



# COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE

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Town of Richmond, RI

DECEMBER 2021



# Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>1-1</b>
Consistency with State Plans .....	1-3
Regional Coordination .....	1-3
Public Participation .....	1-3
Public Workshop .....	1-4
Community Survey .....	1-5
Community Profile .....	1-5
<b>2 Open Space and Recreation.....</b>	<b>2-1</b>
Community Survey and Pubic Workshop .....	2-2
Regional Opportunities for Open Space and Recreation .....	2-2
Open Space and Recreation Opportunities for the Region .....	2-4
Current Conditions and Trends.....	2-4
Recreation.....	2-4
Open Space.....	2-5
Inventory and Assessment of Open Space and Recreation Resources.....	2-5
Current Recreation and Open Space Programs in Richmond.....	2-6
The Richmond Dog Park .....	2-8
North-South Trail: A Regional Resource.....	2-9
Analysis of Richmond's Recreation Needs .....	2-9
National and State Standards .....	2-9
Summary of Richmond's Developed Recreation and Open Space.....	2-10
Local Needs Assessment.....	2-12
Goals, Policies, and Actions .....	2-14
<b>3 Natural and Cultural Resources.....</b>	<b>3-1</b>
Community Survey and Pubic Workshop .....	3-2
Current Conditions and Trends.....	3-2
Natural Resources.....	3-3
Cultural Resources.....	3-4



Conservation and Protection .....	3-7
Richmond Conservation Commission .....	3-8
Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust .....	3-9
Regional Efforts .....	3-10
Targeted Conservation Efforts .....	3-10
Public Open Space Management Areas .....	3-11
Unique Natural Areas Requiring Protection .....	3-11
Riparian Land along Water Resources .....	3-11
Unique Natural Areas with Ecological Significance .....	3-12
Planning Policies .....	3-12
Conservation Development .....	3-13
Residential Compounds .....	3-14
Agricultural Overlay District .....	3-14
Aquifer Protection Overlay District .....	3-14
Flood Hazard Overlay District .....	3-15
Goals, Policies, and Actions .....	3-15
 <b>4      Economic Development .....</b>	 <b>4-1</b>
Community Survey and Public Workshop .....	4-1
Economic Conditions .....	4-2
State Trends .....	4-2
Local Trends .....	4-3
Economic Development Commission .....	4-7
Economic Development Strategies .....	4-8
Agriculture .....	4-8
Agricultural Tourism .....	4-9
Geotourism .....	4-10
Golf Businesses .....	4-10
Commercial Development .....	4-11
Industrial or Business Parks and Manufacturing .....	4-12
Goals, Policies, and Actions .....	4-13
 <b>5      Circulation .....</b>	 <b>5-1</b>
Community Survey and Pubic Workshop .....	5-1
Roadways and Traffic .....	5-2
Streets .....	5-2
Traffic .....	5-4
Traffic Collisions .....	5-5
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) .....	5-5
Public Transportation .....	5-6
Bicycles and Pedestrians .....	5-6
Parking Alternatives .....	5-7
Goals, Policies, and Actions .....	5-7



<b>6</b>	<b>Public Services and Facilities .....</b>	<b>6-1</b>
	Community Survey and Public Workshop Summary .....	6-1
	Education .....	6-1
	Libraries .....	6-2
	Fire Districts .....	6-3
	Hope Valley-Wyoming Fire District .....	6-3
	Richmond-Carolina Fire District .....	6-3
	Police Department .....	6-4
	Social and Health Services .....	6-5
	Community Center .....	6-6
	Town-sponsored Senior Activities .....	6-6
	Public Water Systems .....	6-7
	Aquifer Protection .....	6-9
	Wastewater .....	6-9
	Solid Waste Disposal .....	6-10
	Emergency Management .....	6-11
	Natural Hazard Mitigation .....	6-12
	Municipal Offices .....	6-14
	Energy Conservation .....	6-14
	Energy Efficiency and Conservation .....	6-15
	Goals, Policies, and Actions .....	6-17
<b>7</b>	<b>Housing .....</b>	<b>7-1</b>
	Community Survey and Public Workshop .....	7-2
	Housing Supply .....	7-2
	Age of Dwellings .....	7-2
	Housing Types .....	7-2
	Housing Demand .....	7-3
	Housing Affordability .....	7-5
	Housing Needs .....	7-6
	Special Housing Needs .....	7-8
	Attempts to Provide More Affordable Housing .....	7-11
	Past Strategies .....	7-11
	Affordable Housing Recently Constructed .....	7-11
	Regulations that Facilitate Construction of Affordable Housing .....	7-12
	How Richmond Can Meet its Goal .....	7-14
	Regional Cooperation .....	7-14
	Property Rehabilitation and Reuse .....	7-14
	Multi-family Housing .....	7-15
	Village Revitalization .....	7-15
	Transfer of Development Rights .....	7-16
	Mixed-use Development in Wyoming .....	7-16
	Community Education .....	7-16

Siting of Increased-density Residential Development.....	7-16
Goals, Policies, and Actions .....	7-19
<b>8 Land Use.....</b>	<b>8-1</b>
Community Survey and Pubic Workshop .....	8-2
Population .....	8-3
Population and Land Use .....	8-3
Physically Constrained Land.....	8-4
Limited Development Areas.....	8-5
Development Trends.....	8-6
Land Availability .....	8-7
The Preferred Development Strategy.....	8-8
Managing Growth and Maintaining Rural Character .....	8-8
Residential Development.....	8-8
Agricultural Development .....	8-11
Other Strategies to Manage Growth and Retain Rural Character .....	8-12
Areas of Future Growth .....	8-13
Industrial Uses.....	8-14
Balancing Water Availability, Wastewater Treatment, and Land Development .....	8-14
The Future Land Use Plan .....	8-15
Wyoming-Route 138 Infill and Growth Area .....	8-17
Low Density Residential .....	8-17
Medium Density Residential.....	8-17
High Density Residential.....	8-17
Potential Future Growth Areas .....	8-17
General Business and Neighborhood Business .....	8-18
Industrial and Light Industrial.....	8-18
Flex Tech.....	8-18
Planned Development .....	8-18
Shannock Village.....	8-19
Planned Development Resort District .....	8-19
Planned Unit Development–Village Center.....	8-19
Conservation and Open Space.....	8-19
Public and Governmental.....	8-19
Agriculture Overlay .....	8-20
Aquifer Protection Overlay.....	8-20
Flood Hazard Overlay.....	8-20
Inconsistency Between the Future Land Use Map and the Zoning Map .....	8-20
Goals, Policies, and Actions .....	8-21

# List of Tables

Table No.	Description	Page
Table 1-1	Richmond Population Change, 1980 - 2020.....	1-6
Table 1-2	Population Growth in Washington County Towns, 2000 - 2020 .....	1-6
Table 1-3	Age Distribution of Richmond Population .....	1-7
Table 1-4	Household Incomes in Richmond .....	1-8
Table 2-1	2019 NRPA Data on Parks and Recreational Facilities .....	2-10
Table 2-2	Recreation and Open Space Compared to 2020 Population .....	2-11
Table 2-3	State Beaches, Management Areas and Preserves Compared to 2020 Population .....	2-12
Table 3-1	Properties Acquired by the Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust .....	3-9
Table 4-1	Number of Businesses in Richmond, First Quarter 2010 through First Quarter 2018.....	4-4
Table 4-2	Average Employment for Richmond Businesses, First Quarter 2010 through 2018.....	4-5
Table 4-3	Businesses with More Than 25 Employees (2019).....	4-6
Table 4-4	Industries That Employ Richmond Residents 16 and Older .....	4-7
Table 5-1	Highway Functional Classification of Richmond Streets .....	5-3
Table 5-2	Change in Daily Average Traffic, AADT Values .....	5-4
Table 6-1	School Enrollment in the Chariho Regional School District (2010 2019) .....	6-2
Table 6-2	Annual Metered Water Consumption April 2020 - March 2021.....	6-8
Table 6-3	Solid Waste and Recycled Materials 2016 – 2020 (in tons) .....	6-11
Table 6-4	Potential Natural Hazards .....	6-12
Table 6-5	Municipal Electric Usage and Cost.....	6-15
Table 6-6	Municipal Heating and Vehicle Fuel Usage and Cost .....	6-15
Table 7-1	Estimated Percentage of Housing Units by Age .....	7-2
Table 7-2	Housing Types in Richmond.....	7-3
Table 7-3	Housing Supply: Total Number of Dwelling Units, 1970-2017 .....	7-3
Table 7-4	Select Housing and Economic Indicators of Rhode Island.....	7-4



Table 7-5	Household Incomes in Richmond .....	7-4
Table 7-6	Median Sales Prices for Single-family Homes: Richmond and Select Washington County Communities, 2010-2018 (Year End).....	7-6
Table 7-7	Projected Need for Low or Moderate Income Housing.....	7-8
Table 7-8	Special Needs Households in Richmond, 2017 .....	7-8
Table 7-9	Disability Population.....	7-9
Table 7-10	Household Size in Richmond (Owner Occupied Units) .....	7-10
Table 7-11	Percentage of Low and Moderate Income Housing Units, Richmond and Surrounding Communities.....	7-10
Table 7-12	Count of Vacant Housing Units in Richmond and Surrounding Communities.....	7-15
Table 8-1	Age Distribution, 1990, 2000, 2009 and 2017 .....	8-3
Table 8-2	Current Land Uses: Actual Use in Zoning Districts .....	8-4
Table 8-3	Physically Constrained Land in Acreage by Zoning District (2019) .....	8-5
Table 8-4	Limited Development Areas by Zoning District (2019) .....	8-6
Table 8-5	Comparison of Parcel Inventories, 2004, 2010, 2018 .....	8-6
Table 8-6	Net Area Available for Residential Development .....	8-7
Table 8-7	Commercial Solar Energy Systems in Richmond .....	8-11

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# 1

## Introduction



Richmond is a rural town located in Washington County in southern Rhode Island. Historically it has been a farming 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 encourages development to expand the property tax base while protecting its rural characteristics.



The primary document that will help Richmond achieve this goal is the Comprehensive Community Plan. This 2021 plan is an update to the plan amended in 2016 and supersedes all previous versions.

Overarching goals carried forward in this plan include:

- › Determining future land uses based on the environmental capacity of the land and the capacity of existing and planned public facilities and services;
- › Safeguarding natural and cultural assets;
- › Promoting the production of affordable housing; and
- › Encouraging economic development.

The Richmond Comprehensive Community Plan sets long-range goals for community action. The Plan is divided into seven elements:

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

Each element describes existing conditions, how residents envision the Town of the future, and how the Town will achieve that vision. Each element includes policy statements and plans for Implementation in the form of goals and specific actions. The time frame in which each action item will be completed is stated accordingly. Short-term actions should be completed within one to five years of the adoption of the Plan. Mid-term actions should be completed within six to ten years. Long-term actions should be completed within ten to twenty years. Municipal resources, including financial resources and staff resources, will influence the degree to which the Town will be able to adhere to these time periods.

The Town uses the Comprehensive Community Plan regularly in a variety of ways.

The Plan serves as the foundation for sound and informed land use decisions. Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance (including the Zoning Map) and the Land Development and Subdivision regulations are reviewed for consistency with the Plan before enactment or adoption. Before the Planning Board approves proposed land developments, members review the proposals for consistency with the policies articulated in the Comprehensive Community Plan. When the Town seeks state or federal funding, the application for that funding specifically notes the consistency of the project to be funded with the provisions of the Plan.

Because land use decisions must be consistent with the policies embodied in the Comprehensive Community Plan and must also comply with the Zoning Ordinance and the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations, Town officials will review the ordinance and the regulations each time the Plan is amended to ensure that both documents remain consistent with the Plan and, if necessary, will amend the ordinance or the regulations.

## Consistency with State Plans

The Richmond Comprehensive Community Plan is 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 Community Development Corporation (Housing Element)
- › Economic development strategies with the Washington County Regional Planning Council (Economic Development Element)
- › Protection of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed with Hopkinton, Westerly, and the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association (Natural and Cultural Resources Element)

Richmond shares social and public services with adjacent communities, most notably with its membership in the Chariho Regional School District, which also includes Charlestown and Hopkinton. Many Richmond residents must travel to adjacent communities for medical and social services, and Richmond provides financial support to some of those agencies.

## Public Participation

Because the Richmond Comprehensive Community Plan is a public document, it was developed with public participation. The public participation program involved a workshop, a community survey, a Richmond Planning Board work session, and two public hearings, one conducted by the Richmond Planning Board and one conducted by the Richmond Town Council.

## Public Workshop

The public workshop was held during the evening on June 25, 2019 at the Chariho Regional Middle School. The workshop involved a formal presentation followed by an open discussion with more than 50 attendees. Each element in the Plan 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 results 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 at the I-95 interchange. Outside of Wyoming, residents felt that the different areas of town should be approached differently. Conservation efforts should be aimed at forested and farmland areas, while villages and growth centers should be targeted for new development and infill.

Residents want the Town to encourage the establishment of smaller businesses that offer better quality jobs. They said the Town needs to focus equal attention on attracting new businesses and on providing incentives for existing businesses to stay in Richmond. Residents would welcome family entertainment establishments such as theaters and cinemas, and businesses that would attract visitors to 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 and from the University of Rhode Island, Newport and Cape Cod. Some residents felt that these travelers are potential customers for local businesses and that by failing to give those travelers a reason to stop in Richmond, those local businesses and the Town are ignoring a potentially lucrative opportunity.

Many residents expressed a desire for more bike paths and trails that connect villages, parks, and other natural areas. For example, the North-South Trail is in the vicinity of Wyoming, and should be connected to the village itself. Other transportation issues mentioned were the traffic congestion caused by the numerous driveways and parking lot accesses on Route 138 near its intersection with I-95, and the lack of sidewalks in Wyoming.

The shortage of affordable housing was a significant concern for many residents, particularly those older than 55. The Town's housing stock is comprised mostly of single-family homes, limiting the choices for people interested in alternative types of housing such as assisted living facilities and multi-family buildings. Villages including 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 Richmond as a small rural town but also increase the property tax base to reduce the tax burden on homeowners.



## Community Survey

Between March and June of 2019, the Town conducted an online survey of its residents in preparation for updating the Comprehensive Community Plan. 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 to determine where revisions, deletions, or additions might be appropriate. Residents 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. Their responses reflected views expressed during the public workshop. 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 that they like its rural character, natural beauty, and safety. Many also commented on its friendly people, its quiet atmosphere, and its scenic beauty. Some respondents focused on the many acres of state park and management areas in town, Richmond's close proximity to a major highway, 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 increasing the number and quality of recreational opportunities available. Many residents mentioned as challenges the need to limit increases in property taxes and the lack of local employment opportunities.

With regard to the pace and appearance of development, respondents were mostly neutral or in agreement that commercial and residential development has been located in areas appropriate for new growth. Nearly 81 percent of respondents felt that future growth would be appropriate in areas with existing development and areas immediately adjacent to Wyoming and Shannock, both of which are served by public water.

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 supported Town investment in public services and facilities to encourage economic development in targeted locations.

Finally, respondents strongly supported the Town's continued efforts to protect open space and preserve scenic views and vistas that contribute to the local rural character, and supported the purchase of land or development rights to accomplish this goal. Most respondents also agreed 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 U.S. Census Bureau reported that Richmond's population in 2020 was 8,020, a 4 percent increase over the 2010 population. That increase in population is slightly below the statewide figure. Statewide, the 2020 population was 4.3 percent higher than the 2010 population.

**Table 1-1 Richmond Population Change, 1980 - 2020**

Year	Population	Change
1980	4,018	
1990	5,351	33.00%
2000	7,222	34.90%
2010	7,708	6.70%
2020	8,020	4.00%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 1-2 compares the population change in Richmond with the population changes in the other Washington County communities from 2000 to 2020.

**Table 1-2 Population Growth in Washington County Towns, 2000 - 2020**

Town	2000	2010	2020	% Change 2010-2020
Charlestown	7,859	7,827	7,995	2.2%
Exeter	6,045	6,425	6,460	0.5%
Hopkinton	7,836	8,188	8,398	2.6%
Narragansett	16,361	15,868	14,532	-8.4%
New Shoreham	1,010	1,051	1,410	34.2%
North Kingstown	26,326	26,486	27,232	4.7%
Richmond	7,222	7,708	8,020	4.0%
South Kingstown	27,921	30,639	31,931	4.2%
Westerly	22,966	22,787	23,359	2.5%

U.S. Census Bureau

Richmond's 4 percent increase in population from 2010 to 2020 was significantly lower than the 12.6 percent increase projected by Statewide Planning in 2013.<sup>1</sup> Statewide Planning's 2030 population projection for Richmond is 9,838. Based on the 2020 Census figures, the Town is projecting that its population will increase by 2030, but the rate of population growth between 2020 and 2030 will be slower than the rate projected by Statewide Planning.

In the 2010 Census, 7,437 Richmond residents identified themselves as white, while in the 2020 Census, 7,375 did, a decrease of 0.8 percent. Thirty-six Richmond residents identified themselves as Black or African American in 2010, while 44 did so in 2020, an increase of

1 Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning Technical Paper 162.

22.2 percent. In 2010, 42 Richmond residents identified themselves as American Indian or Alaskan Native; that number rose by two in 2020, an increase of 4.8 percent. The number who identified themselves as Asian went from 42 to 72, an increase of 71.4 percent. One Richmond resident identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander in 2010, while three did so in 2020. The most significant demographic change was in those who identified themselves as mixed race or of a race not listed among the choices on the Census form. In 2010, 27 Richmond residents said they were of some other race, while in 2020, 70 residents said they were of some other race, a 159.3 percent increase. In 2010, 123 residents said they were of two or more races, while in 2020, 412 identified themselves as mixed-race, an increase of 235 percent.

The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey estimates for 2017 indicate that the population of Richmond is aging. Table 1-3 shows the changes in age distribution between the 2010 Census and the 2017 ACS estimates.<sup>2</sup> In 2017 the median age was estimated to be 44.3 years old, up from 41.2 in 2010. The percentage of school-aged children (19 years and younger) decreased, which is consistent with the decline in public school enrollment discussed in the Public Services and Facilities Element. The number of young adults and young families decreased. Many people who grew up in Richmond in the 1980s and 1990s have not returned to live here, perhaps discouraged by the high cost of new homes and the increase in property taxes. In contrast, the number of residents 45 years and older 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 American Community Survey, the composition of Richmond households changed little from the 2010 Census. The number of households increased from 2,911 to 3,025, but the average household size decreased slightly, from 2.84 persons to 2.67 persons.

<sup>2</sup> The 2020 U.S. Census data on age distribution was not yet available when this Element was prepared.

The distribution of household incomes is shown in Table 1-4. The American Community Survey estimated that in 2017, median incomes increased over 2010 median incomes. Richmond households have a higher median income than the state median income.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1-4 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	\$77,058 <sup>1</sup>	\$98,234
State Median Household Income	\$55,677	\$52,438 <sup>1</sup>	\$61,043

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

All dollar amounts adjusted to 2017 dollars via CPI Inflation Calculator, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

In 2020, the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) severely affected the country. In Rhode Island, the pandemic resulted in tens of thousands of infections, more than 2,750 deaths as of mid-August 2021,<sup>4</sup> pressure on the healthcare and education systems and significant increases in unemployment claims. The pandemic has changed the way institutions and businesses operate. Although reported cases of COVID-19 are more prevalent in urban communities than in rural ones, Richmond continues to adjust to the changes caused by the pandemic. It is not clear how the pandemic will affect the population, municipal and educational operations, or the local economy over the long term.

<sup>3</sup> The 2020 U.S. Census data on age distribution was not yet available when this Element was prepared.

<sup>4</sup> Rhode Island Department of Health.

# 2

## Open Space and Recreation

The Open Space and Recreation Element establishes a long-range guide for community actions and development of policies and initiatives for management and protection of open space and recreation resources in Richmond. To understand the role of this element and its links to other elements in this Comprehensive Community Plan and other guiding documents, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of the terms used.



By referring to sources including the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) rules and regulations and *Ocean State Outdoors: Rhode Island's State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* (State Guide Plan Element 152), the following definitions have been developed for use in this Plan:

"Open space," when used in this Comprehensive Community Plan, means:

Undeveloped or partially developed real property that has natural, ecological or scenic value. Open space includes, but is not limited to, conservation land, forested land, wetlands, management areas, agricultural land, critical habitat, recreational areas, and parks. Open space may include amenities such as small parks, green buffers along roadways, or open areas that are owned by a governmental agency or are open to the public. Open space may also include undeveloped parcels not specifically designated as open space that have conservation or recreation value.

"Recreation areas," as referred to in this Comprehensive Community Plan, means:

Land, facilities, or amenities available to the public for active or passive outdoor activities. Recreation areas can be either developed facilities or undeveloped natural areas.

Developed facilities include game fields and courts, pools, boat ramps, campsites, picnic areas or shelters, paved or unpaved trails, and auxiliary facilities such as parking areas, restrooms and meeting rooms. Some level of organization or programming may be provided.

Undeveloped natural areas include areas for walking, hiking, biking, fishing, bird watching, and kayaking or canoeing with few or no constructed amenities. These areas can include forested areas, beaches, riverways, open fields, and wildlife habitats.

Some areas may contain both developed and undeveloped property. For instance, a state park of mostly forested areas can provide paved parking and restroom facilities near the entrance, while the remainder of the site is left in its natural state for hiking or bird watching.

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, the Open Space and Recreation Element is also linked to the Public Services and Facilities Element, which includes the recreation areas managed by the Town.

## Community Survey and Pubic Workshop

The Richmond community survey and public workshop provided residents and property owners with the opportunity to comment on policies that can be adopted to protect important natural and cultural resources (see Appendix A for Public Participation Summary). The survey 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 people 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, including farms, to attract tourists and build agricultural tourism in Richmond. Residents also felt that the Town should try to attract 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 plays a role in preserving open space and providing recreation opportunities for the entire state as well as adjacent states. The Town's location on Interstate 95 (I-95), only

ten miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean, offers residents recreation and open space experiences that are available by traveling only 20 to 30 minutes away 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 State Park, and picnicking complexes at the Arcadia Management Area, Burlingame State Park, and Beach Pond in Exeter.

There are five golf courses in Richmond: four eighteen-hole courses (Richmond Country Club, Meadow Brook Golf Course, Beaver River Golf Club, The Preserve at Boulder Hills (a private course) and one nine-hole course (Pinecrest Golf Club). Each offers a clubhouse and restaurant facilities (see the Economic Development Element).

Also in the area of developed recreation, the three towns in the Chariho Regional School District (Charlestown, Richmond and Hopkinton) sponsor organized sports leagues, such as Little League Baseball, Girl's Softball, Chariho Youth Soccer Association, and Chariho Cowboys football and cheerleading as well as all the programs offered by the school district itself. These organizations use fields in all the participating towns that are owned either by the leagues themselves, the towns, or the regional school district.

Such regional cooperation is 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.

Some of the largest federally-owned and state-owned forest management areas and conservation areas in the state are located in Richmond. Portions of DEM's Arcadia Management Area and Great Swamp Management Area, as well as all of the Carolina Management Area, are located in Richmond.

In recent years, DEM has acquired additional land to annex to existing state preserves, as well as land on rivers and ponds. DEM has also acquired agricultural development rights. Regionally, the southwestern corner of Rhode Island has the state's most extensive network of permanent open space as a result of state and federal conservation activities dating back to the 1930s. Many of the large management areas started as 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 State Trail Advisory Commission plan followed on this concept. The state's land use plan, Land Use 2025, also embraces this concept.

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

Richmond, a town large in area but small in population, is fortunate to have ready access to a wide variety of regional, recreational and conservation facilities. It is becoming increasingly



important for the Town to work with regional organizations to maximize the value of available funds, staff, and volunteers.

## Open Space and Recreation Opportunities for the Region

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. Farms throughout the town 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 from urban areas are attracted to farms because of the unfamiliar sights and experiences the farms have to offer.

## Current Conditions and Trends

Understanding major trends is the best way to effectively plan to provide adequate 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 State Planning Council's "Ocean State Outdoors: Rhode Island's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (State Guide Plan Element 152), the state continues to pursue a statewide greenway system that effectively connects the state's natural resources, parks, and open spaces.

The past two decades have seen major changes in recreation trends, particularly in the types and locations of recreation facilities. An example is the establishment of the Arcadia Branch of the Ocean Community YMCA in Richmond. These changes were driven largely by family economics that require parents to work outside of the household, widespread use of daycare centers, and longer commuting distances to work, all resulting in 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 facilities and staff. Municipal governments and school departments are likely to be pressured to provide more after-school programs for children.

Although Rhode Island has provided grants for recreation facility acquisition and development, federal assistance is not assured. The years of massive federal funding are gone, and the responsibility of financing programs is falling increasingly to the state and municipal governments. Funding for new facilities and 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 programs.

## Open Space

The discussion of open space resources in this element is closely linked with the Natural and Cultural Resources Element. Additional discussion of the items below can be found in that element. The Natural and Cultural Resources Element 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.

There is also growing awareness of the importance of the Wood-Pawcatuck watershed and the need to protect the quality 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 Brook, Meadow Brook, Roaring Brook, White Brook, and Taney Brook. The purpose of the designation is to preserve, protect and enhance the special environment, cultural and recreational values of the Wood-Pawcatuck watershed and rivers and tributaries in Rhode Island and Connecticut for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

## 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 of the more than 8,280 acres of protected lands in Richmond (32 percent of Richmond's total land mass); a full listing is provided in Appendix C. There are an additional 6,835 acres (roughly 22 percent of Richmond's land mass) in 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:

- › DEM;
- › Town of Richmond and Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust;
- › Private, non-profit organizations;
- › Private property owners who have sold or donated conservation easements or development rights;
- › Owners of commercial recreational properties; and
- › Owners of properties participating in the Farm, Forest and Open Space program.

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

## **Current Recreation and Open Space Programs in Richmond**

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

The Land Trust's mission is to identify, acquire, preserve, and protect open space, including forests, wildlife habitat, wetlands, and farmland, to maintain the Town's rural character and ecological assets for the benefit of the public.

The work of the Land Trust is carried out by seven trustees appointed by the Town Council and assisted by a group of dedicated volunteers who help with property maintenance and outreach efforts.

During the past six years, the Land Trust has acquired two substantial properties, the 112-acre Saila Preserve and the 112-acre Chan Preserve. Final plans are underway for construction of a parking area to serve the Saila Preserve.

The Land Trust's other recent activities include:

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

### **Richmond Conservation Commission**

The mission of the Richmond Conservation Commission is to 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, the Conservation Commission is engaged in a number of activities including:

- › Sponsorship of the Town's annual Earth Day event, which includes volunteer cleanups and collection of recyclables along town streets.

- › 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 Eco-Depot events held in town and various environmental topics through its website.
- › Development and maintenance of the Richmond Heritage Trail, a hiking path constructed on donated land.
- › 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 Department**

Although a Recreation Commission was established by ordinance in 1994, the Town has been without an active commission for several years. As of mid-2021, recruitment is currently underway for new commission members. The Town's annual summer camp and various events throughout the year, primarily for school-aged children, are organized by a part-time recreation director.

The summer camp, which takes place at the Richmond Elementary School from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. during July and August, attracts about 60 children from Richmond and other surrounding towns. Full-day camp began in the summer of 2021; previously camp was a half day. Camp activities include field trips, crafts, summer reading, first-aid classes, drug education, and sports including basketball and volleyball.

Annual events include the Huck Finn Fishing Derby, the Bunny Breakfast and Egg Hunt, and the holiday tree lighting and visit with Santa.

### **Chariho Little League**

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

- › T-Ball – 8 year olds – approximately 50 participants per year.
- › Major and minor league programs – 9 to 12 year olds – approximately 225 participants each year.
- › Senior league program – 13 to 15 year olds – approximately 75 participants each 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 Elementary School Field, Chariho Vocational-Technical 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**

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

## **The Richmond Dog Park**

In 2010, Richmond dog owners began using a capped landfill on Town-owned property on Buttonwoods Road as a dog park where they could allow their pets to walk, run and play with other dogs. The Town Council endorsed the use of the landfill for a dog park, but because the park could not be formally established on the lot without further site remediation, the Town Council appointed an ad hoc committee in 2012 to raise money to remediate the site and establish a dog park. The ad hoc committee became a formal dog park committee in 2016. The Buttonwoods Road dog park has continued to increase in popularity, attracting residents of nearby towns as well as Richmond residents. After construction of the Heritage Trail in 2017 on open space donated to the Town, interest increased in establishing a dog park adjacent to the new trail instead of on the landfill. Since

then, the Dog Park Committee has continued to raise money and has initiated planning for construction of a permanent dog park at the new location.

### **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 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. A portion of the trail runs through Richmond. Currently, there are proposals 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 in addressing its recreational needs since the last Comprehensive Community Plan was adopted. Through funding assistance from DEM, for example, the Town completed the Richmond Heritage Trail located off Route 138 in 2017. The trail provides a two-mile loop through Town-owned property on Country Acres Road.

### **National and State Standards**

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends that future recreational facility needs be determined by using a "level of service" analysis. While such an analysis can be useful, it is costly and time-consuming. As an alternative, Richmond has chosen to use NRPA's historic guidelines that consider needs on a per capita basis. These standards are outlined in Table 2-1.

However, NRPA's per capita guidelines do not take into consideration local factors that influence the ability to provide recreational facilities, nor do the guidelines address the differences between urban and rural communities. Some facilities are more appropriate for urban communities, so the need for those facilities in Richmond should be assessed by taking into consideration the quality of recreation they would provide.

Using NRPA data for 2019, Table 2-1 shows how many acres of parkland there are on average for each 1,000 residents nationally and in New England; the average number of residents for each park or recreational facility nationally and in New England; and the percentage of park and recreation agencies (including state governments, local governments, and private agencies) that operate or maintain each type of recreational facility nationally and in New England.

In 2013, the Division of Statewide Planning<sup>1</sup> projected Richmond's 2020 population at 8,684, and predicted a relatively constant rate of growth between 2020 and 2040.

<sup>1</sup> Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning Technical Paper 162.

**Table 2-1 2019 NRPA Data on Parks and Recreational Facilities**

	New England Average	US Average
<b>Parkland Metric</b>		
Acres of Parkland per 1,000 Population	10.0 Acres	10.1 Acres
<b>Number of residents per each type of facility:</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>Percentage of agencies that maintain each type of facility:</b>		
Parks	85.0%	95.7%
Recreation Programming and Services	97.5%	92.8%
Indoor Facilities	77.5%	87.3%
Trails, Greenways, Blueways	65.0%	78.0%

Source: National Parks and Recreation Association, 2019

According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Richmond's population increased by 4% from 2010 to 2020. This is significantly lower than the 12.6% increase projected by Statewide Planning in 2013. Statewide Planning's 2030 population projection for Richmond is 9,838. Based on the 2020 Census figures, the Town is projecting that its population will increase by 2030, but the rate of population growth between 2020 and 2030 will be slower than the rate projected by Statewide Planning.

## 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 open space. Care must be exercised to place these facilities in safe areas where they will have a minimal impact on natural resources.



**Table 2-2 Recreation and Open Space Compared to 2020 Population**

Fishing Areas		
Mechanic Street Dam	2.54 acres	
Wyoming Pond	1.30 acres	
Beaver River Grove	1.00 acres	
Beaver River Access	3.09 acres	
<b>Total 7.93 acres</b>		<b>1,011 Residents per Acre</b>
Parks and Playgrounds		
Richmond Elementary	5.00 acres	
Chariho Campus	20.00 acres	
Heritage Trail	45.40 acres	
Beaver River Playground	19.34 acres	
<b>Total 89.74 acres</b>		<b>89 Residents per Acre</b>
Boat Launch Areas		
Mechanic Street Dam	2.54 acres	
Biscuit City Landing	0.50 acres	
Wyoming Pond	1.30 acres	
Beaver River Grove	1.00 acres	
Pawcatuck River	0.50 acres	
<b>Total 5.84 acres</b>		<b>1,373 Residents per Acre</b>

Sources: DEM, Richmond G.I.S., Richmond Tax Assessor

When compared to national standards, access to boat launch areas is adequate. However, almost all of the ponds and rivers in Richmond are appropriate for canoe or kayak access at multiple points. Few have launch areas for boats on trailers. However, because 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 shows the State beaches, management areas, and preserves available to Richmond residents. The existing State management area and preserve acreage is expected to meet future demand. The number of linear feet of beach available to Richmond residents is below recommended guidelines. However, it is reasonable to assume that residents will continue to use freshwater and saltwater beaches in nearby towns as well as the beaches available in Richmond.

**Table 2-3 State Beaches, Management Areas and Preserves Compared to 2020 Population**

Beaches		
Arcadia	500 linear feet	
Carolina	100 linear feet	
Total 600 linear feet		13.3 Residents per LF
State Management Areas and Preserves		
Arcadia	1,032 acres	
Carolina	2,325 acres	
de Coppet	1,825 acres	
Great Swamp	428 acres	
Grassy Pond	245 acres	
Total 4,030 acres		1.9 Residents per Acre
Boat Launch Areas		
Mechanic Street Dam	2.54 acres	
Biscuit City Landing	0.50 acres	
Wyoming Pond	1.30 acres	
Beaver River Grove	1.00 acres	
Pawcatuck River	0.50 acres	
Total 5.855 acres		1.36 Residents per Acre

Sources: DEM, Richmond G.I.S., Richmond Tax Assessor"

## Local Needs Assessment

Many residents who took part in the community survey and public workshop agreed that the Town needs to attract or create developed recreation facilities, including sports fields and playgrounds. However, applying national standards, which focus only on quantitative measurements of publicly controlled active recreation in urban areas, does not adequately assess Richmond's recreational needs. For a more comprehensive view, one must consider 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, the per capita income in Richmond was \$16,117. 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.

The Division of Statewide Planning population projections estimate that Richmond's population will increase 6.7 percent between 2020 and 2025, 6.2 percent between 2025 and 2030, and 4.6 percent between 2035 and 2040. Although these projections may prove to be too high, as noted above, the Town nevertheless anticipates that its population will increase. This increase in population, as well as the increase in per capita income that is possible if historic trends continue, make it likely that the demand for recreational opportunities, especially active recreational facilities, will continue to increase.

Most new residential developments in Richmond are designed as conservation developments. Conservation developments are intended to minimize land clearance and environmental impacts and maintains the rural character of Richmond. House lots and streets are sited in a manner that follows the natural topography of the property to the greatest extent possible and preserves historic and cultural features such as stone walls. Separate lots encompass large, contiguous areas of open space. As a result, conservation developments provide more useful and functional open space than other types of residential site design.

The growth in the number of participants in girls' and womens' sports is likely to continue and will place greater demand on facilities that currently are used primarily by mens' and boys' groups. The trend toward more organized sports and recreational activities is also likely to continue. Athletic fields probably will continue to be in greatest demand during late afternoons and evenings and on weekend mornings. Priority should be placed on providing recreational facilities with multi-purpose fields rather than providing small neighborhood parks.

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. Older residents also are more likely to prefer canoeing and fishing to participation in organized sports.

Equestrian activities are popular in Richmond and probably will attract more participants if more riding trails become available. The Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust is incorporating equestrian trails into the passive recreation design of some Land Trust properties.

Generally, the current dedicated public open space available in Richmond is adequate for the current population and will continue to be adequate in the near future. The greatest need is for sports fields and other active recreational facilities. Therefore, the goals, policies, and recommended actions in this element suggest a limited acquisition program, a reorganization of Town efforts to develop new facilities, and encouragement of more private commercial and nonprofit recreational 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 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 Town's capital improvement plan.
- › Continued coordination with neighboring towns to share recreational facilities to expand opportunities for Richmond residents and avoid duplication of effort.

## Goals, Policies, and Actions

**GOAL OSR 1: Provide residents of all ages with adequate recreational and open space opportunities**

**Policy OSR 1: Focus Town recreation efforts on priority projects in order to maximize resources and to increase recreational facilities.**

**Action OSR 1:** Recruit and appoint members to the Recreation Commission and provide the commission with staff assistance to carry out their responsibilities.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

*Responsibility:* Town Council, Town Administrator

**Action OSR 2:** Adopt a five-year capital improvement budget to enable development and maintenance of new recreation facilities.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

*Responsibility:* Recreation Commission, Town Administrator, Finance Department, Finance Board, Town Council

**Action OSR 3:** Develop a new dog park on Town-owned land adjacent to the Heritage Trail.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

*Responsibility:* Dog Park Committee, Town Administrator, Finance Department, Town Council

**Policy OSR 2: Coordinate recreation planning with surrounding communities to increase opportunities for local residents and to maximize efficient use of these facilities.**

**Action OSR 4:** Work to continue and expand regional Chariho programs.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Recreation Commission

**Action OSR 5:** Establish a 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 OSR 3: Increase public access opportunities to natural areas, including water bodies, river and stream corridors, and hiking trails.**

**Action OSR 6:** Identify and map existing trails (including the North/South Trail) open to public use on property owned by the Land Trust, Audubon Society of Rhode Island, The Nature Conservancy, and other organizations.

*Timeframe:* Short-Term

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

**Action OSR 7:** 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 OSR 4: Encourage the development of an interconnected network of natural areas, protected open space, and recreation land in Richmond and adjacent communities.**

**Action OSR 8:** Encourage development proposals that will 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

**Action OSR 9:** Consider designation of scenic roadways 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 OSR 5: Foster the preservation of existing, large tracts of forests and open space.**

**Action OSR 10:** Use conservation easements to create greenways connecting natural areas to other natural areas.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Land Trust and Town Council

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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 forested state parks and management areas that attract visitors from around the region to hike, kayak, canoe, hunt, and fish. 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 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 of 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 or create developed recreation facilities, including sports fields, playgrounds, and swimming pools. Respondents also expressed interest in the promotion of activities such as arts and cultural events and historic tours.

Practices such as the transfer of development rights, purchase of development rights, property acquisition, and conservation easements were all cited 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. It was incorporated as a separate town in 1747. Settled by planters, the Town remained largely agrarian well into the early twentieth century. Eighteenth and nineteenth century farmhouses, outbuildings, open pastures, and stone walls such as those visible along Beaver River Road (in the Beaver River Road Historic District) and the north side of Shannock Hill Road (Shannock Hill Rural Landscape District) are important reminders of the Town's agricultural past.

Historically, the people of Richmond benefited 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 Narragansett Indians for fishing long before the arrival of European settlers. Later, the Wood, Pawcatuck, and Queen 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, Usquepaugh, and Carolina. The Hillsdale and Wood River Junction settlements were established on smaller waterways. Today, many of the original structures in these mill villages remain intact, providing the Town with an impressive array of historically significant sites, such as those found in the Carolina Village Historic District, Shannock Village Historic District and the Hillsdale Historic and Archaeological 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. By 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 with the State. 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 development of coordinated land use regulations begins with an awareness and appreciation of environmental features. Today, many residents envision rural images when they think of Richmond. 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. The challenge is to identify areas that are able to accommodate population growth 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 where public services such as drinking water are available, 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.

## 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 and on the south by the Pawcatuck River, and the Usquepaugh 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 central land mass of Richmond. Prominent topographical features include Shannock Hill, Wilbur Hill, and Kenyon Hill in the south, and Pine Hill and Tefft Hill in the north. Ellis Flats is a large flat lowland 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 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, and 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 basis 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 limit development of land because they can be easily contaminated and, if altered, may jeopardize lives and properties.

Geologic factors include the bedrock structure and 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, areas where the groundwater table is high, and areas 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 economy. 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 in Appendix B illustrate the following characteristics that limit the development of land:

- › Groundwater reservoirs and their recharge zones (Map 3);
- › Flood hazard areas and areas with soils that are frequently flooded, have a high seasonal water table, or have a slow or very slow rate of permeability (Map 4, Map 16);
- › 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 (see Map 8 in Appendix B and listings 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 value 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 will perpetuate Richmond's agricultural traditions and enhance its small-town atmosphere.

### 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 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, designated by the State as a scenic highway in 1991, passes through the District. Since 2008, the towns of Richmond and Charlestown have coordinated efforts to determine how to best preserve the District. Using a Preserve America Grant administered by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC), the towns drafted historic design guidelines unique to that village. Those guidelines are incorporated by reference into this Comprehensive Community Plan.

Wyoming Village Historic District is bounded 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 to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. The Samuel Clarke Farm located at 106 Lewiston Avenue was added in 2019. These sites are representative of Richmond's agricultural history.



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 determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places include the Kenyon Historic District. The Beaver River Road Historic District, which includes both sides of Beaver River Road at Nos. 19, 133 and 165 Beaver River Road, was added to the National Register on October 25, 2021. A group of private citizens submitted the nomination to the RIHPHC in 2020.

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 in Richmond is found in Appendix D. It was 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 the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangle sheets (7.5 series) for use and consultation in the review of development plans submitted to the Town for approval. The State Archaeologist advises the Town when a development proposal may be affected by one of these archaeological and historic sites.

### **Cemeteries**

Cemeteries are among Rhode Island's most overlooked historic resources. Rhode Island contains at least 2,833 historic cemeteries, ranging from small family burial grounds to landscaped garden cemeteries. Richmond has more than 90 identified local cemeteries, most of them small and historic. They all 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 strong support for farming and farm-related activities. Active farms contribute scenic values to the landscape with their pastures and fields, providing open land in the predominately forested town.



State programs are available that 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's database (2019), owners of nine properties have sold the development rights to a total of 983 acres to the state 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 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 significant property tax reductions to owners who agree to maintain their property as open space, managed forests, or active farms.

### Protection of Historic Buildings

Richmond does not have an ordinance that establishes a historic district and creates a historic district commission to protect the exterior integrity of existing historical structures. Such an ordinance could contribute significantly to protection of the Town's historic character, but currently there does not appear to be any interest in enacting one. The Richmond Historical Society, a private organization, offers educational programs and maintains historical archives that are available to the public.

### Scenic Vistas and Scenic Roadway Designation

It has been a long-standing practice in Rhode Island to recognize and preserve aesthetically-pleasing vistas and scenic views that are visible from public roadways and rivers. These may include forests, open space, farms or historic properties. The Town should make an inventory of such areas, including the farm fields on Route 138 and the historic village of Carolina on Route 112. Shannock Hill Road, Beaver River Road, Pine Hill Road, North Road and Lewiston Avenue also offer views of farms, forest management areas and historic structures. Preservation of these unique roadway and river vistas would enhance the quality of life for residents and would be 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.

Residential development has occurred in the Town's more accessible areas, with their gentler topography and well-drained soils. But in spite of physical constraints to development, a considerable number of residential projects have been proposed on more difficult land, an inevitable trend as most of the easier terrain is already developed. Nevertheless, because of

the existing state parks and management areas, supplemented by property acquisitions by the Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust and by private conservation groups, many large tracts of land in the northern sections of town are protected from development.

Although today nearly half of Richmond’s land has some official recreation, open space, or conservation status, much of this land is not restricted from development in perpetuity. Land under the jurisdiction of DEM, the Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, and the Town, as well as open space in residential cluster and conservation development subdivisions, may reasonably be considered permanently protected land. However, it cannot be assumed that large private parcels owned by commercial enterprises or by participants in the state’s Farm, Forest and Open Space (FFOS) Program will remain undeveloped permanently. In addition to the 6,835 acres in the FFOS Program, there are approximately 800 acres of private property on which recreational businesses, including golf courses and campgrounds, are located. If the opportunities present themselves, the Town should consider developing partnerships for the continued protection of these areas.

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 for public access 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’s GIS platform can provide more detail about individual properties. Overall, these properties included those owned and managed by:

- › R.I. Department of Environmental Management (DEM);
- › The Town of Richmond or the Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust;
- › Private, non-profit organizations; and
- › Private property owners who have sold or donated conservation easements.

The following sections discuss the roles of some of the municipal and state bodies and agencies that work toward land conservation.

### **Richmond Conservation Commission**

Richmond’s Conservation Commission was established in 1978. Chapter 4.14 of the Code of Ordinances 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 Commission’s mission statement 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 development on natural resources. The commission reviews land development applications and advises the Planning Board on the potential impact of development proposals on the Town's natural resources. The commission also makes recommendations to the Town Council, the Zoning Board of Review, 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 that Land Trust is responsible for:

*[A]cquiring 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, in perpetuity, and to maintain the Town's rural character and ecological assets for the benefit of the public. The Trustees act as stewards of the property acquired or placed in conservation easement. Since its inception, the Land Trust has acquired ownership or development rights to nine properties with a total of more than 500 acres. Some properties were donated and some were purchased with bond issue proceeds or state open space acquisition grants, as shown by 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 Preserve	2011	62	Purchased
Niles Property	2013	4	Donated
Saila Preserve	2015	112	Purchased
Chan Preserve	2018	112	Purchased

## Regional Efforts

Specific features and areas of the Richmond landscape that have repeatedly been 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 U.S. 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 tributaries including Glen Rock, Meadow, Roaring, White and Taney Brooks. The undisturbed nature of the river corridor land contributes 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.
- › Many important and valuable rare species habitat areas and associated natural areas are located in Richmond. These sites are both publicly and privately owned.

The private, nonprofit Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA) coordinates preservation efforts among the nine Rhode Island and two Connecticut towns in the watershed. The WPWA's 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 provides 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.

Richmond and the eleven other towns in the watershed 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 established to guide the towns in implementation of the stewardship plan. All twelve towns have a representative on the Stewardship Council. The Town plans to continue to work 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 Watershed.

## Targeted Conservation Efforts

Despite its small size, Rhode Island supports a broad spectrum of biodiversity, including thousands of resident and migratory species of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians, beetles, butterflies and moths, and other insects, freshwater mollusks, annelids,

crustaceans, and other marine invertebrates. 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. For that reason, Richmond has a special obligation to promote conservation efforts that preserve existing wildlife habitats.

DEM's Rhode Island Wildlife Action Plan identifies habitat loss and degradation from human population growth and its associated impacts as the primary threats to wildlife and natural places. The Wildlife Action Plan urges every municipality in the state to identify conservation opportunity areas, places that should be preserved in order to maintain biodiversity. The plan identifies three types of conservation opportunity areas: core natural areas, which are large undeveloped parcels without roads; smaller sites that contain specialized habitats or fragile features; and corridors that connect core natural areas and sites. Richmond's conservation opportunity areas are identified on Map 6 in Appendix B.

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

In recent years DEM and private conservation organizations such as The Nature Conservancy and the Audubon Society of Rhode Island have acquired a considerable amount of conservation land in Richmond. DEM, the Audubon Society, and The Nature Conservancy all manage conservation lands for open space or recreational purposes to varying degrees. Acquiring and protecting private land abutting these managed areas is a current DEM priority.

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 benefit 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 resources to the local and statewide community. The watershed is recognized statewide and nationally for its recreation value and relatively pristine condition.

Most of the property adjacent to the Wood River is privately owned. The Conservation Commission supports the restoration of wooded riparian buffers along streams and rivers within the regulatory buffer zones established by DEM regulations.

A major advantage of the conservation development method of site design is that it allows flexibility in the siting of open space. A property owner who is applying for land development approval must submit a detailed plan that shows existing site conditions and existing natural, scenic and cultural features to illustrate how the conditions and features relate to each other and how they can be protected. The Planning Board requires developers

to locate unique or fragile areas, including freshwater wetlands, rivers and streams, and their regulatory buffers, in a separate open space lot wherever feasible (see Sections 13.2.2 and 13.2.3 of the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations).

### **Unique Natural Areas with Ecological Significance**

The Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program (RINHP), administered by the Rhode Island Natural History Survey, recognizes unique natural areas containing rare species and ecologically significant areas. A map showing the exact location of these areas is available from DEM. When a proposed development is located on or near a site harboring rare species or areas of ecological significance, the Richmond Planning Department requests recommendations from the RINHP to determine how best to protect these areas. When the RINHP determines that development poses a potential threat to a rare species or an ecologically significant community, the Planning Board can incorporate the RINHP recommendations into the approval of the development.

### **Farmland as a Land Use with a Special Value**

The Town supports agricultural uses through enforcing the requirements of the zoning ordinance's Agricultural Overlay District. The overlay district is located where there is prime agricultural soil. See the section below on the Agricultural Overlay District.

Richmond also assist in the preservation of farmland by allowing farms of 20 or more acres to offer certain agriculture-related or open space-related income-producing uses that may be open to the public. These include farm stands, hay rides, crop mazes, pick-your-own crops, viewing, feeding or petting farm animals, home food production, breweries, and wineries. Farms are not permitted to host wedding receptions, parties, or similar private or public functions for remuneration.

## **Planning Policies**

The Richmond Planning Board is the body with the greatest opportunity to ensure well-planned development and prevent negative impacts on valuable natural resources. In addition to preparing the Comprehensive Community Plan and its updates, the Board also writes and administers the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations. The Board also reviews proposed site plans for permitted uses, makes recommendations to the Town Council concerning proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, and makes recommendations on special use permit applications when the Zoning Ordinance requires such a recommendation or when the Zoning Board of Review requests such a recommendation.

The Zoning Ordinance and the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations are the most critical local mechanisms for preventing mundane suburban development and avoiding negative impacts on important resources. The Town ordinances and regulations that promote conservation and preservation are listed below.

***Zoning Ordinance provisions:***

- › Conservation Development
- › Residential Compounds
- › Agricultural Overlay District
- › Aquifer Protection Overlay District
- › Development Plan Review
- › Special Use Permits
- › Flood Hazard Overlay District

***Other Town Ordinances:***

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

***Land Development and Subdivision Regulations***

The Land Development and Subdivision Regulations include the following requirements:

- › **Low Impact Development (LID).** Low impact development practices preserve natural site conditions, minimize impervious surfaces, and manage stormwater runoff close to the point of origin (see Sections 13.2 and 13.12.1 of the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations).
- › **Native Species.** Use of native species in landscaping promotes sustainability and benefits native wildlife. Richmond has required use of native species in landscaping since 2012. (See Section 13.7.4 of the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations and Section 18.54.100(D) of the Zoning Ordinance.)
- › **Dark-sky Compliant Lighting.** Light pollution harms human health and endangers wildlife. Richmond was one of the first towns in the state to require outdoor light fixtures to be IDA compliant. Richmond has required full-cutoff fixtures in all new development except single-family houses since 2012 (see Section 13.8.2 of the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations and Section 18.54.100 of the Zoning Ordinance).
- › **Stormwater Facility Design.** Richmond requires compliance with DEM's Stormwater Design and Installation Standards Manual. (See Section 13.12.1 of the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations.)

**Conservation Development**

In a conventional subdivision, where lot size corresponds to the minimum lot area permitted by the Zoning Ordinance, the developer is not required to provide open space, and streets layout is typically designed to create the greatest permitted number of lots. For the past thirty years, Richmond has permitted conventional subdivisions only when an alternative method of site design is not practicable. In 1985, Richmond adopted cluster development as the preferred development option. Cluster subdivisions created open space areas around the

lots. The open space is owned in common by all lot owners and is available for use for passive recreation. During the period that cluster subdivisions were required, 21 such developments were approved, creating a total of 418 acres of open space.

In 2003, the Town amended its Land Development and Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinance to replace cluster subdivisions 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 is required; the amount depends on the zoning district. Conservation developments are intended to conserve open land and contribute to a town-wide greenway system. Conservation development is more flexible than cluster development, and provides more protection for wetlands and historical and cultural features. The Planning Board requires all new major and minor subdivisions to be designed as conservation developments unless conventional subdivision design is more appropriate to the site and its surroundings.

### **Residential Compounds**

The Residential Compound regulations permit low-density development on large parcels, helping to protect the Town's rural character. The minimum density is five acres per dwelling unit. The minimum lot size depends on the zoning district. In the R-3 zoning district, for example, the minimum lot size is three acres. Excess land may be added to individual lots or may be contained in one or more open space lots. Each residential compound is permitted to have no more than seven lots for development. As an incentive for the reduced residential density, developers are relieved of some of the infrastructure requirements, such as underground utilities and paved streets, that are otherwise required in residential subdivisions. Nineteen residential compounds have been created since the adoption of this development method.

### **Agricultural Overlay District**

The Town's Agricultural Overlay District is designed to preserve large contiguous areas of prime agricultural soils. A property owner who is seeking approval for a conservation development in the Agricultural Overlay District is required to create large open space or farm lots that encompass areas with prime agricultural soil. One acre of a large farm lot is reserved for residential development and the remainder is designated for agricultural use or open space. If the property owner in the Agricultural Overlay District is developing a residential compound, each lot must be at least eleven acres so the entire lot, with the exception of the home site, will be eligible for participation in the Farm, Forest and Open Space program. As an incentive for creating farm lots in the overlay district, accessory dwelling units are permitted by right rather than by special use permit (see the Land Use Element for more discussion of farmland protection).

### **Aquifer Protection Overlay District**

Richmond depends on the groundwater from its sole-source aquifer for all of its potable water. Protecting the high quality of the Town's groundwater is a priority for all the Town's agencies. The Aquifer Protection Overlay District provisions of the Zoning Ordinance prohibit

certain uses likely to pollute groundwater and limit the discharge per acre per day into onsite wastewater treatment systems.

DEM's groundwater quality regulations divide the state's groundwater into four classes and establish quality standards for each class. Groundwater classified as GA, located under about 70 percent of the state, and GAA, located under about 21 percent of the state, require protection to maintain drinking water quality. Groundwater classified as GB, located under about 9 percent of the state, and groundwater classified as GC, located under less than 1 percent of the state, are known or presumed to be unsuitable for drinking water.

A wellhead protection area is the portion of an aquifer through which groundwater moves to a well. Under its wellhead protection program, DEM is responsible for delineating a wellhead protection area for each of the public wells in the state. These areas require protection as current and future drinking water supplies.

The District boundaries on the zoning map should be updated to reflect DEM's most up to date information about the location of the aquifer recharge areas, areas of GA and GAA groundwater, and wellhead protection areas.

According to DEM, portions of the Pawcatuck River, the Wood River, Meadow Brook, Taney Brook, and Baker Brook are classified as "impaired" due to bacterial pollution. Educating property owners near these waterways about activities that degrade water quality could alleviate some of this pollution.

### 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 continue to be reviewed for compliance with the flood resistance siting and construction requirements of the R.I. State Building Code.

## Goals, Policies, and Actions

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

**Policy NCR 1:** Limit the development of environmentally sensitive areas.

**Action NCR 1:** Determine appropriate uses for environmentally sensitive areas and develop land acquisition and management programs to protect them.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

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

**Action NCR 2:** Prioritize the acquisition and protection of the conservation opportunity areas identified on Map 6 in Appendix B.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Land Trust

**Policy NCR 2: Protect rare and unique natural resources.**

**Action NCR 3:** Monitor rare native plant and wildlife communities, determine compatible land uses and develop land acquisition and management programs.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

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

**Policy NCR 3: Protect the quality of the Town's surface and groundwater resources.**

**Action NCR 4:** Compare the location of the Aquifer Protection Overlay District with current GIS mapping to insure that all crucial areas are protected.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

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

**Action NCR 5:** Provide information to residents about prevention of bacterial pollution and the spread of aquatic invasive species.

*Timeframe:* Short-term and Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Conservation Commission

**Policy NCR 4: While protecting the Town's natural resources, encourage their use in a sustainable and environmentally sensitive way that promotes economic development opportunities.**

**Action NCR 6:** Develop strategies to promote the sustainable use of the Town's abundant local and state parks and other open spaces.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission, Planning Board

**Policy NCR 5: Encourage farming on land with prime agricultural soils.**

**Action NCR 7:** Develop new programs to assist the economic viability of agricultural operations.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission, Planning Board



**Policy NCR 6:** Identify and protect scenic rural landscapes, vistas, and key cultural and historic resources.

**Action NCR 8:** Adopt design guidelines for historic villages to protect historic and cultural resources and to maintain the unique aesthetic look of these places.

*Timeframe:* Long-term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board

**Policy NCR 7:** Develop a comprehensive strategy for protecting natural, historic and cultural features.

**Action NCR 9:** Maintain a list of potential conservation property that should be protected or acquired.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Department, Land Trust

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**Action NCR 10:** Enact amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to establish mixed-use development standards appropriate for existing villages to promote the conservation of natural and cultural resources.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

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

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## 4

## Economic Development



Richmond aspires to attract new businesses and expand employment opportunities while exercising responsible environmental stewardship. The Economic Development Element describes the Town's current economic climate and explains how the Town intends to broaden its non-residential property tax base and provide more job opportunities for its residents.

### 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. When asked what types of businesses they would like to see in Richmond, residents mentioned restaurants, bars and taverns, mom and pop retail stores, public recreational facilities, urgent care, medical and dental offices, a movie theater or playhouse, and retail chain stores.

Participants in the public workshop 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 areas and local conservation and open space land can provide visitors with varied 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 are in favor of Town policies that help to support the prosperity and perpetuation of all farms, small as well as large, and encourage agritourism.

Overall, residents would like to see a wide variety of new businesses. In addition to those mentioned above, survey respondents mentioned light industry, manufacturing and office or technology parks. Generally speaking, residents felt that the Town should support economic development opportunities in order to expand the non-residential tax base and ease the tax burden on residents. A minority of respondents believe there should be no further business development in Richmond at all.

Residents were concerned not only with the types of businesses the Town should try to attract, but also where those businesses should be located. 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.

A number of residents were dissatisfied with the appearance of Wyoming village, which acts as a gateway to the community. They expressed concern about the vacant storefronts and the lack of sidewalks and street trees. They favored development of Main Street Wyoming development standards that would promote a sense of cohesiveness and encourage redevelopment of existing buildings and construction of new buildings.

## Economic Conditions

### State Trends

Regional and state economic conditions obviously affect economic development 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 recovered to 4.1 percent by 2018. Between July 2009 (the lowest employment level during the Rhode Island recession) and July 2019, fourteen employment sectors added jobs, while three 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 the 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, healthcare and social assistance

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

agencies, the accommodation and food service industry, retail trade, manufacturing, administrative and waste services, finance and Insurance, professional and technical services, and the educational service sector. Nearly half of the private sector workers in the state are employed by 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 fewer 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 sectors.

The novel coronavirus pandemic of 2020 impacted the state and national economy significantly. Statewide, thousands of jobs were lost across several industries, particularly within the small retail, personal services and restaurant sectors. Before the pandemic, the state projected that employment would increase 5.9 percent by 2026. Under that projection, 30,464 jobs would have been added. The largest gains were expected in the accommodation and food service industry; healthcare and social assistance; professional, scientific and technical services; and retail sectors. The fastest growing occupational groups were expected to be construction and extraction, computer and mathematical services, architecture and engineering services, personal care and service occupations, and food preparation and serving related occupations. It is too early to tell how the pandemic will affect these sectors over the long term.

### **Local Trends**

A majority of the businesses in Richmond 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 service industries. Business growth occurred primarily in professional and technical services, while employment growth occurred primarily in construction and professional and technical services (Table 4-2). In 2018, businesses in Richmond employed 1,259 people. Although this number increased from 1,034 in 2010, it has declined from a peak of 1,316 in 2016.

**Table 4-1 Number of Businesses in Richmond, First Quarter 2010 through First Quarter 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 Service	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 through 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	*
<b>Government</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>712</b>	<b>702</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>701</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>678</b>	<b>676</b>

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.

### 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. Richmond's unemployment rate compares favorably with the state's unemployment rate of 3.6 percent (October 2019).

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 4-3 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 Golf Course	Golf Club, Non-Membership	25
Riverhead Building Supply Corporation	Building Materials, Supplies and Services	28
The Preserve at Boulder Hills*	Private Sporting Preserve	30

Source: Communication with local businesses May - July 2019

\* Estimated

U.S. Census data 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 that employ residents ages 16 years and older. Nearly one-third are employed in education services, and healthcare 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 and insurance, real estate, rental and leasing, and professional, scientific and management, and administrative and waste management services saw the largest declines in employment from 2009 to 2017.

Most Richmond residents are not employed in town. One of the Town's economic development goals is to increase employment opportunities for residents while retaining existing businesses. The Census Bureau's ACS reports that a majority of residents (89.2 percent) commuted alone to work by car. The average commute is 29 minutes. Few workers appear to be using the limited public transportation available. The 2017 ACS reports that 0.2 percent used public transportation to get 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.



**Table 4-4 Industries That Employ Richmond Residents 16 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 Healthcare & 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

Richmond established an Economic Development Commission (EDC) in 1995 to advise the Town Council on programs and strategies to encourage industrial and commercial development that is consistent with the Town's environmental policies.

The commission is asked to:

- › Identify locations that are appropriate for nonresidential development and develop site criteria for development at those locations;
- › Recommend strategies to enhance local conditions favorable to the promotion of responsible economic growth;
- › Identify potential cooperative ventures with the University of Rhode Island to stimulate commercial and industrial development; and
- › Research federal and state economic development funding assistance programs and services.

The work of the commission has included:

- › Advocating for the adoption of measurable economic objectives for the Town
- › Coordinating Town economic development policies
- › Seeking technical assistance and funding for economic development programs

In 2016, the Economic Development Commission proposed creation of the Richmond Community Marketplace and assisted local small business owners in establishing it. The

Marketplace was a regularly-scheduled event on Town Hall property that provided local businesses with an opportunity to showcase their unique products. The purpose of the marketplace was to provide increased visibility for locally-based businesses. The Town Council approved the use of the Town Hall property for the Community Marketplace, finding that an event at which many local businesses were gathered at one highly-visible and easily accessible location would benefit the participants by bringing their products and services to the attention of a wider audience.

## 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 efforts.

To provide adequate space for the establishment of new businesses, and to ensure that those businesses are appropriately sited, the Town has established several zoning districts that permit commercial and industrial uses. These include the Industrial and Light Industrial zoning districts, the General Business and Neighborhood Business zoning districts, and the Flex Tech zoning district. Richmond also has Planned Development and Planned Unit Development zoning districts that allow flexibility in the siting of commercial, residential, and mixed-use buildings. New non-residential development that is permitted by right under the Zoning Ordinance must obtain development plan approval from the Planning Board. This review process ensures that businesses minimize their impact on the environment and are compatible with other nearby uses.

## Agriculture

In Richmond there are approximately 45 working farms. Many offer seasonal activities that support their operations, including 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. 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 creates food security. 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.



From 2008 to 2015, a seasonal farmers' market operated at the Town Hall property. The sponsor was the South County Growers' Association, a nonprofit organization. That farmers' market, one of two currently operating in Richmond, is now located further east on Route 138 in the parking lot of a commercial establishment.

In addition to crop farms, agricultural operations in Richmond also include nurseries, tree farms, greenhouses, and turf farms, as well as one major dairy farm. Other agricultural activities include vineyards and at least one winery.

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 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. Agricultural tourism allows farmers to increase the availability of their goods and services to the public and provides an additional source of income. 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. The increasing interest in leisure horseback riding and competitive equestrian activities could support the establishment of one or more equestrian centers.

Richmond supports the economic viability of agricultural operations by permitting farms to offer some agriculture-related activities. On farms of 20 or more contiguous acres, hay rides, tractor rides and sleigh rides, crop mazes, viewing, feeding, and petting of animals, agriculture-related classes and tours, display of antique vehicles and farm equipment, pick-your-own crops, passive outdoor recreation such as hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, or horseshoe pitching, farm home food production, sale of gardening or landscaping materials produced on the premises, including mulch, compost, potting soil, and soil amendments, and wineries using fruit, flowers, herbs, or vegetables grown on the premises are permitted uses. Wedding receptions and similar functions that could disturb neighbors are prohibited (see Zoning Ordinance Ch. 18.47).

The Town will continue to support existing and new agricultural businesses through sensitive land development policies that encourage agritourism.

## Geotourism

As discussed in the Natural and Cultural Resources Element, many residents moved to Richmond to take advantage of the pristine rivers and forest resources. There are numerous access areas for canoeing, kayaking and fishing along the Wood, Pawcatuck and Beaver Rivers, as well as local freshwater ponds. 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 local and state tourism market. 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 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 and filters runoff, and the 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 water bodies, which can act as 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 Richmond (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 restaurant with a full-service bar and grill, and a pro shop.
- › **The Preserve at Boulder Hills Golf Course** is a private 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 a pro shop. It is open to Preserve members only.
- › **Meadow Brook Golf Course** is an 18-hole, 7,400 yards, par 72 golf course located 2 miles east of I-95 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 on Pinehurst Drive near the village of Carolina. It has a clubhouse with a full-service bar and grill.

There are also four golf courses and a driving range located in the adjacent towns of Hopkinton and South Kingstown. This concentration of golf facilities gives Richmond a distinct advantage in attracting visitors. The Town should work with the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation and local tourism councils 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 New England.

## Commercial Development

Richmond's existing business center is at the Route I-95/Route 138 interchange and in the Village of Wyoming, immediately to the west. 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 developments with large parking areas. As of 2020, there are some vacant storefronts and opportunities for infill development in Wyoming. The Town is considering how to encourage commercial and mixed-use development in these areas. The

Land Use Element advocates a mix of uses in Wyoming, including residential uses and professional offices.

The Town's development plan review ordinance contains design standards regulating the appearance of new or renovated commercial structures. Building siting, landscaping, and parking layouts are reviewed to ensure a harmonious relationship with the surrounding area. Residents believe that the appearance of existing development needs improvement. Management of curb cuts, driveways and vehicle access are also concerns; those are discussed in the Circulation Element. Overall, future development strategies should promote economic development while respecting the Town's rural character.

In 2013, Richmond approved plans for a commercial and residential development called Richmond Commons. It is located in a zoning district that was established specifically for the project. As of 2021, construction has not yet commenced. At full buildout, it will feature a concentrated commercial area complimented by residential development. Richmond Commons will have privately-owned roads and stormwater management facilities, 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 stores. To mitigate traffic congestion, the developer will be required to upgrade Route 138 between the development entrance and I 95 and realign the Stilson Road-Route 138 intersection.

### **Industrial or Business Parks and Manufacturing**

The Flex Tech zoning district, originally established as part of the Richmond Commons development proposal, allows a mixture of light industrial uses with a unified design, clustering of buildings, and 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. The zoning district would be the most appropriate location in Richmond for small-scale light manufacturing or a business park. Currently, however, most of the zoning district is occupied by active sand and gravel and building material businesses.

The Town should try to attract development that qualifies for state economic development assistance. This type of assistance provides capital to developers and offers other incentives to encourage new businesses.

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

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

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission

**Action ED 2:** Provide residents with links to state resources, regulations, and educational information about home-based businesses in Rhode Island.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission

**Policy ED 2: Work with state and regional organizations to attract new industries and new economic development activity.**

**Action ED 3:** Actively promote Richmond as a location to expand industry, either directly or with partners such as the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation or Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission

**Action ED 4:** Establish regular communication with the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation and other state agencies and departments that can assist in economic development

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission and Town Council

**Policy ED 3: Invest in public infrastructure to support appropriate light industrial and commercial development at specific locations in Wyoming.**

**Action ED 5:** Identify areas for major commercial and industrial activity in the vicinity of Routes 138, I-95 and Route 3 and ensure that they are appropriately zoned.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

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



**Action ED 6:** Talk to property owners and business owners near the I-95/Route 138 interchange and Route 3 area to identify and eliminate any infrastructure constraints prohibiting future development.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission and Town Administrator

**Policy ED 4: Optimize the supply and choice of land capable of supporting business and industries.**

**Action ED 7:** Review current land development regulations and recommend amendments that will complement economic development goals.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

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

**Action ED 8:** Establish mixed use zoning in villages to allow for flexibility in design and to maintain appropriate village-scale development.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board and Town Council

**Action ED 9:** Identify roadway improvements needed in business districts and coordinate with the R.I. Department of Transportation to encourage funding for those improvements.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Public Works Department, Town Administrator, Economic Development Commission

**Policy ED 5: Promote agriculture and agricultural businesses.**

**Action ED 10:** Continue to promote farmers markets, fairs and craft events that support locally sourced and produced goods. Provide a way for local businesses to make the community aware of these products and activities.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission

**Policy ED 6: Encourage economic development opportunities for ecotourism based on the Town's abundant natural and cultural resources.**

**Action ED 11:** 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 7:** Encourage new businesses to locate in Richmond and promote existing businesses.

**Action ED 12:** 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:* Economic Development Commission, and Town Administrator

**Action ED 13:** Create and fund a “shop local” campaign that encourages residents to shop and do business with local establishments.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission

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# 5

## Circulation

The location and condition of streets and highways, pedestrian walkways, and bicycle paths can have a substantial impact on the character of a community. An inadequate circulation network can render land use decisions ineffective. These are among the reasons why long-range planning for circulation improvements is a necessity. Efforts to revitalize the local economy, provide affordable housing where it is needed, and make sensible land use plans are intricately tied to the quality of a community's transportation network. The goals and policies articulated in this Circulation Element are consistent with the State's Long Range Transportation Plan. 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 RIPTA paratransit program. This feedback complemented the Community Survey responses, which identified transportation for seniors as a high priority. Survey respondents also expressed a desire to have RIPTA buses available more frequently. In particular, respondents mentioned a desire for bus service to and from area beaches. The survey also identified a need for improved

roadway conditions and reduced traffic congestion on Route 138. Survey participants said that better wayfinding signage would improve transportation safety.

Residents expressed concern about the growing traffic congestion on Route 138 in Wyoming and how it might be affected by additional development. Virtually every business in Wyoming has one or more access points to Route 138. Town officials realize that reducing the number of curb cuts would reduce congestion and improve traffic safety, but have found it extremely difficult to persuade adjacent businesses to share highway access. The Town should consider prohibiting additional drive-through windows for businesses that cannot provide sufficient queueing space.

Workshop participants agreed that pedestrian amenities should be enhanced in the villages, especially 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. The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (DOT) is addressing this problem by adding sidewalks under I-95 as part of its redesign and reconstruction of the interstate on and off ramps. Residents also would like to see an increase in pedestrian walkways outside of the village. Residents, both at the workshop and in response to the Community Survey, also liked the idea of bike paths throughout town that would link villages.

The Land Development and Subdivision Regulations do not require installation of sidewalks in developments outside of the villages. The Planning Board generally does not require installation of sidewalks or streetlights where their appearance would detract from the rural atmosphere of the town and the benefit to pedestrians and vehicles would be negligible.

## Roadways and Traffic

### Streets

Streets in Richmond other than interstate highways are classified as arterial, collector, local, or rural local (see Sec. 13.3 of the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations). Arterial and collector streets are shown on Map 9 in Appendix B and listed in Table 5-1. The lengths in this table reflect those portions of a street classified by the Division of Statewide Planning's Highway Functional Classification designations as collector streets. For example, only a half-mile of Shannock Village Road is classified as a collector street. The remaining portion is considered a local street.



**Table 5-1 Highway Functional Classification of Richmond Streets**

Classification	Road	Length (miles)	Route #
Interstate	Interstate 95	5.23	
Arterial	Kingstown Road	5.45	Route 138
	Wyoming Main Street	0.72	Route 138
	South County Trail	2.63	Route 2
Collector	Carolina Main Street	0.37	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	
	Kings Factory Road	0.06	
	New Kings Factory Road	0.39	
	Shannock Village Road	0.48	
	Switch Road	4.05	
	Arcadia Road	1.79	
	Bridge St.	0.08	
	K. G. Ranch Road	0.25	
	Kenyon School Road	0.49	
	Lewiston Avenue	1.21	
	Pine Hill Road	2.23	
	Shannock Hill Road	2.48	
	Sherman Avenue	0.14	
	Woodville Road	1.05	

Source: Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning, Technical Paper 165.

## Traffic

The goal of any roadway system is to provide access that is adequate 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 on anticipated delays (see Appendix E). It is calculated generally by comparing actual or anticipated traffic volume with a street's capacity, taking into account days of the week and times of 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, the Planning Board will require the developer to submit a traffic mitigation plan before the development is approved.



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 Avenue	–	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 West 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: DOT

AADT: Factored average daily traffic volume for calendar year.

## Traffic Collisions

According to the Richmond Police Department, the total number of motor vehicle collisions for the years 2016 through 2019 are as follows:

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

According to Police Chief Elwood M. Johnson, Jr., the largest number of collisions, up to 44 percent, occurred on Route 138 (Main Street and Kingstown Road). The largest percentage of these were 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 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 (as amended 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 Road City Road and Wood River Road
- › Maintenance to Heaton Orchard Bridge at Route 2 along the Usquepaug River
- › Maintenance to Miantonomi Bridge at Route 2 along the 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**

The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) does not operate any bus routes within Richmond. The only RIPTA bus route that serves Richmond residents is commuter service from the public Park and Ride parking lot at the Route 138/I-95 interchange to downtown Providence. Weekday service includes four inbound and outbound buses between 6:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. There is no weekend or holiday service. RIPTA also offers a local service between Wyoming and the Amtrak station in Westerly on Fridays only.

Residents who participated in the Community Survey expressed interest in increasing public transportation opportunities in Richmond. The Land Use Element encourages increased density as infill in Wyoming. The Fox Run condominium complex, completed in 2021, added 100 residential dwelling units on Stilson Road in Wyoming. In mid-2021, plans were announced for a similar development nearby. This new construction increases the need for public transportation in Richmond.

Transit Forward RI 2040 is a collaborative effort between RIPTA, DOT and Statewide Planning to develop a statewide Transit Master Plan. This collaboration is a recognition of the increasing demand for transportation alternatives in Richmond and throughout Washington County. Richmond officials should continue to participate in multi-modal transit planning conducted by RIPTA, DOT and Statewide Planning to raise awareness of Richmond's need for public transportation.

## **Bicycles and Pedestrians**

Planning for transportation and circulation must include bicycle riders and pedestrians as well as motor vehicles. In the village centers and growth areas, mixed-use and compact development is preferred, as noted in the Land Use Element. When these developments are

planned, pedestrian and bicycle traffic should be considered as part of the circulation pattern.

Considerations should include the level of service required for streets, as well as the location of sidewalks and crosswalks.

## Parking Alternatives

In recent years, residents have expressed a concern about availability of parking in villages, particularly in Shannock. Development of municipal parking lots might be a way to assist existing businesses and encourage new businesses where parking space is limited.

Shared parking areas, particularly adjacent to Route 138, could reduce stormwater runoff and pollutants. Parking alternatives should be specific to existing villages or future growth centers, and linked to bikeways, pedestrian walkways, and public transportation.

## Goals, Policies, and Actions

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

**Policy C 1:** Ensure that new streets will be adequate to meet and future demands without negatively affecting the Town's rural atmosphere.

**Action C 1:** Maintain street design standards that minimize pervious surfaces and protect the rural character of the Town.  
*Timeframe:* Ongoing  
*Responsibility:* Planning Board

**Action C 2:** Work with DOT to prioritize new or existing projects in the State Transportation Improvement Plan.  
*Timeframe:* Ongoing  
*Responsibility:* Town Administrator, Town Planner, Planning Board

**Policy C 2:** Adopt regulations that will reduce traffic congestion in Wyoming.

**Action C 3:** Consider allowing new drive-through windows only for businesses that can provide sufficient queueing space.  
*Timeframe:* Mid-term  
*Responsibility:* Planning Board

**Policy C 3: Promote alternative modes of transportation.**

**Action C 4:** Adopt regulations that will encourage compact development design and prioritize pedestrian access and safety in village centers and growth areas.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board

**Action C 5:** Encourage pedestrian and bicycle links to existing bikeways, hiking and biking trails, and pedestrian ways in new developments and redevelopment projects.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Board

**Action C 6:** Work with RIPTA to increase public transportation options for Richmond residents, including internal bus routes in Richmond.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Town Administrator and Town Council

**Policy C 4: Increase parking alternatives in village centers and future growth areas.**

**Action C 7:** Consider development of municipal parking lots in village centers and future growth areas.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

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

# 6

## Public Services and Facilities

The Public Services and Facilities Element provides details about the municipal services available to Richmond residents and forecasts improvements needed to meet future demands. This element also addresses educational facilities, which are provided on a regional basis, and fire safety services, which are provided by two independent chartered fire districts. 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 improvements to Town infrastructure and a revitalization of the Wyoming business district. Challenges facing Richmond include the adequacy of available public and private water for future needs and the lack of conveniently-located medical services.

### Education

The Chariho Regional School District provides public education for students in Richmond, Hopkinton and Charlestown. Schools in the District include: Richmond Elementary School, located across the street from the Town Hall at the intersection of Route 138 and Route 112; the regional Middle and High Schools; Chariho Alternative Learning Academy; and Chariho Technical Vocational School. Administrative offices are located on Switch Road in Richmond.

Richmond Elementary School has approximately 400 students enrolled (2019). The facilities are owned by the Town and leased to the Chariho Regional School District, which is responsible for maintenance and repair.

A 2011 facilities assessment identified the need for physical improvements including roof replacement, asphalt repaving, playground resurfacing, and electrical, HVAC, plumbing, and

fire suppression system upgrades. Between fiscal years 2011 and 2015, approximately \$2.4 million was spent on the improvements. For the five-year funding cycle ending in the 2020-2021 fiscal year, approximately \$1.5 million was allocated for additional work, including redesign and reconstruction of traffic and pedestrian circulation and replacement of the roof and the septic system.

Although enrollment fluctuates from year to year, it has generally declined during the past decade. Table 6-1 shows the student population for each year.

**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

Richmond does not have a municipal library system. The Clark Memorial Library, located in Carolina, is operated by a private, non-profit corporation. As of 2019, the library had 1,736 cardholders and 20,500 visitors annually. Its collection includes 24,792 circulating items. The library participates in the Ocean State Libraries System, which allows Richmond residents access to library resources in every other community in the state. The library's 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 a week to answer questions about Town 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, also operated by a private, non-profit corporation, is located in the Hope Valley section of Hopkinton and serves Hope Valley and Wyoming. As of 2019, the library had 1,323 cardholders; about 17 percent were Richmond residents. According to the Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services, the library has about

19,200 visitors annually. Its collection includes 20,129 circulated items and it owns 25,950 physical items. The librarian believes 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, but improvements are constrained by the physical footprint of the building and lack of funds.

## Fire Districts

Fire suppression and prevention 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 Rhode Island General Assembly and independent from Town government. Both districts have the authority to assess and collect property taxes. Both departments are staffed primarily by volunteer firefighters. 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 Hope Valley, and a second station located on Route 91 in Alton. As of 2020, the department has 30 to 35 volunteer firefighters, one full-time firefighter, and two full-time employees, the fire chief and the secretary-tax collector.



Ladder 911

The District has the following equipment:

- › One 109 foot rear-mount ladder truck with a 2,000 gallons-per-minute pump and 300 gallon water tank
- › Three engines:
  - Two with a 1,500 gallons-per-minute pump and 1,000 gallon water tank
  - One with a 2,000 gallons-per-minute pump and 2,000 gallon water tank
- › One tanker with a 1,250 gallons-per-minute 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: Station 3, located on Bell School House Road, serving the northern portion of town; Station 2 on Route 138; and 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 available to the Town and to local

organizations. Like the Hope Valley-Wyoming District, the Richmond-Carolina District has a mutual aid agreement with the other Washington County towns.

## 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. That position is largely funded by the school district. There are five full-time civilian employees, including 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 annual Washington County Fair.

In 2018, the Town received a grant to purchase and train a police dog. The grant covered equipment (including retrofitting of a police vehicle), food and veterinarian care, and reimbursement for the overtime incurred when the K-9 handler was away for certification training. K-9 Bico, a Belgian Malinois, 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, the Police Department often had difficulty obtaining a police K-9 from another community 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 Victorias (model years 2005-2011) and one 2010 Dodge Charger that are used exclusively for traffic details. The cars have high mileage but earn direct revenue that totaled \$74,000 in 2019 in police detail work.

- › Four specialty vehicles that include one 2007 Chevrolet Impala (for surveillance) and three vehicles that were acquired at no cost from the U.S. Military's 1033 program: a 1995 Dodge pickup truck and two Humvees (High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles).

The Department is considering buying all-terrain vehicles or motorcycles to enhance search capabilities in emergencies involving large parcels of open space and woodland.

The following improvements have been made to the Police Station during the past nine years:

- › Installation of a console in the Dispatch Center. The used console was donated by the Westerly Police Department; it was an upgrade from Richmond's prior equipment.
- › Replacement of the HVAC system.
- › Repair or replacement of roof shingles.
- › Replacement of the illuminated sign from the front of the building with sign made of high-density foam that is more attractive and requires less maintenance.
- › Replacement of broken, bent, and unattractive light poles in the parking lot with new poles and fixtures that use energy-efficient LED lights. The replacement was funded with a grant.

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 and security are compromised by the shared use of the building. 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. Capital budgets in the near future should provide for 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 have incomes below the poverty line.

There are no facilities for the homeless located in Richmond, but there are two in nearby communities. The Westerly Area Rest Meals (WARM) Center has 19 beds and provides daily meals and community outreach services. Welcome House of South County, located in South Kingstown, has 17 beds, a soup kitchen, transitional and supportive permanent housing, and case management and advocacy services. Peace Dale Congregational Church in South Kingstown operates an emergency shelter during cold weather, and the Rhode Island Center Assisting those in Need (RICAN), located in Charlestown, maintains a food pantry and a clothing loft.

Richmond has several group homes operated under the direction of the State Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals. As of December 31, 2020, there were 46 group home beds in Richmond, according to Rhode Island Housing. The Providence Center, which treats adults and children with psychiatric illnesses, emotional problems, and addictions, operates a residential program for women in recovery on Baker Pines Road in Richmond.



No medical treatment facilities are located 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.

Tri-County Community Action, with headquarters in Johnston, provides Richmond residents with services that include home weatherization programs, food, clothing and housing assistance, homelessness prevention, youth programs, emergency services, job training and placement, and Head Start, a pre-school program for young children. Other social service agencies serving Richmond residents that have received funding from the Town of Richmond include the VNS Home Health Services; South Shore Mental Health Center; the Olean Center in Westerly, which serves individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities; the Domestic Violence Resource Center, located in South Kingstown; and the Jonnycake Center of Bradford. Qualified Richmond residents may apply for heating assistance and home improvement funds through the Washington County Community Development Corporation.

The Arcadia Branch of the Ocean Community YMCA, located in Wyoming, offers a variety of programs including child enrichment, family events, and health and wellness activities.

## Community Center

In 2018, the Town Council appointed an ad hoc committee to study the need for a new community center and explore options for location and financing. The committee found that the current center, on the second floor of the building housing the Police Department, is too small to serve the community and that its location is incompatible with law enforcement functions. The committee found that building a new community center would make additional space available to the Police Department.

A vacant Town-owned lot across the street from the Town Hall, purchased in 2020, was determined to be an ideal location for a new community center, but no funding sources were identified. The committee met with representatives of the YMCA to discuss the possibility of a shared space, but because there was general agreement that the Town should own its own facility, those discussions did not continue.

## Town-sponsored Senior Activities

The Richmond Senior Activities Committee, whose members are appointed by the Town Council, currently oversees the operation of the Richmond Senior Center. The Rhode Island Office of Healthy Aging provide outreach services to seniors in the community and provides an annual grant for Senior Center programs.

Richmond's Elder Affairs Commission, established in 1995, advises the Town Council on matters of particular interest to older citizens, serves as an information and advocacy resource, and sponsors informational and educational programs.

## Public Water Systems

All of the potable water in Richmond is supplied by one aquifer. The most productive areas of the aquifer are the central parts of the river valleys, where the saturated thickness and water transmitting capacity of the sediments are greatest. These include the Chipuxet, Usquepaugh-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.

### Richmond Water System

The Richmond water system is a community water system created in the early 1980s by the Rhode Island Water Resources Board in response to groundwater contamination from leaking underground gasoline tanks in Wyoming. The system provides water to homes and businesses between Wyoming and the Richmond Elementary School. About 10 percent of the homes in Richmond receive their water from the system (see Map 10 in Appendix B).

The Richmond Water Department, the administrative arm of the system, is operated by the Finance Department. The system itself is operated by a private contractor whose employees work closely with Town officials. In June of 2019, the Town Council approved revised technical regulations for the installation of service connections and water main installations.

Water is drawn from two wells 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. Richmond has a mutual aid agreement with the Town of Westerly for provision of potable water in emergencies.

The water storage tank on Old Kenyon Road has a capacity of 300,000 gallons. It consists of one above-ground standpipe with an overflow elevation of 281 feet. The elevated standpipe and a well pump located off of Wood River Drive operate the distribution system.

During the past decade, the town extended the water line east to Richmond Elementary School, providing the school's fire suppression system with the necessary water pressure to satisfy the requirements of the State Fire Code. The Town also installed an additional elevated storage tank with a capacity of 500,000 gallons. Engineering has been completed on a chlorination system that is scheduled to be installed in 2022. As of 2021, there are no plans to extend the water line any further east on Route 138 beyond the Route 112 intersection.

The Richmond water system also provides water to two consecutive water systems,<sup>1</sup> one serving a small adjacent area of Hopkinton and the other serving The Preserve at Boulder Hills, a private recreational and residential development. Each consecutive system is connected to the Richmond system by a master meter that measures the number of gallons provided. The Richmond Water Department bills each consecutive system as one water system customer. During the twelve-month period ending March 31, 2021, the two consecutive systems used about nine percent of the total water volume billed.

Table 6-2 shows the number of gallons of metered water billed to customers for the twelve-month period ending March 31, 2021. Water provided to fire hydrants and commercial fire suppression systems is not metered; therefore, these figures do not represent total well draw.

**Table 6-2 Annual Metered Water Consumption April 2020 - March 2021**

	Number of Gallons
Richmond Primary Water System	14,320,916
<b>Consecutive Systems</b>	
The Preserve at Boulder Hills	332,581
Town of Hopkinton	<u>923,993</u>
Total	1,256,574
<b>Total Metered Volume</b>	<b>15,577,490</b>

Source: Richmond Finance Department

The Richmond water system is currently able to meet a maximum daily demand of 510,000 gallons from the existing primary well source. Based on an annual billing volume of 15,577,490 gallons, the average daily volume of metered water would be about 42,678 gallons. If current daily draw from the well is estimated at roughly 50,000 gallons (including metered water, water for hydrants and fire suppression systems, and lost water), the existing system would be able to handle a substantial increase in demand.

Richmond Commons is the only major development adjacent to the Town water main that has been approved but not constructed. Final approval for the development was granted in 2013. As of late 2021, there were no immediate plans to begin construction. If the water system does not extend its water main further east of the Route 138/112 intersection, future increases in demand would come from construction of Richmond Commons, from the ongoing development at The Preserve at Boulder Hills, and from in-fill development along Route 138.

Although state law does not require a public water system the size of Richmond's to maintain a water management plan, the system would benefit from having one. Water system management plans facilitate conservation, development, and protection of drinking water resources and guide decision-making.

<sup>1</sup> The R.I. Department of Health defines a consecutive water system as "a public system that receives some or all of its finished water from one or more wholesale systems. Delivery may be through a direct connection or through the distribution system of one or more consecutive systems." R.I. Department of Health Public Drinking Water Regulations (2016-RICR-50-05-1), Sec. 1.2(A)(25).

### **Shannock Water District**

The Shannock Water District was established by an act of the state legislature 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, which is across the Pawtuxet River from Shannock Village (see Map 10 in Appendix B). The system has two wells. The main well yields approximately 75 gallons per minute and the second well serves as a backup. The water district was expanded in 2016 to include the new Shannock Falls low-income apartment complex constructed by Women's Development Corporation.

### **Aquifer Protection**

Private wells serve most residents and businesses. Every developer who applies for Planning Board approval of a land development project in Richmond is required to demonstrate that there will be sufficient potable water and sufficient water for fire suppression systems to serve the new development.

Because the aquifer is the sole source of water in Richmond, the Town has adopted land use regulations intended to protect the quality of the groundwater. Chief among these is the Aquifer Protection Overlay District, a zoning overlay district that prohibits or limits some uses in areas where the groundwater is vulnerable to contamination.

The Town's land use planning policies are consistent with the policies in Rhode Island State Guide Plan Element 721: Rhode Island Water 2030. Growth should be directed toward areas with public water service, and care must be exercised to prevent development density that is too intense for the aquifer to satisfy. Town facilities should be located within the growth centers in the State Guide Plan Element 121: Land Use 2025.

### **Wastewater**

Richmond does not have a municipal sanitary sewer system. All waste is collected in on-site wastewater treatment systems or, in some cases, cesspools and other older systems that are no longer permitted. On-site wastewater systems that are incorrectly installed, inadequately maintained, or functionally obsolete are potential sources of contamination to the groundwater.

The Town has an On-site Wastewater Management Plan, approved by RIDEM, that includes education and outreach efforts to encourage homeowners to properly maintain septic systems. The Town participates in the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank Community Septic System Loan Program (CSSLP) through Rhode Island Housing. The CSSLP allows residents of communities without wastewater treatment facilities to apply for low-interest loans from a state revolving fund. The program helps homeowners repair or replace failing, failed or substandard septic systems, including cesspools. Property owners are able to borrow money at a fixed rate of one percent for a loan of up to \$25,000 with a maximum term of 10 years. A loan origination fee of \$300 is also charged. The Town is not permitted by State regulations to raise or lower the current CSSLP rate of one percent, but may provide additional funds to borrowers from another source.

## Solid Waste Disposal

Richmond does not provide curbside pickup of solid waste and recyclables. Instead, the Town operates a transfer station for the collection of recyclables and refuse.

The transfer station, located on Buttonwoods Road next to the Department of Public Works facility, was opened in 1989, replacing a sanitary landfill. For most of the time between 1989 and 2012, the transfer station was operated by private waste disposal firms under a contract with the Town. In 2012, the Town assumed responsibility for its operation.

The transfer station occupies about 90,000 square feet. It is surrounded by a chain link fence with a locked gate. According to its operations plan—approved by RIDEM in 2020—the transfer station can accept up to 50 tons of refuse per day. The expense of operating the transfer station is charged to the Town's general fund. Fees collected from users partially offset operating expenses.

The Richmond Public Works Director estimates that about two-thirds of the household waste generated in Richmond is picked up curbside by private waste haulers licensed by the Town. The private haulers transport refuse to the R.I. Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC) facility in Johnston, or the transfer station operated by the Town of South Kingstown. Mixed recyclables picked up curbside by private haulers are brought to the transfer station on Mondays, where they are accepted free of charge.

About one-third of Richmond households bring their refuse and recyclables to the transfer station themselves. The transfer station is open to the public on Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday. Users are required to display a placard attached to the interior rear-view mirror of their vehicle. There is no charge to residents for the placards, which do not expire. As of 2020, Richmond had about 3,000 households.<sup>2</sup> A total of 1,578 placards have been issued since 2019; 247 of those were issued in 2020. The number of placards currently in regular use is not tracked. Hopkinton, immediately to the west of Richmond, does not have a transfer station. Most Hopkinton residents use Westerly's transfer station. A small number of Hopkinton residents use the Richmond transfer station, paying \$25 for a placard annually. In 2020, the Town issued 76 placards to Hopkinton residents.

To encourage diversion, Richmond charges residents who deposit non-recyclable solid waste at the transfer station. The fees are in the recycling and solid waste disposal ordinance (Ch. 8.18 of the Code of Ordinances) and are updated periodically. The transfer station attendant weighs each bag of refuse and charges a fee based on weight. Recycling is mandatory. Mixed recyclables, electronic waste and used motor oil are accepted free of charge. The Town contracts with a private hauler to transport the refuse and mixed recyclables collected at the transfer station to Johnston.

The transfer station accepts large items, including mattresses, furniture, tires, large appliances, propane tanks, and construction and demolition debris, for fees based on size and weight. A private hauler under contract with the Town transports recyclables accepted

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<sup>2</sup> This estimate is based on the 2020 U.S. Census population count and the 2018 American Community Survey average household size. R.I. Resource Recovery Corp. estimates the number of households in Richmond at 2,500. (<http://www.rirrc.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/2020%20Municipal%20Summary%20Detailed%20with%20Charts%2020210402.pdf>)

by RIRRC to Johnston. Used motor oil and mattresses are recycled through the State program, and private vendors accept the other large items collected.

According to the Public Works Director, the transfer station easily accommodates the number of households currently using it. Statewide Planning's population projections anticipate a population increase of about 25 percent between 2020 and 2040. The Public Works Director believes the transfer station would be able to serve 25 percent more households simply by opening it to the public one additional weekday.

Under state law, each city and town is required to recycle at least 35 percent of its solid waste and divert at least 50 percent of its solid waste. Diversion means removing all items from the waste stream that can be or must be disposed of in some way other than burying them in a landfill. For 2020, Richmond's recycling rate was 43.1 percent and its diversion rate was 44.3 percent. The Town has met the recycling rate but not the diversion rate. Efforts should be undertaken to reach a diversion rate of 50 percent.

**Table 6-3 Solid Waste and Recycled Materials 2016 – 2020 (in tons)**

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total Waste</b>	<b>2,335</b>	<b>2,197</b>	<b>2,349</b>	<b>2,202</b>	<b>2,562</b>
Refuse (household trash)	1,333	1,247	1,340	1,207	1,428
Mixed recyclables	762	765	774	772	751
Composted	1	1	12	6	5
Scrap metal (inc. white goods)	182	156	181	153	317
Clothing	11	–	10	8	8
Tires	3	–	–	–	–
Other recycling	42	27	33	55	53
<b>Diversion rate (percent)</b>	<b>42.9</b>	<b>43.2</b>	<b>42.9</b>	<b>45.2</b>	<b>44.3</b>
<b>Mixed recycling rate (percent)</b>	<b>36.4</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>36.6</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>34.5</b>
<b>Mandatory recycling rate (percent)</b>	<b>41.8</b>	<b>42.5</b>	<b>42.1</b>	<b>43.8</b>	<b>43.1</b>

Source: RIRRC

## Emergency Management

Emergency management in Richmond is administered by the Emergency Management Agency, established in 2008. The agency is run by a part-time director and two deputy directors. The emergency operations center is located in the Department of Public Works facility on Buttonwoods Road.

The Town has an Emergency Management Plan and a Hazardous Materials Plan. The Hazardous Materials Plan addresses workplace hazardous materials and hazardous materials on local streets and state highways.

The Chariho Regional High School and the Chariho Middle School, both located on Switch Road in Richmond, have been designated as community shelters for Richmond residents. The Middle School is an American Red Cross designated shelter. The Community Center is

occasionally used as a cooling or warming shelter. It can be opened when there is widespread loss of electrical power.

## Natural Hazard Mitigation

As noted in the Natural and Cultural Resources Element, all of Richmond is within the Wood-Pawcatuck watershed, the most rural and least developed major watershed in Rhode Island. The Pawcatuck River and Wood River constitute portions of the Town's boundaries, and the Beaver River, Taney Brook, White Brook, Meadow Brook run through Richmond. As a result, special flood hazard areas constitute a significant part of the Town's land area (see Map 4 in Appendix B).

Richmond's Hazard Mitigation Plan, approved by FEMA in 2018, identifies riverine flooding and wind damage from severe weather as the potential natural hazards of greatest concern. As an inland community, Richmond would feel the impact of sea level rise only in indirect ways, but based on recent history, potential flood damage is an immediate concern. The fiscal impact study prepared for the Hazard Mitigation Plan determined that a destructive flood could cause more than \$17 million in damage to buildings town-wide. Because all homes in Richmond rely on on-site wastewater treatment systems and most homes get their potable water from on-site wells, a destructive flood also could cause widespread pollution of drinking water. Stormwater runoff from buildings, pavement, and other compacted or impervious surfaces can cause flooding and can impair the quality of the water in the Town's rivers and streams.

The Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies the natural events most likely to impact the Town and ranks them according to probability of occurrence, frequency, and degree of potential damage. The following table, an excerpt from the table included in the Plan, identifies the natural events most likely to impact the Town. "Highly Likely" means likely to occur every one to five years, and "Likely" means likely to occur every five to ten years.

**Table 6-4 Potential Natural Hazards**

Type	Frequency	Potential Damage	Impacts	Probability	Priority Rank
Riverine and runoff flooding	High	Medium	Property damage; life & safety; road & bridge damage; businesses closed	Highly likely	High
Winter storms, including extreme cold	High	Medium	Power outages; tree damage; roof collapse; businesses closed; road heaving, damage	Highly likely	Medium
Thunderstorms, lightning	High	Low	Brush and wildfires; house fires; power loss; propane tank explosion	Likely	Medium
Hurricane, Nor'easter	Medium	High	Power loss; property damage; economic losses, debris	Highly likely	Medium

Source: Richmond Hazard Mitigation Plan



In December of 2019, the Town's Emergency Management Agency conducted a public workshop to discuss how to prepare for and manage weather-related power outages. This is an especially important topic for Richmond residents, because all of Richmond is at the end of electrical feeder lines that originate in the nearby towns of Charlestown and West Greenwich. When there is a power outage, restoration begins at substations. Richmond is often the last community where power is restored in southwest Rhode Island.

Another concern for Richmond residents is the increased likelihood that trees will fall, blocking streets and pulling down utility wires. Recent hot, dry summers combined with the 2019 gypsy moth caterpillar infestation, which was particularly severe in Richmond, caused thousands of trees to weaken or die. Many trees have fallen on streets and utility lines and more are certain to fall. Town officials agreed during the public workshop that when a storm is approaching, residents should be encouraged to store water for household use at a rate of three gallons per person per day. To conserve potable water, residents should also be encouraged to use gray water, such as dishwater or water from a swimming pool, to flush toilets.

The Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association, in cooperation with the National Fish and Wildlife Association and the U.S. Department of the Interior, sponsored preparation of a Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Flood Resiliency Management Plan in 2017. The Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Plan and the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan both note that Richmond has sustained extensive flood-related damage in the recent past. The most extreme flooding on record occurred in the spring of 2010. More than 16 inches of rain fell in February and March, saturating the soil, raising the water table, and causing the worst flooding ever documented along the Pawcatuck and Wood Rivers. The area of Richmond most severely affected was the Valley Lodge neighborhood, especially Pine Shadows Drive and Leroy Drive, and nearby KG Ranch Road.

The Wood-Pawcatuck watershed contains nearly 600 stream crossing structures (roads, railroads, and bicycle and hiking trails that run over bridges or culverts) that cross mapped streams. Approximately 400 of these stream crossings were inspected and evaluated for the Wood Pawcatuck Watershed management plan to determine how well they will function as climate change causes more frequent heavy rain events. The management plan rates about one-third of them as high priority for upgrade or replacement. Of those, 24 are in Richmond: 11 on the Beaver River or a tributary, 4 on the Queen-Usquepaugh River, 6 on the Pawcatuck River, and 3 on the Wood River. The majority are on Town-owned streets. The Town should develop a plan to upgrade or replace them. As a start, the ones in greatest need of upgrade or replacement should be identified, and money should be included in each year's capital budget for engineering and construction of more resilient and ecologically-friendly stream crossings.

Dams can contribute to upstream flooding by backing up water during extreme rain events. A dam breach or failure can cause property damage or loss of life downstream. According to RIDEM's 2020 Dam Safety Program Report, one unsafe dam and three potentially unsafe dams are located in Richmond. The unsafe dam, the Wyoming Upper Reservoir dam, owned by RIDEM, is currently undergoing repair (2021). The three potentially unsafe dams are Wood River Junction and Alton, both owned by the R.I. Department of Transportation, and Barberville, owned by RIDEM.



The Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Plan notes that extreme precipitation events are expected to increase in both frequency and intensity in Rhode Island. It is vital for Richmond to take immediate steps to prevent and mitigate the effects of flooding.

The Town already requires that new developments locate special flood hazard areas in undevelopable open space. The Town also requires new developments to employ low impact development measures for stormwater management.

Funding has not been available in the past for any significant flood prevention measures, but the Town currently is participating in the initial phase of a U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service flood prevention project sponsored by the Southern Rhode Island Conservation District and the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association. The project, funded through the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (P.L. 83-566), will provide up to 100 percent funding for planning, design and engineering, and construction of flood prevention improvements.

## Municipal Offices

Most municipal offices are located at the Town Hall, on Richmond Townhouse Road at the intersection of Routes 112 and 138. The following officials and departments are located in the Town Hall: The Town Administrator, the Town Clerk's Office, the Finance Department, the Building, Planning and Zoning Department, the Tax Collector, and the Tax Assessor.

The Public Works Department is located on Buttonwoods Road. It is headed by a Director and two Superintendents. The department is responsible for maintenance of Town streets and stormwater management structures, and maintenance of Town buildings, as well as operation of the transfer station. 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

## Energy Conservation

The Town operates buildings in three locations: the Town Hall, the Police Station-Community Center, and two Department of Public Works structures. The Town is committed to reducing energy consumption in Town buildings. To determine the annual energy use of the municipal operations, the Town collects data on electricity, natural gas, heating oil, gasoline and fuel use from each department.

The energy usage and cost data in Table 6-5 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).

**Table 6-5 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 (High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle) 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 6-6.

**Table 6-6 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

Energy costs during the past decade were substantially reduced by Richmond's participation in a state and federally funded program that provided energy efficiency audits and installation of recommended energy-saving equipment. Incandescent light bulbs were replaced with compact fluorescent bulbs, and occupancy sensors were installed in restrooms and the lunch room.

Richmond has also saved money during the past five years through its participation in the Partnership for Rhode Island Streetlights Management (PRISM), a state statute enacted in 2013 allowed municipalities to buy their streetlight fixtures from National Grid and upgrade and maintain the fixtures at a substantial savings. Richmond bought 267 fixtures from National Grid.

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

Richmond is one of two Rhode Island communities participating in the multi-state U.S. 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 Rhode Island Energy Partnership 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 Town Council appointed a Citizen's Energy Challenge Committee in 2017 to coordinate Richmond's participation in the Rhode Island Energy Challenge. Primary responsibilities included:

- › Serving as public advocates for energy conservation;
- › Persuading 5 percent of households to participate in a free home energy assessment;
- › Providing public outreach and educational materials related to the Rhode Island Energy Challenge; and
- › Advising 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 State Office of Energy Resources Municipal Energy Working Group. The group conducts workshops to keep municipalities informed about state and federal energy policies and programs.

## Goals, Policies, and Actions

**Goal PSF 1: Protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Richmond by providing cost-effective public services that meet the Town's needs.**

**Policy PSF 1: Protect the quality of the Town's water and reduce water consumption.**

**Action PSF 1:** Launch a public education program to teach residents where their water comes from and how they can help to conserve it.

*Timeframe:* Short-term and ongoing

*Responsibility:* Conservation Commission

**Action PSF 2:** Launch a program to educate property owners and businesses about groundwater pollution and illustrate measures that can reduce contamination of groundwater.

*Timeframe:* Short-term and ongoing

*Responsibility:* Conservation Commission

**Action PSF 3:** Amend land use ordinances and regulations to increase groundwater quality protection.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

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

**Action PSF 4:** Encourage connections to the existing water system that would facilitate in-fill development.

*Timeframe:* Short-term and ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Board

**Action PSF 5:** Develop a management plan for the water system.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Finance Department and Town Council

**Policy PSF 2: Promote waste diversion and recycling to achieve a 35 percent recycling rate and 50 percent diversion rate at the transfer station.**

**Action PSF 6:** Educate residents about proper disposal of solid waste.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* DPW, Conservation Commission

**Action PSF 7:** Provide information to residents about household composting.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

*Responsibility:* DPW, Conservation Commission

**Action PSF 8:** Distribute information to residents annually about the recycling rate and diversion rate.

*Timeframe:* Short-term and ongoing

*Responsibility:* DPW, Town Administrator, Conservation Commission

**Goal PSF 2: Make Richmond a safer and more environmentally resilient community**

**Policy PSF 3:** Reduce the potential loss of life and property damage caused by natural hazards, including riverine flooding and severe storms.

**Action PSF 9:** Update the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan and Emergency Operation Plans in 2022 and every five years thereafter.

*Timeframe:* Short-term, ongoing

*Responsibility:* Emergency Management Administrator

**Action PSF 10:** Make an inventory of the Town's stream crossing structures and identify the ones in most immediate need of upgrade or replacement.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

*Responsibility:* DPW, Emergency Management Administrator

**Action PSF 11:** Investigate funding sources for retrofitting existing Town buildings with low impact development stormwater management facilities.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Town Administrator, Finance Director, Planning Department

**Action PSF 12:** Participate in the design, engineering and construction phases of the PL-566 flood prevention program sponsored by the Southern Rhode Island Conservation District and the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association.

*Timeframe:* Short-term and ongoing

*Responsibility:* Town Planner, Town Administrator, Town Council.

**Policy PSF 4:** Promote energy efficiency, conservation, and renewable energy use by the Town and throughout the community.

**Action PSF 13:** Continue to look for opportunities to reduce energy use in Town facilities.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Town Administrator, DPW

**Action PSF 14:** Continue to develop energy saving projects to reduce energy consumption for municipal buildings and infrastructure.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Town Administrator

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**Action PSF 15:** Retrofit electric switches in offices, hallways, and work spaces in municipal buildings with occupancy sensors where appropriate.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

*Responsibility:* DPW

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**Action PSF 16:** Consider energy efficiency and Energy Star standards when purchasing new vehicles and equipment for the Police and Public Works Departments.

*Timeframe:* Mid Term and ongoing

*Responsibility:* Police Department, DPW

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## 7

## Housing

Richmond's goal is to provide its residents with safe and affordable housing while protecting the environment and preserving the Town's historic character.

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 16 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 was completed in 2021 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 of Richmond Ridge, a development of multi-family buildings containing 32 low-income rental units, was completed in 2019. Construction of these two developments has diversified the type of housing available in Richmond. 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 driven 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, accessibility to major highways, 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 would be 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>

**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

<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.

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 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 was 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 was 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 reserves at least 25 percent of its units for low or moderate income households. Initially, the approval process was only available 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. Richmond gained only one single-family affordable dwelling unit. 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 the period ending December 31, 2019 does not include 41 low or moderate income housing units that were added in Richmond in 2018 and 2019, according to documents recorded in the Richmond land evidence records, but 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 2020, 14 low or moderate income units were constructed. These include 11 owner-occupied units added at Fox Run and 3 rental units at 215A Shannock Village Road that were rehabilitated by Washington County Community Development Corporation. During the first six months of 2021, an additional 4 LMI units were constructed at Fox Run, bringing the total number in Town to 90. These are not yet part of the State's official LMI count.

According to Rhode Island Housing, as of the end of 2020, Richmond had 46 group home beds, and as of the end of 2020, the Town had 62 LMI family units. That brings Richmond's total number of low or moderate income units to 108.

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 would give Richmond an actual deficit of 184 low or moderate income units as of December 31, 2020.

According to the Division of Statewide Planning's population projections (Technical Paper 162), Richmond's population in 2020 was 8,684. When that number is divided by the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey's 2018 estimate of the average household size in Richmond, which is 2.67, the estimated number of households in Richmond is 3,252.

Using that estimated number of households, Richmond would need to have 325 low or moderate income dwelling units to meet the Low and Moderate Income Housing Act's ten percent affordability goal. Because Richmond had only 108 low or moderate income dwelling units as of December 31, 2020, the town had a deficit of 217 LMI units if Statewide Planning population projections are used.

Table 7-7 shows the estimated number of low or moderate income housing units Richmond will need to meet the Low and Moderate Income Housing Act's ten percent affordability goal for the next twenty years. The population projections are from Division of Statewide Planning data, and the projected number of households is based on Division of Statewide Planning projections and on the American Community Survey estimate of average household size in Richmond in 2018.

**Table 7-7 Projected Need for Low or Moderate Income Housing**

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Population	7,708	8,196	8,684	9,266	9,838	10,374	10,855
Households	2,887	3,070	3,252	3,470	3,685	3,885	4,066
LMI units needed to reach 10%	289	307	325	347	368	389	407
Current LMI units	-	-	108 <sup>1</sup>	112 <sup>2</sup>	112	112	112
Additional LMI units needed	-	-	217	235	256	277	295

1 Actual total as of 12/31/20.

2 Actual total as of 6/30/21. Population estimates based on Division of Statewide Planning projections.

Notes: Number of housing units based on 2018 American Community Survey estimated average household size of 2.67.

Current number of LMI units based on LMI deed restrictions recorded in Richmond land evidence records.

Number of additional LMI units needed based on current actual count.

## 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
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> The resource is from the American Community Survey 2017 estimates. Each age group includes only the civilian noninstitutionalized population.

## 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 fluctuates. In 2008, there were 45. 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. As of December 31, 2020 there were 46 group home beds.

**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. The number of low or moderate income units in 2020 does not include those that were unreported, as previously explained. 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% <sup>1</sup>
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.

<sup>1</sup> This percentage represents an undercount. See Table 7-7 above.

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, there is an immediate need to attain the ten percent low and moderate income housing goal. The current deficit is about 240 units.

### 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. The development was expected to have a total of 40 low or moderate income housing units, but it is not clear when the Town can expect those units to be constructed.

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 this 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 and the bills have consistently died in committee.

### Affordable Housing Recently Constructed

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, was completed in 2021. Fox Run is a comprehensive permit development with 100 owner-occupied dwelling units in 14 multi-unit buildings. Twenty-five of the units are reserved for low or moderate income families. As of the end of 2020, 21 of those 25 units had 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 near the village of Shannock sponsored by Women's Development Corp., was completed in 2019. It provides 32 low-income rental 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 R.I. 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 new market-rate residential development. The purpose of such ordinances is to make sure that the community 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.

No inclusionary housing units have been built since the ordinance was enacted in 2008, because with two exceptions, no residential developments have been approved that create more than six new market-rate dwelling units. This could be because the housing market has not yet fully recovered from the 2008 recession, but also could be because developers have intentionally limited the size of developments to avoid having to comply with the inclusionary zoning requirement.

One of the market-rate developments approved since 2008 that authorizes construction of more than six new dwellings, 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. However, 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 to Richmond's ten percent low or moderate income housing goal. The other development, Meadow Brook Acres, created a total of 16 building lots between 2015 and 2021 and agreed to make payments in lieu of constructing three low or moderate income dwellings. The fees will be deposited in the affordable housing fund established by ordinance in 2008.

### **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. Committee tasks include 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.

In September of 2021, the Town Council enacted amendments to Ch. 3.08 (Affordable Housing Fund) and Ch. 4.12 (Affordable Housing Committee) of the Code of Ordinances. The amendments were recommended by the Affordable Housing Committee. The amendments to Ch. 3.08 explicitly require affordability deed restrictions to be recorded for every unit of

low or moderate income housing built or renovated with money from the affordable housing fund. The amendments to Ch. 4.12 require the Affordable Housing Committee to establish criteria for formulating recommendations to the Town Council concerning the use of land donated to the Town for affordable housing, and authorize the Committee to accept, on behalf of the Town, fees in lieu of construction, land conveyed in lieu of construction, and any money or land voluntarily donated to the Town for the purpose of increasing the stock of affordable housing available in Richmond. On September 20, 2021, the Affordable Housing Committee adopted regulations that contain criteria for recommendations to the Town Council about the use of fees in lieu of construction and land conveyed in lieu of construction of low or moderate income housing. Those regulations are in Appendix G.

## **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 in Richmond and raise their families here.

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.

## 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 when that housing is located in areas with existing community infrastructure. 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. This should be one of the Affordable Housing Committee's goals.

## Siting of Increased-density Residential Development

The most practical way for Richmond to reach its ten 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 assist in identifying the areas of the Town most suited for low or moderate income housing, the Town updated its affordable housing siting analysis. The affordable housing



siting analysis is based on the Buildout Analysis. The Buildout Analysis (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. 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 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 H 1: Provide residents of Richmond with adequate, safe, and affordable housing opportunities, while protecting the natural environment and town character residents value most.**

**Policy H 1:** Broaden the responsibilities and increase the number of members of the Affordable Housing Committee.

**Action 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.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

*Responsibility:* Town Council

**Action H 2:** 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 H 3:** 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 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.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Affordable Housing Committee and Planning Department

**Policy H 2:** Take the initiative in identifying potential locations for affordable housing and seeking developers for those locations.

**Action 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.

*Timeframe:* Short-term and ongoing

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

**Action H 6:** Research the benefits of increasing affordable housing stock to stimulate business investment in Richmond.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

*Responsibility:* Affordable Housing Committee and Economic Development Commission

**Action H 7:** Evaluate Town-owned parcels for opportunities to construct affordable housing.

*Timeframe:* Short-term and ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Department, Town Administrator and Affordable Housing Committee

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

**Action H 8:** Amend the zoning ordinance to reduce minimum lot size and dimensional regulations for construction of multi-family buildings in appropriate locations.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board, Town Council

**Action H 9:** Work with neighboring towns to seek funding for village revitalization projects.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Department and Town Administrator

**Action H 10:** Amend the zoning ordinance to allow mixed-use buildings in Wyoming.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

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

**Action H 11:** 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 is the unifying chapter of this Comprehensive Community Plan. It incorporates information from all of the other elements to articulate the Town's land use planning strategy in a manner consistent with Land Use 2025, the State's land use policy document.



Richmond's approach to land use planning has three major objectives:

- › To sustain the rural character of the Town;
- › To achieve a thoughtful balance of green space and urban development through well planned community design with limited infrastructure; and
- › To conserve natural resources, protect habitats, and identify areas appropriate for development.

The Land Use Element explains how the Town's land use ordinances and regulations support these objectives. This Element incorporates population estimates, economic development targets, housing needs, natural and cultural features, suitability factors, and the projected capacity of public facilities and services. As future land use decisions are made, the goals and policies in the Natural and Cultural Resources Element and the Open Space and Recreation Element should be considered. 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 except land enrolled in the Farm, Forest and Open Space program and land owned by governmental entities) should be allocated for the land uses that will serve Richmond residents and employers?

The answer to this question is drawn in part from the demographic and economic data presented in the other elements 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 answer these questions, land use planning goals were formulated, and the suitability and availability of land for development were studied in the Buildout Analysis. The result was the Future Land Use Map, Map 13 in Appendix B. That map and the current Zoning Map, Map 14 in Appendix B, illustrate development strategies and land use policies consistent with the the Town's land use objectives and the opinions and aspirations of residents who participated in the community survey and public workshop. The Buildout Analysis, which is based on geographic information system mapping, estimates the total number of potential residential dwelling units throughout the Town. Individual parcels were analyzed to estimate how many additional dwelling units might be developed. The Buildout Analysis is Appendix F.

## Community Survey and Pubic Workshop

The community survey and public workshop gave residents the opportunity to comment on the update to the Comprehensive Community Plan. Residents were encouraged to offer their assessment of Richmond's development since the previous Plan, and to describe what development they think should take place during the next ten to twenty years. The comments gathered for this update differ little from the comments made before previous updates. The majority of respondents still list rural character, quiet, and small-town atmosphere as qualities they like most about Richmond. Residents still value the Town's friendly people, scenic beauty, and historic buildings and villages. The most recent comments indicate that residents place a high value on preserving clean rivers, rural beauty, farms, and forests.



The greatest challenges cited do not vary from those expressed during previous surveys. Residents cited the need for mixed-use economic development, growth control, support of existing businesses, and the need to attract new businesses while maintaining Richmond's rural atmosphere. Another widespread concern was the need to keep property taxes in check. When asked what type of new businesses they would like to see, residents answered, in order of preference, restaurants, bars and taverns, small businesses, public recreation facilities, urgent care facilities, and medical and dental offices.

At the public workshop, residents also voiced the need to contain and control growth, especially the growth of 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 feel economic development efforts are needed to revitalize the village centers. Support was expressed for economic development strategies that support local businesses and attract larger employers to help to ease the residential property tax burden. Residents further expressed a strong interest in protecting the Town's extensive natural resources from overuse and infringement by neighboring development. The loss of natural land to development was described as the greatest threat to the Town. The greatest economic development challenge was identified as the storefront vacancies in Wyoming. A detailed description of the survey is provided in Appendix A.

## Population

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Richmond's 2010 population was 7,708, and its 2020 population was 8,020. That 4 percent increase was significantly lower than the 12.6 percent increase projected by Statewide Planning in 2013.<sup>1</sup> Based on the 2020 Census figures, the Town is projecting that its population will increase by 2030, but that the rate of population growth between 2020 and 2030 will be slower than the rate projected by Statewide Planning.

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 averages. The Town's population is aging. As of 2017, nearly half of Richmond residents were age 45 or older. Table 8-1 shows the shifts in age distribution from 1990 to 2017.

**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

## Population and Land Use

Richmond residents strongly expressed their desire to maintain rural character while fostering economic development in the Wyoming and I-95 area. This is consistent with residents' general desire for a balanced local economy and a phased rate of growth.

Population growth will continue, because Richmond is 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

<sup>1</sup> Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning Technical Paper 162.

Public Services and Facilities Element describes the limited amount of public facilities and services available in the Town. No significant expansions of existing infrastructure 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.

These objectives determine the proposed land uses. The Town has an area of approximately 24,903 acres, or just over 40 square miles. A total of 53 percent (13,249 acres) is 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 describes the importance and location of Richmond's environmentally-sensitive areas. The characteristics of these areas are key to identifying potential development sites. Map 17 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, engineering and construction for development of these areas generally are more expensive. For instance, poorly drained soils may require more sophisticated on-site wastewater treatment systems, while steeply sloped and rocky soils may require the same costly wastewater systems, costly foundations, increased pavement, and more intensive 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. As a matter of policy, these areas should be preserved as open space rather than developed. Almost all of this prime agricultural soil (3,767 acres, or 98 percent) is located in the R-2 and R-3 zoning districts. Prime agricultural soil is not protected from development in the same way that wetlands are. As a result, much of it can be easily developed. The Town struggles to balance the need for residential growth with the desire to preserve prime agricultural resources so they will be available for farming in the future.

## Limited Development Areas

The suitability of land for development is further limited by regulations and policies that protect aquifer recharge areas, public water supplies, prime agricultural soils, and land owned by government entities. Calculation of number of acres with limited suitability for development assumes that property enrolled in the Farm, Forest and Open Space program, shown in Table 8-4, will remain in the program during the next five years. Land that is physically constrained or has limited development potential is shown in Table 8-3 and Table 8-4 (see Map 17 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

Subdivision and development of land, like increases in population and employment, is a measure of growth. Its pace generally coincides with the region's economic vitality. According to the 2018 Buildout Analysis, the Town's Zoning Ordinance dictates that residential construction is still the predominant 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 declined between 2010 and 2018.

**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>

## 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 shown in Table 8-6.

Based on the 2018 Buildout Analysis, a sufficient amount of land is available to meet Richmond's near-term 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) together with land zoned Flex Tech, Planned Development, and Planned Unit Development-Village Center (Richmond Commons) will be sufficient to meet long-term commercial and industrial needs.

**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
PUD-VC	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 want future development to be located in areas already serviced by water lines and in or near existing villages. This is consistent with the goals and objectives of the State Land Use Plan, Land Use 2025. Implementation of this policy requires concentrating future growth in village centers and imposing conservation measures 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. From the 1990s until 2008, the Town experienced a vigorous rate of residential growth. Residential development continues to take place, but not at the rate it took place in the early 2000s. Because Richmond is heavily dependent on residential property taxes, many residents would like the Town to encourage diverse land development that increases the non-residential tax base while making minimal demands on Town services and minimal changes in the rural character of the Town. To encourage non-residential development, Richmond can pursue these strategies:

- › Concentrating development in existing villages where there is access to existing utilities and infrastructure. The Town will continue to assess incentives to focus infill growth in these areas. A program allowing transfer of development rights from rural areas to villages would provide an incentive for locating new construction in developed areas.
- › Encourage business development. The Town needs to support growth and expansion of existing businesses and develop approaches to attract new businesses and industry.
- › Encourage construction of smaller dwelling units and dwelling units in multi-unit buildings in anticipation of future trends. Mixed commercial and residential buildings, cottage communities, and other multi-unit models could increase the municipal housing stock.

Further discussion of these and other preferred development strategies follows below.

### Residential Development

#### Conservation Development

Conservation development design is intended to minimize land clearance and environmental impacts and maintains the rural character of Richmond. House lots and streets are sited in a manner that conforms to the natural topography of the property to the greatest extent possible, and preserves historic and cultural features such as stone walls. Open space is set aside as one large lot or large contiguous lots. As a result, conservation development provides more useful and functional open space than other types of residential site design.

The percentage of the site that must be devoted to open space varies by zoning district. In residential zoning districts, the minimum is 50 percent of land suitable for development. The open space in a conservation development may be used for passive or active recreation or

for agriculture. It also may be preserved in its natural state. The developer must record a conservation easement that prohibit development of the open space that is inconsistent with the use approved by the Planning Board.

The overall residential density of a conservation development is the same as it would be for a conventional subdivision, but lots are smaller than the required minimum lot area for the zoning district. The Planning Board has the authority to modify the size and shape of individual building lots to conform more closely to the natural features of the land, and may approve lots that depart from the dimensional requirements that would ordinarily apply.

The Planning Board encourages developers to design conservation developments so that the required open space will connect with open space on adjacent parcels or provide a buffer between new development and sensitive areas 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, desirable neighborhoods are created and sprawl is avoided.

Conservation development is now the default method for residential subdivisions. The Planning Board requires developers to submit conservation development designs unless such a design was impracticable. Cluster subdivision, in effect from 1985 to 2003, was the predecessor to conservation development. Although less flexible in design options, cluster subdivision also required one or more open space lots and building lots smaller than the minimum lot size for the zoning district. Technically, lots in cluster subdivisions are now legal nonconforming lots, but the standard dimensional regulations in effect when they were created did not apply to them. To solve the problem of what dimensional regulations should apply to a lot in the 21 existing cluster subdivisions, a section was added to the Zoning Ordinance that provides special minimum lot area, yard dimensions, and frontage for lots in cluster subdivisions.

### **Residential Compounds**

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 without requiring compliance with the full construction design and improvement standards applicable to other subdivisions. Residential compounds are limited to seven lots. The overall density of the development must be at least five acres per dwelling unit, while the minimum lot size is the same as in the zoning district. The excess area may be part of each lot or may be in one or more separate open space lots.

Instead of requiring undivided open space, the residential compound ordinance requires 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 minimal land disturbance and reduce the overall number of dwellings. The Town requires streets in residential compounds to be privately-owned so no maintenance by the Town will be necessary.

## **Siting of Renewable Energy Production Facilities**

In Richmond, as in other Rhode Island communities, the construction of renewable energy facilities has generated controversy. Richmond recognizes the need to increase production of renewable energy to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and endorses the goals articulated in Energy 2035, the Rhode Island State Energy Plan. But residents frequently object to proposals to construct renewable energy facilities, especially if those facilities will be built near their homes.

Commercial solar energy systems were first permitted as a principal use in 2013 as part of general amendments to the zoning ordinance. In July 2017, the Town Council enacted a zoning ordinance amendment at the request of a private property owner that allowed a limited number of commercial solar energy systems by special use permit in the R-3 residential zoning district. That ordinance provision proved extremely unpopular and was repealed in October of 2019.

Currently, ground-mounted commercial solar energy systems are allowed as a principal use only in the General Business, Industrial, Light Industrial, and Flex Tech zoning districts. Each system must have a deer-resistant vegetative buffer sufficient to shield the solar energy panels from view from outside the lot. The Planning Board has the authority during development plan review to determine which lot boundaries require visual buffers. Applicants must submit a decommissioning plan and a detailed estimate of the cost of equipment removal and site restoration, and must post a financial guarantee for the removal and restoration. Property owners are prohibited from removing topsoil or prime agricultural soil from the site for installation of the facility.

In 2016, in order to provide financial assistance to the agricultural community, the Town Council enacted a zoning ordinance amendment that allows farmers to have small commercial solar energy systems as accessory uses. Each system, including perimeter fencing and buffers, cannot occupy more than 50,000 square feet, and all of the energy produced must be sold to a public utility.

Individual solar energy systems are also allowed as accessory uses to single residential, commercial, institutional, or industrial used or buildings, provided that the energy produced by the system is used on the site. The Town does not yet have an ordinance regulating commercial wind energy systems, so they are currently prohibited.

Renewable energy equipment is assessed and taxed as personal property according to a formula developed by the State Office of Energy Resources. Richmond currently collects tax revenue for the following commercial solar energy equipment:

**Table 8-7 Commercial Solar Energy Systems in Richmond**

Plat and Lot	Address	Lot Size	Annual Tax	Use
4B/43	56 Stilson Road	3.39 acres	\$10,00	Principal
6E/35	421 Kingstown Road	19.0 acres	\$22,500	Principal
11A/240	54 Bucknam Road	7.85 acres	\$23,400	Principal
4B/44-1	68 Stilson Road	2.05 acres	\$3,750	Principal
5B/4-LUA	1219A Main Street	3.12 acres	\$3,900	Principal
4B/54	6A Buttonwoods Road	5.0 acres	\$6,250	Principal
10B/10	477 Church Street	2.70 acres	\$900	Principal
8E/7	139 Heaton Orchard Road	1.0 acre	\$1,250	Accessory
8E/17	3738 South County Trail	1.0 acre	\$1,250	Accessory
8F/12	3700 South County Trail	1.0 acre	\$1,250	Accessory
9A/15	331 Switch Road	1.0 acre	\$1,250	Accessory
9D/30	28 West Shannock Road	1.0 acre	\$980	Accessory
10E/1	230 Shannock Village Road	1.0 acre	\$980	Accessory
10D/2	26 West Shannock Road	0.89 acres	\$1,080	Accessory

## Agricultural Development

Most residents strongly support active farming and agricultural tourism, which includes farm stands, educational programs, and seasonal events. These activities support economic development that is appropriate for Richmond and maintain the rural character of the Town.

According to DEM and the Richmond Tax Assessor, as of 2019 there were about 45 active farms in Richmond. They produce dairy products, Christmas trees, turf, livestock, fruits and vegetables, and honey. The Town recognizes the challenges facing the farming community and will continue to look for ways to support agriculture as an important sector of the Town's economy.

## Agricultural Overlay District

The purpose of the agricultural overlay is to preserve areas with prime agricultural soil, as identified by the Soil Conservation Service (see Map 7 in Appendix B). Prime agricultural soil is a natural resource, and protecting it maintains the cultural and economic benefits derived from farms and agricultural operations. Two areas of prime agricultural soil are in the overlay district; one in the eastern portion of town, and one in the western portion. Both areas presently are used primarily for production of turf.



### **Agricultural Overlay District - Conservation Development**

A Conservation Development subdivision in the Agricultural Overlay District is designed in much the same way as it would be in any other area, but the open space lot in the development must be a "farm lot" that contains the greatest possible amount of prime agricultural soils. Farm lots are intended for both residential and agricultural use. One acre of a farm lot is reserved for residential development. One principal residence and one accessory dwelling unit are permitted by right in the residential portion of a farm lot. If a subdivision contains more than one farm lot, one of them must be at least twenty-five acres, reinforcing the focus on rural character and protecting farms from residential encroachment.

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

Residential Compounds are permitted in the Agricultural Overlay District, but each lot must be a farm lot of at least eleven acres. One acre of each lot is reserved for residential use, and the remaining ten acres is eligible for participation in the Farm, Forest and Open Space program. One principal residence and one accessory dwelling unit are permitted by right in the residential portion of a farm lot.

## **Other Strategies to Manage Growth and Retain Rural Character**

### **Transfer of Development Rights**

A Transfer of Development Rights program works by moving development rights from parcels in more rural areas (the "sending" property) to parcels in villages and other built-up areas with infrastructure (the "receiving" property). The increased density on the receiving lot is a reward for protecting the sending lot from development. A conservation easement is placed on the sending property. Transfer of development rights can be used to protect open space, farmland, natural resources, or areas of historical importance. When development rights to farmland are transferred, the property is no longer assessed based on its most valuable potential use. Instead, the property is assessed as agricultural land, which is taxed at a lower rate. The reduction in property taxes contributes to the financial stability of the agricultural operation.

The Town should consider enacting a zoning ordinance amendment that would establish a transfer of development rights program. Such a program would require identifying parcels where prohibiting development would be desirable and identifying parcels on or near the Town's water main, preferably in Wyoming, that could support increased development density.

### **Sale of Development Rights**

When a property owner sells the development rights to property, the property owner retains ownership of the land but gives up the right to develop it. Development rights typically are sold to a conservation organization, a land trust, or a governmental entity. A conservation easement on the land permanently prohibits development of the property, and continues to be enforceable even if the property changes ownership. As with transfer of development rights, the land is assessed and taxed at a lower rate than it would be if development rights

had been retained. Most residents who responded to the community survey supported transfer or sale of development rights as strategies to protect open space and farmland from development.

## Areas of Future Growth

### Village Centers

New construction that takes place in villages with historically significant buildings or other historic or cultural resources should be undertaken with those historical or cultural resources in mind.

In 2014, the Town Council enacted a zoning ordinance amendment that places the Village of Shannock in a special zoning district. The ordinance establishes unique dimensional requirements, exterior construction material requirements, and mixed-use provisions that are intended to preserve the historic character of the village while promoting the village's economic vitality. The ordinance includes some of the design guidelines the Town adopted for Shannock Village in 2011. The remainder of the design guidelines are voluntary.



Land Use 2025 establishes urban services boundaries that identify areas that can accommodate additional development because some level of public services are provided. The urban services boundary in Richmond encompasses all of Route 138 between the Hopkinton boundary and a point a short distance west of the Richmond School. It includes the village of Wyoming. The Town's water line serves the entire portion of Route 138 located in the urban services boundary. The Town favors infill development in this area, but it is important to preserve the remaining 19th century and early 20th century buildings and maintain Wyoming's historic village character. In 2007, students in the URI landscape architecture program prepared illustrations that showed redesigned suggestions for Wyoming. At a public workshop on the redesign, residents said they liked the scale of development and favored protecting the village's historic structures while encouraging infill development.

The Town should consider establishing a special zoning district for Wyoming. Such an ordinance could permit mixed-use development, help to protect existing historic structures, and provide site design guidelines that would help to mitigate traffic congestion. Buildings with commercial uses on the first floor and residential units on the second floor would be compatible with existing uses and would visually complement historic structures. Multi-family buildings would provide an opportunity for the Town to increase the number of low or moderate income housing units. Because wastewater must be treated on-site, environmental impact should be considered when building density is determined.

A major concern for Wyoming, even at the present level of development, is traffic. The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) Park and Ride parking lot at the I-95 interchange with Route 138 is the only location in Richmond where public transportation is



available. New development should not decrease existing levels of service on Route 138. This is the most congested area of town and needs careful attention. Shared entrances to businesses on Route 138 would limit the number of curb cuts and help to decrease traffic congestion. The Town has tried to persuade Wyoming property owners to share highway entrances, but those efforts have been unsuccessful. The goals and policies in the Circulation Element should be incorporated into a new village district ordinance.

### **Growth Centers**

Land Use 2025 designates two areas in Richmond, Wyoming and Shannock, as growth centers. The Town should continue to evaluate other appropriate places where increased development density could be accommodated, taking into consideration the area's ability to handle increased on-site wastewater treatment and the adequacy of the water supply. In addition to Shannock, the villages of Alton, Wood River Junction, and Kenyon are also identified on the Future Land Use Map as potential growth centers. Other villages, including Carolina and Usquepaug, could be studied for potential as growth centers as time and resources allow.

### **Industrial Uses**

Most industrial areas are located near the junction of I-95 and Route 138. Other areas zoned for industrial uses are located in historic mill villages adjacent to railroad lines. These areas were once thriving mills that relied on railroads to receive and ship goods and materials. Changes in the way products are produced and transported have resulted in reduced dependence on rail and increased dependence on trucking. The Town should consider these smaller industrially-zoned sites for alternative mixed uses.

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

Public water is available only in Wyoming and Shannock. The Town will continue to encourage infill development in those places, but other areas of the Town eventually must be developed to accommodate population growth and build a more diverse tax base. When development takes place in those places, the Town must balance the need for the new development with the availability of water and the capacity of the land to accommodate on-site wastewater treatment. Economic development goals should be based on policies that considers buildout and waste by all potential uses.

Outside of Wyoming, the Town is largely zoned R-2 and R-3. Development is permitted in these zoning districts at densities of two acres or three acres per dwelling unit. These zoning districts were adopted in order to protect the underlying Wood-Pawcatuck aquifer. Low-density zoning was adopted to protect water quality, preserve water supply, and prevent contamination of wells by on-site wastewater systems.

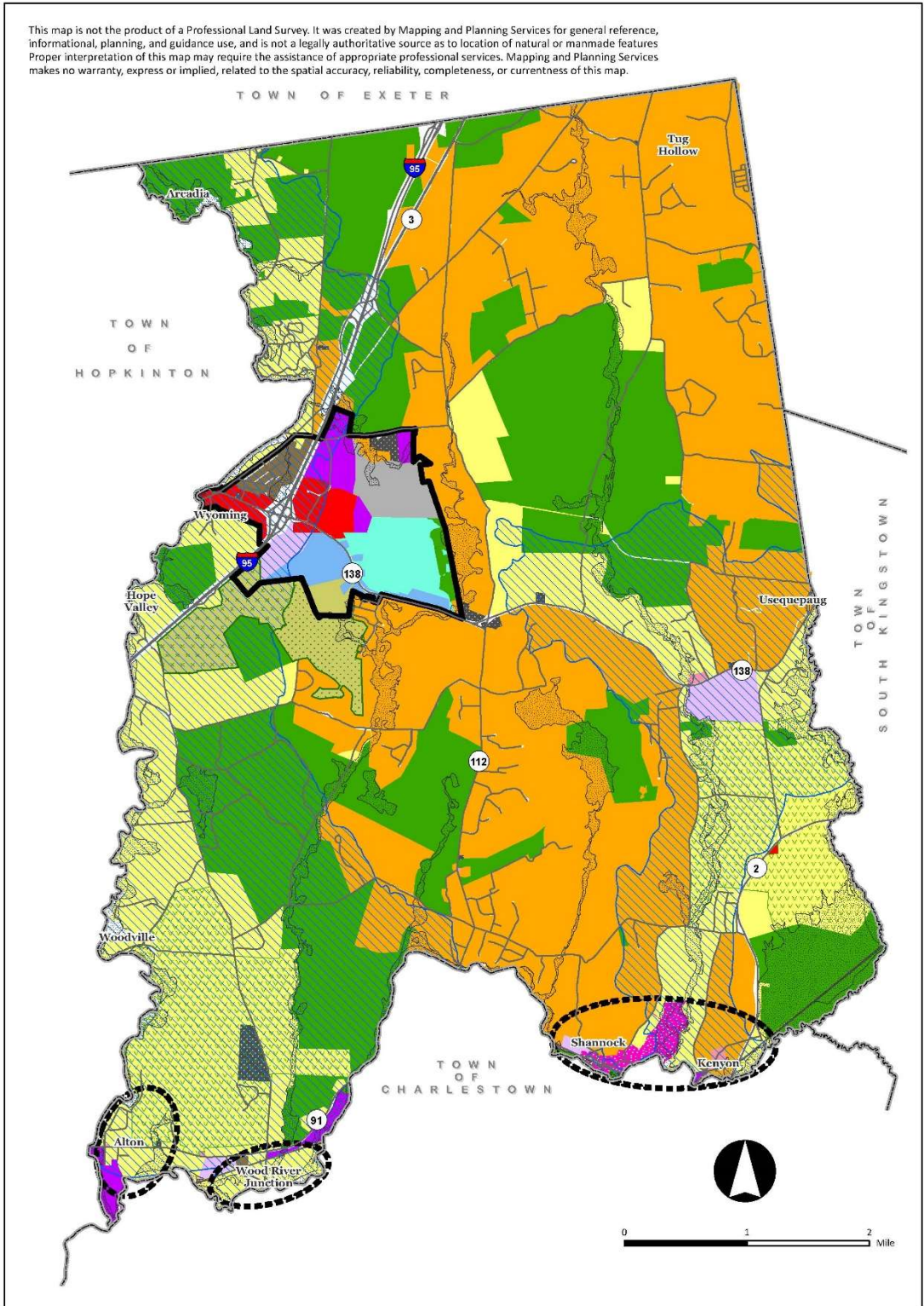
## Low Impact Development Techniques

All new development in Richmond is required to comply with DEM's Low Impact Development Site Planning and Design Guidance Manual, and DEM's Stormwater Design and Installation Standards Manual to reduce the impact of development on water quality.

## The Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Map illustrates Richmond's land use 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. The Future Land Use Map is Map 13 in Appendix B. It shows the following categories of land use:

- › High Density Residential
- › Medium Density Residential
- › Low Density Residential
- › Wyoming-Route 138 Infill and Growth Area
- › Potential Future Growth Areas
- › General Business and Neighborhood Business
- › Industrial and Light Industrial
- › Flex Tech
- › Planned Development
- › Shannock Village
- › Agricultural Overlay
- › Aquifer Overlay
- › Flood Hazard Overlay
- › Planned Development Resort (The Preserve at Boulder Hills)
- › Planned Unit Development–Village Center (Richmond Commons)
- › Conservation and Open Space
- › Public and Governmental



**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

Map 13 - Future Land Use Plan



The Future Land Use Map is meant solely to complement the plan's text by illustrating the plan's land use 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 (see the section above on Village Centers).

### **Low Density Residential**

The area designated as Low Density Residential 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, and surface water buffer areas, all of which are appropriate for low-density zoning.

### **Medium Density Residential**

Pockets of land suitable for medium density development are located in the central areas of town and extend to the northern and eastern borders of the towns of Exeter and South Kingstown. The central portion of town south of Route 138 is an intermediate density area, as is the area west of Route 2 and south of Shannock Hill Road. The development advantages of the medium density residential land are its proximity to the Wyoming commercial and industrial districts, proximity to the public water distribution system, access to principal roads, and few natural development constraints.

### **High Density Residential**

An area of high-density residential development is located in the Canob Park residential neighborhood in Wyoming and portions of Alton and Shannock. Wyoming is the only area of town with Town water, and the residential areas here are almost entirely developed.

### **Potential Future Growth Areas**

Richmond may consider encouraging rehabilitation, reuse, infill, and mixed-use development in Alton, Wood River Junction, Shannock, and Kenyon to increase the supply of affordable housing and neighborhood businesses and services. Whether these areas will support higher density development requires further study. It will ultimately depend on factors including water availability and wastewater disposal capacity. Using the Indicator of Potential Suitable Areas for Affordable Housing (see Map 11 in Appendix B), and working with property owners

and the Affordable Housing Committee, the Planning Board should study land in the existing villages to determine areas that could support higher density development.

### **General Business and Neighborhood Business**

The majority of the existing and proposed businesses in Richmond are located near the I-95 and Route 138 junction. The General Business zone extends further west along Route 138 to the Hopkinton border, and east a short distance beyond Stilson Road. Smaller areas for business uses are on Route 138 near Usquepaug (identified on the Future Land Use Map as Neighborhood Business) and in Shannock (identified on the Future Land Use Map as Shannock Village). Residents who participated in the Community Survey and public workshop did not indicate support for expanding business areas outside of existing zoning districts. 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 and Light Industrial**

Industrial and light industrial uses are permitted in several areas, primarily near the junction of I-95 and Route 138, along Route 138 and on Stilson Road. The Richmond Airport and the parcel adjacent to it, which has been developed for solar energy production, are in the area designated as light industrial. Other smaller industrial and light industrial areas are located in Alton, Wood River Junction and Shannock. Historically, these zoning districts 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**

The area designated as Flex Tech on the Future Land Use Map is located between Route 138 and Buttonwoods Road, immediately north of the area designated as Planned Unit Development-Village Center. Both zoning districts were created in 2002 for the Richmond Commons land development project. The Flex Tech zoning district was intended for development as one unified light industrial and commercial site. However, the owner-developer of Richmond Commons sold the property. Its current owner continues to use it for industrial uses and earth removal. It has not yet been redeveloped in the manner intended by the Flex Tech ordinance.

### **Planned Development**

An area encompassing both sides of Route 138 just east of the business and industrial areas adjacent to I-95 is designated as Planned Development. This area is intended for residential and non-residential uses and that act as a transitional area between the business and industrial uses to the west and the surrounding residential neighborhoods.



## **Shannock Village**

Shannock Village is located adjacent to the Pawtuxet River, which is the boundary between Richmond and Charlestown. Water-powered mills operated in Shannock from the 18th century into the 20th century, and the village's architecture spans several periods. The Shannock Village zoning district contains dimensional and aesthetic requirements intended to maintain the village's historic appearance, and use provisions intended to stimulate commercial activity.

## **Planned Development Resort District**

The Preserve at Boulder Hills, located at the site of the former Boulder Hills Golf Club, is a private resort that offers a wide range of recreational activities, luxury second homes, and other amenities. In 2016, the Town enacted a new mixed-use zoning district called the Planned Development Resort District to meet the Preserve's unique needs. The new zoning district encompasses about 700 acres formerly in the Planned Development, Light Industrial, R-2, and R-3 zoning districts. Permitted uses in addition to residences include an underground shooting range and other commercial and non-commercial recreational facilities, hotel and event facilities, restaurants, and limited commercial uses for the convenience of members and their guests. A gasoline service station and retail uses are planned for adjacent property in the Planned Development zoning district. The Preserve is currently under development in multiple phases.

## **Planned Unit Development–Village Center**

The Town adopted the Planned Unit Development–Village Center zoning district in 2002 specifically for development of Richmond Commons, a proposed mixed-use development on Route 138. The district includes about 300 acres. The development plan approved in 2013 includes residential and retail uses. Most of the acreage is currently undeveloped.

## **Conservation and Open Space**

Open space, conservation, and recreational property owned by the state or federal government - for instance, the Carolina and Arcadia Management Areas - was in residential zoning districts until 2021, when the Town Council amended the Future Land Use Map and the Zoning Ordinance to create a Conservation and Open Space zoning district. Placing land owned by other governmental entities in a zoning district that prohibits most uses will not guarantee that the property will never be developed, but it does give the Town some measure of control over this property, which encompasses a large portion of the Town's acreage and contributes substantially to the Town's rural atmosphere.

## **Public and Governmental**

The Public and Governmental land use designation was added to the Future Land Use Map in 2021 in order to identify land owned by the Town and other governmental and quasi-governmental entities and used for governmental purposes. Land in this category includes

the Town Hall and the Public Works Department facility as well as the public safety buildings owned by the fire districts.

### **Agriculture Overlay**

The purpose of the agricultural overlay is to preserve and protect large areas of prime agricultural soils so they will continue to be used for farming. Two areas are delineated: one in the eastern portion of town, and one in the western portion.

### **Aquifer Protection Overlay**

All of Richmond depends on groundwater from one aquifer for its potable water. The Aquifer Protection Overlay District provisions of the zoning ordinance prohibit certain uses likely to pollute groundwater and limit the discharge per acre per day into onsite wastewater treatment systems. The district boundaries on the zoning map should be updated to reflect DEM's most up to date information about the location of the aquifer recharge areas, GA and GAA groundwater, and wellhead protection areas.

### **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's Hazard Mitigation Plan, approved by FEMA in 2018, addresses public safety in flood hazard areas.



The plan serves as a guide to help the Town mitigate losses caused by natural hazards.

## **Inconsistency Between the Future Land Use Map and the Zoning Map**

In March 2021, the Town Council adopted an amended Future Land Use Map, and in July 2021, the Town Council enacted amendments to the zoning ordinance (including the zoning map) that were consistent with the amended Future Land Use Map. Those amendments created two new zoning districts: Conservation and Open Space (COS), for land owned by government entities and used for recreation or conservation, and Public and Governmental (PUB), for property owned by the Town and other governmental and quasi-governmental entities.

Map 13 reflects the policy decisions made during the process of adopting the new zoning districts. There is only one inconsistency between the Map 13 (the Future Land Use Map) and Map 14 (the Zoning Map). An undeveloped five-acre Town-owned lot on Richmond Townhouse Road opposite the Town Hall is designated as Public and Governmental on the Future Land Use Map but is still in the R-2 zoning district. The Planning Board had

recommended that the Town Council include the lot in the new Public and Governmental zoning district. However, during the public hearing on the zoning ordinance amendments, the Town Council decided that the lot should not be rezoned until a decision is made about its permanent use.

## Goals, Policies, and Actions

**GOAL LU 1: Support development without adversely affecting public health, the natural environment, or the Town's rural character.**

**Policy LU 1:** Locate affordable housing in areas where development will not adversely affect the natural environment and will have access to public water and main transportation corridors.

**Action LU 1:** Recommend to the Town Council changes to the Future Land Use Map identifying areas in Town that can support higher density development based upon the Buildout Analysis.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board, Town Council

**Action LU 2:** Periodically review and update the Buildout Analysis to ensure consistency with the evolving goals and policies of the Town (see Housing Element).

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Planning Department

**Policy LU 2:** Encourage development that protects the Town's historical and archaeological heritage.

**Action LU 3:** Adopt a special zoning district for Wyoming that permits mixed-use buildings.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

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

**Action LU 4:** Coordinate redevelopment of historic villages with adjacent communities that share those villages.

*Timeframe:* Long-term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board, Town Council

**Action LU 5:** Consider establishing a program for transfer of development rights.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

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



**Action LU 6:** Consider adopting redevelopment plans for Alton, Wood River Junction, and Kenyon that allow mixed-use development on property in Industrial zoning districts.

*Timeframe:* Long-term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board, Town Council

**Action LU 7:** Encourage the creation of open space lots near existing open space to avoid fragmentation of open space.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Land Trust, Planning Board

**Policy LU 3:** Ensure that development does not exceed the capacity of the Town's infrastructure.

**Action LU 8:** Encourage innovative and mixed-use developments where public water and infrastructure are available.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Department, Planning Board, EDC

**Action LU 9:** Evaluate locations in Town that may be suitable as growth centers.

*Timeframe:* Long-term

*Responsibility:* Planning Department, Planning Board

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## Appendix A

### Public Survey

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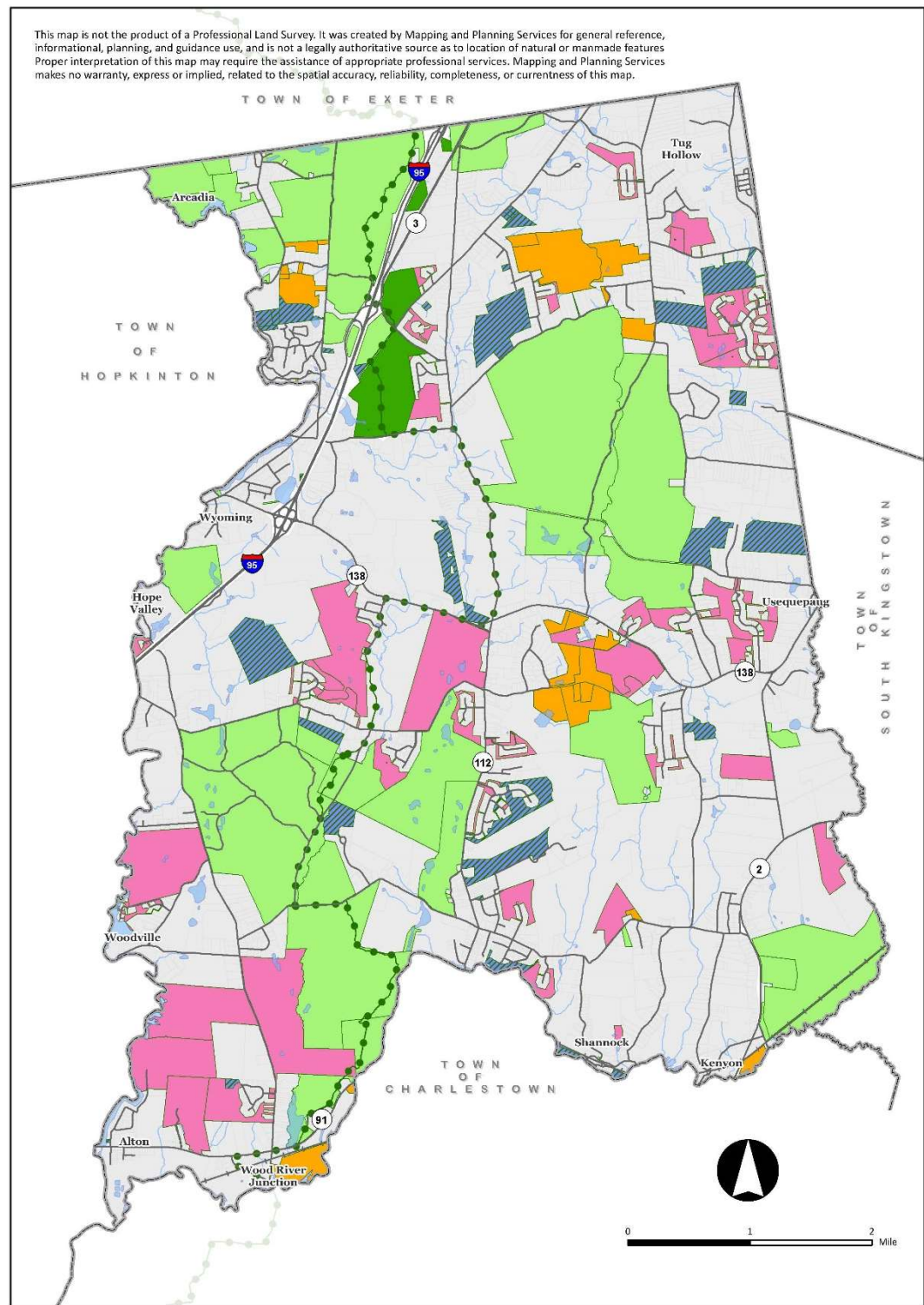
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## Appendix B

### Maps

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# Appendix B: Maps



**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

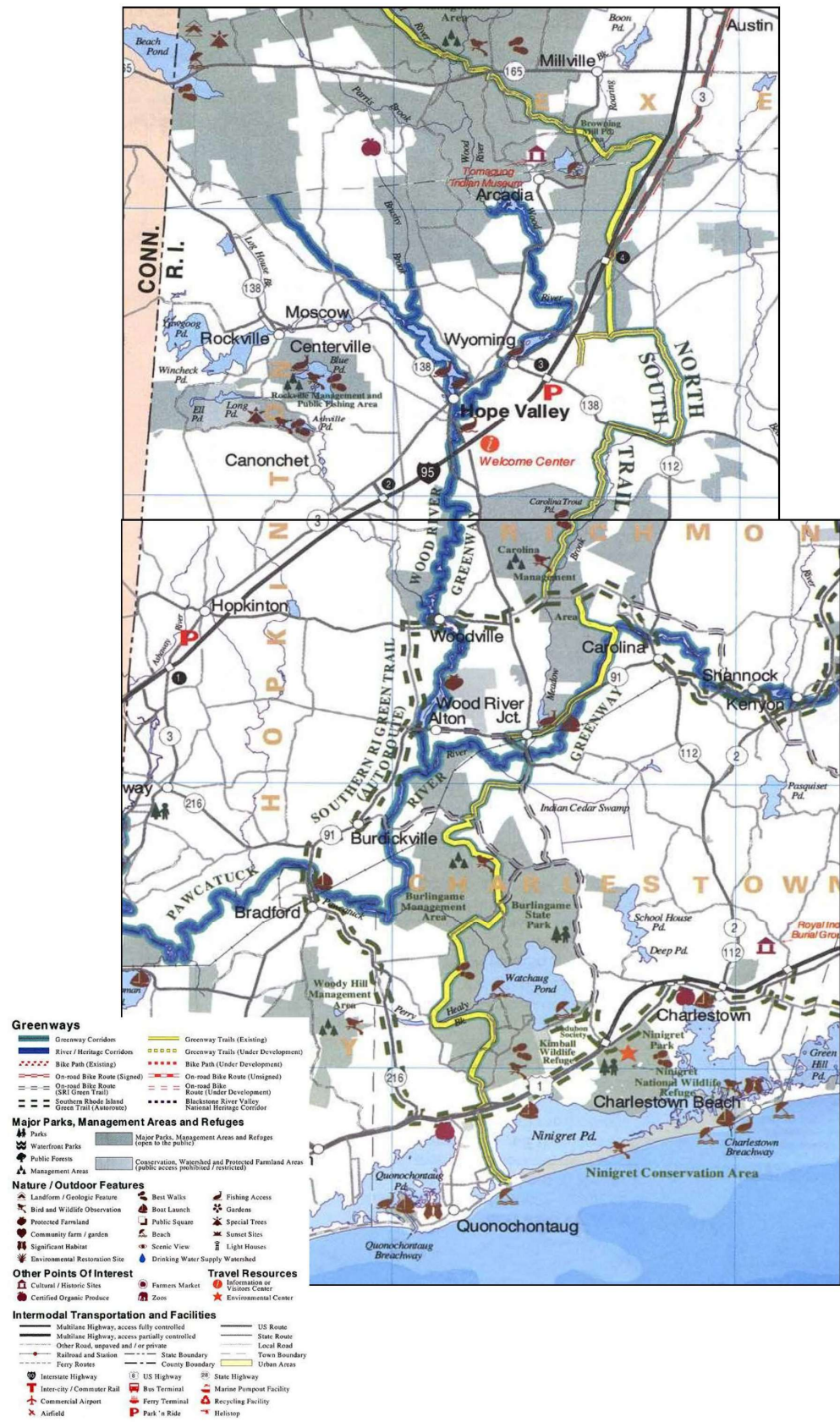
Map 1 - Recreation Conservation and Protected Open Space  
as of March 2020

- Municipal Border
  - Roads
  - Streams
  - Surface Waters
  - Railway
  - North-South Trail
- Owner/Jurisdiction**
- Federal
  - NGOs
  - Private
  - State
  - Town (incl. Land Trust)
  - Other Lands

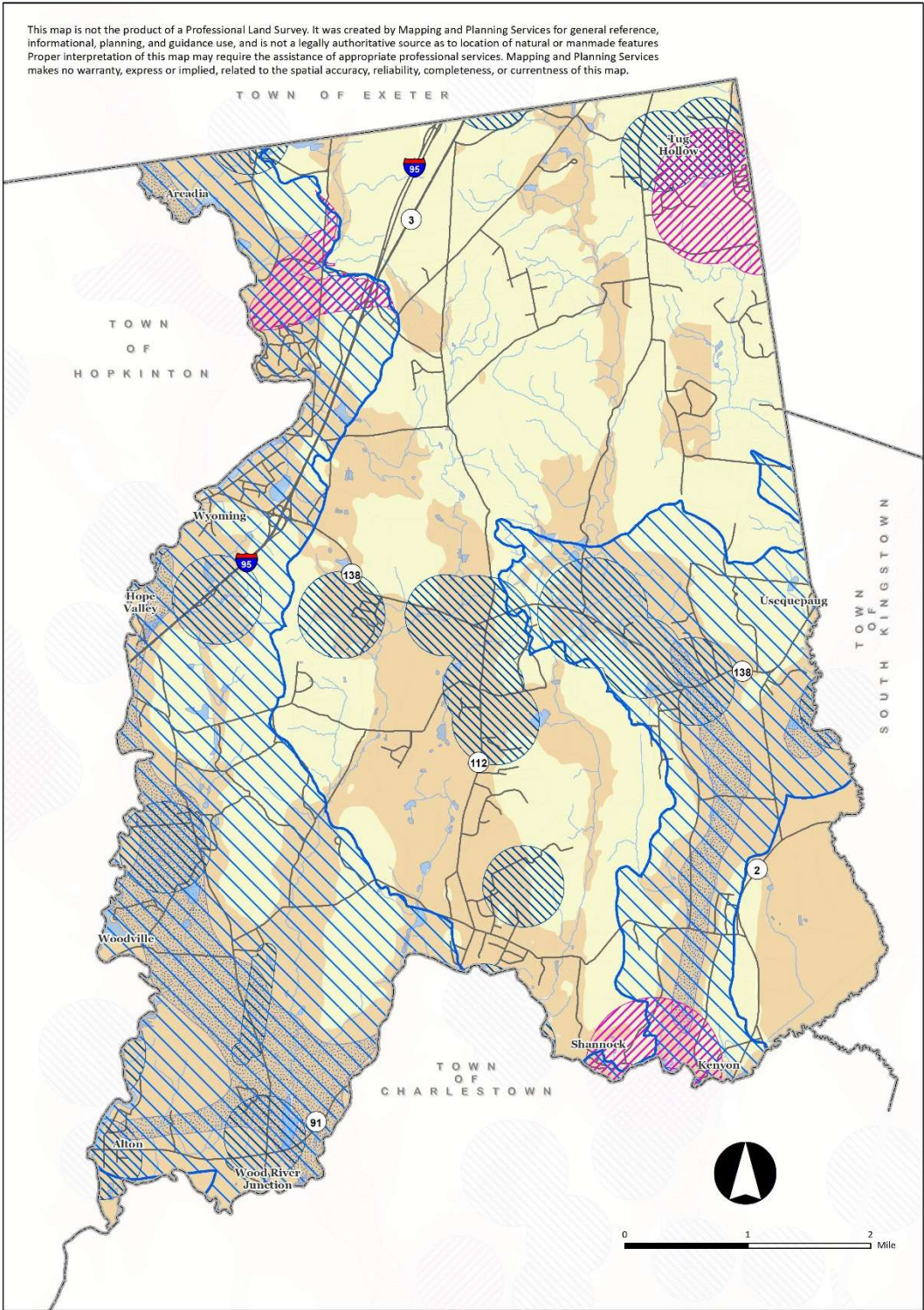
Data sources: Richmond GIS, RIGIS and RIDEM

MH 8/2021

MAP 2: North-South Trail through Richmond (Yellow Line) (Source: [http://outdoors.htmlplanet.com/nst/nst\\_map00.htm](http://outdoors.htmlplanet.com/nst/nst_map00.htm))  
(Not to scale)







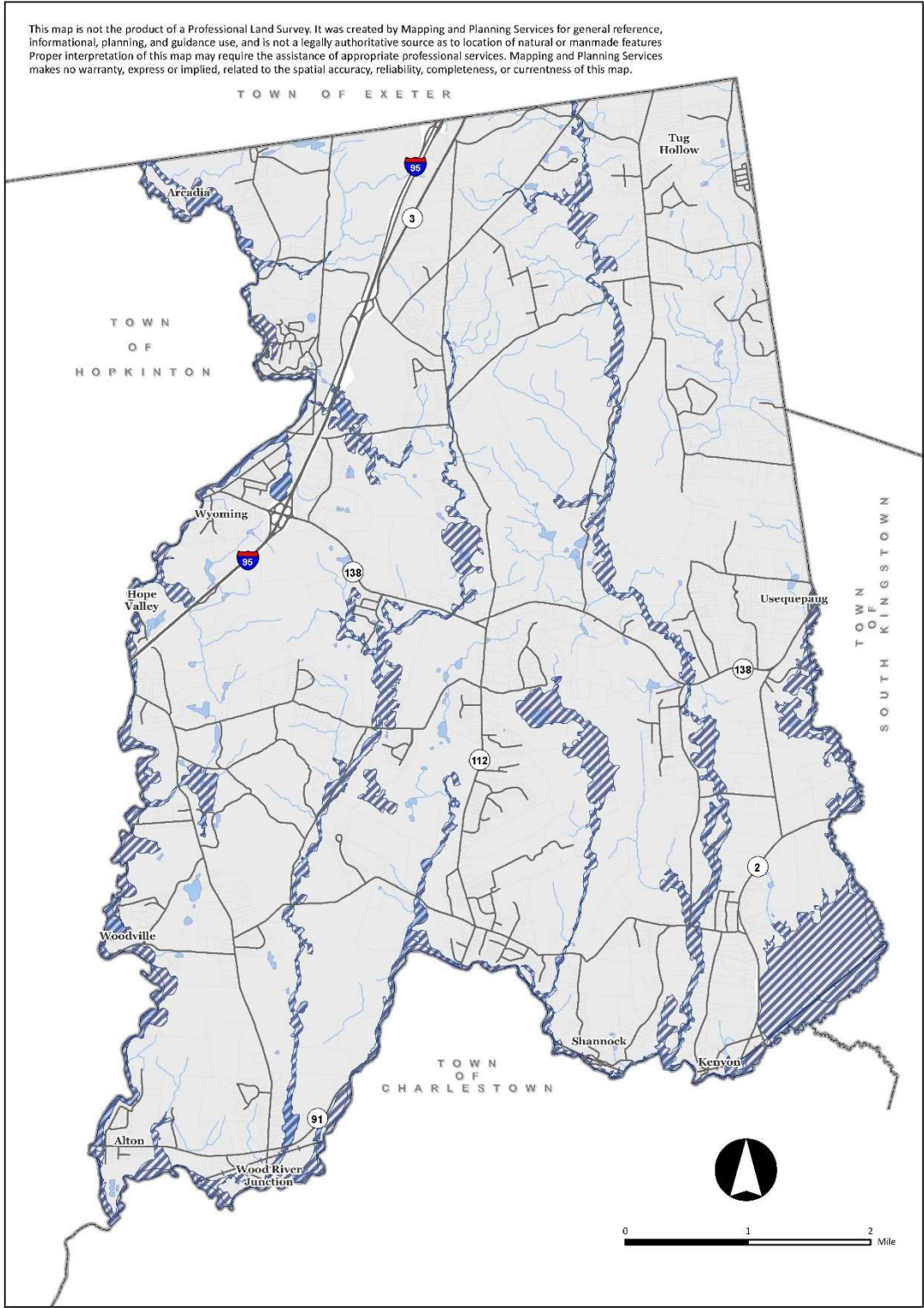
**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

Map 3 - Geology and Groundwater



Data sources: Richmond GIS, RIGIS

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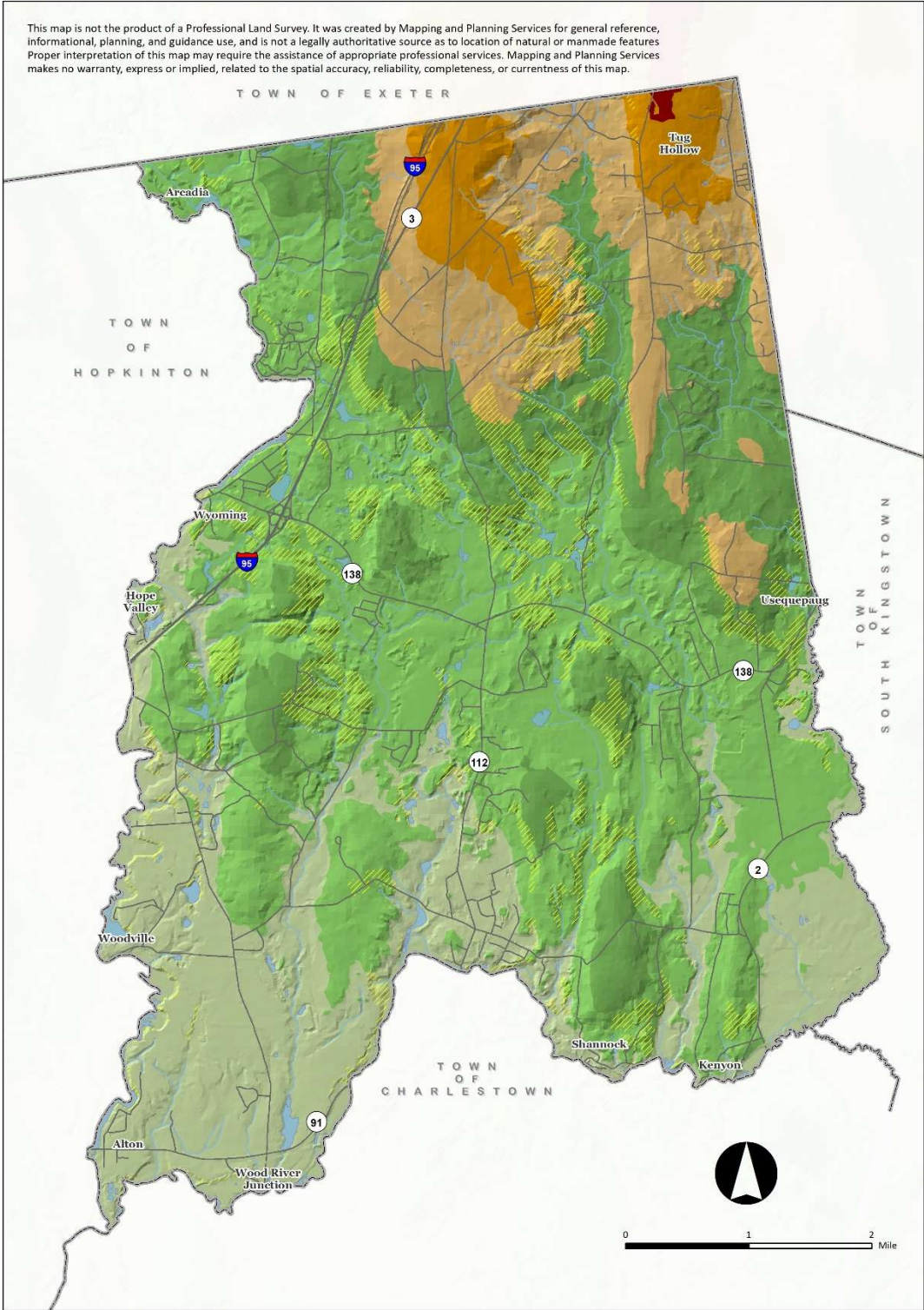
**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

Map 4 - Special Flood Hazard Areas

Data sources: Richmond GIS, RIGIS and RIDEM  
Note: Flood Hazard Areas (1-Percent Annual Chance Flood) are coincident with the new Flood Overlay District (approved 3/17/2020) by the Town of Richmond). There are no 0.2-Percent Annual Chance Flood within the Town.

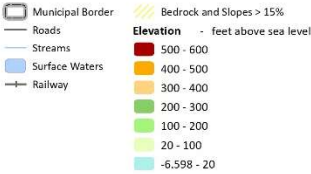
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**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

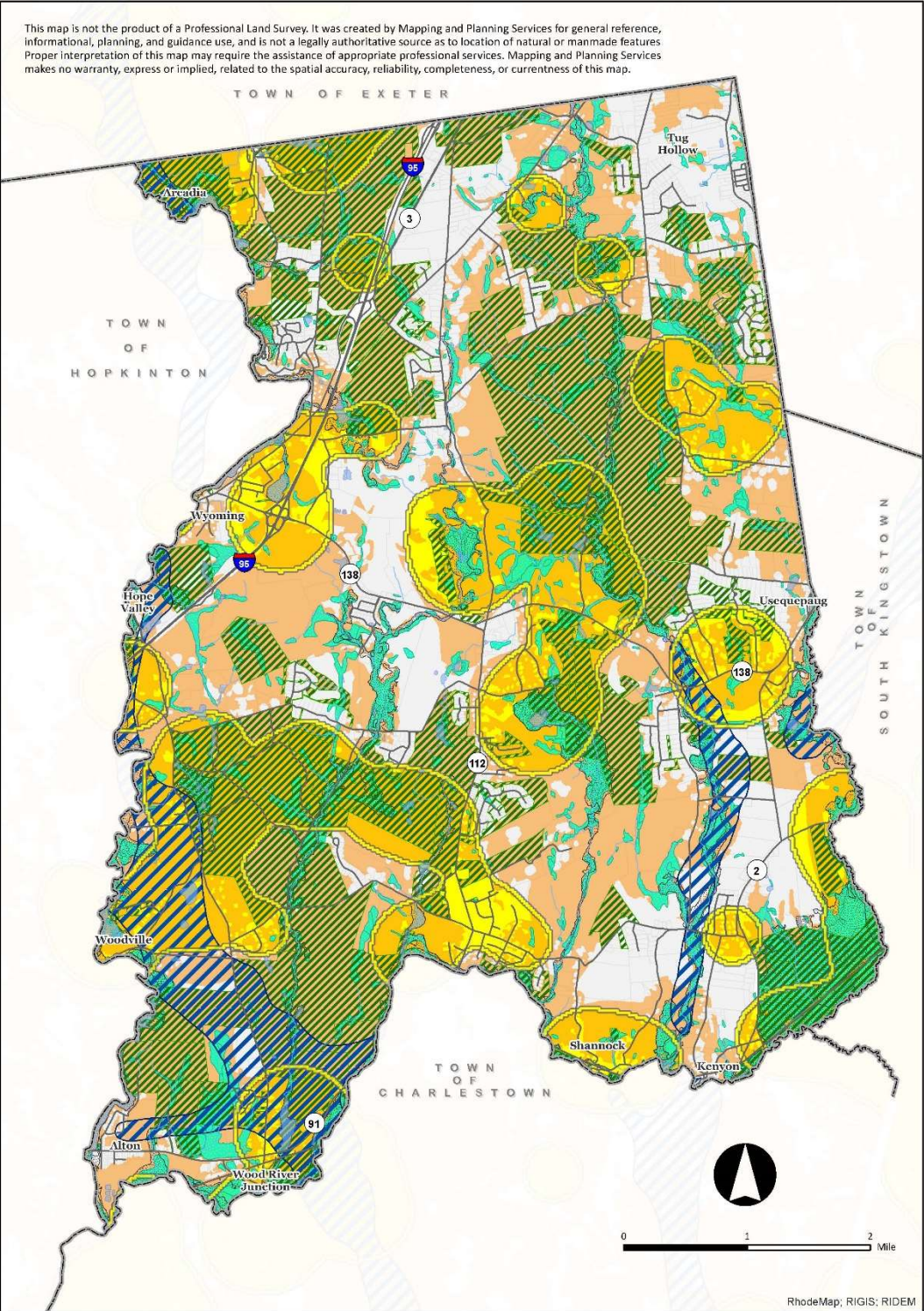
Map 5 - Geologic and Topographic Features



Data sources: Richmond GIS, RIGIS

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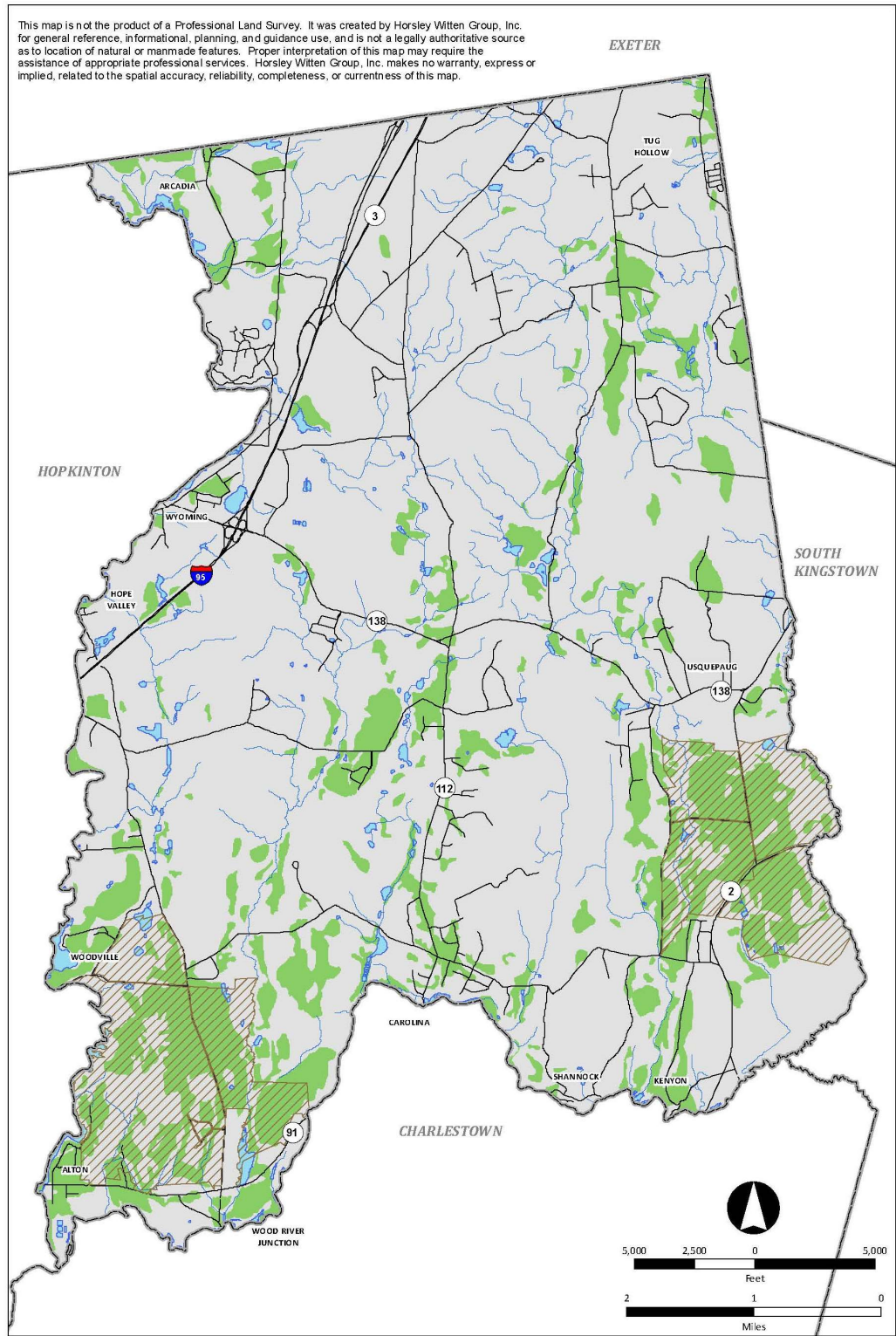
**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

Map 6 - Natural Features and Conservation Opportunity Areas

- Municipal Border
- Roads
- Surface Waters
- Streams
- Railway
- Conservation Opportunity Areas
- Conservation Opportunity Areas + Natural Heritage A
- Natural Heritage Areas
- Wetland
- Flood Hazard Areas
- Groundwater Aquifer Reservoirs
- Protected Open Space

Data sources: Richmond GIS, RIGIS and RIDEM  
Note: Colors on map may differ slightly from legend, due to overlapping features.

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**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

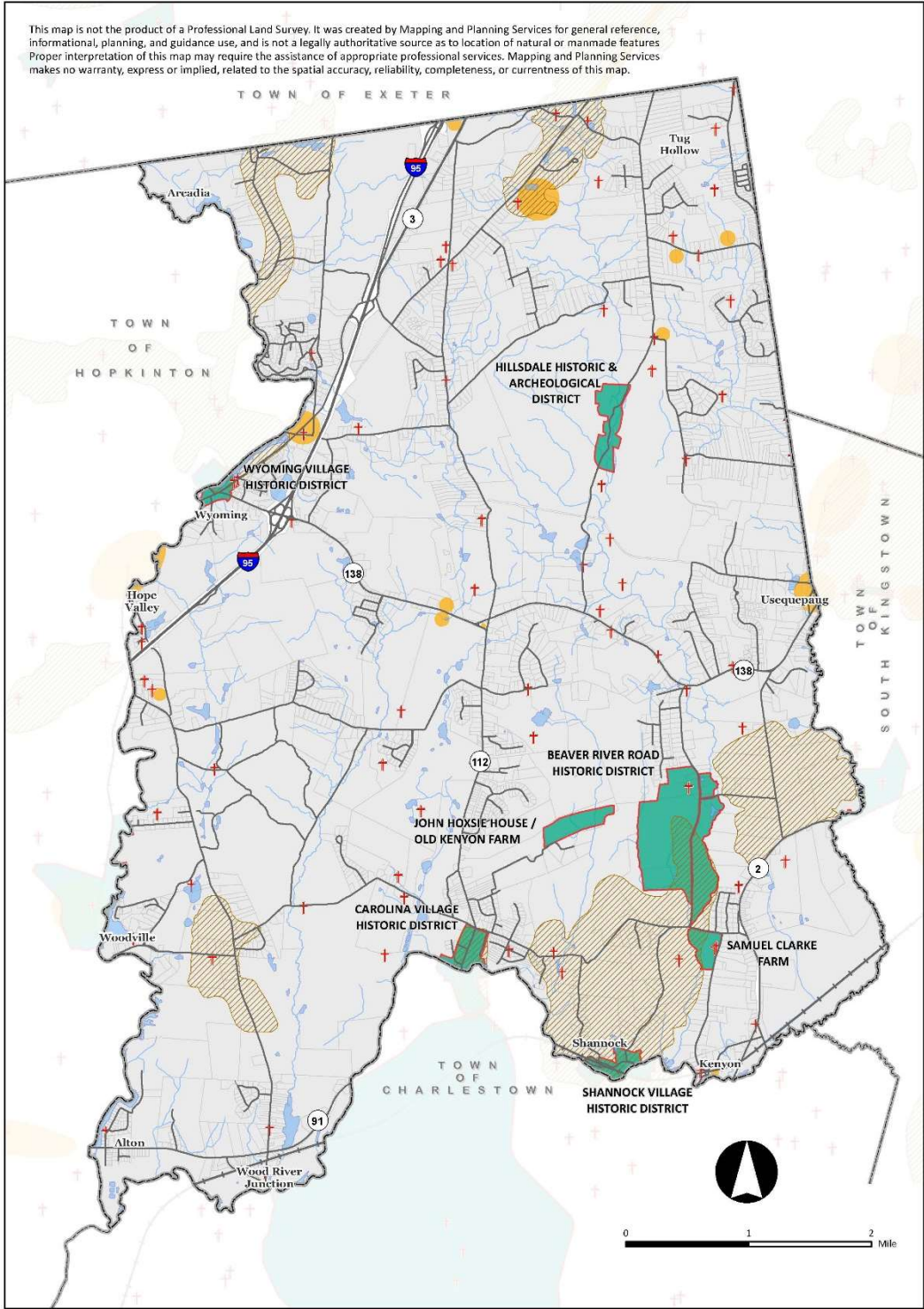
Map 7 - Prime Agricultural Soils

- Municipal Border
- Roads
- Streams
- Surface Waters
- Prime Agricultural Soils (USDA-NRCS)
- Agricultural Overlay District

Data sources: Town of Richmond, RIGIS

4/24/12





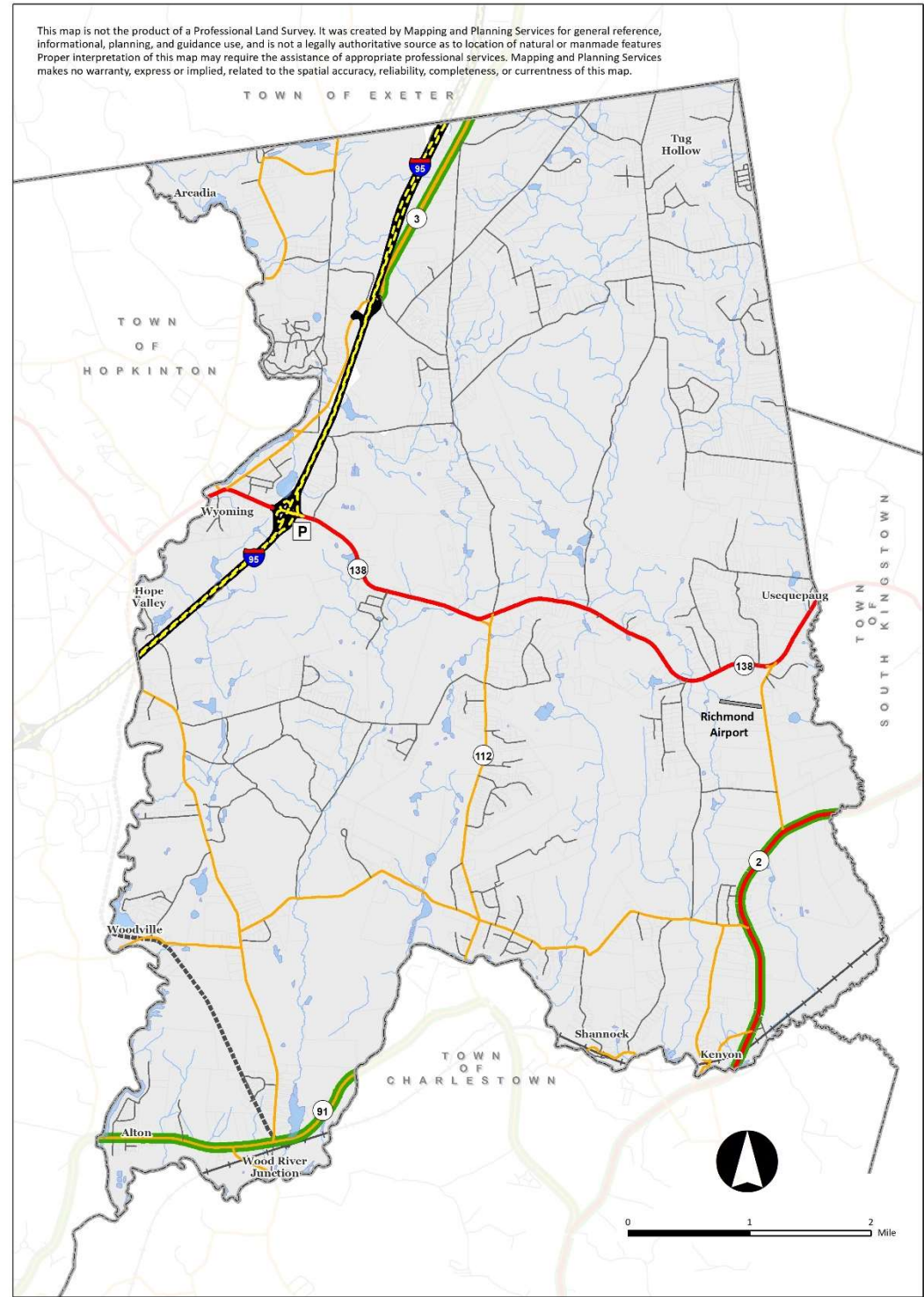
**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

Map 8 - Historic and Cultural Resources

- Municipal Border
- Roads
- Railway
- Surface Waters
- Streams
- Historic Cemeteries
- Scenic Areas
- National Register of Historic Places Districts and Sites
- Areas Eligible for National Historic Register

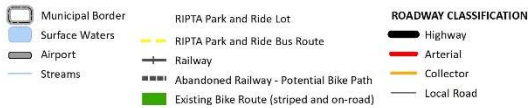
Data sources: Richmond GIS, RIGIS rev.

MH 10/2021



**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

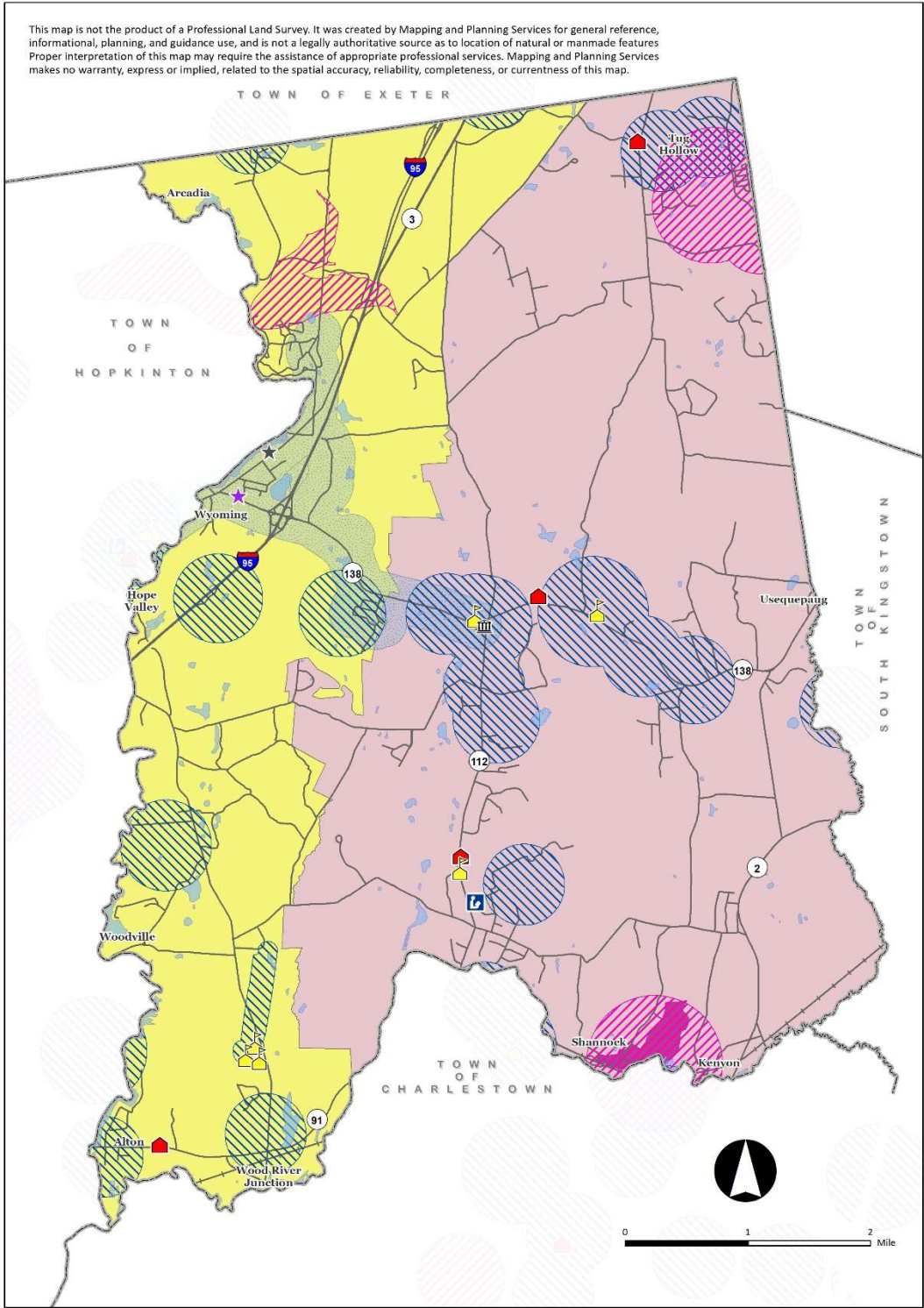
Map 9 - Transportation Network



Data sources: Richmond GIS, RIGIS

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**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

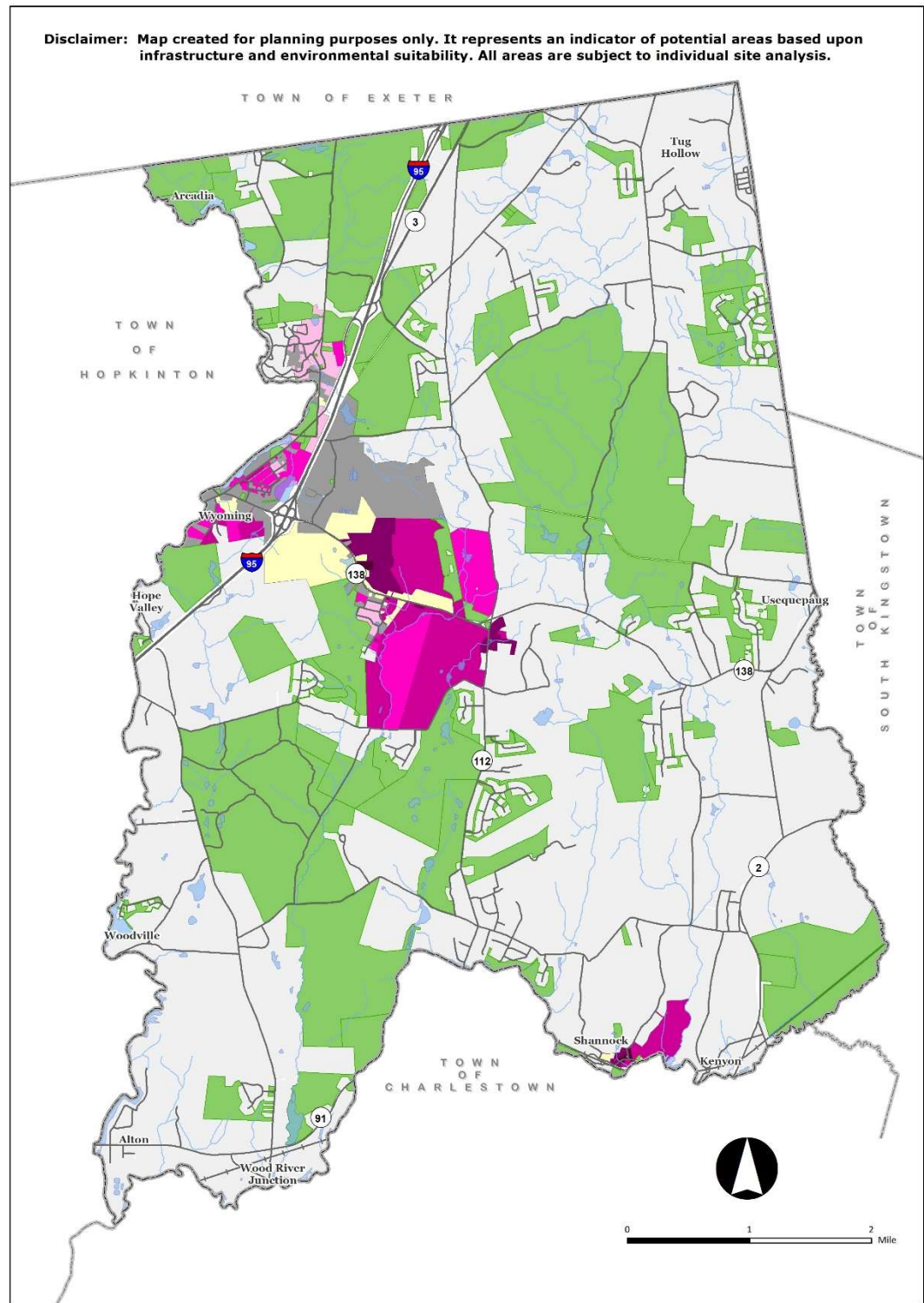
Map 10 - Public Services and Facilities

- |                  |  |   |
|------------------|--|---|
| 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

MH 1/2021





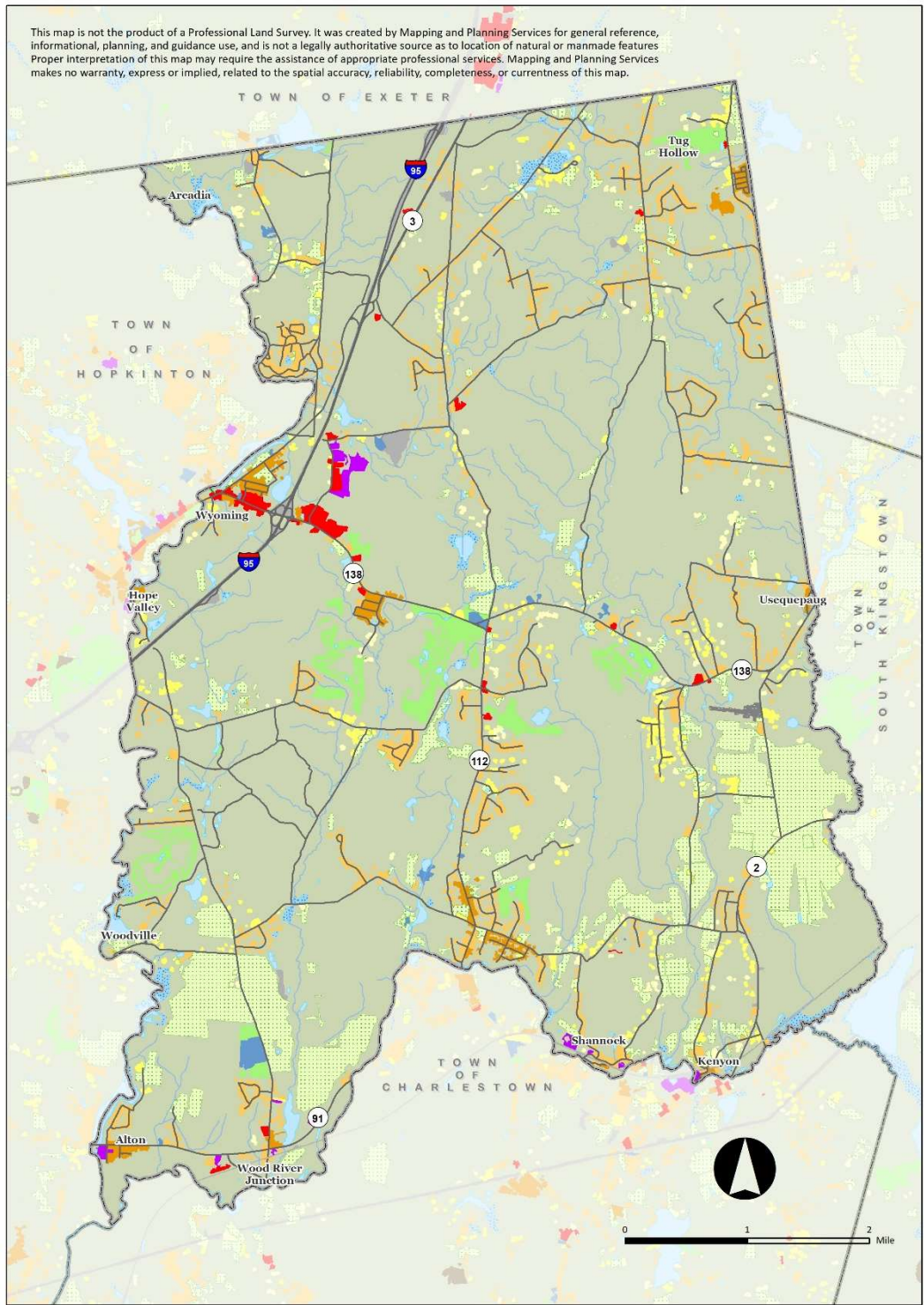
## RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021

Map 11 - Indicator of Potential Suitable Areas  
for Affordable Housing

Data sources: Richmond GIS and RIGIS

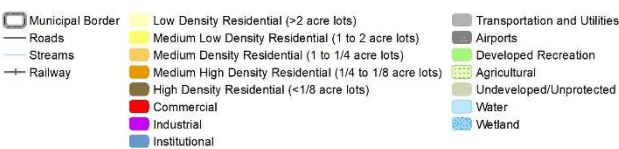
This map is not the product of a Professional Land Survey. It was created by Mapping and Planning Services for general reference, informational, planning, and guidance use, and is not a legally authoritative source as to location of natural or manmade features. Proper interpretation of this map may require 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**

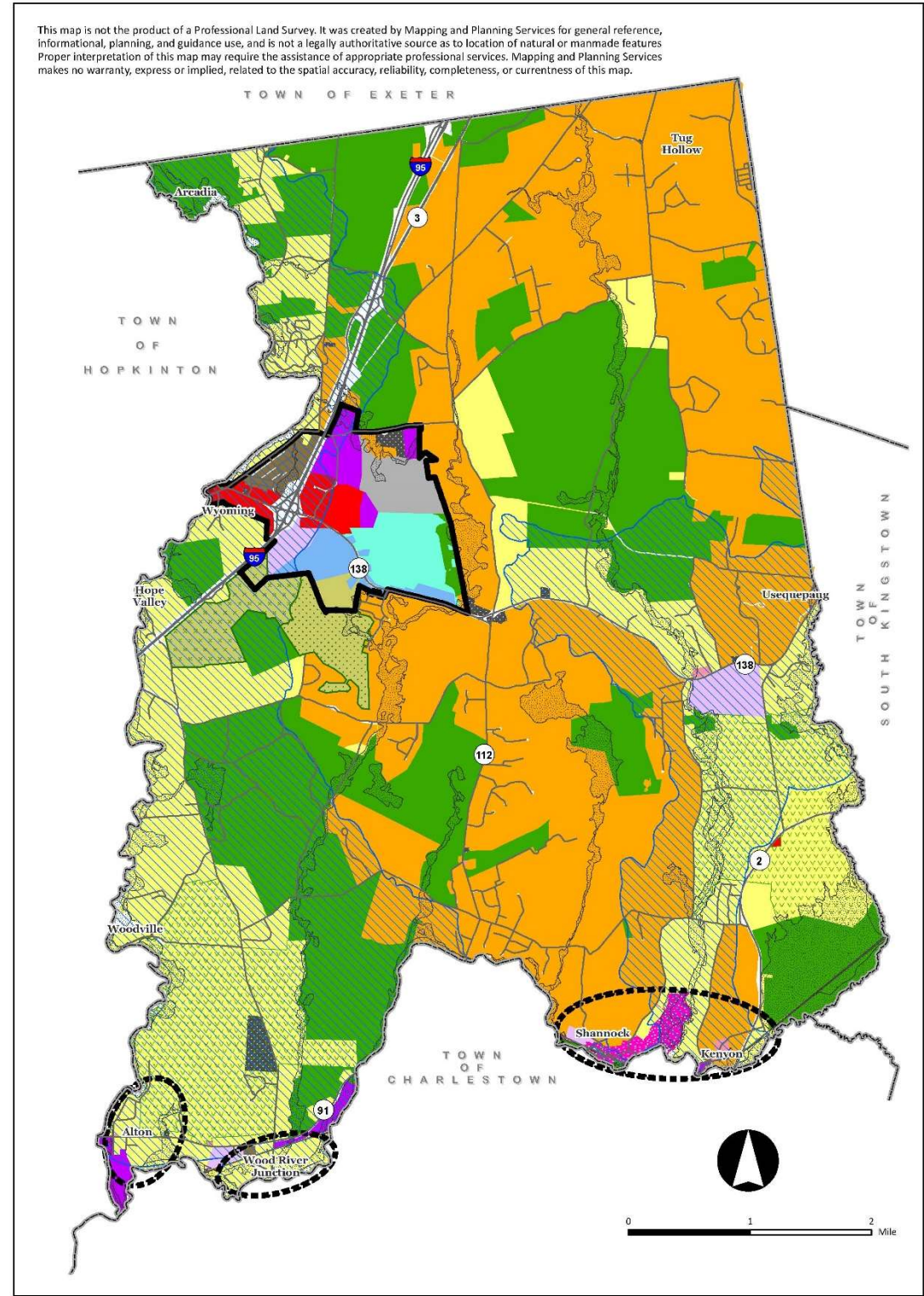
Map 12 - Land Use/Land Cover (2011)



Data sources: Richmond GIS and RIGIS

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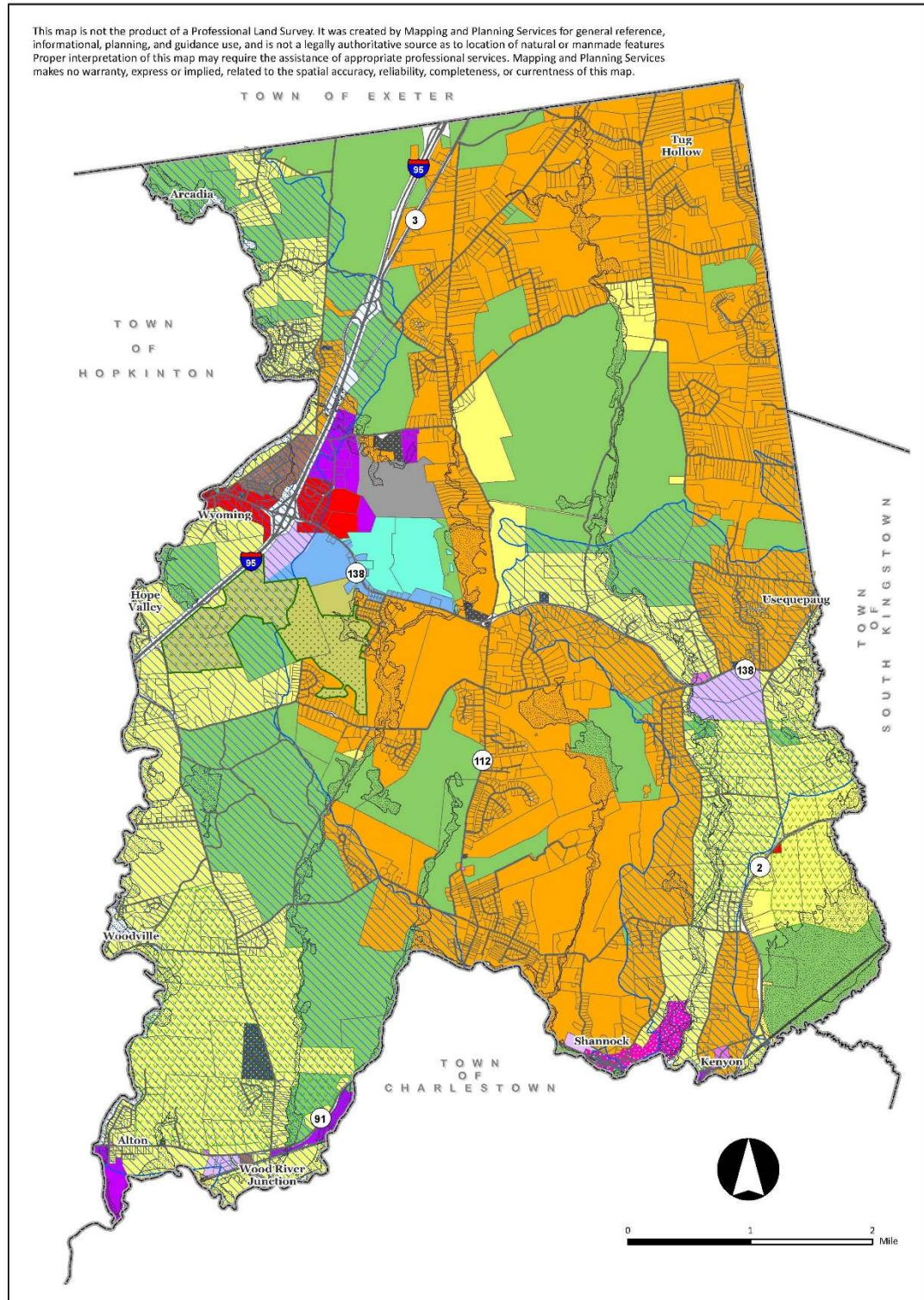


**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

Map 13 - Future Land Use Plan







## RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021

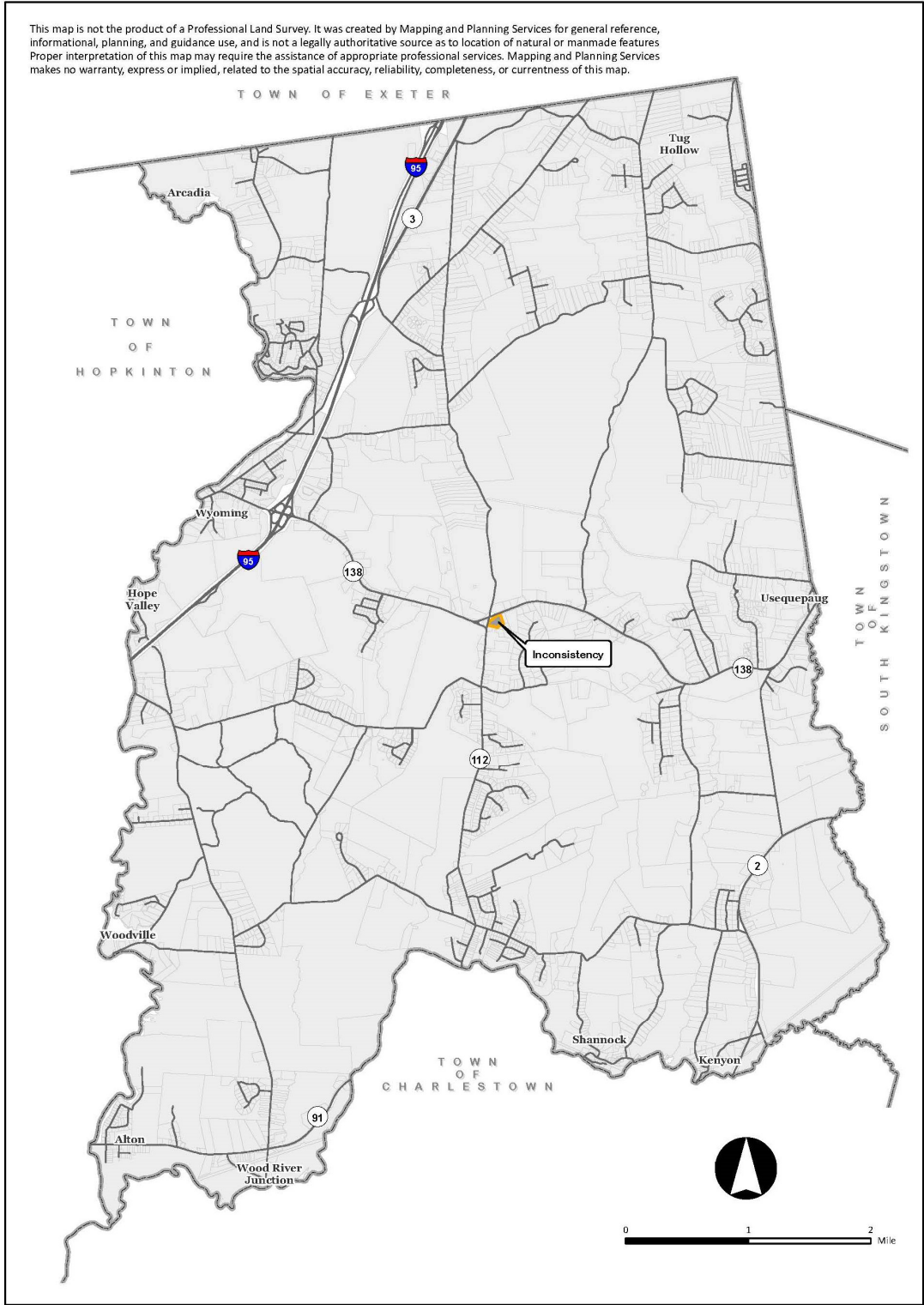
**Map 14 - Existing Zoning**  
includes amendments through July 20, 2021

Municipal	Agriculture Overlay District	R-1 : Residential, 1 acre minimum	PDR : Planned Development Resort
Parcel	Aquifer Overlay	R-2 : Residential, 2 acre minimum	I : Industrial
Railway	Flood Overlay District	R-3 : Residential, 3 acre minimum	LI : Light Industrial
	Resort Area overlays	GB : General Business	FT : Flex Tech
	Low Density Residential	NB : Neighborhood Business	PUDVC : Planned Unit Development - Village Center
	Medium Density Residential	SV : Shannock Village	PUB : Public and Governmental
		PD : Planned Development	COS : Conservation Open Space

Data sources: Richmond GIS, RIGIS

Note: The new Flood Overlay District (approved 3/17/2020) and the Zoning Map Amendment (approved 7/20/2021) are delineated.

MH 8/2021



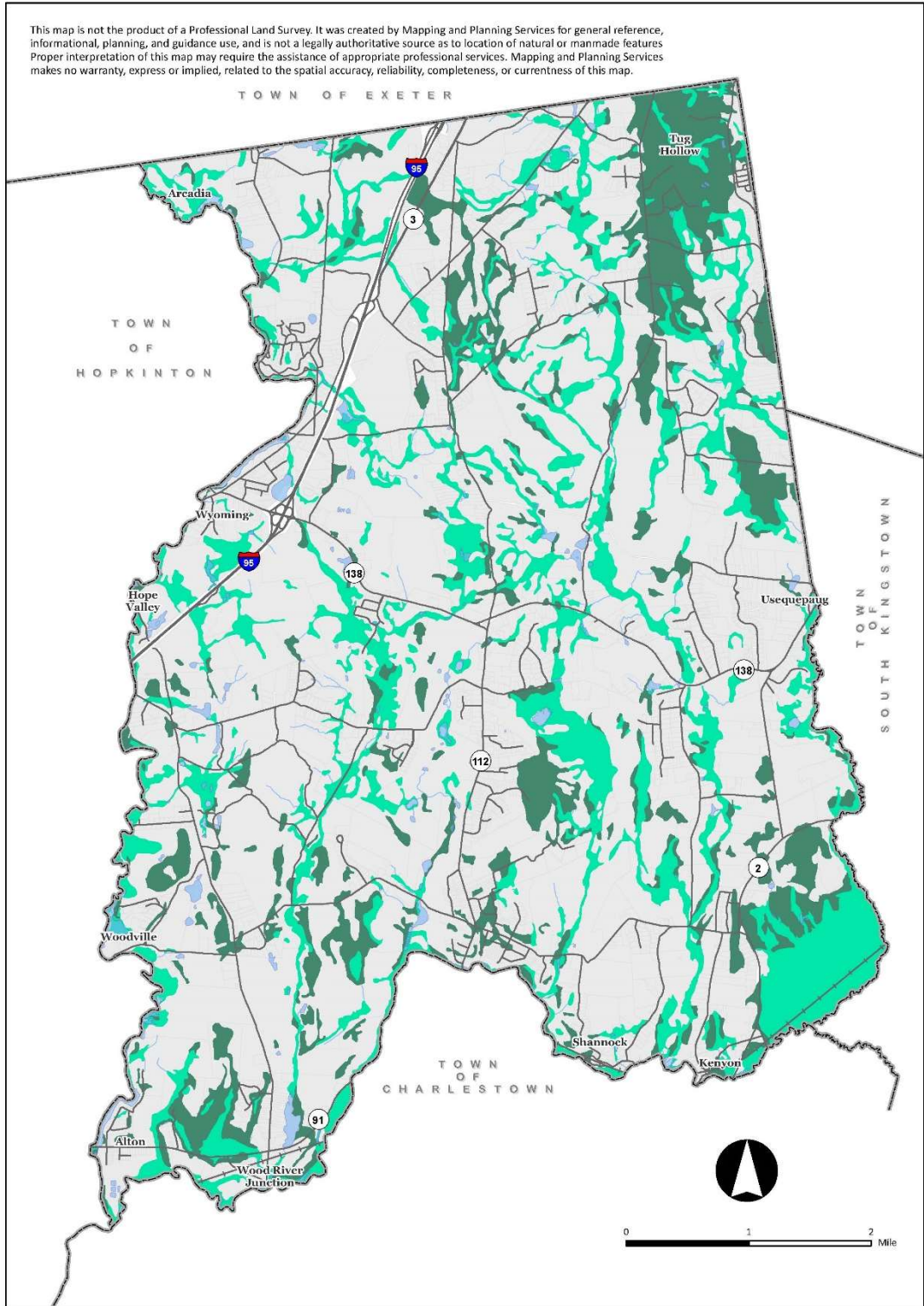
**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

Map 15 - Inconsistencies  
between Future Land Use Map  
and Existing Zoning (last amendment 7/20/2021)

- Municipal Border
- Roads
- Railway
- Parcel Lines
- Inconsistency
  - Public and Governmental / R-2

Data sources: Richmond GIS, RIGIS  
Note: See Chapter 8 Land Use for further details.



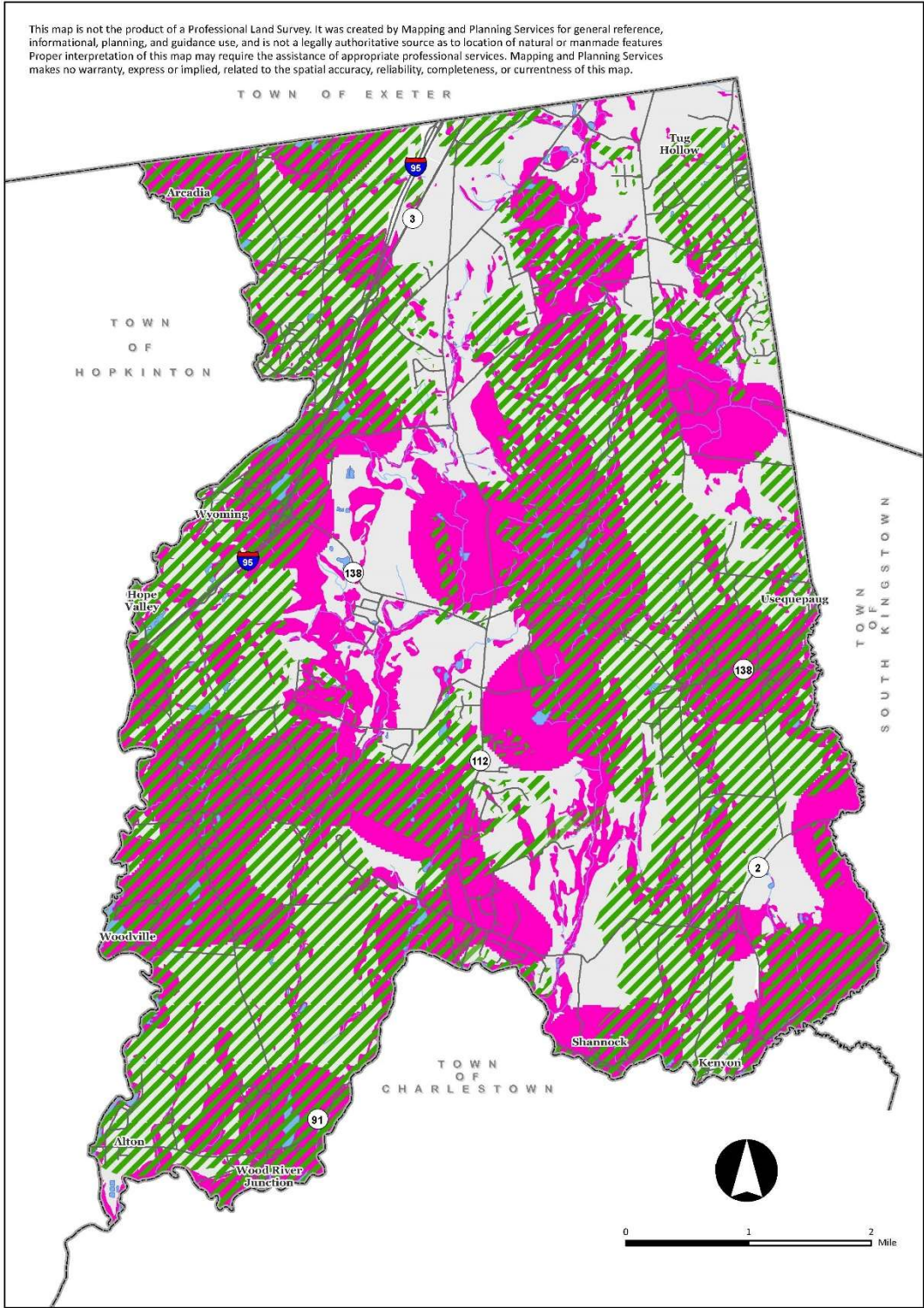


**RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2021**

Map 16 - 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 17 - Composite of Constraints



Data sources: Richmond GIS, RIGIS and RIDEM

Note: Limited Development Areas include Groundwater Recharge Areas, Community Wellhead Protection Areas, Conservation and Protected Lands, Cemeteries and Historic and Cultural Resources.

Physically Constrained Areas include Steep Slope and Bedrock, Wetlands, Natural Heritage Areas and Land Subject to Flooding (Special Flood Hazards Areas).

MH 8/2021



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## **Appendix C: Recreation and Open Space Inventory**

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# Appendix C: Open Space and Recreation Inventory

## Property Owned by the State Department of Environmental Management

1. Arcadia Management Area	<p>AP 1A/50, AP 1A/50-1, AP 1C/51-6, AP 1C/51-7, AP 1C 51-8, AP 1C/51-9, AP 2A/1, AP 2A/2-1, AP 2B/26, AP 2B/27, AP 2B/50, AP 2B/50-3, AP 3B/50, AP 3B 50-3, AP 3B/50, AP 3B/50-1, AP 3B/50-2, AP 3C 50-1.</p> <p>This 15,543-acre management area extends from northern Richmond into Hopkinton, Exeter, and West Greenwich. About 1,032 acres of the management area in Richmond. The area is largely forested and has a number of hiking trails. It encompasses the area sometimes referred to as Dawley State Park.</p>
2. Carolina Management Area	<p>AP 7B/4-6, AP 7B 50-1, AP 7B/52-2, AP 7C/17, AP 8B/52-10, AP 8C/1-2, AP 8C/3, AP 9C/44, AP 10B/7, AP 10B/9.</p> <p>This 2,325-acre management area includes the Carolina Trout Hatchery and the area formerly known as Hannah Brown management area. The federal government owns large parcels of adjacent land.</p>
3. de Coppet Forest Preserve	<p>AP 3D/11, AP 4D/1, AP 4D/4, AP 4E/1, AP 5D/5, AP 5D/6, AP 5E/2.</p> <p>This 1,825-acre preserve in Hillsdale was conveyed to DEM by the estate of the late Theakston de Coppet, who intended it to remain undeveloped and to be used as "a forest reservation and sanctuary for the scientific care, study and preservation of all desirable plant and animal life within its limits."</p>
4. Great Swamp Management Area	<p>AP 9F/2, AP 9F/3, AP 9F/4, AP 10E/27.</p> <p>The Great Swamp Management Area is a 3,593-acre area located primarily in South Kingstown. A small portion of it, about 428 acres, is located in Kenyon.</p>
5. Grassy Pond Preserve	<p>AP 7D/9; off of Beaver River Road.</p> <p>DEM acquired this 245-acre parcel in 2012.</p>

6. Pawcatuck River Boat Launch	A small canoe and boat launch area on the bank of the Pawcatuck River on Route 91 near Wood River Junction.
7. Wyoming Pond Boat Launch	A 1.3-acre fishing area and small boat launching facility on Wyoming Pond, which is on the Wood River. It is located on Bridge Street, off of Nooseneck Hill Road (Route 3).
8. Mechanic Street Dam	AP 5A/22, AP5A/23, AP 5A/36; 2.54 acres. This access to the Wood River is located off North Switch Road in Hope Valley near an old mill.
9. Biscuit City Landing	An access to the Pawcatuck River on Biscuit City Road in Kenyon.
10. Beaver River Grove	Intersection of Kingstown Road (Rt. 138) and Beaver River Road; part of the state highway right-of-way. A pleasant grove and fishing area on the west bank of the Beaver River. There is parking available for several cars.
11. Beaver River Fishing Access	AP 9E/24A; 3.09 acres. Fishing access to the Beaver River on its east bank immediately south of Shannock Hill Road. There is no sign and no parking. The physical access is overgrown.

## Property Owned by the Town of Richmond

12. Richmond Elementary School	AP 6C/15; 10.17 acres.  Richmond is part of the Chariho Regional School District. The Town owns this school building; the district uses and maintains it. The site includes recreational facilities, including a ball field.
13. Beaver River Playground	AP 7E/20; 19.34 acres.  Playground and open space on Beaver River Road.
14. Thousand Oaks open space	AP 4E/2.  A 10.80-acre lot conveyed to the Town by the subdivision developer to be preserved as open space.
15. Switch and Pine Hill Road	AP 9B/7; 0.6 acres
16. New London Turnpike	AP 3C/3; 2.0 acres.  Landlocked wetlands.
17. Buttonwoods Road	AP 4C/26; 10.43 acres.  The former Town landfill, now used as a dog park.

18. Pinehurst and Richmond Townhouse Roads	AP 8C/43; 1.4 acres. An undeveloped lot opposite Clark Memorial Library.
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## Property Owned by the Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust

19. Stetson Preserve	AP 2D/3-33, AP 2D 33-4, AP 2D 33-5; 6.16 acres on New London Turnpike.
20. Chan Preserve	AP 3D/14; 112.77 acres on Old Mountain Trail.
21. Salla Preserve	AP 6B/1; 112 acres off of Chelsea Farm Drive.
22. Kenyon Preserve	AP 5E/8; 62.26 acres on Punch Bowl Trail.
23. Crawley Preserve	AP 5F/23; 84.30 acres on Glen Rock Road.
24. Bradner Preserve	AP 2E/13; 63.02 acres on Hoxsie Road.
25. Scudder Preserve	AP 8C/52; 65.59 acres on Richmond Townhouse Road.
26. Oviatt property	AP 3E/7. The Land Trust holds a conservation easement on 47.27 acres of this property located on Hillsdale Road.

## Property Owned by the Chariho Regional School District

27. Chariho Regional School District Campus	AP 10B/2. The 52-acre campus includes the high school, middle school, Chariho Tech, and the Chariho Alternative Learning Academy. Includes recreational facilities.
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## Property Owned by The Nature Conservancy

28. Hillsdale Road	AP 2D/15; 55.00 acres
29. Kingstown Road	AP 6D/15-7; 11.02 acres
30. Old Mountain Trail	AP 2D/7; 159.00 acres
31. Wilbur Hill Road (off)	AP 7D/8; 47.10 acres
32. Wilbur Hill Road	AP 6D/31; 5.00 acres
33. Wilbur Hill Road	AP 6D/32; 9.6 acres
34. Hillsdale Road	AP 3E/8; 27.63 acres

35. Wilbur Hill Road	AP 6D/30; 34.64 acres
36. Kingstown Road	AP 6D/15; 11.43 acres
37. Wilbur Hill Road	AP 6D/14; 29.79 acres
38. Wilbur Hill Road	AP 6D/14-1; 38.50 acres
39. Kingstown Road	AP 6D/12-3; 13.32 acres

## Property Owned by the Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association

40. Church Street	AP 10B/10-1; 3.00 acres
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## Property Owned by the Audubon Society of Rhode Island

41. 251 Arcadia Road	AP 2B/19; 12.69 acres
42. Cherry Lane	AP 2B/29-5; 2.07 acres
43. Cherry Lane	AP 2B/ 29-8; 2.80 acres
44. Old Mountain Trail	L AP 3D/4; 3.50 acres
45. K G Ranch Road	AP 2B/22; 49.50 acres
46. K G Ranch Road	AP 2B/28-15; 2.24 acres
47. K G Ranch Road	AP 2B/29-9; 2.05 acres
48. Biscuit City Road	AP 10E/24; 14.40 acres
49. White Oak Drive	AP 2D/5; 14.60 acres
50. Wood River Drive	AP 3B/4-4; 0.34 acres

## Privately-owned Open Space and Recreational Facilities

### Recreational Facilities

51. Meadow Brook Golf Course	AP 6C/9, 9-3 & 9-4 An 18-hole golf course and clubhouse on 92 acres.
52. Washington County Fairgrounds	AP 7D/7; 115.7 acres The Washington County Pomona Grange owns and operates this fairground, site of the annual Washington County Fair.
53. Wawaloam Reservation	AP 1E, Lots 10-5, 17, 19-22; 93.44 acres

	Wawaloam Campground has 310 parking sites for recreational vehicles, a miniature golf course, and other facilities.
54. Richmond Country Club	AP 8A, Lot 2 An 18-hole golf course and clubhouse on 205 acres.
55. Pinecrest Golf Club	AP 8D/2 A 9-hole golf course and clubhouse on 41.02 acres.
56. Beaver River Golf Club	AP 6E/38-1 An 18-hole golf course on 93.85 acres.

### Open Space in Residential Subdivisions

57. Whitetail Cluster	AP 6D/7, 20.93 acres
58. Camelot Estates 1	AP 3E/21-1A, 8.36 acres; AP 3E/21-1B, 14.97 acres
59. Camelot Estates 2	AP 3E/12-2, 49.44 acres
60. Camelot Estates 3	AP 3E/12-3A, 6.01 acres; AP 3E/12-3B, 27.59 acres
61. Marie Estates	AP 2C/10, 6.80 acres
62. Beaver River Estates	AP 6E/38-7, 11.88 acres
63. 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
64. Knotty Pine	AP 8A/3, 9.44 acres; AP 9A/24, 0.44 acres
65. Richmond Hills II	AP 7E/31-43, 2.26 acres; AP 7E/31-44, 2.57 acres; AP 7E/31-45, 5.72 acres
66. Cedar Hills	AP 7C/18, 34.14 acres
67. Castle Ridge	AP 8C/60-2; 7.10 acres
68. Classic Acres	AP 6E/ 44; 14.12 acres
69. Fox Ridge Estates	AP 3D/17; 10.77 acres
70. Fairside Farms	AP 7C/12-A, 1.80 acres; AP 7C/12-B, 0.57 acres; AP 7C/12-C, 10.20 acres; AP 7C/12-D, 3.10 acres
71. Hillcrest Estates	AP 2E/5, 48.30 acres
72. Pine Glen	AP 6E/40, 4.70 acres
73. Sand Pines	AP 10B/45-A, 76.77 acres; AP 10B/45-B, 1.16 acres; AP 10B/45-C, 1.12 acres
74. Rising Trout	AP 6A/20, 9.42 acres
75. Greenbrier Estates	AP 6E/22, 22.17 acres



<b>76. Oak Cluster</b>	AP 3C/6, 38.90 acres
<b>77. Oakhill Estates</b>	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
<b>78. Pond View Estates</b>	AP 6D/12-1, 21.89 acres
<b>79. Shannock Heights III</b>	AP 9D/43, 13.50 acres
<b>80. Castle Ridge II</b>	AP 7C/2-60, 1.81 acres; AP 7C/2-61, 2.10 acres
<b>81. County Fair Estates</b>	AP 7C/39, 21.82 acres
<b>82. Bass Rock</b>	AP 9D/42, 16.40 acres
<b>83. William Reynolds Farm</b>	AP 1D/18, 25.63 acres

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## Appendix D

# Historic & Cultural Resources Inventory

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# Appendix 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**

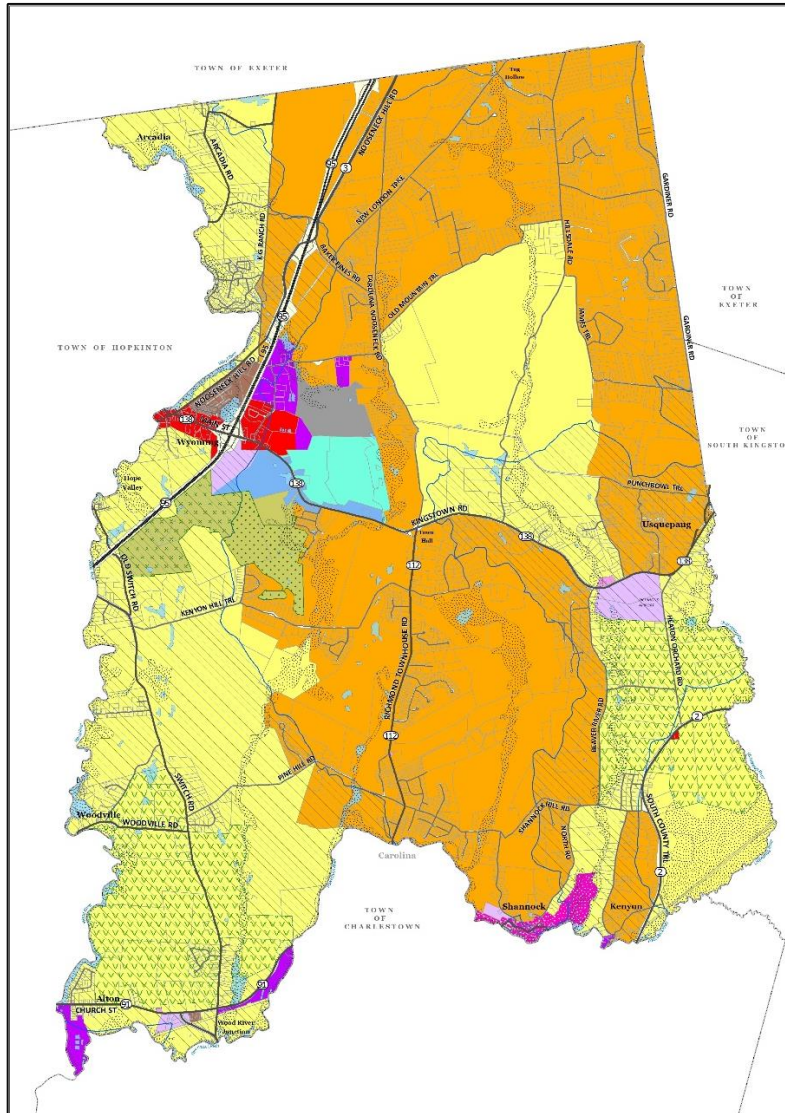
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# Town of Richmond

## Buildout Analysis 2018

In support of Comprehensive Plan Update



February 26, 2019

**FINAL DRAFT**



MAPPING AND PLANNING SERVICES  
PLANNING ~ GIS ~ CARTOGRAPHY

## Table of Contents

I.	Introduction . . . . .	1
II.	Methodology . . . . .	1
III.	Assumptions . . . . .	1
IV.	Buildout Results . . . . .	4
V.	Comparison with the 2004 Buildout Analysis . . . . .	5
VI.	Development of Privately-owned Golf Courses . . . . .	5

## List of Tables

Table 1.	Projected Lots at Buildout by Zoning District, Richmond, 2018 . . . . .	7
Table 2.	Projected Single-Family Dwelling Units by Zoning District, Richmond, 2018 . . . .	8
Table 3.	Comparison of Existing Units and Projections, Richmond, 2018 . . . . .	4
Table 4.	Comparison of Richmond Buildout Analysis 2018 to Richmond Buildout Analysis 2004 . . . . .	5
Table 5.	Projected SF Dwelling Units on Privately-owned Golf Courses . . . . .	6

## List of Figures

*(all Figures follow page 9)*

Figure 1.	Existing Zoning Map
Figure 2.	Land Unsuitable for Development
Figure 3.	Areas Excluded from Buildout Analysis
Figure 4.	Land Suitable for Development by Zoning District
Figure 5.	Distribution of All Existing Dwelling Units
Figure 6.	Projected Distribution of Dwelling Units at Buildout under Existing Zoning

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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
<b>Total</b>		<b>24,903</b>	<b>10,275</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>3,545</b>	<b>2,150</b>	<b>5,524</b>

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 DUs <sup>1</sup>	Projected Additional SF DUs	Projected Inclusionary DUs	Total DUs at Buildout	Increase in DUs 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 (DU per acre)	0	15	3	18	8,200
PDR (DU per acre) <sup>2</sup>	1	56	8	65	
PUD-VC (Richmond Commons)	3 <sup>5</sup>	0 <sup>3</sup>	n/a	0 <sup>3</sup>	367
PUD-VC (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
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>2,955</b>	<b>2,472</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>5,744</b>	<b>94</b>
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 accessory dwelling units not included.

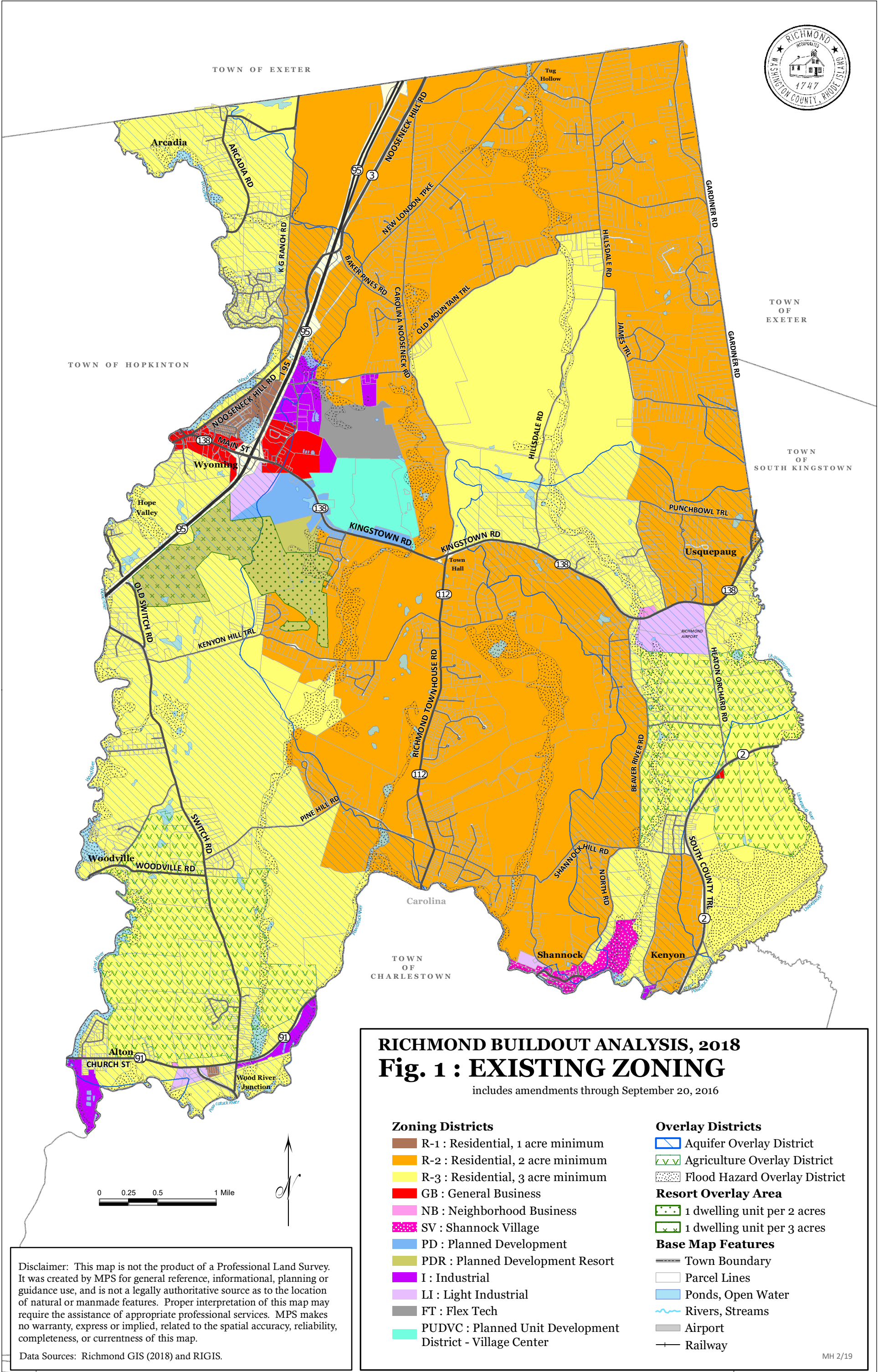
<sup>2</sup> Includes single-family dwellings allowed as-of-right.

<sup>3</sup> The approved Richmond Commons mixed-use development has 399 two-family buildings, but no single-family housing is part of this project.

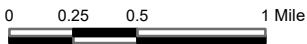
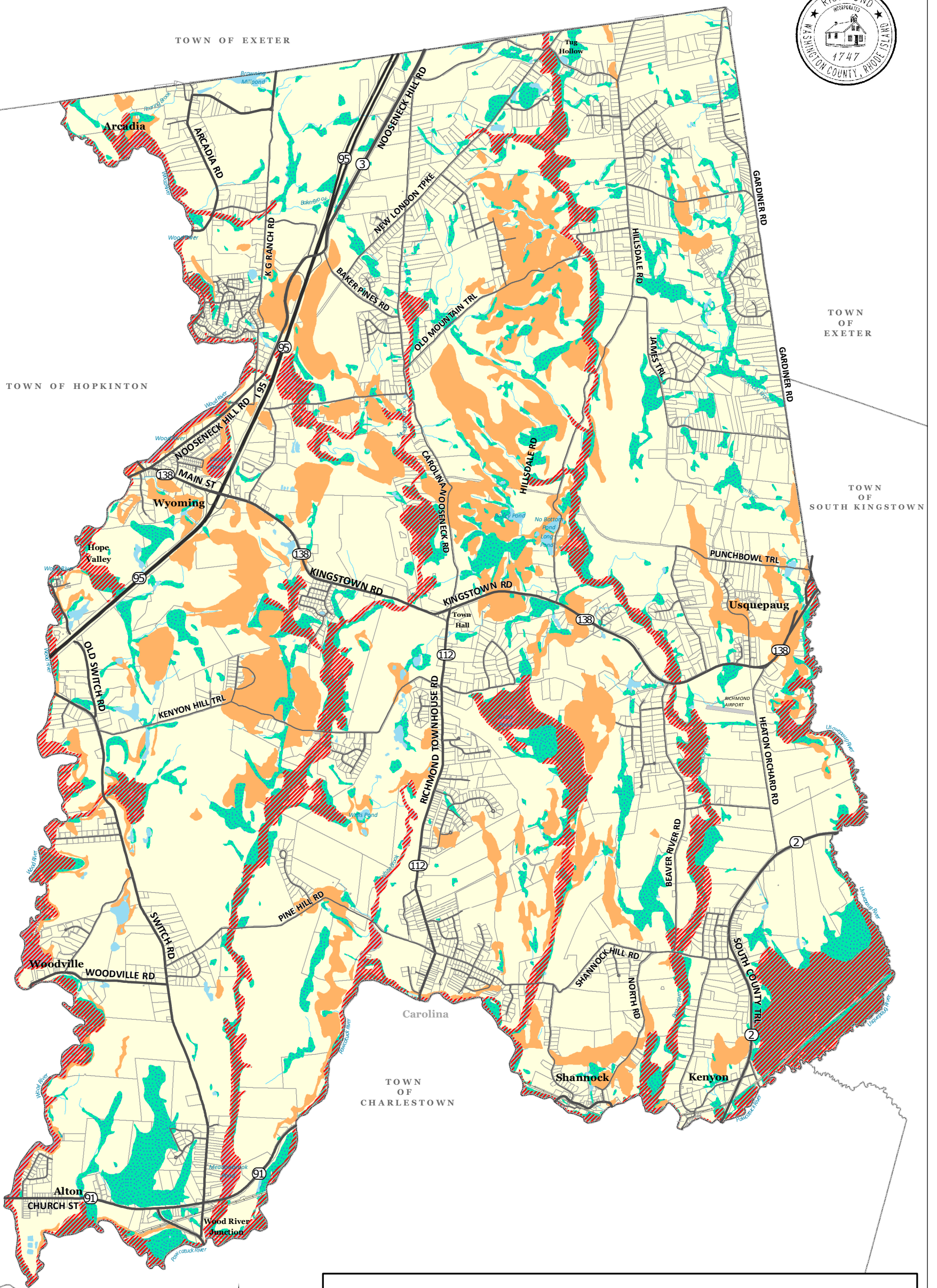
<sup>4</sup> 05B/066-000 is a 5-acre frontage lot on Kingstown Road.

<sup>5</sup> There are three residential buildings on 05B/065-000.









**RICHMOND BUILDOUT ANALYSIS, 2018**  
**Fig. 2 : LAND UNSUITABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT**

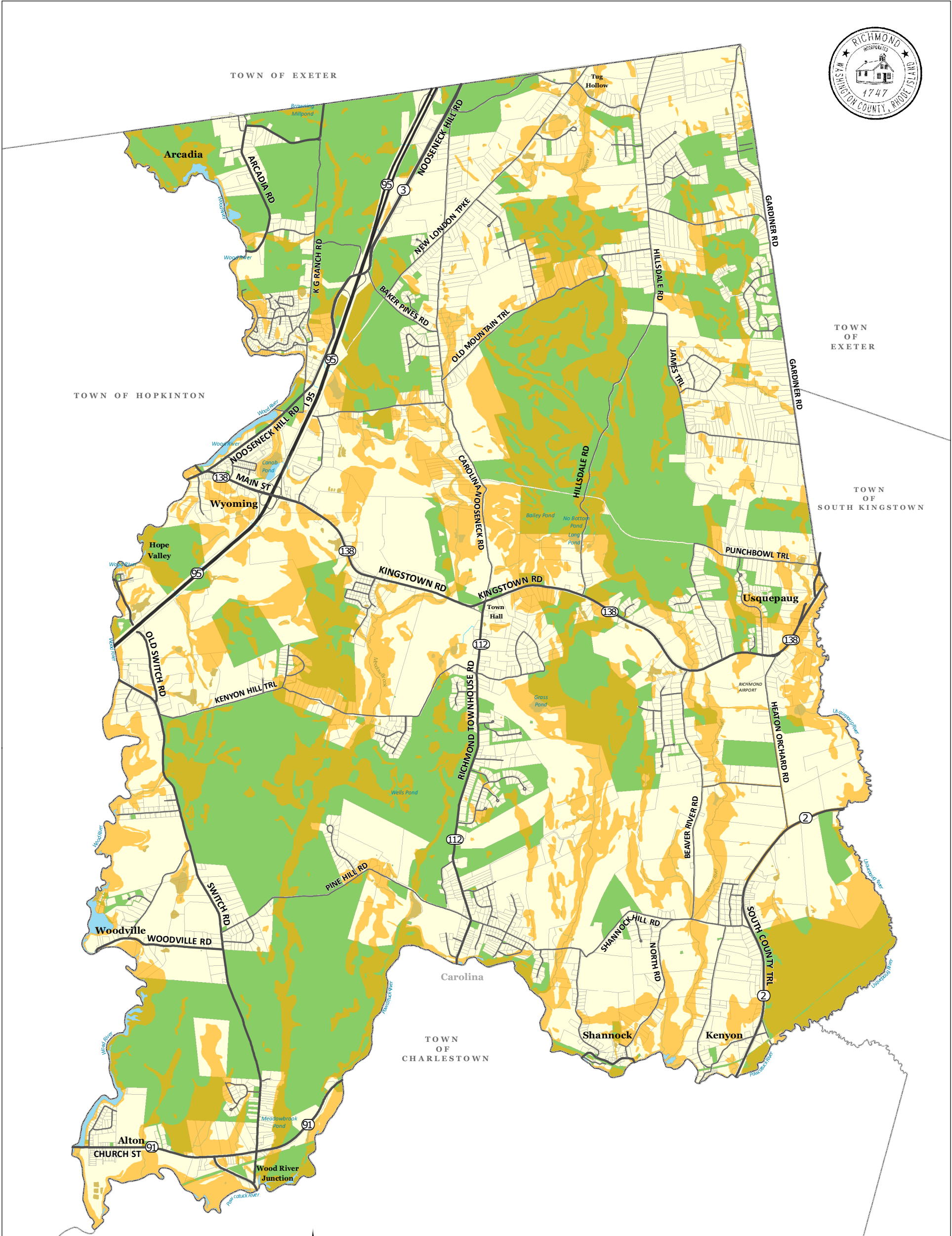
- Areas Unsuitable for Development**
- Flood Hazard Areas
  - Wetlands
  - Soils (ledge, rock outcrops, poorly filtered, large stones)
  - Ponds, Open Water
  - Rivers, Streams

- 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**

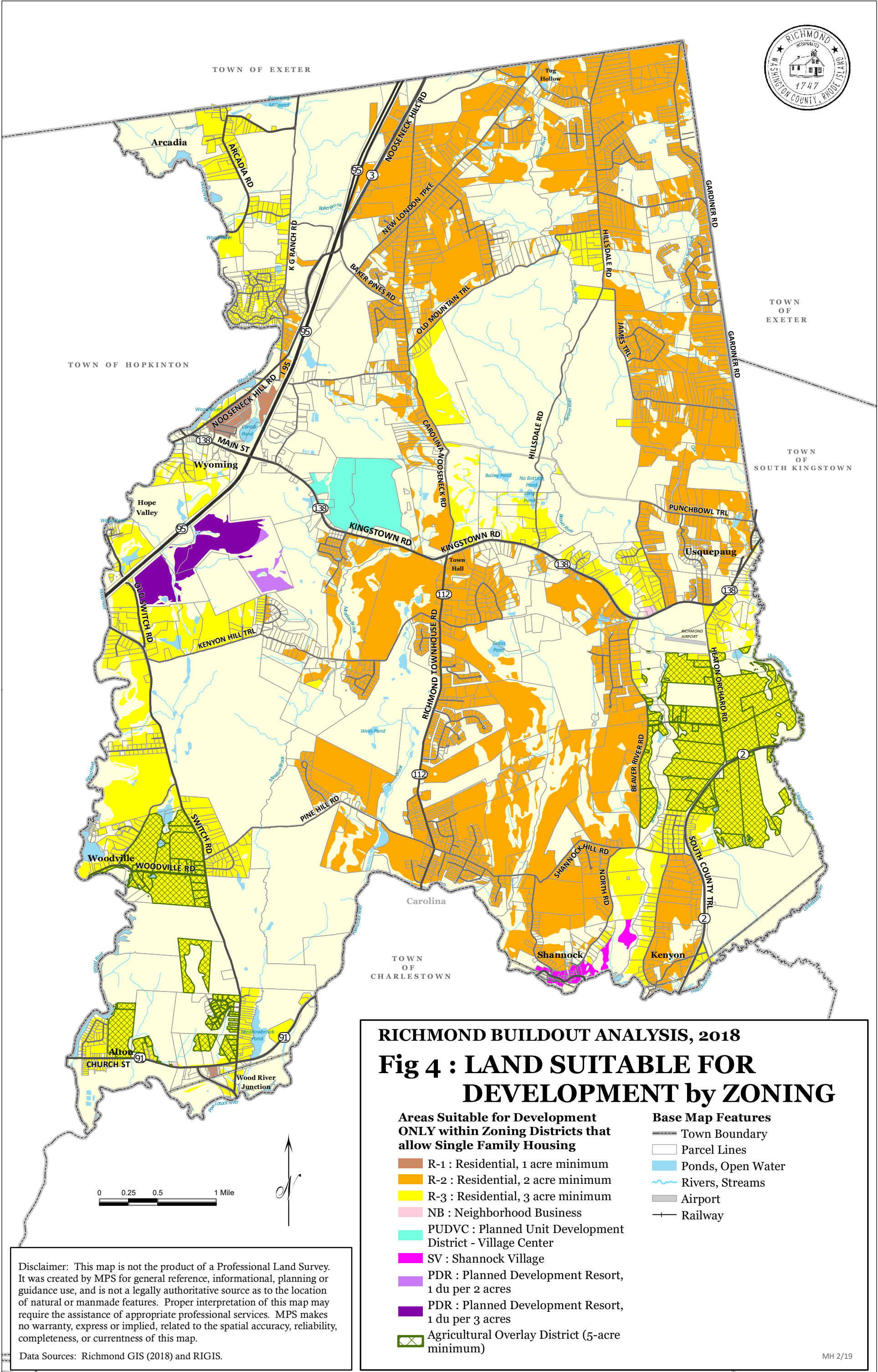
- Land Unsuitable for Development**  
flood, wetlands, soils, etc.
- Areas Excluded from Buildout Analysis**  
Existing Open Space Areas and other Public and Private Properties

- Base Map Features**  
Town Boundary  
Parcel Lines  
Ponds, Open Water  
Rivers, Streams  
Airport  
Railway

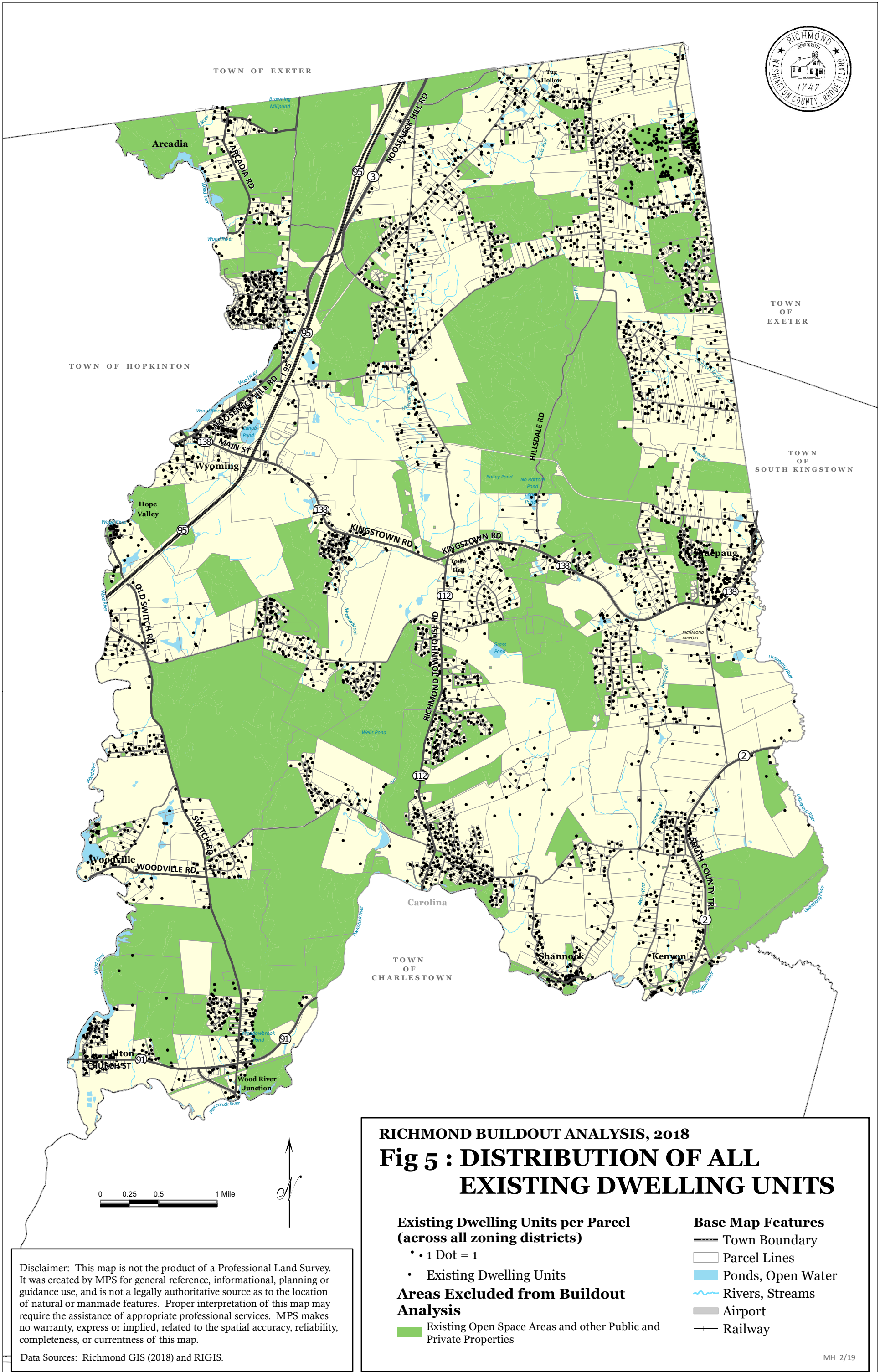
Disclaimer: This map is not the product of a Professional Land Survey. It was created by MPS for general reference, informational, planning or guidance use, and is not a legally authoritative source as to the location of natural or manmade features. Proper interpretation of this map may require the assistance 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.

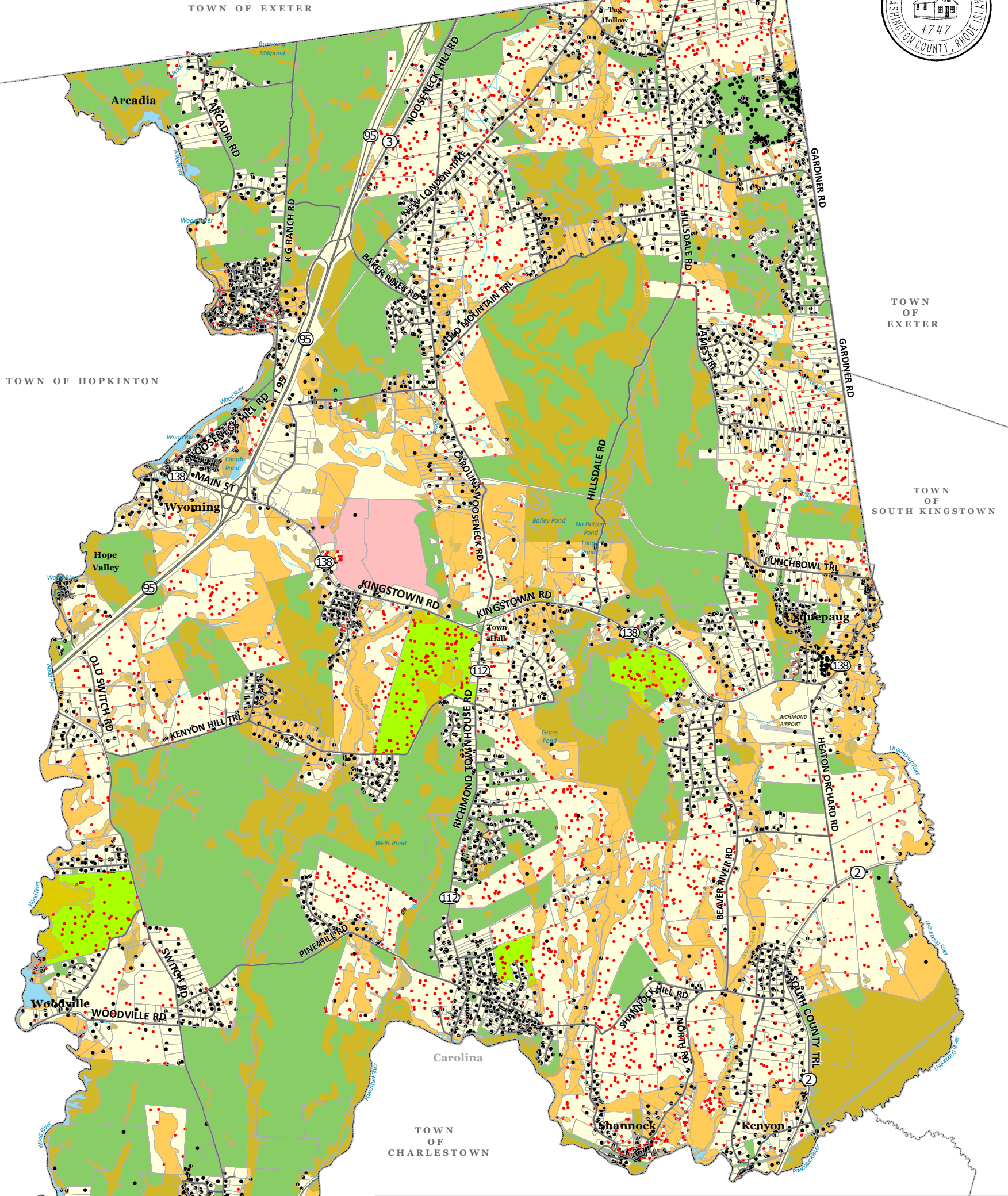












## RICHMOND BUILDOUT ANALYSIS, 2018

### Fig 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

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.

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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## Appendix G

### Affordable Housing Committee





# Appendix G: Richmond Affordable Housing Committee – Regulations

The Richmond Affordable Housing Committee (“the Committee”) is responsible for making recommendations to the Town Council concerning the allocation and award of money in the affordable housing fund established by Ch. 3.08 of the Code of Ordinances, and for making recommendation to the Town Council concerning the use of town property for production of low or moderate income housing. These regulations establish guidelines for how recommendations are made.

## ***A. Conditions applicable to use of fees in lieu of construction of inclusionary housing***

The following conditions apply to the allocation and expenditure of fees paid in lieu of construction of low or moderate income housing pursuant to Ch. 18.18 of the zoning ordinance:

1. The funds must be allocated or awarded for a specific project with two years of the date the funds were received.
2. The funds must be used for production of housing for families with household incomes of 80% or less of the area median income.

## ***B. Eligibility for cash awards***

1. Nonprofit community development corporations, nonprofit housing development organizations, for-profit housing developers, and owners of property where low and moderate income housing units will be constructed are eligible to apply for monetary awards for the production of low or moderate income housing. The funds may be used for construction of new low or moderate income housing or renovation or rehabilitation of existing structures that will be occupied by low or moderate income families.
2. Nonprofit community development corporations and nonprofit housing development organizations also are eligible to apply for awards to cover predevelopment costs including, but not limited to, appraisals, architectural, engineering, and legal services, environmental site assessments, and fees to engage certified monitoring agents.

***C. Applications for monetary awards***

1. Developers of residential land development projects shall submit to the Planning Department four additional copies of all the application materials required by Article 15 of the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations.
2. Applicants who are building or renovating one single-family or one two-family house shall submit to the Planning Department six copies of the complete building permit application, including site plan, and a narrative explaining the scope of the project and the need for financial assistance. The Committee may request additional information.
3. Applications may be made to the Planning Department at any time before or during the permitting and construction period. Applications must be received no later than six months after a certificate of use and occupancy has been issued for every dwelling unit.

***D. Evaluation of applications for monetary awards***

1. When making a recommendation to the Town Council for allocation of money from the affordable housing fund, the Committee shall consider the following criteria:
  - a) The extent to which the project is consistent with the goals and objectives of the housing element of the Comprehensive Community Plan.
  - b) The number of low or moderate income dwelling units that will be produced in relation to the amount of money requested.
  - c) Whether the project has applied for, or has received, a subsidy from any other source, and if so, whether eligibility for that subsidy depends on receipt of money from the affordable housing fund.
  - d) If the project has not yet been approved, the anticipated date of final approval.
  - e) Whether other applications for funding are pending, and if so, whether the competing projects would make better use of the money in the fund.
  - f) Any other specific factors that the Committee considers relevant.
2. The Committee's recommendation to the Town Council shall be in writing and shall include a description of the project and the reasons why the recommendation is being made.

***E. Receipt of monetary awards***

1. All monetary awards shall be in the form of reimbursement for eligible expenses incurred.
2. To receive a monetary award, a successful applicant must submit to the Planning Department:
  - a) A certificate of use and occupancy for every dwelling unit.
  - b) Copies of sale or rental affordability restrictions recorded in the Richmond land evidence records for each dwelling unit. The affordability shall be guaranteed for at least 99 years from the date of initial occupancy.
  - c) Itemized invoices for all expenses for which reimbursement is sought.

***F. Use of real property donated or acquired for the production of low or moderate income housing***

1. If real property is donated to the town for the production of low or moderate income housing, or if the town acquires real property for the purpose of increasing the number of low or moderate income dwelling units, the committee shall make a written recommendation to the Town Council concerning use of the property. The committee should make such a recommendation within one year of the date the property was conveyed to the town.
2. The committee may request proposals for use of the property from nonprofit entities who intend to construct residential developments in which all the dwelling units will be reserved for occupancy by low or moderate income household for at least 99 years from the date of initial occupancy.
3. When making a recommendation to the Town Council concerning conveyance of real property to a nonprofit entity, the committee shall consider the following criteria:
  - a) The extent to which the project is consistent with the goals and objectives of the housing element of the Comprehensive Community Plan.
  - b) Whether the applicant has obtained or expects to obtain a subsidy for construction of the low or moderate income dwelling units and if so, whether eligibility for that subsidy depends on the conveyance of the real property to the applicant.
4. If neither the town nor any nonprofit entity proposes a viable plan for construction of low or moderate income housing on the property, the Committee may recommend to the Town Council that the property be sold and the proceeds deposited in the affordable housing fund.

***G. Conveyance of real property to nonprofit entities***

If the Town Council votes to convey real property to a nonprofit entity for the production of low or moderate income housing, the town should enter into a purchase and sale agreement with the nonprofit entity that includes the specific conditions under which the property is being conveyed. The conditions must remain enforceable after conveyance of a deed. The Committee may recommend specific conditions that should apply to each such conveyance.

Date of Adoption: September 20, 2021

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## Appendix H: Implementation Plan

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# Appendix H: Implementation Plan

Elements 2 through 8 of this plan includes sections called Goals, Policies and Actions that articulate the community's goals and policies and proposes actions to be taken to implement those goals and policies. Each action includes a timeframe in which the action should be completed and the officials responsible for implementation. Four timeframes are used:

- › Short-term – One to five years.
- › Mid-term – Six to ten years.
- › Long-term – Ten to twenty years.
- › Ongoing – Action should be initiated within a year and continue as needed to achieve the goal.

## Element 2 – Open Space and Recreation

### Goals, Policies, and Actions

**Goal OSR 1: Provide residents of all ages with adequate recreational and open space opportunities.**

**Policy OSR 1:** Focus Town recreation efforts on priority projects in order to maximize resources and to increase recreational facilities.

**Action OSR 1:** Recruit and appoint members to the Recreation Commission and provide the commission with staff assistance to carry out their responsibilities.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

*Responsibility:* Town Council, Town Administrator

**Action OSR 2:** Adopt a five-year capital improvement budget to enable development and maintenance of new recreation facilities.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

*Responsibility:* Recreation Commission Town Administrator Finance Department Finance Board, Town Council

**Action OSR 2:** Adopt a five-year capital improvement budget to enable development and maintenance of new recreation facilities.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

*Responsibility:* Recreation Commission Town Administrator Finance Department Finance Board, Town Council

**Action OSR 3:** Develop a new dog park on Town-owned land adjacent to the Heritage Trail.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

*Responsibility:* Dog Park Committee, Town Administrator, Finance Department, Town Council

**Policy OSR 2:** Coordinate recreation planning with surrounding communities to increase opportunities for local residents and to maximize efficient use of these facilities.

**Action OSR 4:** Work to continue and expand regional Chariho programs.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

*Responsibility:* Recreation Commission

**Action OSR 5:** Establish a plan for a network of biking and hiking trails throughout Richmond connected with adjacent communities.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

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

**Policy OSR 3:** Increase public access opportunities to natural areas, including water bodies, river and stream corridors, and hiking trails.

**Action OSR 6:** Identify and map existing trails (including the North/South Trail) open to public use on property owned by the Land Trust, Audubon Society of Rhode Island, The Nature Conservancy, and other organizations.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

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

**Action OSR 7:** 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 OSR 4:** Encourage the development of an interconnected network of natural areas, protected open space, and recreation land in Richmond and adjacent communities.

**Action OSR 8:** Encourage development proposals that will 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

**Action OSR 9:** Consider designation of scenic roadways 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 Department, Planning Board, Town Council

**Policy OSR 5:** Foster the preservation of existing, large tracts of forests and open space.

**Action OSR 10:** Use conservation easements to create greenways connecting natural areas to other natural areas.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Land Trust

## Element 3 – Natural and Cultural Resources

### Goal NCR 1: Protect and enhance the Town’s Natural and Cultural Resources

**Policy NCR 1:** Limit the development of environmentally sensitive areas.

**Action NCR 1:** Determine appropriate uses for environmentally sensitive areas and develop land acquisition and management programs to protect them.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

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

**Action NCR 2:** Prioritize the acquisition and protection of the conservation opportunity areas identified on Map 6 in Appendix B.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Land Trust

**Policy NCR 2: Protect rare and unique natural resources.**

**Action NCR 3:** Monitor rare native plant and wildlife communities, determine compatible land uses and develop land acquisition and management programs.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

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

**Policy NCR 3: Protect the quality of the Town's surface and groundwater resources.**

**Action NCR 4:** Compare the location of the Aquifer Protection Overlay District with current GIS mapping to insure that all crucial areas are protected.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

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

**Action NCR 5:** Provide information to residents about prevention of bacterial pollution and the spread of aquatic invasive species.

*Timeframe:* Short-term and Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Conservation Commission

**Policy NCR 4: While protecting the Town's natural resources, encourage their use in a sustainable and environmentally sensitive way that promotes economic development opportunities.**

**Action NCR 6:** Develop strategies to promote the sustainable use of the Town's abundant local and state parks and other open spaces.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission, Planning Board

**Policy NCR 5: Encourage farming on land with prime agricultural soils.**

**Action NCR 7:** Develop new programs to assist the economic viability of agricultural operations.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission, Planning Board

**Policy NCR 6: Identify and protect scenic rural landscapes, vistas, and key cultural and historic resources.**

**Action NCR 8:** Adopt design guidelines for historic villages to protect historic and cultural resources and to maintain the unique aesthetic look of these places.

*Timeframe:* Long-term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board

**Policy NCR 7:** Develop a comprehensive strategy for protecting natural, historic and cultural features.

**Action NCR 9:** Maintain a list of potential conservation property that should be protected or acquired.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Department, Land Trust

**Action NCR 10:** Enact amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to establish mixed-use development standards appropriate for existing villages to promote the conservation of natural and cultural resources.

*Timeframe:* Short Term

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

## Element 4 – Economic Development

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

**Policy ED 1:** Support and enable the creation, growth, and success of home-based business enterprises.

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

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission

**Action ED 2:** Provide residents with links to state resources, regulations, and educational information about home-based businesses in Rhode Island.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission

**Policy ED 2:** Work with state and regional organizations to attract new industries and new economic development activity.

**Action ED 3:** Actively promote Richmond as a location to expand industry, either directly or with partners such as the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation or Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission

**Action ED 4:** Establish regular communication with the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation and other state agencies and departments that can assist in economic development

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission, Town Council

**Policy ED 3:** Invest in public infrastructure to support appropriate light industrial and commercial development at specific locations in Wyoming.

**Action ED 5:** Identify areas for major commercial and industrial activity in the vicinity of Routes 138, I-95 and Route 3 and ensure that they are appropriately zoned.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

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

**Action ED 6:** Talk to property owners and business owners near the I-95/Route 138 interchange and Route 3 to identify and eliminate any infrastructure constraints prohibiting future development.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission, Town Administrator

**Policy ED 4:** Optimize the supply and choice of land capable of supporting business and industries.

**Action ED 7:** Review current land development regulations and recommend amendments that will complement economic development goals.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

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

**Action ED 8:** Establish mixed use zoning in villages to allow for flexibility in design and to maintain appropriate village-scale development.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Public Works Department, Town Administrator, Economic Development Commission

**Action ED 9:** Identify roadway improvements needed in business districts and coordinate with the R.I. Department of Transportation to encourage funding for those improvements.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission



**Policy ED 5: Promote agriculture and agricultural businesses.**

**Action ED 10:** Continue to promote farmers markets, fairs and craft events that support locally sourced and produced goods. Provide a way for local businesses to make the community aware of these products and activities.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

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

**Policy ED 6: Encourage economic development opportunities for ecotourism based on the Town's abundant natural and cultural resources.**

**Action ED 11:** 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, Economic Development Commission

**Policy ED 7: Encourage new businesses to locate in Richmond and promote existing businesses.**

**Action ED 12:** 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:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Town Administrator, Economic Development Commission

**Action ED 13:** Create and fund a "shop local" campaign that encourages residents to shop and do business with local establishments.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Economic Development Commission

## Element 5 – Circulation

**Goal C 1: Provide for safe and accessible mobility opportunities for all residents.**

**Policy C 1: Ensure that new streets will be adequate to meet and future demands without negatively affecting the Town's rural atmosphere.**

**Action C 1:** Maintain street design standards that minimize pervious surfaces and protect the rural character of the Town.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Board

**Action C 2:** Work with RIDOT to prioritize new or existing projects in the State Transportation Improvement Plan.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Town Administrator, Town Planner, Planning Board

**Policy C 2:** Adopt regulations that will reduce traffic congestion in Wyoming.

**Action C 3:** Consider allowing new drive-through windows only for businesses that can provide sufficient queueing space.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board

**Policy C 3:** Promote alternative modes of transportation.

**Action C 4:** Adopt regulations that will encourage compact development design and prioritize pedestrian access and safety in village centers and growth areas.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board

**Action C 5:** Encourage pedestrian and bicycle links to existing bikeways, hiking and biking trails, and pedestrian ways in new developments and redevelopment projects.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Board

**Action C 6:** Work with RIPTA to increase public transportation options for Richmond residents, including internal bus routes in Richmond.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Town Administrator, Town Council

**Policy C 4:** Increase parking alternatives in village centers and future growth areas.

**Action C 7:** Consider development of municipal parking lots in village centers and future growth areas.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

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

## Element 6 – Public Services and Facilities

**Goal PSF 1: Protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Richmond by providing cost-effective public services that meet the Town's needs.**

**Policy PSF 1: Protect the quality of the Town's water and reduce water consumption.**

**Action PSF 1:** Launch a public education program to teach residents where their water comes from and how they can help to conserve it.

*Timeframe:* Short-term and Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Conservation Commission

**Action PSF 2:** Launch a program to educate property owners and businesses about groundwater pollution and illustrate measures that can reduce contamination of groundwater.

*Timeframe:* Short-term and Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Conservation Commission

**Action PSF 3:** Amend land use ordinances and regulations to increase groundwater quality protection.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

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

**Action PSF 4:** Encourage connections to the existing water system that would facilitate in-fill development.

*Timeframe:* Short-term and Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Department, Planning Board

**Action PSF 5:** Develop a management plan for the water system.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Finance Department, Town Council

**Policy PSF 2: Promote waste diversion and recycling to achieve a 35 percent recycling rate and 50 percent diversion rate at the transfer station.**

**Action PSF 6:** Educate residents about proper disposal of solid waste.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* DPW, Conservation Commission

**Action PSF 7:** Provide information to residents about household composting.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

*Responsibility:* DPW, Conservation Commission

**Action PSF 8:** Distribute information to residents annually about the recycling rate and diversion rate.

*Timeframe:* Short-term and Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Town Administrator, Conservation Commission

**Goal PSF 2: Make Richmond a safer and more environmentally resilient community.**

**Policy PSF 3:** Reduce the potential loss of life and property damage caused by natural hazards, including riverine flooding and severe storms.

**Action PSF 9:** Update the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan and Emergency Operation Plans in 2022 and every five years thereafter.

*Timeframe:* Short-term and Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Emergency Management Administrator

**Action PSF 10:** Make an inventory of the Town's stream crossing structures and identify the ones in most immediate need of upgrade or replacement.

*Timeframe:* Short-term and Ongoing

*Responsibility:* DPW, Emergency Management Administrator

**Action PSF 11:** Investigate funding sources for retrofitting existing Town buildings with low impact development stormwater management facilities.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Town Administrator, Finance Department, Planning Department

**Action PSF 12:** Participate in the design, engineering and construction phases of the PL-566 flood prevention program sponsored by the Southern Rhode Island Conservation District and the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association.

*Timeframe:* Short-term and Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Town Planner, Town Administrator, Town Council

**Policy PSF 4:** Promote energy efficiency, conservation, and renewable energy use by the Town and throughout the community.

**Action PSF 13:** Continue to look for opportunities to reduce energy use in Town facilities.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Town Administrator, DPW

**Action PSF 14:** Continue to develop energy saving projects to reduce energy consumption for municipal buildings and infrastructure.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Town Administrator

**Action PSF 15:** Retrofit electric switches in offices, hallways, and work spaces in municipal buildings with occupancy sensors where appropriate.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

*Responsibility:* DPW

**Action PSF 16:** Consider energy efficiency and Energy Star standards when purchasing new vehicles and equipment for the Police and Public Works Departments.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* DPW, Police Department

## Element 7 – Housing

**Goal H 1:** Provide residents of Richmond with adequate, safe, and affordable housing opportunities, while protecting the natural environment and town character residents value most.

**Policy H 1:** Broaden the responsibilities and increase the number of members of the Affordable Housing Committee.

**Action 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.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

*Responsibility:* Town Council

**Action H 2:** Assist Town staff in collecting data for more accurate recording and reporting of housing data.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Department, Affordable Housing Committee

**Action H 3:** Sponsor public meetings and workshops to educate the public about the need for low or moderate income housing.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Department, Affordable Housing Committee

**Action 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.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Department, Affordable Housing Committee

**Policy H 2:** Take the initiative in identifying potential locations for affordable housing and seeking developers for those locations.

**Action 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.

*Timeframe:* Short-term and Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Affordable Housing Committee, Planning Department

**Action H 6:** Research the benefits of increasing affordable housing stock to stimulate business investment in Richmond.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

*Responsibility:* Affordable Housing Committee, Economic Development Commission

**Action H 7:** Evaluate Town-owned parcels for opportunities to construct affordable housing.

*Timeframe:* Short-term and Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Affordable Housing Committee, Planning Department

**Policy H 3:** Ensure that new housing construction maintains Richmond's rural character, especially in villages.

**Action H 8:** Amend the zoning ordinance to reduce minimum lot size and dimensional regulations for construction of multi-family buildings in appropriate locations.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board, Town Council

**Action H 9:** Work with neighboring towns to seek funding for village revitalization projects.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Department, Town Administrator

**Action H 10:** Amend the zoning ordinance to allow mixed-use buildings in Wyoming.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

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

**Action H 11:** Pursue discussions with other Washington County towns concerning regional strategies to increase affordable housing production.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Department, Town Administrator, Town Council



## Element 8 – Land Use

**Goal LU 1: Support development without adversely affecting public health, the natural environment, or the Town's rural character.**

**Policy LU 1:** Locate affordable housing in areas where development will not adversely affect the natural environment and will have access to public water and main transportation corridors.

**Action LU 1:** Recommend to the Town Council changes to the Future Land Use Map identifying areas in Town that can support higher density development based upon the Buildout Analysis.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board, Town Council

**Action LU 2:** Periodically review and update the Buildout Analysis to ensure consistency with the evolving goals and policies of the Town (see Housing Element).

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

*Responsibility:* Planning Department

**Policy LU 2:** Encourage development that protects the Town's historical and archaeological heritage.

**Action LU 3:** Adopt a special zoning district for Wyoming that permits mixed-use buildings.

*Timeframe:* Mid-term

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

**Action LU 4:** Coordinate redevelopment of historic villages with adjacent communities that share those villages.

*Timeframe:* Long-term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board, Town Council

**Action LU 5:** Consider establishing a program for transfer of development rights.

*Timeframe:* Short-term

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

**Action LU 6:** Consider adopting redevelopment plans for Alton, Wood River Junction, and Kenyon that allow mixed-use development on property in Industrial zoning districts.

*Timeframe:* Long-term

*Responsibility:* Planning Board, Town Council

**Action LU 7:** Encourage the creation of open space lots near existing open space to avoid fragmentation of open space.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Land Trust, Planning Board

**Policy LU 3:** Ensure that development does not exceed the capacity of the Town's infrastructure.

**Action LU 8:** Encourage innovative and mixed-use developments where public water and infrastructure are available.

*Timeframe:* Ongoing

*Responsibility:* Planning Department, Planning Board, Economic Development Commission

**Action LU 9:** Evaluate locations that may be suitable as growth centers.

*Timeframe:* Long-term

*Responsibility:* Planning Department, Planning Board