

# RHODE ISLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING STANDARDS MANUAL

Approved by the Rhode Island State Planning Council on  
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*The chief shall develop standards to assist municipalities in the incorporation of the state goals and policies into comprehensive plans, and to guide the chief's review of comprehensive plans and state agency activities.*

*The Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act, RIGL subsection 45-22.2-10(b)*

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**This manual is accompanied by several guidance handbooks that are intended to assist communities in fulfilling the requirements of the Act. Each handbook provides helpful guidance, including data sources, as well as general information on including the required topics within a comprehensive plan.**

Please see [www.planning.ri.gov/statewideplanning/compplanning/](http://www.planning.ri.gov/statewideplanning/compplanning/)

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning Standards Manual is the result of over twenty-four months of cooperation and coordination among state agencies, local planners, and other professionals interested in helping cities and towns craft better comprehensive plans. The development process was overseen by the Comprehensive Planning Advisory Committee, a dedicated group of planning, land use, legal, and community professionals, without whom the manual would not have become reality. A draft of the Manual was reviewed and commented upon by the Technical Committee and the final document was reviewed and approved by the State Planning Council.

The standards were developed with numerous topical experts including staff from the Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Planning. The manual was prepared by Chelsea Siefert, Principal Planner. Ms. Siefert was guided by Karen Scott, Assistant Chief of the Division of Planning, and Kevin Nelson, Supervising Planner of the Local Planning Assistance and Consistency Review Unit, and assisted by Caitlin Greeley, Principal Planner.

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## INTRODUCTION

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Land use planning in the State of Rhode Island has been set up as a reciprocal system, where State goals and policies are reflected in local plans and local plans have the ability to guide State actions. Therefore, the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act requires that adopted comprehensive plans be submitted to the Division of Planning for review and that the Division of Planning review adopted comprehensive plans for consistency with the goals and intent of the Act and the State Guide Plan.

Per RIGL subsection 45-22.2-9(d), State review of a comprehensive plan is intended to assure that the following requirements are complied with:

- (1) The intent and goals of the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act have been met.
- (2) All required content as stated within the Act is complete and the plan is internally consistent in its policies, forecasts and standards.
- (3) The plan or amendment is consistent with, and embodies the goals and policies of the State and its departments and agencies as contained in the State Guide Plan and the laws of the State.
- (4) Municipal planning activities have been conducted and coordinated according to the provisions of the Act.
- (5) The plan or amendment has been officially adopted and submitted for review in accordance with the Act and other applicable procedures.
- (6) The plan or amendment complies with the rules and regulations adopted by the State Planning Council.
- (7) Adequate, uniform, and valid data have been used in preparing the plan.

This manual lays out standards for complying with the requirements listed above. A standard may: 1) reiterate a requirement found in the Act; 2) provide specifics to clarify a requirement of the Act; 3) describe processes that if followed will help ensure State approval; or 4) identify information that while not specifically required by the Act, has been identified as vital to supporting the intents of the Act.

The following sections of this manual include all four types of standards. Those standards that describe processes or information not required by the Act are listed as recommendations.

Please note: These standards provide guidance as of the time of their most recent revision. Comprehensive plans must still comply all State laws, goals, policies, and other requirements in force at the time the comprehensive plan is adopted. Additionally, the Chief of the Division of Planning may waive any standard that is deemed not to be applicable to an individual municipality's comprehensive plan.

## 1. GENERAL STANDARDS

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- 1.1 There shall be a single version of the comprehensive plan, including all amendments, appendices, and supplements, which is fully updated and re-adopted at least once every 10 years.
- 1.2 Utilize a minimum 20-year planning timeframe in considering forecasts, goals, and policies.
- 1.3 Be internally consistent in policies, forecasts, and standards.
- 1.4 *(Recommendation)* Include a demographic profile of the municipality, including breakdowns of population race, education, income, and age.
- 1.5 Include a 20-year population projection.
- 1.6 *(Recommendation)* Include a development capacity (build-out) analysis that is based on the existing zoning districts.
- 1.7 Utilize data that is:
  - a. From a reliable data source;
  - b. Sufficiently recent to still be valid;
  - c. Consistent throughout the document; and
  - d. Calculated correctly based on a methodology that is sound.
- 1.8 For any and all plans and/or documents that are to be “incorporated by reference” into the comprehensive plan, the following requirements must be met:
  - a. The entire plan or document must be submitted to the State for review; and
  - b. The entire plan or document must be included in the comprehensive plan either as an appendix or as a separate chapter or the text must include all the following:
    - i. The words “incorporation by reference”;
    - ii. Identification of the material to be incorporated, by title, date, edition, author, publisher, and identification number of the publication;
    - iii. A statement of availability that includes the name(s) and address(es) of the municipal agency(ies) where the document can be viewed by the public, contact information (i.e. phone number and/or email address) for questions from the public regarding the material, and how copies can be obtained or purchased; and
    - iv. The document publisher’s address, phone number, email, and internet address, if applicable.

## 2. PLANNING FOR NATURAL RESOURCES

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- 2.1 Identify the following natural resources and natural resource areas on one or more maps:
  - a. Surface water, including ponds, rivers, and streams, and their watersheds;
  - b. Aquifers;
  - c. Wetlands and saltwater marshes;
  - d. Floodplains;
  - e. Forested areas;
  - f. Any existing large, intact, or connected blocks of habitat area; and
  - g. Any known critical, uncommon, or fragile wildlife habitat areas.
- 2.2 Identify existing permanently protected conservation areas (both public and private) on a map.
- 2.3 Illustrate the effects of sea level rise on saltwater marshes, including potential losses and migration areas, by including maps showing:
  - a. The marsh areas within the community that are likely to be lost in the event of 1', 3', and 5' of sea level rise; and
  - b. The areas within the community to which marsh is likely to migrate in the event of 1', 3', and 5' of sea level rise.
- 2.4 Identify and discuss any prominent issues facing the municipality's significant natural resources.
- 2.5 Discuss the municipality's priorities for land conservation.
- 2.6 (*Recommendation*) Discuss the techniques that are in place for minimizing the negative impacts of development on significant natural resources.
- 2.7 Include goals that embody the State's goals for natural resources and policies to support each goal.
- 2.8 Include implementation actions within the Implementation Program that address the protection and management of natural resources.

### 3. PLANNING FOR RECREATION

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- 3.1 Identify existing recreational areas and sites by:  
*(Recommend including a. through c. to fulfil this standard)*
- a. Including one or more maps showing:
    - i. Publicly-owned outdoor recreational areas;
    - ii. Privately-owned outdoor recreational areas that have been deemed significant in meeting the community’s recreational needs; and
    - iii. Publicly operated indoor recreational sites, such as schools and community centers.
  - b. Identifying which of the mapped properties are municipally-owned and/or managed; and
  - c. Including on the map, or in an associated table, clear identification of the name and/or type of each area or site.
- 3.2 Analyze existing and future recreational needs by:  
*(Recommend including a. through c. to fulfil this standard)*
- a. Assessing whether there are any neighborhoods or districts within the municipality that do not have enough recreational resources in general or enough of a specific type of recreational resource;
  - b. Discussing whether the existing recreational options within a municipality seem to suit the needs of current and anticipated future residents; and
  - c. Determining and discussing whether any of the existing recreational areas, including conservation areas intended for recreation use, are in need of improved public access.
- 3.3 Identify areas for the potential expansion of recreational facilities.
- 3.4 Include goals that embody the State’s goals for recreation and policies to support each goal.
- 3.5 Include implementation actions within the Implementation Program that address:
- a. The protection and management of existing recreational resources and acquisition of additional resources if appropriate; and
  - b. Meeting identified recreational needs.

#### 4. PLANNING FOR HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

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- 4.1 Identify historic and cultural resource areas and sites (such as, but not limited to, historical buildings, landmarks, and scenic views) by:
  - a. Including one or more maps showing:
    - i. Properties or districts listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places; and
    - ii. Locally designated historic districts established through the zoning ordinance.
  - b. Including clear identification of the name of each mapped resource area and/or site.
- 4.2 (*Recommendation*) Assess issues related to historic and cultural resources by including the following:
  - a. A list and description of the significant historic and cultural resource areas and sites that exist within the community;
  - b. Discussion of any current or potential future threats to the community's significant historic and cultural resources; and
  - c. Identification of any existing local programs related to the management of historic and cultural resources such as a local historic district ordinance.
- 4.3 Include goals that embody the State's goals for historic and cultural resources and policies to support each goal.
- 4.4 Include implementation actions within the Implementation Program that address the protection of historic and cultural resources.

## 5. PLANNING FOR HOUSING

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- 5.1 *(Recommendation)* Provide an overview of the existing housing context by including the following data points:
- a. Existing housing units, both the number and the relative trend in housing development over the past 10 or more years;
  - b. Occupied and vacant housing units, both the number and as a percentage of total housing units;
  - c. Year-round and seasonal, single-family and multi-family housing units, both the number and as a percentage of total housing units;
  - d. Owner-occupied and rental units, both the number and as a percentage of occupied housing units;
  - e. The median age of housing units;
  - f. The number of single-family and multi-family units constructed each year for the past 10 or more years;
  - g. The current median home sale price, and the general trend in home sales prices over the past 10 or more years; and
  - h. The average monthly rental price for one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and three-bedroom rental units, and the general trend in rental prices over the past 10 or more years.
- 5.2 Identify existing housing patterns and conditions by:  
*(Recommend including a. and b. to fulfil this standard)*
- a. Discussing areas of the community, or neighborhoods, in which housing is located and, for each area, the average density, the prevalent housing types, the general condition of housing, and the general age of housing; and
  - b. Discussing any condition-related issues that may be occurring within the municipality, such as high rates of foreclosure or abandonment, general neglect or deterioration of the housing stock, overcrowding of housing units, etc.
- 5.3 *(Recommendation)* Include the following data points related to housing affordability:
- a. The number of households within the community that are housing cost-burdened, meaning that they are paying more than 30% of their income on housing, also as a percentage of total households;
  - b. The number of households within the community that are severely housing cost-burdened, meaning that they are paying more than 50% of their income on housing, also as a percentage of total households;
  - c. The number of low- and moderate-income (LMI) households that are housing cost-burdened, also as a percentage of total LMI households;
  - d. The number of LMI households that are severely housing cost-burdened, also as a percentage of total LMI households;
  - e. The number of cost-burdened LMI households that are currently renting, also as a percentage of total cost-burdened LMI households; and

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- f. The number of cost-burdened LMI households that own their home, also as a percentage of total cost-burdened LMI households.
- 5.4 Assess existing and future housing needs, including the need for affordable housing, by: *(Recommend including a. through g. to fulfil this standard)*
- a. Stating how many units will house the future population, either at build-out or at the end of the 20-year planning horizon;
  - b. Discussing the ways in which the population is changing in terms of age, ethnicity, income, and household size;
  - c. Discussing the adequacy of the available range of housing unit sizes and/or types (studio, 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom; rental and ownership; condominium; etc.) in accommodating a range of future population needs;
  - d. Discussing the current housing options available within the community for the homeless population, including the number of shelter beds that currently exist;
  - e. Discussing the relationship of housing price (both sales and rental) to household income over the past 10 or more years;
  - f. Discussing any needs related to risk of homelessness for severely cost-burdened low- and moderate-income (LMI) households, as indicated by the data cited by Standard 5.3; and
  - g. Discussing the types of affordable housing (for LMI populations, families, the elderly, special needs populations, rental, etc.) that are in most need within the community, as indicated by the data cited by Standard 5.3.
- 5.5 Demonstrate how one of the mandated low- and moderate-income thresholds will be met, by including: *(Recommend including a. and b. to fulfil this standard)*
- a. For municipalities that have already met one of the mandated low- and moderate-income housing thresholds:
    - i. A statement as to which threshold has been met; and
    - ii. The data necessary to show how the threshold has been met, including the current number of LMI housing units in the municipality and the percentage serving each population type (family, elderly or special needs); or
  - b. For municipalities that have not already met one of the mandated low- and moderate-income thresholds:
    - i. The existing number of LMI housing units (the number of low- and moderate-income (LMI) housing units that currently exist within the municipality, also as a percentage of the total number of year-round housing units within the municipality);
    - ii. The existing number of LMI housing units by population served (the current number of LMI housing units within the municipality designed to serve families, the elderly, and those with special needs, also as percentages of the total LMI housing units within the municipality);
    - iii. The 10% threshold (the number representing 10% of the existing year-round

- housing stock);
  - iv. The existing deficit (the gap between the 10% threshold and the number of LMI housing units that currently exist within the community);
  - v. The forecasted 10% threshold (the number representing 10% of the forecasted housing units either at the end of the 20-year planning horizon or at build-out);
  - vi. The forecasted deficit (the gap between the existing LMI housing units and the forecasted threshold);
  - vii. Discussion of the general success rate of each previous strategy for providing low- and moderate-income housing units, (if a numeric estimate was given as to how many units would be produced using the strategy, the actual number produced must be compared to the estimate or, if a numeric estimate was not given, stating whether the strategy was highly successful, moderately successful or not successful);
  - viii. Discussion of the factors that affected the success rate of each previously proposed low- and moderate-income housing strategy;
  - ix. A description of all of the strategies that the municipality will implement moving forward to meet or exceed the 10% threshold for low- and moderate-income housing;
  - x. A discussion of the reasons why each proposed strategy is likely to be effective given past experiences, current economic conditions, building trends, etc.;
  - xi. An estimate as to how many low- and moderate-income housing units will likely be produced through the implementation of each proposed strategy that demonstrates numerically that the 10% threshold will be achieved;
  - xii. Associated implementation actions within the Implementation Program that present the path by which each proposed strategy will be implemented;
  - xiii. A realistic estimate of when the stock of low- and moderate-income housing will equal 10% of the total year-round housing stock; and
  - xiv. Interim, time-based benchmarks by which the municipality can measure its progress toward the goal and describe the process by which the municipality will assess whether benchmarks have been met and adjustments will be made.
- 5.6 (*Recommendation*) Discuss the municipality's inclusionary zoning ordinance by:
- a. Including a statement as to whether the municipality has an inclusionary zoning ordinance; and
  - b. If the municipality has an inclusionary zoning ordinance:
    - i. Discussing what types of development incentives are currently offered; and
    - ii. Describing how the municipality currently complies with or will comply with the requirements of RIGL section 45-24-46.1(b).
- 5.7 Include goals that embody the State's goals for housing and policies to support each goal.
- 5.8 Include implementation actions within the Implementation Program that address:
- a. The development of housing units in adequate numbers to meet future population

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needs, including the development of a minimum of 10% of the year-round housing within the community as low- and moderate-income housing;

- b. Promoting the use and rehabilitation of the existing housing stock and maintaining a housing stock that is safe, healthy, and sanitary;
- c. Locating new housing in appropriate areas of the community at densities that are appropriate to the characteristics of the land, the availability of infrastructure and community services, and the densities of surrounding neighborhoods; and
- d. Complying with the requirements of RIGL subsection [45-24-46.1\(b\)](#), if applicable.

## 6. PLANNING FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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- 6.1 Describe the existing types and patterns of economic activities that exist within the municipality by:
  - a. Identifying the business and industry sectors within the municipality that are significant employers, large revenue generators or substantial contributors to the tax base;
  - b. Identifying the business and industry sectors within the municipality that are expanding or shrinking; and
  - c. Discussing any areas of the community where the economic activity is changing, whether in terms of size, form or nature of activity.
- 6.2 Assess and discuss the ways in which the local government can improve the local business climate by:
  - a. Discussing the significant opportunities that exist to further support the businesses within the community's major or expanding business sectors;
  - b. Discussing any issues that may exist related to the services and infrastructure provided for local businesses;
  - c. Discussing any local economic or regulatory issues affecting the business and industry sectors within the municipality; and
  - d. Describing any local economic development plans, programs or other incentives currently in effect or offered by the municipality.
- 6.3 Include goals that embody the State's goals for economic development and policies to support each goal.
- 6.4 Include implementation actions within the Implementation Program that address the expansion and stabilization of the economic base and the promotion of quality employment opportunities and job growth by:

*(Recommend including a. and b. to fulfil this standard)*

  - a. Creating a climate in which business activity will grow and businesses will thrive; and
  - b. Conserving and enhancing areas suitable for economic expansion and/or redevelopment.

## 7. PLANNING FOR AGRICULTURE

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- 7.1 Identify valuable agricultural soils on a map.
- 7.2 *(Recommendation)* Include an inventory of significant agricultural operations by identifying:
  - a. The locations and types of active agricultural operations; and
  - b. Farm lands that have been protected from development, even if currently idle.
- 7.3 *(Recommendation)* Assess the role of agriculture as part of the municipality's existing types and patterns of economic activity by describing:
  - a. The scale of the agricultural sector in the community, including supporting uses such as processing centers, distribution centers, etc.; and
  - b. The overall trend in the agricultural sector, for example expanding, contracting, diversifying, etc.
- 7.4 *(Recommendation)* Discuss the opportunities that exist within the community to further support agriculture relative to capacity, access, and partnerships.
- 7.5 Include goals that embody the State's goals for agriculture and policies to support each goal.
- 7.6 Include implementation actions within the Implementation Program that addresses the expansion and stabilization of agriculture as part of the economic base by:  
*(Recommend including a. through d. to fulfil this standard)*
  - a. Preserving the best farmland for agricultural use;
  - b. Keeping active farms in agricultural use and promoting the active use of idle agricultural land;
  - c. Expanding the agricultural sector; and
  - d. Capitalizing on the existing agricultural opportunities.

## 8. PLANNING FOR SERVICES AND FACILITIES

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- 8.1 Identify existing and proposed sewer service areas on a map by showing, as separate areas if applicable:
- a. Areas that currently have access to a sewer line, regardless of whether the buildings within the area are in fact connected to the sewer system; and
  - b. (*Recommend including the following as appropriate*) Areas to which sewer access is planned within the 20-year planning horizon of the comprehensive plan.
- 8.2 Identify existing significant public infrastructure and facilities on a map, by showing and clearly labeling the following, if present within the municipality:
- a. All municipally-owned and/or operated buildings, including but not limited to city/town hall, administration buildings, schools, community and/or senior centers, libraries, fire stations, police stations, etc.;
  - b. Solid waste transfer stations and municipal compost or refuse disposal sites; and
  - c. Wastewater pump stations and wastewater treatment plants.
- 8.3 Describe the public services provided to the community and the associated facilities and infrastructure by:
- a. Describing the municipal solid waste management system. (*Recommend including i. through vii. to fulfil the standard*)
    - i. The method(s) by which municipal solid waste is collected (picked-up curbside, dropped-off by residents at a transfer station, dropped-off by residents at Rhode Island Resources Recovery Corporation or a transfer station, some combination of methods, etc.);
    - ii. The types of municipal solid waste that are collected by each identified method;
    - iii. The permitted capacity of local transfer stations, the current estimates of transfer station usage, and whether the transfer station is municipally-owned or private;
    - iv. The types of municipal solid waste (mixed refuse, recyclables, etc.) that are currently being brought to the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation;
    - v. The types of municipal solid waste that are being sent somewhere other than the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation;
    - vi. The current rates of solid waste recycling and diversion, the process by which recyclables are segregated from the waste stream, and the municipal plan for achieving a minimum 35% recycling and minimum 50% diversion rate; and
    - vii. The current ways in which the solid waste management system is being funded.
  - b. Describing the wastewater management system, including:
    - i. The wastewater infrastructure for which the municipality is responsible, if any; (*Recommend including ii. through v. to fulfil the standard*)
    - ii. The current usage and capacity of any municipally-operated wastewater management systems;

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- iii. The ways in which any municipally collected wastewater is treated and dispensed;
  - iv. Any plans for improvements in the management of wastewater; and
  - v. Any current municipal regulations regarding the use of on-site wastewater treatment systems.
- c. Describing the municipal approach to stormwater management, including:  
*(Recommend including i. through v. to fulfil the standard)*
- i. The municipality's maintenance program for stormwater infrastructure;
  - ii. The adequacy of funding for the maintenance program;
  - iii. Identification of any areas regularly subjected to flash flooding during storm events due to overwhelmed or unmaintained infrastructure;
  - iv. Any plans for improvements in the funding for or management of stormwater; and
  - v. Any current municipal regulations or standards regarding stormwater management.
- d. Describing the public safety and emergency services *(inclusion of "emergency services" is recommended)* provided to the community, as well as the facilities and infrastructure associated with these services, including:  
*(Recommend including i. through iv. to fulfil the standard)*
- i. The ways in which public safety and emergency services are provided to the community;
  - ii. The respective numbers of police stations, fire stations and public ambulatory service facilities located within the municipality;
  - iii. The general disbursement of public safety facilities throughout the municipality; and
  - iv. Any plans for improvements in the provision of public safety and emergency services.
- e. *(Recommended)* Describing all aspects of the public educational system, including:
- i. A description of the overall public educational system; and
  - ii. Overall school system enrollment figures per grade and capacity per grade.
- f. For municipalities that provide library services, describe the public library system, including:
- i. The number of public library facilities within the municipality; and
  - ii. The general disbursement and accessibility of public library facilities throughout the municipality.
- g. For municipalities that provide community and/or senior centers, describe the services provided *(recommended)* and associated facilities, including:
- i. The number of community and/or senior centers within the municipality; and
  - ii. The general disbursement and accessibility of the centers throughout the municipality.

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- 8.4 Analyze existing and future needs for additional types and higher levels of services, facilities, and infrastructure by:
- a. Providing an assessment of public school needs.  
*(Recommend including i. through iv. to fulfil the standard)*
    - i. Enrollment projections by grade level forecasted over a 10-year period;
    - ii. Comparison of enrollment projections and existing school capacity by grade level;
    - iii. Discussion of any existing or anticipated future issues with school capacity, whether the issues are related to over or under enrollment; and
    - iv. Discussion of any existing or anticipated future issues with the condition of existing school facilities.
  - b. Providing an assessment of the current and anticipated future types and levels of the services currently provided to the community by including, for each service (except schools):  
*(Recommend including i. through iv. to fulfil the standard)*
    - i. Discussion of whether residents are able to adequately access the service;
    - ii. Discussion of the effectiveness of the service at achieving desired outcomes;
    - iii. Identification of any existing major issues related to administration of the service; and
    - iv. Indication of how the quality of service is likely to change over the 20-year planning horizon (improve, stay the same, worsen) and the reasons why such a change is expected.
  - c. Discussing any existing and future issues related to the condition and/or capacity of facilities and infrastructure for each service.
- 8.5 Include goals that embody the State's goals for services and facilities and policies to support each goal.
- 8.6 Include implementation actions within the Implementation Program that address:  
*(Recommend including a. and b. as appropriate)*
- a. Achieving a minimum 35% solid waste recycling rate and a minimum 50% solid waste diversion rate;
  - b. Implementing low-impact development standards for stormwater management; and
  - c. Meeting existing and future needs for services and facilities.

9. PLANNING FOR ENERGY

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- 9.1 Include goals that embody the State’s goals for energy and policies to support each goal.
- 9.2 (*Recommendation*) Include implementation actions within the Implementation Program that address:
- a. Conducting a baseline assessment of the amount of energy currently being used by municipal buildings, vehicles, and equipment or, if a baseline assessment has already been completed, conserving and efficiently using energy in public buildings, transportation, and equipment; and
  - b. Adopting zoning policies and siting standards for renewable energy production facilities.

## 10. PLANNING FOR WATER SUPPLY

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- 10.1 Identify water-supply related natural features and sensitive water supply areas on one or more maps, including:
- a. Surface and sub-surface reservoirs used for potable water (*inclusion of “sub-surface reservoirs” is recommended*);
  - b. Aquifers;
  - c. (*Recommendation*) Groundwater recharge areas; and
  - d. (*Recommendation*) Community and non-community well-head areas.
- 10.2 Identify existing and proposed water service areas on a map, if applicable (*inclusion of “proposed” areas is recommended*).
- 10.3 Describe the ways in which water is provided to the community and any proposed future modifications (*inclusion of “proposed” modifications is recommended*), by:  
(*Recommend including a. through c. to fulfil this standard*)
- a. Discussing the different types of water supply systems (major public water suppliers, minor public water suppliers, self-supply, etc.) that are in use within the municipality;
  - b. Discussing all of the water sources supplying water to the municipality (i.e. specific surface or ground water resource); and
  - c. Including, if one or more public water suppliers serve the municipality:
    - i. Identification of the major public water suppliers, if any, that serve the community;
    - ii. Identification of the type of each major supplier (regional, municipal, private, etc.);
    - iii. Identification of the percentage of persons within the community that are served by each major public water supplier;
    - iv. Identification of the average monthly and peak monthly amounts of water currently being supplied by each major public water supplier;
    - v. Identification of the projected average monthly and peak monthly amounts of water that will be supplied by each major water supplier at the end of the 20-year planning horizon;
    - vi. Discussion of the existing capacity of each major supplier’s water infrastructure, as confirmed by the Rhode Island Water Resources Board in the most recently approved Water Supply System Management Plan (WSSMP), including the amount of water flow that the infrastructure can currently accommodate;
    - vii. Discussion of any major projects and/or plans that have been proposed by each major public water supplier; and
    - viii. Discussion of the municipality’s coordination with the supplier(s), especially as it pertains to the municipal role in implementation of the WSSMP(s) with

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regard to water supply source protection, water availability, demand management, drought mitigation and response, and water emergencies.

- 10.4 Assess existing and future issues concerning the supply of potable water to the municipality by assessing and discussing issues related to:
- a. The general adequacy of water sources to meet current demands;  
*(Recommend including b. through d. to fulfil this standard)*
  - b. The quality of potable water sources;
  - c. The potential impacts of natural hazards and climate change; and
  - d. If served by one or more public water supplier, the capacity of public water infrastructure.
- 10.5 Include goals that embody the State's goals for water quality and supply and policies to support each goal.
- 10.6 Include implementation actions within the Implementation Program that address meeting future demands:  
*(Recommend including a. through d. to fulfil this standard)*
- a. Promoting water conservation and the efficient use of water in both the public and private sectors;
  - b. Improving or preserving water quality;
  - c. Planning and preparing for drought conditions; and
  - d. Responding to water emergencies.

## 11. PLANNING FOR TRANSPORTATION

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- 11.1 Illustrate the existing transportation network on a map, including the following components, where they exist:
- a. Major streets, highways, and interstates, (*recommend identification of roadways according to the Highway Functional Classification System*);
  - b. Bus routes and major bus hubs;
  - c. Separated bicycle paths;
  - d. Rail stations and railway lines;
  - e. Ports and harbors;
  - f. Airports and airport overlay zones (*illustration of airport overlay zones is recommended*); and
  - g. Any other major transportation facilities that may exist within the municipality.
- 11.2 Assess the community's transportation system by:  
(*Recommend including e. through j. to fulfil this standard*)
- a. Describing the transportation modes currently serving the community;
  - b. Describing the existing and proposed major facilities and routes that serve transit riders, bicyclists, and pedestrians;
  - c. Describing the existing and proposed major facilities and routes that facilitate the movement of freight, including air, marine, rail, highway, and pipelines;
  - d. Describing the large-scale transportation facilities that exist within the community if any, such as airports, ports and harbors, bus depots, etc.;
  - e. Identifying the major traffic generators, for example schools, hospitals, military facilities, stadiums, major parks, regional shopping centers, business parks, etc.;
  - f. Identifying the areas of the community that could benefit from the addition of bus or rail transit, and specifically areas where the existing or proposed density or the demographic characteristics of the area's population show a need for transit;
  - g. Identifying the areas of the municipality that are perceived to be unsafe for bicyclists and/or pedestrians in which the community has stated a desire for the use of such transportation modes;
  - h. Describing any areas in which linkages exist between transportation modes and identification of the areas that would be better served by improved linkages;
  - i. Identifying and discussing any prevalent transportation issues that exist within the community such as congestion, intersection safety, parking shortages, lack of public transportation in high density areas, barriers to transit access, etc., and the areas of the community in which these issues exist; and
  - j. Including the following data points:
    - i. The percentage of the population that lives in a household without a private vehicle;

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- ii. The percentage of the working population that uses public transit for commuting purposes; and
  - iii. The percentage of the working population that bike or walk for commuting purposes.
- 11.3 Include goals that embody the State's goals for transportation and policies to support each goal.
- 11.4 Include implementation actions within the Implementation Program that addresses fast, safe, efficient, and convenient transportation that promotes conservation and environmental stewardship.  
*(Recommend including a. through c. to fulfil this standard)*
  - a. Developing and supporting a multi-modal transportation network that includes accommodations for bicyclists, pedestrians, and automobiles, and, where appropriate, freight and transit;
  - b. Improving community livability, environmental stewardship, and user safety through transportation infrastructure design and maintenance; and
  - c. Improving the compatibility of major transportation facilities with surrounding land uses.

## 12. PLANNING FOR NATURAL HAZARDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

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- 12.1 *(Recommendation)* Identify the priority natural hazards and climate change trends that are likely to impact the municipality.
- 12.2 Identify the areas of the community that could be exposed to flooding, including riverine and coastal flooding, sea level rise, and coastal storm surge by including:
- a. One or more maps that illustrate the areas that would currently be inundated in the event of a 1% and 0.2% storm as they appear on the most recent Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs);
  - b. One or more maps that illustrate the areas that would be inundated in the event of Category 1 through 4 hurricanes; and
  - c. One or more maps that illustrate the areas that are projected to be inundated due to 1', 3' and 5' of sea level rise.
- 12.3 *(Recommendation)* Discuss the priority impacts that the municipality would face in the event of future natural hazards and long-term climate change, as identified through a preliminary community vulnerability assessment, by:
- a. Stating the priority impacts that the municipality must address, as derived through a preliminary vulnerability assessment; and
  - b. Discussing the ways in which the municipality will address each priority impact, which may include undertaking more detailed vulnerability assessments for specific assets, populations, resources, etc.
- 12.4 Include goals that embody the State's goals regarding natural hazards and climate change and policies to support each goal.
- 12.5 Include implementation actions within the Implementation Program that would help avoid or minimize the effects that natural hazards pose to life, infrastructure, and property.

### 13. PLANNING FOR LAND USE

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- 13.1 Identify existing land uses on a map.
- 13.2 Describe and identify on a map, existing zoning districts.
- 13.3 Include a Land Use section that contains all the information pertaining to Standards 13.4 through 13.9.
- 13.4 (*Recommendation*) Assess future development capacity, based on the regulations of the existing zoning districts, by including estimates of:
  - a. Total future population at anticipated build-out; and
  - b. The year by which residential build-out is anticipated, based on historic trends.
- 13.5 Illustrate future land use and residential density categories on a Future Land Use Map (FLUM) according to the following:
  - a. All land areas within the municipality's boundaries must be designated with a future land use category;
  - b. Each future land use category depicted on the FLUM must be labeled within the map's legend;
  - c. (*Recommendation*) The State's Urban Services Boundary should be shown on the FLUM, where applicable;
  - d. (*Recommendation*) Any locally-designated growth centers should be shown on the FLUM, if applicable;
  - e. The following items must be depicted on the FLUM:
    - i. Existing permanently protected conservation areas;
    - ii. Significant existing, permanently protected outdoor recreational areas; and
    - iii. Areas of the municipality in which residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural uses are desired as a future land use.
  - f. The FLUM must be consistent with Figure 21-02(1) of Land Use 2025: Rhode Island's State Land Use Policies and Plan by applying the following minimum and/or maximum residential densities, or, where the municipality feels that consistency may not be appropriate, giving a narrative that describes why the minimum and/or maximum residential density is not warranted:
    - i. Areas shown as "Sewered Urban Development" on Figure 21-02(1) must have a minimum residential density of 5 dwelling units per acre.
    - ii. Areas shown as "Urban Development" on Figure 21-02(1) must have a minimum residential density of 1 dwelling unit per acre.
    - iii. Areas shown as "Conservation/Limited," "Reserve," "Non-urban Developed," "Prime Farmland," or "Major Parks and Open Space" on Figure 21-02(1) must have a maximum residential density of 1 dwelling unit per acre.
  - g. For coastal communities, the FLUM must be consistent with the policies and regulations of the RI Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC), including:

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- i. Aligning the future use designations shown on the FLUM with CRMC's water type classifications (Types 1-6, as applicable);
  - ii. Aligning future use designations shown on the FLUM with CRMC's rules for designated coastal barriers; and
  - iii. Aligning the residential densities shown on the FLUM with any requirements for residential density contained within Special Area Management Plans that are applicable to the municipality.
- 13.6 Include descriptions of each of the future land uses and densities shown on the Future Land Use Map that discuss, at a minimum:
  - a. The general uses that are desired within the future land use category (residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, civic, institutional, open space, recreation, etc.); and
  - b. The average residential density or the range of residential densities that are desired within the future land use category, if residential uses are to be permitted.
- 13.7 Identify any areas of the municipality in which inconsistencies exist between the existing zoning districts and the desired future land uses illustrated on the Future Land Use Map, by:
  - a. Clearly delineating on a map, the areas that have been determined to be inconsistent;
  - b. Identifying the existing zoning in the areas that have been determined to be inconsistent; and
  - c. Identifying the future land use designations of areas that have been determined to be inconsistent.
- 13.8 For any inconsistencies that exist between the existing zoning districts and the Future Land Use Map and categories, propose resolutions by selecting and discussing one of the following options:
  - a. Propose to change the zoning of a particular area to an existing zoning district that is consistent with the future land use designation, giving a brief description of the zoning district that includes the allowed uses; or
  - b. Propose the creation of a new zoning district that would achieve consistency with the future land use designation, and the application of the new district to the inconsistent area, giving a brief description of the intended zoning district that includes the expected allowed uses.
- 13.9 (*Recommendation*) Discuss any inconsistencies that exist between the desired future land uses illustrated on the Future Land Use Map and the comprehensive plans of contiguous municipalities by including, for each area in which a conflict is identified:
  - a. Identification of the conflicting future land use designations;
  - b. Discussion of the conflict that seems to exist; and
  - c. A brief synopsis of why the future land use was selected for the area.
- 13.10 Include goals that embody the State's goals for land use and policies to support each goal.
- 13.11 Include implementation actions within the Implementation Program that address:
  - a. Promoting orderly growth and development;

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- b. *(Recommended as appropriate)* Minimizing potentially conflicting land uses in contiguous municipalities and appropriately using shared resources;
- c. Ensuring that municipal land use regulations are consistent with the goals and policies set forth within the comprehensive plan; and
- d. Amending the zoning ordinance and map to provide consistency with the comprehensive plan, if applicable.

### 13A. DESIGNATING A LOCAL GROWTH CENTER

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Communities have the option of using their comprehensive plans to designate and get state approval of a local growth center. If a community wishes to designate a local growth center, the following requirements must be met.

13A.1 Include a map of the growth center, illustrating:

- a. The exact boundary of the land to be included within the growth center; and
- b. The future land use designations within the growth center.

13A.2 Include a narrative that discusses:

- a. The economic purpose or reason for the establishment of the growth center, including the desired outcomes of designation, and the types of businesses, residents, and visitors that the growth center is likely to serve;
- b. The public investment priorities that will be targeted for the growth center once adopted;
- c. The ways in which the growth center compliments what is going on in the rest of the municipality, neighboring municipalities, and the rest of the state, in terms of services and housing choices provided to residents and visitors, and the economic purpose;
- d. The impact that designating the growth center is expected to have on development and investment patterns in areas of the municipality outside of the growth center;
- e. The ways in which the municipality will incentivize growth within the center and/or limit growth outside of the center;
- f. The potential impacts of natural hazards and climate change on the growth center, if any, and the ways in which the municipality intends to mitigate these impacts; and
- g. The ways in which the growth center meets each of the following criteria:
  - i. Encourages growth in an area with existing infrastructure and services;
  - ii. New infrastructure is planned to support compact growth;
  - iii. Includes mixed land uses;
  - iv. Creates a range of housing opportunities and choices;
  - v. Protects and enhances critical environmental resources;
  - vi. Provides a variety of transportation choices;
  - vii. Promotes community design that contributes to a sense of place; and
  - viii. The center is appropriately scaled.

13A.3 Include implementation actions within the Implementation Program that would help to implement the designated growth center.

### 13B. MAINTAINING LOCAL GROWTH CENTER DESIGNATION

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Communities that have already designated a growth center in a state-approved comprehensive plan can choose to maintain the growth center's approval status by completing the following requirements. If the following requirements are not met, state-approval of the growth center will lapse.

13B.1 Include a map of the growth center, illustrating:

- a. The exact boundary of the land to be included within the growth center; and
- b. The future land use designations within the growth center.

13B.2 Include a narrative that discusses:

- a. The economic purpose or reason for the establishment of the growth center, including the desired outcomes of designation, and the types of businesses, residents, and visitors that the growth center is likely to serve; and
- b. The public investment priorities that will be targeted for the growth center.

13B.3 Implementation actions within the Implementation Program that would help to implement the designated growth center.

## 14. THE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

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- 14.1 Include a separate Implementation Program that meets all the requirements of this section and includes specific implementation actions as required by sections 2 through 13 of these Standards.
- 14.2 Include the specific municipal implementation actions to be undertaken to achieve each goal of the comprehensive plan, by:
  - a. Including sufficient, specific implementation actions to which the municipality will commit in order to achieve each of the comprehensive plan's goals;
  - b. Providing a timeframe for each implementation action;
  - c. (*Recommendation*) Assigning a responsible party to each implementation action, including the City or Town Council for actions that will require the amendment of codes and ordinances by the municipal legislative body; and
  - d. Including an action to implement a development moratorium post-adoption of the comprehensive plan if one is so desired.
- 14.3 Identify any implementation actions involving the expansion or replacement of public facilities that are reflected in the current Capital Improvement Program.
- 14.4 Specify the schedule by which the zoning ordinance and zoning map will be amended to provide consistency with the comprehensive plan by:
  - a. Specifying the amendments that will be undertaken within the first twelve (12) months after adoption of the comprehensive plan that are related to any desired development moratoriums;
  - b. Specifying, in 2-year increments, (*"2-year increments" are recommended*) the amendments that will be undertaken to bring consistency with the comprehensive plan; and
  - c. (*Recommendation*) Proposing all amendments to be completed within the 10-year period subsequent to the adoption of the comprehensive plan.

## 15. MAPPING STANDARDS

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- 15.1 All maps must have a title that is reflective of the data shown on the map.
- 15.2 All maps must have a legend that provides information about all of the data presented within the map.
- 15.3 Information about the source(s) of all of the data being shown on the map must be clearly identified.
- 15.4 All map symbology, including colors and/or shading of features, must be clearly distinguishable.
- 15.5 On all maps, specific areas within the municipality should not be left without relevant information and features intended to cover the entire municipality (e.g. existing zoning districts and Future Land Use categories) must cover the entire municipality.

## 16. THE FORMAL ADOPTION PROCESS

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- 16.1 Comprehensive plans must be adopted as an ordinance by the City/Town Council.
- 16.2 Prior to adoption of a comprehensive plan, the City/Town Council must hold a minimum of one (1) public hearing, which may be a joint meeting with the Planning Board/Commission.
- 16.3 Prior to adoption of a comprehensive plan by the City/Town Council, the Planning Board/Commission must:
  - a. Disseminate information to the public about the plan revision;
  - b. Solicit both written and oral comments during the preparation of the plan;
  - c. Hold a minimum of one (1) public hearing, which may be a joint meeting with the City/Town Council; and
  - d. Submit a recommendation to the City/Town Council regarding adoption of the plan.
- 16.4 Prior to all hearings of the City/Town Council and the Planning/Board at which the comprehensive plan is to be considered, the municipality must publish notice of the public hearing at least once each week for three (3) successive weeks prior to the date of the hearing in a newspaper of general circulation.
- 16.5 All public notice of hearings at which the comprehensive plan is to be considered must:
  - a. Specify the place, date, and time of the hearing;
  - b. Indicate that adoption of the comprehensive plan is under consideration;
  - c. Contain a statement of the proposed amendments to the comprehensive plan or summarize and describe the matter under consideration;
  - d. Advise those interested where and when a copy of the matter under consideration may be obtained, examined or copied; and
  - e. State that the plan may be altered or amended prior to the close of the public hearing without further advertising, as a result of further study or because of the views expressed at the public hearing.
- 16.6 Comprehensive plans must be submitted to the Division of Planning within thirty (30) days of adoption by the City/Town Council.