that publicly owned lands are zoned for open space to also prevent fragmentation.	Land Trust, Planning Board, and Town Council				✓
LU 15	Continue to require that all major development proposals follow the principles of conservation development design.	Planning Board				✓
LU 16	Consider a program that allows for the transfer and/or purchase of development rights to protect natural resources, water supply, open space and or farmland.	Town Planner, Planning Board, Land Trust and Town Council			✓	
LU 17	Monitor and update development standards as necessary as the Town continues to develop.	Town Planner and Planning Board				✓

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## Appendix A

### Public Survey

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# Richmond Comprehensive Plan Survey

375

Responses

32:18

Average time to complete

Closed

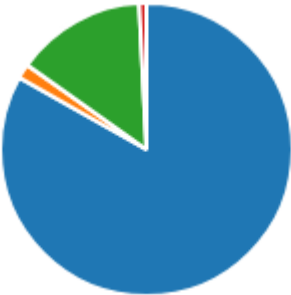
Status



Ideas

## 1. Do you live or work in Richmond?

I live in Richmond	312
I work in Richmond	6
I live and work in Richmond	54
I don't live or work in Richmond	3



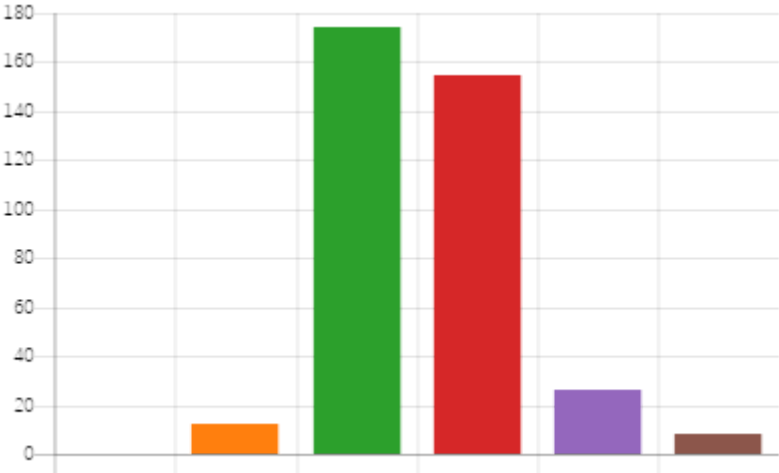
## 2. How long have you lived in Richmond?

0-5 years	75
6-15 years	111
16 -20 years	51
More than 20 years	134



## 3. What is your age?

18 or younger	0
19-29	12
30-49	174
50-69	155
70-79	26
80+	8



#### 4. What one word or phrase would you use to describe Richmond?

341

Responses

Latest Responses

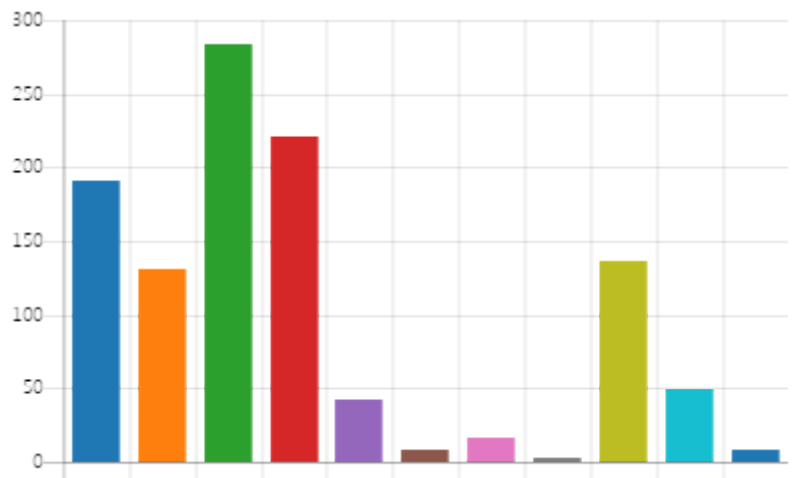
*"A safe, quiet, rural town with a clean environment, bordering on buco..."*

*"Beautiful natural habitats, rivers and wildlife "*

*"Beautiful rural landscape"*

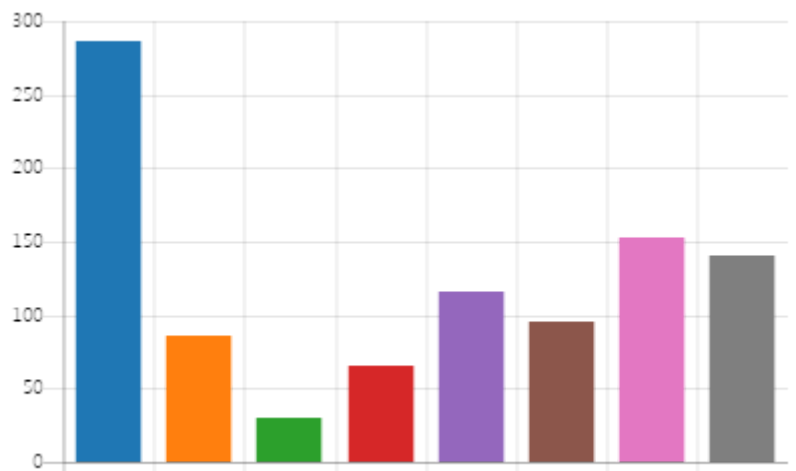
#### 5. What do you think makes Richmond a great place to live? Choose your top 3.

● Safety of community	191
● Location	131
● Rural setting	283
● Natural beauty	221
● Recreational opportunities	42
● Cost of living	8
● Property value	17
● Taxes	3
● Schools	137
● Friends/family	49
● Other	8



#### 6. What are the biggest challenges to improving quality of life in Richmond? Choose the top three problems that you think our community needs to address first.

● Managing growth while maint...	287
● Lack of employment opportun...	86
● Not enough housing options	30
● Housing affordability	66
● Access to and/or quality of rec...	116
● Not convenient or safe to bike...	95
● Visual appeal of the town	153
● Other	141



**Q4 What one word or phrase would you use to describe Richmond?**

Neighbors helping neighbors
Peaceful
Rural
Rural
Under developed and not enough business or activities for families
Peaceful
overtaxed
Peaceful
Country
Woods, water features, farm fields, and historical beauty are our undervalued assets.
Growing
Nice...
Quiet, peaceful.
Abandoned
home
Safe
quiet. or rural
Rural
Peaceful
Beautiful and rural
Rural
Not much around
Rural small town
Wooded
Peaceful
Rural
Beautiful
Outdated
Peaceful
Peaceful
Down to earth
torn
disperse
Country living
Peaceful.
Home
Community
Pleasant
Countrynry
quiet
Scenic
Expensive
Hometown
Community

Rural
Bad business climate
Farmtastic
beautiful but difficult to afford for most
Calming
Rural
Home
Quiet
Home
Boring
Peaceful
Rural
Rural
Rural!
Good for families
Country living
Friendly
Quiet
peaceful
Upcoming
Welcoming
Peaceful and country
Laden
Undeveloped
A small piece of country living!
Country
Community
Expensive(taxes) rural community
Friendly
Rural
peaceful
Private
Peaceful
Rural
Rural small community
Rural but becoming a bedroom community
Confused
Hightaxes
Rural
Wonderful
underdeveloped
Naturey views
Peaceful
peaceful
hightaxes



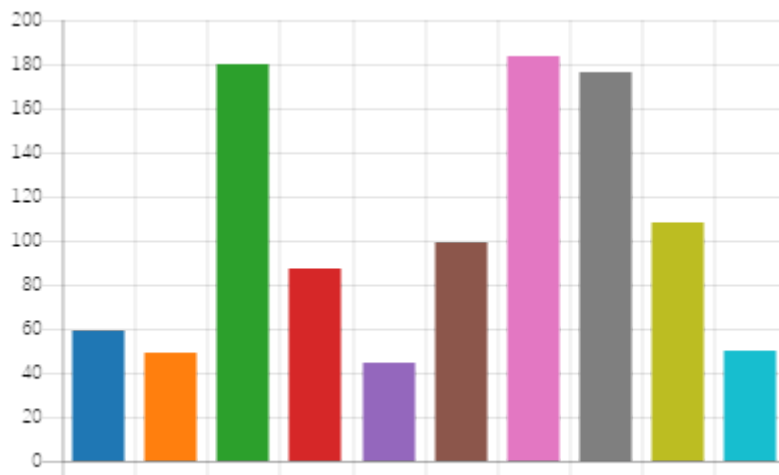
Quiet
Rural
Peaceful
rural boating fishing cycling camping and walking
Beautiful
Home
Home
Country living
Country
beauty
Home
My Quaint little town that is starting to look like warwick,big box stores etc. (stop&shop has the monopoly) SAD REALLY
Country
Richmond is a small, quaint, rural, traditional farming/country type of town.
Do not let a pot grow house in a residential area!!!!!!
Expensive
Beautiful
Beautiful
Needs to fill in empty spaces
Rural but still close to town conveniences and highway access
Outdoor recreation
Expensive
Nice people
Great hometown community.
Community
rural
Rural
Peaceful
Semirural
Rural
Can't!! BEAUTIFUL quiet pastoral historic rural peaceful clean country dark starry skies green wooded river wildlife pristine
neighbor, rural, beautiful (Arcadia area)
Over populated solar and growing
Safe
private
Country
Home
community
Peaceful
Sellout
Charming
Quaint
Rural
Pretty nice

Quaint
Peaceful
Peaceful
rural yet convenient
Rural
nature
Quiet
Basic
Beautiful
Lacking
Rural
Quiet
Peaceful
Rural
Home. Nature. Peace. Away from Crowds.
in need of some changes
Country
Peaceful
Vacant Retail!
Natural
25 minutes from everywhere
Mixed land use
Nice
Low in public service
Rural
Rural
Empty
Pleasingly rural, but not completely undeveloped.
Homey
Beautiful
Home
Beautiful!
convenient but also country
ill planned and developed
Quaint
Expensive
Embarassing
beautifully rural
Growing
Scenic and Historical Areas
Idiosyncratic
Natures beauty
Rural beauty.
Fabulous
Rural
Home
Home

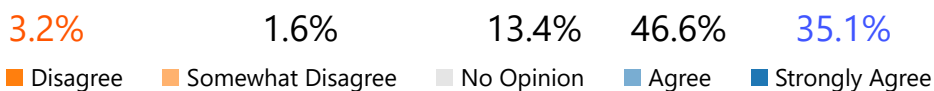
Getting too busy
Peaceful
Sad
Rural
rural
Over taxed
Rural
Friendly
Quiet
Quiet
Disheveled
Not living up to its potential
Quiet
Resistant to change
A growing population of younger residents with new values
Rural
Peaceful, natural beauty and slow paced which I love
Amazing
peaceful, serene
Peaceful
rural
Charming
Viable
Rural
My piece of heaven
A quite middle class rural community in Southern Rhode Island
Forested retreat
Tranquil
Calm
Pleasant
Rural
rural
Richmond is naturally peaceful- Keep it that way
Overtaxed
Rural
Rural but in danger of losing its character
Picturesque
Peaceful
Lacking quality restaurants, health care, amenities
Quaint
Rural
Home
Peaceful
Country
Quiet
Lovely
high taxes
Run down
Quiet
Rural
Natural beauty
Used to be rural
agricultural

a fantastic place to raise a family
Small Town
Rural
peaceful
Rural
Peaceful
Foster South
Country
Expensive
Barron
Unwelcoming to economic development
once was rural
Pleasant
Podunk
Supportive community
Quiet
Rural
country
Family-friendly
high taxes
Rural
Deep woods Rural
Rural
rural
Peaceful
Rural
Natural
Rural
Country
rural
rural
Comfortable but getting to crowded
Beautiful, Rural Community
rustic
My neck of the woods.
Quaint
Development Pressured
A nice place to live

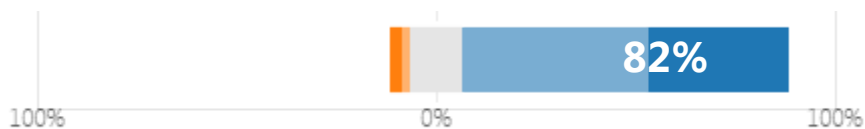
## 7. What are the major land use issues/concerns within Richmond? Choose the top three.



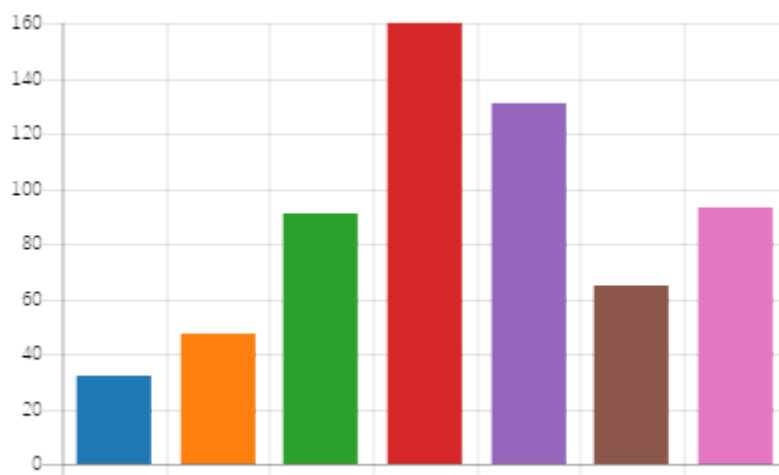
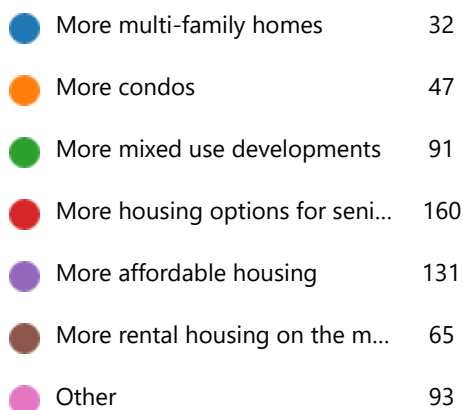
## 8. How do you feel about the following statement?



The Town should support active farming.

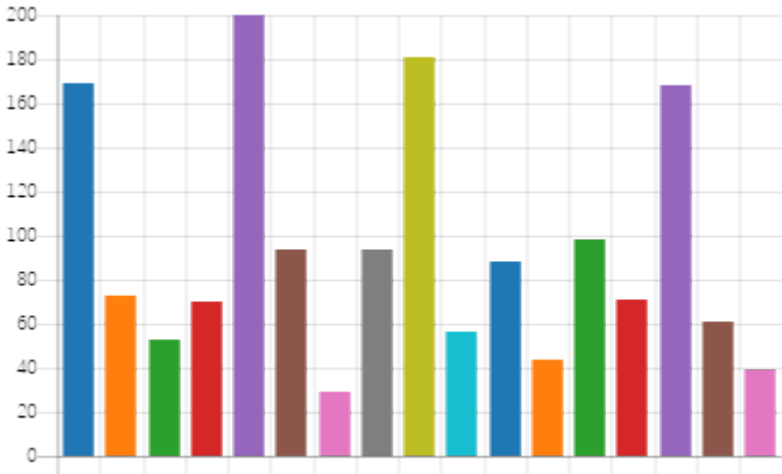


## 9. What are the most important housing needs? Choose the top three.



10. What type of future businesses do you feel are most needed, and would you like to see come to Richmond?

Urgent care/medical/dental of...	169
Business offices	73
Hotel	53
Bed and Breakfast	70
Restaurants, bars and taverns	200
Microbrewery	94
Solar energy	29
Retail chains	94
Retail (Mom and Pop)	181
Art galleries/museums	56
Greenhouse, nurseries	88
Marijuana related (cultivation ...	44
Movie/Play House	98
Private recreational complex	71
Public recreational facilities	168
Outdoor outfitters (camping a...	61
Other	39



## 11. In terms of future commercial and business development in Richmond, how important are the following?

■ Not Important
 ■ Somewhat Important
 ■ Important
 ■ Very Important

Types of businesses

4.5% 17.6% 37.5% 40.3%

Location of new business development

3.8% 13.6% 35.4% 37.1%

Appearance and style of building

4.1% 19.2% 39.7% 37%

Height, size an appearance of signage

11.2% 23.4% 33.5% 31.6%

Walkability between sites

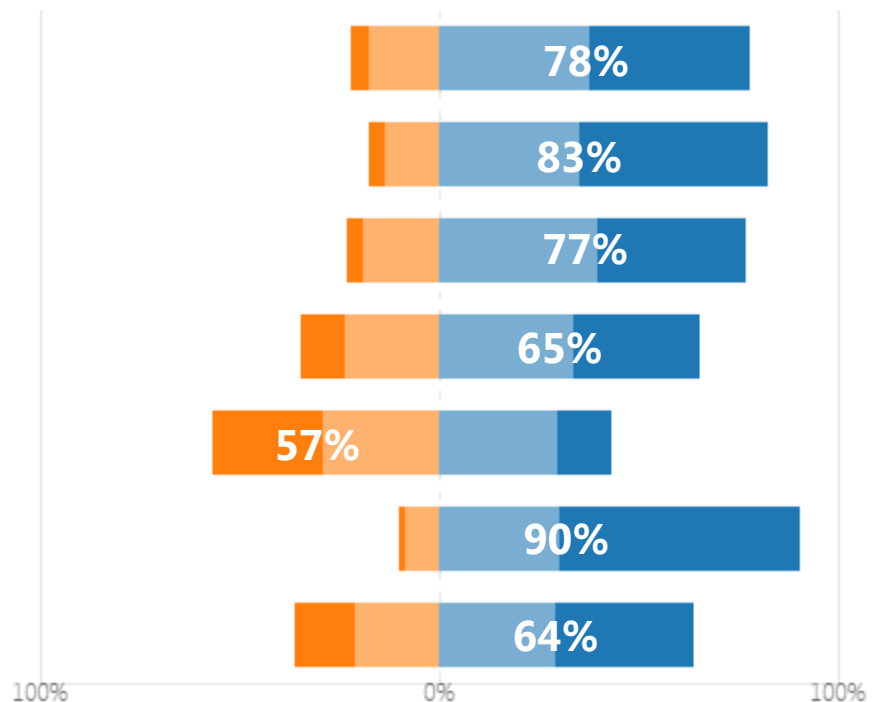
28.1% 28.9% 29.4% 13.6%

Rejuvenation of existing commercial areas

1.4% 8.4% 30% 60.3%

Development of vacant sites

15.2% 20.9% 29.1% 34.8%



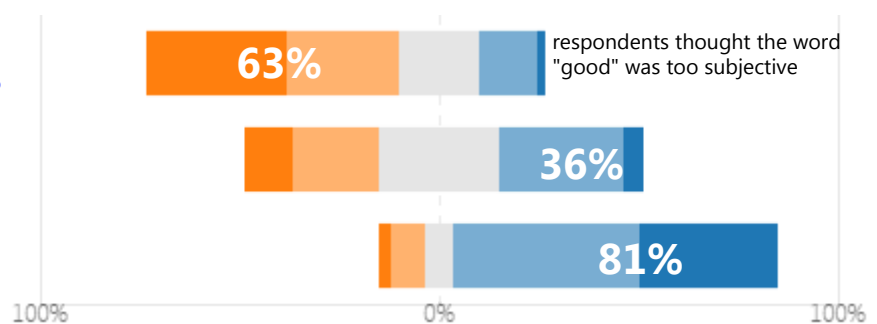
## 12. How do you feel about the following statements?

■ Disagree
 ■ Somewhat Disagree
 ■ No Opinion
 ■ Agree
 ■ Strongly Agree

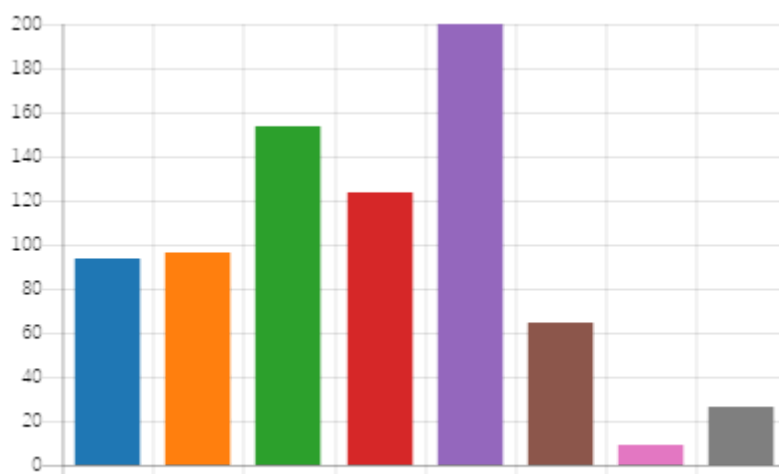
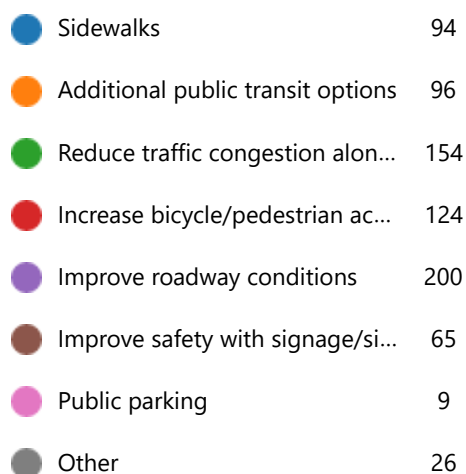
Commercial and residential development has been at a good pace. 35.5% 27.9% 20.1% 14.6% 1.9%

New residential and commercial development is located in areas appropriate for new growth. 12.2% 21.4% 30.1% 31.4% 4.9%

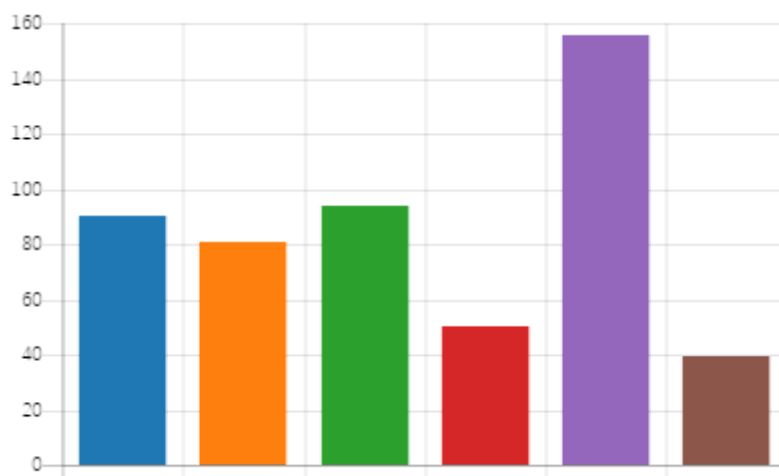
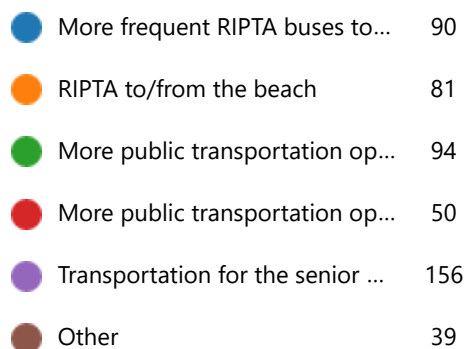
Future commercial and industrial activities should be concentrated in the vicinity of Route 138 and... 3% 8.6% 7% 46.5% 34.9%



### 13. What are the most pressing transportation needs? Choose your top three.



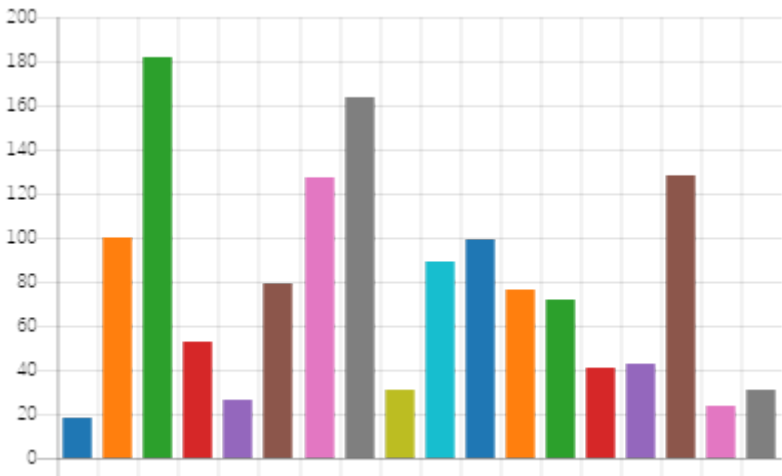
### 14. What are your public transportation needs in Richmond? Check all that apply.





15. Which recreational facilities/activities do you think the town needs the most?

<div></div> Golf course	18
<div></div> Small neighborhood parks	100
<div></div> Walking/hiking/biking path	182
<div></div> Ice skating rink	53
<div></div> Zip line	26
<div></div> On street bike lanes	79
<div></div> Swimming pool	127
<div></div> Community wellness and exer...	164
<div></div> Shuffleboard, bocce and pickl...	31
<div></div> Community garden plots	89
<div></div> Playgrounds	99
<div></div> Sports fields	76
<div></div> Boating (kayaking, canoeing)	72
<div></div> Fishing	41
<div></div> Historic tours	43
<div></div> Arts and culture events	128
<div></div> Campgrounds	24
<div></div> Other	31

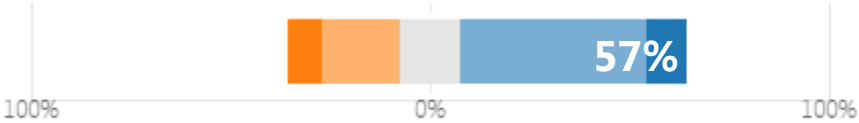


16. How do you feel about the following statement?

8.6%19.8%14.7%46.8%10.2%

Disagree Somewhat Disagree No Opinion Agree Strongly Agree

Public services provided by the Town (such as police, education, libraries, safe drinking water, public works...



17. If you disagreed with the previous question about public services, what would need to be improved?

119

Responses

Latest Responses

18. How do you feel about the following statement?

8.3%

7.5%

25%

46%

13.2%

Disagree

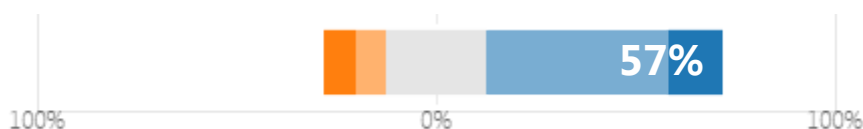
Somewhat Disagree

No Opinion

Agree

Strongly Agree

Richmond should invest in public services and facilities to encourage economic development...



19. How do you feel about the following statement?

13.4%

28.6%

11.8%

41.7%

4.5%

Disagree

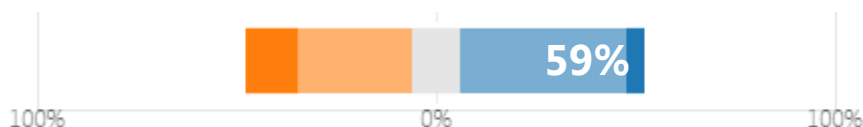
Somewhat Disagree

No Opinion

Agree

Strongly Agree

The Town has done a good job protecting its rural character.



20. Richmond is rich in history. What are the most important aspects of Richmond's culture or history that need to be represented?

195

Responses

21. What is the one most important thing you think the Comprehensive Plan should address in the next 15-20 years?

286

Responses

**Q17 What public services need to be improved?**

Continue to better our schools.
Police building is a joke
A bigger library for music events
n/a
More attention needs to be paid to the existing public water system, future demands on it, and how increased private water use affects capacity. The library needs support for a more modern facility - they do a lot more than lend paper books.
Richmond recreation summer camp needs to expand hours to support full-time working parents. I shouldn't need to go to a neighboring town, that is out of my way, for child care.
The quality of roads (Hillsdale low numbers 30+ is terrible)
Roads need repair
The water
More well thought out planning instead of doing things that need to be reworked shortly
Our town is growing , more police !
PD is too small, library not pushed, transfer station is poor. Westerly has much better facility.
Clark Memorial Library needs more space and resources, something needs to be done about public animus toward Charlestown - we need good schools and/but we need community support; perception is that taxes are very high and it's largely the school's fault - what can be done about this? Richmond Historical Society needs support like Hopkinton/Charlestown/Narragansett Historical Societies. We need to capitalize on our history and celebrate it.
If the town expands, may need to consider more police and full time fire
Water system
Emergency medical services need to be staffed by full-time paid employees and offer advanced life support 24/7. Merge emergency medical services with the two fire districts.
The library is outdated, small, and needs more books and resources.
Very little service for tax dollars besides the school. Need more road improvements. This town is a Mecca for cyclists, but some of our roads are horrible. I've lived off Punch Bowl Trail for 30 years and it's the worst road in town and hasn't had more than oil coating done in that 30 years.
We are growing so fast, we need more teachers, probably a larger police station and force, maintenance on our playgrounds...
Monitor land use so it doesn't impact groundwater quality.
Public works
Impossible to predict whether public services are adequate for future needs - depends on changes in commercial industry
City water
Sidewalks and police stations
The school system is excellent, though I do find taxes are very high compared to the rest of the state for the services we receive.
I think if growth of business is to happen more public services would be needed. Especially with the proposed Marijuana Grow facility on Arcadia Road. Increased public works, police, fire and safe drinking water would need to be considered.
I would like to see a reduction in the costs of town services through privatization
Can't answer for future needs. Don't know the future.
Public education must stop adding subjects that are irrelevant and add to taxpayers burden
Richmond does the best with the limited resources that it has now. The Public Works department is currently putting band-aids on many of our roads that require extensive repairs. They are not

keeping up with the demands now, in the future there will be no way to keep the deteriorating roads.
Not a simple answer available.
Funding for Ambulance corp and Fire services, impacts on drinking water, aquifers and protection of private wells needs to be addressed, road conditions need to be addressed
Community Center, recreational facility such as the YMCA being considered
I don't think that they will meet future demand
Little recreational opportunities and poor maintenance of existing ( tennis courts). Under utilization of school facilities.
The town can't 'grow' with the current facilities... we are getting killed tax wise because we totally lack vision and refused to see/acknowledge the cut in state funding for schools coming. Instead we spend too much time complaining and offering zero solutions to problems.
Have no idea if current services are sufficient to meet FUTURE demands.
Overall the services are great but I think road maintenance could be improved.
amendments to zoning to restrict unwanted business , adult entertainment and pot growing factories in residential zones.
Our Police and drinking water are and will be in jeopardy if certain businesses (marijuana grow facilities and retail marijuana) are allowed to come into residential areas including secluded residential areas. They will not be able to be monitored. Marijuana and adult entertainment will also bring unsavory characters to the area and that only brings additional trouble and will strain our police dept.
We have lived here for almost 2 years and love Richmond. The taxes are very high though. I would think there should be some soft of trash pickup included or at the least no fee's for trash at the transfer station for residents.
I think I agree over all but public services I feel more could be done for the families in the area maintaining playgrounds and paths etc
The services above are all well done, but for the amount of taxes we pay, to have to pay Fire Tax on top of that and not have garbage removal is ridiculous.
More town wells as backup.
Improvement on public works with regard to overgrown trees and bushes blocking view of roadways AND the conditions of the deep ruts at the transfer station, arrogant employees at transfer station, no cleanup on a daily basis at the transfer station (place is an eyesore), improvement with regard to trash pickup as this town is growing. Improvement on community involvement with the police. Improvement for a bigger library with more places to study and read at for adults. Improvement of our new hiking circle by the water tower as in the summer the bush, weeds,grass grows quickly and overruns the path (job for public works/parks and recreation) PLUS tick control. If a dog park will go across this hiking path, tick control should seriously be used as well as mosquito control. Ticks are rampant there!
Water supply must be protected with growth, improved public transportation needed.
an environmentally friendly alternative to salt during slippery conditions
Drinking water expanded to other areas
Better police
Always concerned about education, and whether development (^population) expands ahead of education resources, but otherwise I agree that it is meeting current demands
My personal experience is that Richmond public services are rather mediocre. If something catches fire it is most likely to burn down. The police are rather stoic and unconcerned. The libraries are old and dirty. I wouldn't drink water from the town. Public works? We've had to call the town to re-sweep the streets after the first sand/salt sweeping. We've had the property next door to us (The Preserve) constantly use our cul-de-sac to transport hundreds of big trucks,

cement mixers, landscape trucks, you name it, into their property on a day-to-day basis, told the town this would happen, and the town did nothing and ignored all our concerns, which turned out to be valid, and in the end true. We hear constantly day long shooting of the game birds released on The Preserve. We have about 20 pheasants living in our yard now. No one in town government cares one bit.
Clean up along roads, fix potholes on side roads
Seems adequate for now but I am not sure if the infrastructure is adequate for future growth. The water supply is of concern. Also, the road system won't support growth. 138 should not be the only road that goes toward the beaches, URI and Newport.
Richmond needs to tailor its education system to students' needs and focus more on public libraries. They also need to stop straining the Wood River, a lot of residents rely on water from the river and they need to protect it and keep it as clean and safe as possible for everyone's water safety and recreation. Fix the dam.
If you plan on all this development, where are these kids going to go to school?
The police department is not prompt or thorough
I agreed but believe trash pick up town services would be a nice addition... or at least the ability to dispose of brush
Our police force needs diversity and deescalation training. The police force also needs to be more diverse. I would love to not only have white cisgendered men employed by the town. The general lack of manners and civility shown by the police force when interacting with them for basic things like a VIN check is appalling.
This is a statewide issue. In summary, we're taxing like crazy, and have too few people doing too much work. So things don't get done.
No trash pickup, town pay for our fire department
Roads
The roads need to be repaved throughout the town
Community center is needed
More effective trash and recycling service. A community center that helps to connect richmond residents of all ages and walks of life. Safe drinking water is important but is up to individual homeowners...little or no support from the town.
Local bus service to doctor appoint nearby malls and doctor appointments.
Better road maintenance
i don't disagree but want to say that keeping Richmond the way it is means we will maintain our demands for public service at a rural level---we don't want to be Warwick.
Add speed and gps monitors to police vehicles. I heard and saw them flying to a possible house fire tonight to the wrong address, they were going to Riverview Dr in Richmond the call was actually in Charlestown. Seems to be a common theme for them, jumping fire and ems runs, beating up their vehicles doing double or triple the speed limit.
Road conditions
Well assessments. Stop expansion of the preserve
Safe drinking water?? I, like most Richmond residents, have well water. It is up to us as individual home owners to make sure that our water is safe, not the town! It is very expensive to have your water tested, but is necessary because of all the golf courses and turf farms in our area. I'm sure that these places use many chemicals to treat their grounds, which can get into my well water. The town of Richmond providing safe drinking water, I think not!
More signs in rural areas dealing with littering. Need road improvements, pot holes repaired and resurfacing in some rural areas such as North Road in Shannock.
Our town is growing and changing. Therefore our public services need to as well.
Better school infrastructure; a real police station

Libraries, more Police presence
Continue improving education
Not many residents actually have access to town water or sewer services (despite the high taxes on homes with septic/wells) and the library is a highly underfunded/underutilized service.
Libraries are too small and underfunded to meet needs. Water and septic is not available in much of the town.
Clark Memorial Library has outgrown its space and needs to be relocated to a larger building. The Richmond Historical Society also needs its own dedicated space and a place to preserve its archives and display them for public education.
We need to grow the services at the same rate the town grows. With the affordable housing going in Shannock, the new development on 138, that Preserves place, the school space isn't growing too. The roads need repaving badly, rte 138, rte 2, beaver river, parts of hills dale.
I want to be sure all meet future demands. It fine currently but as the town grows so does the need for services.
Fire dept if more housing/people
No natural gas access
All
We need a community center and library that is easy to access for all residents including those that dont drive.
improve our libraries to be up to date
Safe drinking water??? Most Richmond residents have wells, how is the town helping with that? They should find out from all golf courses and turf farms what is being used on the land and if it is getting into our wells!!
We need a community center to hold regular events, bring the community together
Road are awful
Additional attention is needed on the condition of town roads. I believe that the town should work with private concerns such as the YMCA and the Clark Library to enhance the services they provide to town residents.
Road repair, tree trimming, garbage pickup, natural gas lines, plowing on smaller residential streets, etc.
I believe that if the town is going to grow, there will be greater need for these services in the future. Currently, the high expense of the school budget does not allow this financially. Lack of businesses coming into the town also limits revenue and ties the towns hands. Ongoing tax hikes are not sustainable to the taxpayers...something has got to give, and the only place that I can see that is in new business development and decreasing the school budget.
Recreation. There needs to be a complete expansion and overhaul of recreational opportunities
When we called the police for a busted window (BB gun)...they didn't know our house was in their jurisdiction...so is it low crime or a lack of policing?
Public works cannot seem to repair roads in a timely fashion (or at all in many cases). Schools are aging and need updating.
Another well site in case something happens to our current one.
I think the public works dept. does not even maintain adequate signs on local roads and no one takes care of dead standing limbs and trees. We may be okay for now but we are not prepared increased development, should that be the plan.
Have you taken a look at our library. It is a disgrace...so uninviting. The Senior Center is located in the police station with limited access to parking. I feel the Town Council has done a very poor job. You lack vision and energy to do the job you signed up for.
Public Works expertise and project management.

**Q20 What are the most important cultural or historical aspects that need to be represented?**

Farming and agriculture should be preserved and encouraged.
Rural lands
Maintaining its rural character with better upkeep and grooming while strategically planning housing and business development that fits into the landscape
none
Fair and reasonable animal welfare laws (both commercial and hobby scale)
Areas on the federal historic register need protection from development and ways to encourage preservation (Carolina, Wyoming, Beaver River corridor, etc.). Farmland scenic byways are a second type of historic feature in addition to the villages.
Trees and beauty... stop with solar panels
Access to water
Not many know Richmond's history
Agricultural history as it has evolved and struggled
I think the culture needs to change to represent current & future growth in the community. Big box stores are necessary for job creation. Especially another grocery store. How do we allow Stop & Shop to monopolize our grocery shopping. This store has the highest prices in the state due to no reasonable competition within a 10 mile radius. This is absurd. The town should intervene to allow us other options.
Ensure that the younger generation learns about the history and encourage them to help protect / preserve it.
Route 138 has been developed like a strip mall, there is no small town character to it. Quite frankly it's ugly
Native American
Carolina village
Not sure
Retaining it's rural atmosphere
Farming
Mills powered by water.
education of the history for new residents
Farming
Historic buildings and farms
rural character, riverways
Maintaining & protecting historical buildings
Historic cemetery's should be maintained,most are overgrown,with broken headstones.
Native American lore and the Kings' Town
Mill villages, historic plantations, the Narragansett Tribe, local foodways/agriculture, Hazard family's abolitionism yet they supplied slave cloth to the South - very complex/interesting stuff. Let's celebrate more than just white colonial history. It's diversity that makes our history a rich and interesting tapestry.
Historical buildings and sites such as historic farms and buildings like the stagecoach house, wood river inn, etc.
Farming and historic villages
I live here and have no idea about the history.
Farms and open land, trees,
Agriculture. South County History Center covers Richmond. Town should take advantage of that to use for archival of historical documents and work with them to set up historical events in town.

Unsure... We love the hiking trails!
Keep it rural!!!!
Farmland and open spaces protected from development especially Beaver River Valley . Forests preserved.
Simplicity of lifestyle. Rural character.
Washington County Fair
Rural charm
Farms and the historic houses
Native Americans
Good question. I would love to know more about the history of the town.
Farming
We moved to Richmond for its rural quality. We have only lived here since 2016 but in that time we have had to fight to protect this quality. With the increase in solar farms, a purposed marijuana grow warehouse (in a residential area) and DEM wanting to build an office building on Browning Mill Pond my family feels like the rural character of Richmond is being slowly taken away. While grow is important I think the town needs to be thoughtful on how to manage this without losing its best quality. A more concentrated focus on using existing empty buildings to attract new business should be explored. Perhaps rehabbing vacant homes to provide low income or senior housing.
Richmond heritage trail had lots of good information. There are many others. If Richmond put together a concerted effort to showcase some of these things it may cause travelers to stop on their way through or past RI during their trips. For example, the Decoppett property and the mill village that was on site (Hillsdale?) and similar things of interest. There is a lot of old pre colonial and colonial history in New England that some states like Massachusetts do a better job of capturing and presenting to the public.
Farming
I have found that there is very little information available about Richmond's history. Many other communities that I have lived in are proud of their history and present it openly on places like the town webpage. Having moved here 15 years ago, I found very little available and most people I know are unaware of the town history. Anything would be an improvement.
Don't know the rich history.
Highlight the historic mills and the role that the rivers have played
Assist in maintaining the current historical sites which have high visibility in Richmond, such as the Stagecoach House, Bell School House and Fairgrounds,
No Opinion
Open space , farming, nature should be preserved above all else.
Farm land and that does not mean Solar Farms.
senior population and the youth of the town
You're joking here....
That it be known that we are rich in history..
More activities originating from the Bell School House and other historic local structures.
It is historic that over the last century the locally sustained communities/economies/infrastructures have been drawn into an unhealthy dependence on transported, non-local, monopolized food distribution centers; consider, 5 major food distributors supply... the nation, each with 30 days of inventory; average distance traveled of most meals eaten is 12-1500 miles; local supermarkets have a 4 day inventory. All transportation is monopolized non-local fuel/energy sources (oil/gas). The most important aspect of Richmond's culture AND history is that it was self-sustaining. That... is the essence of a rural community. Keep that, and we'll fare well.
Waterways and public lands and land access are critical



old mill villages,
That it is a rural area
our historical building should be preserved (De Coppett est. etc) and foundations from the whole area
Fishing , parks , hiking and outside activities in Arcadia
Old mills and foundations should be preserved. The character of the town needs to be preserved as well and not turned into another Warwick or Coventry. Richmond is a family town with a rich traditional farming heritage.
Agriculture
Natural recreation
Honestly, I don't know. I just want our taxes to stop going up and someone needs to do something about economic development to offset that.
Mill life.
Indians as they were the first here.
There is no publication of Richmond's history which makes it hard for residents to feel proud of its history
Keeping Richmond rural.
Rural New England Community
Historic buildings and districts
Preservation of historic sites and houses, plaqueing of historic sites, support of the Historical Society. Form a Historic preservation Committee?
More education related to local natural resources, wild animals, gardening, local history.
That history continue to drive the decisions that keep Richmond the way it is.
the farming community the rural landscape
Small historical looking farming town
Early town history
I'm largely unaware of the history
Keep farming alive!
sense of community
I grew up in a very historical Rhode Island town. It's history is represented all over this town in hundreds of different ways. After having lived in Richmond for more than a decade I can't even find anything historical represented in town? Where is it represented? The "downtown" part of Wyoming looks like 1960 New Jersey. All the new development and buildings have zero New England character. Shouldn't we be trying to cultivate a certain character and personality for the the town? How about a self-serve visitor's center at the Town Hall that highlights historical sites in town? I know all about the history of Richmond, because that is I had to seek it out in books and online.
Culture and history need to be shared more frequently and in various ways
Residential areas should be preserved. No one wants make their largest investment in a home only to have businesses too close that disrupt the peace. The Preserve is a prime example. People in Meadowbrook subdivision live w gunfire noise and animals that have been released. The tranquil neighborhood that people bought into is gone. I went to the town hall meetings. The neighborhood predicted what would happen and the town ignored those concerns.
You should represent local artists and craftsmen who bring Richmond its rustic charm and character.
The feeling of history and historical spots persevered.
Early farming community and Native American history
I have not resided here long enough to answer this question.
Agriculture and early settlements
Main Street and the space and rural character

Open space and lack of congestion...Washington count fair and presevered Grange booths and quality country entertainment
All of them
Unsure at this time
Those that aren't privately owned.
Everything. I've seen some of the stuff the Richmond Heritage Trail has to offer. A lot of old farm properties in the area need to be protected to capture that history and transform into tours, recreational, outdoor access. This is why people live here, and this is why people visit. Don't shoot yourself in the foot with poor and unthoughtful development -- including solar farms.
no building at browning mill pond
Mills , Indian ancestry, history of founders
Farming
Shannock
Maintaining woodlands (removing dead trees from town forests, decimated by drought/ caterpillars) walking trails, aquifers; cleaning litter from rural lands and streets; ensuring no nighttime light pollution; landscaping city center and parks; Repaving poor roads. Reducing traffic congestion— Richmond will represent itself if these things are done. We could rival the Berkshires in eastern MA.
Farming, native american, mills
All of them
That need to be represented? What does this question mean? If you'd said "preserved", I'd say the rural nature of the place. How do we do this when the nature of most of the land does not lend itself to big agriculture but rather grazing livestock with some poor hay production. Time to think about paying land owners to keep land grazed just like they now do in the hill country in UK.
No clue, maybe we should include a curriculum at the elementary school telling students about our industrious past.
I think the period from early settlement through the late 1800s, and describe the type of industries that developed in town.
The areas near where the mills were located, adjacent the rivers that powered them and the surrounding villages that were created to support the industry.
Farming, ponds,
Seinor needs.
Our founders and our Native American heritage.
Richmond comes from mill town and farming--hard workers who took care of themselves and each other and didn't depend on the government to take care of every little thing.
Rural
Richmond is failing to protect many scenic/historical areas against the large scale solar farms being submitted by big wind and solar companies. The Richmond Comprehensive Plan needs to clearly spell out what prior Richmond officials had intended..."to Protect and Preserve" the Richmond scenic/historical area of our town like the Beaver River Valley Area(s) and neighboring communities.
In line with the existing Comprehensive Community Plan we need to put some teeth into our statements about preserving rural views and vistas. Specifically page 28 paragraph 3 of the plan needs to be re-written to state the town will preserve these views and vistas not just should. The town commits to not permitting further industrial scale development of solar arrays in town except in areas already zoned industrial/commercial.
Farming
That it is a rural community and basically always has been with small areas of industrial activity
Farming / rural character- historical aspects under which new england was founded as well as richmond

Native American history
How in the 19 and early 20C, although life was hard, the human impact on the natural world was so much less, and the community cohesion may have been better.
More representation of local indigenous populations, many seem to think Richmond's history started when white Europeans arrived.
Native histories and cultures
Richmond has always been primarily rural in nature. That's one of the primary reasons folks move/remain here. I feel that we need to preserve the town's country atmosphere.
Avoiding eye soars that will be short term, after which the town is left with hardware that is outdated, ie solar panels
Indigenous population/history, mill towns, plantation system, history of its settlement, involvement in Revolutionary War, Civil War, etc. Again, a great place to start would be some financial support of Richmond Historical Society and giving them a dedicated space, such as Charlestown and Hopkinton have done.
Sugar houses, syrup trees on Beaver River, fishing spots, local apiaries, green space, farms. NOT solar farms.
Rural scenic character past agrarian use
The schoolhouse. The old mills, the recreational trails
Diversity of community
As a new resident I am unaware of it's history. I would be interested in tours.
Farming and the rural nature of the town. Solar panels being installed everywhere you turn are ruining the appeal of the town and decreasing housing values.
Farming should be supported. Caving in to the millionaires and investors i.e. The Preserve and all their sub names that no one realizes, are buying up the town farms, also the solar companies leasing lands for solar companies want to change the area forever. Unfortunately, the next move for these folks are getting elected to town positions and changing the zoning to benefit their financial matters and not the townspeople.
Farming
Bell house
Historic homes, farms and mills This town is being pillaged by solar panels
The historic areas in town need to be preserved and kept separate from commercial development
Stay Rural !!!!
Small town feeling
The historic character of Richmond/Wyoming has been destroyed by fast food, liquor stores, dollar stores and gas stations. No side walks and vacant buildings. Nothing was done to maintain historic character of town.
Farming
Protect that history
serenity
Keep Richmond rural. Keep all commercial business on Main St.
Enhance the Heritage Trail, highlight historic buildings, structures such as historic features and agriculture
Its rural farming character. Stop with the solar already
The rural character of Richmond is what drew us to the wonderful town. In the time we have lived here our taxes have tripled. We need to find a way to preserve the rural quality of living here, and utilize the zoning that is already for business to provide an alternative tax base.
Farming and Colonial History
Mill villages

Its mill and former manufacturing centers
Our buildings
The great swamp monument.
The rural nature of the town is being destroyed by the replacement of open land/fields with solar panels. Why not use the roofs of buildings or land close to the Interstate? Beaver River Road...really!??
History of the mills, farming, native people
The towns architectural history.
Old Mill sites
I would like to see the old mill area in Shannock renovated. Not that I want increased traffic but the horse-shoe falls and old buildings have a rich history and have great potential.
Perhaps the Town Council should explore the history of the Town and share it with the population.
Open Space, farm land, trees,
That people move to the community for the tranquility, wildlife and peace and quiet.
Rural lands need protection. Stone walls, cemeteries, and old roads are a representative examples of the rural history and culture of the Town.
farming, historic buildings, rural character

**Q21 What is the one most important thing you think the Comprehensive Plan should address in the next 15-20 years?**

Allowing for growth while supporting the rural nature of our town.
Large property owners limited development of the property
Lowering taxes, fixing the roads, creating/maintaining public parks, bringing in new business
Ensuring thoughtful development in specifically designated areas that does not interfere with the rural character but does offset tax rate
Town growth through better schools, nicer housing options, better park and rec options, business development and more aesthetically pleasing architecture
Like it or not but businesses are needed to offset the tax burden on home owners. For what we pay a year we get very little in services. People will start leaving if this isn't addressed
We need to start a large botanical park with a professional design now
Attracting a more diverse population; support for more small businesses; maintaining rural character
Establish an identity - we have so much going for the town that is not appreciated - and don't let conflicting policies allow anything and everything.
No solar farms
Keeping Richmond Rural
Abandoned buildings
Target development near 138/95
Allow big boxes.
A mix of commercial, industrial, and residential development. Not just any development, but smart and rational development. Industry and commercial development is important to offset the tax base for the town. Keep in mind that each time a single family homes are built it can put a lot of stress on the town since these types of properties draw families. A family atmosphere is great, but without the tax base to contribute to the town and school system the tax pressure on the families becomes too great and the town will lose residents.
Instead of building new commercial structures on wooded lots the town needs to address (and use) those already developed locations that are empty like the CVS and the Cycle Bros buildings on 138.
Allow growth without losing rural character.
Is Richmond Commons still on the table or will the site be left as is looking like another empty, decimated lot
Bring in business to Stop & Shop area that will offset continually rising property taxes
Condensing the elementary schools
Developing currently unoccupied spaces.
Preserving rural character, no more solar farms unless out of site
Fix the rub down look of the plaza in Richmond lower the dam taxes
Preservation of natural surroundings
Building a closer community
Something to help with taxes
new businesses in vacant buildings
let's be a leeds certified town
Finding a way to have Charleston pay one-third of the school bill and/or doing away with the charter that keeps Charleston, Richmond and Hopkinton tied to a district for school purposes. The school tax bill is the biggest sticking point in the town and is driving homeowners to leave Richmond for towns which have more reasonable taxes. Charleston gets equal voice on the School Committee but pays a smaller share of taxes than the two other towns. That is unfair! Most importantly, the school administrators demand too much in the way of tax dollars, favoring teachers and the teachers' union and administration and not the taxpayers they represent. They should find a way to conserve and to have some consideration for taxpayers in order to keep them here.
Economic development infrastructure
Trying to find a balance between commercial development and a rural community. We need some revenue in this town to help our taxes decrease

Reduce taxes
Contain commercial development
desperately need to increase the commercial tax base
Limiting development in rural areas of the town.
Decreasing property taxes.
Maintaining the lack of helipads in Richmond
Use of rural land in our community being used as solar farms.
Solar fields . Wind turbines , no more !
138 development and re-development
Traffic on 138
Thoughtful, deliberate renewable energy. Stop cutting down already threatened/fragmented forests and using up precious farmland for poorly thought out solar "farms." We are all for renewable energy but there are more than enough old quarries, brown sites, and old polluted mill sites that are sitting vacant, not to mention highway corridors. Let's be smart about these things. Let's think 100 years ahead, not just 5 or 20.
Keeping Richmond rural
Encouraging Positive commercial growth in targeted areas while maintaining rural quality. Ex. Widening 138 through town. Subterranean power for Wyoming are/ clean up the look of the area to create small town charm.
School tax desperation from town tax
Keep Richmond rural
Create an emergency medical tax district. Hire full-time advanced life support personnel 24/7. We have passed the days of volunteers and need to ensure that competent professional medical care will be available when/if needed. South Kingstown did this and high quality emergency medical services are guaranteed to be available in an emergency.
We need more accessibility to restaurants and stores. I have to drive at least 20-25 minutes anytime I need something which is inconvenient and annoying.
Do not adopt Rhode Map RI/Rhode Island Rising. Keep all decisions local without the infection of out of town money from state agencies
How to preserve the rural character of the town and add to the tax base in appropriate locations. Don't turn into Warwick! Don't cover farmland and woods with solar panels. All for green energy, but in the right places!
Growth equals increased costs that should not exceed the new tax revenue received from new housing.
Getting tax revenue from larger businesses to relieve the burden placed on us homeowners paying crazy taxes, but that needs to happen now, not in 15 years!
Encouraging local businesses to thrive. Farms, small businesses. Don't over develop. Limited solar development. Do not allow clear cutting of large areas for solar.
Solar development. Sensibly controlled and located with minimal destruction of trees and without becoming eyesore and causing devaluation of surrounding property.
Amending the tri-town school system tax contribution basis to keep cost of living in Richmond affordable in a rural/low end of the socioeconomic scale area.
Wider roads for biking/walking/running
GROWTH! Many people are discovering the area from points north. We need to be prepared for the influx while still protecting the history of the town.
Public and/or private activities for kids and families
Tax cut due to an influx of local businesses
Building a sense of community. Developing a town "center" for community activities near the Town Hall, a la North Scituate, Chepachet, Ashaway, Westerly.
Stop trying to bring big box stores to the town. Don't sell it as a means to reduce taxes. The school budget is our tax problem and we can drive 20 minutes north for all Bix box needs.
No more solar fields Need community center Need culture Tennis courts
Sidewalks on 138
Improve the tax base and attract more restaurants/businesses.

A stable tax revenue with manufacturing or industrial park.
Development. There needs to be a balance between the rural nature of Richmond and development. Zoning laws need to be re-examined to make sure loop holes are not being taken advantage of. More transparency between "officials" and the "public" should be in place. Often times the public does not hear of things until they are far along in the planning process.
Maintain undeveloped land as a natural resource to protect wildlife.
Loosen restrictions that would enable the establishment of high-value low-impact businesses (for example, ASA in South County Commons)
WE need a Community/Senior Center. Over 47% of the current voting population in Richmond are over 50 years old. Every year more and more people move into the Senior group. This group is expanding and living longer with no credible facility for them to go to. Build a Community/Senior Center now.
The town council needs to rethink the issue of controlled growth - urban / suburban sprawl - I would push for the reinstatement of impact fees. Its likely the only way to control growth and control new parent/families from moving into the area creating drivers for increased taxation (Chariho).
Richmond should find a way out of the chariho school system if not Charlestown should pay equal part one third of the cost
The town needs to look for growth that is appropriate and most beneficial for the residents. For example, I do not understand why Walgreens was issued a permit to build in Richmond. We already had CVS, Rite Aid, and Stop & Shop pharmacy. Stop & Shop was at least smart enough to close realizing that the market was flooded.
Giving the main part of town a presentable appearance to attract small business and patrons to that business.
Increase businesses on 138. Develop the RICHMOND commons site.
How do we maintain our rural qualities
Bringing in new business to offset property taxes of our town's residents.
Town's forward-thinking economic growth and ability to provide affordable housing to attract families to our community.
Keeping the area affordable and beautiful for residents, keeping schools great by finding grants and other creative funding, rewarding small business, encouraging healthy development another small grocery store, restaurant, community farms etc..
Controlling the development along 138 and trying to keep buildings looking more like our rural character.
keeping retail marijuana out this town
Limitations on growth and development (mostly commercial) to maintain the rural character of Richmond.
Moderate growth
a senior center AND NEW BUISNESS!!!!
A sustainable budget for ALL residents. The crackpot ideas we keep hearing about are non starters and will leave this town doomed to a future similar to West Warwick.
Population growth.
1.Activation of the populace to meet various social/service needs, through LETS, TIME Deposit/Banking or other models being used nationally, globally. 2.New birth stipends to encourage family growth, and retain community loyalty. Last I checked, we were at or nearing 0% reproduction. This does have long term complications. China's reeling from that now. 3... oops, you said 1. My bad.
Finding the right balance between homes for permanent residents and secondary high end homes for vacationers.
No marijuana warehouses in residential areas
no pot growing facilities
Stopping building new buildings and instead filling up the empty ones in Wyoming
let's have business in town and let the country be country
Keep commercial industry out of neighborhoods
Since this is a hot topic, Richmond needs to not allow any more solar and no marijuana facilities in any residential area. And this includes not changing the zoning to allow these. We also don't need adult entertainment. This town is slowly turning into a city atmosphere which most people that move here want to escape from. All these types of businesses want to come in and destroy the Town.

Preserving our woodlands.
Family facilities and restaurants - filling all the abandoned buildings
See above. Find ways to offset taxes. PLEASE. I know the people who vote the school budgets through say "great schools will help our property values." Property values don't mean anything if people don't want to buy because of taxes and just go to Charlestown.
Preservation of land, recreation.
The Comprehensive Plan should address the use of pesticides and poison in our land. The school system should seriously be looked at as it is not fair that Richmond carries the bulk of supporting a school that Serves THREE towns. It is time to break free of Chariho as Richmond has grown in population and will CONTINUE to grow.
We should look at communities from other states to see what has worked, for instance Freeport ME, We get the traffic of people traveling to URI and Newport, we need to become inviting so they want to stop and explore, eat, shop. Not just drive through.
Keep the rivers and forests beautiful.
Balancing commercial growth and tax revenue pressures with the reasons Richmond is a community desirable to live and work in.
Move to 100% renewable energy
Highlight Richmond as an outdoor recreational destination for locals and tourists
Probably closer to 5-10 years, but looking at making the Richmond Airport an actual airport with flights to Block Island, Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard.
Growth, CONTROLLED AND ATTRACTIVE to improve the quality of life for all. Think South County Commons.
Very controlled growth which brings jobs to appropriate areas without jeopardizing rural atmosphere.
Industrial sprawl, keeping urban and suburbia out of Richmond.
Protecting our groundwater from industry and protecting the rural quality of the town, which in turn protects it's citizens and our natural environment.
Maintain rural small town look and feel
The growth of the town
Redeveloping the Wyoming district
Stop allowing so much solar to take up the beautiful forest and landscape.
reduce taxes, water quality and supply, reasonable business development that fits and works for the town AND its residents. Land management to not over build or over crowd.
swimming pool, community spaces such as fields, courts, etc. A park.
Economic Development
The most important thing the Comprehensive Plan needs to take into consideration is: the effects of development verses quality of life My personal experience is that the citizens of the town come in 2nd place over any development or business that is going to increase the tax base of the town. The intrusion of surrounding development--the growth, the noise, the traffic, the constant construction, the constant gunshots--has been so disruptive that, although it breaks my heart, I could not recommend the Town of Richmond to someone else due to my poor experience with developers being given "special treatment" and the majority of their desires approved over the valid concerns and effects this has on these developers supposed neighbors. It's okay for the town council and planning board to not say "yes" to everything when it effects the whole town.
Upkeep of town. Have owners of shopping center modernize. Sell vacant buildings or put something in them. Such as Walgreens, motorcycle shop. Let another grocery store into town.
Keeping residential communities residential and bringing in businesses and restaurants where they do not intrude on the peace and quite of communities. Make the roads wide enough to accommodate the additional traffic and encourage businesses to move into existing abandoned locations like the bike shop behind Washington Trust, Billy Hill's, and the old Hess station and Walgreens.
I think the Comprehensive Plan should be focusing on preserving natural spaces, providing public recreational spaces, and keeping the Wood River safe.
Keeping the small town culture.
Solar farms
Expanded medical/health services



Supporting the rural farming community
Getting a handle on our poorly managed and extremely expensive education / special needs system to better manage learning differences, along with offering and supporting healthy recreational opportunities for mid to older youth and families.
The property taxes are way to high. It needs to be congruent with the income of Richmond citizens.
Broadening the tax base, and bringing more entertainment/recreation options to town. No more hiking trails, we have plenty of trails that go under used or not used at all.
Keeping Richmond as it is and keeping the marijuana out of the town. Also, we don't need any of those Adult industries.
Access to quality healthcare services
Roads, the astronomical school budget, our obscene tax rate, becoming a more inclusive town
Smart, sustainable, growth that fully understands why people live and visit Richmond. Support your small businesses that bring people -- restaurants, bike shops, tours, health food stores, arts. Look to other areas that have created awesome main streets. That is a good target -- not Warkwick, bald hill/rte 2. Our gems are the rural character and outdoor opportunities. Get a brand and cater to it.
wasted buildings that businesses leave
Keeping taxes low . Help senior stay in Richmond. Keep Arcadia Management Area a functionally recreation area .
138
R.I. is such a small state. It is never a far drive to access retail and industry, already well represented in other cities. Recognize that a population density much smaller than some of our northern cities is itself a Plan to be envied. A reduction in the Chariho School budget will help to free up funds to maintain the needs of the town.
How to make Richmond feel like more of a community instead of lots of individuals living in a town.
Maintain the open space and not allow sub divisions to overtake and cut up land. Encourage cluster developments or condos instead of endless housing tracts. Renovate old homes instead of building new.
Safety and support to avoid contamination of land and drinking water.
Rec center, YMCA and Senior center
Stop outside developers investing in our naivety & greed. Your solar development control appears to be out of hand. Farmers (mostly, around here, they should be called land rich but possibly cash poor people) have no right to make a living at the expense of the community. Solar development on farmland is only for the benefit of the developer and the land owner. Keep it on industrial land and make the developer swallow any distance to transmission costs.
Continue to manage development where it makes the most sense to maintain the rural character of most of the town. Also to encourage the type and appearance of development that enhances the well-thought-out character of the town--not random commercial appearance.
Senior needs.
Growth that considers the rural character of the town.
Reduce school tax and businesses must meet town requirements for maintenance and setting
Again senior needs.
Keeping Richmond rural. Balancing the need for business growth while keeping our rural character.
Keeping the bulk of Richmond rural while helping develop business in a set area near 95
More housing, more development
Property tax. Increase businesses in Wyoming especially the vacant buildings. Less marijuana, private country clubs, and smoke shops more restaurants and shopping.
Cleanup downtown, fix roads widen 138 make it a destination
Clearly define where Solar/Wind and cell towers businesses can and cannot be located. These businesses should not be allowed in areas previously defined in the Richmond Comprehensive Community Plan (RCCP) as rural, scenic and historical. Currently the RCCP is not clear on this.
Solar energy projects should not be allowed to destroy the natural beauty of Richmond.

Make sure that growth of any kind does not reduce the thing most often expressed as important to residents and that is the rural nature and scenic beauty of our rural roads.
Appropriate police station; reduction of traffic on 138; use of abandon buildings
Why did we not let that discount outlet in years ago! Stupid...
More commercial business
Smart development to build a tax base so the individual taxes don't keep rising with the cost of the school system
Taxes
Buildout plan supports TOO many houses and more importantly houses with children. The school system (as good as it is) is KILLING THIS TOWN with taxes. Now we have people from up North moving down here for the schools building expensive homes and driving expensive cars. They are changing our community and will drive locals out.
Spending less money, lowering taxes, getting rid of superfluous programs that waste money
Bringing more revenue in
A family friendly area with shops and restaurants to encourage growth and provide a business tax base.
Reducing sprawl and getting community support for a more concentrated town center that can support more transit and more commercial activity.
Nicer housing developments, business and community development, continue to better education system
More public community areas, bringing in business to take some tax burden off residents and getting the local population open to the idea that Richmond can still be rural and have a small town feel even if things change.
A new library with the size and staff to support a growing town, whose greatest draw to continued growth is its outstanding education record.
The current Comprehensive Plan stresses the preservation of Richmond's open spaces and beautiful, rural areas. I feel we need to enhance/strengthen these goals by not allowing solar development in areas that change the town's rural vistas. Allowing solar on brown sites and in commercial areas where appropriate is fine but please keep them out of residential areas and in farmland abutting residential areas.
Maintaining Richmond's rural character, natural beauty and slow pace
Limit solar farms to boarding 85
Staying rural, making farming lucrative and worthwhile
Preserving open spaces/rural character.
All the solar proposals coming our way. If all those panels go in, everything else on this survey is useless. They will run the character and run people and businesses off.
Taxes. We need to realize the state isn't going to help. We need to create our own future with development that makes sense for us.
Limiting solar sprawl. Stop putting COMMERCIAL Solar instalkations in residential areas
Ending the boarded up businesses on 138 while bringing in taxpaying businesses
REthinking a town center and really creating a space.
Becoming more business friendly and LESS restrictive will ease the burden on the taxpayers.
better traffic by RES/town hall
Bringing in and supporting new business to offset taxes on residents.
Preparations for climate changes, increase carbon sequestration in soil, assure waterways are safe during flooding, etc.
Development of small business that meets with Richmond's rural character.

Business/commercial development to provide tax dollars to reduce the taxable burden on property owners
Limiting solar panels and commercial development. We have enough empty buildings/businesses and not enough population to support the continual opening of additional ones.
Property taxes are outrageous, but development needs to go slow. Business that benefits all the community should be encouraged.
We need business so our taxes can go down. Or pull out of Chariho
Lowering the tax burden and retaining our rural character
End of the solar sprawl that is taking over our rural town. These commercial sites must not be allowed to continue to be expanding. Please place a moratorium on any solar projects that have not broken ground yet. Especially any that require zoning changes in residential areas.
Getting rid of Barry Ricci
Use of open space ! No more solar fields !
Community activities for all citizens. All the money is spent on children activities and schools. Not all residents have children. Seniors have no place to move if they can no longer can maintain their homes but want to stay in the community. No transportation for Seniors or disabled.
Balancing commercial and residential growth with the cost associated with a growing population.
Keep it rural
Keeping Richmond rural
Expansion of tax base
more retail establishments
The vacant buildings on Main St. while keeping the rest of Richmond rural. Make Main St the place for everyone to come and run their errands or do their activities. Keep Main St simple but fill the vacant buildings with a good variety of business so that no one will have to seek other towns to do their business.
Maintaining a rural character in the face of rapid climate change impacts
No more solar sprawl
138 is becoming more and more heavily trafficked. The intersection of 112 and 138 is becoming more dangerous. Traffic routing at the Bell School House needs to be modified to make it safer. Shoulders on Rt 138 between the town hall and 95, and east of Beaver River Road are unsafe for bicycles and need to be widened. 138 is used by a small number of commuters who work in Hope Valley who cannot drive. Push the state to address this.
Richmond needs to be attractive for business to want to move into the town. The comprehensive plan needs to continue to focus on the strengths of the town, the access to nature, and waterways.
Lower property tax!
Lowering property taxes
Attract more businesses to reduce the tax burden put on home owners while protecting our rural feeling
Sustainable consistent income, quality retail, restaurants No chains, movie theatre, ice rink
Addressing the vacancy's in Wyoming. Allowing businesses into the area that would bring people into the town where they will also patron local business. Allowing a Dave's or a Target would bring people to the town. Keeping everything else rural continues to make this an appealing place to live.
New grocery stores to compete with Stop and Shop and movie theater or drive in. Things for teens, young adults and seniors to do.
Affordable housing, continue to grow commercial development
Keeping taxes down and containing economical development to the rt138/rt95 intersection
Fill the vacant buildings with businesses along 138 and add more restaurants and retail

Stop increasing taxes of the population, bring in businesses that benefit the community and make day to day life easier, places like marijuana buildings and smoke shops do public health a disservice. Being in business that improve quality of life not worsen.
The planning board and town council NEED to re-institute impact fees for new home construction. We need a concerted effort to control the number of new families and children that are moving into Richmond from other parts of the state. We can't sustain the current pace of new enrollments / costs for Richmond in the Chariho district we MUST RECOVER THOSE fees or at least in part through the use of controlled development methods. I really dont think that people / parents and esp. the Town Council members realize that eventually the school / property tax math formula will fail - were approaching a point were we WONT be able to pay the Chariho bill and taxpayers are NOT going to approve a tax increase to pay it. Then what?!
Keep the existing plan
Recreation, recreation, and more recreation
Ban loud ATVs/dirt bikes
Keeping big box retailers out and keeping the forests.
Finding a source for long term income instead of raising taxes every year. More businesses and a way to keep the businesses in our town. Fill all the vacant buildings in Wyoming.
The town should look at the types of businesses that it allows to open on 138. We do not need any more pharmacies, pizza places or dollar stores. It is no wonder many close with multiple of the same type of stores for a very small population.
Maintaining the rural character of Richmond while keeping Richmond affordable for people of all economic means.
More recreational activities.
Reduce use of prime agricultural soils for non agricultural uses [ solar ]
zone targeted development planning/control
The needs of the seniors and the young people. It is a disgrace that we pay one of the highest tax rates, yet we have no facilities.
Limit growth, keep rural, open space, clean rivers
Keeping Richmond Rural and keeping SOLAR fields out!
need to improve business growth to offset taxes...too many run down and vacant properties.
Read the charter of the Richmond Land Trust. It says it all.
Development of the town - how to maintain a rural feel while providing more businesses/activities to the taxpayers.
Create incentives for landowners to protect and maintain open space. Taxing to the point that a landowner must develop or sell the land is counterproductive. Open space costs the Town nothing in services, yet protects groundwater, natural habitat values, and quality of life in the Town.
Economic development to increase tax base
Loss of Rural Character, No Solar Projects - we have way to many already

22. What is the one most important thing that needs to be resolved in the short term (0-5 years)?

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Responses

23. Is there anything else that we are missing that you'd like to share?

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Responses

**Q22. What is the one most important thing that needs to be resolved in the short term (0-5 years)**

Safe roads
Designating specific areas for 'good' business development while maintaining the rural character/resources and providing some tax relief.
Increase Business development
All the empty buildings in town is an eyesore and is bring in no tax revenue
Start a park like Wilcox park in Westerly, now
Better access healthcare (urgent care; minute-clinic; some form of 24/7 quick care)
Solar fields. They are ugly land cannibals and do nothing for the town itself, just a way to cash in on land like subdivisions used to be. We have to see where the state goes on cannabis.
No solar farms
Taxes are too high
Traffic
Community and senior center
We bought our house in 2002 because we were excited about the possibility of the Richmond Commons. 17 years later and NOTHING has happened there. Again, the culture needs to change to support future growth. An indoor recreation facility like Wide World of sports would be a great opportunity in our area.
More commercial and industrial development. But smart development that needs to be well thought out. I do not believe providing tax breaks for companies is the correct method to attract businesses. It takes too much time to recoup the tax break to make it worth it to the town.
Marijuana growing stations shouldn't be allowed into the community. We already have one - that is enough.
Improve road conditions. Fill empty buildings in the center of town.
Traffic on route 138 through Wyoming as well as doing something with all the empty buildings
No more pot warehouses
Becoming more business-friendly and improving the tax base
Using the empty buildings
Empty building need to be reused
Generating jobs and revenue from businesses located here.
Community center/rec center
Lower the taxes
Over growth of solar farms and clear cutting trees.
Recreational activities and or businesses. For example, movie theatre, playhouse, roller skating rink, bowling alley etc...Filling the empty business that we currently have in the town. Creating community events/festivals to bring back a close small town feel
Traffic
new YMCA with pool for community use
Slow down on development. Keep Richmond "country".
School taxes, school taxes, school taxes. Even though taxes are reduced for seniors (much appreciated). they are the Achilles heel of Richmond as far as younger taxpayers are concerned and are the main reason Richmond cannot keep people here in the town for longer periods.
Revenue to lower taxes
Fill empty storefronts
stopping the installation of solar arrays on undeveloped land. instead allow only on brownfields, roofs, parking lot structures (look to some colleges in massachusetts that have done this)

Protecting rural / historical areas from wind/solar development
Safe and well maintained running paths. Runners either have to use 138 with 40mph traffic or side roads with no shoulder and limited visibility from hills and curves.
Keeping our town rural and lowering taxes
Same
Traffic in town
Why are we building all this new "affordable housing" in areas that have no jobs, no public transportation, no side walks, no public community parks, and very few options for food/necessities?
Improve rev activities for the kids- ie better YMCA, sports programs more local
Empty buildings- need to be used, not just rented
Lower taxes
Clean up the towns appearance, better restaurants
Public recreation. Bike paths. Large public park with sports fields.
We need more accessibility to restaurants and stores. I have to drive at least 20-25 minutes anytime I need something which is inconvenient and annoying.
Better use of the strip malls where the Hope Valley PO is.
Same. How to preserve the rural charcter of the town and add to the tax base in appropriate locations. Don't turn into Warwick! Don't cover farmland and woods with solar panels. All for green energy, but in the right places! Solar panel issue needs to be addressed immediately!
Overdevelopment. Increasing/imposing minimum acreage on lots
As above, taxes!!
Repurposing vacant commercial spaces in town.
Solar development. See #21
Better sense of community
Vacant buildings in Wyoming
need better community center complex - indoor pool, etc
More entities in town
Resources for our youth
Same answer as 21. Also Integrate the North-South Trail with existing or new trail networks. Get the blue blazes off the paved roads, especially 91, 138 and CNN Rd.
Stop the solar expansion. It's promoted to lower electric rates.
City water Get Richmond taxes in line with rest of chariho district
Elementary school traffic on 138
Improve tree trimming on ALL streets to protect against power outages and loss of property. This is a result of the gypsy moth devastation of our local trees and forests.
Filling all those empty business buildings in town. No one will want to come when they see emptiness.
Indoor horticultural regulations. A more clear and defined definition of what this entails and what is allowed. Currently it seems like there are major loop holes that allow someone claiming Indoor Horticultural to build a 5000 + square feet warehouse in a residential area. While horticultural is an important part of Richmond, there needs to be thought and considerations in place as to how it can effect the surrounding neighborhood. Currently there are plans to build a Warehouse (up to 10,000 square feet per the plans) in a residential zone area. The warehouse would actually be a production facility - as stated in their own documents submitted to the town. It would also be an illegal operation (marijuana) on the federal law level. I do no think this is what the zoning was intended for when it was written. Also more define regulations regarding Solar Farms.
Stop raping the earth for capitalism. Clearing land and building new structures changes the overall ecosystem and watershed with no regard for existing neighboring land.

Reduce property taxes
Community/Senior Center
Tax control, control on business types through zoning changes - we dont want to be known for solar farms, pot growing warehouses and exclusive clubs like The Preserve (which most Richmond Residents cant afford to be a member). Increase in outdoor recreational areas and preservation, bike / foot paths to town would be nice.
Relief of tax burden
The downtown area is not at all representative of the character of Richmond. It is mostly made up of vacant buildings. Wood River Animal Hospital, Washington Trust, Westerly Community Credit union and Allstate Insurance have done a beautiful job of representing a small town character. The plaza with the Wyoming post office, the Walgreens site, Village Pizza, and Hess make me wonder if the town was subject to a forced evacuation. Other communities take a very strong stand on vacant properties so that they do not make the highly traveled downtown areas look like a blighted area. If we do not, many of the large corporations will be content keeping them empty, take the tax write-off, and prevent competition from moving into the area. That is great for them, but not our town.
Give less money to Chariho and more to the town.
More businesses on 138.
Managing growth along Rt 138
Bringing in new business to offset property taxes of our town's residents.
Find businesses to occupy the current empty locations, thus providing a better visual appearance, which will them in turn draw customers and potentially more families to Richmond.
Bringing more business revenue to the town to lower homeowner tax burden, finding and utilizing grants for old fashioned farms, (solar panels is not farming) open space, parks, trails etc, building richmond commons , finding appropriate sights for solar and green energy to not impact town character and harm rivers, habitats etc, buffer and setback rules
YMCA
The traffic along 138 near route 95.
keeping retail MARIJUANA out of town
Preventing solar farms from overtaking open land and rural feel.
Recreational facilities
SENIOR/RECREATION CENTER
Bringing new business into town.
NO MORE SOLAR PANELS.
Land use management.
Local infrastructure stability. A viable means of doing business... day to day life. Complimentary/alternative currencies.
Establishing a long term plan that sets goal and objectives and works with Hopkinton and Charlestown to align on the Chariho act and strong support for our public school system.
No marijuana warehouses in residential areas. No warehouse on Arcadia rd
same as above
Not allowing marijuana grow facilities in residential neighborhoods
less solar and amendments to restrict unwanted business
Keep taxes down
The same as above. Richmond needs to not allow any more solar and no marijuana facilities in any residential area. And this includes not changing the zoning to allow these. We also don't need adult entertainment. This town is slowly turning into a city atmosphere which most people that move here want to escape from. All these types of businesses want to come in and destroy the Town.



Keep pot growing off Arcadia Road!!!! We all ready have one in town now.
Need to generate more revenue to offset taxes
Rt. 138 congestion in summer.
Lower taxes
Filling all the abandoned buildings and adding new restaurants and chains like chipotle
TAX RELIEF. I hear the big building behind Westerly Credit Union is a giant cannabis facility. I see all the solar farms going up. But I don't see my taxes going down with this development. Please invest time in development opportunities that actually help the residents' bottom lines. Every year my mortgage taxes are short and I need to write an extra check for almost \$1000. This is unsustainable.
Backup Well
The Comprehensive Plan should address the EMPTY BUILDINGS in town before allowing new construction. Shameful.
138 area from 95 to Hope Valley
Not sure.
Maintaining our rural character and protecting our town from influences of the State.
Install Solar power on town Buildings to save on energy and create a new revenue stream for the town. Also to show great stewardship of our environment.
Making the town safer for pedestrians and bikers
If we want to consider ourselves a "Gateway Community" we may want to do something about the fact that Wyoming looks like a ghost town. I often ask myself if I were just a passer by driving through Wyoming what would I think about this town, and frankly it's not good. We need to develop the "Richmond Commons" property, and redevelop the unused buildings in town. Outdoor and indoor recreation, think a sporting complex! We need to capitalize on the fact that we are easy to get to, right off 95. We should have taken advantage of the proposed rest stop from the State last year.
The obvious muscle applied by solar development companies across the state and specifically in Hopkinton area should NOT be allowed to move forward. I moved to Richmond for its rural character and lots of foliage. Solar developments should not be allowed to occur on protected lands, watershed areas, or any areas zoned for residential. Spot zoning and changing zoning from residential to commercial should NEVER be allowed.
Destroying and rebuilding Wyoming.
Improving public transportation to facilitate access to jobs and volunteer activities.
The empty businesses and vacant buildings in the General Business District off 138 be rejuvenated with new businesses. Develop the large gravel pit off 138 behind the credit union. A small locally owned market with gourmet prepared foods (I don't think Stop & Shop should be allowed to block this), a healthier alternative to fast junk food franchise, specialty boutiques (like Fetch RI), fishing, canoeing, kayaking or camping supplies, small movie theatre...endeavors that keep the small town feel and reflect our values and interests and nature. Keep development in town and not allow it to sprawl into residential zones. No big box. No Walmart.
Keeping the rural character. Am a previous Richmond resident and still reside close.
New Commercial/industrial development with in rural neighborhoods curtailed. Industrial/commercial grow facilities limited to properly buffered areas. Commercial sized solar arrays are taking away from the overall beauty of what our town has to offer of scenic views. The DEM office park at browning mill pond needs to be stopped.
Expanding the tax base responsibly
Solar Farms ought to be limited/tightly controlled
Do not allow so many marijuana facilities in residential locations.
Taxes and affordability to live here with a full sense of community involvement as to how the town grows and develops.

Partner with the YMCA to build a new facility AND promote the use of abandoned retail locations in the center of town that are an eye sore. Don't allow for S&Shop to rent out and leave building vacant.
Economic Development and the vacant building situation on route 138. Please develop the charm of the town, especially along Main Street and Kingstown Road, i.e., Wickford Village and Main Street in Wakefield.
Downtown Wyoming is a horrible, embarrassing eyesore. Where is the vision and planning to fix this? Where are the out-of-the-box ideas? There are so many solutions staring the town right in the face and yet nothing ever changes. The buildings in "downtown" Wyoming should all be built in the same style/character that reflects what we want the character of the town to be and look like. The planning board should pick a style and do the same as the city of Providence with its Providence Re-Development Board. If something wants to get built or redevelopment it has to be done in the same style (Federal, Colonial, something/anything). Buildings have to get look and type of architectural style approval from the town. Wickford forced Walmart to build the Wickford Walmart using a "New England" looking style building over its usual boxy style. Why are we not doing that? The Medical Marijuana growing facility of 138 could not have has some building style attributes to make it at least look like a pleasant looking building. With some minor changes the town an the building could have built something that is at least pleasant to look at, if not something amazing. Why can't Richmond be visionary instead of being non-proactive? And why are we not working with the Wyoming commercial property owners around the center of downtown to put in 19th Century style lampposts along the sidewalks? Why are we not beautifying the area? Why are we not planting trees and putting in benches and some islands with bushes and flowers along the commercial area of downtown Wyoming like they have done in Jewitt City, Apponaug, Hope, and so many other smaller villages in Rhode Island. Why don't we have any vision? It boggles many of the residents minds.
Road issues
Stop expansion of the Preserve.
You need to get someone to fix the dam. I don't know if it's Richmond specifically but it's a hazard and it shouldn't take this long to get someone to fix it.
Balancing the need to bring in business with out destroying our culture of small town feel.
Marijuana growing facilities location in residential and our State forest recreational areas. We should do more to market our forests and rivers.
As the local population ages, we need to do a better job supporting the needs of the elderly - medical, transportation, age appropriate recreation.
Sprawl
High tax rate
Education affects that are overburdening residents with increased taxes while restricting funding and allowing freedom for town to offer better maintenance, services along with being able to increased recreational opportunities. Grant writers and Grant's are needed and can lift or accommodate some of these burdens or restrictions. Summer rec camps for youth of all ages is also greatly needed.
I believe the property tax issue needs to be scrutinized and should be adjusted downward. The taxes negatively impact housing affordability.
Slowing down the rate at which solar projects eat this towns usable commercial acreage. We need more things for people to do in town, rock climbing gym, good restaurants, breweries, sporting complex. Good housing developments with club houses.
A new YMCA and Senior Center.
Disaster management planning
Tax rate and school budget
No more solar projects, you're killing this town.
reckless development that leaves the town in a worse state. this includes solar farms.
Keeping business out of family neighborhood and persevere county setting

Too much business redundancy such as numerous pharmacies and fast food franchises
138
Please see above
How to get more businesses to Richmond especially restaurants (not just fast food places). We need to help make Richmond a destination that people outside of Richmond want to go to, which is why we also need recreational facilities to help support this.
I haven't lived here long enough to know the issues however the downtown area by I-95 is run down and would benefit from some urban renewal to offer the town a focal area for shopping and activities. Those houses are gems in the rough!
Place a hold on solar projects! Bring in real business and commercial projects.
Community center to be inclusive of all citizens.
New YMCA
See #21 Figure out how to not be financially hamstrung by the growing cost of delivering a public education to our children. Maybe work on combining more school districts. How many replications of school administrators do we need? Jump onto between 1 and 4 school districts for the state, get rid of popularity contest school boards and run education like a modern organization instead of "Little House on the Prairie" style or worse, local political influence in hiring.
More business and housing
Creating a solid future plan for "down town Wyoming" finding a solution to all buildings that are currently vacant and brining new businesses to Town, such as restaurants and different attractions.
not to allow random development, but planned development instead
Senior needs
Appearance of the highway interchange area. The state is going to redo the interchange area and the town needs to help with appearance where it can.
Protect water supply
Same as 21.Needs.
Keeping our rural character
Finding ways to keep schools top notch while keeping taxes affordable for all.
More housing, more development
Lower taxes
Lower Property tax by attracting more businesses and therefore tax revenue.
Same as abov
The rapid threat of Solar, Wind, Cellular and Cannabis businesses coming into Richmond areas previously protected by Richmond ordinances. These business are making big money on the backs of the Richmond residents at the expense of Town of Richmond losing it's scenic and historical areas forever.
Solar Energy
Revisit and re-write zoning regulations to eliminate further development of industrial scale solar on other than commercial or industrial zoned areas. Eliminate the potential for land owners to split up land into many little LLC farms in order to qualify for more 1 acre accessory solar installations. We already have two examples of this happening in town. Richard and Bouchard have both installed two accessory acres of solar.
Use of abandoned buildings
Spend more money fixing schools
Filling empty buildings in town

Try to get some sensible business in town to build the tax base. One small really needed thing is a walk in clinic - any minor injury means a trip to east greenwich or wakefield - a minute clinic in CVS would be nice
Taxes
The Chariho School system is unsustainable - the costs have skyrocketed and sooner rather than later the MATH WILL NO LONGER WORK. We can only raise taxes so much. All of these families with children should be PAYING MORE!!!!
Public and private recreational facilities for kids and families
School budget. Our tax rate is approaching the state maximum
Increasing revenue
Change the mindset about family and business. This town can grow while maintaining its character, but only if it has the population and business tax base to so.
Incentivizing solar development in industrial/commercial areas and stopping it in residential areas
More businesses
Empty storefronts. Makes the town look rundown and is a waste of space that could be used for local businesses.
Filling or reclaiming the vacant motorcycle store in Wyoming.
The steady encroachment by solar developers, and perhaps pot growers, into/near residential areas.
Equity in the regional school system. It seems as though Richmond pays more than its fair share. I thought regional school systems were supposed to be cheaper??
Limit solar farms to boarding 85
Traffic through town
All the solar requests. There is now a giant brown field, waste land, on 91 in Hopkinton. That will be Richmond if we don't stop this nonsense.
Taxbase
Same as previous question. Stop solar sprawl. Stop putting commercial solar utilities in residential areas
Stopping solar sprawl
making the infrastructure safe for outdoor activity
BPZ is the economic gatekeeper and with our new planner, Richmond needs economic growth versus prevention.
Community center/better ymca
Bringing in and supporting new business to offset taxes on residents.
Renegotiate the Chariho financing structure to avoid significant shifts in all town budgets
Congestion on 138.
Filling vacant commercial buildings
Putting a stop to the destruction of undeveloped land due to the installation of solar panels.
The YMCA growth. It was so nice when the townspeople supported Ocean Community Y to move in and was much welcomed addition, now that they need to grow Richmond should welcome their partnership for senior, teen, pool and community event center.
The school and taxes
Lowering our tax burden and retaining the rural character of Richmond
See above.
Getting rid of Barry Ricci
Filling vacant buildings getting business back in !
Same as above
Roads infrastructure , empty commercial buildings and affordable housing.

Keep taxes low
Road conditions
Vacant lots in wyoming
Traffic
maintain the current small hiking circle off 138 full of ticks
Zoning! Keep commercial business of any kind out of residential zones! Keep residential zones safe and rural.
Better restrictions on targeted land development especially where solar farms can and should not go. Why cut down forests to build solar? Target solar in the right places and cluster housing development
Solar sprawl
Road conditions. Rt 112 is not very safe to ride after storms because water pools up on the surface - no infiltration and runoff. Shoulders on Rt 138 between the town hall and 95 need to be widened. 138 is used by a small number of commuters who work in Hope Valley who cannot drive. Get the state to address this.
Current tax structure.
Better road conditions. Lower property tax
Road conditions, dead tree removal
138 traffic.
Stop the solar projects expansion, clean up the cycle brothers property, get the Y to build a new building and community center in it.
Community recreation! Having a community center or allowing the Y to create a space for town events would really help. Bordering towns have amazing recreation programs. We travel to NK, SK, Charlestown and Westerly for their programs, but would prefer something close to home where we can socialize with more Richmond families.
New community center with a pool.
Economic development in Richmond commons area
Dog park (too many promises not kept). Let's get it done. Keeping taxes down, slow to none residential development, keep commercial development to Rt138/Rt95 intersection
Fill the vacant buildings with businesses on 138 and add more restaurants
Attention to budget, business development and recreation
Controlled housing development / increase business development
lowering school budget
Recreation
Ban loud ATVs/dirt bikes
Traffic issues, bike paths
Fill the vacant buildings in Wyoming.
NO MORE SOLAR FARMS!
Taxes are too high.
Increase businesses in the town. Especially east of 95 on 138 where the majority of the out of town traffic passes.
Filling empty storefronts along 138.
Loss of Agriculture
tax mill rate is twice that of Westerly or Narragansett - I love the rural character but why is the Mill rate so high????
A plan to attract more businesses. Perhaps start with looking a the vacant buildings in the Town.
No more solar panels
Solar fields.

need to improve business growth to offset taxes...too many run down and vacant properties.
Stop putting up Solar Farms. Put incentives in place for vegetable farming instead. Lots of hardworking young people looking for a chance to grow food and families. this can help to address food insecurity in the community. Solar farms make out of towners wealthier, not the community. Put Richmond's people above outside interests.
Solar - how to maintain the woods/open space while encouraging green energy.
Stop facilitating solar in undisturbed areas. There are plenty of already disturbed areas (like Richmond Sand and Gravel lands) that would be ideal for solar and would have a minimal affect on the aquifer. Create incentives for landowners to protect and maintain open space. Taxing to the point that a landowner must develop or sell the land is counterproductive. Open space costs the Town nothing in services, yet protects groundwater, natural habitat values, and quality of life in the Town.
Economic Development
No solar displays

**Q23. Other thoughts**

Not happy with growing in any way to do with marijuana....
Making and fixing up a down town area. We don't really have one and what is there is vacant structures or ones that look dumpy. Our town can be better maintained
Residential areas aren appropriate places to cultivate marijuana. The pose a risk to those in the area and the smell will interfere with peoples enjoyment of their homes.
We are new to the town but love it so far. Hope to be long term residence who can help shape the future!
Question 13 on transportation says to pick 3 but will only allow 1 choice. Needs fixing. Richmond is a beautiful place that has the potential to get ugly very quickly, by what is allowed and lost. We will not attract new businesses without workforce housing and infrastructure investments.
Yea, no solar farms...
Police Dept. seems to have a policy of arrest everyone and let the judge decide 'guilty.
Problems with this survey: #10- you can't answer other and get it to take an answer; #13 will only accept 1 of 3 requested answers; #14; can't check other
Yes. Recently there has been some discussion about a partnership between the YMCA and Richmond. I believe this could be a large benefit to Richmond if done properly. If the YMCA builds a new facility and allows Richmond to use the recreational facilities at a reduced fee and provides a no-fee community center for the town, it is a win-win. Richmond gets what it wants (community center) and does not need to pay for the long-term upkeep of the facility, nor has to outlay the initial cost to build the facility. If that means turning the land over to the YMCA, then that seems like a decent short-term and long term investment, as long as a contract is written and enforced. There needs to be an out for Richmond if the YMCA backs out (Richmond gets the land back and possibly a fee for the deal falling through).
We moved to Richmond to get away from commercially developed areas. We enjoy the rural charm of the town. We certainly hope that this is maintained. It would be more than disappointing to see more commercial businesses added to the town. While I understand that the town needs to address some concerns around this issue, it should be strictly restricted to areas that already exist in the center of town. It should not expand out from the town center.
I'd like to keep the school quality, but also allow business to come into the town. Stop promoting low income housing that makes the school numbers and our taxes go up.
I love Richmond!!☺
Richmond needs to be more than the first stop off 95 and the home of the Washington county Fair. People need to want to come here for other events and business as well.
Make Richmond look more updated and not run down
Please preserve our residential areas from businesses mascarading as benign entities such as horticultural growth company. They are wolves in sheeps clothing. Once that bell is rung it can not be unrunng.
Please, get another grocery store in town. Stop and Shop is terrible. Most residents would welcome an Aldi or Dave's Market or Belmont.
Please pay special attention to the idea of inviting Dave's market to build a store here. Pick out a site you could recommend. Wine and dine them if you have to, but having competition for Stop & Shop is one of the biggest needs Richmond has.
the tax burden in this town has become too high, businesses and homeowners alike find it too expensive and likely will hinder relocation here
My wife and I chose to live here due to the rural character of the area and numerous opportunities for hiking and being in the woods. Please continue preserving those aspects of the town.

Town needs comprehensive plan to lower costs and approve more business. Town town is embarrassing! Empty buildings covered with plywood. Good job.
Growth and efficiency are both over rated.
We have enough golf courses. Let's get to know our neighbors. Let's have more public festivals. Let's save and restore our historic buildings. Too many formerly beautiful old houses falling into ruin. Practically no public transportation, and rural areas need it most. Let's turn HopArts into a fully fledged festival of the arts that attracts visitors from all over. Can we find a way to resurrect the Jonnycake Festival at Kenyon's Grist Mill? Or at least relocated it to the fairgrounds? Also - let's have a bona fide community garden, where residents can gather to plant and tend and learn from each other and celebrate the food history of the area. Let's make EVERYONE feel welcome in Richmond, not just wealthy retirees who love golf and canned shooting opportunities. Lastly: question 13 only allows one answer, not three.
Traffic pattern near town hall should be addressed- too many access points to 138- creates near accidents during peak times especially when school gets out
We really need more grocery store options.
There is so much land and potential in this town. The small strip malls that we do have are outdated and not visually appealing. This town needs a full refresh.
Take advantage of the fact that cyclists around the state love to ride in a Richmond. Combine some of our beautiful rural roads with a bike path and facilities that bring people to town.
Need to find a way to control property taxes
Yes - question #10 - there was no way to add a suggestion to the "other" option. We need to allow another grocery store to come to town and offer fair prices and quality produce.
The police and fire are wonderful, town hall is always a friendly place as well. It's a charming town and a great place to raise a family. We DO need more entities in our town however, (IE retail, restaurants).
I have lived in Richmond for 35 years. We don't plan to stay when we retire. There is very little here.
Listen to the people.
Happy to see this survey !
Sidewalks and skatepark for kids. There's nothing for kids to do! Build a roller rink or movie theater
Question 13 was a multi answer question and only allowed for one answer.
I love my town. We need more emphasis on the affordability of this town. The school budget seem to rule everything.
I think the town of Richmond is standing at a major crossroads of trying to preserve its rural character while promoting and growing businesses. The next 5-10 years will be a critical time and careful thought and planning need to be considered. Public input and transparency from officials is the only way that Richmond can move forward as a united front.
This relaxed and rural atmosphere is why I chose to purchase my home. We need to protect the charm of the rural town. A new development went up adjacent to my property line, and now because of the clearing, paving, and building of these homes, I now have septic issues and had to have a trench built to channel the water away from my home.
The current trajectory of local government activity has been to make Richmond unaffordable to those that have lived here a long time - The 'Hamptonization' of Richmond. Richmond needs to create a welcoming environment to attract new businesses - the most impactful lever would be to reduce property taxes. Richmond government should not be in the business of picking winners and losers.
The planning board does an excellent job with its charge. Ive looked over the previous comprehensive plan and its a credit to the planner, planning office and planning board. Some of the issues I raised are indeed difficult but with action from the Town Council they can be accomplished.
No



It may seem trivial, but people look at a lot of things when they consider moving into a new area, whether that be personally or for business. I believe that an uninviting business district has not only depresses the people who live here but also deters new people from moving into the area. If I was looking to bring my business into Richmond, I would look at the route 138 business district and turn around. My concerns would be that no one frequents the area and that my business would probably fail like all of the rest. So while this is not the only area of Richmond up for development, if it doesn't look open for business and it is the center of everything why would any other area be better?
No thank you.
Opportunities for the YMCA to develop a new location in town similar to western and Mystic to include a new senior center.
Develop a community center
Town Council should initiate and continue discussions with current vacant property owners to stimulate future development and occupancy.
Encourage regular businesses to get increase tax income that do not drain schools, and other natural resources. Why am I shopping in other towns for groceries, clothing, household goods. Stop and shop has a monopoly and is expensive. When I can I use ace hardware, local coffee shops, small groceries and restaurants We would benefit from a Daves or Aldis when you consider the people shopping elsewhere We could use an applebees, panera, chick fila , type restaurant instead of vacant buildings Rec center or larger ymca
see #21 and #22
Types of Commercial development should be considered prior to approval- ex 3 pharmacies approved within 1/2 mile of one another for population of under 10k seems ridiculous. Such consideration may have prevented abandoned buildings on 138.
Come up with a use for the tourist/information center on I 95
No.
Part two to the above... Locally developed sustainable energy source... where it all began a century ago... before Big Oil... namely alcohol. Grown locally. Processed locally. Used... locally. It can be done. It should be done. Some already are. This is probably all very new and foreign to many who will read this. But, the good news is all the leg work has already been done. The knowledge and systems needed already exist. But, for the asking.
Great schools, great town. Keep up the good work.
I do not want a marijuana warehouse next door to my house on Arcadia rd. It will make my property value go down. No tractor trailers, fire hazards, water usage etc.
Please
we need to fill our empty buildings before we build new one's for business
Keep Richmond a country town , affordable to families and small businesses
Richmond needs to fill the empty stores and not do anymore commercial buildings past the Town Hall on 138, nor past the the bridge by the Stagecoach Inn on 138. That should be the only area for businesses including marijuana facilities (cultivation and retail when legal). We have enough condo's too. I do not want to see an influx of more people which will only congest 138 more than it is already, especially in the summer.
Just say NO to marijuana grow " business" on Arcadia Road!!!!!!!!!!!! HOPKINTON SAID NO to it and so can YOU!!!!!!!!!!!!
Please do what you can to protect your taxpayers while maintaining our good schools
the town website could stand to be updated. It is sometimes very difficult to find information. For instance, what is allowed in specific zoning areas etc.
Thank you for asking our opinions and for the work you do. Richmond school is the largest out of the district - families need support. Please offer a full day option for the summer program.

Please revisit the Chariho Act. Aside from business development sorely lacking in Richmond, the school budget is the other main issue. Charlestown doesn't pay its fair share and Richmond and Hopkinton bear the brunt of the increases each year. Which is ironic since Charlestown also has lower taxes due to tourism. Thank you!!!
We need to address the needs of all our citizens not just the elderly. We need housing and public transportation for low income and disabled as well. We need a place to gather that is not just a senior center. We need to address the HIGH taxes.
No
I think the leaders in our town have done a good job in looking out for Richmond's best interests. I would like perhaps more preemptive zoning/ laws to prevent businesses and industries that the majority of residents disprove of.
Richmond is a great place to live!
Make revitalizing the Chariho Plaza a priority.
No, i think i have made myself clear. Council members with aesthetic senses who enforce sign ordinances and realize that to attract people sensitive to their surroundings, they too must be sensitive to their surroundings.
Please don't put high traffic facilities in areas that are clearly rural and would require significant changes to local back roads. Also, although it's already included, please be respectful of the local water supply for those of us who have wells. I'm new to the area and don't know if there is any place in the town that doesn't rely on wells.
Once bad decisions are made, based solely on money, our environment will suffer and because we need the natural environment to survive ourselves, we suffer.
I love it here and want to retire here. I don't want to be forced out economically because I will be on a fixed income.
I love living here.
We have no character, no whimsy, no style, no personality to build upon in the town of Richmond. Can't we be like Bristol or Jamestown or North Scituate or Newport or the East Side of Providence and have a personality for our town? Can't we say: we want to be X and we will build around that? If Richmond Commons were to ever be built into a "Center of New England" style shopping destination--does the town have anything in place where it could have input on what the development would look like? Couldn't we work with a developer and build something akin to what Mystic Village or Garden City looks like (something that represents New England) instead of the strip-mall New Jersey look of Route 2 in Warwick? Why hasn't anyone thought of this? Why are we not thinking about plans and provisions like this? Whatever we attract or approve to be built in town should have oversight by the town administration; and its members should have some vision. Some ideas. Developers come to the town and it is a lot of mostly "yes" and a few personal pet-peeve "no's". Can't a planning board put in place some guidelines for all development to build all buildings in line with the town's rural New England character? It is a huge, huge missing link in our town. We should have a group set up (even if it is expert volunteers) to have input on development in the town like this. After going to so many town council meetings and town planning board meetings I find our representatives reactive instead of proactive. I don't see ideas coming from the town representation itself. How about some projects, initiatives, and using what other beautiful towns and villages have done with their redevelopment and expansion and incorporate all those ideas into our town? When you go to a place like Plymouth, Massachusetts you don't have to ask where you are. You know by the character, the building style, and the care the town puts in to how it looks there where you are. What will anyone remember about Wyoming or Hope Valley if they come there for an hour? What can we do to change that? And can you please get on the case of "The Preserve" and Paul and ask him to move his constant clay-shooting and pheasant hunting to the westside of the property up along the highway corridor like he said he was going to do last year, and the year before that, and away from the

neighborhoods of Meadowbrook and Kenyon Hill. We hear incredibly loud gunshots all day long some days. Sometimes 90 rounds a minute on the busiest of days. I've counted it. And these are not trespassers. It is members of the Preserve; no matter what rhetoric Paul likes to say when he never wants to take responsibility for anything.
Somehow unite the community.
This exit on 95 could be thriving (look at exit 7) but we need to make that expansion close to the 95 interchange to keep neighborhoods safe and comfortable. But, people here wouldn't even allow an expanded rest stop here. So, it will be an uphill battle. Maybe partnering w URI to do some studies and recommendations would help the community feel that they have more participation and ownership of upcoming plans.
I don't really like all the development that's been going on. I live in Wyoming and the increase in stuff like hunting preserves and cigar shops has brought a lot of unreasonably entitled, wealthy, and impolite folks into my general vicinity and as much as I understand that money makes the world go round, it ruins the character of this area. You are pushing your residents out by focusing on these people, who have no connection to or appreciation for the community or your residents. In my opinion, focusing on restaurants, sustainable energy, local arts, consignment shops, affordable housing, and community building events would be far more beneficial to everyone than another golf course.
Question 10 - We could use more family-friendly restaurants, not more bars/taverns. It is important to preserve the integrity and viability of the aquifers to keep our drinking water safe and plentiful when developing new business/residential opportunities.
Some summer seasonal music and varied family activities are a must. Visual promotion is also key.
Keep the marijuana out, save Browning Mill Pond and let's get the Y to build a decent complex. Also, do something about getting another grocery store in town so we do not continue to pay outrageous prices for our food. Stop the monopoly of Stop and Shop.
The recent outcry against solar energy spearheaded by one non resident property owner is disheartening. Families that have lived and worked here for generations are being attacked by this person and the town seems to be bending over backwards to appease him rather than supporting our resident farm owners. I would prefer we work with resident farm owners to find a compromise that doesn't involve one person buying up the entire top of Shannock Hill road.
Town council needs to work for the people and listen to there concerns.
Town Planner anti business.
Make it easier for people visiting from the north to get onto 95 from exit 4 instead of having to drive up to exit 5.
A new YMCA
Well, I pretty much blew my top on the last question. Good luck interpreting your survey. I'd be interested to see the results.
Nope, but thanks for asking
Too clicky
We need to get a grip on residential solar farms before we become one gigantic solar array.
Sometimes we seem to allow development in the wrong places for the wrong businesses----a trucking company on West Shannock Road along the banks of the Pawcatuck is just plain wrong!
Lower taxes
There's a rumour that stop and shop owns the large spot in the YMCA plaza and thy sit on it to block other grocery stores. If that's true that should be stopped. That slot has been empty for over a decade. It's an eyesore and could be a source of more tax income.
Reduce property tax. stop preserve expansion!
Please make it very clear in the next revision of the Richmond Comprehensive Plan that the areas sited on Map-8 of the Richmond Comprehensive Community Plan are not permitted to be used for

solar, wind, cell or cannabis businesses. Oddly enough this is where these businesses on concentration on and we are rapidly losing the fight to keep Richmond rural and scenic.
How about a better notification system. I don't think the existing "notify me" system does it. A system to send an email notification along with agenda for Town, Planning and Zoning meetings is a must. It is currently very hard to keep on top of what is happening where and when.
Need to utilize our location between NY and Boston to attract manufacturing, not big box retail
Less services and government would maintain our rural charm. I didn't move here to be told how to live/ work more than in a suburban area.
None of the "housing options" on this survey do anything to encourage growth and upward mobility for families. Unless Richmond wants a slow death, that mindset needs to change.
Please no more solar farms!
Richmond is a town with tremendous appeal to upper middle class due to rural appeal and the school district quality. Richmond must raise residential taxes to take advantage of the increased appeal of the town and make required infrastructure improvements.
The existing Comprehensive Plan is quite thorough in many areas, but it must be adhered to by the town's governing boards.
Question 8- how is the word "support" defined. This question is difficult to answer.
Do not know right now
More community-based activities.
Turning active, productive farm land into solar arrays sets a very bad precedent.
You should not permit commercial solar in residential areas at all. Our towns rural character a scenic quality is its single biggest asset. Once you lose that you will have nothing. .
Address empty businesses on 138 and stop solar sprawl and you've got it licked.
Solar panels look like trash!!!
Taxes are already very high in this area because of schools. I would want to see business growth to offset the ever increasing taxes.
When we moved here 15 years ago, there was a limit on the number of residential building permits being issued each year so as to preserve the rural character of the town. Now, every which way we turn, we are taking away farmland and replacing it with solar panels and businesses that seem destined to fail (ex. 3 pharmacies within 1 mile of one another for a town with a population of @8,000!! Not surprising that one failed so quickly.). Seems like a very abrupt 180 degree turn and we need to head back in the other direction!!
People move to this town for the rural lifestyle and those with young kids the school system, don't let the investors influence the future development. Retain knowledgeable counsel to fight the fight.
The school department is siphoning a disproportionate amount of funds per person when considering the remainder of the population. School funding is out of control.
I believe we need to promote and facilitate a developer to build tiny homes in a small lot but rural style development, possibly connecting to the town water supply and building a large septic for a few houses to mitigate the cost.
Happy with less if it means low taxes.
My husband and I purposely moved our family to the town of Richmond for their great schools and rural, safe setting. I hope the town continues to keep Richmond rural and invest in the schools.
We need a Town Council, Town Administrator who really want to make a beneficial impact for a high quality of life in Richmond
Stop solar sprawl
The Chariho school district has been an fantastic experience for my children. I realize the taxes are high here, however I am willing to pay them because of the schools and the rural nature of the town.

We do not want 138 to turn into Rt 44 in Smithfield, (That is one of the reasons we moved here from Smithfield).
Access to the town hall for people that work full-time is extraordinarily limited. To get a simple dump sticker, my husband would have to take time out of work. Why isn't something like that available online? More services should be available online or there should be at least 1 night of evening hours or Saturday hours.
Creating a bike path would also allow for people to enjoy our natural setting in a more positive way!
DOG PARK off the land fill. We're got the land. Let's do it. Stop with the broken promises. Commercial development along 138 near 95 is the best way to build our tax base. New housing never solves tax problems because that increases demand for services and we end up chasing our own tail while destroying the town. Re: farming. I would LOVE to see the town support ORGANIC farming only. Re: kind of business development since the option is not active: as little as possible but since we need it for taxes I would like to see many more small local businesses. The more connected to the aforementioned organic farms the better. Lower taxes. Prefer no services to higher taxes.
Our tax rates are highest in area in which we share the most facilities.
More overall business development. Families want places like Marshall's nearby and not have to drive a half hour.
Don't encourage small lots so houses are all on top of one another. People like to live in rural towns for a reason: to have more land.
The roads needs to be monitored more. Since we moved in 12 years ago...the speeding has become ridiculous. 50+ more on small roads. 70 on route two....
Please remember that many of us moved here for the rural quality of life. If we wanted to be surrounded by solar panels and commercial businesses, we would have moved to Cranston. If the town wants to attract more affluent residents (and keep the ones left here) to broaden its tax base, it would serve those in charge to bear this in mind in making financial and business decisions for the town.
Protecting not only vernal pools but the areas around vernal pools.
Taxes are high compared to neighboring towns. Increasing businesses in the town, developing the Richmond Commons would be fantastic. Supporting the YMCA efforts to expand in the town with a modern facility and pool to help anchor the community. Help the town keep a rural feel with modern commercial conveniences in the center of town.
Our town officials must work better together to make Richmond the lovely place it has the potential of being.
Recreational facility with meeting room for community use.
I think you have done a great job!
Stop talking and get working.
Richmond is not same as when I was a kid. Will it look like Cranston soon? Reduce, reuse, recycle is a rule I live by.
Preference in the plan to ensure best in class tools, equipment and training for our Firefighters. Address the every increasing safety issues on/along Rt138. >Speeding passenger vehicles (NY, CT, NJ...plates) just off I95. Need stricter enforcement. >Tractor Trailers w/Engine Brakes. Need posted restrictions. >Enforcement, or creation of(?), noise ordinances for Motorcycles. Yes, you have a HOG, we're impressed, now stop trying to rattle everyone's nerves with in a mile of the highway. To our town Employees: Thank you for all you to do keep our community government running smoothly!
Greater use of referenda in the local decision process rather than following a "platform" of a respective political party.
No solar displays. I don't want my niece's kids and that generation to have to live in a Richmond that looks like Warwick.
Solar - how to maintain the woods/open space while encouraging green energy.

Stop facilitating solar in undisturbed areas. There are plenty of already disturbed areas (like Richmond Sand and Gravel lands) that would be ideal for solar and would have a minimal affect on the aquifer. Create incentives for landowners to protect and maintain open space. Taxing to the point that a landowner must develop or sell the land is counterproductive. Open space costs the Town nothing in services, yet protects groundwater, natural habitat values, and quality of life in the Town.
Economic Development
No solar displays

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## Appendix B

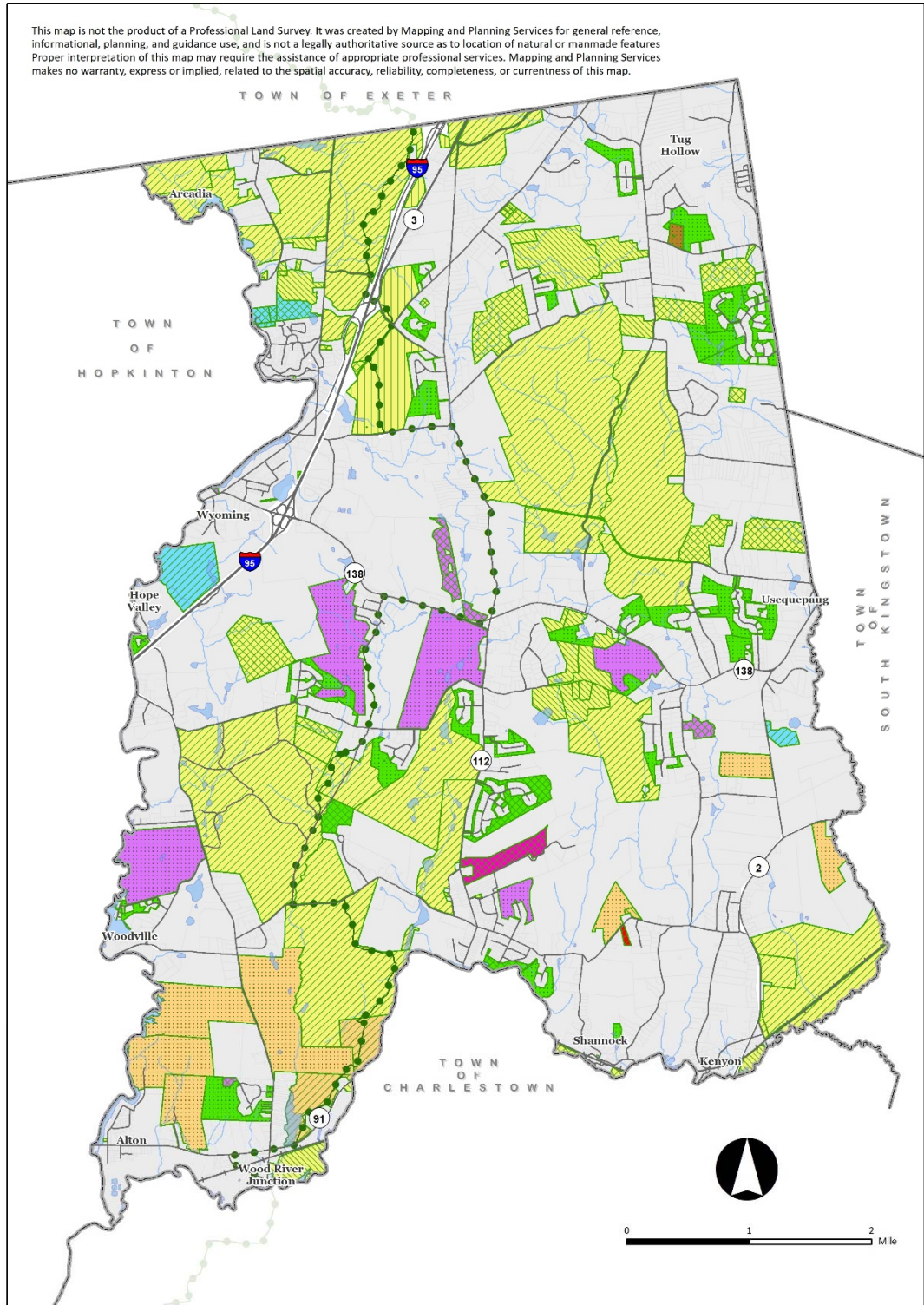
### Maps

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# B

## Maps



RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021

Map 1 - Recreation Conservation and Protected Open Space

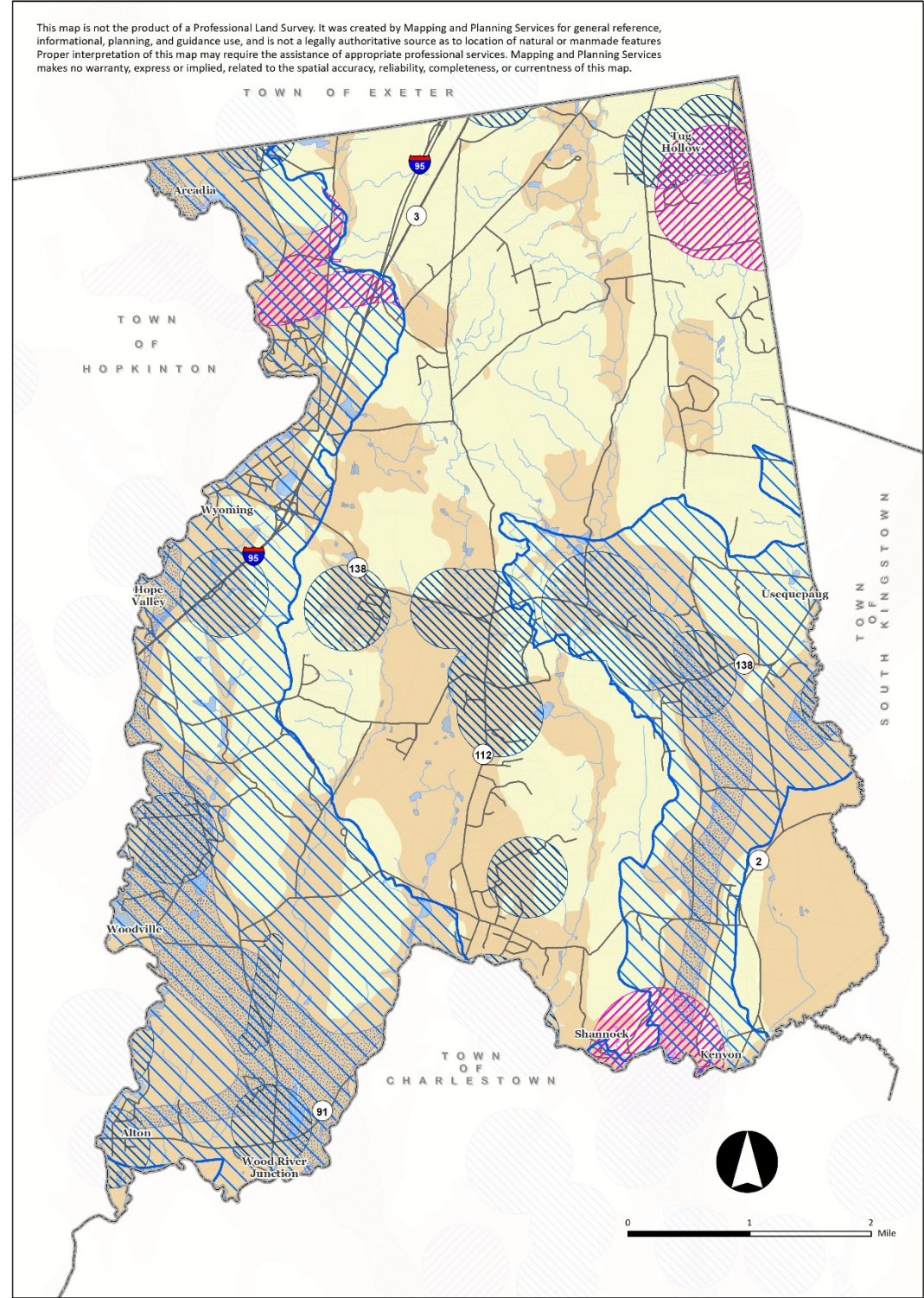


Data sources: Richmond GIS, RIGIS and RIDEM

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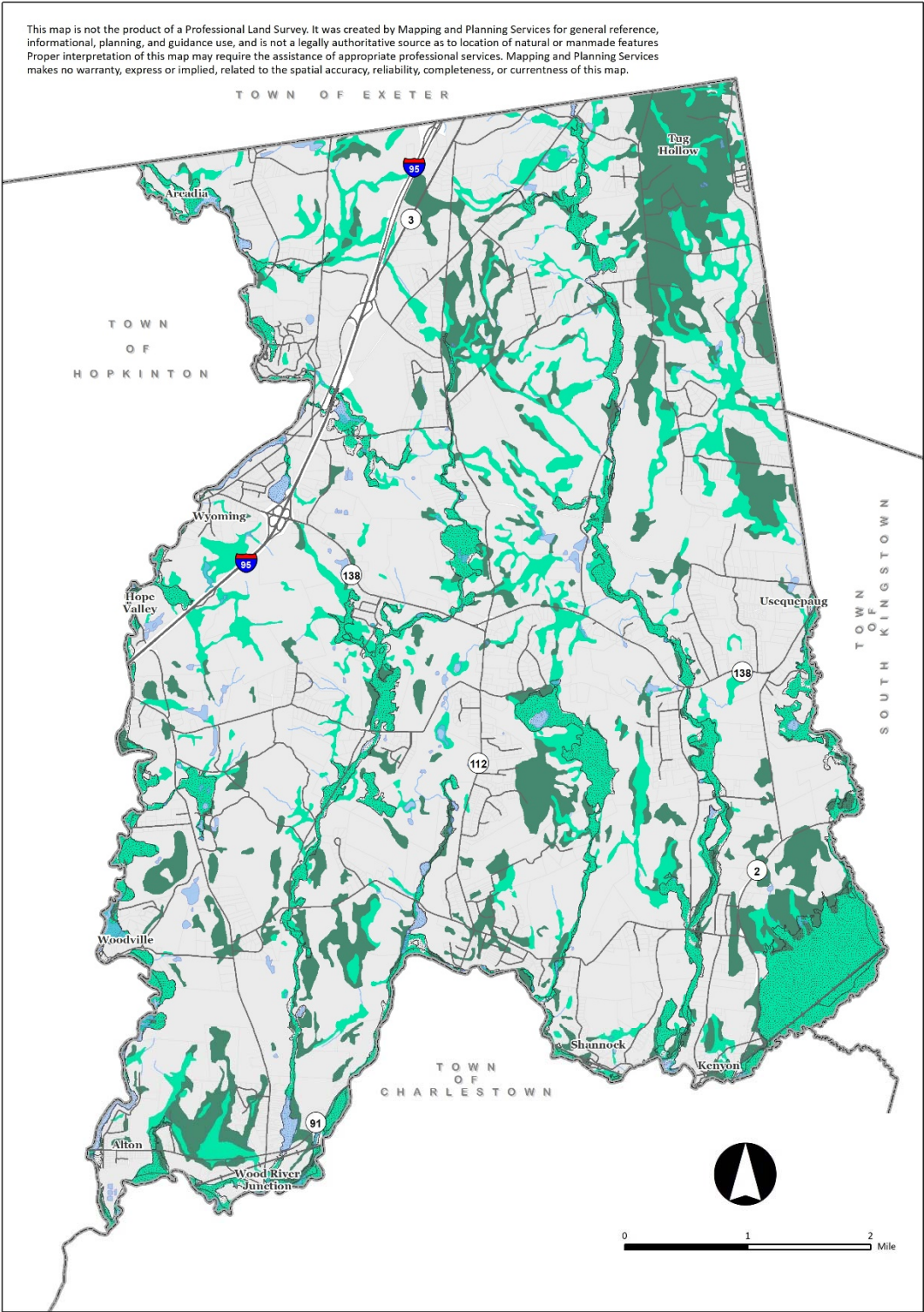
**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

Map 3 - Geology and Groundwater

- |                  |   |                 |
|------------------|---|-----------------|
| Municipal Border | Community Wellhead Protection Area (RIDEM 2019)     | Glacial Geology |
| Roads            | Non-Community Wellhead Protection Area (RIDEM 2018) | Outwash         |
| Streams          | Groundwater Recharge Area                           | Till            |
| Surface Waters   | Groundwater Aquifer Reservoirs                      |                 |
| Railway          |   |                 |

Data sources: Richmond GIS, RIGIS

MH 1/2021



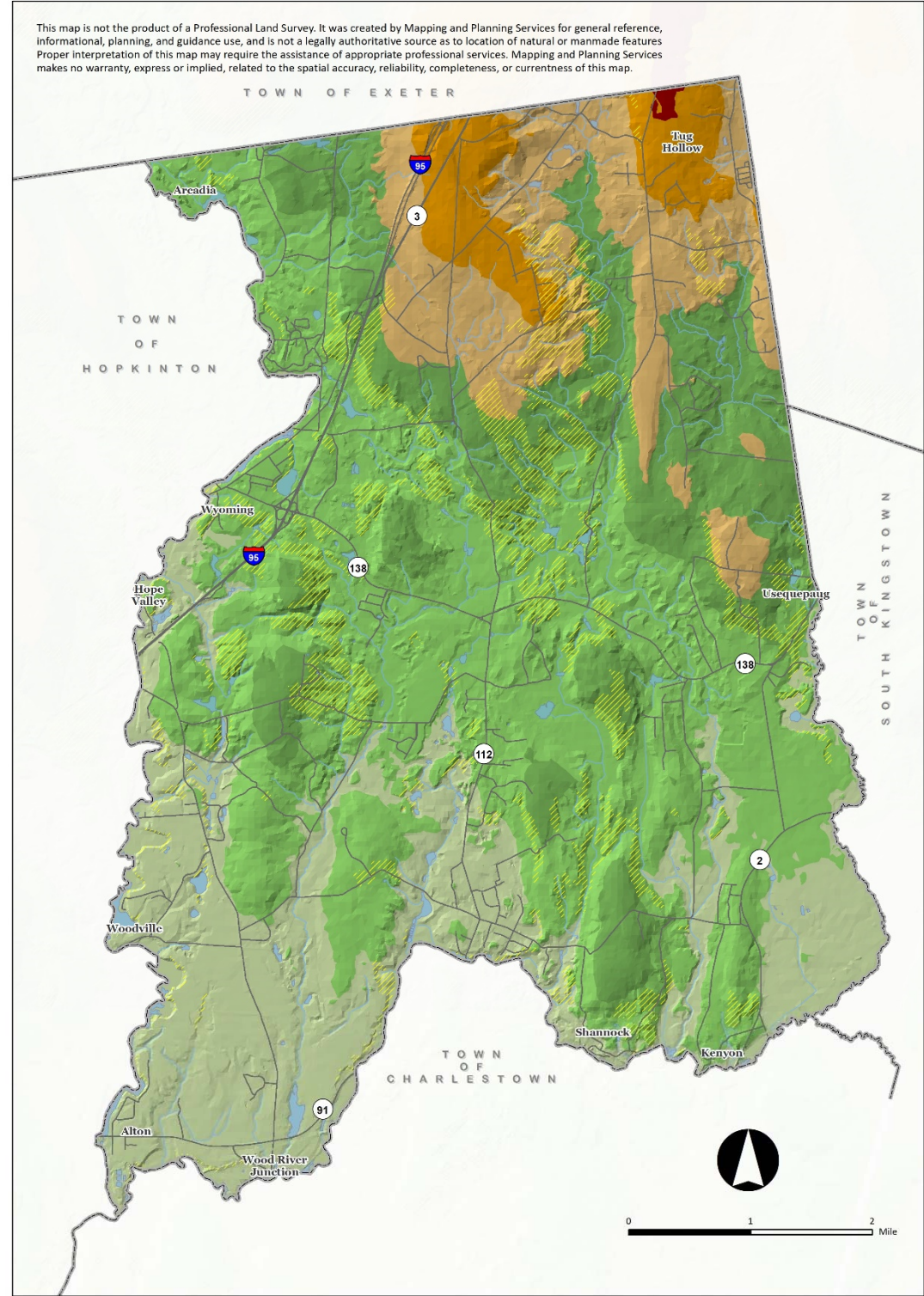
RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021

Map 4 - Floodplain and Wet Soils



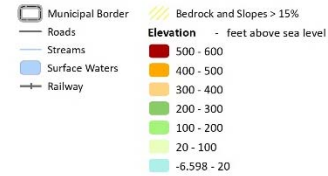
Data sources: Richmond GIS, RIGIS and RIDEM  
Note: Flood Hazard Areas are the new Flood Overlay District (approved 3/17/2020 by the Town of Richmond)





**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

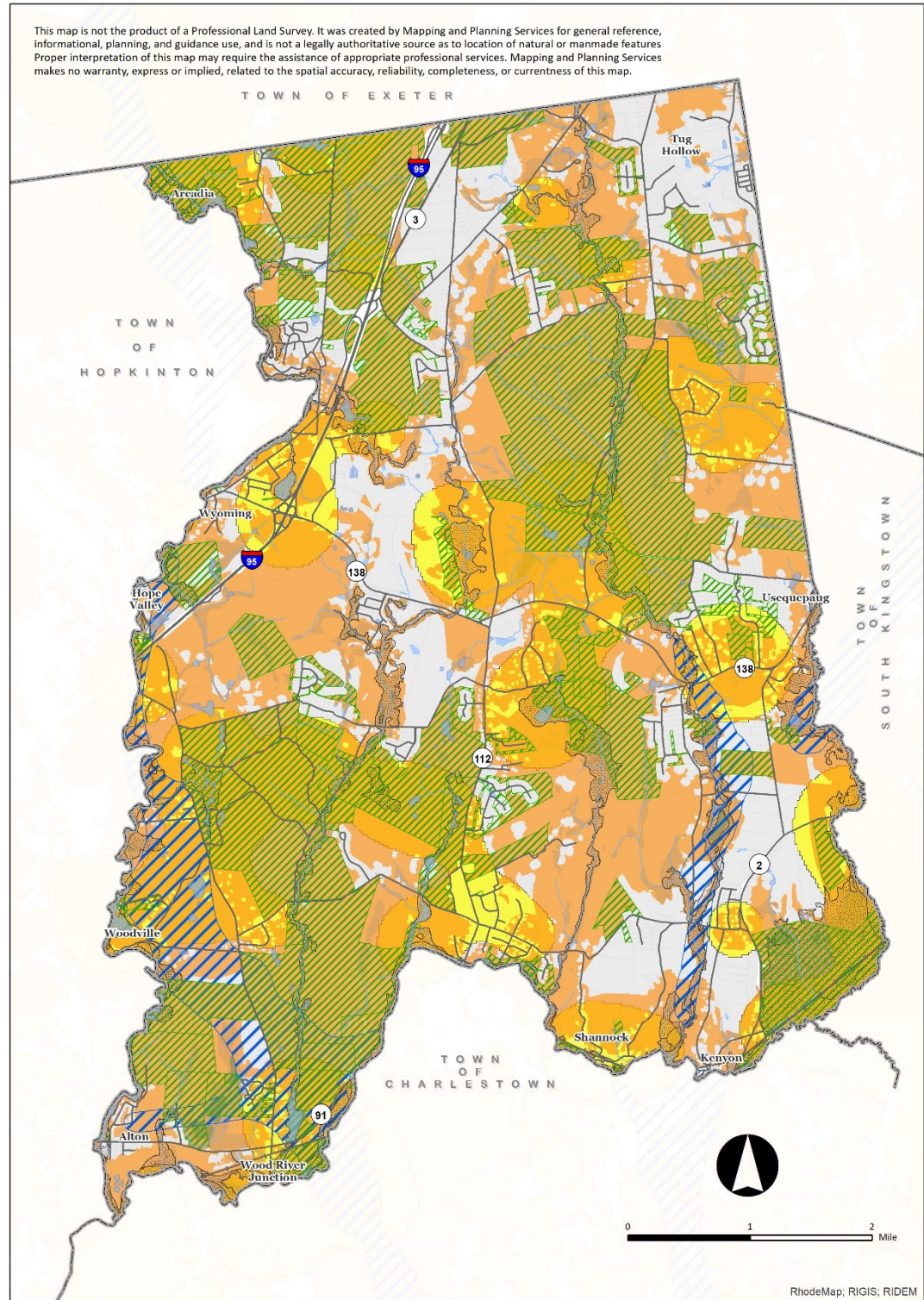
Map 5 - Geologic and Topographic Features



Data sources: Richmond GIS, RIGIS

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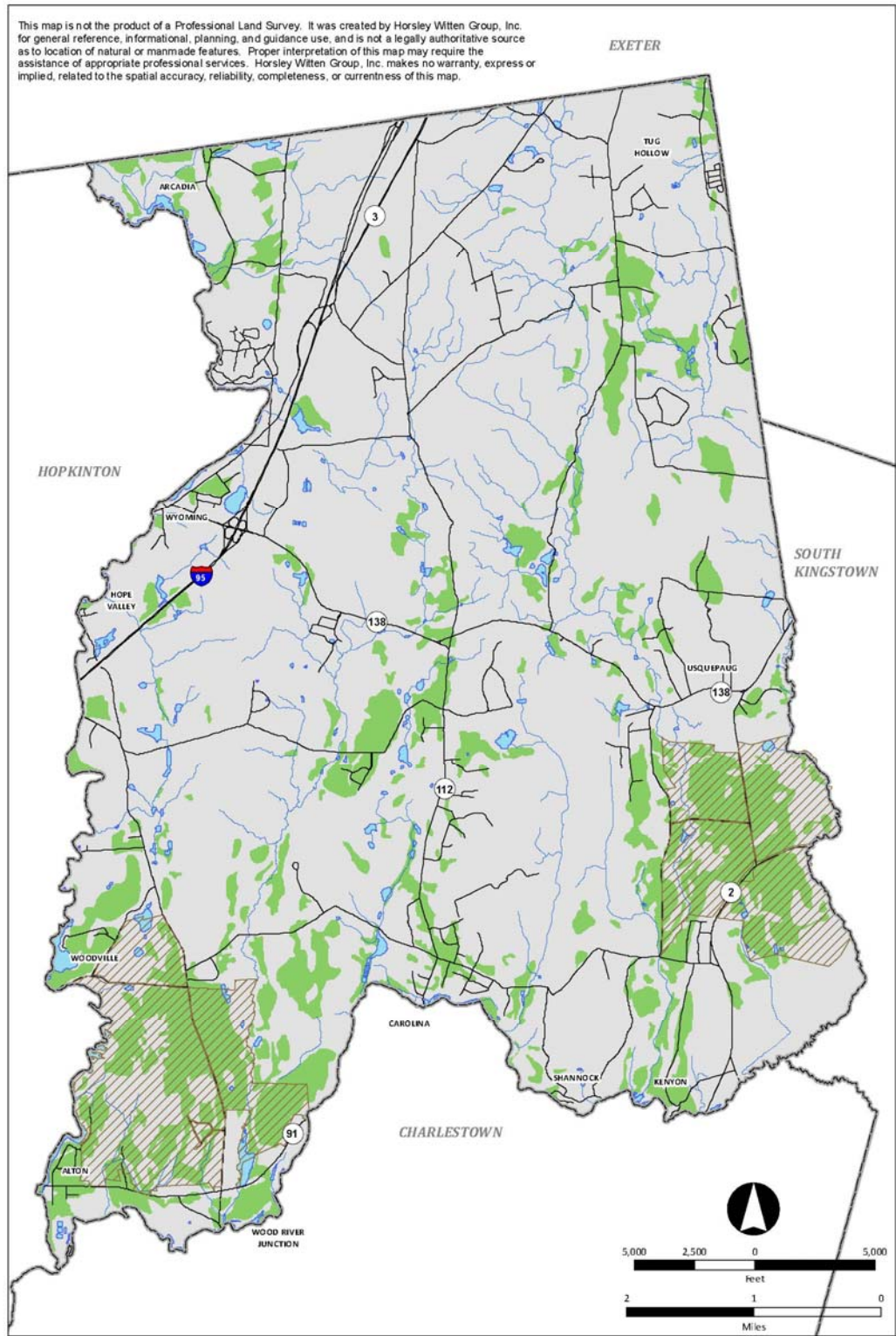
**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

Map 6 - Natural Features and Conservation Opportunity Areas

- Municipal Border
- Roads
- Surface Waters
- Streams
- Railway
- Flood Hazard Areas
- Wetland
- Groundwater Aquifer Reservoirs
- Composite Conservation Opportunity Areas
- Natural Heritage Area
- Protected Open Space

Data sources: Richmond GIS, RIGIS and RIDEM  
Note: The Flood Hazard Areas are the new Flood Overlay District (as approved 3/17/2020 by Town of Richmond).

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**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

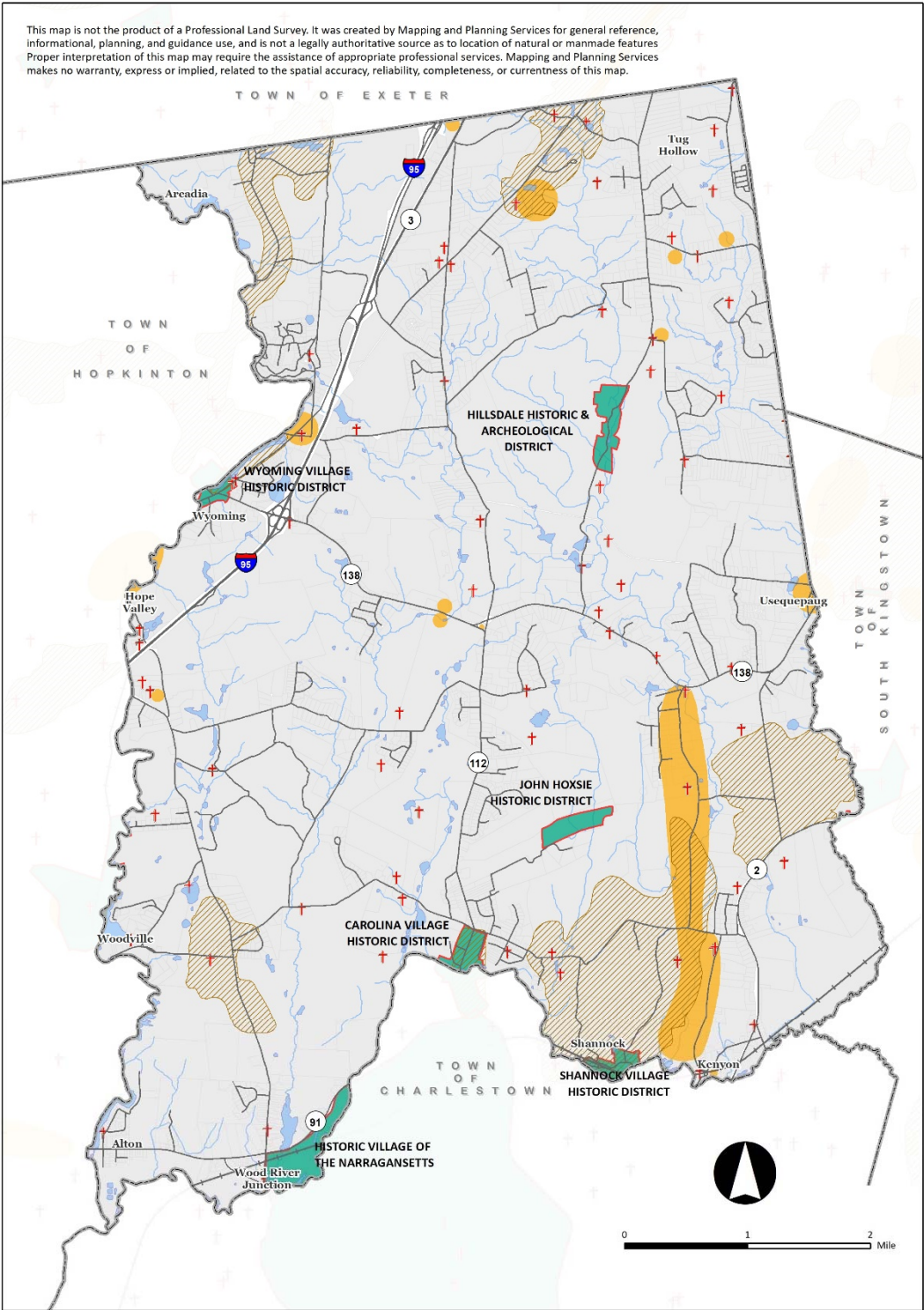
**Map 7 - Prime Agricultural Soils**

- Municipal Border
- Roads
- Streams
- Surface Waters
- Prime Agricultural Soils (USDA-NRCS)
- Agricultural Overlay District

Data sources: Town of Richmond, RIGIS

4/24/12





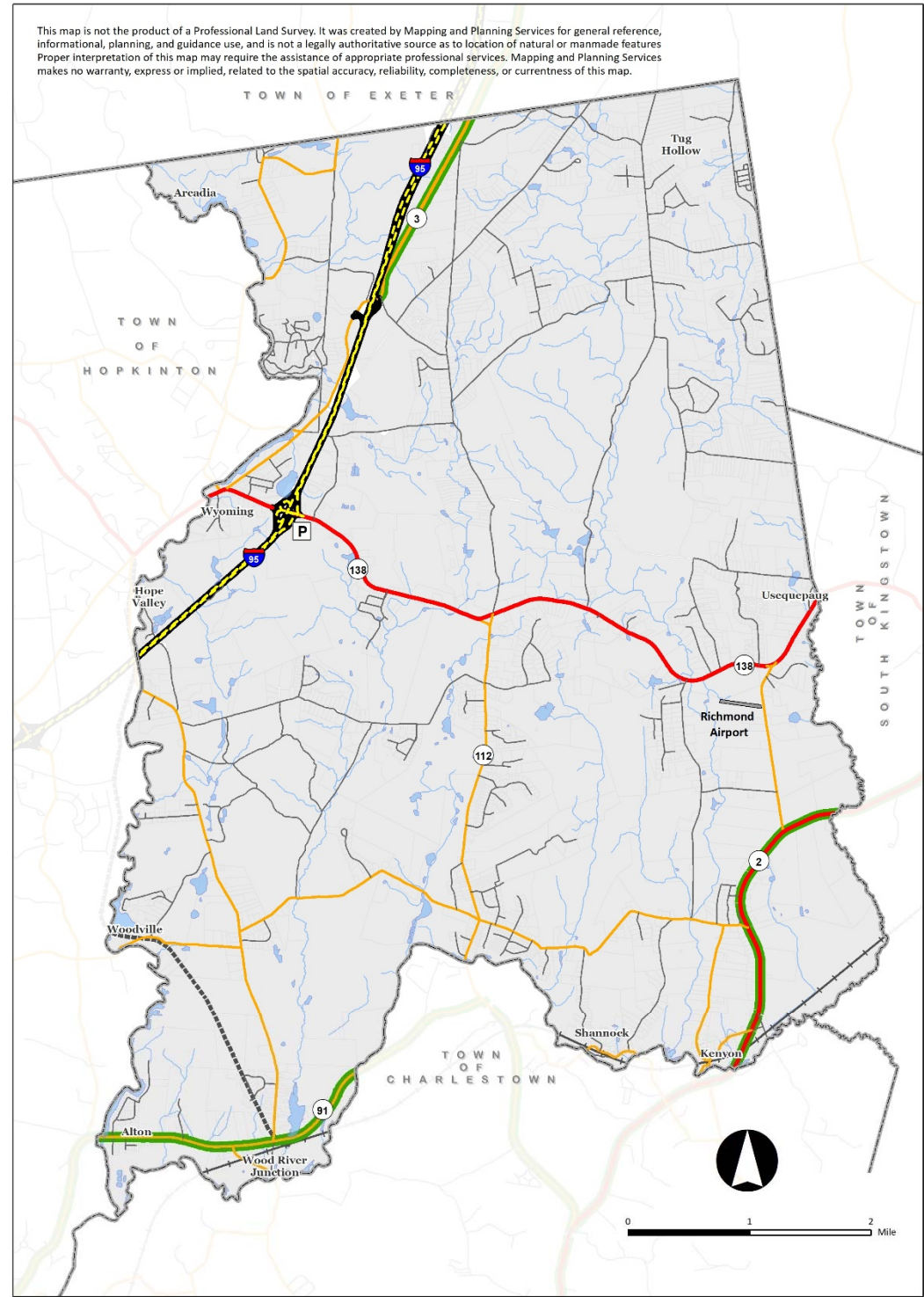
**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

Map 8 - Historic and Cultural Resources

- Municipal Border
- Roads
- Streams
- Surface Waters
- Railway
- Historic Cemeteries
- Scenic Areas
- National Historic Register Districts
- Areas Eligible for National Historic Register

Data sources: Richmond GIS, RIGIS

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**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

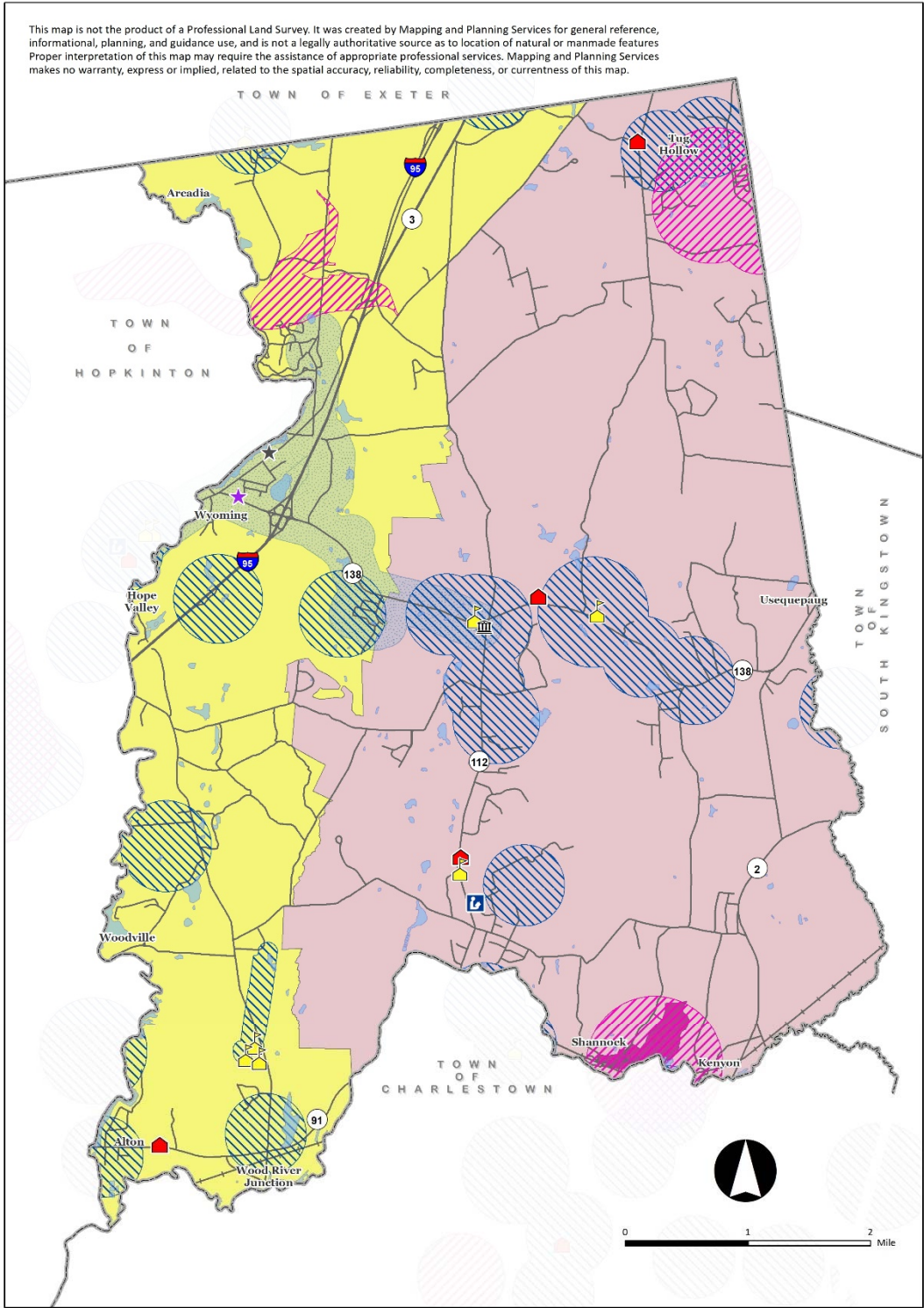
Map 9 - Transportation Network



Data sources: Richmond GIS, RIGIS

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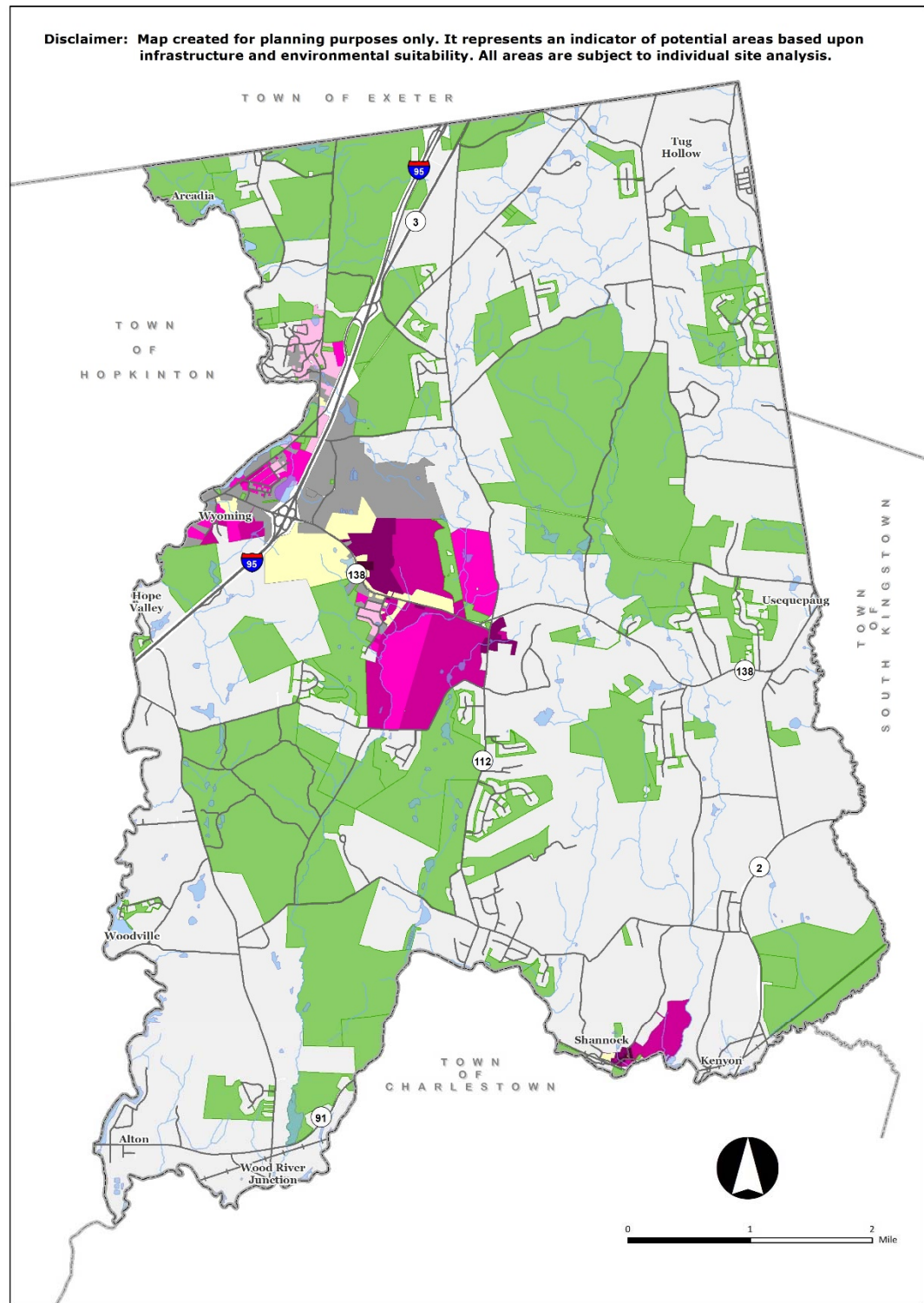
**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

Map 10 - Public Services and Facilities

- |                  |  |   |
|------------------|--|---|
| Municipal Border | Town Hall                              | Hope Valley-Wyoming Fire District                   |
| Roads            | Library                                | Richmond-Carolina Fire District                     |
| Surface Waters   | School                                 | Community Wellhead Protection Area (RIDEM 2019)     |
| Railway          | Fire Station                           | Non-Community Wellhead Protection Area (RIDEM 2018) |
|                  | Richmond Police & Community Center     | Richmond Water District Service Area (approx. only) |
|                  | RI State Police Barracks - Hope Valley | Shannock Water District Service Area (approx. only) |

Data sources: Richmond GIS, RIGIS and RIDEM

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**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

**Map 11 - Indicator of Potential Suitable Areas for Affordable Housing**

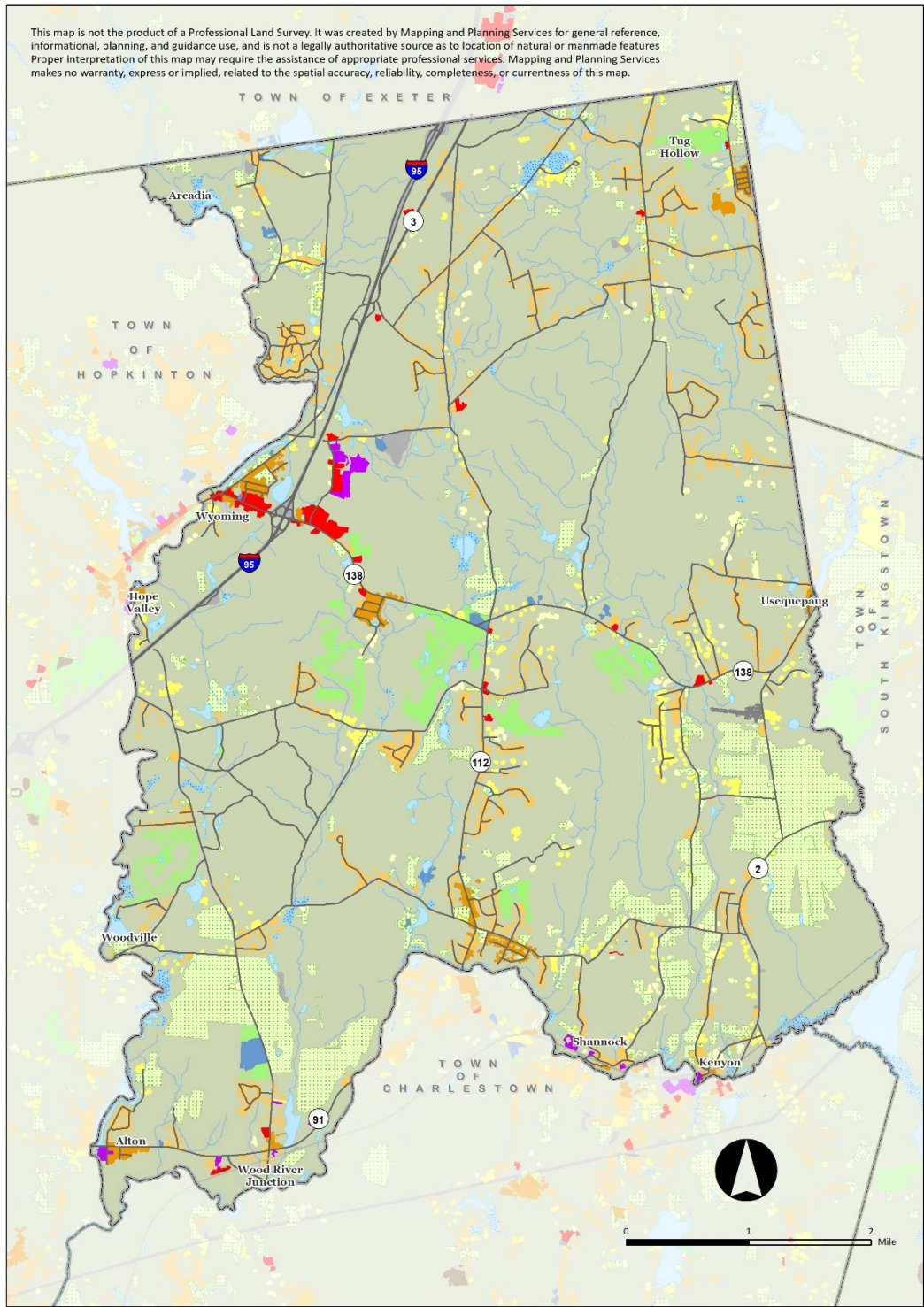
Data sources: Richmond GIS and RIGIS

This map is not the product of a Professional Land Survey. It was created by Mapping and Planning Services for general reference, informational, planning, and guidance use, and is not a legally authoritative source as to location of natural or manmade features. Proper interpretation of this map may require the assistance of appropriate professional services. Mapping and Planning Services makes no warranty, express or implied, related to the spatial accuracy, reliability, completeness, or currentness of this map.



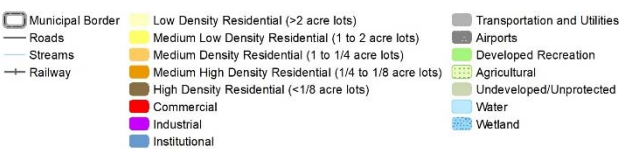
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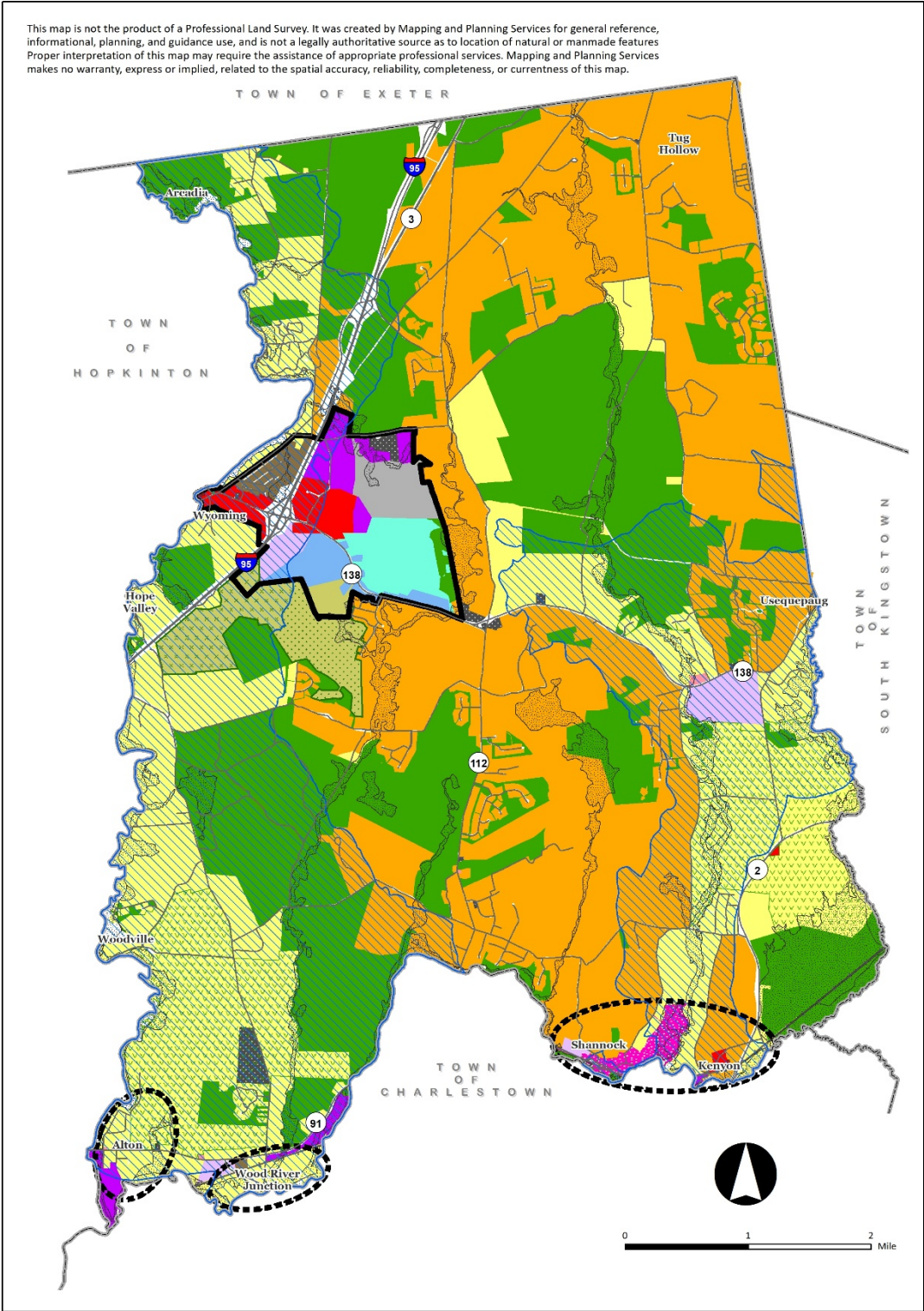
**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

Map 12 - Land Use/Land Cover (2011)



Data sources: Richmond GIS and RIGIS

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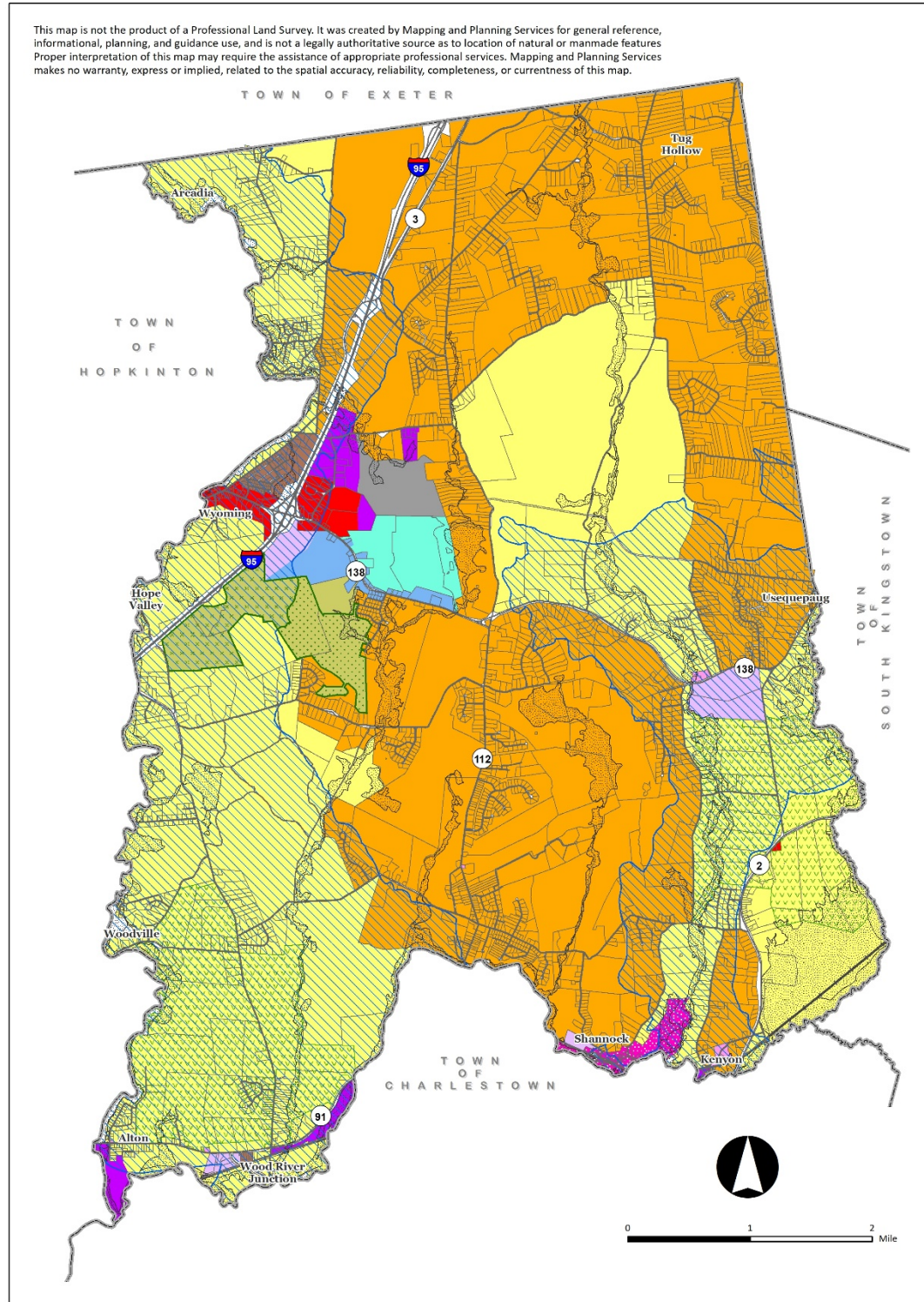


**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

Map 13 - Future Land Use Plan



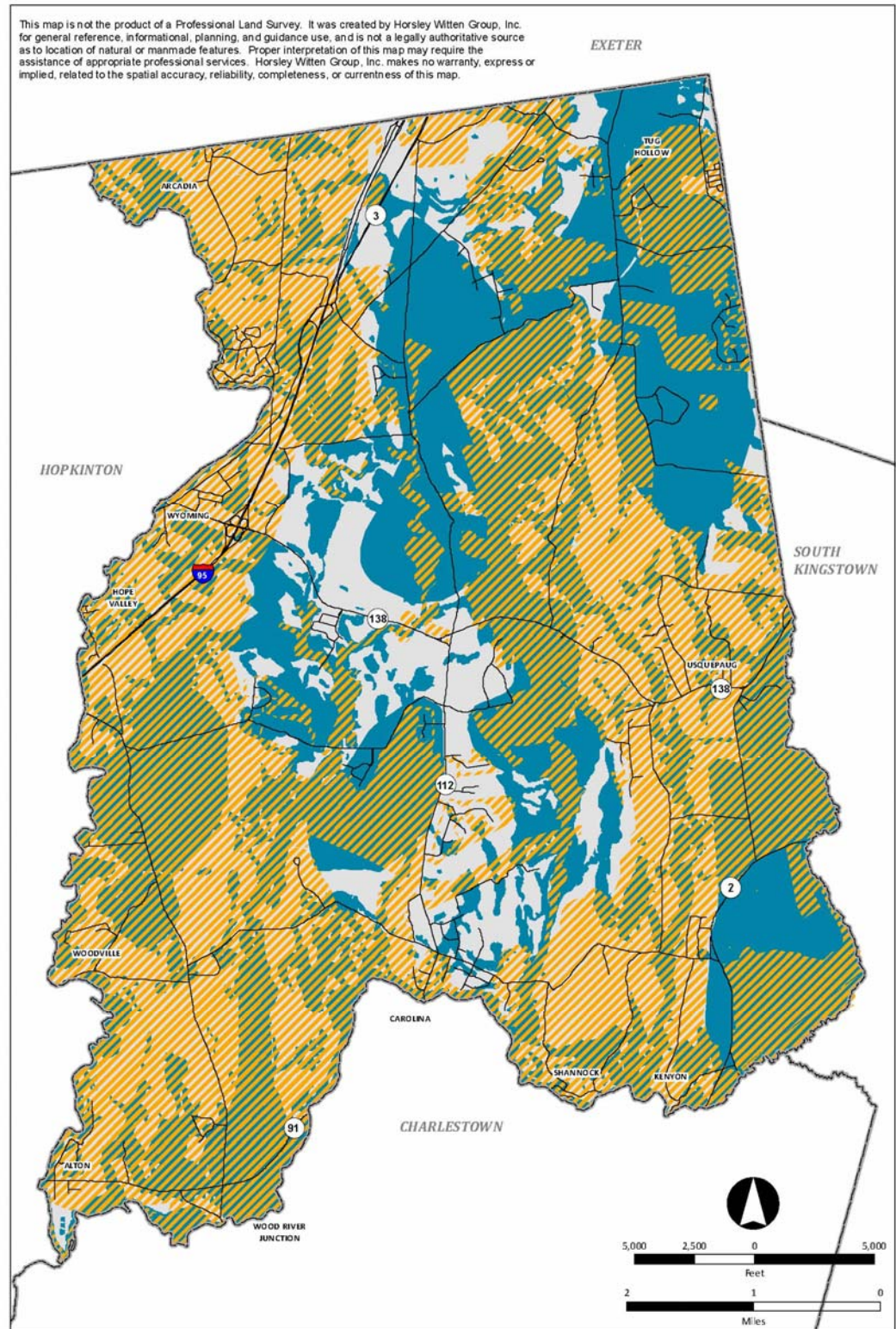




**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

Map 14 - Existing Zoning





**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

Map 15 - Composite of Constraints

- Municipal Border
- Roads
- Limited Development Areas
- Physically Constrained Areas

Map notes:  
Limited Development Areas: groundwater recharge areas, community wellhead protection areas, conservation and protected lands, cemeteries, and historic and cultural resources.  
Physically Constrained Areas: steep slopes, wetlands, rare and threatened species, and lands subject to flooding.

Data sources: Town of Richmond, RIGIS

4/24/12



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## **Appendix C: Recreation and Open Space Inventory**

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# Appendix C: Recreation and Open Space Inventory

## State of Rhode Island, Department of Environmental Management

1. Arcadia Management Area	AP 1A/50, 1B/50, 2B/50 -1-2-31; 108.80 acres Part of a large state management area in the northwestern portion of the Town which extends significantly into neighboring Hopkinton and Exeter. In Richmond, Arcadia is largely forested, with streams, and provides numerous hiking trails.
2. Arcadia	AP 2B/50-3; 49.6 acres This is part of the state property.
3. Beaver River Fishing Access	AP 9E; 0.15 acres Fishing access to the Beaver River at a point along its east bank, south of Shannock Hill Road crossing. There is no sign existing today and no parking. Also, any access that did exist at one time is now overgrown.
4. Beaver River Grove	AP 6E; 0.5 acres A pleasant grove and fishing area, east of Beaver River Road, south of Route 138, and on the west bank of the river where Route 138 crosses over the river. There is parking for several cars.
5. Canob Pond Fishing Area	AP 5B/23-1, 23-2; 1.38 acres Access point for fishing and canoes to Canob Pond. The access is currently unmarked and parking is unclear. Access to water's edge is difficult.
6. Carolina Management Area	AP 7B/52-1 & 2; 7B/50-1; AP 8B/52-10 & 16; 10B/7 & 9; 1,956.32 acres Large area. Numerous parcels combine to total nearly 2,000 acres of DEM land.
7. Dawley State Park	AP 1C/50-5; 51-6, 51-8 & 51-9; 244 acres This area is undeveloped state land in the north part of Richmond, near Arcadia Management Area.

8. DeCoppett Estate	AP 4D/1 & 4; 3D/11; 4E/1; 5D/6; 1,825 acres (approximately) More than 1,825 acres of land in the Hillsdale Road area.
9. Great Swamp Management Area	AP 9F/2 & 4; 447.20 acres A Department of Environmental Management area, most of which lies in the Town of South Kingstown. A historic colonial era battle site is located within the swamp.
10. Hannah Brown Management Area	AP 8B/52-10; 101.2 acres A conservation and management area controlled by the Department of Environmental Management.
11. Pawcatuck River Boat Launch	AP 10B; 0.5 acres A small canoe and boat launch area on the banks of the Pawcatuck River.
12. Wyoming Pond Boat Launch	AP 4A/3; 1.1 acres A fishing area and small boat launching facility. It is clearly marked and well maintained with parking for 20 vehicles.
13. Wood River Access Area (Mechanic Street Dam)	AP 5A/22, 23 & 36; 2.2 acres River access point to Wood River at North Switch Road. It is atop a hill on the site of an old mill complex.
14. Wood River Fishing Area (Barberville)	AP 2B/6; 2.1 acres Located along Arcadia Road.
15. American Fish Culture	AP 7C/17; 469.70 acres A private sporting club with fishing and hunting for a fee. The Club breeds and stocks its own game.

## Town of Richmond

16. Bell School House (Richmond Town Hall)	AP 6C/16 (includes former lot 6C/17); 2.23 acres A small one room nineteenth century schoolhouse on a corner lot adjacent to the town hall property at the intersection of Route 138 and Route 2. There is room for 10 automobiles in a sand lot behind the structure. Restored for meetings of the historic commission.
17. Elementary School Complex	AP 6C/15; 10.17 acres Town school for pre-school, kindergarten and grades 1 through 4. Recreation facilities are on the site.

18. Miantonomi Grove	AP 9E; 4 acres Former state roadside rest area off Route 2. No facilities remain and site is abandoned and overgrown.
19. Mixano Grove	AP 9E; 1 acre Former state roadside rest area off Route 2. No facilities remain and site is abandoned and overgrown.
20. Thousand Oaks	AP 4E/2; 10.8 acres A Town-owned parcel dedicated as open space for Thousand Oaks subdivision.

## Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust

21. New London Turnpike (Stetson Preserve)	AP 2D/3-33, 33-4 & 33-5; 6.16 acres
22. Old Mountain Trail (Chan Preserve)	AP 3D/14; 112.77 acres
23. Chelsea Farm Drive (Saila Preserve)	AP 6B/1; 112 acres
24. Punch Bowl Trail (Kenyon Preserve)	AP 5E/8; 62.26 acres
25. Punch Bowl Trail (Crawley Preserve)	AP 5F/23; 84.30 acres
26. Hoxsie Road (Bradner Preserve)	AP 2E/13; 63.02 acres
27. Richmond Townhouse Road (Scudder Preserve)	AP 8C/52; 65.59 acres
28. Hillsdale Road (Oviatt Preserve)	AP 3E/7; 47.27 acres Conservation easement held by Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust

## Chariho School Department

29. Chariho Regional School Department and Complex	AP 10B/2; 52 acres
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## The Nature Conservancy

30. Hillsdale Road	AP 2D/15; 55.00 acres
31. Kingstown Road	AP 6D/15-7; 11.02 acres
32. Old Mountain Trail	AP 2D/7; 159.00 acres
33. Wilbur Hill Road (off)	AP 7D/8; 47.10 acres
34. Wilbur Hill Road	AP 6D/31; 5.00 acres
35. Wilbur Hill Road	AP 6D/32; 9.6 acres
36. Hillsdale Road	AP 3E/8; 27.63 acres
37. Wilbur Hill Road	AP 6D/30; 34.64 acres
38. Kingstown Road	AP 6D/15; 11.43 acres
39. Wilbur Hill Road	AP 6D/14; 29.79 acres
40. Wilbur Hill Road	AP 6D/14-1; 38.50 acres
41. Kingstown Road	AP 6D/12-3; 13.32 acres

## Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association

42. Church Street	AP 10B/10-1; 3.00 acres
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## The Rhode Island Audubon Society

43. 251 Arcadia Road	AP 2B/19; 12.69 acres
44. Cherry Lane	AP 2B/29-5; 2.07 acres
45. Cherry Lane	AP 2B/ 29-8; 2.80 acres
46. Old Mountain	AP 3D/4; 3.50 acres
47. K G Ranch Road	AP 2B/22; 49.50 acres
48. K G Ranch Road	AP 2B/28-15; 2.24 acres
49. K G Ranch Road	AP 2B/29-9; 2.05 acres
50. Biscuit City	AP 10E/24; 14.40 acres
51. White Oak	AP 2D/5; 14.60 acres
52. Wood River	AP 3B/4-4; .34 acres

## Privately Owned Land

53. Meadow Brook Golf Course	AP 6C/9, 9-3 & 9-4; 243 acres A private, 18-hole golf course.
54. Washington County Pomana Grange	AP 7D/7; 115.7 acres The Washington County Grange and Fairgrounds is a privately owned and run fairground that is leased out for activities. Facilities include public water and enclosed accommodations.
55. Wawaloam Reservation	AP 1E/17; 93.44 acres Wawaloam Reservation and Campground has 100 camp sites, 18-hole miniature golf course, and other recreation facilities.
56. Richmond Country Club	AP8A/2; 205 acres A private, 18-hole golf course.
57. Pinecrest Golf Course	AP 8D/2; 41.02 acres A private, 18-hole golf course.
58. Beaver River Golf Course	AP 6E/38-1; 93.85 acres A private, 18-hole golf course.

## Private Recreation & Open Space in Residential Subdivisions

59. Whitetail Cluster	AP 6D/7; 20.93 acres
60. Camelot Estates 1	AP 3E/21-1A, 8.36 acres; AP 3E/21-1B, 14.97 acres
61. Camelot Estates 2	AP 3E/12-2; 49.44 acres
62. Camelot Estates 3	AP 3E/12-3A, 6.01 acres; AP 3E/12-3B, 27.59 acres
63. Marie Estates	AP 2C/10; 6.80 acres
64. Beaver River Estates	AP 6E/38-7; 11.88 acres
65. Foster Woods	AP 6B/9-1, 31.96 acres; AP 6B/19-34, 3.53 acres; AP 6B/19-35, 1.08 acres; AP 6B/19-36, 1.01 acres
66. Knotty Pine	AP 8A/3, 9.44 acres; AP 9A/24, .44 acres
67. Richmond Hills II	AP 7E/31-43, 2.26 acres; AP 7E/31-44, 2.57 acres; AP 7E/31-45, 5.72 acres
68. Cedar Hills	AP 7C/18; 34.14 acres
69. Castle Ridge	AP 8C/60-2; 7.10 acres
70. Classic Acres	AP 6E/ 44; 14.12 acres
71. Fox Ridge Estates	AP 3D/17; 10.77 acres



72. Fairside Farms	AP 7C/12-A, 1.80 acres; AP 7C/12-B, .57 acres; AP 7C/12-C, 10.20 acres; AP 7C/12-D, 3.10 acres
73. Hillcrest Estates	AP 2E/5; 48.30 acres
74. Pine Glen	AP 6E/40; 4.70 acres
75. Sand Pines	AP 10B/45-A, 76.77 acres; AP 10B/45-B, 1.16 acres; AP 10B/45-C, 1.12 acres
76. Rising Trout	AP 6A/20; 9.42 acres
77. Greenbrier Estates	AP 6E/22; 22.17 acres
78. Oak Cluster	AP 3C/6; 38.90 acres
79. Oakhill Estates	AP 6E/17, 44.51 acres; AP 6E/17-100, 13.42 acres; AP 5E/6-101, 6.24 acres; AP 5E/6-100, .51 acres
80. Pond View Estates	AP 6D/12-1; 21.89 acres
81. Shannock Heights III	AP 9D/43; 13.50 acres
82. Castle Ridge II	AP 7C/2-60, 1.81 acres; AP 7C/2-61, 2.10 acres
83. County Fair Estates	AP 7C/39; 21.82 acres
84. Bass Rock	AP 9D/42; 16.40 acres
85. William Reynolds Farm	AP 1D/18; 25.63 acres

## Other Town Property

86. Valley Lodge Estates	AP 3B/4-L; 3.3 acres Gobeille Drive, possible wetlands
87. Switch and Pine Hill Road	AP 9B/7; 0.6 acre
88. New London Turnpike	AP 3C/3; 2.0 acres Landlocked wetlands
89. Former Town Landfill	AP 4C/26, 27 & 29; 20.73 acres
90. Pinehurst and Richmond Townhouse Roads	AP 8C/43; 1.4 acres Lot opposite Clark Memorial Library
91. Old Mountain Road	AP 3C/31; 2.68 acres Landlocked property adjacent to Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust owned site

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## Appendix D

# Historic & Cultural Resources Inventory

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# D

## Historic & Cultural Resources Inventory

**Table D-1 Historic and Cultural Resources Inventory**

Site #	Period	Description
RI 155	---	Shannock Hill Road – Cup and Saucer Rock
RI 156	Prehistoric	Route 138 – Stationary Mortar
RI 157	Prehistoric	Dawley Park Road – rockshelter
RI 158	Prehistoric	Route 112 – habitation
RI 159	Prehistoric; Historic; 19 <sup>th</sup> century	West of Kings Factory – artifact cluster/scatter
RI 160	Prehistoric; Woodland	West of Kings Factory – rockshelter
RI 292	Prehistoric	Benjamin James Farm – Ellis Flats – unknown; artifact cluster/scatter
RI 293	Prehistoric	Canob Pond – unknown; artifact cluster/scatter
RI 369	Historic; 19 <sup>th</sup> century	Tug Hollow – commercial; tollgate
RI 370	Historic; 19 <sup>th</sup> century	New London Turnpike – commercial; tollgate
RI 371	Historic; 19 <sup>th</sup> century	Nooseneck Hill Road – commercial; grist mill
RI 374	Historic	Route 138 – industrial; mill
RI 638	Prehistoric	Bald Hill Road – artifact cluster/scatter
RI 680	Historic; 19 <sup>th</sup> century	Hillsdale Historic and Archaeological District – Hillsdale Road – 45 sites
RI 697	Prehistoric; archaic; late	Grozke Site
RI 719	Prehistoric	Nooseneck Hill Road – Arcadia Sample Area 4976
RI 938	Prehistoric	Gardiner Locus I – Route 138 – artifact cluster/scatter; habitation?
RI 943	Prehistoric; historic	Sohl Property – Route 138 – habitation; commercial
RI 944	Historic; 19 <sup>th</sup> ; 20 <sup>th</sup>	Rawlings – Route 138 – habitation

**Table D-1 Historic and Cultural Resources Inventory (Continued)**

Site #	Period	Description
RI 946	Historic; 18th; 19th; 20th	Northrup Property – Route 138 – habitation; commercial, agrarian
RI 952	Prehistoric; archaic	Lamb/Barber Property Route 138 – artifact cluster/scatter
RI 963	Historic; 17th	“Old Indian Fort” – military fortification
RI 964	Prehistoric	Kenyon Site – artifact cluster/scatter
RI 971	Historic; 19th; 20th	Shannock Historic District – industrial; habitation
RI 1068	Prehistoric	Carla Ricci Farm – Route 112 – artifact cluster/scatter
RI 1069	Historic; 18th; 19th; 20th	Route 112 – habitation; agrarian
RI 1296	Prehistoric	K.G. Ranch Road Pumping Station
RI 1297	Prehistoric	K.G. Ranch Road – artifact cluster/scatter
RI 1298	Prehistoric	K.G. Ranch Road Pipeline – artifact cluster/scatter
RI 1299	Prehistoric	K.G. Ranch Road Pipeline East – artifact cluster/scatter
RI 1953	Prehistoric	Hope Valley – unknown
RI 2132	Prehistoric	Gardiner Locus II – Route 138 – artifact cluster/scatter
RI 2133	Prehistoric	Laurie – Route 138 – artifact cluster/scatter
RI 2135	Prehistoric	Rawlings Locus I – Route 138
RI 2136	Prehistoric	Rawlings Locus II – Route 138
RI 2147	Prehistoric	Friends’ Cemetery – artifact cluster
RI 2148	Prehistoric	Action Community Land Trust
RI 2149	Prehistoric; historic; 18th	Bosworth
RI 2380	Prehistoric	Altamonte Ridge – artifact cluster
RI2381	Prehistoric	Bend-in-the-Trail site – artifact cluster
RI2382	Prehistoric	Stubtail Snake – artifact cluster
RI 2419	Historic; 18th, 19th, 20th	Knowles/Charmichael Mill – industrial, mill foundations
RI 2426	Prehistoric	Camelot Site – artifact cluster
RI 2612	Prehistoric; historic; 19th	Arcadia Road – artifact cluster/habitation
RI 2793	Historic; 18th; 19th	Farmstead complex
RI 2795	Prehistoric	Beaver River Road – artifact cluster/scatter
RI 2796	Historic; 19th; 20th	Beaver River Road – Farmstead complex

**Table D-2 Historic Cemeteries in Richmond (Continued)**

Number Assigned by RIHC	Location	Cemetery Name
Rd 1	Dawley Park Road	Reynolds Lot
Rd 2	Tug Hollow Road	Reynolds Lot
Rd 3	Gardner Road	Gardner-Sisson Lot
Rd 4	Gardiner Road	Hoxsie Lot
Rd 5	Hoxsie Road	Moore Lot
Rd 6	Old Mountain Trail	Beverly Lot
Rd 7	Corner of New London Turnpike & Carolina-Nooseneck	Kenyon-Clarke Lot
Rd 8	Unavailable	Unknown Lot
Rd 9	Unavailable	Unknown Lot
Rd 10	K G Ranch Road	Benedict Kenyon Lot
Rd 11	Unavailable	Unknown Lot
Rd 12	South County Trail	Joshua Clarke Lot
Rd 13	Gardiner Road	Moore Lot
Rd 14	King Arthur Court	Jonathan James Lot
Rd 15	Unavailable	Sherman Lot
Rd 16	Route 138	Friends - Usequepaug Lot
Rd 17	Route 138 at Beaver River Road	Clarke Family Lot
Rd 18	Route 138	Webster - Boss Lot
Rd 19	Carolina Nooseneck Road	Lillibridge Lot
Rd 20	Carolina Nooseneck Road-Route 3	Wood River Cemetery
Rd 21	Nooseneck Hill Road/New London Turnpike	Hassard Lot
Rd 22	Nooseneck Hill Road	Williams Lot
Rd 23	Old Switch Road, west of I-95	Brown Cemetery
Rd 24	Woodville Road	Larkin-Kenyon Lot
Rd 25	Woodville Road	Collins Lot
Rd 26	Pine Hill Road	Larkin Lot
Rd 27	Pine Hill Road	Matthew Potter Lot
Rd 28	Pine Hill Road	White Brook Cemetery
Rd 29	Pine Hill Road	Jarvis Kenyon Lot
Rd 30	Shannock Road	Babcock Family
Rd 31	Shannock Road	Burlingame Lot

**Table D-2 Historic Cemeteries in Richmond (Continued)**

Number Assigned by RIHC	Location	Cemetery Name
Rd 32	North Shannock Road	Clarke Lot
Rd 33	Lewiston Ave	Clarke Lot
Rd 34	Lewiston Ave	Kenyon Lot
Rd 35	Hope Valley Road (Switch Road - 1996)	Drown-Baggs Lot
Rd 36	Hope Valley Road	Stillman Lot
Rd 37	Route 138 & Route 95	Lewis-Card Cemetery
Rd 38	Sandy Pond Road	Maxon Lot
Rd 39	South County Trail	Ichabod Peterson Lot
Rd 40	Buttonwoods Road	Ezekiel Tefft Lot
Rd 41	Kingston Road (Route 138)	Woodmancee Lot
Rd 42	Hillsdale Road	Woodmansee Lot
Rd 43	Hillsdale Road	Fielding-Vallet Lot
Rd 44	James Trail	Unknown Lot
Rd 45	Hoxie Trail	Hoxsie Monument
Rd 46	Shannock Road	Unknown Lot
Rd 47	Unavailable	Boggs Meeting House Lot
Rd 48	South County Trail	Stanton Lot
Rd 49	Old Switch Road	Hoxie Lot
Rd 50	Hope Valley Road	Hoxie-Kenyon Lot
Rd 51	Shippee Trail	Essex-Larkin Lot
Rd 52	Alton Carolina Road	Wilbur Cemetery
Rd 53	Punchbowl Trail	Phillips Lot
Rd 54	Off Punchbowl Trail-On Webb Farm near Hillsdale	Phillips-Barber Lot
Rd 55	Carolina Nooseneck Road	Bailey Lot
Rd 56	Cal EdwaRoads House	Potter Lot
Rd 57	James Trail & Hillsdale Road	Gardner James Lot
Rd 58	Hope Valley Road	Enos Lot
Rd 59	Unavailable	Brown Lot
Rd 60	Skunk Hill Road	Boss Lot
Rd 61	Beaver River Road	Willian Greene Lot
Rd 62	Kenyon Trail	Prosser Lot
Rd 63	New London Turnpike	Unknown Lot



**Table D-2 Historic Cemeteries in Richmond (Continued)**

Number Assigned by RIHC	Location	Cemetery Name
Rd 64	William Reynolds Farm Road	Jesse Reynolds Lot
Rd 65	Route 112	Edward Tefft Lot
Rd 66	Route 138 & I-95	David Kenyon Lot
Rd 67	Switch Road	Joseph E Baggs Lot
Rd 68	Kenyon Trail	Foster Lot
Rd 69	Beaver River Grove	Tefft Lot
Rd 70	Unavailable	Unknown Lot
Rd 71	Unavailable	Wright Lot
Rd 72	Baker Pines Road	Baker Pines Cemetery
Rd 73	Wilbur Hill Road	Tefft Lot
Rd 74	Essex Trail	Reynolds Lillibridge Lot
Rd 75	New London Turnpike	Unknown Lot
Rd 76	Route 112	Unknown Lot
Rd 77	Unavailable	Unknown Lot
Rd 78	Hilldale Road	Unknown Lot
Rd 79	Back of Halsey Kenyon's Place	Unknown Lot
Rd 80	Back of The Dziekonski's Place	Unknown Lot
Rd 81	Route 138	Unknown Lot
Rd 82	Lewiston Ave	Moller-Link Lot
Rd 83	Unavailable	Ezekiel James Lot
Rd 84	Oakland Road Off James Trail	James Lot
Rd 102	Unavailable	Reynolds Lot
Rd 194	Unavailable	Marchant Family Lot
Rd 205	Unavailable	Worden Family
Rd 500	Unavailable	Hoxsie Lot
Rd 520	Tefft Hill Road	Unknown Lot
Rd 530	William Reynolds Farm Road	Unknown Lot
Rd 540	Route 138	Unknown Lot
Rd 697	Unavailable	Hazard Lot
Rd 791	Unavailable	Clarke Family

Source: Obtained from the RI Historic Cemeteries website: <http://www.rihc.info/index.php>

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## Appendix E: Level of Service

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## Appendix E: Level of Service

A road's level of service (LOS) is a quantitative measure of service that combines such factors as speed and travel time, ease of maneuvering, traffic delays, driver convenience, and safety.

- LOS A Free flow at average travel speeds; unrestricted maneuvering.
- LOS B Traffic moves at 70 percent of the free flow speed; maneuvering is slightly impeded.
- LOS C Stable operating conditions.
- LOS D Average speeds are 50 percent of free flow speed.
- LOS E Average speeds are 30 percent of free flow speed.
- LOS F Low travel speed; frequent traffic congestion.

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# **Appendix F: Town of Richmond Buildout Analysis 2018**

(In support of Comprehensive Plan Update)

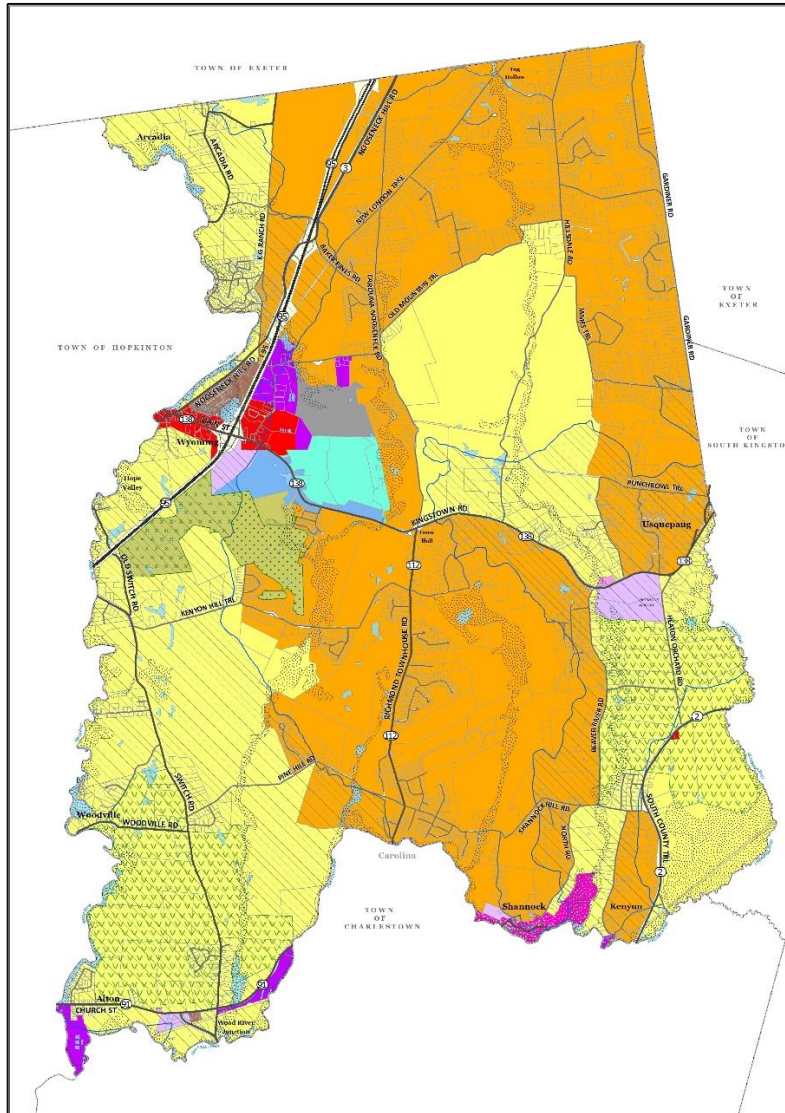
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# Town of Richmond

## Buildout Analysis 2018

In support of Comprehensive Plan Update



February 26, 2019

**FINAL DRAFT**



MAPPING AND PLANNING SERVICES  
PLANNING ~ GIS ~ CARTOGRAPHY

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# Richmond Residential Buildout Analysis 2018

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## I. Introduction

This 2018 Buildout Analysis is conducted in support of the *Town of Richmond's Comprehensive Community Plan Update*. It estimates both the amount and location of future single-family residential development allowed under the Town's *Zoning Ordinance* ("Ordinance" hereafter), *Zoning Map* and *Land Development and Subdivision Regulations* ("Regulations" hereafter). It also provides an update to the Richmond Buildout Analysis 2004 that was conducted in support of the *Richmond Affordable House Plan 2004*.

## II. Methodology

The 2018 residential buildout analysis is conducted using digital data from the Town of Richmond's Geographic Information System (GIS), the Tax Assessor's CAMA database as of December 31, 2018 and RIGIS. Projections are conducted on a lot-by-lot basis under current zoning conditions with amendments through September 20, 2016.

The following are the steps used to prepare the residential analysis:

1. Identify areas considered Unsuitable for Development (wetlands, flood hazard areas, soils) and map.
2. Identify areas that are existing open space and/or other public lands and map. Identify areas where additional growth and development can occur and map.
3. Calculate the number of lots based on subdivision potential, and summarize by zoning district.
4. Determine the number of existing dwelling units per lot, map and summarize by zoning district.
5. Calculate the number of additional dwelling units permitted, based on existing dwelling units and on the subdivision potential of the lot, map and summarize by zoning district.
6. Calculate the number of incentive dwelling units that would be required, and summarize by zoning district.
7. Project total population at buildout based on the total number of additional single-family dwelling units (including incentive units).
8. Estimate the 20-year housing projection.

## III. Assumptions

The following is a list of the major assumptions used to prepare the residential analysis:

**Permitted As-of-Right:** Only single-family residential dwelling units that are permitted as-of-right are considered. These are the R-1, R-2, R-3, NB, PDR, PUDVC and SV zoning districts (per Ordinance, Table 18.16.010) and the Agricultural Overlay District.

**Zoning and Density:** Existing zoning conditions are considered. Where lots are split by two zoning districts (e.g., R-3 / I) any existing dwelling units are allocated to the portion of the lot that allows single-family dwellings, and the development potential of the portion permitting residential (i.e., R-3) is calculated. See Figure 1 -- Existing Zoning Map.

**Land Unsuitable for Development:** Areas of fresh water wetlands, ponds, flood hazard, soils (with ledge, rock outcrops, poorly filtered, large stones) are excluded from the buildout analysis, per Regulations Section 3.3.2. See Figure 2 – Land Unsuitable for Development.

**Existing Open Space & Public Land:** No new development will occur on any existing public or private open space lands (Federal, State, Town, Richmond Land Trust, Audubon Society of Rhode Island, The Nature Conservancy, farms with purchased development rights, subdivision open space, etc.), cemeteries, and other tax-exempt properties (churches, schools, town, etc.). These areas are excluded from the analysis. See Figure 3 – Areas Excluded from Buildout Analysis.

*Note: The development potential of 4 privately-owned golf courses are considered and displayed on Figure 6 and presented in Table 5.*

**Land Suitable for Development:** Areas that are not identified as being ‘unsuitable for development’ and are not ‘existing open space or public land’ (see above definitions) are considered to be suitable for development. Suitable areas on a lot that are not contiguous are considered as a whole in the calculations. See Figure 4 – Land Suitable for Development by Zoning District, and summarized by zoning district in Table 1.

*Note: Portions of lots less than 1,000 sf in area were excluded in the calculations for additional lots or dwelling units, so as to not to over-estimate the projection of additional dwelling unit, in particular those allowed as-of-right.*

**Lot Area:** The GIS calculated area for all lots, or portions thereof, is used for all the build-out calculations. This is because polygon areas must be recalculated if lots have a split zoning district, have portions that are identified as Unsuitable for Development, etc.

**Existing Dwelling Units:** Count of existing dwelling units per lot is determined using the Assessor’s database, from the field LandUse\_Code (e.g., ‘1010’ single-family, ‘1012’ single-fam w/ in-law, ‘1040’ two-family, etc). Additional verification is made using the VISION Appraisal Property Record Cards (see: <http://gis.vgsi.com/richmondri/Search.aspx>). Where lots are split by two zoning districts (e.g., R-3 / I ) any existing dwelling units are assigned to the residential portion of the lot. See Figure 5 – Distribution of All Existing Dwelling Units and summarized by zoning district in Table 2.

**Relationship of Existing Dwelling Units to Additional Dwelling Units:** If there is more than one existing dwelling unit on a lot, and the lot has subdivision potential, then these existing dwelling units are assigned to one of the new lots, in accordance with Ordinance 18.36.010 as it relates to approved land development projects. Additional dwelling units will be located on the other lots created.

**Mobile Homes:** Existing mobile homes in mobile home parks (e.g., the 108 units on the Wawaloam Reservation) are included in the existing dwelling unit count. These units are considered permanent housing and as such contribute to the Town’s affordable housing requirements.

*Effect: The existing unit count is higher than what would be permitted if the property were subdivided into 1 acre house lots. Mobile homes in other areas were not included in the existing dwelling unit count (estimated at 10).*

**Inclusionary Zoning (Incentive Dwelling Units):** Any development that results in the net addition of six or more dwelling units must contribute to the production of low or moderate income housing in Richmond. In determining how many incentive dwelling units must be produced, the basic number of units permitted is multiplied by 15%, and fractions are rounded up. See Table 4 for projected incentive dwelling units summarized by zoning district. See Figure 6 – Projected Distribution of Dwelling Units at Buildout. This figure includes additional single-family units and incentive units (shown in red).

For example: 11A/006-000 R-3 zoning  
ASFAM = 14  
Inc\_DU = 2.1  
Inc\_DUR(ounded) = 3

**Accessory Dwelling Units:** These units are not considered as part of this analysis, since the zoning board may require a special use permit for an accessory dwelling unit to be located on the same lot as the principal single-family dwelling (with conditions). See Ordinance 18.36.040.

*Note: Special use permits are not considered, although were considered in the 2004 Richmond Buildout Analysis.*

**Nonconforming Lots:** The ownership patterns of non-conforming lots are not considered (as per required under the Ordinance, Section 18.48.020), however all non-conforming lots are considered buildable as long as there was at least 1,000 sf of area deemed Suitable for Development.

*Effect: This exclusion over-estimates the buildout projections.*

**Access and Frontage:** It is assumed that all existing lots have road access (or accessibility can be obtained by an easement) and has the required frontage for subdivision. Neither the shape, minimum frontage or location of an existing lot, nor the shape, minimum frontage or location of potential lots is considered.

*Effect: This over-estimates the development potential of a lot and therefore the buildout.*

**Subdivision:** All lots that can be subdivided (based on the area Suitable for Development) will be subdivided. If two lots can be created it is assumed that no road would be created. If three or more lots can be created, a road or road extension will be created, where 5% of the existing lot (based on area Suitable for Development) is allocated to roads.

**Planned Development Resort District:** The PDR district allows a variety of commercial and non-commercial recreational facilities, hotel and event facilities, etc. and a restricted-access residential area. The maximum residential density permitted is 1 du per 3 acres of land suitable for development on the western portion of the PDR district, and 1 du per 2 acres on the eastern portion of the district. Under Ordinance 18.26.080 no development in the PDR district is permitted within 100' of the PDR district boundary, and this linear area, as well as the area identified as Land Unsuitable for Development was removed from the subdivision potential of the district. All the area identified as Suitable for Development was considered to be subdividable under the two residential densities. The existing golf course at The Preserve was not considered for future residential development.

*Note: The analysis over-estimates the amount of single-family residential development, given that commercial and other permitted uses are not factored in.*

**Planned Unit Development-Village Center District:** Within the PUDVC district is the Richmond Commons mixed-use development where 399 two-bedroom dwelling units have been approved. (These dwelling units are located in 12 multi-family and 33 two-family buildings where 15% of those units must be deed-restricted for Low-Moderate Income individuals/families). The development potential of the 5-acre PUDVC lot 05B/066-000 fronting Kingstown Road (not part of Richmond Commons) is considered.

**Agricultural Overlay District:** Lots that are more than fifty percent within the Agricultural Overlay District are considered within this overlay district, and subject to a minimum subdivision of 5 acres. Conservation developments and residential compounds are not considered, as no more than one residential unit per five acres of land suitable for development is permitted.

**Conservation Developments:** Since the maximum residential density in a conservation development shall not exceed the density permitted by the yield plan, plus any incentive dwelling units, this requirement does not become a factor in this analysis. No additional calculations are needed.

**Residential Compounds:** These are not considered in any of the zoning districts.

**Availability of Public Water:** Based on the best-available mailing information provided by the Shannock Water District and existing waterline mapping, it is estimated that 33 of the 49 lots within the Shannock Village (SV) zoning district are served by public water. The minimum lot size for residential development

in the SV district is 1 acre (with no public water) and 20,000 sf (with public water), per Ordinance 18.20.010.

**Population Projection:** It is assumed that the multipliers to calculate future population will remain constant until build-out. The 2016 American Community Survey's Average Household Size of 2.67 persons for Richmond is used as the basis to estimate both the existing (2018) and projected population of the Town. This is a combination of owner and renter households.

#### IV. Buildout Results

**Existing Dwelling Units:** Using the Town's Parcel GIS and CAMA data our "best-estimate" of single-family dwelling units on a parcel-by-parcel basis as of December 31, 2018 is 3,090 (across all zoning districts). Table 2 summarizes the estimated dwelling units in each zoning district. See Figure 5 – Distribution of All Existing Dwelling Units.

*Note: The 2016 American Community Survey's DP04 indicates 2,930 existing housing units in Richmond. Based on this comparison we are confident with our estimated basis. See Table 3 below.*

**Projected Dwelling Units:** At buildout it is projected that an additional 2,150 residential lots could be created, and an additional 2,789 residential units could be built. Under existing zoning this translates into a projected total of 5,879 dwelling units (across all zoning districts) within the community. See Table 2, 3 and 4. See Figure 6 – Projected Distribution of Dwelling Units at Buildout under Existing Zoning.

**Projected Lots:** At buildout an additional 2,150 lots could be created, bringing the total to 5,524 lots. The R-2 district has the most land suitable for development (6,263 acres) and over 73% of new lots will occur here. Within all the districts that allow single-family housing, some 10,275 acres or 43% are considered to be suitable for development. See Table 1.

**Population:** Using the Town's base data it is estimated the 2018 year-end population is 8,250 persons. At buildout it is projected that Richmond's population could increase by 90 %, or 7,447 persons, bringing the total population to 15,697 persons.

A comparison of the 20-year housing and population projections from this 2018 Buildout Analysis to the Statewide Planning's projections is also included in Table 3 below. Based on this comparison we are confident with our estimated basis for both the 20-year projections and buildout projections made in this 2018 Analysis.

**Table 3: Comparison of Existing Units and Projections, Richmond, 2018**

Existing Housing Units <sup>1</sup>	Population <sup>2</sup>	20-year Housing Unit Projection <sup>3</sup>	20-year Population Projection <sup>4</sup>	Housing Unit Projection at Buildout <sup>5</sup>	Population Projection at Buildout <sup>6</sup>
3,090	8,250	3,478	9,286	5,879	15,697

*From Statewide Planning's 2017 Data Points for Comprehensive Planning, Richmond*

Existing Housing Units <sup>7</sup>	Population <sup>7</sup>	20-year Housing Unit Projection <sup>8</sup>	20-year Population Projection <sup>9</sup>
2,930	7,618	3,886	10,376

*Data Sources:*

- 1 2018 Richmond GIS and VISION 2018.
- 2 Calculated by multiplying the average household size of 2.67 persons by the Existing Housing Units.
- 3 Calculated by multiplying the average housing units added over the past 10+ years (19.4) by 20 (years).
- 4 Calculated by multiplying the average household size by the 20-year housing unit projection.
- 5 Projection based on 2018 Richmond GIS and VISION 2018.
- 6 Calculated by multiplying the Projected Housing Units at Buildout by the average household size persons.
- 7 2016 American Community Survey (ACS) DP04
- 8 Calculated by dividing the 20-year population projection by the average household size.
- 9 RI SPP 20-year population projections, available at <http://www.planning.ri.gov/geodeminfo/data/popprojections.php>

**20-year Housing Unit Projection:** The relative trend in housing developments since the 2000 Census show an increase of 310 units, according to SPP's Richmond 2017 Data Points for Comprehensive Planning. This translates into approx. 19.4 new housing units per annum (calculated over a 16-year basis). For the Richmond Residential Buildout Analysis 2018 we estimate the 20-year housing projection is 3,478 units. This is more modest than Statewide Planning's 20-year housing projection.

## V. Comparison with the 2004 Buildout Analysis

**Table 4: Comparison of Richmond Buildout Analysis 2018 to Richmond Buildout Analysis 2004:**

	2018 Buildout Analysis	2004 Buildout Analysis <sup>1</sup>
Base Population	8,250	7,996 <sup>2</sup>
Base Housing Units	3,090	2,775
Projected New Lots at Buildout (residential only)	2,150	3,316
Projected New Dwelling Units at Buildout (residential only, including Incentive units)	2,789	3,522
Projected Total Units at Buildout (all zones)	5,879	6,297
Land Suitable for Development (all zones, acres) <sup>3</sup>	10,275	11,846
Average Household Size	2.67 <sup>4</sup>	2.76 <sup>2</sup>
Projected Population Increase	7,444	9,720
Projected Total Population at Buildout	15,689	17,380

*Data Sources:*

- <sup>1</sup> MPS, January 31, 2005, Town of Richmond Buildout Analysis 2004, In support of Affordable Housing Plan
- <sup>2</sup> Calculated based on Average Household Size, 2000 US Census of Population and Housing
- <sup>3</sup> Richmond GIS, 2018 and 2004, Parcels and Conservation, Open Space and Recreation data
- <sup>4</sup> 2016 ACS B25010

*Note: In the 2004 Buildout Analysis the 2004 base population may have been over-estimated by using the average household size of 2.76, instead of 2.66. If 2.66 was used instead then the Base Population would have been 7,382 persons, with a Projected Population Increase of 9,369, for a Projected Total Population at Buildout of 16,751. Further the Town and its conservation partners have added considerable land holdings to its' open space, conservation and recreation inventory, through acquisition, conservation easements, the subdivision process, etc. since 2004. Further in 2016 the Town's Open Space, Conservation and Open Space GIS dataset underwent a comprehensive update and verification process, providing a more accurate representation of these areas. Due to all of these factors the total land area identified as Land Suitable for Development is considerably less in 2018, despite the fact that four golf courses are considered as developable in the 2018 analysis.*

## 1VI. Development of Privately-owned Golf Courses

The development potential of four privately-owned golf courses: Beaver River, Meadowbrook, Pinecrest and Richmond are summarized in Table 5 below. We understand that these commercial outdoor recreation facilities, although contributing to the community's character and open spaces, are not protected from development and could be under development pressure at some point in the future.

**Table 5 : Projected SF Dwelling Units and Lots on Privately-Owned Golf Courses, Richmond, 2018**

Name	Map-Block- Lot	Zoning District	Suitable for Development (Acres)	Additional Lots	Additional Dwelling Units
Beaver River GC	06E/038-001	R-2	79	36	37
Meadowbrook GC	06C/009-000	R-2	209	98	99
Pinecrest GC	08D/002-000	R-2	38	17	18
Richmond CC	08A/002-000	R-3	153	47	48
<b>Total</b>			<b>479</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>202</b>

*Note: These projections and acreages are also INCLUDED in Tables 1 and 2, and delineated on Figure 6 – Projected Distribution of Dwelling Units at Buildout under Existing Zoning. There are no existing dwelling units on the properties, so one additional lot is allowed-as-of-right on each property.*



**Table 1 : Projected Lots at Buildout by Zoning District, Richmond, 2018**

Zoning District	Minimum Lot Size (SF)	Total Zoning District (Acres)	Land Suitable for Development (Acres)	District Suitable for Development (%)	Existing Lots	Projected Additional Lots	Total Lots at Buildout
R-1	43,560	98	63	64	88	19	107
R-2	87,120	11,685	6,263	54	2,103	1,567	3,670
R-3	130,680	8,278	2,191	26	978	262	1,240
NB	43,560	9	6	67	6	1	7
PDR (1 du per 2 acres)	87,120	599	33	37	4	14	73
PDR (1 du per 3 acres)	130,680		188			55	
PUDVC	12,000	299	251	84	8	11	19
SV (with public water)	20,000	121	42	40	31	65	96
SV (with no public water)	43,560		7		16	0	16
Ag Overlay	217,800	2,782	1,231	44	140	156	296
Subtotal		23,871	10,275	43	3,374	2,150	5,524
Other (GB, FT, LI, I, PD and uncoded lots) <sup>1</sup>		1,032	n/a	n/a	171	n/a	171
Total		24,903	10,275	n/a	3,545	2,150	5,524

Footnotes: Figures for Beaver River, Meadowbrook, Pinecrest and Richmond golf courses are INCLUDED (Land Suitable for Development, Existing Lots, Projected Additional Lots, etc.).

<sup>1</sup> Uncoded lots (includes the railway lots and five underwater lots at town-line/Wood River)

**Table 2 : Projected Single-Family Dwelling Units at Buildout by Zoning District, Richmond, 2018**

Zoning District	Existing DU's <sup>1</sup>	Projected Additional SF DU's	Projected Incentive DU's	Total DU's at Buildout	Increase in DU's at Buildout (%)
R-1	79	30	3	112	40
R-2	1,940	1,712	221	3,873	100
R-3	771	384	40	1,195	55
NB	2	5	0	7	250
PDR (1 du per 2 acre)	0	15	3	18	8,200
PDR (1 du per 3 acre)	1	56	8	65	
PUDVC (Richmond Commons)	3 <sup>5</sup>	0 <sup>3</sup>	n/a	0 <sup>3</sup>	367
PUDVC (Other) <sup>4</sup>	0	12	2	14	
SV (with public water)	43	72	8	123	141
SV (with no public water)	15	3	0	18	20
Ag Overlay	101	183	32	316	213
Sub-total	2,955	2,472	317	5,744	94
Other Districts (GB, FT, LI, I & PD)	135	n/a	n/a	135	0
<b>Total All Zoning Districts</b>	<b>3,090</b>	<b>2,472</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>5,879</b>	<b>90</b>

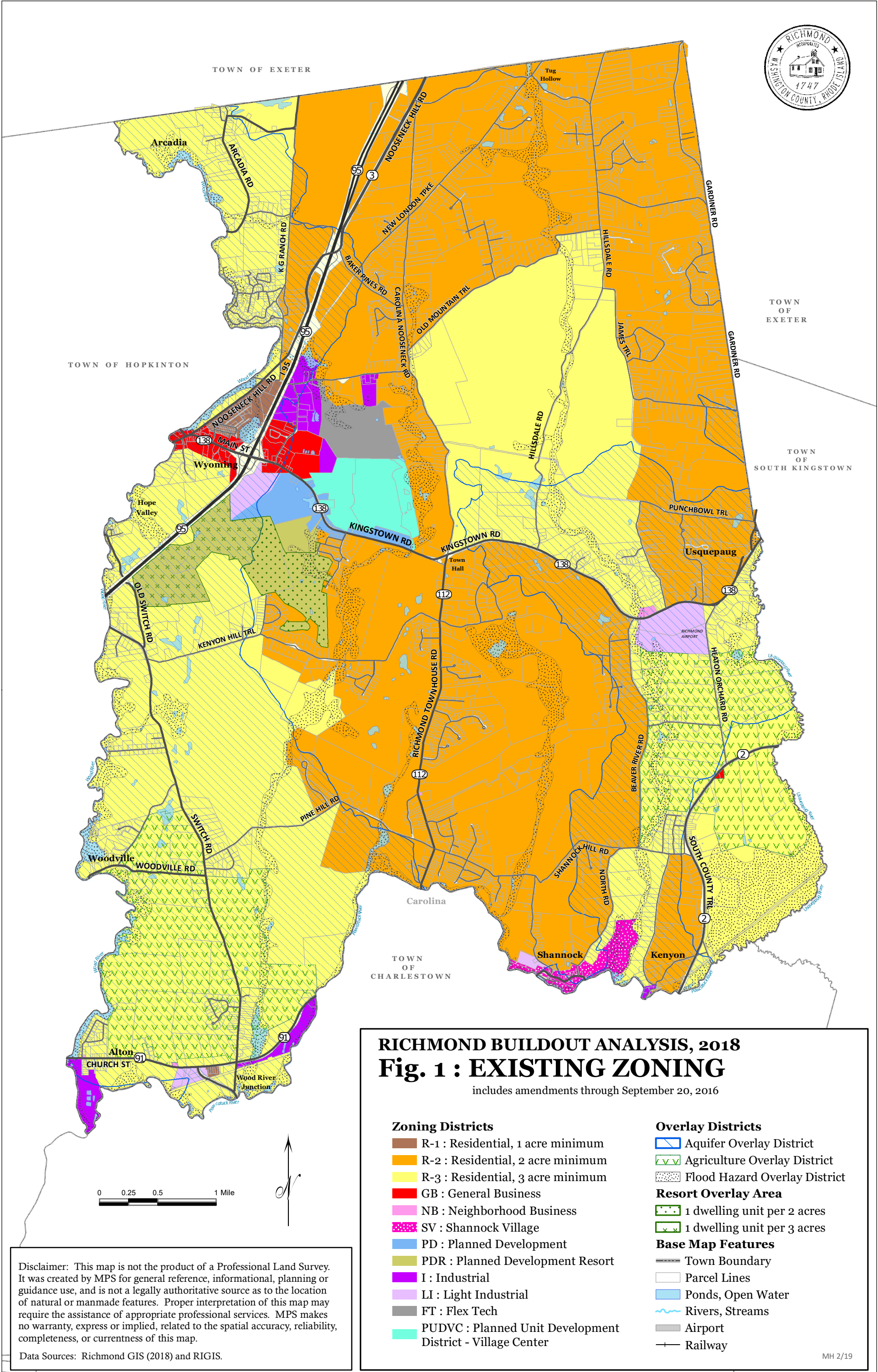
Footnotes: <sup>1</sup> Existing in-law apartments not included.

<sup>2</sup> Includes single-family dwelling units allowed as-of-right.

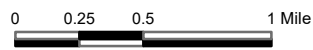
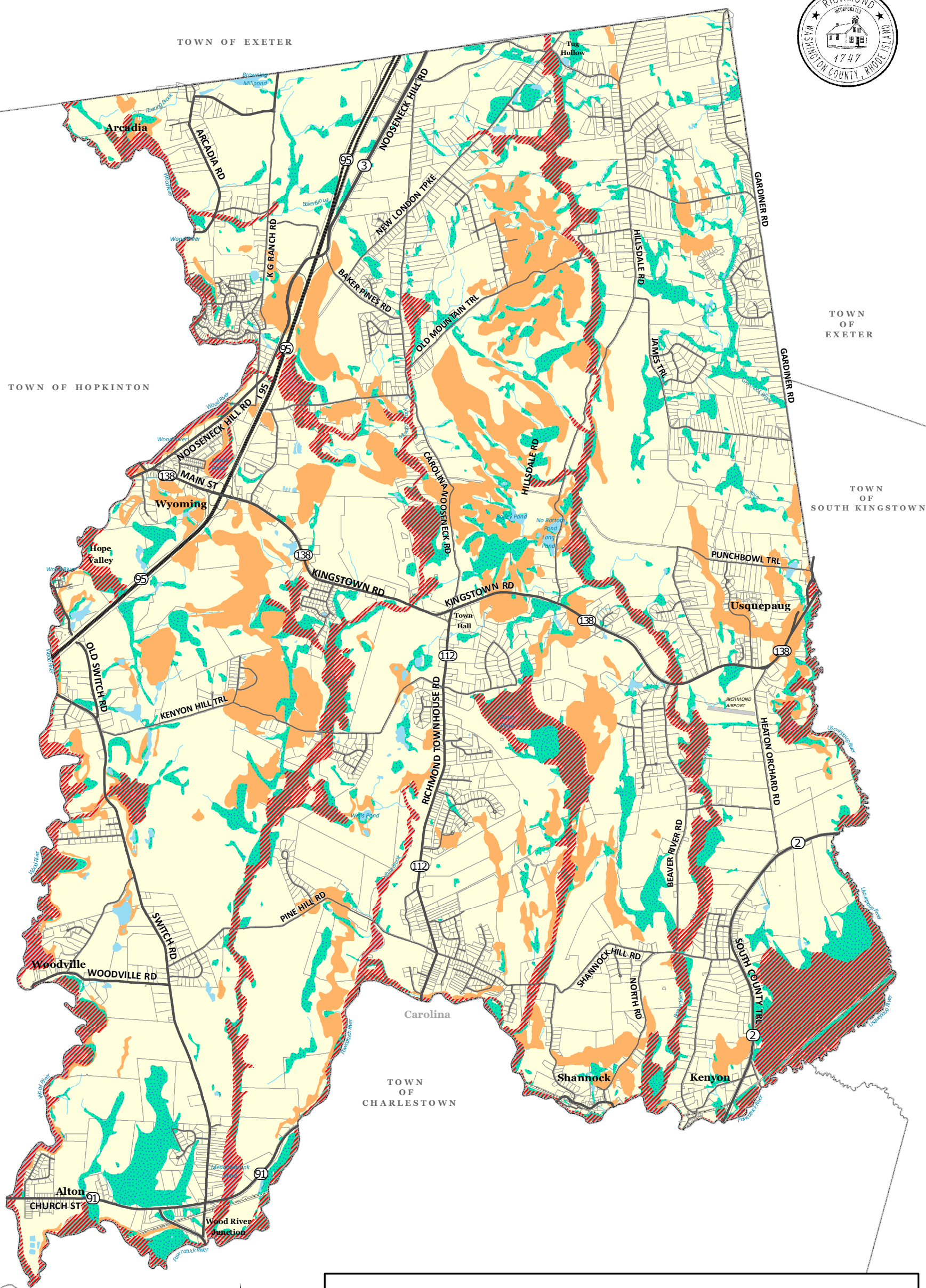
<sup>3</sup> The approved Richmond Commons mixed-use development has 399 two-family dwelling units, but no single-family housing is part of this project.

<sup>4</sup> 05B/066-000 frontage lot on Kingstown Road.

<sup>5</sup> There are three residential-type buildings on 05B/065-000. We have made the assumption that they are all residential.







**RICHMOND BUILDOUT ANALYSIS, 2018**  
**Fig. 2 : LAND UNSUITABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT**

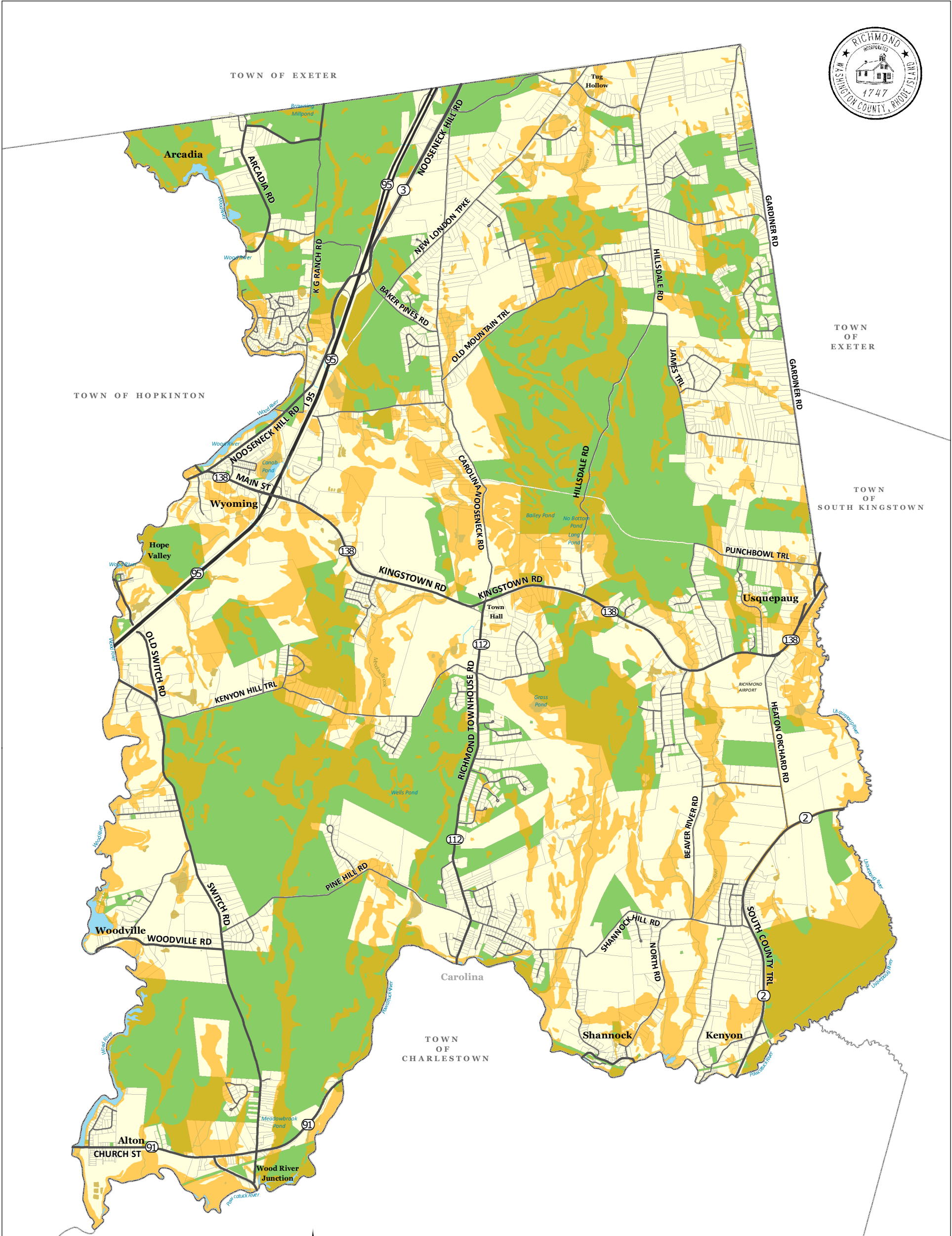
- Areas Unsuitable for Development**
- Flood Hazard Areas
  - Wetlands
  - Soils (ledge, rock outcrops, poorly filtered, large stones)
  - Ponds, Open Water
  - Rivers, Streams

- Base Map Features**
- Town Boundary
  - Parcel Lines
  - Airport
  - Railway

Disclaimer: This map is not the product of a Professional Land Survey. It was created by MPS for general reference, informational, planning or guidance use, and is not a legally authoritative source as to the location of natural or manmade features. Proper interpretation of this map may require the assistance of appropriate professional services. MPS makes no warranty, express or implied, related to the spatial accuracy, reliability, completeness, or currentness of this map.

Data Sources: Richmond GIS (2018) and RIGIS.





**RICHMOND BUILDOUT ANALYSIS, 2018**  
**Fig 3 : AREAS EXCLUDED FROM BUILDOUT ANALYSIS**

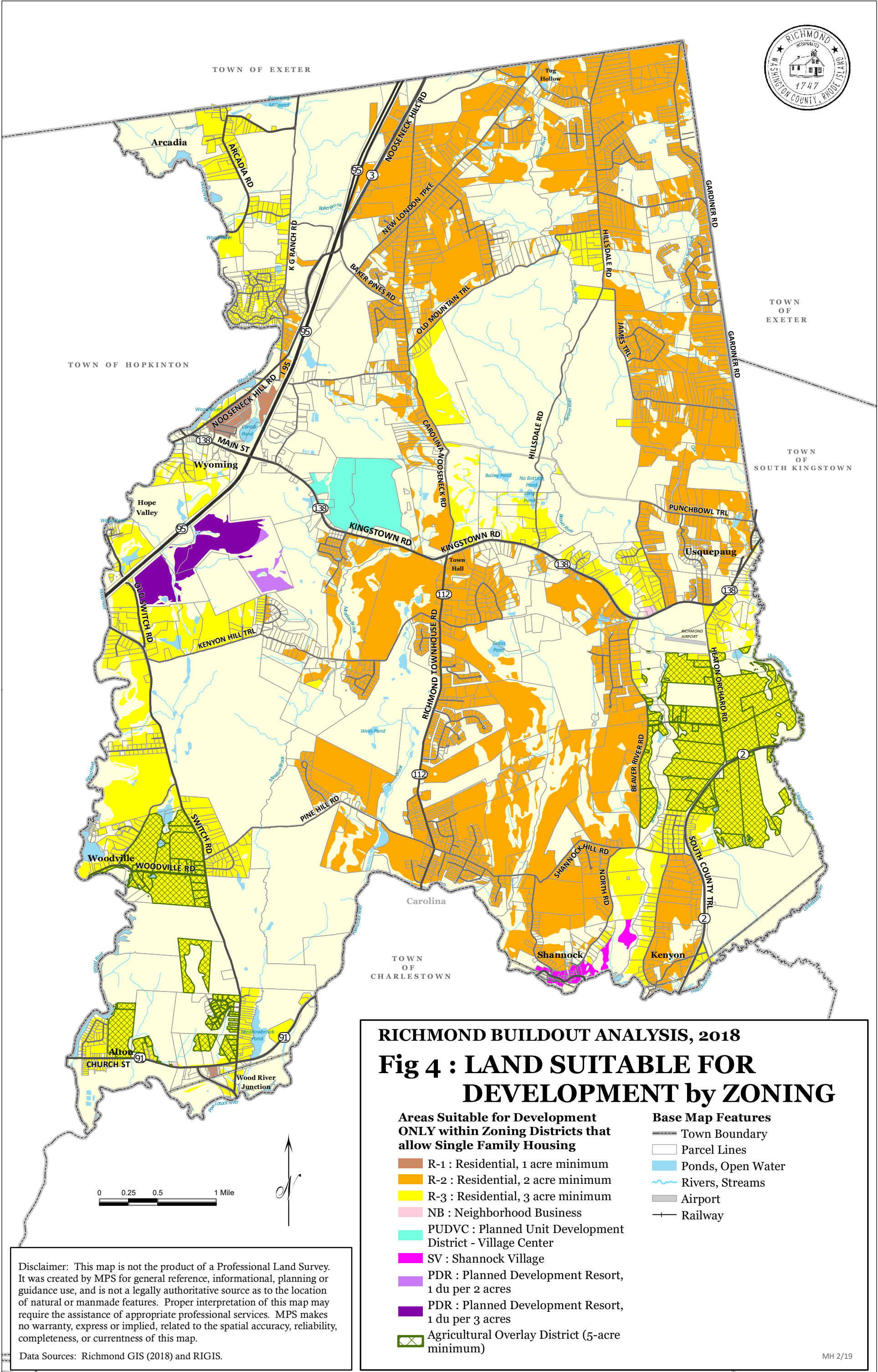
- Land Unsuitable for Development**  
flood, wetlands, soils, etc.
- Areas Excluded from Buildout Analysis**  
Existing Open Space Areas and other Public and Private Properties

- Base Map Features**  
Town Boundary  
Parcel Lines  
Ponds, Open Water  
Rivers, Streams  
Airport  
Railway

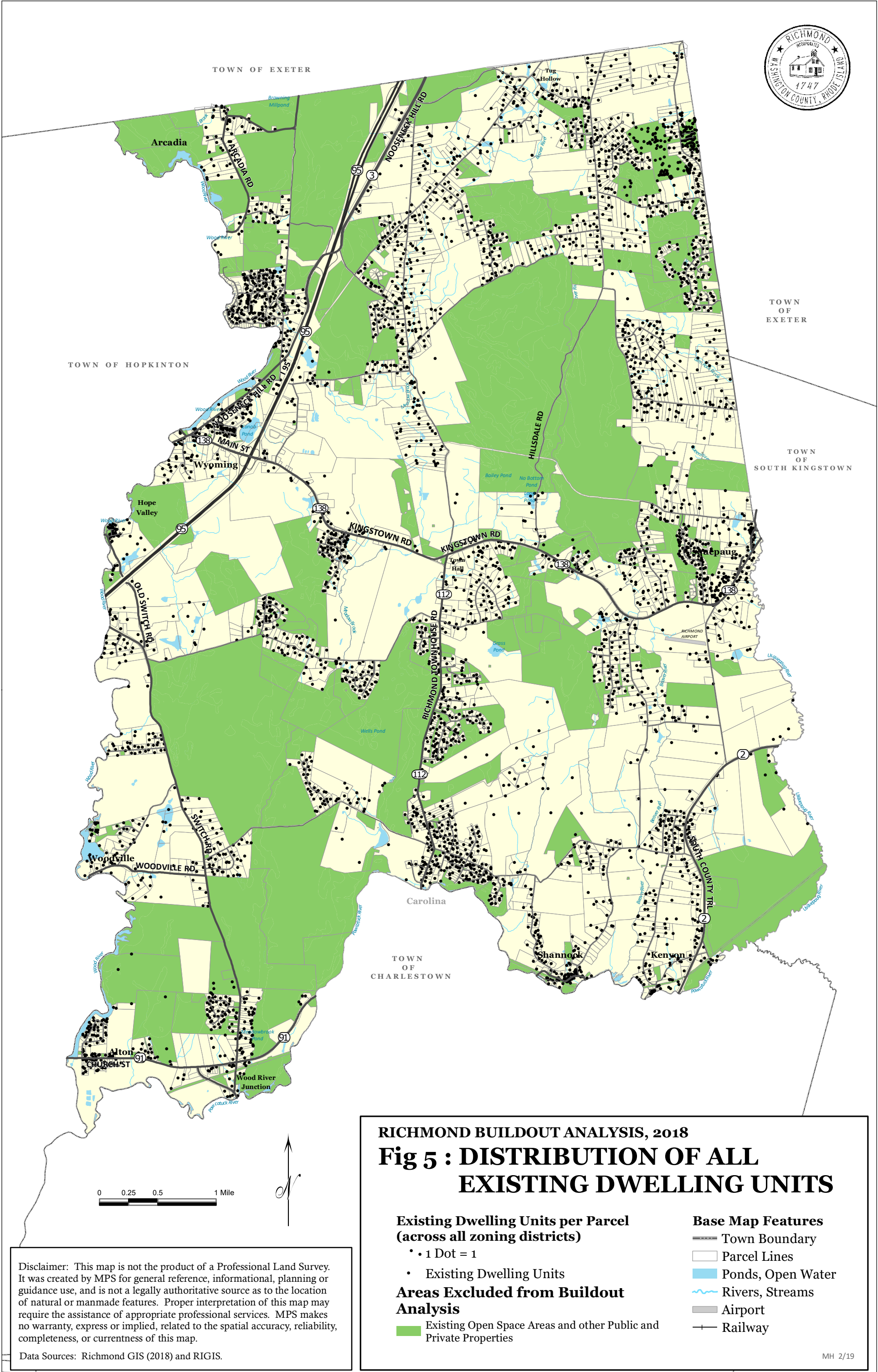
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Data Sources: Richmond GIS (2018) and RIGIS.

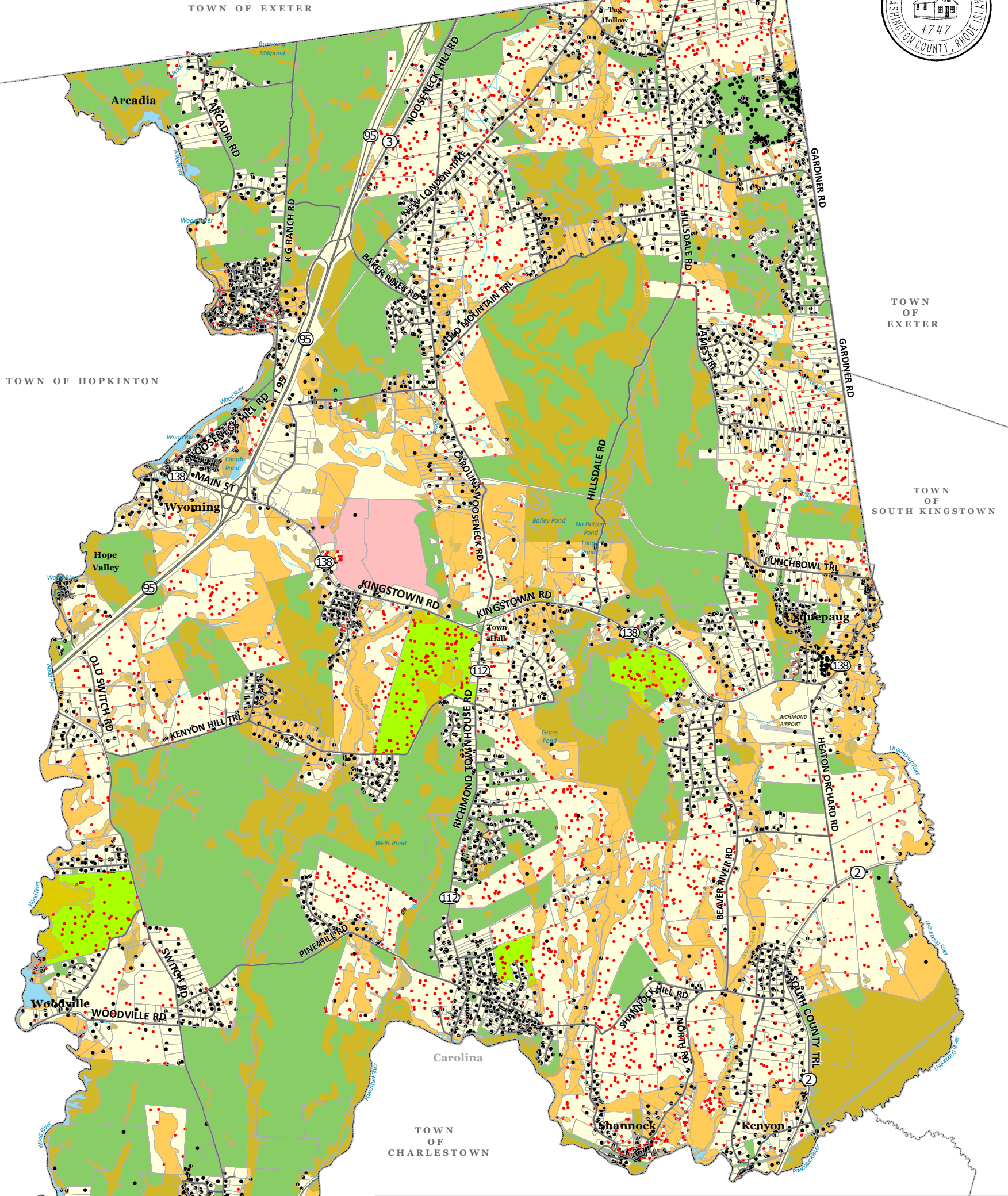












**RICHMOND BUILDOUT ANALYSIS, 2018**  
**Fig 6 : PROJECTED DISTRIBUTION**  
**of DWELLING UNITS at**  
**BUILDOUT under EXISTING ZONING**

**Existing Dwelling Units per Parcel**

- 1 Dot = 1
- Existing Dwelling Units

**Additional Dwelling Units per Parcel**

- 1 Dot = 1
- Additional DUs (inc. Inclusionary)

- Private Golf Courses (unprotected)
- "Richmond Commons" (approved 399 two-family DU's)

**Parcels and Areas Excluded from Buildout Analysis**

- Existing Open Space Areas and other Public and Private Properties

**Base Map Features**

- Town Boundary
- Parcel Lines
- Ponds, Open Water
- Rivers, Streams
- Airport
- Railway

Note: Dots are randomly located on parcel, and not indicative of the actual location of an existing D.U.  
Additional D.U.'s are randomly located ONLY within the developable part of the parcel.

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Data Sources: Richmond GIS (2018) and RIGIS.

