



Weston & Sampson

Jamestown, Rhode Island | 2025

Comprehensive Community Plan



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1

INTRODUCTION

PREAMBLE

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITY

"PROTECT JAMESTOWN'S RURAL CHARACTER AND UNIQUE ISLAND COMMUNITY" stands as the core theme of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan. This guiding statement emerged directly from the 2024 Community Survey and input gathered through numerous public meetings and interactive public workshops that shaped the plan's development.

OUR VALUES

Common values relate to a shared feeling of community and personal identification with the people and physical presence of the Island. The values are a sense of cooperation, caring human contact, volunteerism, involvement and interest in the future of the community. These values should be reflected by a diversity of citizenry in terms of income, education, occupation, economic activity and lifestyle. Values create a place where respect and consideration for each other, as well as a personal affinity with both the natural and manmade physical environment, flourish.

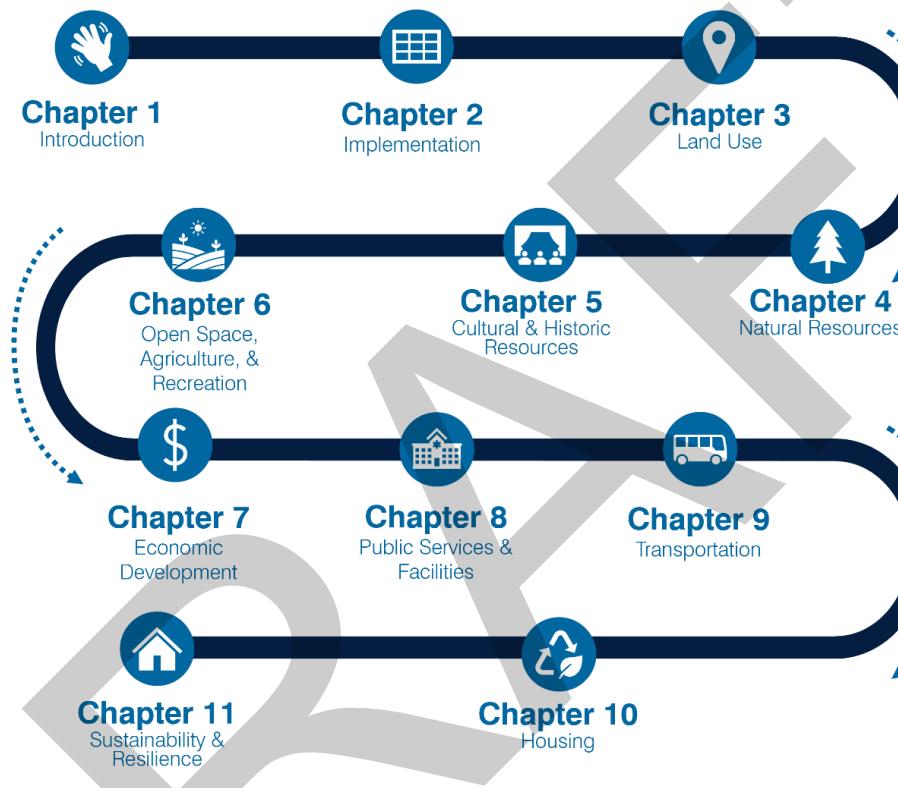
INTRODUCTION

This plan is an update of the 2015 Comprehensive Community Plan, which was reviewed by the Planning Commission and vetted through an extensive public process. Actions that have been accomplished since 2015 were removed in this update, and new goals, policies, and action items were created to address topics that have emerged over the last 10 years. This plan is the result of a yearlong collaborative effort, culminating in a plan that presents a 20-year vision for the future of Jamestown.



Plan Structure

This Introduction presents the Plan Themes, followed by an overview of the public participation approach used to generate this plan update. A demographic profile and development history for the community are presented and inform the chapters that follow. The goals, policies, and actions associated with each element are then presented in the implementation section, providing the essential roadmap that will guide policy decisions and actions the community will engage in moving forward.



	Goals and Policies
	Vision Statement
	Introduction
	Community Insights
	Existing Conditions
	Issues and Opportunities

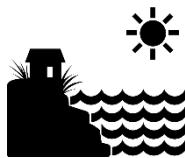
Each chapter begins with a listing of goals and policies. Then, the key functions that this plan seeks to promote are called out in a topical Vision Statement. Key Community Insights gathered during the planning process, Existing Conditions, and a summary of Issues and Opportunities follow.



Major Themes

Many issues presented in this Comprehensive Plan straddle multiple elements and topics. In response to community input and to help unify chapters, the Planning Commission adopted five major themes that run throughout the Plan. These major themes provided guidance during the development of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan and assist in prioritizing goals, policies, and actions for implementation moving forward.

The adopted major themes are:



Preserve Jamestown's Island Character and Sense of Place

Protect the Town's unique identity—its scenic beauty, small-scale development, historic charm, and natural landscapes—by guiding future change in a way that reflects community values and reinforces a strong sense of place.



Support a Year-Round, Inclusive, and Livable Community

Promote feasible and appropriately located housing, infrastructure, and services that support residents—including families, older adults, and lower-income households—and ensure access to a high quality of life for those who live and work in Jamestown.



Foster a Sustainable and Diverse Local Economy

Encourage a resilient local economy that is appropriately scaled, environmentally responsible, and compatible with the island setting—including tourism, small businesses, creative industries, and marine trades.



Invest in Community Infrastructure and Engagement

Maintain and enhance the Town's public facilities, transportation, water supplies, utilities, and digital infrastructure to meet current and future needs, as is feasible and cost efficient, while fostering civic engagement and intergenerational stewardship of the island's future.



Protect Natural Systems and Build Climate Resilience

Safeguard coastal and ecological resources and strengthen resilience to climate change through sustainable development, hazard mitigation, energy efficiency, and adaptation strategies.

These themes are presented throughout the elements of this Plan and should be used to assist the Town on how to focus its limited resources and balance competing needs. Jamestown must work to address and balance a host of issues and requirements in the face of increasingly challenging circumstances.



Promoting compatible tourism and economic development, providing a diversity of affordable housing, ensuring adequate drinking water resources, maintaining and enhancing recreation and open space resources, protecting natural, historic, and cultural resources, and addressing energy usage, natural hazards, and climate change impacts is a significant challenge for a community with limited resources. This is compounded significantly by Jamestown's presence on Conanicut Island. This important position with access to the Narragansett Bay presents a set of unique challenges and opportunities.

WHAT IS A “SENSE OF PLACE?”

Aesthetic qualities that give Jamestown its unique identity as a small Island community, or its “**sense of place**,” include:

- Active farmland, woodland, coastal, and historic features
- A village environment
- Historic landmarks and their surroundings
- Coastal features like Great Creek, Sheffield Cove, the Dumplings, Clingstone, and Beavertail
- Country roads with over-arching trees
- Rural and Village-like Summer homes and modest cottages for all income levels
- Stone walls and scenic vistas over stretches of farmland
- Low traffic volume.

Public Engagement

The Planning Commission engaged in over 17 public meetings where they discussed and vetted the language, goals, policies, and actions contained here. The Town created a dedicated website to post information related to the process and provide the community with the opportunity to view drafts as they were being constructed and amended. A public online survey was created that asked respondents a variety of questions ranging from how long they have lived in Jamestown to ranking how important certain aspects of the Town are to their quality of life. In addition, two public workshops were held in November 2024 and September 2025 to gather community input on priorities and plan details. The full results of this survey and the community workshops are contained in **Appendix A**. They were used to guide goals, policies, and actions contained within the plan.



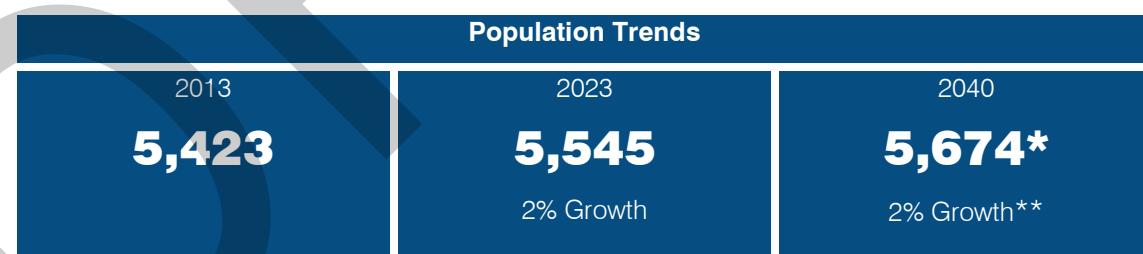
The 2024 Community Survey was publicized through the *Jamestown Press*, Town advertisements, and the Town's website, and was available to be completed on-line. The Survey received responses from 824 individuals, and its findings affirmed the overall goal of protecting the Island's rural character. Results from the first public workshop identified key issues, including housing, open space, and water supply. At the second workshop, participants highlighted the importance of historic and cultural resource protection, preserving open space, agriculture and recreation areas, housing diversity and affordability, village character preservation, and rural character as the top priorities identified.

Throughout survey responses, workshop conversations, and Commission meetings, maintaining Jamestown's rural character was paramount to preserve the island community's natural environment, small town character, and amenities. The community consistently noted that growth must be managed within the capabilities of the Island's finite natural resources and the Town's ability to support it. Jamestown should live within its means, both fiscally and environmentally. This will sustain the quality of life that makes Jamestown a desirable place to live, work, and visit. We must strive for development that respects the identity of the community.

Demographic Profile

Jamestown, Rhode Island, presents a unique and evolving profile as a coastal community with a distinct character shaped by both stability and modest growth. With a population of 5,545 recorded in 2023, the Town has seen a slight increase in the past decade, a trend that underscores its appeal while highlighting broader demographic shifts. The median age of 59.4 years reflects an aging population, which brings specific challenges and opportunities to the planning process, particularly in terms of housing, healthcare, and community services. Jamestown's demographic shift in the past decades towards affluence is evident in its median household income, which exceeds state averages, yet this economic prosperity also brings to the forefront issues of housing affordability and limited demographic diversity. Most residents are white and have at least a high school degree.

Population Trends



*Rhode Island Statewide Planning Population Projections (2013)

**Projected

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2013, 2023. Rhode Island Statewide Planning Population Projections, 2013

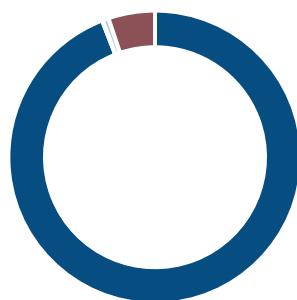


Households

Households		
2013	2023	Growth
2,455	2,563	4%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2013, 2023

Race



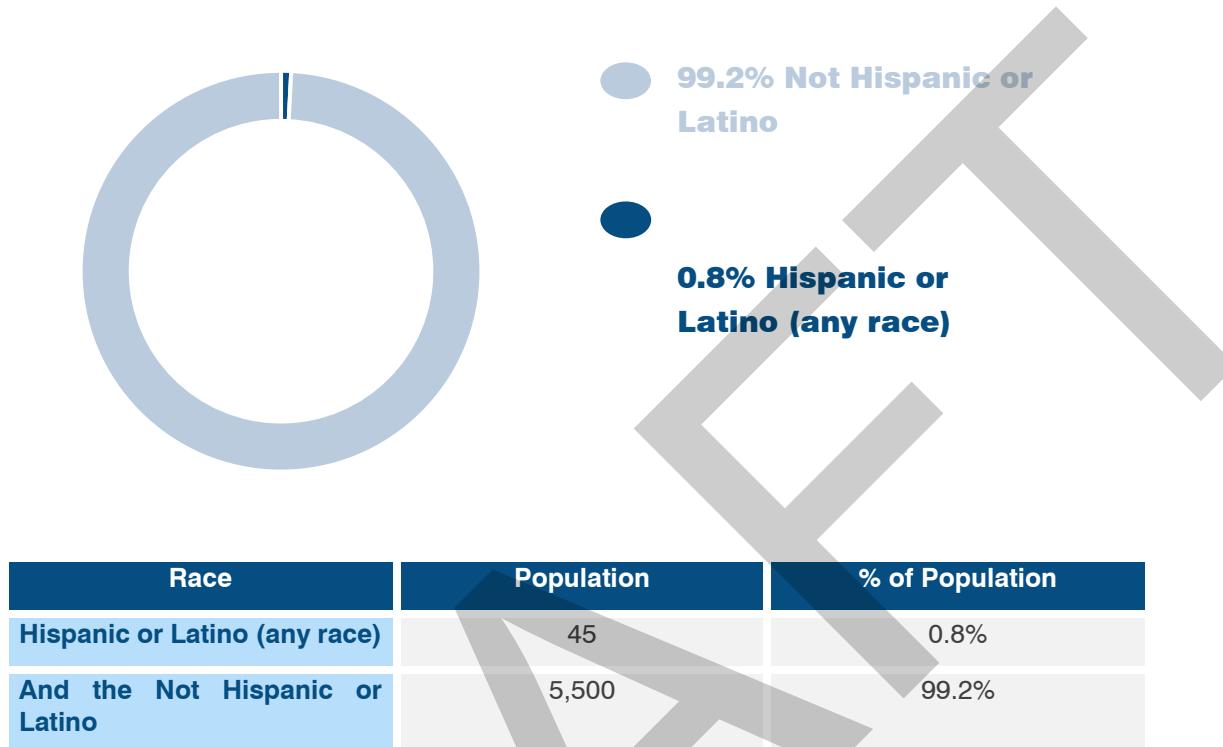
- 94.1% White
- 5.1% Two+
- 0.7% Other
- 0% Black
- 0% Asian
- 0% American Indian or Alaskan Native

Race	Population	% of Population
White	5,219	94.1%
Black or African American	4	0.1%
American Indian & Alaskan Native	0	0%
Asian	0	0%
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	0	0%
Other	37	0.7%
Two or More Races	285	5.1%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2023



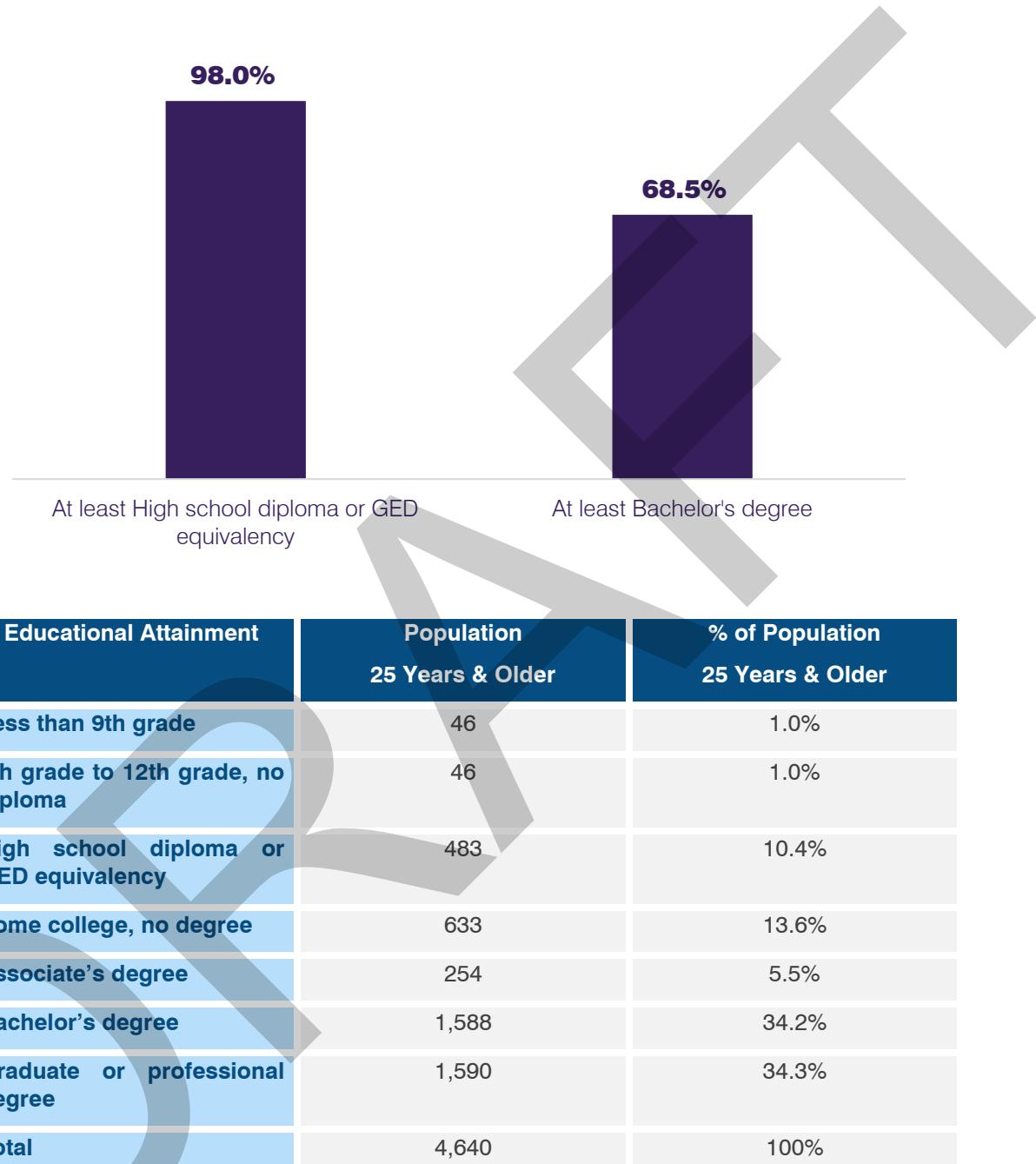
Ethnicity



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2023



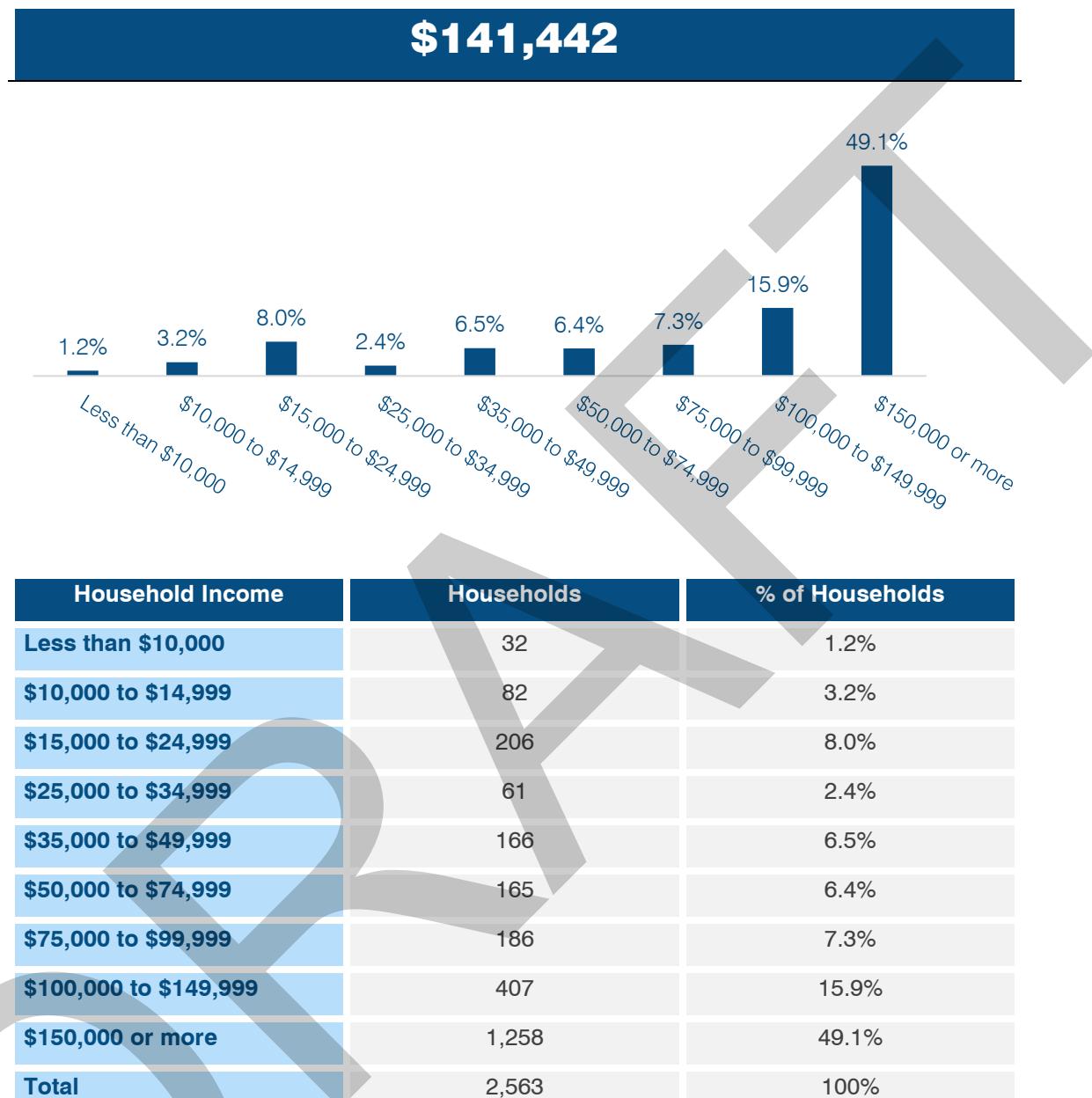
Educational Attainment



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2023



Median Household Income

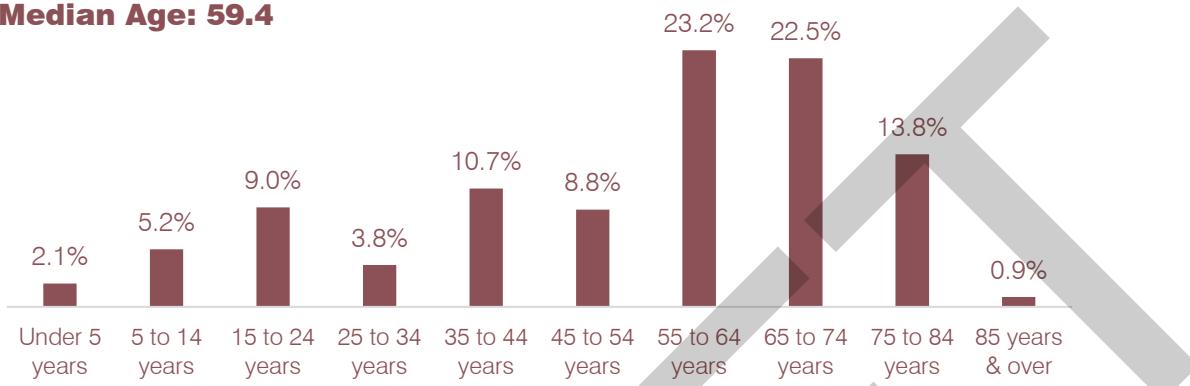


Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2023



Age

Median Age: 59.4



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2023

Age	Population	% of Population
Under 5 years	114	2.1%
5 to 9 years	128	2.3%
10 to 14 years	160	2.9%
15 to 19 years	401	7.2%
20 to 24 years	102	1.8%
25 to 34 years	212	3.8%
35 to 44 years	592	10.7%
45 to 54 years	486	8.8%
55 to 64 years	1,287	23.2%
65 to 74 years	1,248	22.5%
75 to 84 years	763	13.8%
85 years & over	52	0.9%
Total	5,545	100%

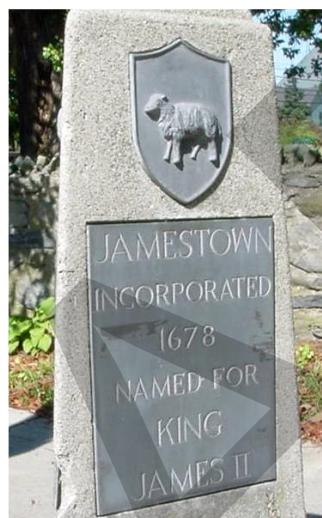
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2023



Development History

Jamestown is located on Conanicut Island in lower Narragansett Bay, 26 miles south of Providence and two miles west of Newport. Jamestown is bounded to the south by the Atlantic Ocean and to the north, east, and west by Narragansett Bay. Recognized by Aquidneck settlers in 1636 for its good grazing grass, the Island was purchased from Native Americans in 1657. Jamestown was incorporated as an independent Town in 1678. Within Jamestown's jurisdiction are the smaller islands of Dutch, Gould, and the Dumplings.

Figure 0-1. Historic Marker for Jamestown's Founding



Historically, the development patterns of Jamestown are closely related to the Island's undulating topography. Conanicut Island, approximately 8.7 miles long in its entirety and varying from 1 to 1.6 miles in width, is itself virtually divided into three separate landmasses. The largest, occupying the northern half of Conanicut, rises to an elevation of 140 feet in its center, commanding impressive views of the mid-Bay region. Aquipimokuk (today Gould Island) lay offshore to the east.

Separated from the northern section by extensive salt marshes and a tidal creek, the center landmass supports the village center of Jamestown located along Narragansett Avenue. Legendarily an old Native American trail, Narragansett Avenue later became part of the Newport to New York Post Road, traversing the Island between the Newport Ferry and the Saunderstown Ferry, and for years was known simply as Ferry Road. The nonarable rock outcropping of the Dumplings areas, south of the village, remained in an essentially natural state until developed as a summer resort area. Capitalizing on its extraordinary vistas, it was popularly known as the Ocean Highlands. It is here, too, that Fort Wetherill, the most extensive military fortification on the Island proper, was located.

To the southwest lies the third major section of Conanicut, Beaver Neck (Beavertail), extending into the Atlantic Ocean and connected to the main body of Conanicut by the sand



spit of Mackerel Cove beach. Northwest of Beaver Neck lies Aquidnesset (today Dutch Island), enclosing the body of water immediately west of the Old Ferry Wharf, known as Dutch Harbor.

Historical Overview of Conanicut Island Development (Jamestown)

17th Century Town Beginnings (1600s)

In 1658, a town plan for Conanicut Island outlined a 6,000-acre division: for every 20 acres of farmland, one acre was to serve as a town lot, and 260 acres were reserved as the town center. Another 20 acres were set aside for public use as an Artillery Lot and Cemetery, now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Because land selection was based on investment, William Coddington and Benedict Arnold were granted first choice. Coddington settled in the northern part of the Island; Arnold chose the southern end, naming it Beaver Neck. The ambitious 1658 plan was never fully implemented, and a decade later the land was divided among the 22 original purchasers, each receiving a one-acre lot along what is now Beavertail Road.

The Island's early development centered around the establishment of a ferry connection to Newport. By 1675, a regular ferry served the northern portion of the Island. In 1678, Conanicut was incorporated as a town—granted “the like privileges and liberties” as New Shoreham—and named Jamestown in honor of James, Duke of York (later King James II). The Island itself retained its Native American name, Conanicut.

18th Century Foundations (1700s)

During the 1700s, Jamestown grew in a steady, orderly manner, shaped largely by Quaker settlers from Newport. Transportation became an early priority; by the century's end, major routes such as North Main Road, North Ferry Road, Ferry Road (Narragansett Avenue), and Southwest Avenue were established.

Community institutions followed. A Town Hall stood on North Main Road. A windmill for grinding grain was erected in 1728 near the northern crossroads. A schoolhouse was added in 1741. The first Quaker Meeting House was built in 1709 near the Old Friends Burial Ground, later destroyed during the Revolution and rebuilt in 1787 on Windmill Hill.

The Beavertail Light, established in 1749, stood as the third lighthouse built on the Atlantic Coast. After multiple reconstructions—including damage from British forces—it was rebuilt in 1856 as the granite structure known today.

Revolutionary War and Early Federal Era (1770s–1830s)

Military activity left an indelible mark on Conanicut Island. British and Hessian troops occupied the Island from 1775 to 1778, constructing and maintaining the Conanicut Battery on Prospect Hill. Fort Dumpling, built around 1800, succeeded an earlier battery and later



gave way to Fort Wetherill in 1898, now a state park. Despite these disruptions, Jamestown remained primarily agricultural well into the 19th century.

Rise of the Summer Resort Era (Mid-Late 1800s)

Jamestown's transformation into a resort destination began with major transportation upgrades. The Jamestown and Newport Ferry Company formed in 1872, launching the steamer Jamestown to East Ferry. In 1874, the Ocean Highlands Company began developing large summer estates on the southern part of the Island—favored by wealthy Philadelphia Quaker families seeking a more understated alternative to Newport's opulence. Designed in Shingle Style and Colonial Revival architecture (including works by McKim, Mead & White), the Highlands remain one of the most intact coastal estate neighborhoods in New England.

Around the same time, the Shoreby Hill neighborhood took shape with architecturally cohesive homes overlooking Jamestown Harbor. Four Corners emerged as a civic center, gaining Baptist and Episcopal churches and a new Town Hall by the 1880s. The first post office opened on Narragansett Avenue in 1847.

Early 20th Century Immigration and Military Expansion (1900–1945)

By the early 1900s, Portuguese immigrants had established a strong presence in Jamestown, working primarily in fishing, farming, and estate gardening. In 1927, they formed the Holy Ghost Society, still active today.

The Island experienced significant military expansion from the Spanish-American War through World War II. Installations included Fort Wetherill in the Dumplings, Fort Getty at Beaver Head, Fort Greble on Dutch Island, the "Mickey" Harbor Entrance Command Post on Beavertail, and a major torpedo testing and repair facility on Gould Island. Together with nearby Newport facilities, they produced the vast majority of U.S. torpedoes during World War II.

Bridges, Automobiles, and Post-War Change (1940s–1990s)

Access to Jamestown shifted dramatically from ferry service to highway bridges. The Jamestown Bridge opened in 1940, linking the Island to South County and spurring development, particularly the post-war Jamestown Shores neighborhood. The Newport Bridge followed in 1969, further integrating Jamestown into the regional transportation network. The Jamestown Verrazzano Bridge replaced the original bridge in 1992. The John Eldred Parkway was completed in 1994, improving connections between both bridges.

These changes, combined with the decommissioning of Naval properties in the 1970s, shifted the Island's demographics and intensified residential development.

Recent Decades: Balancing Growth and Character (1990s–Present)

Over the last forty years, Jamestown has contended with rising development pressure as suburban growth from Providence and seasonal homes along the waterfront have expanded.



New subdivisions and infill housing have altered the Island's rural landscape, though many traditional village characteristics endure.

Jamestown still retains active farms; historic lighthouses, a windmill, and military fortifications; and longstanding neighborhoods with strong architectural identity. Notably, preservation has occurred largely without formal historic district protections. In 2009, the Town adopted the Village Special Development Overlay District and Village Design Guidelines, which introduced form-based standards to guide village-scale development. While these tools have improved architectural consistency, they cannot prevent demolition or major alteration of foundational historic structures.

While land uses and demographics have changed significantly over time, Jamestowners have maintained their traditional spirit of community involvement and volunteerism. This community spirit is a quality that has protected hundreds of acres of farmland and open space, improved recreation programs and facilities, and for the time being, provided public safety with an all-volunteer fire department and ambulance association. The volunteer fire department is reported to be at significant risk with younger volunteers unable to afford housing on Jamestown. The dedication of the people of Jamestown to maintaining the Island's quality of life has been demonstrated throughout the years, but as more seasonal and out-of-town residents working out of the region take ownership of homes, the Town has found it increasingly difficult to maintain the spirit of volunteerism it was founded on. The future of Jamestown's historic character depends on its ability to face, adapt and resist these and many more challenges with this same determination and commitment.





2

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

2.0 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

How do we measure success of this Comprehensive Community Plan? In accordance with Jamestown's community vision, the Comprehensive Community Plan lays out a clear set of goals forming the basis for the measurement of the value and quality of future development in Jamestown. They emulate the goals adopted in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan and have since been confirmed by the 2024 Community Survey. The implementation of the goals set forth in the Goals/Policies/Implementation Action Plan here will gauge success of the 2025 Comprehensive Community Plan. We hope that this Plan serves the residents of Jamestown to achieve the vision of our future for the next decade.

These stated goals, policies, and actions provide a roadmap for the Town to move the plan forward. Goals provide overarching desired outcomes, while policies guide municipal decision making, and actions provide measurable acts that achieve implementation. When all three initiatives work together, the Town can make considerable strides towards achieving the stated goals. The matrix provided in this element has several important functions. First it states each particular element's goals and policies. This is followed by actions. For each action a timeframe and responsible parties are identified. This provides guidance to those involved in implementation in what time frame the action is anticipated to take place and who will be responsible for initiating and supporting each action item. These considerations will vary based on circumstances at the time and this information is provided as a guide.

The following key should be used when reviewing the matrix:

Timeframe. Factors used to determine the timeframe for specific actions include priority level, cost/budget, staff time, and overall length of time for a particular action item to be initiated and completed. Timeframes are categorized as 1-5 years; 5-10 years; 10-20 years; or Ongoing: Continuous.

Responsibility. Each action has at least one responsible party identified. In many cases there are two or more responsible parties identified. Those listed in bold in the matrix are the lead responsible party, with those listed beneath it identified as support parties. The lead responsible party should be those directly involved in conducting a study or implementing an action or policy. Those identified as support parties should be those that will play a role in the implementation or action, but are not leading the charge, only providing support to those that do.

Major Themes. As identified in Section 1.0, the plan is based on several major themes that occur throughout. Those themes extend to the goals, policies, and actions as well. The matrix provides recognition of each action items connection to a major theme by identifying which



themes are touched upon by the action item. The major themes identified in Section 1.0 are reiterated below.



Preserve Jamestown's Island Character and Sense of Place



Support a Year-Round, Inclusive, and Livable Community



Foster a Sustainable and Diverse Local Economy



Invest in Community Infrastructure and Engagement



Protect Natural Systems and Build Climate Resilience

LAND USE

Goals

Goal LU-1: To preserve and enhance Jamestown's rural character while promoting sustainable growth that aligns with the town's environmental, housing, and economic goals.

Goal LU-2: To enhance housing diversity and affordability to support and prioritize year-round residents, including families with children, elderly residents and local/essential workers.

Goal LU-3: To adopt land use policies and zoning strategies which would strengthen Jamestown's local economy through year-round economic development initiatives.

Policies

Policy LU-1: Maintain and update Jamestown's land use regulations to guide development consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, addressing housing diversity, zoning alignment, and resilience to climate impacts.

Policy LU-2: Create zoning strategies that expand a diversity of year-round housing opportunities while preserving neighborhood character and minimizing environmental impacts.

Policy LU-3: Develop a permanent, sustainable funding source for the Jamestown Affordable Housing Trust.

Policy LU-4: Encourage adaptive reuse of existing properties and homes for affordable housing.

Policy LU-5: Promote zoning flexibility to enable year-round economic activities.

Policy LU-6: Encourage adaptive reuse of existing properties for economic activities.

Policy LU-7: Prioritize connectivity to the commercial village through land use strategies.



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
LU-1. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan within 18 months of State approval.						1-5	Planning Commission Town Council
LU-2. Amend the Subdivision Regulations to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan within 2 years of State approval.						1-5	Planning Commission
LU-3. Consider incentives for low-impact and energy-efficient development practices in zoning regulations.						1-5	Planning Department, Building & Zoning Office Planning Commission Town Council
LU-4. Develop strategy for short term rentals that minimizes impact to year-round housing goals.						1-5	Planning Department Town Council
LU-5. Work with Legislators to amend RI law to allow impact fees for affordable housing.						10-20	Town Council Planning Department Planning Commission
LU-7. Consider tax incentives, density bonuses, or expedited permitting for developments that include year-round commercial or mixed-use spaces.						1-5	Planning Department Planning Commission Tax Assessor Town Council
LU-8. Consider revising zoning to allow temporary and flexible uses for commercial properties, such as event spaces, seasonal markets, and tourism-focused initiatives.						5-10	Planning Department Planning Commission Town Council



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
LU-9. Consider the reuse of vacant or underutilized commercial properties for events, pop-ups, or co-working spaces that benefit the local economy throughout the year.						10-20	Planning Department Town Council
LU-10. Amend the zoning ordinance to develop “Complete Streets” strategies to encourage development within the Village that include infrastructure for pedestrian and bicycle access, establish transit-supportive design features, and incorporate wayfinding signage to strengthen connectivity and accessibility.						5-10	Planning Department Planning Commission Town Council

NATURAL RESOURCES

Goals

Goal NR-1: Protect the long-term quality and sustainability of marine, freshwater, and above ground and groundwater resources.

Goal NR-2: Preserve and protect Jamestown’s unique, fragile, and scenic coastal areas to maintain ecological function, mitigate climate impacts, and retain the island’s natural beauty.

Goal NR-3: Maintain and enhance equitable public access to the shoreline.

Goal NR-4: Protect native vegetation and wildlife habitats across Jamestown to support biodiversity, ecological health, and climate resilience.

Policies

Policy NR-1: Actively consider and implement measures to protect the quality and quantity of the Island’s freshwater resources.



Policy NR-2: Protect and enhance the quality and quantity of Jamestown's public drinking water watersheds and private well areas through protection, monitoring, and responsible land and water use practices.

Policy NR-3: Comprehensively assess groundwater resources, and seek funding to do so, in the rural service area of town to inform management, protection, and restoration efforts.

Policy NR-4: Promote integrated water resource management by supporting innovative strategies, infrastructure, and community programs that advance water conservation, improve efficiency, reduce runoff, and protect water quality.

Policy NR-5: Implement land use, stormwater, and wastewater management practices that reduce nutrient and pollutant runoff into Jamestown's salt marshes and coastal waters, in order to protect water quality and marine habitat health.

Policy NR-6: Develop and maintain a prioritized list of unique, fragile, and scenic coastal properties for acquisition and protection for targeted shoreline conservation efforts.

Policy NR-7: Enhance public access to coastline through stewardship of existing rights-of-way, improved infrastructure, and proactive coastal management in compliance with the 1999 and 2013 Shoreline Access and Right-of-Way Report and Inventory.

Policy NR-8: Encourage land management that provides opportunities for public waterfront access.

Policy NR-9: Manage and protect areas designated as Significant Natural Habitats by the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program and other relevant agencies, through conservation practices that maintain ecological integrity, control invasive species, and minimize human disturbance.

Policy NR-10: Give appropriate consideration to the protection of natural vegetation and habitat during all phases of development planning, review, and construction.

Policy NR-11: Encourage wildlife management for the health, safety and welfare of Jamestown residents.

Policy NR-12: Encourage the usage of native vegetation where possible.

Policy NR-13: Enhance the urban forest to support ecological health and visual character and establish clear protection regulations for heritage or significant trees.

Policy NR-14: Proactively plan for natural hazard vulnerability including those hazards which may increase due to climate change.

Actions	Themes	Time & Responsibility
	   	Time Frame Responsibility



NR-1. The Town Council should consider establishment of a permanent Committee for the purpose of planning the future water needs of Jamestown.						1-5	Town Council
NR-2. Continue to enforce the Water Conservation Regulations adopted by the Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners and conduct a yearly review to assess penalties for violations and excessive high use rates.						Ongoing	Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners Town Council
NR-4. Continue community environmental education including information on Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS)						Ongoing	Conservation Commission Planning Department Town Council
NR-5. Continue to aggressively purchase all vacant properties within the Center Island Watershed through grants, town budget and Subdivision fees in-lieu-of land dedication.						Ongoing	Town Council Conservation Commission Conanicut Island Land Trust
NR-6. Continue to identify sources of inflow and infiltration into the public sewer system to reduce groundwater intrusion and maintain system integrity.						Ongoing	Water & Sewer Commission Conservation Commission Town Administrator
Actions	Themes	Time & Responsibility	Time Frame	Responsibility			
NR-7. Seek funding for and develop a comprehensive study to evaluate groundwater resources in rural service area.	    				Time Frame	Responsibility	
					1-5	Town Council Town Administrator Conservation Commission	



NR-8. Identify and work to reduce point and nonpoint pollution sources through elimination of Town sources and education of private landowners.						10-20	Conservation Commission Town Administrator Water & Sewer Commission
NR-9. Pilot a rainwater harvesting and reuse program for irrigation and non-potable uses, particularly for commercial or municipal properties.						5-10	Conservation Commission
NR-10. Consider a local certification or recognition program for “Water-Smart Homes” that reduce consumption, manage runoff, and use environmentally safe landscaping.						1-5	Conservation Commission
NR-11. Adopt regulations for restricting or banning the use of toxic pesticides and herbicides to protect the groundwater, wetland and public health and encourage the responsible use of safe herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers in accordance with RIGL 23-25 and guidance from the Eastern Rhode Island Conservation District.						1-5	Conservation Commission Town Council Town Administrator
NR-12. Update the Jamestown Recreation, Conservation, and Open Space Plan every five years to include a needs assessment and maintain a current priority list of properties for acquisition and protection.						5-10	Recreation Department Conservation Commission Planning Commission CRMC
NR-13. Actively seek funding for Conservation, Recreation and Open Space acquisition and protection including use of Subdivision fees collected in-lieu-of land dedication.						Ongoing	Conservation Commission Planning Department



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
NR-14. Continue to aggressively purchase unique, fragile and scenic coastal areas.						Ongoing	Town Council Conservation Commission Conanicut Island Land Trust
NR-15. Recommend funding to the Town Council at the Financial Town Meeting for acquisition and protection of specific properties.						Ongoing	Conservation Commission Planning Department Town Administrator
NR-16. Implement recommendations and periodically review the "Report on Public Shoreline Access and Right-of-Ways in Jamestown".						Ongoing	Planning Department Town Administrator Parking Committee
NR-17. Actively seek funding for enhancement of selected rights-of-way.						5-10	Recreation Department Conservation Commission Planning Department
NR-18. Create requirements for easements to waterfront in subdivisions where appropriate.						10-20	Planning Commission Planning Department
NR-19. Establish contacts with appropriate federal, state, and non-profit agencies that have responsibility for habitat management in Jamestown and coordinate management plans with these agencies.						5-10	Conservation Commission



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
NR-20. Continue to pursue acquisition or protection of properties that are significant in their ability to support diversified species or provide habitats for endangered species.						Ongoing	Conservation Commission Town Council Conanicut Island Land Trust
NR-21. Develop and implement wildlife management practices for the coexistence of humans and all species, particularly ticks, deer and coyotes.						5-10	Conservation Commission
NR-22. Implement a native plant landscaping guide for residents and developers to promote low-impact, water-efficient, and pollinator-friendly landscaping practices.						1-5	Conservation Commission Planning Department
NR-23. Utilize the Tree Committee's street tree inventory to assess existing conditions, identify priority areas for replanting, and develop a phased implementation plan for street tree replacement using native, non-invasive, and climate-resilient species along major roadways.						1-5	Tree Committee Public Works
NR-24. Continue to update and adopt a RIEMA and FEMA approved Hazard Mitigation Plan as required by FEMA.						1-5	Emergency Management Planning Department



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
NR-25. Incorporate sea level rise projections and salt marsh migration data into criteria for acquisition, easements, protection, and restoration.						5-10	Conservation Commission Planning Department Planning Commission

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CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Goals

Goal HC-1: To protect and preserve all significant historical and cultural resources.

Goal HC-2: Preserve and strengthen the rural and historical village character of Jamestown.

Goal HC-3: Adopt historic preservation as a sustainable practice in Jamestown's codes.

Goal HC-4: Enhance public awareness and engagement in historic preservation.

Policies

Policy HC-1: Protect and archive historic documents to prevent further deterioration and ensure accessibility for future generations.

Policy HC-2: Preserve and restore historic sites of Jamestown to maintain the town's unique historical and cultural heritage.

Policy HC-3: Maintain and enhance historic scenic views and corridors on the island by incorporating preservation strategies into land use planning.

Policy HC-4: Evaluate and consider the establishment of historic districts in Jamestown in collaboration with the Rhode Island Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission.

Policy HC-5: Encourage adaptive reuse of historic properties by integrating preservation-friendly zoning and financial incentives.

Policy HC-6: Promote public awareness by providing educational information/programs and interpretative signage about Jamestown's historic and cultural assets.

Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
	    					Time Frame	Responsibility
HC-1. Ensure climate-controlled archival storage for town and historical society records, expanding space as needed.						1-5	Jamestown Historical Society Town Clerk Town Administrator
HC-2. Continue Town Clerk records management including electronic preservation of historic records through grants and yearly Town budget.						Ongoing	Town Clerk Town Administrator Town Council



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
HC-3. Seek and secure grants and funding sources to support the restoration and preservation of historic properties.						Ongoing	Town Council Town Administrator Jamestown Historical Society
HC-4. Coordinate with adjacent towns to preserve the Bays' military history.						5-10	Planning Department Town Council
HC-5. Establish a permit process for assessing historic features or buildings before demolition or alteration.						1-5	Building & Zoning Office Jamestown Historical Society
HC-6. Enhance streetscape design along Narragansett Avenue to reinforce historic character.						10-20	Town Council Town Administrator Planning Department
HC-7. Identify and map priority scenic corridors and develop vegetation management strategies to prevent overgrowth from obstructing scenic corridors and historic landscapes.						1-5	Conservation Commission Planning Department
HC-8. Support establishment of historic districts and design review standards for protecting historic structures and landscapes						1-5	Planning Department Planning Commission Jamestown Historical Society
HC-9. Host public workshops to provide information about historic district designation and gather community input.						1-5	Town Council Planning Department Jamestown Historical Society



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
HC-10. Consider development of incentive programs such as tax credits, grants, or low-interest loans to support historic property owners in preservation efforts.						5-10	Town Council Jamestown Historical Society
HC-11. Streamline regulatory processes for rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings while maintaining preservation standards.						5-10	Planning Department Planning Commission Jamestown Historical Society
HC-12. Encourage installation of plaques and historical markers on significant buildings to highlight their history and promote public interest.						5-10	Town Council Jamestown Historical Society
HC-13. Partner with local schools to incorporate historic preservation into the curriculum through field trips and interactive learning experiences.						1-5	School District Town Administrator Jamestown Historical Society



OPEN SPACE, AGRICULTURE, AND RECREATION

Goals

Goal OS-1: Preserve and manage significant conservation and open space on the Island.

Goal OS-2: Develop a comprehensive Land Acquisition Action Plan to raise funds through local funding, bonding and grants to acquire and/or protect the remaining ecologically significant undeveloped land and working farmland in Jamestown for the preservation of drinking water, coastal resources, scenic vistas, access to the shore, and open space.

Goal OS-3: Promote public awareness and community stewardship for the conservation of open space and shoreline access.

Goal OS-4: Protect and where possible increase the current acreage of working farmland, while supporting sustainable agricultural practices and agritourism consistent with Jamestown's rural character.

Goal OS-5: Provide all residents and visitors with safe, inclusive, and accessible passive and active recreational opportunities, including enhanced shoreline and boating opportunities.

Policies

Policy OS-1: Investigate and apply growth management strategies that recognize Jamestown's island geography and limited resources and prioritize conservation of open space and limit development pressure on ecologically sensitive lands.

Policy OS-2: Promote innovative and collaborative land conservation tools, including easements and land preservation partnerships.

Policy OS-3: Support public education and stewardship initiatives focused on open space, shoreline access, and ecosystem health.

Policy OS-4: Utilize preservation strategies to protect natural resources, scenic views, shoreline areas, and critical habitats.

Policy OS-5: Ensure long-term protection of publicly owned open spaces through active management and public access planning.

Policy OS-6: Identify and prioritize acquisition of undeveloped land that supports groundwater protection, scenic quality, and habitat continuity.

Policy OS-7: Maintain farming as a viable economic and cultural land use through farmland preservation and community-based agriculture.

Policy OS-8: Support sustainable aquaculture as part of Jamestown's rural economy while safeguarding water quality and marine ecosystems.

Policy OS-9: Maintain public participation in community recreational programs at the current high rates.

Policy OS-10: Improve and expand, where necessary, indoor and outdoor recreational facilities.

Policy OS-11: Promote implementation of the 2024 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan to enhance access to recreation and open space.



Policy OS-12: Support expansion of passive and active recreation facilities to accommodate the growing population on the Island.

Policy OS-13: Implement additional improvements to the Town-owned park at Fort Getty to improve residents' access, experience, and environmental sustainability.

Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
OS-1. Determine an acceptable sustainable rate of growth for Jamestown as it relates to potable water resources or other limited resources.						1-5	Planning Department Planning Commission Water and Sewer Divisions (Public Works)
OS-2. Continue to work with public and private land conservation organizations to preserve open space on the Island.	Ongoing					Ongoing	Conservation Commission Town Council
OS-3. Pursue strategies and sources of funding for open space conservation including Subdivision fees and dedication of land.	Ongoing					Ongoing	Conservation Commission Planning Department Town Administrator
OS-4. Utilize town bonding, where appropriate, to support open space acquisition.	Ongoing					Ongoing	Town Council Town Administrator Town Treasurer Conservation Commission
OS-5. Actively encourage private property owners to donate land for conservation purposes.	Ongoing					Ongoing	Conservation Commission Planning Department Town Council Town Administrator
OS-6. Implement the 2024 Jamestown Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan while linking significant natural areas and open space.	Ongoing					Ongoing	Planning Department Conservation Commission Town Council



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
OS-7. Review all development proposals and encourage land to be designated consistent with the 2024 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.						Ongoing	Planning Commission Planning Department Conservation Commission
OS-8. Update the Jamestown Recreation Conservation and Open Space Plan every 5 years supporting all town needs including watershed protection, farmland preservation, access to shore, recreation areas and groundwater recharge protection.						1-5	Conservation Commission Planning Department Planning Commission
OS-9. Encourage continued educational lectures and field trips to open space areas on the Island.						Ongoing	Conservation Commission
OS-10. Develop management plans for selected public open space areas that focus on the protection of specific features deemed valuable.						Ongoing	Conservation Commission Town Council Town Administrator
OS-11. Cooperate with the CILT's Stewardship Program. Seek third party enforcement of Conservation Easements.						5-10	Town Administrator Conservation Commission Planning Department
OS-12. Manage publicly owned spaces to ensure historic view sheds and corridors are not lost.						Ongoing	Parks and Recreation Department Public Works Town Council Town Administrator



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
OS-13. Consider public purchase of land when cost of infrastructure development is too expensive or infeasible for landowners.						Ongoing	Town Council Conservation Commission Planning Department
OS-14. Focus land preservation efforts on the public drinking water supply watershed, groundwater recharge areas, farmland, greenway linkages, coastal resources, access to the shore, and scenic vistas.						10-20	Conservation Commission Town Council Town Administrator
OS-15. Actively pursue acquisition of development rights or fee simple acquisition for all farmland.						10-20	Conservation Commission Town Council Town Administrator
OS-16. Coordinate with the RI Ag Partnership and the RIDEM Division of Agriculture to support farming in Jamestown.						5-10	Planning Department Conservation Commission
OS-17. Establish a policy to support aquaculture in and around Jamestown while minimizing landside impacts.						1-5	Town Council Planning Department
OS-18. Continue to respond to trends in public recreation.						Ongoing	Parks and Recreation Department Town Council
OS-19. Work with local community groups to accommodate public recreation and open space needs.						Ongoing	Recreation Department Town Council Town Administrator



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
OS-20. Identify and prioritize additional facilities for active and passive recreation. Specifically active sites on the north end and indoor space throughout the island.						1-5	Recreation Department Planning Department Town Council
OS-21. Maintain and improve recreation facilities at the Rec Center (tennis courts, ball field), implementing a phased development and maintenance program, and increase as necessary and feasible.						10-20	Recreation Department Public Works Town Administrator
OS-22. Maintain, improve, and increase current level of indoor recreation space for programming as necessary and feasible.						5-10	Recreation Department Town Council Town Administrator
OS-23. Work with the RIDOT and Town DPW to include bicycle lanes as part of State and Town road upgrades.						Ongoing	Public Works Town Council Planning Department
OS-24. Where appropriate, require the construction of pedestrian and bicycle paths in new subdivisions linking population bases as well as the village area.						Ongoing	Planning Commission Planning Department
OS-25. Review property for potential active and passive recreation opportunities.						5-10	Recreation Department Planning Department



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
OS-26. Preserve and maintain public access to water to accommodate growing demands for active and passive recreational water activities.						1-5 Town Administrator Town Council Planning Department	
OS-27. Continue to act upon the options for acquiring dedicated open space lands through the Subdivision Rules and Regulations including Fees in-lieu-of land dedication.	1				5-10 Planning Commission Planning Department		
OS-28. Provide for increased resident use of Fort Getty Park in compliance with Fort Getty Master Plan.	1			1	1-5 Recreation Department Planning Department		

DPY



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goals

Goal ED-1: To achieve a diverse local economy that caters to residents by offering an abundance of job opportunities and a wide variety of basic goods and services, while maintaining an affordable tax base.

Goal ED-2: To promote year-round tourism that reduces off-season economic decline and ensures local businesses can be self-sustaining.

Policies

Policy ED-1: Incentivize growth of local businesses in existing commercial zones.

Policy ED-2: Encourage a robust year-round economy that highlights local businesses and Jamestown's small-town character including its scenic, historic, and culturally significant assets.

Policy ED-3: Leverage the waterfront's rich history and architectural character to enhance the local economy and foster sustainable growth in commercial districts, while balancing goals to preserve the town's historic integrity.

Policy ED-4: Ensure that new or expanded development within the commercial zones is compatible with existing character of the community.

Policy ED-5: Participate in State and Regional Planning to monitor and influence the effect, on Jamestown and its residents, of changes in surrounding communities and activities within the environment including Narragansett Bay.

Policy ED-6: Prioritize affordable rentals to support local businesses to grow in Jamestown.

Policy ED-7: Explore and support new lodging options (i.e. small inns, B&Bs) as alternatives to Short Term Rentals to encourage tourism while balancing visitor demand and encouraging year-round housing availability without straining water and sewer capacity.

Policy ED-8: Maintain public access to Jamestown's vibrant commercial waterfront including high-quality public landside facilities.

Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
<p>ED-1. Review and consider amending the Zoning Ordinance for permitted uses in noncommercial zones and the conditions for granting special use permits and variances to prevent commercialization of these zones.</p>						1-5 Planning Department Planning Commission	



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
ED-2. Monitor customary home occupations so the trend towards home-based businesses can be accommodated without commercializing residential zones.						Ongoing	Planning Department Building and Zoning Department
ED-3. Support the Chamber of Commerce to develop informational guides for visitors depicting locations of parks, public open spaces, historical sites, public parking facilities, restrooms, shops and restaurants.						1-5	Planning Department Town Administrator Chamber of Commerce
ED-4. Provide informational signage on main roads for significant parks and other historic places.						1-5	Town Council Town Administrator Public Works
ED-5. Work with the state to help provide services and facilities at high use recreational areas.						5-10	Parks and Recreation Department Town Administrator Town Council
ED-6. Support local organizations for off-season events that contribute to the local economy commensurate with local services.						Ongoing	Town Administrator Town Council
ED-7. Identify and pursue locations for additional parking in the most concentrated parts of Jamestown.						1-5	Parking Committee Town Council Town Administrator Planning Department



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
ED-8. Improve general appearance of commercial zones by upgrading and maintaining public facilities such as signage, parking, streetscape improvements, public restrooms and waterfront amenities.						10-20	Planning Department Public Works Town Council Town Administrator
ED-9. Ensure that the number of moorings, slips, both private and commercial, are supported by adequate landside facilities.						Ongoing	Harbor Commission Town Administrator Town Council
ED-10. Develop comprehensive development and management plans for East and West Ferry with special attention to maintenance of the working waterfront and resolution of user conflicts therein (e.g. boaters, fisherman, pedestrians).						5-10	Planning Commission Planning Department Town Council Town Administrator
ED-11. Retain all existing visual and physical access to the waterfront in and adjacent to commercial districts and improve access where possible.						Ongoing	Town Council Town Administrator Harbor Commission
ED-12. Develop regulations to encourage protection of historic structures and regulation of demolition of historic structures in Jamestown, especially in the Village area.						5-10	Planning Department Planning Commission Town Council



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
ED-13. Stay abreast of Economic Development issues and gauge interest of the Chamber of Commerce in partnering with the Town on issues of mutual importance to the Town.						Ongoing	Town Administrator Planning Department Town Council
ED-14. Review and amend zoning ordinance to ensure permitted uses, requirements, etc. are compatible with community character and will foster desired results.						5-10	Planning Department Planning Commission Town Council
ED-15. Be alert to changes in technology that require updating Zoning Ordinance.						Ongoing	Planning Department Planning Commission
ED-16. Continue to monitor and participate in the planning for development of Quonset Davisville Port and Commerce Park.						Ongoing	Quonset Davisville Liaison Representative Planning Department Town Administrator
ED-17. Work with Commerce RI and Governor's Office to monitor progress of development that would affect Jamestown.						Ongoing	Town Administrator Planning Department
ED-18. Continue the work of the Jamestown Restoration Advisory Board to coordinate with the Army Corp of Engineers and the RIDEM on the cleanup and future use of Gould Island						5-10	Town Administrator Public Works
ED-19. Encourage a Narragansett Bay Master Plan which establishes a vision for compatibility of the many and varied uses of the Bay.						5-10	Town Council Town Administrator



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
ED-20. Seek opportunities to participate in other state and regional planning issues.						Ongoing	Planning Department Planning Commission
ED-21. Explore state and regional funding opportunities to support local businesses.						1-5	Planning Department Town Administrator
ED-22. Seek opportunities to partner with the state to create regulations and a tax structure that encourages full-time, long-term rentals.						5-10	Town Administrator Town Council
ED-23. Conduct a study of water and sewer capacity to determine the impact of additional lodging and expanding businesses Townwide.						1-5	Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners Planning Department Planning Commission

DPY



PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Goals

Goal SF-1: Achieve high-quality facilities that integrate energy efficiency, resilient design, and meet the needs of residents without compromising neighborhood character or community resources.

Goal SF-2: Maintain high quality, affordable public services to Jamestown residents as feasible and cost efficient.

Goal SF-3: Achieve a multifaceted solid-waste program that meets the state's recommended 35% recycling and 50% waste diversion rates.

Goal SF-4: Develop a technologically advanced network of public facilities to meet the evolving needs of residents of all ages.

Policies

Policy SF-1: Site, design, build, maintain, and operate public facilities to be compatible, as far as possible, with the character of the neighborhood in which they are located.

Policy SF-2: Ensure the cost of public services remains reasonable.

Policy SF-3: Increase the quantity and improve the quality of the Town's existing public drinking water supply.

Policy SF-4: Ensure development does not exceed safe yield of water and/or wastewater capacity and ensure future public services plan is adequate to accommodate Jamestown's growing population.

Policy SF-5: Integrate Townwide energy and sustainability goals into municipal building design and construction.

Policy SF-6: Consider the consolidation of the Lawn Avenue and Melrose Avenue schools to account for declining student populations.

Policy SF-7: Assess technological upgrades across facilities to keep pace with a modernizing world.

Policy SF-8: Promote library programs that are educational and engaging for residents of all ages.

Policy SF-9: Maintain the library's vast collection online and in-person to ensure equitable access for all.

Policy SF-10: Consider options for the redevelopment of the Town's building at Fort Wetherill.

Policy SF-11: Continue to integrate Recycling recommendations into standard practices of the Transfer Station and Town overall.

Policy SF-12: Identify sources of inflow and infiltration and remove from sewer collection system.

Policy SF-13: Allocate sufficient funding to emergency service departments to adequately protect public safety and security.

Policy SF-14: Retain a healthy, age-appropriate, and volunteer where appropriate, force of emergency personnel to maintain public safety.

Policy SF-15: Consider constructing a satellite fire station located in Jamestown's North End.

Policy SF-16: Support social programs that help residents of all ages to live long, fulfilling lives.



Policy SF-17: Consider food composting as a Town-wide service to reduce solid waste stream and meet State and local solid waste goals.

Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
	    						
SF-1: Conduct a needs analysis for future indoor recreation.						1-5	Parks and Recreation Department Town Administrator Planning Department
SF-2: Provide adequate funding to ensure proper building and facility maintenance.						Ongoing	Budget Commission Town Administrator Town Council
SF-3: Budget the development of a north end garage to house fire equipment to reduce response time in that area and plan for the public safety needs of the Beavertail peninsula during emergencies.						1-5	Budget Commission Town Administrator Town Council
SF-4: Conduct a study to identify cost-effective alternatives to expand the quantity of and improve the quality of the existing water supply.						1-5	Public Works (Water and Sewer Divisions) Planning Department Town Council Town Administrator
SF-5: Lobby the State and Federal Government to increase aid to local municipalities for use in School Department.						Ongoing	Town Council Town Administrator School Department
SF-6: Assess the need for new Town waste services such as food composting, brush chipping, hazardous waste, spring/fall cleaning, trash pick-up, etc.						Ongoing	Town Administrator Town Council Public Works



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
SF-7: Incorporate sustainable building practices including green energy into all Town building projects where feasible and prioritize energy efficiency and cost-saving retrofits in existing facilities.						Ongoing	Town Administrator Town Council Public Works
SF-8: Implement a recycling education program in accordance with Recycling Committee recommendations.						1-5	Town Council Public Works Town Administrator
SF-9: Implement transfer station improvements to facilitate recycling and food composting.						1-5	Town Council Public Works Town Administrator
SF-10: Investigate a financial incentive program to increase recycling and food composting.						5-10	Town Council Public Works Town Administrator
SF-11: Maintain existing and install new technological systems across Town facilities to keep pace with the modern landscape.						Ongoing	Town Administrator Town Council
SF-12: Enforce civil penalties for any residents that connect illegally to the public water supply.?						1-5	Town Council Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners
SF-13: Sufficiently fund emergency service departments to maintain public safety and security.						Ongoing	Budget Commission Town Council Town Administrator
SF-14: Upgrade existing sewer lines to prevent exfiltration after major storms.						10-20	Public Works (Sewer Division) Town Council Town Administrator



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
SF-15: Showcase emergency services at the annual “Island Treasures” in local schools to educate students about careers in public safety.						1-5	Town Administrator Police Department Fire Department School Department
SF-16: Identify financial incentives for the volunteer Fire Department and EMS to retain age-appropriate personnel.						1-5	Town Council Town Administrator Fire Department and EMS
SF-17: Conduct an analysis for existing educational facilities to determine the potential for consolidating the Lawn Avenue and Melrose Avenue schools.						1-5	Planning Department School Department Town Administrator
SF-18: Develop an educational outreach program that incorporates new technology through the library and local schools to encourage students to read and engage with the library's vast collection of materials.						1-5	Library Town Administrator
SF-19: Redevelop the senior center with the bond funds allocated in 2025, based on the results of the senior center needs analysis, completed in 2023.						5-10	Town Council Town Administrator
SF-20: Investigate and support food composting for residents, schools and businesses including methods to ensure it is financially feasible.						1-5	Town Administrator Public Works Planning Department



TRANSPORTATION

Goals

Goal T-1: Provide safe, efficient, and balanced local circulation patterns that prioritize safety for all transportation modes and accommodate existing and future population growth consistent with a “Complete Streets” policy.

Goal T-2: Promote multimodal transportation infrastructure to support healthy lifestyles, environmental sustainability, and community resilience.

Goal T-3: Strengthen connections between transportation and land use planning to reduce congestion, parking pressures, and dependency on single-occupancy vehicles.

Goal T-4: Enhance Jamestown’s connectivity to the broader region through reliable and efficient public transit and marine transportation consistent with Jamestown’s rural character and parking availability.

Policies

Policy T-1: Create a “Complete Streets” policy that promotes alternative forms of transportation and a coordinated system of bicycle and walking routes linking residential areas to recreation, scenic and cultural areas throughout the island while retaining roads rural character.

Policy T-2: Improve roads to provide an acceptable level of service at a reasonable cost to the taxpayer.

Policy T-3: Provide an acceptable level of service for parking in the village commercial area.

Policy T-4: Expand and enhance bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to provide safe, convenient, and accessible transportation options for all ages and abilities.

Policy T-5: Integrate green infrastructure and sustainable practices into transportation projects to mitigate environmental impacts and adapt to climate change.

Policy T-6: Monitor trends and adopt town policies for the proper accommodation and use of e-bikes, e-scooters, electric vehicles (EVs) and low-speed electric transportation to reduce carbon emissions and enhance local air quality.

Policy T-7: Encourage compact, walkable, and bike-friendly development patterns in village areas and near key community destinations.

Policy T-8: Align parking strategies with economic development goals, balancing the needs of local businesses, residents, and visitors.

Policy T-9: Work with RIPTA and regional partners to consider the feasibility of a local park-and-ride and to improve bus and shuttle service frequency, reliability, and connectivity for Jamestown residents.

Policy T-10: Support ferry services and marine transportation options, particularly connections to Newport and Providence while not increasing parking congestion in the Village.



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
T-1. Work with the RIDOT and Town DPW to include bicycle lanes as part of State and Town road upgrades while retaining roads rural character in coordination with the 2024 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.						Ongoing	Bike Path Committee Public Works Planning Department
T-2. Where appropriate, require the construction of pedestrian and bicycle paths in new subdivisions linking population bases as well as the village area.						Ongoing	Planning Commission Planning Department Bike Path Committee
T-3. Plan a five-year road and drainage improvement program at current funding level using grants where available.						1-5	Public Works Town Administrator Town Council
T-4. Annually update the Pavement Management Program to establish priorities for road improvements.						Ongoing	Public Works Town Administrator Town Council
T-5. Investigate the use of innovative solutions for island transportation issues and problems (e.g. traffic calming).						Ongoing	Public Works Planning Department Planning Commission
T-6. Develop policy on creation and maintenance of private roads and discourage private roads that do not meet public road standards.						1-5	Planning Department Public Works Town Administrator Town Council



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
T-7. The Town should purchase or negotiate to lease at least one parcel for parking in the commercial downtown area within close proximity to retail area.						1-5	Town Administrator Town Council
T-8. Develop regulations that ensure the street corners are clear of vegetation and visible and full sidewalk width is maintained clear from all vegetation to a height of 8 feet by adjacent property owner.						1-5	Town Council Town Administrator
T-9. Work with Chamber of Commerce to have businesses encourage employees to walk, bike or take public transit to work or park away from businesses, leaving storefront parking available for customers.						1-5	Planning Department Town Administrator Chamber of Commerce
T-10. Prioritize and implement the 2024 Jamestown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, focusing on high-priority bicycle and pedestrian corridors such as North Road, East Shore Road, and Beavertail Road.						5-10	Bike Path Committee Planning Department Public Works
T-11. Conduct regular maintenance and safety inspections of existing bicycle facilities and pedestrian paths, ensuring they remain accessible and safe year-round.						Ongoing	Public Works Bike Path Committee



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
T-12. Integrate resiliency into transportation improvement projects including permeable pavement, green stormwater infrastructure, and erosion control practices, particularly on roadways vulnerable to climate impacts.						Ongoing	Planning Department Public Works Planning Commission
T-13. Evaluate strategic locations and secure funding for public electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, especially in high-usage areas such as village commercial districts and recreation sites.						1-5	Town Administrator Town Council
T-14. Update subdivision and zoning regulations to explicitly encourage pedestrian-friendly design, bicycle connectivity, and walkable neighborhoods through enhanced sidewalk and pathway requirements.						1-5	Planning Department Planning Commission Bike Path Committee
T-15. Conduct a comprehensive parking management study for the commercial village area to evaluate existing and projected future needs, parking standards, and explore innovative parking solutions.						1-5	Parking Committee Planning Department Town Administrator
T-16. Explore regulatory incentives for commercial developments that include shared parking arrangements, EV parking infrastructure, bicycle storage, or other parking demand-reducing strategies.						1-5	Planning Department Planning Commission Parking Committee



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
T-17. Advocate for increased frequency and improved schedules for RIPTA bus routes #14 and #64 to better serve Jamestown commuters, particularly during peak hours and weekends.						1-5	Town Council Town Administrator Planning Department
T-18. Investigate the feasibility of introducing a seasonal shuttle or trolley service connecting village areas, North End, recreational areas, and key parking locations.						5-10	Town Council Town Administrator Planning Department
T-19. Work with ferry operators and state agencies to identify opportunities for expanding ferry routes and increasing service frequency, particularly to Providence, to alleviate vehicular traffic during peak tourism seasons while not increasing parking or traffic congestion in the Village area.						1-5	Harbor Commission Town Council Town Administrator



HOUSING

Goals

Goal H-1: Create a diversity of housing types (such as homeownership, rental, employee preference, etc.) to meet the needs of Jamestown's low-moderate income residents, town employees, and special populations while maintaining Jamestown's unique mixture of village and rural character.

Goal H-2: Attain and strive to exceed the 10% low and moderate housing goal set by the state.

Goal H-3: Ensure the long-term affordability of Jamestown's housing stock.

Goal H-4: Strengthen partnerships and build community support for affordable housing development.

Goal H-5: Revise the zoning ordinance to further promote affordable housing and aging in place.

Goal H-6: Identify potential locations for affordable housing development.

Goal H-7: Identify existing resources and develop new dedicated, consistent funding source(s) for affordable housing development.

Policies

Policy H-1: Support workforce housing initiatives for local employees and essential workers.

Policy H-2: Promote housing rehabilitation and adaptive use of existing structures.

Policy H-3: Preserve existing affordable housing units through extended affordability restrictions.

Policy H-4: Implement programs which ensure the long-term affordability of Jamestown's housing.

Policy H-5: Strengthen partnerships and build community support for affordable housing.

Policy H-6: Revise the zoning ordinance to promote affordable housing and aging in place.

Policy H-7: Regulate short-term rentals to protect year-round housing availability.

Policy H-8: Encourage small-scale housing solutions.

Policy H-9: Identify and prioritize suitable locations for affordable housing development.

Policy H-10: Expand and secure consistent funding sources for affordable housing projects.

Policy H-11: Invest in infrastructure improvements to support affordable housing development.

Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
H-1. Establish an employer assisted housing program.						5-10	Town Council Town Administrator



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
H-2. Provide incentives for developers to build workforce housing.						1-5	Planning Department Planning Commission Town Council Town Administrator
H-3. Prioritize town-owned land and resources for workforce housing projects.						5-10	Town Council Planning Department Town Administrator
H-4. Provide incentives for adaptive reuse of vacant or underutilized buildings for affordable housing.						1-5	Town Council Affordable Housing Committee Planning Department
H-5. Partner with historic preservation organizations to educate and promote the benefits of rehabilitating existing structures for housing.						1-5	Town Council Jamestown Historical Society Planning Department
H-6. Support energy efficiency and accessibility upgrades in older homes.						5-10	Town Council Town Administrator
H-7. Monitor compliance with affordability requirements for deed-restricted housing.						1-5	Affordable Housing Committee Planning Department
H-8. Provide financial assistance to property owners to maintain and extend affordability agreements.						1-5	Town Council Affordable Housing Committee Planning Department
H-9. Support community land trusts to keep homes permanently affordable.						10-20	Affordable Housing Committee Planning Department Town Council
H-10. Use Church Community Housing Corporation's Land Trust to preserve affordable units over the long term.						Ongoing	Affordable Housing Committee Planning Department



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
H-11. Explore other affordability mechanisms where appropriate.						Ongoing	Affordable Housing Committee Planning Department
H-12. Support creation of a Jamestown Community Housing Land Trust.						5-10	Affordable Housing Committee Planning Department Town Council
H-13. Continue and support the duties of the Jamestown Affordable Housing Committee.						1-5	Affordable Housing Committee Town Administrator Town Council
H-14. Raise awareness of Jamestown's affordable housing needs through public education.						Ongoing	Affordable Housing Committee Planning Department
H-15. Monitor and support the implementation of the Affordable Housing Plan.						Ongoing	Affordable Housing Committee Planning Department
H-16. Endorse appropriate affordable housing proposals.						Ongoing	Affordable Housing Committee
H-17. Strengthen partnerships and working relationships for affordable housing.						Ongoing	Affordable Housing Committee Planning Department
H-18. Work with CCHC and other non-profit developers to develop affordable housing in Jamestown.						Ongoing	Town Council Planning Department Affordable Housing Committee
H-19. Encourage and assist the Jamestown Housing Authority to become a more active affordable housing provider.						Ongoing	Town Council Affordable Housing Committee Planning Department



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
H-20. Actively pursue partnerships with land conservation associations in order to further the preservation of open space and the development of affordable housing.						Ongoing	Town Council Affordable Housing Committee Planning Department
H-21. Conduct a needs assessment to further identify Jamestown's need and methods for attaining affordable housing including targeted locations.						1-5	Affordable Housing Committee Planning Department Town Council
H-22. Adopt Zoning Ordinance provisions that encourage a diversity of housing types that are affordable.						1-5	Planning Department Planning Commission Affordable Housing Committee Town Council
H-23. Require property owners to register short-term rentals and enforce compliance with state and local regulations.						1-5	Town Council Town Administrator Town Clerk
H-24. Establish incentives for converting short-term rentals into year-round housing.						1-5	Town Council Planning Department Planning Commission
H-25. Coordinate with Legislative representatives to strengthen local control over Short-term Rentals							Town Council Town Administrator
H-26. Review and amend short-term rental policy to limit their impact on long-term rental and affordable housing.						1-5	Planning Department Planning Commission Affordable Housing Committee



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
H-27. Investigate small housing options for inclusion in Zoning.						1-5	Planning Department Planning Commission Town Council
H-28. Offer financial incentives or tax abatements for homeowners who build and rent ADUs as long-term/affordable housing.						1-5	Town Council Tax Assessor Town Administrator
H-29. Target appropriate parcels for infill development of affordable housing.						Ongoing	Affordable Housing Committee Planning Department Town Council
H-30 Target appropriate parcels outside the village area for development as affordable housing.						Ongoing	Affordable Housing Committee Planning Department Town Council
H-31. Identify and obtain sites where donated homes can be moved.						Ongoing	Affordable Housing Committee Planning Department Town Administrator
H-32. Seek out existing homes for purchase and add to existing permanently affordable housing stock.						Ongoing	Affordable Housing Committee Town Council Town Administrator
H-33. Establish a local Affordable Housing Trust Fund including a dependable and sustainable source of readily available funds for affordable housing development.						Ongoing	Town Council Planning Department Affordable Housing Committee
H-34. Utilize Existing Federal and State funding sources for affordable housing development.						Ongoing	Affordable Housing Committee Planning Department Town Council



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
H-35. Development should not exceed safe yield of water and/or wastewater capacity in all areas of Jamestown.						Ongoing	Planning Department Planning Commission Town Council Public Works
H-36. Seek state and federal funding for infrastructure projects that enable housing development.						5-10	Town Administrator Affordable Housing Committee Planning Department
H-37. Maintain and upgrade roads, sidewalks, and utilities in targeted areas of housing development.						10-20	Public Works Planning Department Town Administrator
H-38. Coordinate infrastructure planning with affordable housing initiatives to maximize impact.						Ongoing	Planning Department Affordable Housing Committee Public Works Town Administrator



SUSTAINABILITY & RESILIENCE

Goals

Goal SR-1: Promote a climate-resilient community by proactively planning for natural hazards, especially for fragile and scenic coastal areas.

Goal SR-2: Safeguard Jamestown's ecological systems and cultural assets through green infrastructure and sustainable practices.

Goal SR-3: Achieve a greener, more sustainable Jamestown with minimal reliance upon fossil fuels.

Goal SR-4: Ensure vulnerable populations, infrastructure, and essential services are supported before, during, and immediately following natural disasters.

Goal SR-5: Promote alternative energy systems that reduce costs to local residents.

Policies

Policy SR-1: Encourage the adoption of coastal adaptation measures, especially in low-lying areas of Jamestown.

Policy SR-2: Proactively plan for natural hazard vulnerability including those hazards which may increase due to climate change.

Policy SR-3: Prioritize nature-based solutions and green infrastructure to manage stormwater, reduce runoff, and mitigate flooding.

Policy SR-4: Consider Townwide transition to building electrification and renewable energy system installation.

Policy SR-5: Promote the use of electric vehicles and low-carbon transportation options to reduce carbon emissions from the transportation sector.

Policy SR-6: Assist vulnerable populations with planning for natural disasters.

Policy SR-7: Ensure critical infrastructure is protected from natural hazards to prevent significant disruptions to integral systems.

Policy SR-8: Manage costs associated with energy efficiency and alternative energy systems for municipal scale programs and residential scale projects.

Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility		
					SR-1. Amend zoning and subdivision regulations to require climate-resilient design standards for related vulnerabilities in Jamestown.			
Actions	Themes			Time & Responsibility	SR-1. Amend zoning and subdivision regulations to require climate-resilient design standards for related vulnerabilities in Jamestown.			
					SR-1. Amend zoning and subdivision regulations to require climate-resilient design standards for related vulnerabilities in Jamestown.			



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
SR-2. Invest in grey and green infrastructure where necessary to protect residents and critical infrastructure from flooding and stormwater damage.						5-10	Public Works Town Council Town Administrator
SR-3. Update, review annually and implement the RIEMA and FEMA approved Hazard Mitigation Plan.						1-5	Emergency Management Planning Department Town Administrator
SR-4. Reassess Jamestown's evacuation procedure and identify contingency plans for natural hazard events where access on and off the island may be restricted.						1-5	Emergency Management Town Administrator Town Council
SR-5. Conduct vulnerability assessments for critical infrastructure, historic properties, and low-lying neighborhoods.						5-10	Emergency Management Planning Department Town Council Town Administrator
SR-6. Upgrade stormwater systems using bioswales, permeable surfaces, and green roofs in flood-prone areas.						10-20	Public Works Town Administrator Town Council
SR-7. Support energy conservation, building electrification, and installation of renewable energy systems on public and private properties.						Ongoing	Town Council Town Administrator Public Works
SR-8. Incorporate sustainable building practices including green energy into all Town building projects where feasible.						Ongoing	Town Administrator Town Council Public Works



Actions	Themes					Time & Responsibility	
						Time Frame	Responsibility
SR-9. Require all new municipal buildings to meet or exceed LEED or similar green building standards.						1-5	Town Council Town Administrator Public Works
SR-10. Work regionally with partners to develop innovative renewable energy solutions.						5-10	Town Council Town Administrator
SR-11. Investigate programs to support small-scale residential and commercial solar installations.						1-5	Town Administrator Town Council Planning Department
SR-12. Install electric vehicle charging stations on Town-owned land and encourage the state to do the same on state owned land.						5-10	Town Administrator Town Council
SR-13. Investigate financial or other incentives for private property owners to install electric charging stations on their land.						1-5	Town Council Town Administrator
SR-14. Inform and engage the public, especially vulnerable populations, regarding natural hazard preparedness.						Ongoing	Emergency Management Town Administrator
SR-15. Develop an emergency preparedness plan that identifies solutions to protect critical infrastructure and vulnerable populations.						1-5	Emergency Management Planning Department Public Works Town Administrator
SR-16. Educate residents on net metering and other financial incentive programs to reduce costs of home energy systems.						1-5	Town Council Town Administrator





DPY

3 LAND USE



Town of Jamestown, Rhode Island

Community Comprehensive Plan Update

Land Use

Background

The Land Use chapter's purpose within the Comprehensive Community Plan is to provide a comprehensive overview of how land is currently utilized in Jamestown, offering a detailed analysis of its various districts, zoning, and future development trends. It examines both residential and commercial areas, highlights key conservation efforts, and discusses the unique challenges associated with land use, such as non-conforming lots and environmental limitations. This chapter touches on major themes including the preservation of open spaces, the impact of zoning regulations, and the Town's efforts to balance growth with environmental sustainability.

This chapter touches on matters related to public facilities and services, transportation, housing, and open space, which are addressed in more detail in other sections of the comprehensive plan. This chapter provides key findings about residential trends, development limitations, geographic characteristics and the land management priorities of the town and its residents. It also includes an analysis of possible buildout and proposed future land use patterns to achieve the plan's goals.

Goals



To preserve and enhance Jamestown's rural character while promoting sustainable growth that aligns with the town's environmental, housing, and economic goals.



To enhance housing diversity and affordability to support and prioritize year-round residents, including families with children, elderly residents and local/essential workers.



To adopt land use policies and zoning strategies which would strengthen Jamestown's local economy through year-round economic development initiatives.

Policies

1. Maintain and update Jamestown's land use regulations to guide development consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, addressing housing diversity, zoning alignment, and resilience to climate impacts.
2. Create zoning strategies that expand a diversity of year-round housing opportunities while preserving neighborhood character and minimizing environmental impacts.
3. Develop a permanent, sustainable funding source for the Jamestown Affordable Housing Trust.
4. Encourage adaptive reuse of existing properties and homes for affordable housing.
5. Promote zoning flexibility to enable year-round economic activities.
6. Encourage adaptive reuse of existing properties for economic activities.
7. Prioritize connectivity to the commercial village through land use strategies.

See Implementation table for all goals, policies, and actions for this chapter

Disclaimer: goals and policies are in draft form and subject to further review and approval by the Town of Jamestown

3.0 LAND USE

Our Vision: Land use in Jamestown should reinforce the Town's rural character and historic development pattern while directing growth to appropriate locations. Future land use decisions should protect natural and coastal resources and reflect the Island's physical constraints, infrastructure capacity, and community values.

3

Introduction

The Land Use chapter establishes a framework for guiding future development and conservation decisions in Jamestown. It describes existing land use patterns, identifies areas appropriate for growth and redevelopment, and highlights lands and resources that warrant long-term protection. Together, these elements provide the basis for aligning land use decisions with the community's vision, infrastructure capacity, and environmental constraints.

As an island community with limited land area, Jamestown faces unique challenges related to development pressure, infrastructure limitations, and protection of natural and coastal resources. Land use decisions play a critical role in shaping the Island's character, influencing housing opportunities, supporting economic activity, and preserving the rural and scenic qualities that define Jamestown.

This chapter builds on community input, existing conditions analysis, and prior planning efforts to inform land use policies and the Future Land Use Map. The guidance provided in this chapter is intended to support consistent decision-making and ensure that future land use changes reflect community values and long-term planning goals.



3.1. Community Insights

Feedback gathered through the public meeting and community survey highlighted several concerns and priorities related to land use in Jamestown. Many participants emphasized the importance of preserving the Town's rural character while addressing ongoing development pressure and environmental challenges. A consistent theme among respondents was the need to protect open space, groundwater, and drinking water resources across the Island,



particularly as less than 15 percent of land remains available for potential development. Residents also raised concerns about areas such as Jamestown Shores, where substandard lots, poor soil conditions, and septic system limitations may pose risks to water quality.

Residents further identified housing affordability and limited housing diversity as significant challenges. Rising housing costs, along with the expansion of short-term rentals, were cited as factors making it increasingly difficult for year-round residents, younger families, and essential workers to remain in the community. In addition, participants expressed concern about the impacts of climate change, particularly sea-level rise and flooding in areas such as Mackerel Cove and North Road, which many view as critical issues requiring proactive land use planning. Together, this input reflects the community's desire for environmental stewardship, managed growth, and equitable housing opportunities, and it has informed the goals, policies, and actions presented in this chapter.

3.2. General Characteristics

Land use in Jamestown varies considerably and generally follows a traditional village pattern, with a mixed-use core and decreasing residential density extending outward to larger-lot residential areas, farmland, and natural areas. This pattern also includes several smaller-lot, higher-density neighborhoods interspersed within otherwise less dense areas. These pockets of nonconforming development include Jamestown Shores, the north end of Jamestown, and Clarke's Village on Beavertail.

Jamestown also contains a significant amount of undeveloped land, which plays a critical role in preserving the Town's character as a small, rural island community. This land contributes to the protection of natural resources—particularly water resources—and provides numerous recreational opportunities for residents. Undeveloped land in Jamestown includes permanently protected land that is privately and publicly owned and accessible, temporarily protected land, and land that may have the potential for future development.

The predominant land use in Jamestown is medium- to medium-low-density residential development, with lot sizes ranging from approximately one-quarter acre to two acres. Commercial land uses are primarily concentrated within the downtown commercial zoning districts. While new residential development has continued to increase—by approximately 4 percent between 2000 and 2010 and 23 percent between 2010 and 2020—the availability of vacant land for development has declined. As a result, home expansions and renovations have increased annually, along with the demolition of existing homes and construction of significantly larger replacement structures.

Consistent with this Plan's goal "to protect and where possible increase the current acreage of working farmland, while supporting sustainable agricultural practices and agritourism consistent with Jamestown's rural character," the Town and private organizations have made substantial progress in preserving farmland and open space. In 2007, the owners of Dutra (Wanton) Farm and Neale (Windmist) Farm sold the development rights to the majority of



their properties, protecting an additional 81 and 37 acres, respectively. In 2023, the Jamestown Community Farm entered into an option-to-purchase agreement for approximately 14 acres at the corner of Eldred Avenue and East Shore Road in order to continue agricultural activities in perpetuity. This ongoing effort involves the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, and the Town of Jamestown, which has committed \$400,000 toward farmland preservation.

As of December 2023, approximately 889.24 acres—roughly 14.6 percent of the land area in Jamestown—were temporarily protected under the State's Farm, Forest, and Open Space Program. This program allows for reduced property taxes when land meets specific criteria such as farmland, open space, or forestland.

3.3. Geographic Areas

Jamestown can be divided into four distinct types of geographic areas: the Village, Jamestown Shores, rural residential areas, and conservation and recreation areas. The Village and Jamestown Shores are located in defined areas of the Town, while rural residential areas and conservation and recreation areas are distributed across multiple locations throughout the Island. These are illustrated in Map 3.1. Geographic Areas.

3.3.1. The Village

The Village is defined as the area between Great Creek and Hamilton Avenue, extending from the east to the west shorelines of the Island, excluding Beavertail. This area contains the highest density development in Jamestown, supported by the presence of public sewer and water services. Most structures in the Village are single-family residential homes, though a limited number of multi-family apartments and condominiums are also present.

Historically, the Village has served as the focal point for commercial, business, and civic activity in Jamestown and remains the center of service, retail, and business uses. Nearly 70 businesses are located within the Village across the Commercial Downtown (CD) and Commercial Limited (CL) zoning districts, with the CD district containing approximately twice as many businesses as the CL district.

The Village also includes a mix of commercial and residential mixed-use buildings. Town facilities located in this area include the Melrose and Lawn Avenue schools, the Philomenian Library, Town Hall, the Recreation Center, the Police Station, and the Fire and Emergency Services building. The northern portion of the Village contains several large open space areas, including the golf course, Conanicut Island Sanctuary, Taylor Point, and Great Creek Marsh.



The East Ferry area of the Village contains the greatest concentration of recreational boating activity, public waterfront access for boating and fishing, and waterfront-oriented commercial uses.



Legend

- Roads
- Land Area
 - Conservation Area
 - Jamestown Shores
 - Rural Residential
 - The Village



The area extending from West Ferry to East Ferry and between Hamilton Avenue and Mount Hope Avenue comprises the urban service district for public water and sewer. Under the existing Rules and Regulations of the Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners, only properties with frontage along existing water and sewer lines are permitted to connect to these systems. All other connections are subject to approval at the discretion of the Board (see the Public Services and Facilities chapter for additional discussion).

3.3.2. Jamestown Shores

Jamestown Shores is located north of Watson Farm, extending to Capstan Street and bounded by North Road, the Cedar Hill Farm development, and the West Passage of Narragansett Bay. Subdivided in the early 1940s, the area developed slowly as a seasonal community. Over time, many summer cottages were converted to year-round residences, and following the introduction of nitrogen-reducing septic systems, new homes were constructed on substandard lots. While infill development continues, it is expected to slow as remaining buildable lots are developed.

Jamestown Shores is exclusively a single-family residential neighborhood. Although the area is zoned R-40, requiring a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet, many parcels are nonconforming lots of approximately 7,200 square feet, as originally platted. The neighborhood has an average density of approximately three dwelling units per acre, with prevailing lot sizes ranging from 7,200 to 14,400 square feet. The area is served entirely by onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS) and private wells, and the combination of high development density and reliance on OWTS creates vulnerability to groundwater pollution. In response, the Town adopted a merger provision in 1967 requiring adjacent substandard lots under common ownership to be combined.

Soils in the Shores are generally poorly suited for septic absorption, and groundwater resources are limited. The Town's wells, which draw groundwater near the reservoir, may also affect private wells in the area. Development has resulted in increased impervious surfaces and runoff, further compounded by high groundwater levels. To address these issues, the Town adopted a Wastewater Management Plan, including the 2001 On-Site Wastewater Management Ordinance, which mandates inspection and maintenance of OWTS.

A Source Water Assessment completed in 2003 by the University of Rhode Island, in conjunction with the Town, evaluated drinking water reservoirs, wellhead protection areas, and watershed conditions across the Island. The assessment provided information necessary to support land use regulation within drinking water supply areas and informed subsequent planning and regulatory efforts.

Since 2003, the Jamestown Shores and Conanicut Park areas have been subject to additional zoning regulations based on high groundwater and impervious soil conditions. The High Groundwater Table and Impervious Layer Overlay District limits impervious coverage and requires stormwater attenuation for new development.



No public water or sewer service extends to the Shores, and the Town does not intend to extend these services in the future. Studies conducted by URI indicate that the Town's reservoir capacity would not support such extensions, and that sewer installation could reduce groundwater recharge provided by OWTS.

Wetlands further restrict development in the Shores. The Town has preserved more than 100 lots, many acquired through tax foreclosure, specifically for groundwater protection. Legal and acquisition costs were funded through dedicated budget allocations for water resource protection.

Several rights-of-way along Seaside Drive provide water access for residents, including the Town-owned Heads Beach. Heads Beach is an unguarded bathing area with limited boat-launching access and an associated public mooring field offshore.

3.3.3. Rural Residential Areas

Rural residential areas are located north and south of the Village and include Beavertail, the Dumplings, the center island, East Passage and West Reach subdivisions, and areas along North Road and East Shore Road. These areas include older homes along major roads, adjacent farmland, and larger-lot residential development. Zoning requires minimum lot sizes ranging from 80,000 square feet in the RR-80 district to 200,000 square feet in the RR-200 district.

Due to large lot sizes and low-density development, these areas rely on private wells and OWTS. Many soils in these areas are poorly suited for OWTS, and groundwater resources—particularly at Beavertail—have limited yield. The Conanicut Park area is an exception, containing smaller lots that could pose groundwater quality concerns if fully developed, though wetlands and zoning overlay districts restrict development.

3.3.4. Conservation Areas

Jamestown's primary conservation area is located within the Center Island district and encompasses more than 1,000 acres, including the Jamestown Brook watershed, wetlands, farmland, salt marshes, Great Creek, recreation areas, and numerous cultural and historic resources. Only limited residential development exists in this area.

Additional conservation areas include Dutch and Gould Islands, Fort Getty, Taylor Point Beach, Park Dock, Mackerel Cove Town Beach, Conanicut Battery Park, Sheffield Cove, Fort Wetherill, and Beavertail State Park.

Land protection in Jamestown serves multiple purposes and aligns with long-standing Plan goals to protect the Town's rural character while promoting sustainable growth consistent with land use, environmental, housing, and economic objectives. Approximately 29 percent of Jamestown's land area is permanently protected through state, local, and private efforts. Priority preservation areas have included the Center Island watershed, farmland, and parcels



within Jamestown Shores. Over 125 lots in Jamestown Shores are protected through Town ownership and conservation easements held by the Conanicut Island Land Trust. Dutra and Neale Farms are similarly protected, and Watson Farm is considered permanently protected through deed restrictions.

Despite substantial progress, important preservation opportunities remain, particularly related to drinking water protection. The most recent Water System Supply Management Plan indicates that public water system capacity is already exceeded during summer months and will be further strained by future development. The north and south pond watersheds, zoned RR-200, lack public services and require minimum lot sizes of nearly five acres. The Town does not intend to extend utilities to these areas.

3.4. Current Land Use

The Current Land Use section provides an overview of how land in Jamestown is allocated across major use categories, reflecting the Town's balance between development and preservation. This analysis is based on the Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS) 2020 Land Use and Land Cover dataset.

As of 2020, residential land accounted for approximately 34 percent of the Town's total area, an increase from 32 percent in 2011. Open space dominates the landscape, covering approximately 49 percent of Jamestown's land area. This figure includes all categories of open space, both permanently protected and unprotected, and underscores the Town's longstanding commitment to environmental preservation. Smaller portions of land are dedicated to agriculture (10.8 percent), commercial uses (0.92 percent), and institutional uses (1.28 percent), with the remaining area comprised of roads, industrial uses, vacant land, and other categories.

This land use distribution highlights Jamestown's predominantly rural character, limited commercial development, and emphasis on resource protection. Figure [X] provides a detailed breakdown of land use categories and changes between 2011 and 2020, while Map 3.2, Existing Land Use, illustrates the geographic distribution of land uses across the Island. It should be noted that this dataset is a statewide resource intended for townwide analysis at a general scale and may not capture site-specific land use conditions with complete precision.



Legend

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| — Roads | ■ Mixed Use |
| ■ Conservation Lands | ■ Low Density Residential |
| Land Use & Land Cover | |
| ■ Agricultural | ■ Medium Low Density Residential |
| ■ Beaches | ■ Medium Density Residential |
| ■ Cemeteries | ■ Medium High Density Residential |
| ■ Commercial | ■ High Density Residential |
| ■ Developed Recreation | ■ Rock Outcrops |
| ■ Industrial | ■ Undeveloped |
| ■ Institutional (schools, hospitals, churches, etc.) | ■ Utilities & Roadways |
| | ■ Water/Wetlands |



Table 3.1. Land Use and Land Cover, 2011 and 2020

2011			2020		
LAND USE	ACRES	%OF AREA	LAND USE	ACRES	%OF AREA
Residential	1,980	32.46%	Residential	2,075	34.02%
Commercial	57	0.93%	Commercial	56	0.92%
Institutional	79	1.30%	Institutional	78	1.28%
Agriculture	664	10.89%	Agriculture	660	10.82%
Recreation	124	2.03%	Recreation	127	2.08%
Open Space	3,079	50.48%	Open Space	2,989	49.00%
Roads	69	1.13%	Roads	69	1.13%
Industrial	24	0.39%	Industrial	26	0.42%
Transitional	13	0.21%	Transitional	8	0.13%
Vacant	11	0.18%	Vacant	12	0.20%
TOTAL	6,100	100%	TOTAL	6,100	100%

Source: RIGIS Land Use and Land Cover 2011, 2020

The land use categories summarized in Table 3-1 highlight how Jamestown's land area is distributed across residential, commercial, agricultural, open space, and other uses. The following points provide additional context for interpreting this data and identify notable land use patterns and trends observed across the Island.

- Residential: High Density Residential (4,500-8000 s.f.), Medium High Density Residential (1/4 to 1/8 acre lots), Medium Density Residential (1 to 1/4 acre lots), Medium Low Density Residential (1 to 2 acre lots), Low Density Residential (>2 acre lots)
- Commercial: Commercial (sale of products and services), Commercial/Residential Mixed
- Institutional: Institutional (schools, hospitals, churches, etc.), Cemeteries
- Agriculture: Cropland (tillable), Pasture (agricultural not suitable for tillage), Idle Agriculture (abandoned fields and orchards)
- Recreation: Developed Recreation (all recreation)
- Open Space: Brushland (shrub and brush areas, reforestation), Deciduous Forest, Softwood Forest, Mixed Forest, Water, Wetland, Beaches, Sandy Areas (not beaches), Rock Outcrops



- Roads: Roads (divided highways >200' plus related facilities)
- Industrial: Water and Sewage Treatment, Waste Disposal (landfills, junkyards, etc.), Power Lines (100' or more width), Other Transportation (terminals, docks, etc.)
- Transitional: Transitional Areas (urban open)
- Vacant: Vacant Land

3.4.1. Residential

Jamestown's current residential land use patterns vary across the Island, with distinct areas shaped by geography, infrastructure, and historic development. The Jamestown Shores area features medium-high to high-density residential development, characterized by smaller lot sizes, many of which are nonconforming and served by private wells and septic systems. In contrast, the Village area has high to moderate density residential development supported by municipal water and sewer services, with single-family homes dominating the landscape. Rural residential areas north and south of the Village consist of low- and very low-density, large-lot residential properties, often situated near farmland and open space. Conservation areas, while primarily protected from development, also contain scattered residential homes integrated into the natural landscape.

3.4.2. Commercial

Commercial land use in Jamestown is concentrated within the Village, particularly along Narragansett Avenue, where most of the Town's retail businesses, service establishments, and mixed-use buildings are located. This area functions as Jamestown's commercial center, providing essential services and amenities for residents and visitors.

Outside of the Village, commercial activity is limited. A small number of nonconforming commercial uses are located elsewhere on the Island, including boatyards and similar maritime-related facilities. This pattern reflects the Town's longstanding emphasis on preserving residential neighborhoods and rural landscapes outside the Village center.

3.4.3. Institutional and Religious

Institutional and religious land uses in Jamestown include a range of facilities that serve important civic, educational, and community functions. Religious institutions are primarily located within the Village and include St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Central Baptist Church, and St. Mark Catholic Church. These facilities host regular religious services and community activities and contribute to the Town's social and cultural life. The historic Quaker Meeting House is located on Weeden Lane. Several cemeteries—including St. Mark's Cemetery, Cedar Cemetery, Friends Burial Ground, Four Corners Cemetery, and Tefft Family Cemetery—also fall within this category and represent an important component of Jamestown's historic landscape.



Educational facilities comprise a significant portion of the Town's institutional land uses. Melrose Avenue School serves elementary students, while Lawn Avenue School accommodates middle school students. The Jamestown Early Learning Center provides early childhood education within the community. Jamestown high school students attend North Kingstown or Narragansett High School through a regional arrangement, with additional charter and technical school options also available. Collectively, these institutional and religious uses provide essential services and support Jamestown's educational, cultural, and community framework.

3.4.4. Agriculture

Jamestown contains nine working farms: Dutra (Wanton), Neale (Windmist), Hodgkiss, Watson, Jamestown Community Farm, Beaverhead, Fox Hill, Godena, and Jamestown Vineyard. Together, these farms encompassed approximately 680 acres as of 2020, including tillable cropland, idle agricultural land, and pasture (RIGIS, 2020).

In 2007, development rights for Dutra and Windmist Farms were purchased through a partnership involving the Town of Jamestown, the State of Rhode Island, The Nature Conservancy, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Watson Farm is owned by Historic New England and is considered protected from development based on specific deed restrictions governing future use of the property. Godena Farm was purchased by the Conanicut Island Land Trust in 2009. Hodgkiss Farm was the first farm permanently protected from development through a cooperative effort involving the owner, the Town, The Nature Conservancy, and the State of Rhode Island. Beaverhead and Fox Hill Farms remain privately owned and active, with development restricted through conservation easements held by The Nature Conservancy. Windmist Farm, also privately owned, is largely preserved through conservation easements and hosts the Hard-Pressed Cider Company each fall. Jamestown Vineyard has been privately owned and operational since 2010.

3.4.5. Recreation

Recreational land uses are predominantly located in Jamestown's outlying areas. Large public recreation sites—including Fort Wetherill State Park, Beavertail State Park, Conanicut Battery Park, Fort Getty, and Taylor Point—are central to the Town's recreational system and provide access to both natural and developed amenities for residents and visitors.

Additional recreational facilities include the Jamestown Golf Course located within the Village, as well as smaller parks and public spaces distributed throughout rural residential areas and Jamestown Shores. Together, these facilities support a wide range of recreational opportunities across the Island.



3.4.6. Open Space

Open space is a defining feature of Jamestown, particularly within conservation areas that span much of the Island. These areas include Marsh Meadows, Mackerel Cove, and Conanicut Battery, which protect natural resources, wildlife habitat, and scenic landscapes.

Open space within rural residential areas further contributes to Jamestown's scenic character and environmental quality. Even within more developed areas such as the Village and Jamestown Shores, efforts have been made to retain significant open spaces for community use and environmental protection.

3.4.7. Roads

Roads, classified by RIGIS as transportation, communication, and utility land uses, are concentrated in and around the Village and extend outward to Jamestown Shores and rural residential areas. This network provides access to residential, commercial, and institutional uses across the Island.

Road infrastructure is more limited within conservation areas, where minimal roadway development helps protect natural landscapes. Jamestown contains approximately 83 miles of roadway, and the total acreage devoted to roads has remained unchanged since 2011 (RIGIS, 2020).

3.4.8. Industrial

Industrial land use in Jamestown is limited and primarily located near the Village. This category includes essential public facilities such as water and wastewater treatment infrastructure. Industrial activity elsewhere on the Island is minimal, reflecting Jamestown's predominantly residential, agricultural, and conservation-oriented land use pattern. Transitional

Transitional land uses are found primarily within the Village, where older or underutilized properties are gradually being redeveloped. Identified by RIGIS as transitional urban land, these areas reflect evolving patterns of use, particularly within commercial districts where mixed-use development has become more common.

3.4.9. Vacant

Vacant land, classified by RIGIS as undeveloped land, is primarily located within rural residential and conservation areas. These parcels, which often consist of former agricultural land or natural open space, represent potential opportunities for future development or preservation.



Vacant lands play an important role in Jamestown's long-term planning efforts, supporting a balance between accommodating growth and maintaining the Town's rural character, scenic quality, and environmental resources.

3.5. Zoning

Jamestown regulates land use through Chapter 82 – Zoning of the Town Code of Ordinances. Jamestown's first Zoning Ordinance was enacted in 1935 which was readopted in 1962. The Town's modern zoning framework was adopted in 1995 to align with the requirements of Rhode Island's Zoning Enabling Act (RIGL 45-24) and to ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Community Plan. Since that time, the ordinance has been amended periodically to reflect updated land use goals, state statutory changes, and local priorities, including a comprehensive set of revisions proposed in 2023–2024 as a result of significant legislative updates related to land use enabling legislation changes adopted by the General Assembly. The current zoning districts are shown on Map 3.3.

Jamestown's Zoning generally aligns with local land use with some exceptions:

Plat 1, Lot 311 – Broad Street Beach

This parcel was purchased from a private owner in November 2014 as an adjunct to the existing Park Dock recreation right-of-way. This parcel is appropriate for Open Space/Recreation designation.

Plat 4, Lot 47 – Rafferty Watershed Lot

This parcel was protected through a comprehensive permit process where three residential lots were created, one for the existing house and two new affordable homes and the rear 5.3 acres were preserved for watershed protection. This parcel is appropriate for Open Space/Recreation designation.

Plat 7, Lots 11, 15, 49, 165 and RIDOT parcels - Mercy Weeden Court

These lots were inaccurately zoned as RR-80 and should be R-40 so the appropriate Future Land Use designation should change from Low Density Residential to Medium Density Residential.

Plat 8, Lot 893 – Riven Rock

This parcel was rezoned in 2021 from R-40 to R-20. The appropriate Future Land Use designation should change from Medium Density Residential to Medium High Density Residential.

Plat 8, Lots - CL District Changes

These lots are designated as Commercial Limited on the Future Land Use map and after workshops and deliberation related to its current use as residential, it was decided that it is more appropriately designated High Density Residential.



Plat 8, Lot 418 – Rivers Lot (split zone)

This parcel is a residential lot that has a split commercial zoning designation of Commercial Limited and Commercial Downtown. This lot is appropriate as High Density Residential due to its current use.

The Town's Zoning Ordinance divides the community into twelve Zoning Districts as follows:

Open Space I (OS-I)

This district, added by amendment on March 22, 1999, is the Conservation Preserve District and is intended to preserve, protect and enhance, where appropriate, environmentally sensitive and natural resource areas such as conservation areas, watersheds, reservoirs, wildlife refuges and wetlands.

Open Space II (OS-II)

This district, added by amendment on March 22, 1999, is the park and recreation district and is intended to allow agriculture and recreation activities that will not substantially impact the historic, scenic and/or environmental character of the zoning district, nor compromise natural resources.

Rural Residential District RR-200

This district is intended to protect the Town water supply reservoir while permitting residential dwelling at low density. This Zoning District encompasses the approximately 1,000-acre Jamestown Brook center-Island watershed area excluding some areas of publicly owned land which is zoned Open Space. A minimum lot size of 200,000 square feet is required for residential construction in this district. The land use emphasis is on farming and large-lot residential. Development plan review is required for some new development in this zoning district.

Rural Residential District RR-80

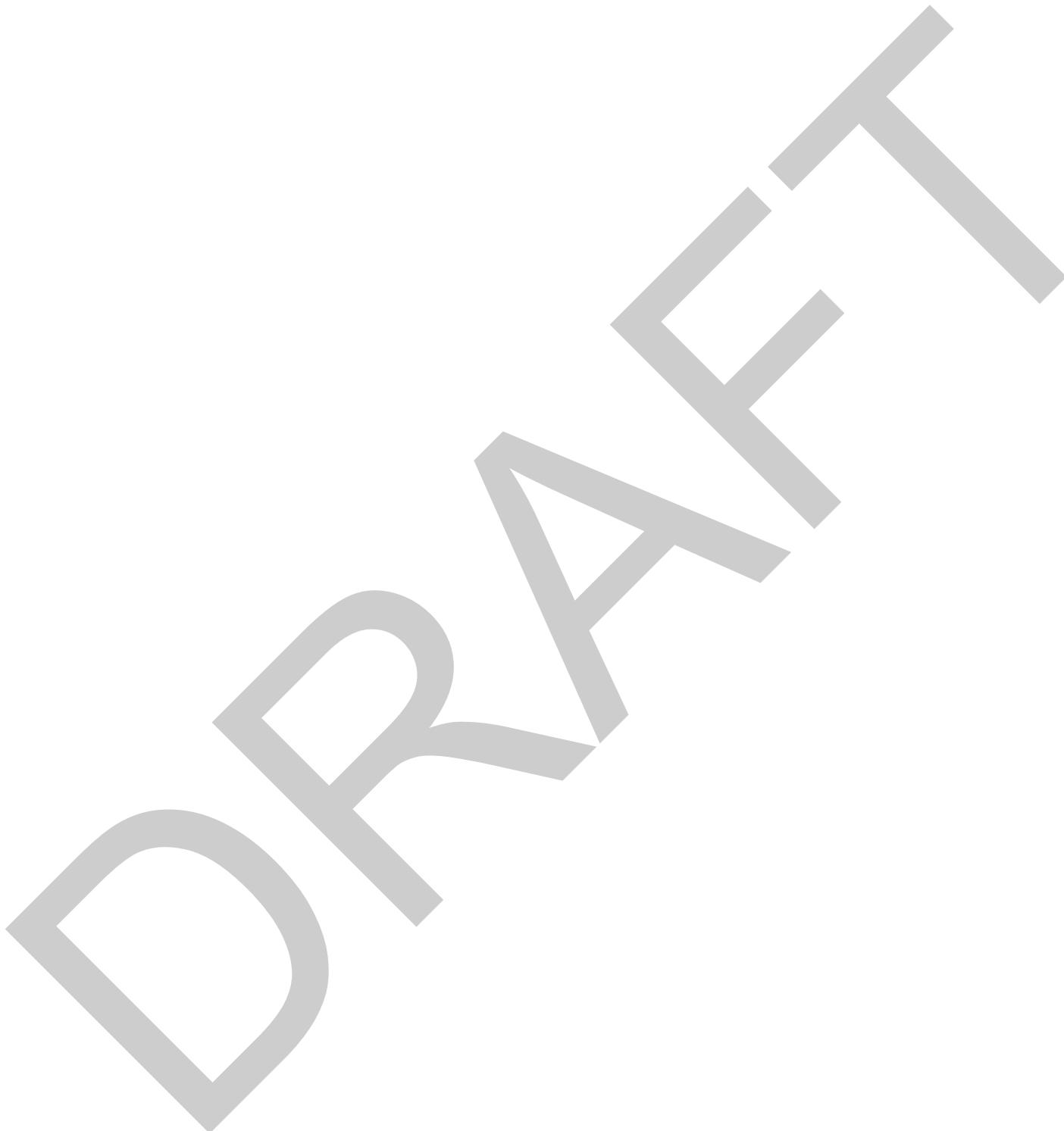
This zone is designated to allow land uses that will not substantially impact the rural character of the zoning district, nor compromise natural resources. Approximately 50% of the entire land area of Jamestown is zoned RR-80. Areas zoned RR-80 include most of the northern end of the Island, the Dumplings neighborhood, and most of the Beavertail peninsula. This zoning district requires a minimum of 80,000 square feet for residential construction. Permitted land uses of the RR-80 zoning district include residential construction, and farming, and different types of recreational development. A special use permit from the zoning ordinance is required for more intense uses such as assisted living facilities, some government, educational, institutional, transportation, and commercial recreation uses.

Residential District R-40

This zone is intended to limit the growth of densely settled neighborhoods, which rely on OWTS and private wells. The small-lot subdivisions, which would be illegal under current

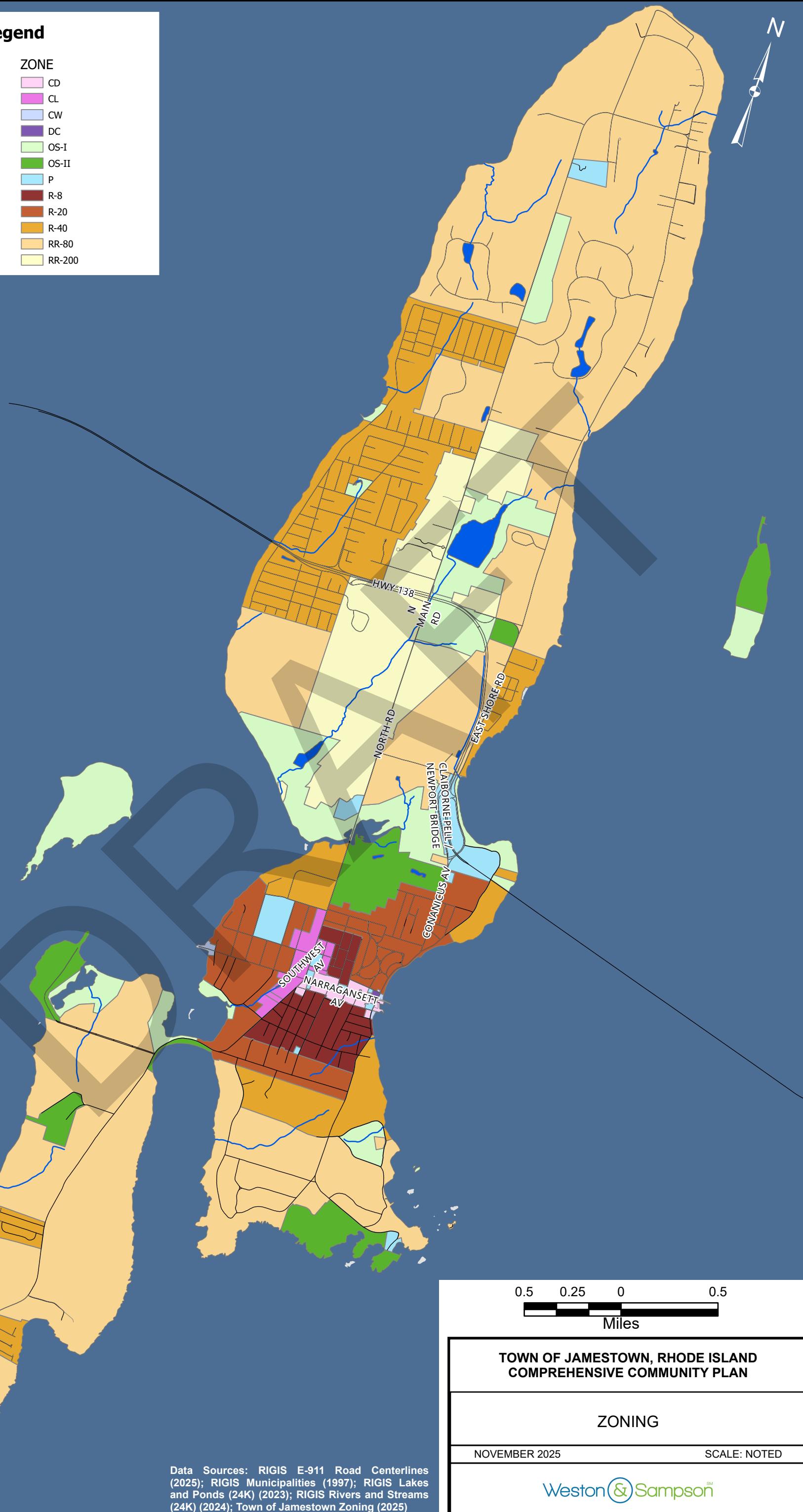


regulations, present potential groundwater contamination problems if not adequately restricted. In some instances, this zone also serves as a transition between R-20 and RR-80.



Legend

— Roads
— Rivers & Streams
■ Lakes and Ponds
■ Jamestown Boundary
ZONE
CD
CL
CW
DC
OS-I
OS-II
P
R-8
R-20
R-40
RR-80
RR-200



Data Sources: RIGIS E-911 Road Centerlines (2025); RIGIS Municipalities (1997); RIGIS Lakes and Ponds (24K) (2023); RIGIS Rivers and Streams (24K) (2024); Town of Jamestown Zoning (2025)

The R-40 Zoning District includes the Jamestown Shores neighborhoods, areas along East Shore Road (south of Eldred Avenue), property along the southern border of the Jamestown Creek, property east of Bay View Drive and south of Hamilton Avenue, and the Clarke's Village and Bonnet View neighborhoods on Beavertail.

The primary land use of the R-40 districts is single-family housing, and some farming and recreational development is permitted. Commercial development is limited to customary home occupation and home offices as permitted uses, and marinas, along with their associated commercial parking and/or ship and boat storage and repair by special use permit.

Residential District R-20

This zone is intended to maintain the neighborhood integrity of the area directly adjacent to traditionally densely developed sections of the village area. This district is designated to allow controlled growth in areas immediately outside the village which are served by municipal water or sewer. This district encompasses areas along Conanicus Avenue including Shoreby Hill, the West Ferry neighborhood, and property along the north and south sides of Hamilton Avenue. A minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet is required for residential development. All of these areas have access to public water and sewer.

The Zoning Ordinance allows for residential development as a permitted use and duplex and multi-family by special exception. Some farming and recreational development is permitted. R-20 zoning allows customary home occupation and home offices as permitted uses and marina and/or ship and boat storage and repair by Special Use Permit.

Residential District R-8

This zone is intended to maintain the neighborhood integrity of traditionally densely developed sections of the village. Most of this area is developed, and infill housing should generally conform to the character of the neighborhoods.

Land area in this zoning district amounts to approximately 130 acres or almost 2% of the total land area of Jamestown. The R-8 district is located both north and south adjacent to the commercial downtown area of Narragansett Avenue. Primarily, these areas consist of residential development with some scattered multi-family housing. With a minimum lot size requirement of 8,000 square feet, the high density of the R-8 district is supported by public water and sewer services.

Permitted uses in this district include residential development and duplexes. Limited farming and at home office or customary home occupation are allowed by right. The development of recreational facilities, commercial parking areas and multi-family dwelling structures are also allowed by Special Use Permit.



Commercial Limited (CL)

The purpose of this zone is to be a transitional area between strictly residential and commercial uses. Many of the uses that are permitted in the commercial district cannot be located in this district except by Special Use Permit.

The CL Zone contains approximately 43 acres along North Road and Southwest Avenue. The minimum lot size requirements range from 8,000 square feet to 20 acres depending upon land use. Most types of residential construction are allowed in this district and various commercial activities are permitted uses. Some industrial non-manufacturing activities and other retail trade are allowed by Special Use Permit. This district contains 58.5% (25 acres) residential, including single-family residential use and duplex or multi-family use. The CL district contains 30.5% commercial use (13 acres); mixed-use buildings incorporating both residential and commercial uses are included as well as municipal and recreational use. The remaining acreage within this zone is split between Forest Land (9%, roughly 4 acres) and Institutional Land Uses (1.5%, roughly half of an acre), with the remaining acreage consisting of water.

This district has available public water and sewer to support residential and commercial development. Current land use in the CL zone includes single-family residential housing units, multi-family housing units, senior housing complex, the Philomenian Library, Jamestown Playground, various automobile service and repair businesses, office condominiums, etc. This zoning district contains the most diverse land use in the community.

Commercial Downtown (CD)

This zone occupies the area that is primarily Jamestown's central business district. This district is designed to encourage businesses that enable pedestrian use. Zoning requirements encourage construction to the curb and feature retail at the street level.

The Commercial Downtown area is about 25 acres total land area located along Narragansett Avenue. Approximately 99% of the 25 area is currently developed. Forty-seven percent of land in the CD district is either commercial or mixed use, while 23% is in residential use. Permitted commercial uses (excluding hotels/motels) do not require a minimum lot size although parking requirements may limit use. Required setbacks are minimal in this area. Allowable uses include most types of residential and commercial development. Special use permits are required for other commercial activities, industrial non-manufacturing, and recreational activities. The various residential and commercial activities are supported by Town water and sewer services.

Religious institutions occupy approximately 10% of the land. Commercial uses dominate the eastern CD district although many structures accommodate mixed uses of both commercial and residential properties. Single-family dwellings, along with churches and Town buildings, predominate at the western end of this zone. The Town owns approximately 15% of the land in the downtown area, including the Town Hall, Fire Station, Ambulance Barn,



waterfront and public parking areas, and these areas are correspondingly zoned as Public (P).

Commercial Waterfront (CW)

This district is intended to restrict the land side uses to those that are primarily water-dependent, including business which utilizes the scenery as an attraction for customers, the CW district encompasses only about three and one-half acres of land. The Zoning Ordinance allows the development of single-family homes and duplexes in this district as well as restaurant, park, and recreation use. Most industrial non-manufacturing is prohibited, but fishing industry is allowed in the CW zone. Very limited commercial and recreational development is permitted in this zone, although yacht and beach clubs with no alcoholic beverages and ship- and boat-building businesses are permitted.

The majority of land at both East and West Ferry is used for waterfront-related boating activity. There are two lots zoned CW at East Ferry. One lot is a small beach area that is owned by the Town and provides public waterfront access and a public boat ramp. The other lot at East Ferry is privately owned and is currently used for small boat and dinghy storage with a commercial marina utilizing the riparian area. At the West Ferry the wharf forming the end of Narragansett Avenue is owned by the Town and leased to a commercial marina operator. Private land zoned CW to the north is used for commercial parking, marina and boatyard activities while the lot to the south is used for as a single-family home.

Downtown Condominium (DC)

The zoning district encompasses a single lot and was designed for a specific condominium project at the corner of Narragansett and Conanicut Avenues. This district permitted one structure containing no more than thirty-six (36) residential condominium units of not more than two (2) bedrooms each, and accessory parking for residents. The zone was intended to allow residential uses compatible with the compressed location at the corner of the Commercial Downtown district.

Public (P)

A zone accommodating a range of public and semi-public uses. Parcels included in this district include the Town Hall, Schools, Fire Station, Police Station, Sewer and Water Treatment Plants, Library and other such public/municipal uses.

Special Districts

The Town employs the use of two overlay districts. These overlay districts are applied over the underlying base zoning designation to either restrict development further or provide more allowance than the underlying zoning. The overlay districts are described in more detail below:

- 1. High Groundwater Table and Impervious Layer Overlay District:** This district encompasses specific areas of the Town where natural physical limitations render the land suitable for development with development restrictions. These are areas



where nonconforming lots predominate, no public sewer and water are available, and the water table is within four feet below the original grade or where the depth to impervious layer is within five feet below original grade. These conditions create severe limitations for development and require special design and/or infrastructure in order to be safely developed. Lots 40,000 square feet or greater are exempt from this section. The purpose of this district is to invoke development standards for development within these areas. Applications for development meeting these development standards are reviewed by the Planning Commission and Zoning Board and may be reviewed administratively.

2. **Jamestown Village Special Development Overlay District:** The standards found in this Article encourage traditional neighborhood patterns such as exist in Jamestown Village today. This district is intended to protect and complete these patterns while encouraging housing that is diverse and affordable for all Jamestowners, so that all new development will be harmonious and compatible with existing Village character. The Village, officially referred to in this Article as the Jamestown Village Special Development District, is defined as those areas within the R-20, R-8, CW, CL, CD, DC and P Zoning Districts.

3.6. Buildout Analysis

The buildout analysis estimates Jamestown's future housing potential under existing zoning regulations, taking into account environmental constraints, protected parcels, and subdivision opportunities. The analysis identifies the approximate amount of vacant and developable land remaining on the Island and projects the number of additional housing units that could be accommodated prior to full buildout.

Results indicate that Jamestown has a limited supply of vacant and developable land, resulting in a finite capacity for future residential development. The analysis accounts for environmental constraints, conservation lands, undevelopable land uses, and areas served by public utilities by excluding them from development potential. The remaining land area is therefore considered developable for the purposes of this analysis.

Based on these findings, Jamestown currently has 70 vacant lots that could be developed, along with the potential to create an additional 107 lots through further subdivision of existing parcels. The Town currently contains 2,746 dwelling units and 45 accessory dwelling units (ADUs). At full residential buildout, Jamestown could accommodate approximately 429 additional dwelling units, resulting in a total of 3,175 dwelling units townwide.

The Town is projected to reach full buildout by 2046, assuming an average construction rate of 21 new dwelling units per year. Using the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates of 2.2 persons per household, Jamestown's population at buildout is projected to be approximately 6,985. This projected growth reflects the Town's constrained geography and regulatory framework and underscores the importance of careful land use planning to



ensure that infrastructure, services, and natural resources can support future community needs.

Additional detail on the buildout analysis methodology and results is provided in Appendix B. See Chapter 10 for further discussion of how the buildout analysis informs housing policy and planning.

3.7. Future Land Use

The future use of land is commonly depicted through a Future Land Use Map (FLUM), which illustrates the community's long-term vision for how land should be used and developed. Use of a FLUM is consistent with Rhode Island's comprehensive planning framework established under RIGL 45-22.2, the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act. Unlike the zoning map, which regulates land use through enforceable districts and dimensional standards, the FLUM functions as a policy guide that reflects desired patterns of growth, conservation, and redevelopment over a 20-year planning horizon. It serves as the foundation for future zoning updates and infrastructure investments, helping to ensure that local land use decisions align with state goals related to resource protection, housing, transportation, and economic development. Each land use designation shown on the map corresponds to general categories—such as residential, commercial, mixed use, industrial, or open space—that describe the intended character and intensity of future development.

The future of land use in Jamestown has become more predictable as the Town approaches full buildout. As of 2025, approximately 10.8 percent of land in Jamestown, or about 653 acres, remains buildable and is not protected from development. In 2015, less than 15 percent of Jamestown's developable land remained undeveloped, a decline from approximately 23 percent in 2000. Over the past several decades, Jamestown has also made notable progress in land preservation and improvements to public drinking water systems.

Jamestown's most pressing land use challenge continues to be potable water capacity. While this limitation has not significantly curtailed growth and development to date, questions remain regarding the Island's long-term water supply. Water-intensive land uses—including agriculture, residential housing, commercial development, and industry—can place stress on drinking water availability and require ongoing monitoring to prevent impacts to the water supply. Concerns about potable drinking water were raised consistently throughout the public engagement process, and residents expressed a strong desire for innovative solutions to address these issues and reduce development pressure across the Town.

The Town Council and the Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners should continue to study Jamestown's future water needs. Significant investments in the public water supply system, the Town's Wastewater Management Program, and active land acquisition efforts have contributed to protecting water quality and increasing system resilience. The Town should continue to evaluate its growth rate and regulatory framework to ensure consistency with available water supply capacity and should work toward identifying alternative potable



water sources as supplementary or backup supplies. Although portions of the Town's drinking water watershed are zoned for rural large-lot residential use, these areas should continue to remain largely open space.

Despite changing demographics, housing needs, and economic conditions, residents' vision for Jamestown has remained consistent. Preservation of historic and cultural resources and protection of rural and village character were among the top priorities identified during public meetings. According to the 2024 Jamestown Community Survey, residents also place high value on recreational and leisure opportunities, the school system, and the Town's sense of community. These priorities are reflected in the proposed future land use patterns depicted in Map 3.4.

3.7.1. Future Land Use Categories

The ten different future land uses and intensities are described below. Please refer to Map 3.4 for more information:

Open Space or Recreation (OSR)

The future land use designation of open space or recreation was created to depict areas permanently protected from development based on Rhode Island state conservation lands and local conservation lands. Long-term protection and ongoing expansion of open space and recreational land uses should be prioritized in keeping with the rural character of Jamestown.

Commercial Limited (CL)

The purpose of this zone is to be a transitional area between strictly residential and commercial uses. This area is appropriate for a mix of residential uses including single-family and duplex (maximum 5.4 dwelling units per acre), specially approved multi-family residential uses (maximum 15 dwelling units per acre), and a variety of boating industry, commercial, and industrial non-manufacturing uses. Strict review of all uses should occur to ensure they are in keeping with the village character of Jamestown.

Commercial Downtown (CD)

This district should encourage businesses that enable pedestrian use. Zoning requirements should encourage construction to the front property line and retail at the street level. Residential and duplex uses (maximum 8.7 dwelling units per acre), and specially approved multi-family uses (maximum 15 dwelling units per acre) are appropriate in this district. A range of special use permits are required for other commercial, industrial non-manufacturing, and recreational activities. Strict review of all uses should occur to ensure they are in keeping with the village character of Jamestown.



Commercial Waterfront (CW)

This district is intended to encourage water-dependent land uses. Strict review of all uses should occur to ensure they are in keeping with the village character of Jamestown with a density of no greater than 5.4 dwelling units per acre of single-family and duplex dwellings. High Density Residential (HDR)

This zone is intended to maintain the neighborhood integrity of traditionally densely developed sections of the village serviced by public sewer and water. Infill housing in this area should generally conform to the character of the neighborhoods. This area is appropriate for single family (maximum 9.6 dwelling units per acre), duplex (maximum 5.8 dwelling units per acre), and specially approved multi-family residential uses. This area is also suggested to include an overlay district addressing formerly commercial limited areas that are currently residential in use. The intent of this district is to allow greater commercial uses than the R-8 District and additional home occupation rights. This area also contains one lot specifically designated for high density residential condominium use at the northwest corner of Narragansett Avenue and Conanicut Avenue currently known as the Bay View Condominiums.

High Density Residential (HDR)

This zone is intended to maintain the neighborhood integrity of traditionally densely developed sections of the village serviced by public sewer and water. Infill housing in this area should generally conform to the character of the neighborhoods. This area is appropriate for single family (maximum 9.6 dwelling units per acre), duplex (maximum 5.8 dwelling units per acre), and specially approved multi-family residential uses. This area is also suggested to include an overlay district addressing formerly commercial limited areas that are currently residential in use. The intent of this district is to allow greater commercial uses than the R-8 District and additional home occupation rights. This area also contains one lot specifically designated for high density residential condominium use at the northwest corner of Narragansett Avenue and Conanicut Avenue currently known as the Bay View Condominiums.

Moderately High Density Residential (MHDR)

This zone is intended to limit the growth of densely settled, environmentally sensitive neighborhoods that rely on OWTS and private wells. This district also serves as a transition between the village area and outlying rural residential areas. This district is appropriate for primarily single-family residential (maximum 1.09 dwelling units per acre) use and agricultural uses.

Low Density Residential (LDR)

This zone is designated to allow primarily single-family (maximum .54 dwelling units per acre) and agricultural uses that will not substantially impact the rural character of the area nor compromise natural resources.



Very Low Density Residential (VLDR)

This district is intended to protect the Town water supply reservoirs while permitting primarily single-family residential use at low density (maximum .2 dwelling units per acre). Also appropriate for agricultural uses.

Town/Public Facilities

The Public Facility designation indicates areas which may be appropriate for a range of public and semi-public uses. Due to the nature of this district, all parcels included are either publicly or semi-publicly owned. Properties taken out of public ownership in the future should be reviewed and amended as appropriate in both the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance. Future publicly acquired properties should be reviewed upon acquisition for their appropriateness for public use and the Future Land Use Map amended if necessary and zoned accordingly. The majority of properties designated as Public Facility encompass one lot with a range of sizes. In many instances the existing public facility covers only a portion of the lot, leaving space for expansion. The appropriateness of new or expanded public facilities and their compatibility with the surrounding area should be considered when siting new or expanding public facilities in the future. Public facilities can and should be a source of community pride. Their location, design and cost should be thoroughly vetted through public meetings and comment to ensure public acceptance. New and retrofitted facilities should be sustainable in their design and construction to the highest degree feasible.

3.7.2. The Future of Jamestown Land Use

Changes to land use can have widespread impacts on development patterns, open space protection, and public service accessibility. This section outlines how land use changes, as depicted in the FLUM, can have significant implications for several aspects of Jamestown's future, including natural resources, housing, and the economy.

Agriculture

The Town has protected a significant amount of agricultural lands but additional steps are necessary to ensure all farmland is protected, including future farmland viability and to prevent encroaching development. In the last decade, there has been a slight decline in farmland use and increasing strain on water availability further stresses agricultural uses. Agricultural protection options, including agricultural easements and the FFOSA, should continue to be refined and expanded locally.

Open Space

In addition to farmland, other areas of Jamestown should be protected to safeguard the Island's natural environment and finite resources. Areas needing preservation and protection from development include:

- the public and private drinking water supply watersheds



- both coastal and freshwater wetlands
- scenic views
- recreational areas
- historic resources
- unique and rare habitats
- large habitat areas
- linkages connecting significant open spaces
- properties that will help to protect the Jamestown Shores water quantity and quality
- and any properties whose preservation and protection will further the goals of the Town's rural character and protect the water resources of Jamestown.

The Town may pursue additional growth control measures to avoid reaching full buildout and subsequent stress on finite resources. The Jamestown Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plan is a critical Plan needed to identify prime properties and areas worthy of protection through acquisition, deed restrictions or easement and should be updated to understand the current recreation, conservation and open space needs of the Town.

Village Character

Jamestown residents shared their interest in maintaining the Town's pedestrian-friendly village character and scenic viewsheds. Scenic views should be protected from rampant vegetation growth by allowing vegetation management. The Tree Preservation and Protection Ordinance should continue working towards protecting historic and scenic views on Jamestown. Historic development patterns of the downtown village are integral to the Town's unique character but limits off-street parking availability. As a result, many existing businesses are unable to meet the parking requirements required in the Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Commission must strictly enforce these parking requirements for new commercial development or redevelopment to ensure future land uses meet local needs.

Economic Development

There should be no expansion of the existing commercially zoned districts. Site Plan Review within the Village Special Development District should continue to work to provide visually and physically compatible buildings in the downtown. New businesses should consider the needs of residents, and their buildings should fit the scale of existing development.

Recreation

There is still an unmet need for additional active recreation facilities in the northern Jamestown area as well as additional indoor facilities throughout the Island. The current Town recreation facilities (recreation center and school facilities) are reaching capacity with their use being almost constant. The recreation center also meets the cultural needs of the Town by providing space for activities such as the community theatre and various arts and



crafts shows. When new property is acquired or built for recreation, it should be zoned accordingly to allow recreation activities.

In accord with the 2024 Jamestown Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, greenways and linkages should be developed throughout the Island. This should be done to encourage safe alternative modes of transportation, encourage healthy living, create a greater quality of life, and to alleviate dependence on cars. This will reduce pressure on existing downtown parking issues, promote a healthy and sustainable environment and population, and help maintain Island character.

Town Facilities

Town facilities should be located in the most appropriate areas of Town. Maximizing facilities while minimizing costs is a priority. The Town's Five-Year Capital Budget Program should continue to identify priority projects. Determining locations and development of new projects should be a community process.

Housing

Land and home prices are at a historical high point. The Town, the Affordable Housing Committee, and Church Community Housing Corporation should continue to actively pursue affordable housing to add to its "permanently affordable" housing stock. The Town should embrace other non-profit affordable housing advocates and developers to further the Town's goal of 10% affordable housing.

Natural Resources

The Town has continued to explore ways to promote conservation of open space and natural resources, and to preserve its rural character. There is, however, a danger that traditional zoning may not be entirely effective in creating and preserving major community-wide open spaces, promoting a network of greenways and protecting key resources such as farmland and drinking water supply watersheds. Utilizing conservation development is recommended in order to preserve open space and important natural and cultural features on a site proposed for residential development while allowing for the reasonable use of the land for residential purposes.

Future Land Use Regulations

As a means of implementing the land use, conservation and open space policies contained within this Plan, the Town supports the adopted concept of Conservation Development. This term describes residential development, in which, exclusive of wetlands and other types of land unsuitable for development, the majority of flat, dry and otherwise buildable land is protected from clearing, grading, and construction by creating open spaces and by reducing lot sizes in order to achieve full-yield density. This is mandated in the Jamestown Subdivision Regulations for all subdivisions of 5 or more lots.

This technique is an important tool that should be used to protect and enhance the Town's rural, small-town character, a goal that is expressed very strongly throughout this Plan. By



preserving large areas of open space and by situating development in compact areas, the Town can create viable neighborhoods while at the same time avoiding sprawling, land-wasting suburban-type subdivisions.

The Town will also consider allowing the open space created in a conservation development to remain in private ownership if the use is limited to agriculture, habitat or forestry. In such cases, the Planning Commission, as part of its review of a conservation development, will make positive findings as part of the record, setting forth the basis for such ownership.

3.7.3. Proposed Land Use Changes

The FLUM is especially useful for illustrating proposed changes to land use. Discrepancies between zoning for individual parcels and larger zoning districts are common after the creation of a FLUM. The Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning requires municipalities to bring their zoning map into compliance with the FLUM within 18 months of Comprehensive Plan adoption.

The FLUM depicts these changes and calls out specific parcels that should be changed on the zoning map. Several preliminary changes illustrated on the Future Land Use Map (Map 3.4) are described below:

- **2 Broad Street (Plat 1, Lot 311):** Land use change from Low Density Residential to Open Space or Recreation
- **Rafferty Property (Plat 4, Lot 47):** Land use change from very low density residential to open space or recreation
- Parcels surrounding Mercy Weeden Court (Plat 7, Lots 11, 15, 49, 165 and RIDOT parcels): Land use changes from low density residential to moderate density residential
- Parcels surrounding Jamestown Philomenian Library (CL District Changes): Land use changes from Commercial Limited to High Density Residential
- **20 Elm Street (Plat 8, Lot 418):** Land use change from a split of Commercial Downtown and Commercial Limited to High Density Residential



Legend

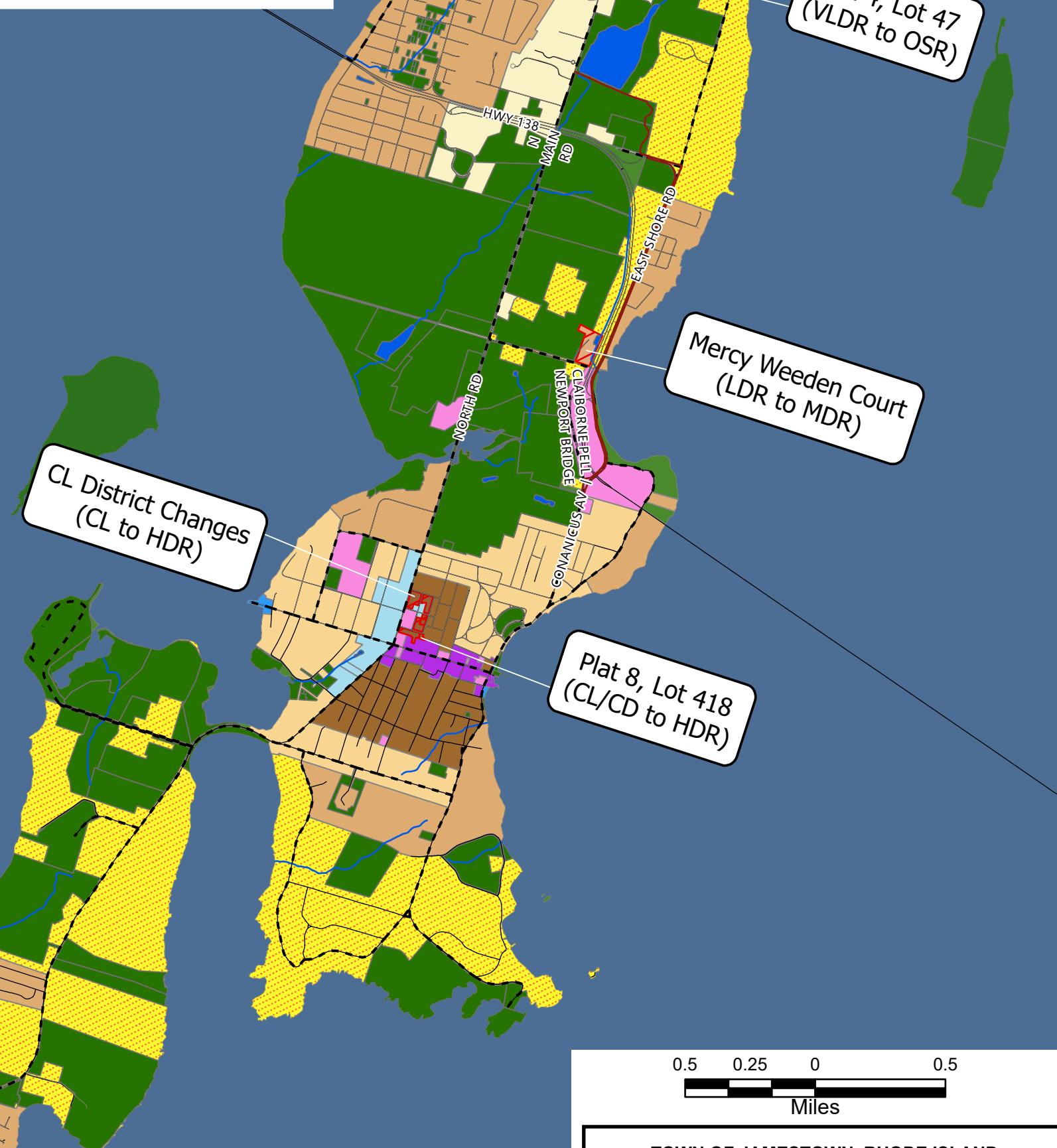
- Roads
- Rivers & Streams
- Lakes and Ponds
- Jamestown Boundary
- North Pond Path
- Reservoir Bikepath
- Potential Bikeway Route

Proposed Land Use Changes

- | Proposed Land Use Change | Current Land Use |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Open Space or Recreation | Open Space or Recreation (OSR) |
| Moderate Density Residential | Moderate Density Residential (MDR) |
| Moderate High Density Residential | Moderate High Density Residential (MHDR) |
| High Density Residential | High Density Residential (HDR) |
| CL District Changes (CL to HDR) | Commercial Limited (CL) |
| Plat 1, Lot 311 (LDR to OSR) | Low Density Residential (LDR) |
| Plat 4, Lot 47 (VLDR to OSR) | Very Low Density Residential (VLDR) |
| Mercy Weeden Court (LDR to MDR) | Town / Public Facility (TPF) |
| Plat 8, Lot 418 (CL/CD to HDR) | Commercial Downtown (CD) |

Future Land Use Categories

- Open Space or Recreation (OSR)
- Commercial Limited (CL)
- Commercial Downtown (CD)
- Commercial Waterfront (CW)
- High Density Residential (HDR)
- Moderate High Density Residential (MHDR)
- Moderate Density Residential (MDR)
- Low Density Residential (LDR)
- Very Low Density Residential (VLDR)
- Town / Public Facility (TPF)



TOWN OF JAMESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

FUTURE LAND USE

DECEMBER 2025

SCALE: NOTED

Weston & Sampson

3.8. Issues and Opportunities

Jamestown's land use patterns reflect a careful balance between development and preservation that has shaped the Town's character for decades. The existing conditions analysis and public input process highlighted how environmental limits, housing pressures, climate vulnerabilities, and evolving mobility needs intersect across the island. These findings point toward opportunities to modernize land use policy in ways that protect natural systems, expand housing diversity, and strengthen community resilience.

3.8.1. Environmental Constraints and Resource Protection

Jamestown's topography, soil conditions, and reliance on private wells and onsite wastewater treatment systems create natural limits to where and how growth can occur. The existing conditions analysis identified the Jamestown Shores and Beavertail areas as particularly constrained by poor soils, low groundwater yields, and limited OWTS capacity. These limitations restrict development potential and heighten concerns about groundwater quality.

Community members consistently voiced strong concern for the long-term protection of natural resources and drinking water. Residents recognize that environmental capacity and land use decisions are tightly linked — a theme that recurred throughout the planning process.

Community Priority

78% of survey respondents identified natural resource protection as the Town's top concern.

Based on the Rhode Island Development Impact Fee Act, Jamestown should consider assessing the dedication of land and/or fees not only on newly subdivided lots, but also on building permits, at a level to be determined, to create a dedicated funding stream for conservation, recreation, and open space goals.

Issues identified include:

- Soils and aquifer conditions that limit sustainable development potential.
- OWTS performance risks where density or site conditions exceed capacity.
- Ongoing development pressure in environmentally sensitive areas.

Opportunities for action build directly from these findings:

- Refine zoning and review standards to steer growth away from hydrologically sensitive areas and require site-specific analyses in constrained locations.
- Encourage conservation development approaches that preserve open space, protect habitat connectivity, and maintain rural character.



- Expand homeowner education on OWTS operation and maintenance to safeguard groundwater quality.
- Develop land and funding sources from new subdivisions and building permits to support recreation and open space.

These strategies establish the framework for integrating environmental carrying capacity into future land use decisions and development review criteria.

Community Priority: 78% of survey respondents identified natural resource protection as the Town's top concern.

3.8.2. Housing Affordability and Diversity

The existing conditions analysis underscored a widening gap between the cost of housing and the needs of year-round residents. Rising prices and the growth of short-term rentals have reduced the availability of long-term housing, particularly for younger households, essential workers, and residents with moderate incomes.

"It's hard to stay in Jamestown when you can't find a place to live year-round." — Resident, Community Survey 2024

Public input echoed these findings. Many residents expressed concern that limited options for smaller, attainable homes are forcing families and employees to look elsewhere. The resulting pattern has implications for the Town's social and economic vitality.

Based on the Rhode Island Development Impact Fee Act, Jamestown should consider proposing an amendment to this act to include affordable housing so a fee may be assessed on all building permits over an amount to be determined, specifically for affordable housing.

Issues identified include:

- Increasing housing costs and declining year-round availability.
- A narrow range of housing types that fails to meet diverse household needs.
- Regulatory barriers that make smaller or multifamily housing difficult to develop.

In response, opportunities for action include:

- Expanding the allowance for accessory dwelling units and small-scale multifamily housing, such as duplexes, triplexes, or cottage clusters.
- Regulating short-term rentals to balance visitor accommodations with preservation of year-round housing stock.
- Updating zoning standards to enable attainable housing types while maintaining the scale and character of existing neighborhoods.



- Seek policy changes to assess fees on building permits to fund affordable housing.

Together, these efforts will allow Jamestown to plan for a housing mix that supports community continuity, intergenerational stability, and local economic balance.

3.8.3. Climate Resilience and Infrastructure Protection

Analysis of environmental and infrastructure data identified sea-level rise, storm surge, and flooding as major risks in coastal and low-lying areas such as Mackerel Cove and North Road. These threats affect not only homes and roadways but also access to critical services. The resilience analysis reinforced that climate adaptation is not a separate issue from land use, it is a land use issue.

Residents expressed strong support for proactive resilience planning, and cross-chapter coordination with the Sustainability and Resilience chapter confirms that local land use policies must anticipate these risks.

See also: Sustainability & Resilience Chapter – Policies for Flooding and Adaptation

Key issues include:

- Increasing flood exposure and storm-related access challenges.
- Infrastructure vulnerabilities that are likely to intensify with climate change.
- A lack of clear adaptation guidance in existing zoning and review procedures.

The following opportunities are grounded in the Town's data and mapping:

- Incorporate flood, sea-level rise, and stormwater resilience standards directly into zoning and development review.
- Use the Future Land Use Map to identify where adaptation or retreat may be appropriate and where infrastructure hardening is justified.
- Coordinate regionally on shoreline protection projects and nature-based adaptation strategies.

Integrating these measures into local land use policy will ensure that the built environment evolves with changing conditions while protecting public safety and investment.

3.8.4. Mobility and Local Economy Opportunities

Land use patterns directly shape how people move through and experience Jamestown. The existing conditions analysis found gaps in the pedestrian and bicycle network that limit safe connections between neighborhoods, schools, and commercial areas. These mobility issues are linked to economic vitality: a more connected, walkable town supports local businesses and reduces the effects of seasonal fluctuations in activity.



Community feedback emphasized the importance of safer, more accessible routes and a desire for year-round vitality in commercial areas.

Issues identified include:

- Limited multimodal infrastructure for walking and biking.
- A seasonal economy that constrains business viability outside of summer months.

Opportunities for action include:

- Expanding sidewalks and bicycle connections to key destinations, including village centers and waterfront areas.
- Encouraging mixed-use zoning to promote walkable destinations and compact development patterns.
- Supporting year-round business activity through flexible land use policies and off-season activation programs.

Economic Focus: Land use strategies that support local business retention and extend the visitor season align with community sustainability goals.

These improvements would reinforce the link between mobility, local commerce, and community quality of life.

Looking Ahead

The issues and opportunities identified throughout this chapter reflect the intersection of environmental conditions, housing market realities, infrastructure needs, and community values. Each topic connects directly to policy choices that will guide future development and preservation. Together, the opportunities outlined here set the stage for the implementation actions that follow—actions designed to protect Jamestown’s resources, expand housing choice, strengthen resilience, and enhance mobility in ways that align with the Town’s long-term vision.





DPY

4 NATURAL RESOURCES



Town of Jamestown, Rhode Island

Community Comprehensive Plan Update

Natural Resources

Background

Uniquely situated on Conanicut Island, the Town of Jamestown is rich in natural resources ranging from sandy and rocky beaches, historic farms, forested areas, and freshwater bodies that offer recreational and open space areas.

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan addresses the impact of development on natural resources, as well as resource protection considerations which contribute to the character, livability, and quality of life of the Town and its residents. Jamestown has more developed areas in the village portion of the Town and predominately suburban and rural areas on the northern and southern areas of the island. During the last decade, the Town has experienced an increase in part-time residents with second homes in Jamestown which in turn has led to increased pressures on available potable water supply during the summer months. Increased development has impacts on Jamestown's freshwater bodies and their associated streams and wetlands, some of the Town's most sensitive and significant natural features and assets.

Goals

-  Protect the long-term quality and sustainability of marine, freshwater, and above ground and groundwater resources.
-  Preserve and protect Jamestown's unique, fragile, and scenic coastal areas to maintain ecological function, mitigate climate impacts, and retain the island's natural beauty.
-  Maintain and enhance equitable public access to the shoreline.
-  Protect native vegetation and wildlife habitats across Jamestown to support biodiversity, ecological health, and climate resilience.

Policies (continued)

- Implement land use, stormwater, and wastewater management practices that reduce nutrient and pollutant runoff into Jamestown's salt marshes and coastal waters, in order to protect water quality and marine habitat health.
- Develop and maintain a prioritized list of unique, fragile, and scenic coastal properties for acquisition and protection for targeted shoreline conservation efforts.
- Enhance public access to coastline through stewardship of existing rights-of-way, improved infrastructure, and proactive coastal management in compliance with the 1999 and 2013 Shoreline Access and Right-of-Way Report and Inventory.
- Encourage land management that provides opportunities for public waterfront access.
- Manage and protect areas designated as Significant Natural Habitats by the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program and other relevant agencies, through conservation practices that maintain ecological integrity, control invasive species, and minimize human disturbance.
- Give appropriate consideration to the protection of natural vegetation and habitat during all phases of development planning, review, and construction.
- Encourage wildlife management for the health, safety and welfare of Jamestown residents.
- Encourage the usage of native vegetation where possible.
- Enhance the urban forest to support ecological health and visual character and establish clear protection regulations for heritage or significant trees.
- Proactively plan for natural hazard vulnerability including those hazards which may increase due to climate change.

See Implementation table for all goals, policies, and actions for this chapter

Disclaimer: goals and policies are in draft form and subject to further review and approval by the Town of Jamestown

4.0 NATURAL RESOURCES

Our Vision: To steward Jamestown's natural areas so the very qualities that led to their protection continue to thrive. The Center Island Watershed must remain safeguarded, and future development should never outpace the island's natural water supply. This means continuing to prioritize water conservation while also exploring new, sustainable ways to supplement existing resources.

4.1. Introduction

4

The Town of Jamestown is rich in natural resources ranging from sandy and rocky beaches, historic farms, forested areas, and freshwater bodies that offer recreational and open space opportunities. Uniquely situated on an island, Conanicut Island, provides Jamestown with ample bay access. Jamestown also contains several large bodies of water including the Jamestown Reservoir, Jamestown Brook, and South Pond, all utilized in the public water supply system.

Land use development patterns in the Town of Jamestown range from more developed areas in the village portion of the Town with small stretches of commercial establishments to predominately suburban and rural areas on the northern and southern areas of the island. During the last decade, the Town has experienced only a slight increase in population. However, the increase in part-time residents with second homes in Jamestown, larger homes with additional bedrooms, as well as the increase and further potential for accessory dwelling units are leading to increasing pressures on available potable water supply, especially during the summer months.

Increased development has consequential influences upon the quality and quantity of the Town's natural resources, including potable water supply and the unique areas and habitats under constant pressure from development and change. Jamestown boasts a significant amount of open space, and many of these sites are protected in order to reduce density to accommodate the natural carrying capacity of the land in unsewered areas, protect groundwater resources, protect the rural character, and preserve Jamestown as a viable, self-sufficient island, being able to provide adequate public services such as water, under never ending development pressure.



With the above considerations in mind, this element of the Comprehensive Plan addresses areas of concern that affect the impact of development on natural resources, as well as resource protection considerations which contribute to the character, livability, and quality of life for residents.



4.2. Community Insights

92%

Almost all respondents agree that natural vegetation and wildlife habitat should be protected where possible throughout the Town.

87%

...believe Jamestown should be proactive on invasive species management.

64%

Public street trees are valued on major roads by almost two-thirds.

61%

... support preservation of "heritage" trees on private property.

67%

A large number are in favor of a tree planting/replacement program along major roads in Jamestown.

Narragansett Avenue, North Road, and Southwest Avenue were specifically suggested for a tree planting program.

Community input plays a critical role in shaping Jamestown's approach to natural resources. In 2024, the Town gathered feedback through a community survey and public workshops. The text boxes above summarize key findings related to natural resources protection, including support for preserving trees on public and private properties, protecting wildlife habitat, and addressing invasive species. These results help illustrate how residents view the Town's role in natural resources management.



4.3. Physical Geography



To effectively plan for current and future land use, the physical characteristics of Jamestown must be considered to ensure growth is both environmentally responsible and resilient over time.

The characteristics of the land provide the framework upon which future development decisions must be made. Natural factors that determine or influence these land use decisions include soils, slope, topography, geology, hydrology, flood hazard potential, wetlands, and vegetation.

4.3.1. Soils

Soil characteristics strongly influence our use of land. The different soil types and their accompanying limitations contribute to development site selection, population density, construction methods, and overall design. More importantly, soils are an overriding factor in the determination of suitability for onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS). As such, they may determine the difficulty and expense with which development may take place in unsewered areas.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture and Soil Conservation Service conducted a soil survey for the State of Rhode Island in 1981. Jamestown also had a detailed soil survey conducted in subsequent years by the same agency through the National Cooperative Soil Survey. From these, it was determined that most of the soils on Conanicut Island have limitations that affect development in one way or another.

A soil analysis specific to Rhode Island, conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service in 1990, divided soils into five types. These are described below (refer to Table 4.1).

Few Restrictions to Development

The specific soil types found in Jamestown that are included in this category are Agawam fine sandy loam (0%-to-3% slopes), Newport Urban land complex, Udorthents-Urban land complex, Urban land, Windsor loamy sand (0%-to-3% slopes), and Windsor loamy sand (3%-to-8% slopes).



Table 4.1. Soils with Few Restrictions to Development

Soil Type	Acreage	Percentage of Total Area
Afa - Agawam fine sandy loam (0% to 3% slopes)	7	0.1%
NP - Newport Urban land complex	238	3.9%
UD - Udorthents-Urban land complex	99	1.6%
Ur - Urban land	16	0.2%
WgA - Windsor loamy sand (0%-3% slopes)	43	0.7%
WgB - Windsor loamy sand (3%-8% slopes)	61	1.0%
Total	464	7.6%

While soils in this category are generally suited for residential development, it is important to carefully evaluate the specific composition of the site because some soils in this group can pose moderate constraints for development. These constraints consist of very permeable soils that have a higher potential for groundwater contamination, slowly permeable soils that tend to have a greater on-site wastewater treatment (OWTS) system failure rate, and extremely stony soils that are expensive to excavate and grade for residential development. The presence of these moderately constrained soil types can be mitigated as part of the development process. Also included in this category are disturbed areas, which are often suitable for residential development but require site-specific evaluation to determine mitigation measures that may be necessary. Examples of these are gravel pits, cut-and-fill areas, and previously paved areas. The acreage of land area found in Jamestown within this soil category is 464 acres, or approximately 8% of the total land area.



Soils with Seasonally High-Water Table

The specific soil types included in this category are the following: Birchwood sandy loam, Pittstown silt loam (0%-to-3% slopes), Pittstown silt loam (3%-to-8%), Rainbow silt loam (3%-to-8% slopes), Poquonock loamy fine sand (0%-to-3% slopes), Poquonock loamy fine sand (3%-to-8% slopes), Fortress sand, (0%-to-3% slopes), Newport silt loam (0%-to-3% slopes), Newport silt loam (3%-to-8% slopes) and Newport silt loam (8%-to-15% slopes),.

Table 4.2. Soils with Seasonally High-Water Tables

Soil Type	Acreage	Percentage of Area
Bc - Birchwood sandy loam	569	9.3%
PmA - Pittstown silt loam (0% to 3% slopes)	280	4.6%
PmB - Pittstown silt loam (3% to 8% slopes)	512	8.4%
RaB - Rainbow silt loam (3% to 8% slopes)	11	0.2%
PsA -- Poquonock loamy fine sand, 0%-to-3% slopes	479	7.9%
PsB -- Poquonock loamy fine sand, 3%-to-8% slopes	635	10.4%
FtA - Fortress sand, 0%-to-3% slopes	21	0.3%
NeA -- Newport silt loam, 0%-to-3% slopes	299	4.9%
NeB -- Newport silt loam, 3%-to-8% slopes	963	15.8%
NeC -- Newport silt loam, 8%-to-15% slopes	210	3.4%
Total	3,979	65.2%



Soils in this group have a seasonally high water table at a depth of 1.5 to 3.5 feet from the surface for significant periods during the year. Many of these soils have additional constraints such as slow permeability or very rapid permeability. Soils with a seasonally high water table do not lend themselves to development and are particularly problematic with installation of basements and on-site wastewater treatment systems. Total Jamestown acreage with this group of soils is 3,979 acres or 65% of total land. The Town has protected 108 lots in the Jamestown Shores through a mix of purchase and development restrictions for the purpose of reducing density and protecting the groundwater quality and quantity for the existing homes and undeveloped lots.

65%

of the island's land area consists of soils with a seasonally high water table.

Bedrock and Soils with Slope Constraints

Soils included in this category in Jamestown are Canton and Charlton fine sandy loams, very rocky (3%-to-15% slopes) and Canton-Charlton Rock outcrop complex (15%-to-35% slopes).

Table 4.3. Bedrock and Soils with Slope Constraints

Soil Type	Acreage	Percentage of Area
CeC - Canton and Charleston fine sandy loams, Very rock, 3%-to-15% slopes	137	2.2%
CaD - Canton-Charlton-Rock outcrop complex, 15%-to-35% slopes	9	0.1%
Total	146	2.3%

Soils in this group have slopes in excess of 15% and/or have significant shallow to bedrock areas. The steep slopes increase the potential for soil erosion during construction and make construction of on-site wastewater treatment systems difficult. Shallow soil and rock outcrops impair the construction of roads and the burial of utilities and on-site wastewater treatment systems. Total acreage within this group of soils is 146 acres or 2% of the total land in Jamestown.



Hydric soils - Severe Constraints to Development

The following Jamestown soils are included in this category:, Mansfield mucky silt loam, Matunuck mucky peat, Ridgebury fine sandy loam, Ridgebury, Whitman, Leicester extremely stony fine sandy loams, Scarboro mucky sandy loam, Stissing silt loam, and Stissing very stony silt loam.+Ipswich, Pawcatuk, Raypol, Sandyhook, Swansea mucky peat.

Table 4.4. Hydric soils – Severe Constraints to Development

Soil Type	Acreage	Percentage of Area
Ma - Mansfield mucky silt loam	177	2.9%
Mk - Mantuck mucky peat	3	less than 0.1%
Rf -Ridgebury, Whitman, Leicester extremely stony fine sandy loams fine sandy loam	163	2.7%
Sb - Scarboro mucky sandy loam	175	2.9%
Se - Stissing silt loam	311	5.1%
Sf - Stissing very stony silt loam	214	3.5%
Ip - Ipswich peat	57	0.9%
Pw - Pawcatuk mucky peat	51	0.8%
Rc - Raypol silt loam	8	0.1%
Sa - Sandyhook mucky peat	13	0.2%
SwA - Swansea mucky peat, 0%-to-2% slopes	2	less than 0.1%
Total	1174	19.2%



Soils in this group have water at or near the surface for significant periods of the year. These soils are formed under conditions of saturation, flooding, or ponding. The total acreage of soils within this group is 1174 acres or 19% of Jamestown's total land area.

All others - Severe constraints to development (rock, sand)

Jamestown soils included in this group are beaches, dumps, and rock outcrop - Canton Complex and Succotash sand, 0%-to-3% slopes.

Soil Type	Acreage	Percentage of Area
Ba - Beaches	76	1.2%
Du - Dumps	14	0.2%
Rk - Rock outcrops	121	2.0%
Rp - Rock outcrop-Canton Complex	54	0.9%
ShA - Succotash sand, 0%-to-3% slopes	43	0.7%
W - Water bodies	62	1.0%
Total	370	6.1%

Soils in this group consist of miscellaneous soil types that pose significant constraints for residential development. Total acreage of soils in this group is 370 acres or 6.1% of land area in Jamestown. The remaining 61 acres or 1% of the land area is comprised of water bodies.

Prime Farmland Soils and Farmland Soils of Statewide Significance

Approximately 62% of Jamestown's land area contains Prime Farmland Soils, and 10% are classified as Farmland of Statewide Importance. A more detailed discussion of farmland can be found in the Conservation and Open Space Element.

Many of the soils found on Jamestown's have the potential for agricultural use (refer to Map 4.2. SOILS: Farmland Type). The Soil Conservation Service identified Prime Farmland Soils,



which have significant potential for future agricultural use (United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), 1993).

4.3.2. Slope

Another factor that directly impacts development potential is slope. Slope is the measure of the degree of change in the land's elevation. Slope is expressed as a percentage: the rise of the land (change in elevation between two points) divided by the run (change in distance between two points). Land is considered nearly level if it has a slope between 0% and 3%; gentle slopes range from 3% to 8%; moderate slopes range from 8% to 15%; and steep slopes are 15% or greater.

In areas of steep slope, it is challenging to construct roadways and foundations, as well as providing wastewater or water services. Development on steep slopes can also lead to problems such as soil erosion, unmanaged surface water runoff, and pollution from OWTS lateral seepage. Areas of moderate slope are more appropriate for development but continue to present challenges for construction which are often mitigated through engineering design. Land with a slope of less than 8% has the greatest development potential, although in some cases very flat land can present drainage problems.

Most of Jamestown is gently sloping. The majority of areas of Town that experience moderate and steep slope are found along the coast associated with the Dumplings, Beavertail, and the ridges on the North end of the island. There are also some moderate and steeply sloped areas in the Jamestown Brook Watershed.

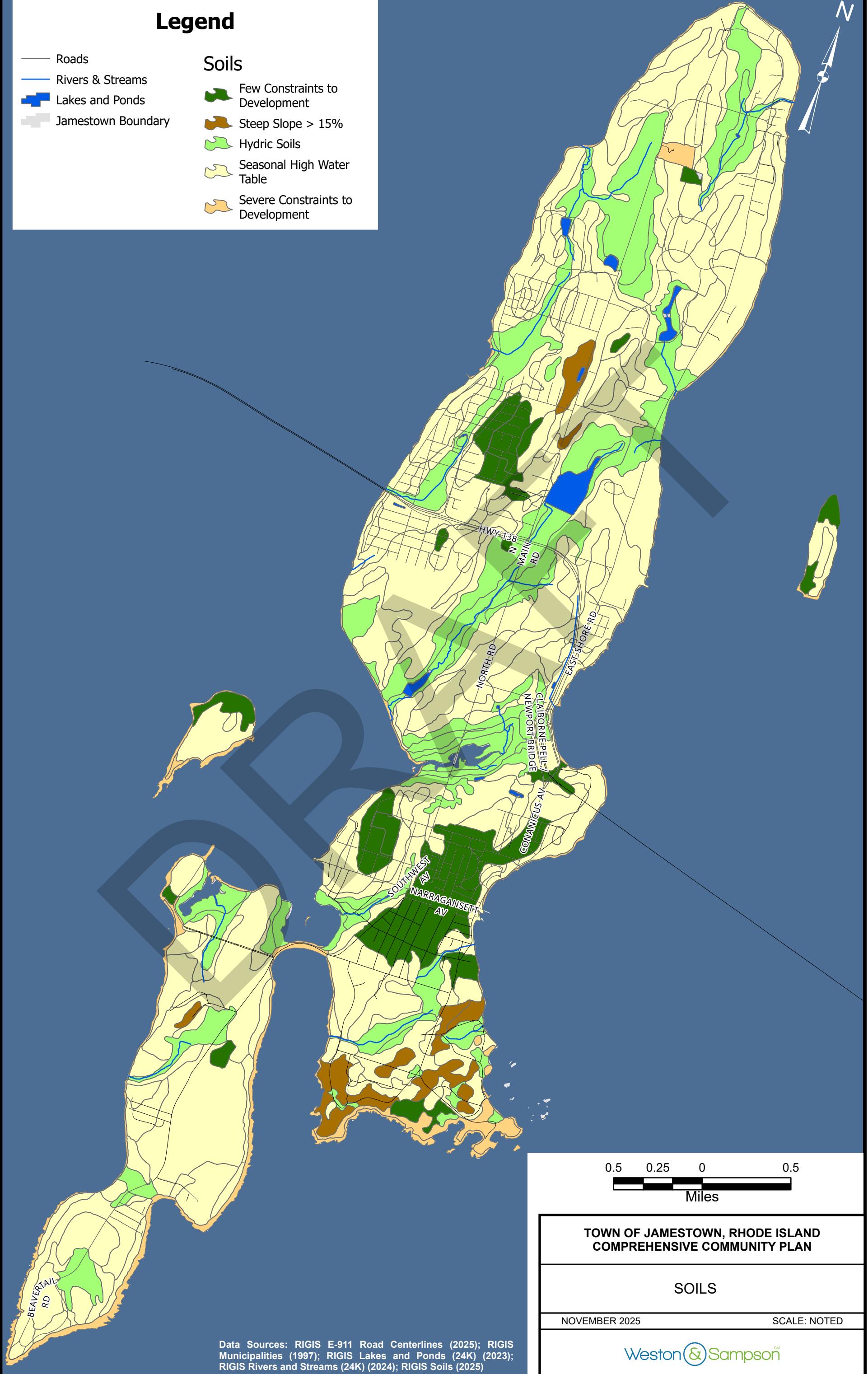


Legend

- Roads
- Rivers & Streams
- Lakes and Ponds
- Jamestown Boundary

Soils

- Few Constraints to Development
- Steep Slope > 15%
- Hydric Soils
- Seasonal High Water Table
- Severe Constraints to Development



Legend

- Roads
- Rivers & Streams
- Lakes and Ponds
- Jamestown Boundary

Soils - Farmland Class

- Not prime farmland
- Prime farmland
- Statewide Important



4.3.3. Topography and Geology

Conanicut Island lies on a series of ridges that extend along the floor of Narragansett Bay. The Island was separated from the mainland during the Carboniferous period, when glaciers cut the East and West Passages.

The Island is essentially divided into three landmasses. The largest is the northern half of the Island. It rises to an elevation of about 140 feet above sea level and is characterized by parallel ridges running north-south, which create the Jamestown Brook Watershed. To the south, separated by Great Creek and extensive wetlands, is the Central Town area. During storms and extreme high tides, floodwaters may divide the north portion of the Island from the Central Island portion. The southeastern end of Jamestown in the Fort Wetherill area is comprised of gently rolling hills with rugged rock outcrops. The highest elevation is about 100 feet. To the southwest is the Beavertail peninsula. Located on another ridge, it is connected to the rest of the Island by a sandy isthmus, Mackerel Cove Beach. Two hills comprise most of the peninsula, with one rising to an elevation of 125 feet.

The undulating topography of Jamestown is caused by the very irregular surface of the underlying bedrock. The rocks are over 200 million years old and classified as pre-Pennsylvania and Pennsylvanian Age. These consolidated rocks are evident at the cliffs and outcrops of Beavertail, the Dumplings, and Fort Wetherill. Unconsolidated deposits cover the bedrock of most of the Island. This is soil and rock carried from Northern New England by the glaciers and deposited when they melted and receded. The glacial deposits range from less than one foot to over forty feet in depth. A majority of these sediment deposits are unstratified drift called glacial till, which is debris deposited direct from ice. Refer to Map 4.3. Topography.

4.3.4. Hydrology

The glacial till that composes the surface geology of Conanicut Island is composed of unevenly sized materials with pore spaces of varying sizes that create an irregular flow of water. This composition constitutes a poor source for groundwater. Many rural residences in Jamestown use wells drilled down to the rock beneath the glacial till, which has higher yields of water.

The more densely developed village area of Jamestown relies on surface water reservoirs for its public water supply. Uneven topography divides the Island into 20 sub-watersheds. Precipitation into these subwatersheds is either absorbed into the ground or drains into wetlands, ponds, streams, or Narragansett Bay.

Surface and ground water patterns contribute significantly to establishing appropriate land uses. The availability of potable water is a high priority issue for Jamestown. As an island community, water resources are limited and highly sensitive to environmental and human influences.

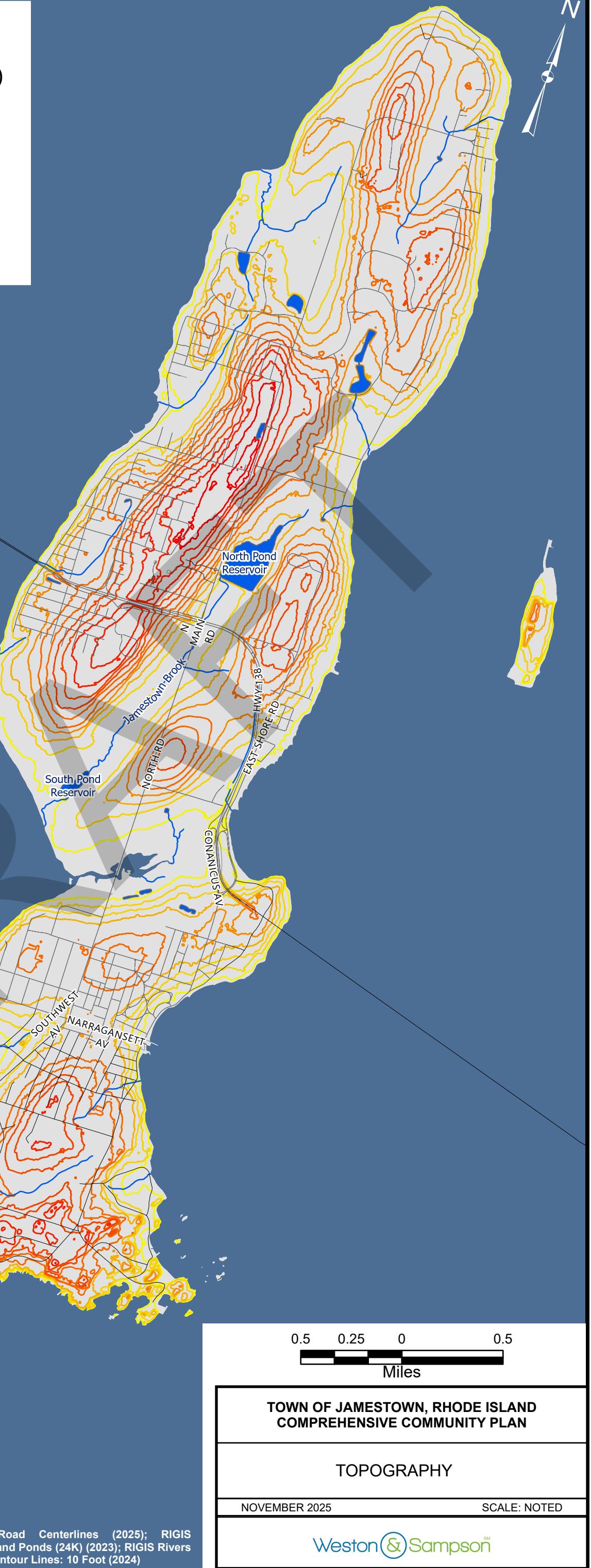


Legend

- Roads
- Rivers & Streams
- Lakes & Ponds
- Jamestown Boundary

Contour Lines (ft)

- <10
- 10-30
- 30-40
- 40-50
- 50-70
- 70-90
- 90-110
- 110-140



It is imperative that the development that takes place will not degrade the purity of surface water or groundwater supplies. Potential sources of both point and non-point pollution threats to these water supplies include pesticides, herbicides used in agriculture and lawn care, road runoff from automobiles and de-icing, chemicals used in commercial and manufacturing operations, and on-site wastewater treatment systems. Refer to Map 4.4. Soils: Hydrologically Sensitive Areas.

A further discussion of the Town's water resources is included in the following section on Water Resources.

4.4. Water Resources

4.4.1. Coastal Resources



The coast is one of Jamestown's most valuable resources. This value is directly related to the Island's economy, recreational assets, and aesthetic quality.

Jamestown's coastline provides not just physical opportunities but also provides for an emotional connection. Living on an island provides residents with constant visual and physical access to the water. The extensive shoreline offers opportunities for a multitude of active and passive recreational pursuits as well as commercial and residential development. Jamestown residents and visitors, as well as boaters on Narragansett Bay, enjoy the Island's scenery and water related activities. The coast is also important as wildlife habitat and serves as a buffer to prevent property damage from flooding and erosion.

As an island, Narragansett Bay completely surrounds Conanicut Island. Jamestown sits at the mouth of Narragansett Bay and separates the Bay, along with adjacent Prudence Island to the north, into the East and West Passages. As the desire to live and recreate at the shoreline has increased over time, Jamestown's geographic location has significantly contributed to the community's growth and development.

In Jamestown, all residents live less than half of a mile from the shoreline. Waterfront access is available through Town and State beaches, parks, and piers. More localized waterfront access at the neighborhood level is provided through undeveloped public and private rights-of-way.

Jamestown's waterfront is an asset to the economy as it relates to tourism, fishing, and recreational boating. To protect this asset, it is vitally important that the quality of the



Narragansett Bay is maintained and improved. Water quality is discussed in further detail later in this section.



Legend

- Roads
- Rivers & Streams
- Lakes and Ponds
- Jamestown Boundary

- Hydrologic Group - Infiltration Rates
- A: High
 - B: Moderate
 - C: Slow
 - D: Very Slow



TOWN OF JAMESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

HYDROLOGICALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

NOVEMBER 2025

SCALE: NOTED

Weston & SampsonSM

Data Sources: RIGIS E-911 Road Centerlines (2025); RIGIS Municipalities (1997); RIGIS Lakes and Ponds (24K) (2023); RIGIS Rivers and Streams (24K) (2024); RIGIS Soils (2025)

4.4.2. Public Waterfront

There are 23 miles of shoreline around Conanicut Island, not including Dutch and Gould Islands. The majority of the coastline is privately owned and not publicly accessible. There are over five miles of publicly owned shoreline, not including Dutch and Gould Islands. The Town owns about one and three-quarter miles of coastline including the 2015 purchase of almost 300 feet of privately owned shoreline adjacent to the Park Dock recreation area on the north-east side of Jamestown. The State of Rhode Island owns about three and one-quarter miles, and the Federal Government owns approximately three-quarters of a mile on Beavertail Point. The following section describes coastal waterfront areas that play a significant role in providing ecological benefits and recreational access in Jamestown.

Beavertail State Park

Beavertail State Park is recognized statewide as one of the State's most iconic and beloved coastal parks. Its cliffs offer breathtaking panoramic views of Narragansett Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. In addition to recreational amenities, described in the Open Space, Agriculture, and Recreation chapter, the park contains coastline and tidepools teeming with marine life. Beavertail is also the site of such geological phenomena as crystalline formations, metamorphic, quartz and basaltic intrusions. It is also the home of the Beavertail Lighthouse, which is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Fort Wetherill State Park

Fort Wetherill State Park is located amongst the Dumplings and Ocean Highlands neighborhoods. This park is located in an area that represents one of the most spectacular natural settings in the State. The area is composed of headlands, inlets, rugged cliffs, and rock outcrops providing a variety of landscapes that all culminate in stunning views of the East Passage, the Atlantic Ocean, and Newport. Along with preserving natural beauty and recreation access, the park has significant historical significance, reflecting the strategic military importance of Narragansett Bay throughout American history.

Fox Hill Marsh, Sheffield Cove Marsh, Hull Cove Swamp, Racquet Road Thicket and Great Creek Marsh

The above referenced marshes and swamps are owned by the Rhode Island Audubon Society and the Town of Jamestown and are maintained as conservation areas. These areas are among the most ecologically sensitive on the island and provide unique habitat and nursery areas for a diverse variety of wildlife.

4.4.3. Public Rights-of-Way

The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) have designated numerous public rights-of-way on the Island. Public access to the water at these rights-of-way is usually through undeveloped roads. These areas are typically small in size and primarily utilized by neighborhood residents. At some rights-of-way locations, adjacent



private property owners have encroached upon the easement, making access difficult. Other amenities, such as parking, are limited or non-existent in many of these areas.

There are many public rights-of-way to the water that are not captured through the CRMC designation and inventory of these. The Town released an inventory report in 2013 with existing and potential rights-of-way, which was updated in 2018. Town, State, or Federal ownership is paramount to the designation of “public” rights-of-way. A Town parking committee report entitled *The Parking Committee’s Report on Public Shoreline Access and Rights-of-Way in Jamestown* lists all existing and potential rights-of-way in Jamestown. Of the 39 rights-of-way listed by the Town, 14 are officially designated by CRMC (see the CRMC designated sites in PLACEHOLDER FOR MAP

). In addition, the report assigns each of the 39 potential rights-of-way to one of three categories called “priority” ratings. This priority rating system serves to place each right-of-way into a category based on the functionality of the right-of-way to serve the public including public amenities such as parking, access, and/or public facilities. The priority ratings have the following implications:

Number 1

Sites or locations identified with the number 1 indicate that the Town has assigned the site the highest importance and priority for public access. These sites can support the number of users, have facilities already in place, need little if any improvement, and should be fully maintained. It is interesting to note that sites designated with the Number 1 constitute roughly 15% of Jamestown’s total shoreline. The Town should give these primary sites the highest priority for full maintenance. These locations should be posted as public rights-of-way immediately.

Number 2

Sites or locations identified with the number 2 represent a second tier of public access. If all number 1 sites are fully functioning, and there is a need to provide additional shoreline public access, these sites could be improved to provide additional parking and/or improved access to fulfill that need. Funds for construction, possibly through CRMC or RIDEM, permit approvals, and maintenance would need to be committed to improve these sites and provide for continued maintenance.

Any additional or new parking or facilities should be considered only if the primary sites do not adequately meet the community need and budget allows for second tier sites to be upgraded or expanded. These locations should be posted as public rights-of-way once fully developed.

Number 3

Site or locations identified with the number 3 are largely neighborhood rights-of-way. In most cases these were originally established for neighborhood pedestrian access and should be maintained as such. Most are in dense neighborhoods and are currently maintained by abutting neighbors for use by those within walking distance. These sites are of the lowest



priority because they would require significant public input and investment for them to be safe and fully accessible. These locations would be established at a considerable cost to the Town and would not provide access for a significant number of people. Where there are, or have been, encroachments into these rights-of-ways it is advised that the Town mark the boundaries to clearly establish their location. It is not in the best interest of the Town to provide services, facilities, or parking at these sites.

4.4.4. Dutch and Gould Islands

In addition to Conanicut Island, Dutch Island and Gould Island are part of the Town of Jamestown. These islands provide restricted open space and a relatively unspoiled shoreline. Dutch Island, which is located on the western side of Conanicut Island, is owned by the State and is managed as a Wildlife Management Area by RIDEM's Division of Fish & Wildlife. Public access is not allowed and there are no boat ramps or access facilities provided on the island.

Gould Island is located on the eastern side of Jamestown. Its ownership is divided between the State, which owns 16.9 acres on the south portion, and the Federal Government, which owns 24.1 acres on the north end of the Island. The State portion of the Island is a Wildlife Management Area maintained for nesting wading birds by RIDEM's Division of Fish & Wildlife. Access is prohibited during the nesting season, April 1 through August 15. There are no public facilities available on Gould Island and public access is prohibited in the federally owned portion.

4.4.5. Freshwater and Estuarine Resources

Conanicut Island's water resources are a network consisting of a primary watershed, sub-watersheds, freshwater and coastal wetlands, groundwater, streams, brooks, and ponds. These water resources are particularly important because of the Town's exclusive reliance on surface and groundwater for the drinking water supply. No reasonable alternatives currently exist for permanent connections to other water supply systems. Local water resources must, therefore, be protected to ensure a continued source of drinking water. Access to a reliable drinking water resource is essential for sustaining public health, economic stability, and overall quality of life for residents.

Jamestown is primarily within the Jamestown Brook Watershed, which also serves as the main watershed for the public water supply system. This watershed includes key water bodies such as the North Pond Reservoir and South Pond Reservoir.

While the Jamestown Brook Watershed is the primary and most significant watershed on the island, there are smaller sub-watersheds and drainage areas that contribute to the island's overall hydrology. The public water supply system, including the watershed and the reservoirs, are also discussed in the Public Services and Facilities Element.



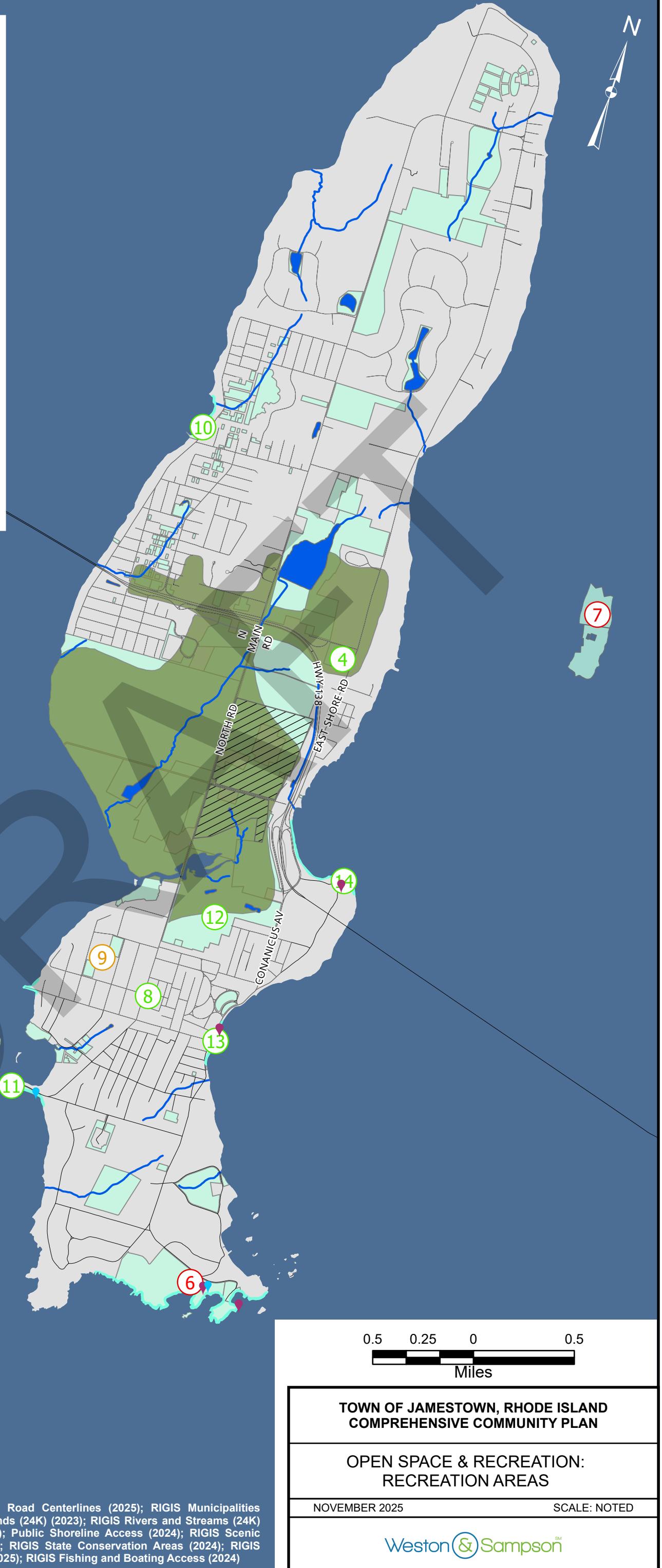
Legend

- Roads
- Rivers & Streams
- Lakes and Ponds
- Camping Sites
- Scenic Landscape Inventory
- Open Space
- Conservation Lands
- Shore ROW
- Fishing & Boating Access
- Public Shoreline Access

SCORP Inventory of Facilities

Owner

- Municipality
 - School
 - State
- | | |
|----|------------------------------|
| 1 | Bay Is. Park-Dutch Island |
| 2 | Beavertail State Park |
| 3 | DAR Memorial Park |
| 4 | Eldred Ave. Field |
| 5 | Fort Getty |
| 6 | Fort Wetherill |
| 7 | Gould Island |
| 8 | Jamestown Library Playground |
| 9 | Jamestown School |
| 10 | Jamestown Shores Beach |
| 11 | Jamestown Town Beach |
| 12 | Jamestown Town Golf Course |
| 13 | Jamestown Town Pier |
| 14 | Potter Cove Access |



Data Sources: RIGIS E-911 Road Centerlines (2025); RIGIS Municipalities (1997); RIGIS Lakes and Ponds (24K) (2023); RIGIS Rivers and Streams (24K) (2024); RIGIS SCORP (2024); Public Shoreline Access (2024); RIGIS Scenic Landscape Inventory (2024); RIGIS State Conservation Areas (2024); RIGIS Local Conservation Areas (2025); RIGIS Fishing and Boating Access (2024)

TOWN OF JAMESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION:
RECREATION AREAS

NOVEMBER 2025

SCALE: NOTED

Weston & Sampson

4.4.6. Wetlands

Wetlands are a vital natural resource that provide numerous ecological, economic, and social benefits, making their protection essential. They are valuable wildlife habitat because they provide significant feeding, nesting, breeding, resting, and nursery areas. Estuarine wetlands provide spawning and nursery habitat for fin fish, shellfish, and other invertebrates. Over one-half of the State's plant species that are rare, threatened, endangered, or of special interest or concern are wetland plants.



Water quality and quantity are also affected by wetlands. Wetlands are helpful in maintaining or improving water quality by removing and retaining nutrients, processing chemical and organic wastes, and reducing the sediment load of water. The efficiency of a wetland as a filtration and storage system depends on its size and quality. Wetlands affect water quantity by acting as a surface reservoir to store potential floodwaters and reduce peak flows downstream during periods of high rainfall. They also act to recharge the groundwater reservoirs serving wells. In addition, coastal wetlands are an effective buffer to flooding from storm waves and tides.

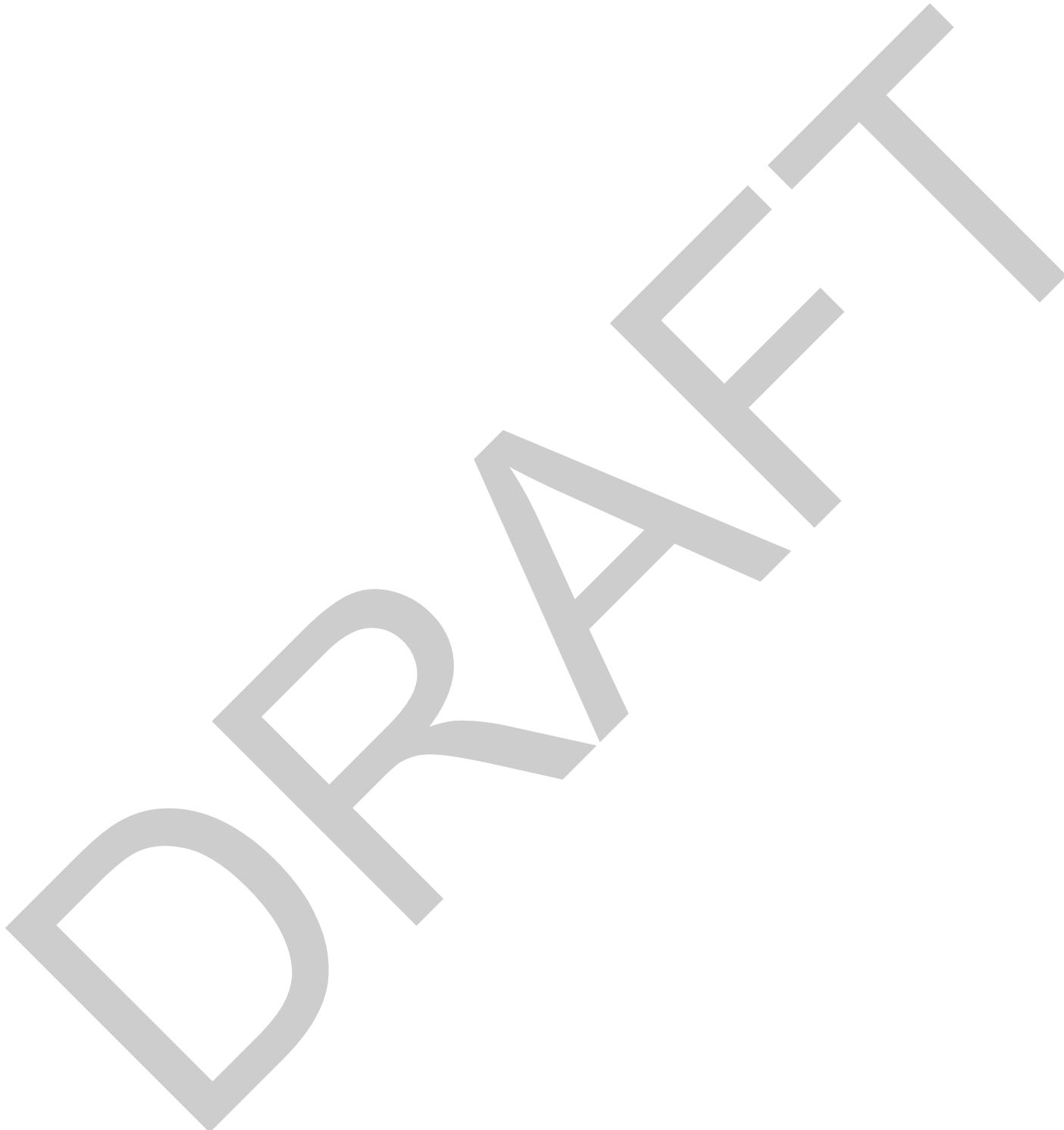
Wetlands can be defined as transitional areas between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water. They may be identified by any of the following characteristics: vegetation, hydric soils, seasonal high-water tables or a saturated water regime. Wetlands are classified by location and characteristics and include salt marsh, tidal freshwater marsh, mudflat, wet meadow, bogs, cedar swamp, and hardwood swamp. In addition, wetlands are defined and regulated by State law through RIDEM.

The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC)'s Sea Level Affecting Marshes Model (SLAMM) shows the coastal wetlands will likely transition and migrate onto adjacent upland areas under projected sea level rise scenarios of 1, 3 and 5 feet in the coming decades. In particular, this will most notably affect the areas near Marsh Meadows Wildlife Preserve, Mackerel Cove Beach, and Fox Hill Marsh.

There are slightly over 1,000 acres of wetlands on Conanicut Island, with 420 acres of those in freshwater wetlands and 585 acres of them in coastal wetland (including the entire intertidal zone around the Island). Notable wetland areas include the Jamestown Brook



watershed, Hull Cove Swamp, Round Swamp/Great Creek marsh, Fox Hill Marsh, Carr Creek and Sheffield Cove marsh. (refer to Map 4.6



420

Acres of Freshwater
Wetlands

585

Acres of Coastal Wetland

DRAFT



Legend

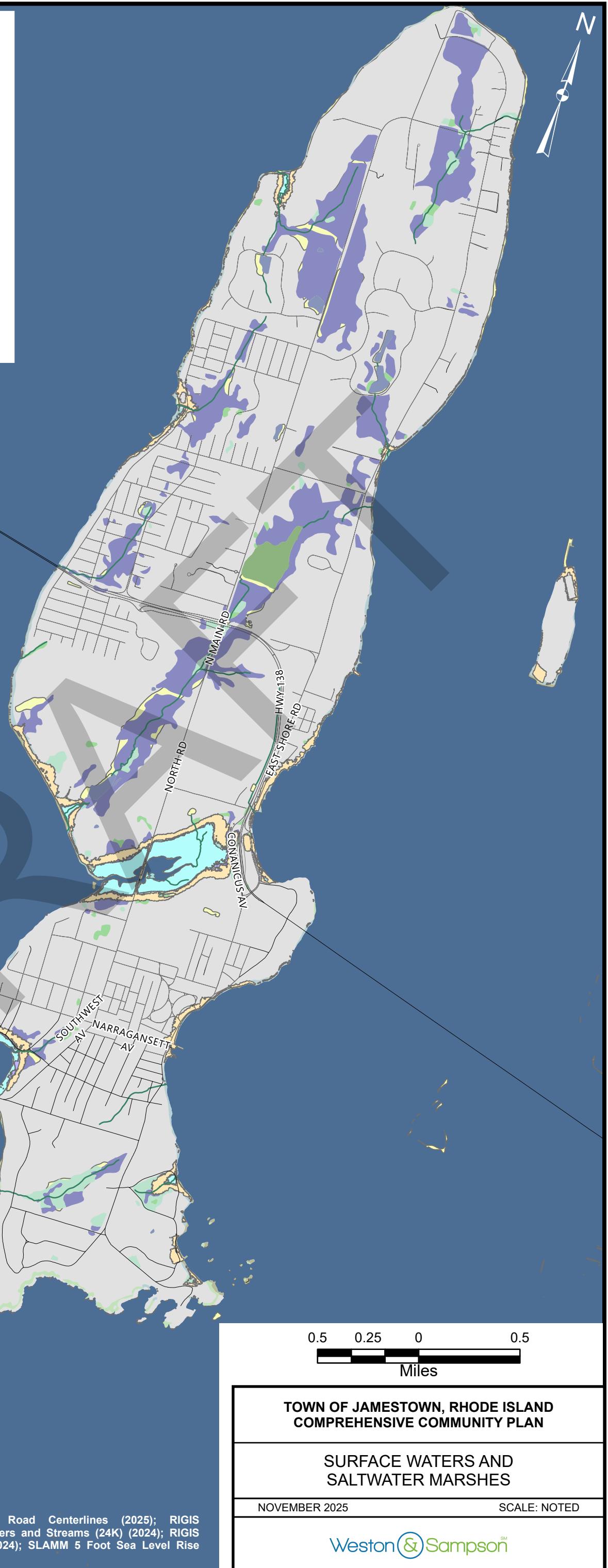
- Roads
- Rivers & Streams
- Jamestown Boundary
- National Wetlands Inventory

Sea Level Affecting Marshes Model

- New Tidal Habitat
- Persistent Tidal Habitat
- Tidal Habitat Loss

Wetlands

- Emergent Wetland: Marsh/Wet Meadow
- Estuarine Emergent Wetland
- Estuarine Open Water
- Forested Wetland: Deciduous
- Lacustrine Open Water
- Marine/Estuarine Rocky Shore
- Marine/Estuarine Unconsolidated Sh
- Palustrine Open Water
- Scrub-Shrub Swamp



Data Sources: RIGIS E-911 Road Centerlines (2025); RIGIS Municipalities (1997); RIGIS Rivers and Streams (24K) (2024); RIGIS National Wetlands Inventory (2024); SLAMM 5 Foot Sea Level Rise (2024); RIGIS Wetlands (2024)

4.4.7. Center Island Watershed and the Public Reservoirs

The Center Island Watershed and its associated public reservoirs form the cornerstone of Jamestown's public drinking water supply. This vital sub-watershed collects, stores, and filters precipitation, feeding the Town's reservoirs, North Pond and South Pond. As an island community with finite water resources, the Town depends on the sustainable management and protection of these natural systems to ensure a reliable and safe drinking water supply.

The Center Island Watershed encompasses the central portion of the island, covering approximately 640 acres, or 1.1 square miles. This area includes the sub-watersheds of the island's two public water supply reservoirs, North Pond and South Pond. Presently, the Center Island Watershed is minimally developed and largely protected. A number of creative land protection methods have been implemented in the Watershed. A combination of Federal, State, local, non-profit, and private initiatives have resulted in the permanent protection of approximately 450 acres in the approximately 640-acre Watershed.

450

out of 640 acres contained within the Center Island Watershed are
permanently protected

The wetlands associated with Jamestown Brook are of great importance because they comprise part of the Center Island Watershed, which is the source of the Town's water. Approximately one-third of the 1.1 square mile watershed flows to the North Pond Reservoir, from which the Town currently draws its water. The remainder of the Center Island Watershed drains into Jamestown Brook, or South Pond, a secondary public water supply. The South Pond Reservoir has increased in importance as the demand for public water has frequently outstripped supply.

The Center Island Watershed area is established as a Watershed Conservation District, and development in this area is regulated by both the RR-200 Zoning District (1985) and the Open Space I District (1999). The RR-200 Zoning District requires a 200,000 square foot minimum lot size. The OS-I District is for publicly owned properties that need preservation and does not permit development. All new development is required to go through a regulatory process that considers impacts on the environment and natural resources.

4.4.8. Streams and Ponds

Other than the Jamestown Brook and reservoirs, Jamestown has a number of perennial and intermittent streams and ponds located throughout the Island.



Figure 4-1. Unnamed Pond



Source: Town of Jamestown

Ponds include Hammond Pond, Crusher Pond, Rosamund Pond, Tefft Pond, and Rainbow Pond. Hammond Pond is a natural pond that acts as a holding area for runoff. Rosamund, Tefft, and Rainbow ponds were constructed for drainage purposes as part of the development of the West Reach and East Passage subdivision projects. All of these ponds have wildlife, aesthetic, and recreational value. The water quality of these ponds is believed to be good. The Jamestown Conservation Commission has worked with the homeowner associations from both subdivisions in developing a management plan for all three man-made ponds.

Perennial and intermittent streams are part of the Town's natural drainage system into the Narragansett Bay and the Town's reservoirs. Streams are connected to wetland areas that serve as holding basins and drainage areas for runoff. These streams are identified and classified on



4.4.9. Surface Water Quality

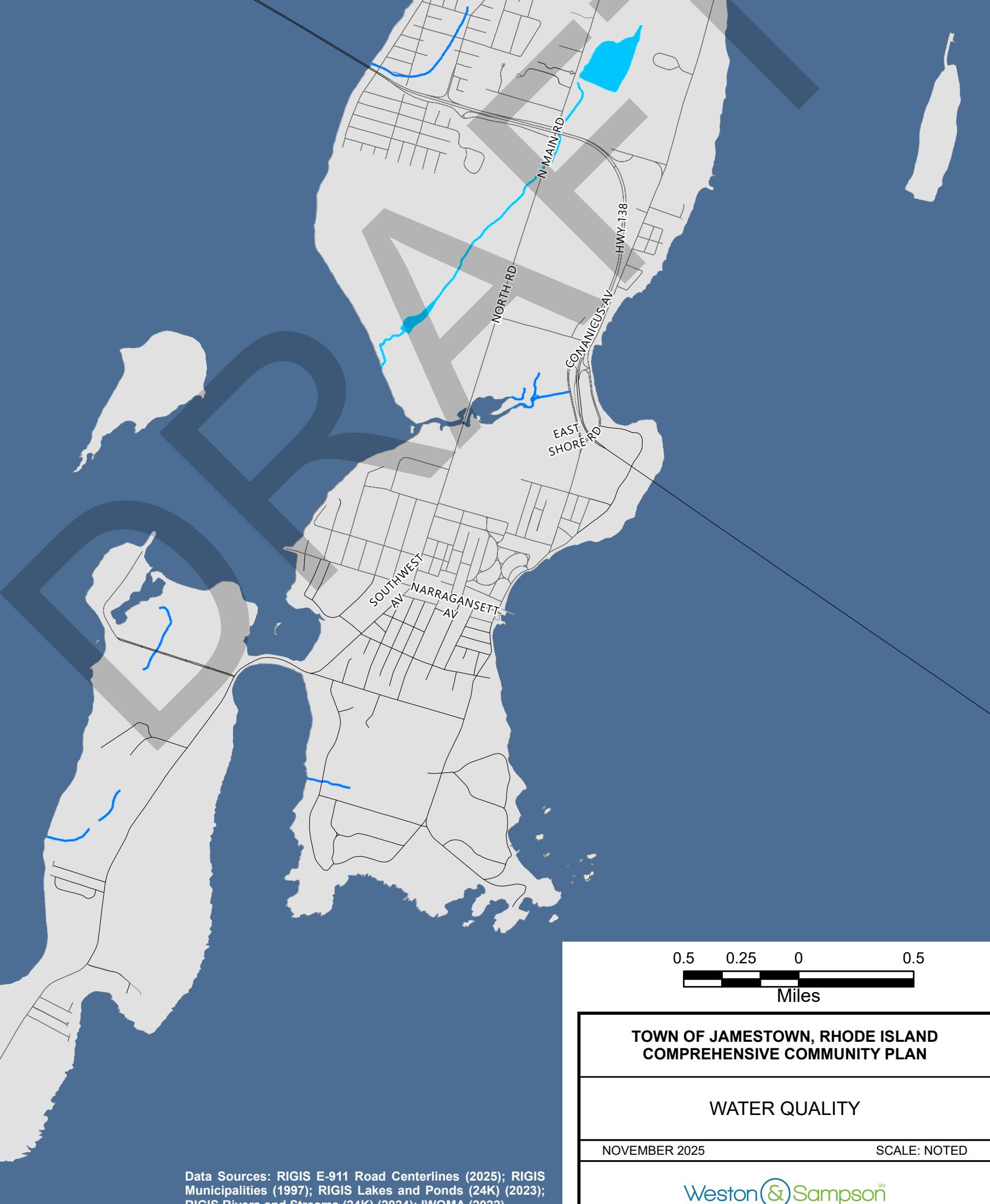
All surface waters of the State have been categorized according to the water use classifications defined within Rhode Island's Water Quality Regulations. The surface water quality classifications, including the partial use classifications, are represented in Tables 4.6 4.7, and Map 4.7 Water Quality. The surface water-quality uses are the intended or designated purposes for which a water body is used or expected to be used. The surface water quality criteria, or standards, are the specific measurable thresholds or conditions that define what is necessary to support those designated uses. The surface water-quality goals represent the desired or required quality of the water to ensure it can safely and effectively serve its designated uses. The current surface water-quality conditions of a particular water body may not always meet the water body standards. Even if the present condition of the water body does not support the surface water-quality goal, all activities requiring environmental regulatory permits must conform to the surface water-quality criteria for the goal designated for that water body. This is to help achieve and maintain that designated use goal in the future. Waters with higher water quality than the surface water-quality criteria are also protected to maintain their high quality under the State's Anti-degradation Policy.



Legend

- Roads
- Jamestown Boundary
- Stream WQ Standard
 - AA
 - A

- Pond WQ Standard
 - AA
- Estuary WQ Standard
 - SA
 - SA{b}
 - SB
 - SB1



TOWN OF JAMESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

WATER QUALITY

NOVEMBER 2025

SCALE: NOTED

Weston & SampsonSM

Data Sources: RIGIS E-911 Road Centerlines (2025); RIGIS Municipalities (1997); RIGIS Lakes and Ponds (24K) (2023); RIGIS Rivers and Streams (24K) (2024); IWQMA (2022)

Surface water quality designations differ between fresh and salt water due to the differences in ecosystems and biological communities, unique uses and priorities, different pollutant sensitivities, varying regulatory requirements, and hydrological differences. These different classification systems allow more tailored regulatory requirements. The surface water quality classification system allows RIDEM to designate a partial use for the approved water use classifications. A partial use designation denotes specific restrictions of use assigned to a water body or segment of a water body. A partial use designation is represented by the lower-case letters "a" or "b", which appear in brackets {} next to the classification.

The majority of marine waters around Conanicut Island are classified as SA, meaning they support all marine related uses defined by the classification system. A small area on the West Passage side of the Island at West Ferry is classified as SA{b} due to the proximity to the marina and mooring fields, which preclude shellfishing in that area during the summer. On the East Passage side of the Island, the area around the wastewater treatment facilities discharge is classified as SB1 and SB. The area around East Ferry is classified as SB and SA{b}. The area north of Gould Island is classified as SB described in Table 4.6 below. The State RIDEM monitors shellfishing and swimming areas seasonally to ensure proper water quality in these areas.

SA

Surface water quality classification of the **majority of marine waters around Conanicut Island**

The Island's major fresh waterbodies are North Pond Reservoir, South Pond Reservoir, and Jamestown Brook. The State Department of Health monitors the North Pond for several parameters including turbidity, color, total suspended soils, sodium, pH, chloride, nitrate and total coliform. North Pond is in full compliance with the Class A drinking water standards. South Pond and Jamestown Brook are assessed as impaired for Class A drinking water due to high color and pathogens, respectively.

Water quality issues have been identified for Jamestown Brook pertaining to bacteria, copper, iron, and lead, and a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) has been approved. A TMDL assessment describes impairments and identifies measures needed to restore water quality in the water body and is required by the Clean Water Act for all waters in this category. The Jamestown Brook Watershed Plan was released in 2021 to identify and prioritize these water quality issues into one unified vision and action plan. This plan also enables the Town to be eligible for USEPA Section 319 funds that are administered by RIDEM.



Table 4.6. Water Quality Standards

Freshwater	
Class A*	These waters are designated as a source of public drinking water supply, for primary and secondary contact recreational activities and for fish and wildlife habitat. They shall be suitable for compatible industrial processes and cooling, hydropower, aquacultural uses, navigation, and irrigation and other agricultural uses. These waters shall have good aesthetic value.
Class B	These waters are designated for fish and wildlife habitat and primary and secondary contact recreational activities. They shall be suitable for compatible industrial processes and cooling, hydropower, aquacultural uses, navigation, and irrigation and other agricultural uses. These waters shall have good aesthetic value.
Class B1	These waters are designated for primary and secondary contact recreational activities and fish and wildlife habitat. They shall be suitable for compatible industrial processes and cooling, hydropower, aquacultural uses, navigation, and irrigation and other agricultural uses. These waters shall have good aesthetic value. Primary contact recreational activities may be impacted due to pathogens from approved wastewater discharges. However all Class B criteria must be met.
Class C	These waters are designated for secondary contact recreational activities and fish and wildlife habitat. They shall be suitable for compatible industrial processes and cooling, hydropower, aquacultural uses, navigation, and irrigation and other agricultural uses. These waters shall have good aesthetic value.
Saltwater	
Class SA**	These waters are designated for shellfish harvesting for direct human consumption, primary and secondary contact recreational activities, and fish and wildlife habitat. They shall be suitable for aquacultural uses, navigation and industrial cooling. These waters shall have good aesthetic value.

*Class A waters used for public drinking water supply may be subjected to restricted recreational use by State and local authorities.



Saltwater	
Class SB**	These waters are designated for primary and secondary contact recreational activities; shellfish harvesting for controlled relay and depuration; and fish and wildlife habitat. They shall be suitable for aquacultural uses, navigation, and industrial cooling. These waters shall have good aesthetic value.
Class SB1*	These waters are designated for primary and secondary contact recreational activities and fish and wildlife habitat. They shall be suitable for aquacultural uses, navigation, and industrial cooling. These waters shall have good aesthetic value. Primary contact recreational activities may be impacted due to pathogens from approved wastewater discharges. However all Class SB criteria must be met.
Class SC	These waters are designated for secondary recreational activities, and fish and wildlife habitat. They shall be suitable for aquacultural uses, navigation, and industrial cooling. These waters shall have good aesthetic value.

**Certain class SA, SB, and SB1 water body segments may have partial use designations assigned to them as follows and more clearly noted in rules 8.B(3) of the RIDEM Water Quality Classification Descriptions and Regulations.

Partial Uses	
In accordance with rule 19 of the RIDEM Water Quality Classification Descriptions and Regulations, the DEM may designate a partial use for the above listed water classifications. Partial use denotes specific restrictions of use assigned to a water body or water body segment that may affect the application of criteria. For example, a partial use designation may be appropriate where activities such as combined sewer overflows and concentrations of vessels impact the waters. Additional partial uses may be so designated by the Director if provided in accordance with rule 19.	
CSO	These waters will likely be impacted by combined sewer overflows in accordance with approved CSO Facilities Plans and in compliance with rule 19.E.1 of the RIDEM Water Quality Classification Descriptions and Regulations and the Rhode Island CSO Policy. Therefore, primary contact recreational activities, shellfishing uses, and fish and wildlife habitat will likely be restricted.



Partial Uses

Concentration of Vessels

These waters are in the vicinity of marinas and/or mooring fields and therefore seasonal shellfishing closures will likely be required as listed in most recent (revised annually) RIDEM document entitled Shellfish Closure Areas. For Class SA waters, all Class SA criteria must be attained at all times.

Source: *Title 250 – Department of Environmental Management, Chapter 150 – Water Resources, Subchapter 05 – Water Quality, Part 1 – Water Quality Regulations*

4.4.10. Groundwater Resources

Geology and Groundwater Formation

The geology of Conanicut Island is largely responsible for determining the amount of groundwater available to the Town. The Island is underlain by very irregular consolidated rocks, more than two hundred million years old, classified as Pre-Pennsylvanian and Pennsylvanian in age. In most places, these bedrock formations are overlain by unconsolidated deposits left behind by glacial ice, consisting mostly of till that ranges in thickness from less than one foot to more than 40 feet. This geology yields the lowest quantity of groundwater in the State. Groundwater is stored in fractures within the consolidated bedrock, with only limited additional storage in the saturated glacial till above it. To meet the Town's needs, wells were installed in the North End to tap into these reserves and supplement the North Reservoir's supply yield. See Map 4.8, *Groundwater Supply and Protection*, for the location of wellhead protection areas.

All water on the island, both surface and groundwater, originates from precipitation. The saturated glacial till and the bedrock aquifer are hydrologically connected, allowing recharge to occur through infiltration. While excessive pumping can temporarily lower groundwater levels, a significant amount of water is returned through precipitation and on-site wastewater treatment system (OWTS) infiltration. Only about 15% of total water is lost through consumption and evapotranspiration, especially in summer months. Because recharge is so essential to maintaining supply, the return of water to the hydrologic system—particularly through OWTS infiltration—is critical.

Groundwater Classification System

The RIDEM groundwater classification system categorizes Rhode Island's groundwater resources into four classes and establishes quality standards for each. Table 4.7 summarizes these classifications, including drinking water suitability and typical locations.



Table 4.7. Groundwater Classifications

Classification	Description
GAA	These groundwater resources are designated to be suitable for public drinking water use without treatment. These resources are located within groundwater reservoirs, wellhead protection areas for community water supply wells, and groundwater dependent areas that are physically isolated from reasonable alternative water and where existing groundwater supply warrants the highest level of protection.
GA	These groundwater resources are designated to be suitable for public or private drinking water use without treatment. These resources are not located in the areas delineated or designated in GAA.
GB	These groundwater resources may not be suitable for public or private drinking water use without treatment due to known or presumed degradation. These resources include highly urbanized areas of the State with dense concentrations of historic industrial and commercial activity, historically permitted or approved landfills, inactive and active land disposal sites, and areas the Director of DEM has determined not suitable for public or private drinking water use.
GC	These groundwater resources are designated to be more suitable for certain waste disposal practices than for development as a drinking water supply. These resources include at licensed solid waste landfills – permitted area for waste disposal and areas surrounding the permitted area for waste disposal, and areas that have been reclassified for solid waste landfills and facilities for the disposal of hazardous waste.

Source: Rhode Island Department of Environmental Conservation

Groundwater Quantity, Density, and Safe Yield

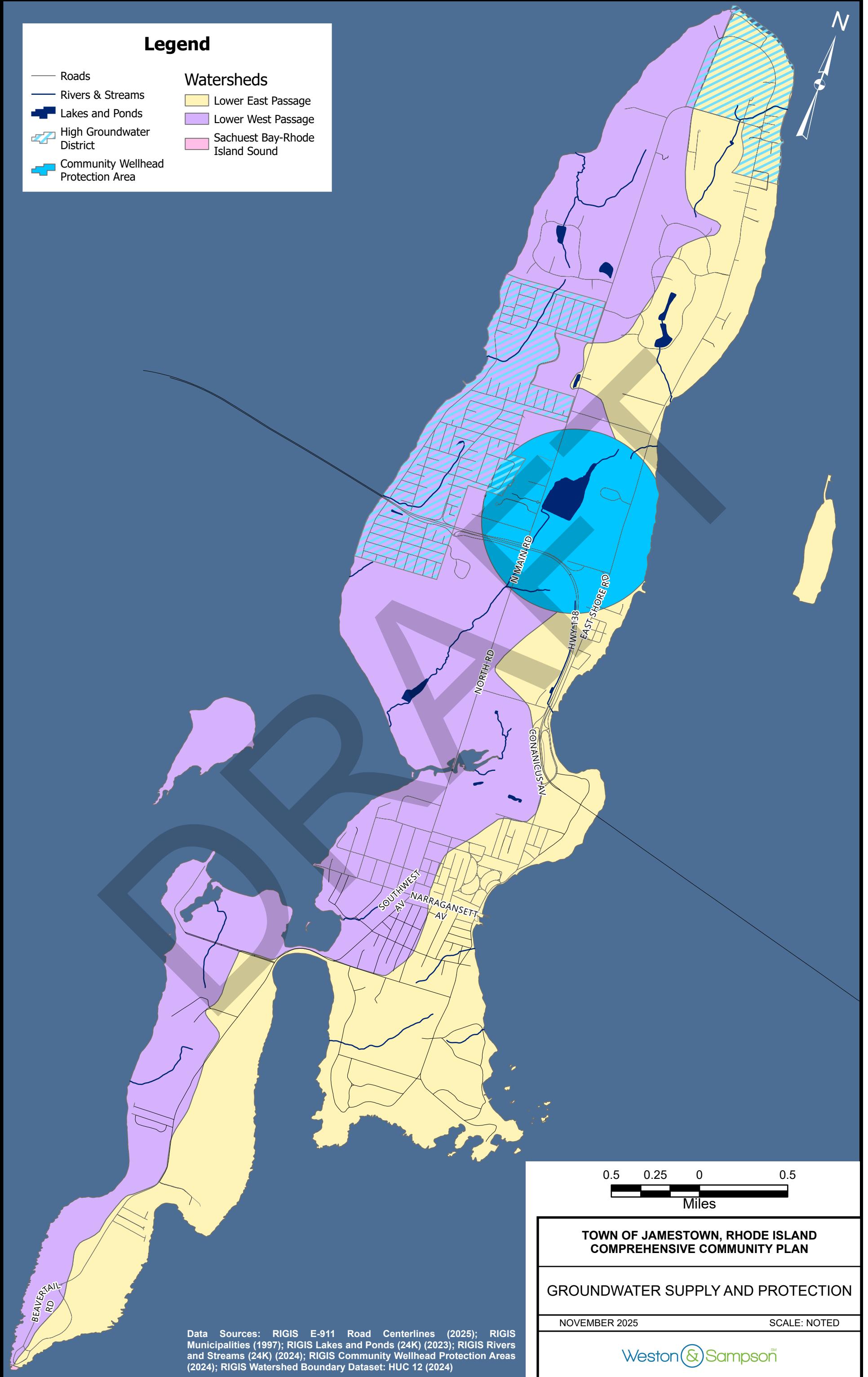
Groundwater quantity becomes a particular concern in areas with high-density development. The greatest challenges occur in the Jamestown Shores area, where public water is not available and densities range from two to six homes per acre. Although there are no widespread reports of well depletions, it would be prudent for the Town to determine a maximum safe yield for areas not served by public water to avoid future supply issues.

The 2024 Community Survey asked residents whether they would support spending public funds to determine the island's groundwater "safe yield," defined as the amount of groundwater that can be withdrawn without reducing the supply below naturally replenishable levels. Seventy-two percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed; 10% strongly disagreed or disagreed; and 17% were unsure.



Legend

- Roads
 - Rivers & Streams
 - Lakes and Ponds
 - High Groundwater District
 - Community Wellhead Protection Area
- Watersheds**
- Lower East Passage
 - Lower West Passage
 - Sachuest Bay-Rhode Island Sound



Data Sources: RIGIS E-911 Road Centerlines (2025); RIGIS Municipalities (1997); RIGIS Lakes and Ponds (24K) (2023); RIGIS Rivers and Streams (24K) (2024); RIGIS Community Wellhead Protection Areas (2024); RIGIS Watershed Boundary Dataset: HUC 12 (2024)

**TOWN OF JAMESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN**

GROUNDWATER SUPPLY AND PROTECTION

NOVEMBER 2025

SCALE: NOTED

Weston & SampsonSM

Existing Regulations Affecting Groundwater Quantity

Groundwater quantity in the Jamestown Shores area is managed through several long-standing regulatory tools, including the 1967 lot-merger provision, rezoning to R-40 (requiring a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet), and the creation of the High Groundwater and Impervious Layer Overlay District in 2003. Despite these measures, many substandard lots and legal pre-existing nonconforming lots created before these zoning requirements remain eligible for development.

A related concern is the installation of underdrains or subsurface drains, which can lower groundwater levels and alter natural drainage patterns. These systems are regulated for both groundwater quantity and quality reasons. Lots outside designated areas require only State approval for subdrains, while the High Groundwater and Shallow Impervious Layer Overlay District prohibits subdrains for OWTS installations in the Jamestown Shores and Conanicut Park areas.

Groundwater Quality and Risks

Groundwater quality in Jamestown is generally good, largely due to the absence of major industrial development and the fact that most commercial areas and higher-density residential neighborhoods are served by public water and sewer. However, the most significant risk to groundwater quality arises from OWTS on small lots with poor soils and limited separation from private drinking water wells. This issue will be discussed further in the groundwater protection methods section.

Iron in groundwater is also common on the island. Pyrite releases of iron and sulfur can affect smell and taste but do not pose health concerns.

Recurring water quality concerns have been documented in higher-density areas, particularly in the Jamestown Shores. The Town has responded proactively by developing a Wastewater Management Plan and an accompanying ordinance requiring OWTS inspection and maintenance.

Town Management and Protection Efforts

To further protect groundwater in the northern part of town, Jamestown established the High Groundwater and Impervious Layer Overlay District with associated development regulations for Jamestown Shores and Conanicut Park. The Town also completed a second round of well testing in the Shores in 2011, with assistance from URI, the Rhode Island Department of Health, and RIDEM. This testing revealed elevated nitrate levels in more densely populated areas of northern Jamestown.

Over the past several decades, the Town has also acquired 108 lots in the Jamestown Shores to reduce density and protect groundwater resources. These lots were obtained primarily through tax sale or budgeted funds for water resource protection, effectively removing them from potential development.



Collectively, Jamestown's geology, limited groundwater storage capacity, and pockets of higher-density development make the island's groundwater a finite and vulnerable resource. Although existing regulations, wastewater management efforts, and long-term density reduction strategies have significantly strengthened local protection, changing environmental conditions and aging data highlight the need for continued monitoring and updated analysis. Sustaining the island's groundwater supply will depend on maintaining low-impact development patterns, protecting recharge areas, and ensuring that water returned to the system keeps pace with the community's long-term needs.

4.5. Water Quality Protection



The protection of groundwater and surface water on Conanicut Island is critical to ensuring the quality of both private and public drinking water sources.

The majority of households in Jamestown depend upon private wells, and the extension of the public water supply system to the areas outside the water district is not feasible due to the current limited storage capacity. These constraints emphasize the importance of protecting the quality and quantity of the ground and surface water supplies on the Island. The management and proper treatment of surface water runoff is also very important because the Town's public drinking-water reservoirs are primarily fed by surface water runoff. Preventing degradation of the water quality in this watershed is extremely important since the development of an alternate water supply source would be very difficult and costly.

The Town's goals for ensuring good water quality include the protection of freshwater resources, prevention of wetlands degradation and loss, and maintenance of the quality and area of the Jamestown Brook Watershed. Various Local, State and Federal programs, policies and statutes protect Jamestown's water quality. The following is a discussion of the most pertinent protective measures that address pollution.

4.5.1. Federal Sole Source Aquifer

Conanicut Island was designated as a Sole Source Aquifer by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Aug. 14, 2008 after a resident group petitioned the federal agency in hopes of protecting the island's water supply. According to the EPA, a Sole Source Aquifer (SSA) is an aquifer that is the "sole or principal source" of drinking water for an aquifer service area, meaning it supplies 50 percent or more of the area's drinking water and there are no reasonable available alternative sources should the aquifer become contaminated. The Federal Safe Drinking Water Act gives EPA the authority to designate aquifers as such.



Once an aquifer is designated as an SSA, federal financial assistance is not permitted for any project which the EPA determines could contaminate the aquifer, through its recharge area, that would create a significant hazard to public health.

Sole Source Aquifer (SSA)

Sole or principal source (50% or more) of drinking water for an aquifer service area

The designation as an SSA helps to increases public awareness of the value of local water resources and can assist in conservation efforts. It can foster a greater sense of stewardship within the community, leading to more sustainable water usage practices and support for policies that protect the aquifer from pollution or overuse. The designation can also make the community eligible for other funding sources to assist in protection and maintenance of the aquifer. For example, EPA may provide funding for water quality monitoring, pollution prevention programs, or the installation of newer and safer water infrastructure if needed. There are three other SSAs in Rhode Island; Pawcatuck River, Hunt-Annaquabucket-Pettaquamscutt, and Block Island.

4.5.2. State

The State of Rhode Island through its various departments and agencies has developed plans and programs to foster water-quality preservation and enhancement for both drinking water sources and recreational uses. Numerous State statutes have also been adopted to protect water quality.

Regulatory and Permitting Requirements

RIDEM is the primary State department responsible for preparing and administering water quality protection programs. RIDEM administers a myriad of permitting programs including those governing freshwater wetlands alteration, solid and hazardous waste disposal, and pollutant discharge elimination systems.

The design and installation of OWTS are also permitted and regulated by RIDEM. Any variance from the State regulations for the installation of OWTS can be reviewed by local officials and recommendations are rendered when necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of residents.

Further protection of water quality is provided under RIDEM's water quality classification system, which is discussed in detail in Section 2.3 of this chapter. These classifications designate and prohibit specific uses within delineated groundwater and surface water areas. The goal is to protect current water quality and ideally to upgrade its classification status.



Point-source pollution

Pollution that comes from a single location and discharges pollutants directly into water bodies, from a pipe or channel.

Non-point source pollution

Pollution that comes from the land or streets and is carried by rain or snowmelt into waterways.

Nonpoint Source Pollution Management

According to the EPA, nonpoint source pollution is considered the dominant source of water pollution in the United States and poses a significant management concern affecting the State's surface water and groundwater resources. Nonpoint source pollution results when water traveling over and through the ground collects pollutants from a variety of land uses and activities and carries those pollutants into streams, rivers, lakes, coastal water, wetlands, and groundwater.

The Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 303(d) requires states to identify and list waterbodies that are not expected to meet State water quality standards after the implementation of technology-based controls, and as such, require the development of TMDLs. These water bodies are considered to be "impaired", failing to meet one or more water quality standards for their designated uses. While not always the case, water bodies are often listed as impaired due to nonpoint source pollution. RIDEM prepares the State's Impaired Waters Report, the most recent of which was completed in April 2024 (Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Office of Water Resources, 2024).

Jamestown Brook is the only waterbody in Jamestown that is considered impaired. It was initially placed on the impaired list in 1998 and despite the establishment of a TMDL, ongoing monitoring indicates that the waterbody has not achieved the desired water quality standards, therefore, it remains on the list of impaired waterbodies (Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Office of Water Resources, 2021).

Waters are evaluated as a drinking water supply, bathing and recreation resource, or habitat resource. Waters that are included on the priority list have often been threatened or impaired by non-point sources of pollution. The Town has completed improvements to the earthen dam with the installation of a toe drain along the entire length; improved the slope and stability of the structure; and replaced compressed air with a high-volume blower for the diffused aeration system within the reservoir to improve raw water quality.

The Water Quality Act (WQA) Section 319 requires states to develop a plan to manage nonpoint source pollution. Rhode Island's Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan has been managed by RIDEM for over 35 years and is one of several core State water quality programs that work collectively toward clean water goals in the State. The most recent



Nonpoint Source Management Plan was updated in 2024, from the previous 2019 Plan (Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Office of Water Resources, 2024). The purpose of the Plan is to describe strategies the State will use when carrying out and implementing actions to achieve water quality goals.

The 2024 NPSMP Plan incorporates significant programmatic changes since the last management plan in 2019. The 2024 NPSMP Plan expands program development to involve the expansion of efforts to plan for and respond to the impacts of climate change, including building capacity for stormwater runoff management and promoting watershed and community resilience, as well as environmental justice.

The connection between the Impaired Waters Report and the NPSMP Plan lies in their shared goals of improving water quality by addressing pollution sources that degrade water quality. The Impaired Waters Report identifies water bodies that do not meet their water quality standards due to pollutants, often from nonpoint sources, while the NPSMP Plan provides a framework for reducing this type of pollution. It prioritizes actions in watersheds with impaired waters, identifying strategies to address specific pollutants and sources listed in the Impaired Waters Report. In Jamestown, the NPSMP Plan recommends using a mix of protection and restoration strategies to address pollution.

Coastal Resources Management Program

The Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC), which was created to oversee Rhode Island's coastal resources, has provided supplementary protection for water quality since 1971. Enabling legislation requires that an assent be obtained from the CRMC for certain alterations and activities within 200 feet of a coastal feature to confirm that these activities are in compliance with its water use classification program.

In order to carry out its legislative intent, CRMC adopted the Coastal Resources Management Plan (CRMP), which designated water use classifications for the State's coastal waters (Rhode Island Department of State, 2024). The State's waters are classified into six categories based upon ecological characteristics, existing uses, and management priorities and are highly dependent on the type of activities on the adjacent mainland. These categories range from pristine conservation areas (Type 1) to industrial waterfronts and navigation channels (Type 6). The classification system directly influences how the shoreline and adjacent land can be developed. Table 4.8 provides more information about the CRMP classification system.



Table 4.8. Coastal Resources Management Council Water Classifications

Water Classification Type	Description	Goal
Type 1 – Conservation Areas	<p>Water areas that are within or adjacent to the boundaries of designated wildlife refuges and conservation area;</p> <p>Water areas that have retained natural habitat or maintain scenic values of unique or unusual significance; and</p> <p>Water areas that are particularly unsuitable for structures due to their exposure to severe wave action, flooding, and erosion.</p>	Preserve and protect Type 1 waters from activities and uses that have the potential to degrade scenic, wildlife, and plant habitat values, or which may adversely impact water quality or natural shoreline types
Type 2 – Low Intensity Use	Waters in areas with high scenic value that support low intensity recreational and residential uses. These waters include seasonal mooring areas where good water quality and fish and wildlife habitat are maintained.	Maintain and, where possible, restore the high scenic value, water quality, and natural habitat values of these areas, while providing for low intensity uses that will not detract from these values.
Type 3 – High Intensity Boating	Intensely utilized water areas where recreational boating activities dominate and where the adjacent shorelines are developed as marinas, boatyards, and associated water enhanced and water dependent businesses.	Preserve, protect, and, where possible, enhance Type 3 areas for high intensity boating and the services that support this activity. Other activities and alterations will be permitted to the extent that they do not significantly interfere with recreational boating activities or values.



Table 4.8. Coastal Resources Management Council Water Classifications

Water Classification Type	Description	Goal
Type 4 – Multipurpose Waters	<p>Large expanses of open water in Narragansett Bay and the Sounds which support a variety of commercial and recreational activities while maintaining good value as a fish and wildlife habitat; and</p> <p>Open waters adjacent to shorelines that could support water dependent commercial, industrial, and/or high intensity recreational activities.</p>	Maintain a balance among the diverse activities that must coexist in Type 4 waters. The changing characteristics of traditional activities and the development of new water dependent uses shall, where possible, be accommodated in keeping with the principle that the Council shall work to preserve and restore ecological systems.
Type 5 – Commercial and Recreational Harbors	Adjacent to waterfront areas that support a variety of tourist, recreational, and commercial activities.	Maintain a balance among diverse port related activities, including recreational boating, commercial fishing, restaurants, and other water enhanced businesses; to promote the efficient use of space; and to protect the scenic characteristics that make these areas valuable to tourism.
Type 6 – Industrial Waterfronts and Commercial Navigation Channels	Extensively altered in order to accommodate commercial and industrial water dependent and water enhanced activities.	Encourage and support modernization and increased commercial activity related to shipping and commercial fisheries.

Source: (Rhode Island Department of State, 2024)

Under the CRMP, Jamestown's waters are classified as Types 1, 2, and 3 with types 4 and 6 designations found further from the shoreline (refer to Maps 4.8 and 4.9). These categories



establish patterns of use that preserve scenic value of the coastline and prohibit increased intensity of various uses. Type 1 water is found around Dutch Island, Beavertail, Southwest Point to Bull Point and Potter's Cove. Type 2 water is located around Gould Island, in Mackerel Cove, and from Dutch Island Harbor north around the north end of the Island. Type 3 water is found from Bull Point north to the Newport Bridge. Types 4 and 6 waters, although not directly adjacent to the island, are located outside the Type 1-3 areas (Type 4) and off the north coast of Conanicut Island (Type 6).

Rhode Island Department of Health

The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) is responsible for regulating public water systems to ensure safe drinking water. They regulate public water systems under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act and the Rhode Island Safe Drinking Water Act through RIDOH's Public Drinking Water Program (Rhode Island Department of State, 2024). A public water system is any system that serves 15 or more connections or 25 or more people daily for at least 60 days a year, which includes Jamestown's public water system.

Under these regulations the regular monitoring and testing of the Town's public water system, including water sources and treatment facilities, is mandatory to ensure compliance with health-based standards. The Town has a permit from RIDOH for the operation and maintenance of the public water system and is required to submit regular reports to RIDOH and provide Consumer Confidence Reports to inform users about water quality.



Legend

— Water Type Boundary

CRMC Water Type Classification

- 1 Conservation Areas
- 2 Low Intensity Uses
- 3 High Intensity Boating
- 4 Multi Purpose Waters
- 5 Recreational and Commercial Harbors
- 6 Industrial Waterfronts and Commercial Navigation Channels

CRMC Barriers

- D - Developed
- M - Moderately Developed
- U - Undeveloped
- ////// Coastal wetlands in Type 3-6 waters designated for preservation



0.7 0.35 0 0.7
Miles

TOWN OF JAMESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

WATER TYPE CLASSIFICATION

NOVEMBER 2025

SCALE: NOTED

Weston & SampsonSM

RIDOH also conducts routine inspections and enforces regulations to ensure that the system complies with federal and State standards.

In partnership with local government, RIDOH is the primary State department responsible for regulating private well water quality. It oversees rules and regulations pertaining to private drinking water systems requiring the testing of all new private wells and private wells involved in real estate transactions. These required tests must be conducted prior to the issuance of building permits (quantity) and certificates of occupancy (quality), which are permits and certificates issued by the local building official. Additionally, the Contractors Registration Board requires the registration and licensing of all well drillers and pump installers.

While there are no requirements for the continued testing of private wells after they have been installed, RIDOH highly recommends that all private well owners have their wells tested annually for bacteria, nitrates, and contaminants such as arsenic or radon.

4.5.3. Municipal

The most effective method of groundwater protection can be accomplished by local regulations. In Jamestown, protection of water resources is achieved through ordinances and policies.



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Zoning Ordinance

The Town's Zoning Ordinance specifies protection methods to maintain and preserve surface and groundwater quality on the Island. Of particular importance is the High Groundwater and Shallow Impervious Layer Overlay District that has been in place since 2002 (see Map 3.3 Existing Zoning). The goals of this ordinance are:

- To ensure proper on-site wastewater treatment system operation and provide adequate pathogen treatment.
- To maintain groundwater nitrogen at safe concentrations for private wells.
- To control the volume of stormwater runoff through on-site infiltration to recharge groundwater supplies, promote natural pollutant removal processes, and dilute wastewater effluent and other contaminants entering groundwater.



- To protect and restore wetland buffers to maintain their water quality function, filtering sediment and other pollutants in surface runoff, and promoting denitrification of shallow groundwater.
- To provide for the use of advanced treatment systems where necessary, and provide for their adequate maintenance.

The ordinance has achieved some success by minimizing the impacts of new and expanded home development in areas containing a predominance of undersized lots, groundwater resources, wetlands, and including the Jamestown Shores and Conanicut Park areas where existing non-conforming lots exist and the density of development is known to be problematic with regards to water quality and quantity.

Also important is the adoption of the Open Space I – Conservation Preserve Zone (OS I) and Rural Residential-200 Zone (RR-200) for the watershed area. These zoning districts represent a majority of the land area contained within the Jamestown Brook Watershed and the Town's two reservoirs. Land use restrictions and special standards for site development, designed to protect the surface water reservoirs, their tributary streams, and groundwater aquifers, are enforced in the RR-200 and OS I zoning districts.

The RR-200 district requires a minimum of 200,000 square feet for development. In addition, development in this zoning district is limited to residential and agricultural uses. Although some nonconforming lots remain in the RR-200 district, most lots have been developed for single-family homes and few opportunities exist for further subdivision. Development in the RR-200 area is also controlled by Article 8 of the Zoning Ordinance which contains special regulations for Development Plan Review in this zoning district.

Exempt from Article 8 review are (1) existing and new single-family dwellings and their customary accessory uses on lots of 200,000 square feet or greater, and (2) agricultural uses operating in accordance with an Eastern Rhode Island Conservation District-approved plan or uses that will not reduce the quality of a public water supply. Through this Development Plan Review process, the Town has been successful in ensuring that development in the watershed is consistent with the Town's water-quality protection goals.

The proper placement of OWTS has been a concern. Since 2022, RIDEM (Rules and Regulations Governing the Administration and Enforcement of the Freshwater Wetlands Act) and CRMC (Rules and Regulations Governing the Protection and Management of Freshwater Wetland in the Vicinity of the Coast) govern all placement of OWTS.

The Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations address land unsuitable for development. Undevelopable land includes State-defined wetlands and intertidal salt marshes. These areas must be deducted from the overall density calculation for subdivisions. Requiring these areas to be removed from the density calculation ensures that portions of the lot that are contributing to water quality, such as wetlands and salt marshes, are not also being used to contribute to the number of lots that can be developed. This



approach helps to ensure that the land is not developed beyond what it can environmentally sustain.

Article 6, Section 601, Table 6-1 Permitted Uses, VIII. Industrial, Non-Manufacturing, use number 12 of the Zoning Ordinance prohibits underground fuel storage tanks as a primary use in all districts but does allow this use by special use permit as an accessory use in the Commercial Districts. Underground storage tanks have the potential to contaminate groundwater due to leaks or improper installation. Although this section of the Ordinance regulates any future underground storage tanks, a potential problem remains with underground storage installed prior to the adoption of the Zoning Ordinance. In response to concerns about problems from leaking tanks, the State has an underground storage tank registration requirement which applies to tanks with a capacity of 1,100 gallons or greater. Typically, smaller residential tanks do not require registration under the State program.

Subdivision Regulations

The Town's Subdivision and Land Development Regulations also assist in water-quality protection by requiring the submission of a soil erosion and sediment control plan (SESC) as part the development application. The SESC must conform to the standards of the Eastern RI Conservation District guidelines. The Eastern RI Conservation District staff is available to conduct a review of the SESC component of development applications upon request by the Town.

Conservation Developments, mandated for subdivisions with five or greater resulting lots (in the RR-200, RR-80, and R-20 zoning districts), can also be an effective method for water quality protection. This design method allows a developer to reduce lot sizes and cluster the homes in one area of the site while maintaining the permitted density. This design approach minimizes the amount of land area that is impacted, also often reducing roadway length, all of which contribute to lesser impacts on the land and less overall stormwater runoff, a primary source of nonpoint source pollutants. An additional benefit to conservation development is the designation of open space within the development. Conservation development has high standards for the quantity, quality, and configuration of the resulting open space that is preserved.

Other Regulations

RIDEMs OWTS Rules provide the basis for approval of Alternative and Experimental (A/E) Technologies (Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, 2023). A/E systems are designed as alternatives to conventional OWTS or parts of a conventional system. An A/E Technology is an OWTS that does not meet the location, design, or construction requirements of a conventional system, but has been demonstrated through field testing, calculations, and other engineering evaluations to provide the same degree (or better) of environmental and public health protection. Specifically, RIDEM now recognizes both composting and incinerator toilets as viable options. These technologies can be especially appropriate in locations where traditional OWTS are impractical or pose environmental risks. These systems offer sustainable sanitation solutions that reduce water usage and minimize



environmental impacts. The State installed five composting toilets at Beavertail State Park as part of the State's initiative to expand the use of environmentally friendly sanitation solutions in public areas. When using an incinerator or composting toilet, RIDEM requires the separate installation of an OWTS to treat graywater (waste from sinks, showers, dishwashers, and other uses besides a toilet).

Protection of groundwater and surface water resources can also be enhanced with the adoption of local regulations for herbicide, pesticide, and fertilizer use and application. These should be developed with the assistance of the Eastern Rhode Island Conservation District. A review of Island farming techniques and practices that may affect water resources should also be considered.

Harbor Management Plan

The Harbor Management Ordinance, under Chapter 78, Article II of the Town's Code of Ordinances and the Harbor Management Plan represent significant elements of the local regulatory framework designed to protect the quality of Narragansett Bay around Conanicut Island. The Harbor Management Ordinance establishes the legal framework governing activities within Jamestown's harbors. This ordinance details regulations on mooring permits, anchoring, vessel operations, and other harbor related activities to ensure safety and environmental protection. The ordinance is enforced by the Harbor Commission. The Harbor Management Plan serves as the strategic framework for managing the Town's harbor resources. It outlines policies and guidelines to ensure the suitable use and protection of harbor areas, addressing aspects such as mooring allocations, environmental conservation, and public access. The Harbor Management Plan is currently in the process of being updated.

Conanicut Island is fortunate to be surrounded by some of the best and most valuable marine habitats in Narragansett Bay. One of the most valuable of those is eelgrass, an important spawning and nursery habitat for many bay species. The clear, unpolluted waters around Conanicut Island currently support more acres of eelgrass than any other community in Rhode Island. These sensitive and important marine habitats are monitored by CRMC and activities that adversely impact them are regulated by the CRMC.

Water System Supply Management Plan

The Water System Supply Management Plan (WSSMP), last updated in 2024, outlines strategies and measures to be implemented to ensure a reliable and sustainable water supply for Jamestown residents. The plan focuses on the main service area, which encompasses the Village and emphasizes the importance of effective water supply system management. Key components of the plan include detailed system information, current and projected water demands, water quality protection measures, financial and emergency management strategies, and the establishment of goals with corresponding implementation schedules.



Appendix B of the Code of Ordinances contains the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners. These regulations are in the process of amendment at time of writing.



Jamestown Water Study Committee

During the summer of 1993, the North Reservoir was depleted due to drought and the public water system was unable to meet local needs. Water had to be imported by National Guard tanker truck to the island for a period of several months, beginning on September 17, 1993. In 1994, the reservoir was again at a low level, and a similar trend was apparent in the spring of 1995. In order to develop measures to resolve chronic water shortages, the Town Council formed the Water Study Committee and passed the following resolution on December 20, 1993: "The Town Council of the Town of Jamestown hereby resolves the following: That the Jamestown Water Study Committee research and report on the most efficient ways to improve the quality and quantity of the public drinking water supply. In pursuing options toward increasing the public drinking water supply, attention and care should be given to the issue of preserving the supply of water to private well users."

This Committee developed a report dated April 2003 that recommended that an additional 150,000 GPD should be the goal in excess of the current average daily demand of 248,000 gallons. This required that a safe daily yield of 398,000 GPD be attained with an appropriate treatment capacity. The WSC explored seven major avenues of direction in hopes of reaching this goal. They are as follows:

1. Expansion of North Reservoir.
 - a. Storage Capacity
 - b. Watershed
2. Development of South Reservoir.
3. Bedrock drilling.
 - a. Freshwater Wells
 - b. Brackish Wells
4. Water Conservation
5. Inter Basin Transfer
6. Carr Creek Watershed
7. Membrane Filtration

This committee was disbanded on January 5, 2009.



Wastewater Management District

The establishment of Wastewater Management Districts was enabled by Legislation passed by the RI General Assembly in 1987. Various other communities in the State have adopted a similar ordinance. Block Island and Charlestown are implementing similar ordinances.

In 1999, the Town began the process of developing a comprehensive Wastewater Management Program including implementing a Wastewater Management District (WWMD) ordinance. With Town funds and a grant from the RIDEM, the Town was able to hire a team of consultants to develop a Wastewater Management Program, Wastewater Management District Ordinance, and an educational component. One of the educational component's goals is to make people aware of the benefits of wastewater management and its importance.

The development and adoption of a Wastewater Management Plan and ordinance has made Jamestown residents eligible for loans from the State, through the Community Septic System Loan Program, to repair or replace improperly functioning OWTSs. Benefits of the WWMD Plan and ordinance include proper maintenance of OWTSs resulting in enhanced groundwater quality and a reduction in overall costs of routine maintenance through the competitive bidding process.

High Groundwater and Shallow Impervious Layer Overlay District – Zoning Ordinance Section 314

Although discussed above under the Zoning Ordinance, this section of the Jamestown Zoning Ordinance is worthy of a separate discussion to detail the sequence of events that led to such a detailed cutting-edge regulation that has been modeled throughout the State as the most comprehensive and advanced regulation for areas with high groundwater table.

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) began permitting alternative septic systems in the late 1990s, with specific regulations regarding their design, construction, and maintenance being established through amendments to existing rules in the early 2000s. This opened up the development potential of many lots in Jamestown that were otherwise not developable with conventional septic systems. This created a surge in development in areas of the island with a predominance of non-conforming, small lots. Subsequently, the Town was made aware, through received many complaints and evidence from residents, primarily in the Jamestown Shores, illustrating that increasing development has negatively affected their own OWTS, their wells, and their lots were being affected by stormwater flooding.

The Planning Commission adopted the High Groundwater and Impervious Layer Overlay District ordinance in February 2003, and it has been amended several times since, most recently in 2024 to streamline the ordinance.

The High Groundwater Overlay encompasses areas where nonconforming lots predominate, no public sewer and water are available, and the hydrogeologic conditions present considerable constraints to development. These conditions require special design



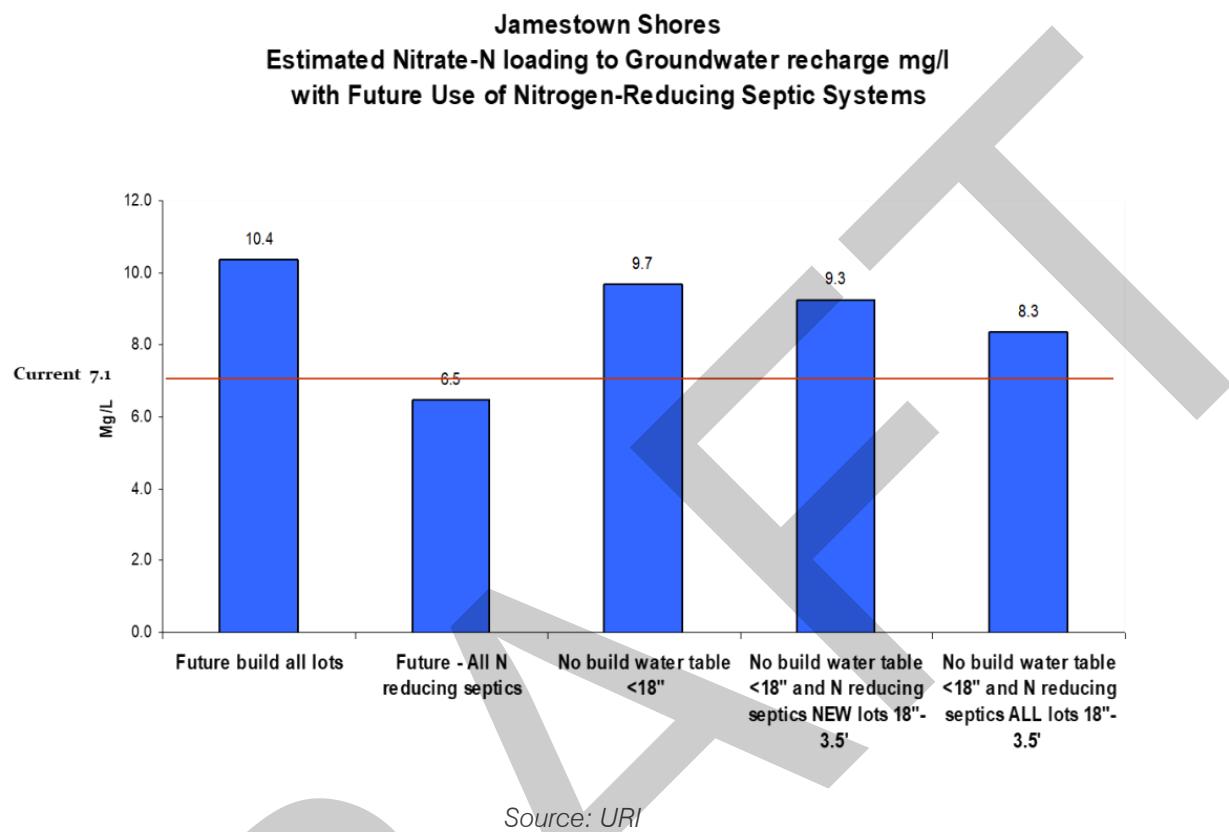
approaches and/or infrastructure in order to protect individual homeowners, neighborhoods, and Jamestown's water resources.

The strategies of special design, limiting impervious cover, and handling stormwater on site have significantly benefited the overlay district as evidenced by the 2012 Study that quantified the amount of impervious coverage that has been avoided by Jamestown's High Groundwater Ordinance specifically in the Jamestown Shores area between 2003 and 2012. In that time, 45 homes were constructed under the ordinance. The report estimated that the amount of impervious area avoided by the High Groundwater and Impervious Layer ordinance from 2003 to 2012 was 45,000 ft² in 700,000 ft² of approved development. In addition, the homes built were, on average, 407 square feet smaller than before the adoption of the ordinance, assumed due to the impervious cover limitations.

The 2003 Source Water Assessment and Wastewater Needs Analysis conducted by the University of RI and funded by the USEPA specifically studied the Jamestown Shores and modeled future nitrogen loading scenarios to determine groundwater quality in 2003 and in the future under build out, as shown in Figure 4-2 below. Although the report excluded lots with water tables within 18 inches of the surface which are now routinely permitted by RIDEM, Figure 4-2 shows that because the area is already heavily developed, using advanced treatment systems only for new development will not substantially reduce pollution risks. The only way to reduce nitrogen below current levels in the future is to replace failed and substandard systems to protect groundwater quality. The US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) notes that the maximum contaminant level, or the highest level of nitrogen that is allowed in drinking water is 10 milligrams per liter (Mg/L).



Figure 4-2. Septic System Benefits - Excerpted Chart from 2003 URI Report



Drainage Improvement Program.

The institution of a drainage improvement program in the Jamestown Shores area and elsewhere on the Island has been helpful in protecting the surface and groundwater quality. Drainage improvements typically include the installation of catch basins that receive road runoff and separate out detritus and grit from the flow. Catch basins are cleaned out on a regular schedule to prevent buildup that causes malfunctions. It should be noted that runoff from house lots that are discharged to the road, reduces groundwater infiltration and should be avoided.



4.6. Wildlife/Vegetation



Due to its Island environment, Conanicut Island has a diversity of natural ecosystems that include upland hardwood forests, streams, wooded swamps, meadows, fresh water and saltwater marshes, streams, rocky shores, beaches, coastal estuaries, and a variety of marine habitats.

Each of these ecosystems is characterized by specific flora and fauna, all of which play an essential role in contributing to the quality and enjoyment of the Island's natural environment.

In addition to its role as wildlife habitat, the Island's vegetation plays an important role in social buffering, erosion and flood control, filtering of water-borne pollutants, production of oxygen, the absorption of air pollution, and as an important aesthetic amenity that gives the Island its rural character. The community of plants and animals that live on Conanicut Island form a complex "web of life" where each is dependent upon the other for survival. Each species fills a unique niche in the natural environment. The loss of a single species has the potential to adversely impact the Island's ecosystem. (Refer to

The Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program has identified seven significant habitat areas on Conanicut Island: Great Creek/Round Swamp and Marsh Meadows Wildlife Preserve, Dutch Island, Gould Island, Beavertail Park, Fort Wetherill State Park, Fort Getty State Park, and Jamestown Reservoir. These areas support species that may become lost to the State if their habitat is not protected and carefully managed.

In addition to designated habitat areas, tree canopy is an important component of a healthy natural environment. Trees improve air quality, reduce stormwater runoff, provide wildlife habitat, and shading from heat and paved areas. While the Town has roughly 50% tree cover, there is additional space to add trees, particularly along roadways and sidewalks (i-Tree, 2025). To ensure protection of existing trees, the Town has adopted a tree preservation ordinance that requires a permit for planting, cutting or removal of trees in public spaces and rights of way.

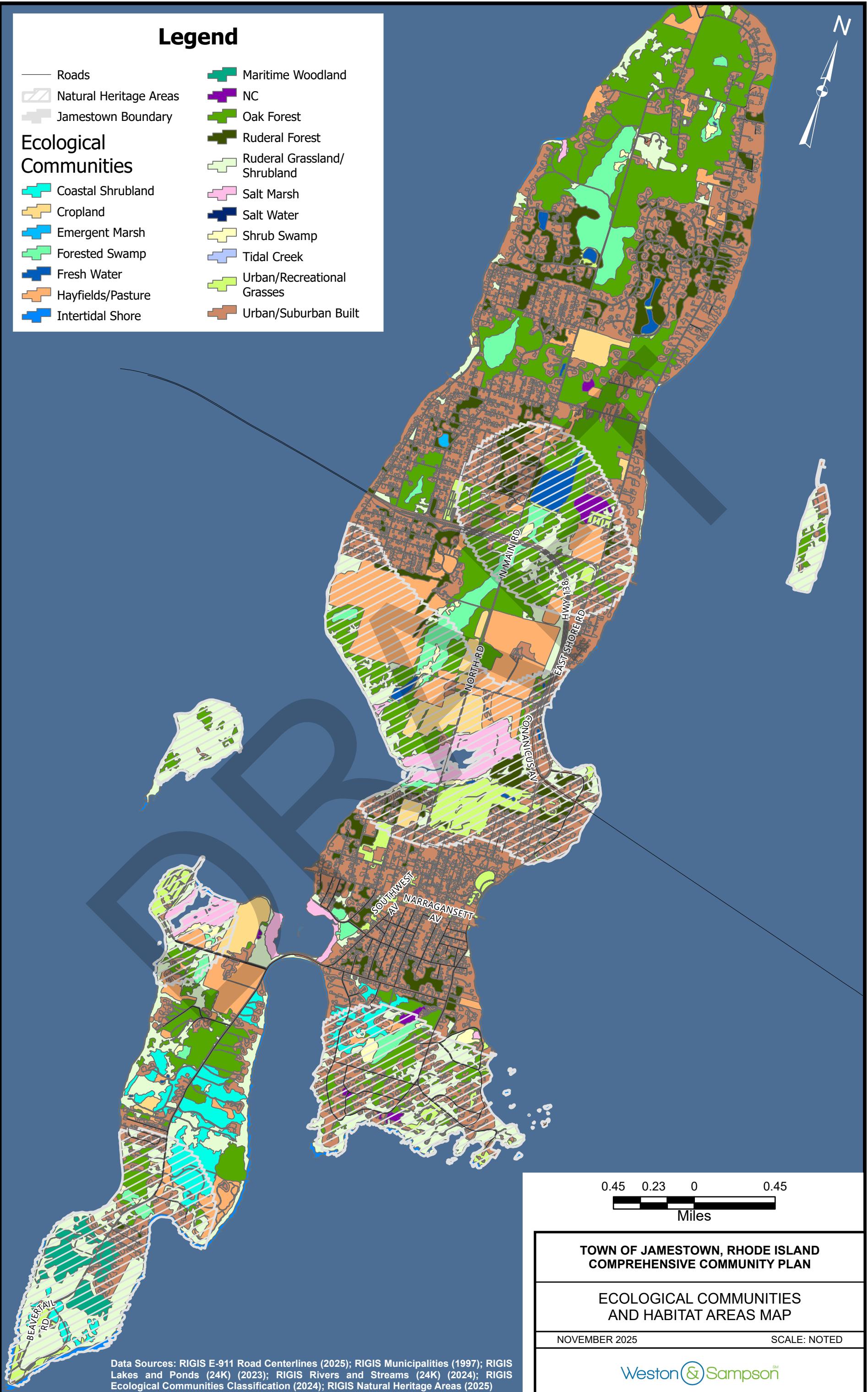


Legend

- Roads
- Natural Heritage Areas
- Jamestown Boundary

Ecological Communities

- Coastal Shrubland
- Cropland
- Emergent Marsh
- Forested Swamp
- Fresh Water
- Hayfields/Pasture
- Intertidal Shore
- Maritime Woodland
- NC
- Oak Forest
- Ruderal Forest
- Ruderal Grassland/Shrubland
- Salt Marsh
- Salt Water
- Shrub Swamp
- Tidal Creek
- Urban/Recreational Grasses
- Urban/Suburban Built



4.6.1. Invasive Species

Conanicut Island has a variety of invasive, non-native plant species that threaten the ecological health of the native ecosystems. Invasive species include herbaceous plants such as Japanese knotweed, garlic mustard, and common reed. Invasive vines, bushes, and trees include porcelain berry, multiflora rose, autumn olive and Asian bittersweet. These species are often dispersed via road maintenance, landscaping, and excavation. The Jamestown Tree Preservation and Protection Committee, Taylor Point Restoration Association (TPRA), Sustainable Jamestown provide public educational materials on these issues to inform and promote community action, including a native tree list and invasive species identification guide.

The 2024 Community Survey queried residents regarding protecting natural vegetation and wildlife habitat, invasive species, scenic and historic views to the Bay, and street-side tree-planting and “heritage” or significant/historic trees. Almost all respondents (92%) support protecting natural vegetation and wildlife habitat wherever possible throughout Town, and 87% support the Town taking a proactive stance to manage invasive species. Residents also value scenic views to the Bay (97% agree or strongly agree), and 85% agree that Jamestown should take a proactive stance on maintaining historic scenic views to the Bay. Most respondents supported vegetation management for scenic views on public property (89%), and a slightly weaker majority support regulation of private property to encourage maintenance or reintroduction of historic scenic vistas (59%). Support is mixed on mandating private property actions to maintain scenic vistas, with 48% supporting, 27% objecting to this approach, and 25% not sure.

Many residents (67%) like the idea of a Town program to put street trees along major roads, especially Narragansett Avenue, North Road, and Hamilton Avenue. Sixty-four percent support street trees along all major roads, and 60% support preservation of heritage trees on private property.

Although Jamestown is supportive of its varied and diverse ecosystems and wildlife, several wildlife have proven cause for concern in Jamestown, including deer, ticks and coyotes.

4.6.2. Ticks and Deer

Jamestown has an active “Tick Task Force” Ad-hoc Committee due to the high prevalence of tick-borne illness throughout the island. The mission of the Tick Task Force is to develop an education plan and a plan of action to address the increase in Lyme disease and other tick-borne disease cases, with a focus on the importance of public awareness, personal protection, and environmental measures. Much of the information provided to Jamestown residents through its Tick Task Force is provided by the University of Rhode Island (URI). URI’s Dr. Mather, director of URI’s Center for Vector-Borne Disease and its TickEncounter Resource Center is an educational resource for Jamestown and the Tick Task Force.



It is reported that deer have an important role in the life cycle of the ticks that transmit Lyme disease. Adult deer ticks need a blood meal before laying eggs and most frequently this is obtained by feeding on deer. Therefore, while deer do not serve as a source of infection, deer control can play a role in prevention of Lyme disease when used as part of an integrated pest management program to reduce tick populations.

The overpopulation of deer has also proved difficult for automobile collisions. In 2024, RIDEM reported 19 deer auto strikes and a total of 53 deer were harvested. For this reason, as well as tick born illnesses, Jamestown has opened Town Land to regulated deer hunting.

4.6.3. Coyotes

Coyotes reportedly have no natural predator in Jamestown and adequate food source to thrive on the island. Coyote overpopulation has alarmed many residents due to their affinity to house pets allowed to run loose. Jamestown has adopted an ordinance to prohibit feeding of non-domesticated animals, which includes coyotes. The ordinance protects the health and safety of residents in Jamestown with respect to dangers associated with coyotes and other non-domesticated animals by minimizing opportunities for such animals to obtain food from sources controlled or controllable by humans.

4.7. Issues and Opportunities



4.7.1. Water Resources Protection

Both the drinking water and general water resources – surface waters, groundwater reservoirs, and wetlands – in Jamestown face pressures:

- Increasing population, especially seasonal residents, is putting pressure on limited potable water supplies during summer months.
- Surface and groundwater are vulnerable to contamination from pesticides, herbicides, road runoff, and wastewater treatment systems, and Jamestown Brook shows signs of impairment.
- Extensive wetlands in the Town support wildlife habitat and contribute to flood control, but they may be at risk from future development.

Jamestown has adopted zoning ordinances to help limit impervious cover and protect water resources, and ongoing implementation of clustering in development will help preserve open space and minimize stormwater impacts. To continue this progress:

- Access grants, as well as utilize town funds including fees in-lieu-of taxes collected through subdivision developments, to continue to purchase and protect the remaining watershed property.



4.7.2. Soil Limitations on Development

Generally, Jamestown soils do not provide easy opportunities for development. Outside of the central area of Town that has both public water and sewer service, virtually all development will encounter soil limitations and constraints in the form of rocks, ledge, wet soils, poor drainage characteristics, or a combination thereof, many of which can be overcome by proper engineering but may increase the cost of development.

4.7.3. Wildlife/Vegetation Protection

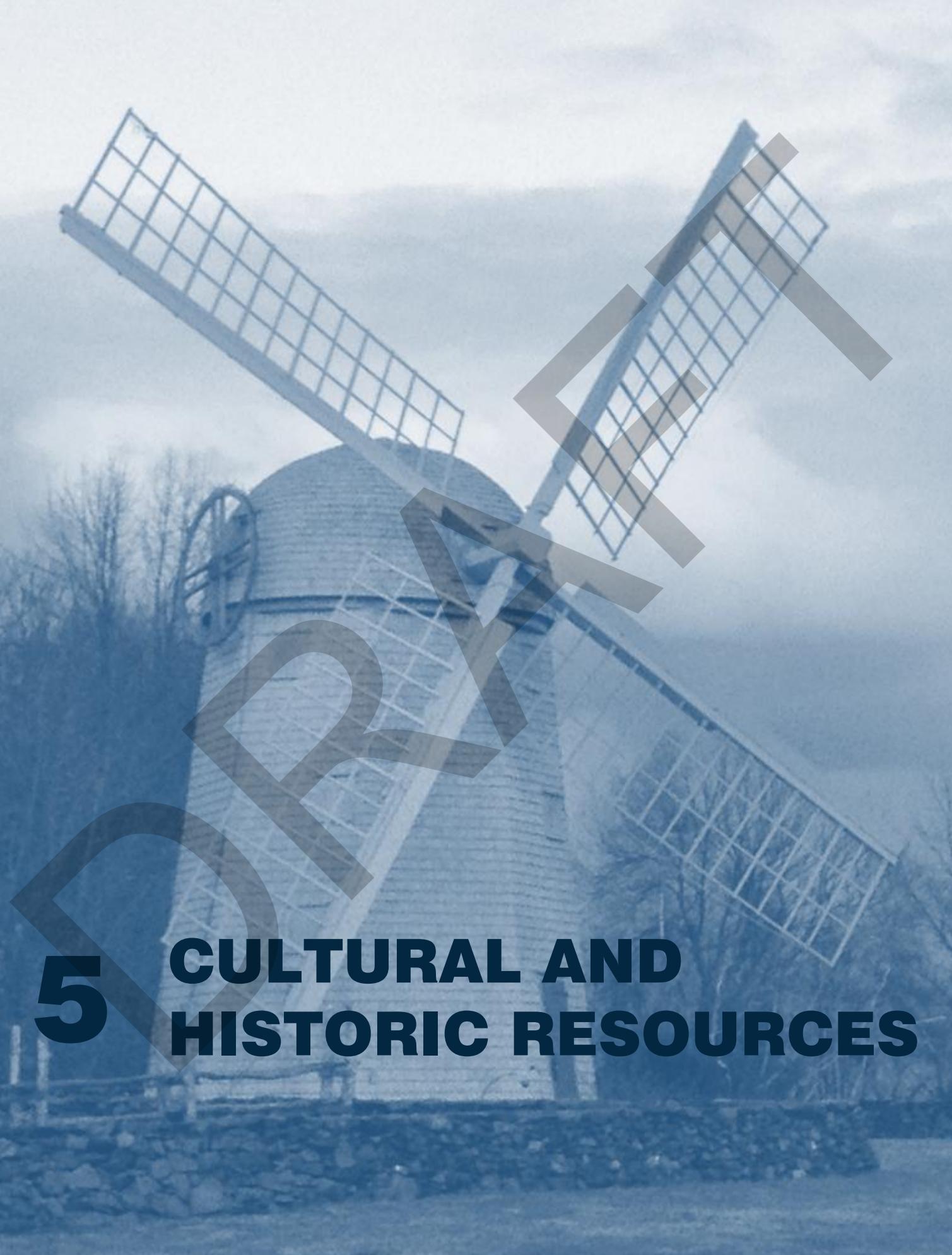
Jamestown's wildlife and native plant species also face challenges:

- Overpopulation of deer and coyotes may pose risks to public health and safety
- Invasive species are threatening native ecosystems.

Most residents support protecting natural areas, scenic views, and wildlife habitat. To build off this momentum, the Town should pursue the following opportunities:

- Continue to implement the popular tree planting program and invasive species management.
- Continue community education and engagement events to uplift public support and involvement in resource protection. Because of the prevalence of privately owned land on the coastline and containing undeveloped natural areas, community involvement in natural resource protection will be an important strategy.
- Preserve special habitat areas through open space protection.
- Invite the community to assist with deer management (and associated tick-borne diseases) through deer hunting on Town land.







Cultural and Historic

Background

This chapter assesses the existing conditions of Jamestown's historic and cultural resources, identifying key assets, challenges, and opportunities for preservation and enhancement. Jamestown's cultural and historical resources are deeply connected to its identity, reflecting diverse influences that have shaped the community over centuries. These resources reflect the community's Native American, European, agricultural, and military influences, which span a nearly 400-year period since 1657. Conanicut Island was purchased from the Narragansett tribe by Massachusetts Bay Colony settlers. Current cultural resources further enrich Jamestown's community life. Preservation of these resources is a vital step toward retaining the Island's rural character and to maintaining its architectural and cultural legacy.

Organizations such as the Jamestown Arts Center and Jamestown Community Theatre foster creativity and engagement through public art, performances, and educational programs. Events like art exhibitions, concerts, and festivals provide opportunities for residents and visitors to connect with the town's cultural vitality, blending historic preservation with modern artistic expression. Local organizations, like the Jamestown Historical Society, play a critical role in maintaining and celebrating the town's historic sites, including the Jamestown Windmill and Friends Meetinghouse, ensuring these resources remain an integral part of the community for future generations.

Goals



To protect and preserve all significant historical and cultural resources.



Preserve and strengthen the rural and historical village character of Jamestown.



Adopt historic preservation as a sustainable practice in Jamestown's codes.



Enhance public awareness and engagement in historic preservation.

Policies

1. Protect and archive historic documents to prevent further deterioration and ensure accessibility for future generations.
2. Preserve and restore historic sites of Jamestown to maintain the town's unique historical and cultural heritage.
3. Maintain and enhance historic scenic views and corridors on the island by incorporating preservation strategies into land use planning.
4. Evaluate and consider the establishment of historic districts in Jamestown in collaboration with the Rhode Island Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission.
5. Encourage adaptive reuse of historic properties by integrating preservation-friendly zoning and financial incentives.
6. Promote public awareness by providing educational information/programs and interpretative signage about Jamestown's historic and cultural assets.

See Implementation table for all goals, policies, and actions for this chapter

Disclaimer: goals and policies are in draft form and subject to further review and approval by the Town of Jamestown

5.0 CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Our Vision: to preserve the qualities that make Jamestown's island community distinct—its active farmland and woodlands, its coastal and historic features, and its traditional village setting. We recognize that the island's heritage is rooted not only in its landmarks, but in the surrounding landscapes and contexts that sustain their significance.

5

5.1. Introduction

Jamestown's cultural and historical resources are deeply tied to its identity, reflecting diverse influences that have shaped the community over centuries. These resources encompass the Town's Native American, European, agricultural, and military heritage, spanning nearly 400-years. Conanicut Island was purchased from the Narragansett Tribe by Massachusetts Bay Colony settlers in 1657 (Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, 1995). Preserving these assets are essential to maintaining the Island's rural character, architectural and cultural legacy, and sense of place.

Figure 5-1. Sign board of Historic Jamestown



Source: iStock by Getty Images



The Jamestown Archaeological District is one of the most significant Native American burial sites in New England, containing artifacts that reflect the long and continuous use of the land by Indigenous Peoples. The Town also includes well-preserved historic districts such as Shoreby Hill, a notable example of early 20th-century garden-suburb planning, and landmarks like the Beavertail Lighthouse, which has guided mariners since the 18th century. Efforts to protect historic landscapes, such as the scenic stone walls and agricultural fields of Windmill Hill, further reflect Jamestown's longstanding commitment to honoring its agrarian past.

The era of steam ferries and the later construction of the bridges to Newport and the mainland transformed Jamestown into both a summer resort community and a suburban extension of the region. These transportation changes fundamentally influenced the Town's growth and character, helping shape the community residents know today.

Jamestown's cultural life continues to thrive through organizations such as the Jamestown Arts Center and Jamestown Community Theatre, which provide opportunities for artistic expression and public engagement. Local groups—including the Jamestown Historical Society—play an essential role in maintaining and interpreting the Town's historic sites, ensuring they remain meaningful parts of the community's identity. This chapter assesses the existing conditions of Jamestown's cultural and historic resources, identifies key assets and challenges, and outlines opportunities to strengthen preservation efforts so these defining characteristics can be safeguarded for future generations.



5.2. Community Insights

5.2.1. Community Survey

The Community Insights for this chapter draw heavily on two major engagement efforts: the 2024 Jamestown Community Survey and the November 2024 public workshop. Key survey findings shown below illustrate the community's commitment to preserving historic and cultural resources, highlighting residents' priorities for preservation, scenic landscapes, ideas for historic districts, and cultural expression. These results illustrate community sentiment shared during deeper discussions that took place during the public meeting.



According to the 2024 Jamestown community survey, the majority of respondents (86%) are in favor of **preserving historic landscapes**, in addition to protection of all significant historical and cultural resources (91% in agreement).





Ninety-seven (97%) of respondents **value scenic views to the bay** and feel that Jamestown should take a proactive stance on maintaining historic scenic views to the bay (85%) through public property vegetation management (89%).



Regulation of private property to encourage maintenance or reintroduction of historic scenic vistas was more positively received (59%) than mandating such maintenance or reintroduction of historic scenic vistas (48% yes, 27% no and 25% not sure).



Responses are more strongly in favor of **creating historic districts on the Island** (66%) than not (14%).



Those that do support creating districts want them, in order of popularity, in **Jamestown Village, Beavertail, Shoreby Hill, Beaverhead, Dumplings, and Conanicut Park**.



Permanent public art in Jamestown is supported by 65% of respondents.

Survey results provide a clear picture of overall community values, and the public workshop allowed participants to expand on these perspectives and discuss specific challenges and opportunities in more detail. Meeting feedback generally supported the survey themes and added nuance about supporting design compatibility, development pressures, and the tools residents feel are appropriate to help protect Jamestown's historic character, i.e. less emphasis on regulation than on awareness building and supportive policies.

Public Workshop

At the public workshop on November 13, 2024, participants identified several pressing issues regarding historic and cultural resources in Jamestown. Chief among these concerns was the sense that new homes are often incompatible with the community's historic and architectural character, exacerbating a disconnect between current zoning regulations and the established village character. Attendees also noted that homes purchased by investors



without a stake in the community, particularly for short-term rentals, can detract from neighborhood cohesiveness. Additionally, they highlighted the lack of enforceable design guidelines, which prevents expanded or remodeled properties from reflecting Jamestown's aesthetic and cultural heritage.

Despite these challenges, the community demonstrated strong support for preserving Jamestown's historic and cultural assets. Opportunities identified included exploring non-regulatory mechanisms for preservation, such as education and advocacy programs, as well as establishing a local historic district to provide additional protections. Participants suggested offering tax incentives to encourage preservation of historic properties and emphasized the importance of safeguarding public buildings with historical significance. Additionally, there was support for collaborating with Indigenous tribes to incorporate heritage sites into local planning, fostering a more inclusive approach to cultural preservation. Together, these ideas reflect a community committed to balancing growth with the protection of its rich historical legacy.

5.3. Historic Preservation Plans, Policies, Programs

Historic preservation in Jamestown is supported through a wide range of programs and policies available at the federal, state, and local levels. These initiatives provide critical support for safeguarding significant historic and cultural resources, provide financial incentives for preservation, and guide how federal and state actions interact with local historic assets. Understanding these programs allows the Town to better protect its heritage and leverage available assistance for future preservation efforts.

5.3.1. Federal

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) was enacted to protect historical and archaeological sites across the nation. This legislation led to the creation of the National Register of Historic Places, the designation of National Historic Landmarks, and the establishment of State Historic Preservation Offices. Additionally, the NHPA introduced the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (AChP) and the Section 106 review process to further preservation efforts (National Park Service, 2024).

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation that is maintained by the National Park Service. Properties listed in the National Register include individual buildings, structures, sites, and objects, as well as historic districts that contain multiple properties. To qualify, a property must retain historical integrity and meet criteria related to historical events, significant individuals, distinct design characteristics, or archaeological potential (National Park Service, 2024).



The National Register is a tool to encourage the preservation and recognition of our national heritage. Further, the register is not intended to hinder progress; it is a reminder that the preservation and re-use of properties giving Jamestown its identity are part of the Town's evolution. Listing in the National Register does not require the owner to preserve or maintain the property. Unless the owner applies for and receives special Federal or State benefits, they can do anything with the property permitted by local ordinances.

Listing in the National Register provides certain benefits, including recognition as a nationally significant site, review of impacts from federally funded projects, Federal and State tax-incentives for qualifying rehabilitation projects (National Park Service, 2024).

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (AChP) advocates for the preservation, enhancement, and effective utilization of historic resources nationwide. It is the sole entity legally tasked with ensuring that federal agencies incorporate historic preservation considerations into their project planning and requirements (Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 2024).

Section 106

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to evaluate the impact of their projects on historically designated properties. This process ensures that the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (AChP), stakeholders, and the public have an opportunity to provide input before final decisions are made, allowing communities to help protect and preserve their historic assets (Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 2024).

5.3.2. State

Rhode Island Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) serves as the state agency responsible for historic preservation and heritage programs. It identifies and safeguards historic and prehistoric sites, buildings, and districts by nominating them to the National and State Registers. The Commission provides financial support through grants, loans, and tax credits for historic building rehabilitation, oversees federal and state projects impacting cultural resources, and regulates archaeological activities on state lands and waters. Additionally, it develops programs to document and celebrate Rhode Island's diverse cultural and ethnic heritage (Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, 2024).

Statewide Preservation Planning

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) has developed three key plans to guide its work (Rhode Island Historic Preservation & Heritage Commission, 2024):

- **The State Guide Plan**, Rhode Island's long-term planning framework, includes a historic preservation element titled Protecting Our Legacy of Buildings, Places, and



Culture: An Historic Preservation Plan for Rhode Island, approved by the State Planning Council in 2021.

- **The State Historic Preservation Plan**, mandated by the National Historic Preservation Act, outlines current preservation programs and priorities and was approved by the National Park Service as A Big Plan for the Smallest State: The Comprehensive Statewide Historic Preservation Plan for Rhode Island, 2021–2027.
- **The RIHPHC Strategic Plan**, approved by the Commission in 2021, defines the RIHPHC's mission, vision, and four key goals for 2021-2027.

State Register of Historic Places

Rhode Island also maintains a State Register of Historic Places, which includes properties listed in the National Register, as well as sites determined to be significant to Rhode Island's heritage. Properties listed in the State Register, either individually or as contributing to a historic district, are eligible for financial assistance through the state's Historical Preservation Loan Fund. Loan money may be provided to public, non-profit, or private owners for restoration work, or for acquiring and rehabilitating endangered historic properties (Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, 2024).

5.3.3. Municipal

Historic District Zoning



A local historic district zone is a special zoning designation created by a community to protect historic buildings and preserve the unique character and sense of place in certain areas.

Under RIGL § 45-24.1, municipalities may establish local historic districts and create Historic District Commissions to review exterior changes to properties within those districts. These commissions ensure that alterations preserve the historic character of designated areas. Jamestown has not adopted a local historic district or established a Historic District Commission, though state law provides clear authority to do so. Local district zoning could be used strategically to protect areas with strong historic character or to support voluntary preservation through an incentive-based model. Historic and Archaeological Preservation Ordinance

Chapter 30 of Jamestown's Code of Ordinances was adopted to comply with Title 23-18 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, which governs the preservation of historic and archaeological burial sites in Rhode Island. The ordinance establishes regulations for protecting marked and unmarked gravesites, ensuring they are not altered or removed without Town council approval. Alteration or removal requires a permit, granted only after demonstrating that no viable alternatives exist and that the activity serves public interest. Applicants must provide detailed site plans, historical and genealogical studies, and reburial plans. Public hearings, with proper notification to stakeholders, including tribal and religious



groups, are required for permit consideration. Construction near burial sites may be paused pending verification of human remains. The ordinance also outlines requirements for archaeological investigations, engineering plans, and compliance with state laws governing burial sites. Final decisions rest with the Town council, which may impose conditions to uphold preservation goals (Town of Jamestown, 2024).

Jamestown Village Special Development District

The Jamestown Village Special Development District incorporates Smart Growth and New Urbanism principles to promote compact, walkable, and mixed-use development. The district aims to preserve and enhance the traditional neighborhood patterns of Jamestown Village while encouraging diverse and affordable housing options. Regulations for the district ensure that new development aligns with the existing village character, ensuring harmony and compatibility with the community's established layout. Jamestown does not have an Architect on staff or contract, which would help in enforcing these design guidelines.

Although there are special provisions for historic buildings, called "Buildings of Value", within the Jamestown Village Special Development District, the requirements for such designation have not been adopted. Such designation under Article 11 of the zoning ordinance could provide for any addition or modification to a building designated as historic, or eligible for historic register inclusion, requires approval from both the Jamestown Planning Commission and Town Council. Jamestown needs to advocate for preservation of their historic structures as a tool to preserve the character of the community or such structures will continue to be lost to redevelopment or demolition.

5.4. Funding Sources

5.4.1. Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

The CDBG Program allocates annual grants to states, cities, Towns, and counties based on a formula. These funds can be used for a variety of development activities related to cultural resource preservation. Eligible activities include, but are not limited to, the rehabilitation of privately owned properties benefiting at least 51% low- and moderate-income households. A residential rehabilitation program can be created that combines historic home protection with building code compliance. CDBG funds may also support adaptive reuse projects if they provide significant benefits to low- and moderate-income households. These grants have been vital in preserving the historic integrity and character of buildings. Additionally, the funds can be used for streetscape improvements and public space enhancements, such as acquiring and installing period benches, lampposts, and paving (US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2024).

5.4.2. Federal Historic Tax Credit

The National Park Service's Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program encourages private investment in historic buildings by offering a 20% tax credit for



rehabilitating certified historic structures.¹ The building must be for a business, commercial, or other income-producing use, and the rehabilitation work will be reviewed by the state historic preservation office and National Park Service to ensure it complies with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The tax credit promotes the preservation of historical integrity while allowing modern functional updates.

5.4.3. State Historic Tax Credit

The RIHPHC offers financial assistance for restoring historic income-producing buildings by providing a credit on state income taxes. To qualify, the property must be listed on the National Register of Historic Places before the rehabilitation is completed and the building is put back in service. Owners of potentially eligible properties can apply for preliminary certification, which becomes final once the property is listed. The credit is 25% for commercial rehabilitation and 20% for residential projects (Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, 2024).

5.4.4. Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission Grants

The RIHPC's Certified Local Governments (CLG) Program offers 50% matching grants to eligible communities for various historic preservation projects. In recent years, these funds have been used for activities such as conducting surveys to document cultural resources, preparing National Register nominations, protecting endangered sites, creating local preservation plans, and supporting public education through programs and publications. To be eligible for CLG grants, municipalities must adopt Historic District Zoning and establish a Local Historic District Commission as outlined in RIGL § 45-24.1. Jamestown can apply for these grants once it meets the necessary criteria and is certified by the RIHPHC (Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, 2024).

5.4.5. Rhode Island Historical Preservation Loan Fund

Administered by the RIHPHC, the Historical Preservation Loan Fund provides loans to public, non-profit, and private property owners to preserve properties listed on the State Register of Historic Places. Loans can be used for restoration work or to acquire and rehabilitate endangered historic properties, with the work required to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The program is open year-round, and applications are evaluated based on the property's significance, the need for work, and public benefit. Loans have adjustable interest rates, a maximum of \$200,000, and must be repaid in five years. Borrowers are responsible for certain costs, and must agree to preserve the property through

¹ Internal Revenue Code § 47(c)(3) and Treasury Regulation § 1.48-12(d)(1) define the term certified historic structure to mean any building (and its structural components) which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (National Register), or located in a registered historic district and certified by the National Park Service to the IRS as being of historic significance in the district.



an easement. Additionally, the program allows municipalities to operate local revolving loan programs for historic preservation projects (Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, 2024).

5.4.6. Rhode Island Preservation Easements

Preservation easements are legal agreements between property owners and the RIHPHC to protect the historic and architectural integrity of a property. These easements ensure that the property will not be altered without the Commission's approval, while allowing the owner to retain full use and responsibility for its maintenance. Historic buildings, archaeological sites, and land can all be safeguarded through easements, which may also offer significant tax benefits for federal income, estate, and gift taxes, as they are considered charitable contributions. Easements can be tailored to the owner's needs, protecting exteriors, interiors, or surrounding land, with flexibility for larger properties. To help with monitoring, the RIHPHC requires an endowment equal to 5% of the easement's appraised value, and the Commission staff provides ongoing support and property visits (Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, 2024).

5.4.7. Rhode Island Humanities Grants

In addition to the RIHPHC, this agency offers grants to support educational initiatives aimed at raising awareness of cultural resources within local communities. These activities may include slide shows, videos, lectures, publications, and other educational materials designed to engage and inform the public about the importance of preserving local heritage (Rhode Island Humanities, 2024).

5.5. Inventory of Historic & Cultural Resources

Jamestown's historic and archaeological resources are well documented, providing the Town, property owners, and preservation partners with valuable information to support informed decision-making. A comprehensive survey conducted by RIHPHC in 1995, *The Historic and Architectural Resources of Jamestown, Rhode Island*, identifies key buildings, sites, and areas of historical importance across the island. The report also recommended additional properties for potential National Register designation. The Town should review these recommendations to assess which properties have been added and to identify candidates for future nominations. Continued research and evaluation of properties not yet listed on the National Register can enhance public awareness and contribute to more effective preservation strategies.

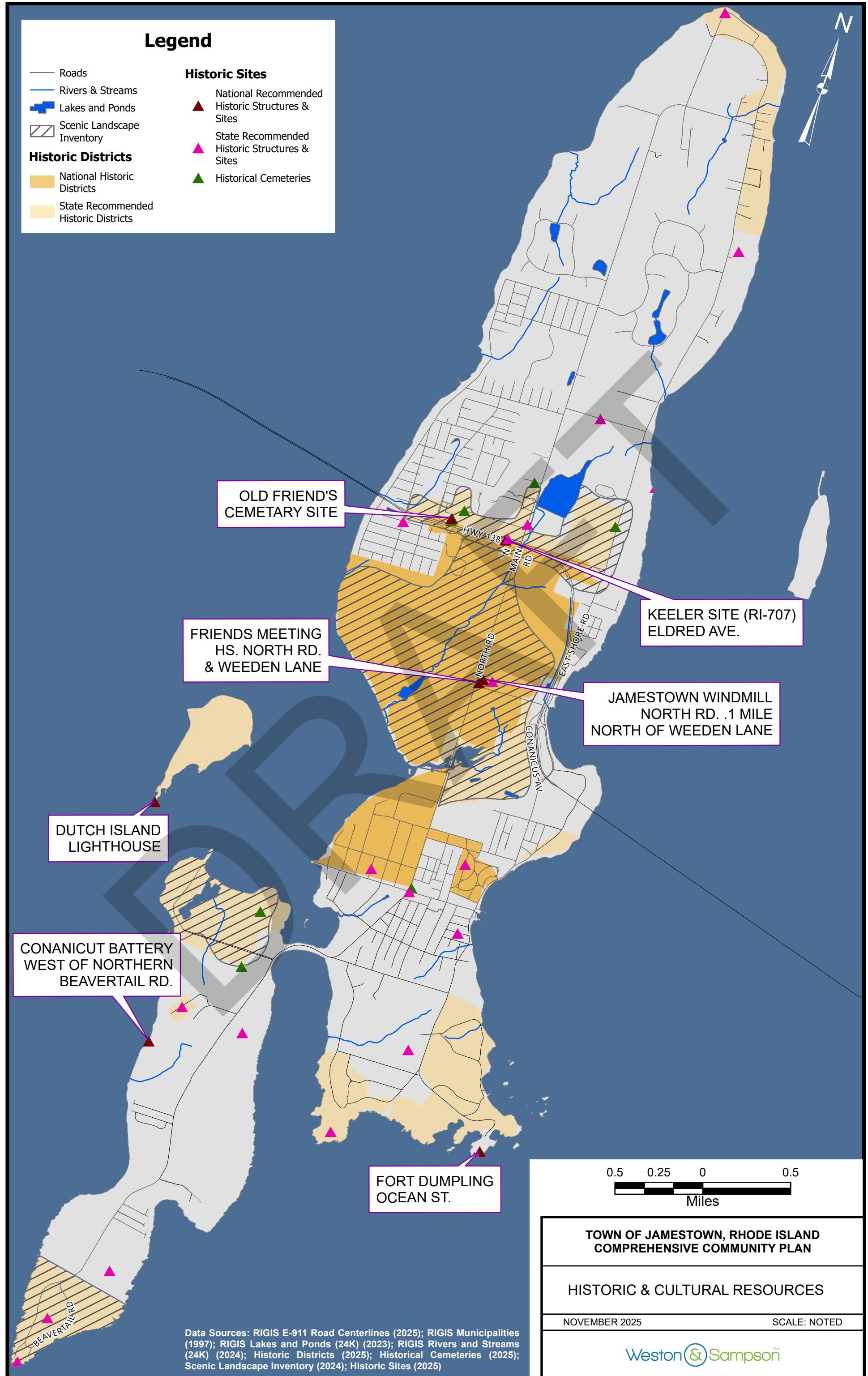
According to the 2007 *Vision Charette Report*, historic structures are "intrinsic to the character that so many residents want to preserve."



Legend

- Roads
 - Rivers & Streams
 - Lakes and Ponds
 - Scenic Landscape Inventory
- Historic Districts**
- National Historic Districts
 - State Recommended Historic Districts

- Historic Sites**
- National Recommended Historic Structures & Sites
 - State Recommended Historic Structures & Sites
 - Historical Cemeteries



In addition, the report recommends that the Town explore possibilities for the establishment of one or several historic districts, either as an actual overlay with additional restrictions on development, or as an incentive-based, voluntary district. Designating more properties on the National Register will allow residents to take advantage of the numerous state and federal tax incentive programs.

The Town is fortunate to have an active and committed historic preservation organization, the Jamestown Historical Society. The Town should seek to strengthen their partnership with this group to pursue new historic districts that are most likely to satisfy the broad goals of the community, without placing undue restrictions on new development.

The Community Survey conducted in both 2010 and 2024 asked residents whether they supported creating historic regulation on the island with building regulation, for the purpose of protecting historic structures and character. In 2010, 41% of respondents supported the creation of historic districts, with 34% opposed. By 2024, there was a notable increase in support, with 66% of residents in favor, 14% opposed, and 21% unsure. This marked a shift towards protecting historic properties in Jamestown, highlighting growing recognition of the importance of preserving Jamestown's historic character (Town of Jamestown, 2024).

5.5.1. National Register of Historic Places

Jamestown contains numerous nationally significant historic sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places, reflecting the Town's rich cultural and architectural heritage. These sites are also recognized in the Rhode Island State Historic Register, ensuring their importance is acknowledged at both state and national levels. Table 5-1 below provides a detailed overview of Jamestown's designated historic sites and districts.

Table 5-1: Sites and Districts Listed in the National Register of Historic Places			
Resource	Location	Date Designated	Significance
Jamestown Archaeology District	Various	12/10/89	Believed to be the location of a major prehistoric Native American settlement, including the largest known burial ground in New England, with artifacts dating back up to 5,000 years.
Windmill Hill Historic District	Eldred Avenue and North Main Road	10/2/78	A 772-acre site with a remarkably preserved 18th-century Quaker-farming community, featuring historic farmsteads, burial grounds, a Quaker Meetinghouse, and a windmill, making it one of the finest rural landscapes in the state.



Table 5-1: Sites and Districts Listed in the National Register of Historic Places

Resource	Location	Date Designated	Significance
Beavertail Light	Beavertail Road	12/12/77	Built c. 1856, this is one of the earliest lighthouses in the United States that used pioneering technology, including gas lighting and fog signals.
Conanicut Battery	120 Battery Lane	7/2/73	Built in 1776 to defend Narragansett Bay, it was later occupied by the British, reinforced by African American soldiers, and eventually became a site of military significance in both World Wars.
Joyer Archaeological Site	Eldred Avenue	11/1/84	Contains evidence of a Native American village settlement dating back 4,500 years, with artifacts including wigwam remains, tools, and food remnants.
Keeler Archaeological Site	Tashtassuc Road	11/1/84	Originally occupied by the locally prominent Carr family from the late 18th through the 19th century, contains artifacts related to this notable Quaker family.
Fort Dumpling Site	Ocean Street	3/16/72	First fortified by colonists on the eve of the Revolutionary War, it served as a strategic defensive site, was occupied by British forces, and underwent several reconstructions, including a stone fort built in 1798, before being destroyed in 1898 after deteriorating over the 19th century.
Artillery Park and Churchyard Cemetery	North Road and Narragansett Avenue	3/7/73	The central open space in Jamestown, originally designated in the 1690s for military practice and burial, has served defensive to agricultural roles, and gained military significance during the Revolutionary War, especially during British occupation, due to its strategic location for artillery and control of key water passages.



Table 5-1: Sites and Districts Listed in the National Register of Historic Places

Resource	Location	Date Designated	Significance
Jamestown Windmill	North Road	3/14/73	Built in 1787 on Conanicut Island, it showcases unique craftsmanship and mechanical innovation, serving as a vital community resource until 1896 and later preserved and restored by the Jamestown Historical Society
Horsehead / Marbella	Highland Drive	6/16/99	Designed by Charles L. Bevins and built between 1882 and 1890 for philanthropist Joseph Wharton, the building is a significant example of Shingle Style architecture and landscape design, reflecting Jamestown's emergence as a summer destination.
Friends Meetinghouse	North Road and Weeden Lane	3/7/73	Built c.1786, this is a well-preserved example of early Quaker architecture, reflecting the Society of Friends' values of simplicity and functionality, and remains one of the few unchanged remnants of Quaker presence in Rhode Island.
Dutch Island Lighthouse	Dutch Island (south end)	2/25/88	Established in 1826 and rebuilt in 1857, this is Rhode Island's sixth lighthouse and played a vital role in guiding ships through Narragansett Bay for over 150 years before being deactivated in 1979, with restoration efforts led by the Dutch Island Lighthouse Society in 2007
Conanicut Island Lighthouse	Beavertail Road	7/2/73	Built in 1885, this is Rhode Island's only surviving example of Gothic Revival lighthouse architecture, serving as a critical maritime guide until its deactivation in 1933, after which it was repurposed as a summer residence.



Table 5-1: Sites and Districts Listed in the National Register of Historic Places			
Resource	Location	Date Designated	Significance
Shoreby Hill Historic District	North Road, Whittier Road, Knowles Court, Conanicut Avenue	9/15/11	Developed in two phases between 1898 and 1911, this is a notable example of a planned Garden Suburb designed by the Olmsted Brothers, featuring distinctive residential architecture and landscapes that blend aesthetic beauty with natural topography, offering a peaceful retreat for residents.

Source: *Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, 2024, Listed Properties; Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, Historic and Architectural Resources of Jamestown, 1995*

5.5.2. Identified Sites & Districts

Eligible for National Register

The following sites have been officially evaluated by the National Park Service and deemed eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places based on their historical, architectural, or cultural significance (Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, 2018):

- Harbor Entrance Control Post at Beavertail Point
- Jamestown Bridge Archeological Site (RI-711)

Although these sites have not yet been formally listed, their eligibility reflects their importance and potential to contribute to the preservation of Jamestown's heritage. This recognition also offers an opportunity for further advocacy and preservation efforts to ensure their protection and eventual listing.

State Identified Districts and Structures

RIHPHC has identified several additional as potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. They demonstrate noteworthy historical or cultural value and deserve closer examination and research to determine their full eligibility for formal designation. By undertaking additional study and consideration, these sites could gain the recognition that National Register listing affords. (Rhode Island Geographic Information System, 2023; Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, 2018) :



Table 5-2: State Identified Historic Districts and Structures

Resource	Location
Clingstone (House on the Rocks)	Dumpling Drive
Fort Burnside	Beavertail Road
Cajacet/Captain Thomas Paine House	850 East Shore Road
Conanicut Park Historic District	Vicinity of East Shore Road
Dutch Island Historic District	Dutch Island
Fox Hill Historic District	NW portion of Beaver Head
Ocean Highlands – Walcott Avenue Historic District	Southwest point, in the vicinity of Walcott Avenue and Highland Drive
J.B. Lippincott House/Meeresblick	177 Beavertail Road
Beavertail Farm	601 Beavertail Road
Horgan Cottages	17, 19, 23 Conanicus Avenue
Carr Homestead	90 Carr Lane
Fowler's Rock	340 East Shore Drive
Lyman-Cottrell Farmhouse	83 Hamilton Avenue
Riven Rock	113 Melrose Avenue
Jamestown Town Pound	North Main Street
Fort Wetherill	Fort Wetherill Road
Jamestown Fire station	50 Narragansett Avenue
Vinecroft	20 Lincoln Street
Old Greene Farm	55 Longfellow Road
Edwin Knowles House	Mount Hope Avenue
A Lawrence Wetherill Cottage / Spindrift	50 Bay View Drive



Table 5-2: State Identified Historic Districts and Structures

Resource	Location
J.D. Johnston Cottage	32 Coulter Street

Source: Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, *Historic and Architectural Resources of Jamestown*, 1995

5.6. Cultural Resources



Cultural resources are broadly defined as physical and intangible elements that reflect the history, identity, and practices of a community.

Cultural resources encompass both physical and intangible elements that reflect a community's history, identity, and traditions. They include historic buildings, archaeological sites, sacred landscapes, artifacts, and significant locations associated with traditions or cultural practices. Many cultural resources hold particular significance for specific social, religious, or ethnic groups due to their historical, spiritual, or cultural associations. Additionally, cultural resources encompass sites like burial grounds, memorials, or traditional gathering areas that are meaningful to communities over generations. These elements are integral in preserving the cultural identity and history of a place, fostering continuity among people connected to these spaces across time (National Park Service, 2024).

5.6.1. Archeological Resources

Conanicut Island is rich in archeological resources, many of which are listed in the National Register or are in areas that are part of National Register districts. The archeological significance of the Island dates back over 5,000 years to a time when the community was the summer residence of the prehistoric Native Americans.

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission prepared a "Management Plan for Prehistoric Archeology Resources in Rhode Island's Coastal Zone" that applied a predictive model to assess the presence of material culture within the Jamestown Archaeological District, including archaeological artifacts and prehistoric settlements. Locations of fresh water, salt water, and slope were used to predict artifact densities and clusters with considerable certainty. This model can be used as a rational guide to development, reducing the need for field investigations, minimizing the cost of site recovery, and minimizing unnecessary destruction of archaeological resources (Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, 1982).



5.6.2. Native American Burial Grounds

The discovery of large Native American Burial Grounds in Jamestown has enabled tribal members and historians an opportunity to view life as it was in the beginning in Jamestown. A large Narragansett Indian burial ground has been identified by the state and is included in the Jamestown Archeological District.

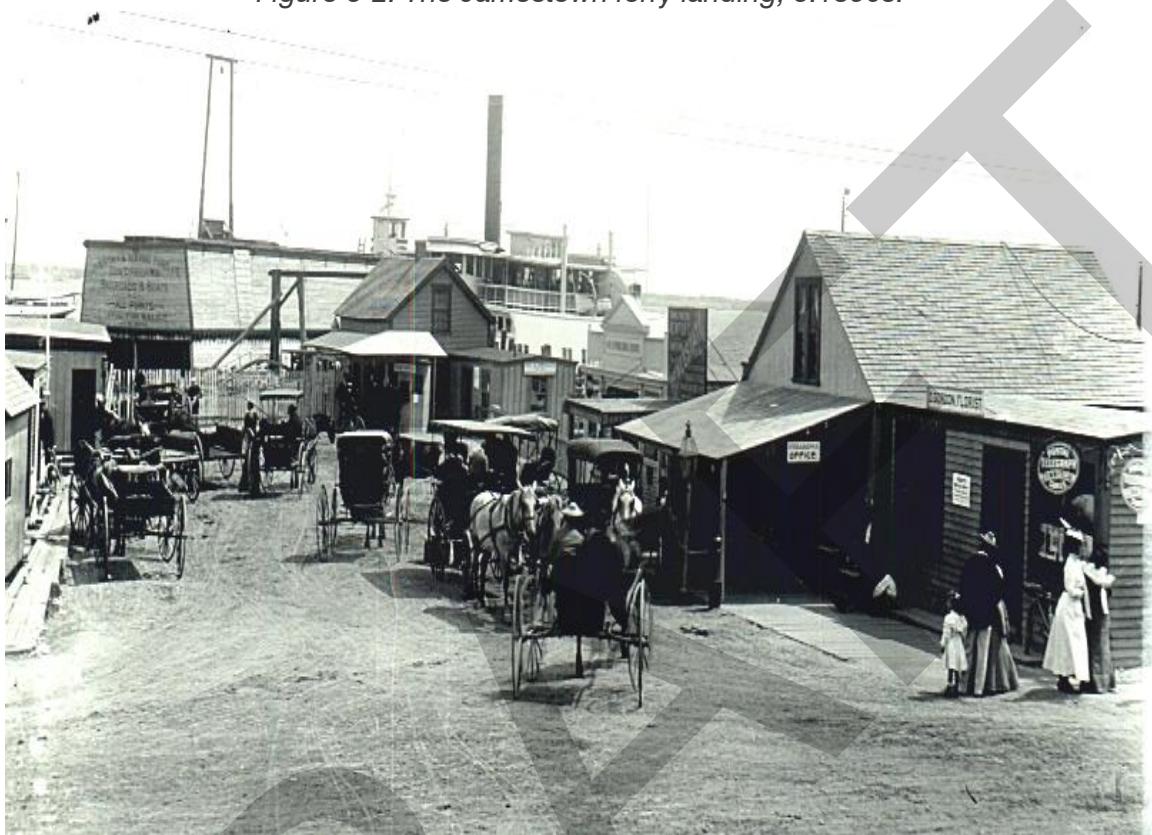
The Jamestown Archeological District, entered into the National Register of Historic Places in 1984, is made up of two significant archaeological sites, the Joyner site and the West Ferry site. Other evidence of early Indian settlements is found throughout the Island and New sites are occasionally found during construction activities but there are no active ongoing investigations for new sites.

These archaeological projects have made significant contributions to our understanding of the Native American history of Conanicut Island in particular and southeastern New England in general. The Jamestown Philomenian Library previously served as a repository for Narragansett and European artifacts recovered from Narragansett graves in the 1960s by archaeologists from Harvard University. Members of the Narragansett tribes reburied the skeletal remains in 1972 in one of the first reburial ceremonies in the United States. All of the artifacts that remained at the Library have been inventoried by the Narragansett Indian Tribe in 2023 and are being temporarily stored by the Town until the Tribe can find a suitable location for reinternment.



5.6.3. Ferry Landing

Figure 5-2: The Jamestown ferry landing, c.1890s.



Source: Providence Public Library

The East Ferry played a central role in the island's development, transforming a modest landing into a hub with hotels, cottages, and residences during the late 19th century. Originally, private homes near the ferry landing housed summer visitors, evolving into a bustling village by the 1870s. The ferry system, which connected Jamestown to Newport and Saunderstown, played a crucial role in commerce and transportation. With the introduction of steam ferries in 1873, the ferry service thrived, driving local growth and development before being phased out by bridge construction in the 20th century (Quahog.org, 2024). Today, there remains very little at this site to remind us of the role of the ferry in the past. The Jamestown Historical Society, however, has installed four original ferry signs – three name signs from ferryboats and a large painted schedule board – in the lobby of the Recreation Center across from the ferry landing.



5.6.4. Stone Walls

Jamestown's agricultural heritage is exemplified by the presence of numerous stone walls lining many historic properties throughout the island (Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, 1995). As farmers cleared stones from their land to create fields, the stones were piled along the edges of the field and the property boundaries. The stone walls were used to delineate field crops and to contain livestock. Significant stone walls run along the Town's major roadways, including North Road and Beavertail Road. These are a significant statement of Jamestown's agrarian past and serve as a present statement of Jamestown's rural character. The preservation of these walls should be a high-priority initiative for Jamestown.

5.6.6. Historic Cemeteries

The Town of Jamestown has 14 existing historical cemeteries identified by Rhode Island Historic Cemetery Commission (Rhode Island Historic Cemetery Commission, 2024). These burial sites reflect centuries of community history and include family plots, churchyards, and burial grounds of local and regional significance. The documented cemeteries are as follows:

Table 5-3: Historic Cemeteries in Jamestown

Cemetery	Location
Governor Carr Lot	East Shore Road
Town Cemetery	North Road
Cottrell & Green Lot	Fort Getty Road
Captain Arnold Lot	Fort Getty Road
Cedar Cemetery	Eldred Avenue
Friends Cemetery	Eldred Avenue
Henry Tew's Cemetery	North Road



Table 5-3: Historic Cemeteries in Jamestown

Cemetery	Location
Paine Cemetery	East Shore Road
St. Mark Roman Catholic Cemetery	East Shore Road
Hazard Lot	Eldred Avenue
Watson Lot	Narragansett Avenue
Joseph Greene Lot	West of Narragansett Avenue
Fort Greble Post Lot	Dutch Island, NE Shore
Cautantowwit's Indian Lot	Watson Avenue

Source: *Rhode Island Historical Cemeteries*, 2024

5.6.7. Scenic Sites

Various scenic sites, including farmland and open landscapes, reflect the Island's pre-Colonial appearance. The Rhode Island Landscape Inventory study, initiated by 1987 legislation, tasked the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) with identifying scenic areas across the state. The study evaluated potential sites using specific landscape criteria and involved surveys with local professionals. A field team documented and rated each site, selecting the most scenic ones for inclusion on detailed USGS maps. The final report was distributed to local governments to support open space, recreation, and comprehensive planning efforts. RIDEM also developed a GIS layer from the study for future planning use (Rhode Island Geographic Information System, 2016).

The Rhode Island Scenic Landscape Inventory lists four significant scenic landscapes in the Town of Jamestown (see Table 5-4) (Rhode Island Geographic Information System, 2016). These scenic landscapes account for 1,473 acres (23% of land area) in Jamestown.

The following are recognized as scenic sites and landscapes in Jamestown:

Table 5-4: Scenic Sites in Jamestown

Site	Acreage	Description
Jamestown Brook/Windmill Hill	595 acres	Interesting topography and vegetation



Table 5-4: Scenic Sites in Jamestown

Site	Acreage	Description
Fox Hill Pond	228 acres	Well-sited farms and excellent views to the ocean
Beavertail Point	215 acres	Varied vegetation; rocky shoreline; views
Eldred Avenue/Route 138, The John Eldred Parkway	80 acres	Undulating topography; views to the bridge

Source: Rhode Island Geographic Information System, 2016, Scenic Landscape Inventory

5.6.8. Historic Landscapes

The 2001 *Historic Landscapes of Rhode Island* report offers a comprehensive overview of the state's historic landscape resources, including several in Jamestown. It integrates two surveys: one focusing on designed landscapes (conducted from 1988 to 1990) and the other on vernacular landscapes (1992 to 1994). The study examines agricultural complexes, scenic rural roads, and mill villages to understand evolving land-use practices and architectural significance. The final document provides insights into hundreds of properties, emphasizing education, preservation, and thoughtful stewardship to encourage landscape conservation efforts throughout Rhode Island.

Shoreby Hill is specifically identified as a landscape that deserves further study and nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, due to its unique and highly intact 19th century design, including well-landscaped homes and a large, semi-circular open space known as "The Green." In 2011, this recommendation was acted upon and Shoreby Hill was listed to the National Register as a historic district (National Park Service, 2011).

The report underscores that landscapes, unlike buildings, are organic and continually changing. Their preservation requires proactive stewardship, and their contribution to community character is often underappreciated (Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, 2001). For Jamestown—where residents consistently identify "rural character" as defining value—these landscapes are especially important.

Jamestown has long valued preserving its historic landscapes. Twenty years ago, the 2004 Comprehensive Community Plan included a recommendation to "Preserve scenic views and corridors on the island" with a related action to "Investigate methods of controlling vegetation growth that will impact scenic views." And the 2010 Community Survey responses reflect a strong sentiment in favor of preserving scenic views of the bay, with 94% of participants valuing these views highly. Additionally, 83% supported proactive Town efforts to maintain historic views, with most preferring public property management (91%) and encouragement of private owners (64%) over mandates, as only 37% supported regulations on private properties for view preservation. The most recent survey in 2024 followed a similar pattern



with 86% of respondents in favor of preserving historic landscapes, such as Shoreby Hill Green or the Ft. Getty Road area (Town of Jamestown, 2024).

Given this response, the Town should identify historic scenic views to the Bay and develop protocols to maintain and reintroduce such views when in Town control. The Town should also develop ways to inform residents where such views exist and formerly existed and work with all landowners with protected land, including State and Federal agencies, to achieve and preserve the historic and scenic views to the Bay.

The Historic Landscapes of Rhode Island report lists 6 landscapes worthy of preservation (Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, 2001). The documented landscapes are documented in Table 5-5.

Table 5-5: Historic Landscapes in Jamestown

Landscape	Location	Description
Johnathan Law Farm/Beavertail Farm and Fox Hill Farm	Fort Getty Road	These two historic farms, originally a single parcel owned by the Arnold family, feature mid-18th century farmhouses, barns, and outbuildings set amidst hayfields, pastures, and woodlands, preserving one of the most picturesque agricultural landscapes on Conanicut Island.
Watson, Weeden-Neale, Dutra Wanton, Watson-Hodgkiss Farms	North Main Road	These farms form a historically significant agricultural district on Windmill Hill, showcasing 17th-century origins and an exceptional collection of farmhouses, barns, fields, and stone walls within a still-active farming landscape.
Watson-Hodgkiss Farm	305 North Main Road	This 155-acre farm, historically a sheep and later a dairy farm, features a ca. 1802 farmhouse, 19th- and 20th-century barns, and well house on a knoll, surrounded by stone wall-divided fields producing vegetables, corn, and hay.
Watson Farm	455 North Main Road	This 248-acre farm, stretching from North Road to the Narragansett Bay, features a 1796 farmhouse and 18th- and 19th-century barns, with stone wall-divided fields and pastures extending south and west.



Table 5-5: Historic Landscapes in Jamestown

Landscape	Location	Description
Shoreby Hill	Shoreby Hill Subdivision	An 8-acre residential subdivision designed by Ernest W. Bowditch in 1896 as Jamestown's first landscaped summer colony that exemplifies a well-preserved 19th-century garden-suburb with curving streets, open parks, stone entrance posts, and thoughtfully positioned homes that maximize privacy and bay views while maintaining its historic layout and character.
Weeden-Neale Farm	71 Weeden Lane	This 43-acre dairy farm, part of the Windmill Hill agricultural district, features a well-maintained quadrangular complex near Weeden Lane, surrounded by manicured lawns, gardens, stone wall-lined pastures, and distant views of marshlands and the Newport Bridge.

Source: *Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, 2001, Historic Landscapes of Rhode Island*

5.7. Community Organizations, Institutions & Resources

Jamestown benefits from a strong network of organizations and institutions that preserve the Town's history and support its cultural life. These groups manage historic sites, maintain archives, and provide arts and cultural programming that reinforce Jamestown's identity and sense of place.

5.7.1. Jamestown Historical Society

The Jamestown Historical Society (JHS) is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and celebrating the history of Jamestown, Rhode Island. Founded in 1912, the society manages several historic sites, including the Jamestown Museum, the 1787 Jamestown Windmill, the 1786 Conanicut Friends Meetinghouse, and the Conanicut Battery Historic Park, which features earthworks from 1776. The JHS also oversees a collection of historical documents, photographs, and artifacts. Through exhibits, events, and educational programs, the Society fosters a connection to Jamestown's rich past while encouraging community engagement. Its headquarters and museum are located at 92 Narragansett Avenue, with operations supported by members, donations, and volunteers (Jamestown Historical Society, 2024).



5.7.2. Dutch Island Lighthouse Society

The Dutch Island Lighthouse Society (DILS) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to restoring, preserving, and maintaining the Dutch Island Lighthouse. Founded in 2000, the organization successfully led efforts to relight the lighthouse in 2007 after decades of disrepair. In addition to maintaining the lighthouse as a functioning private aid to navigation, DILS is committed to preserving the history of the light station and its keepers. They engage in fundraising, public education, and collaboration with state agencies to ensure the lighthouse remains a significant cultural and historical asset (Dutch Island Lighthouse Society, 2024).

5.7.3. Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association

The Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association (BLMA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and promoting the Beavertail Lighthouse. Founded in 1993, the BLMA maintains the lighthouse and its museum, which features exhibits on maritime history, lighthouse technology, and local ecology. The association also manages an archive of historical photos, documents, and other materials related to the lighthouse. BLMA is committed to public education and offers tours, events, and programs to share the lighthouse's rich history and its role in Rhode Island's coastal heritage (Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association, 2024).

5.7.4. Town Historic Records/Archives

The Town's archives include historic records dating back to 1640 that include the official records and maps of the Town. These records have endured for centuries, through fires and hostilities, and are expected to be maintained ad infinitum. The most important of the official Town records are stored in a large, climate-controlled vault in the Town Clerk's office. Other records of Town activities are held by the Jamestown Historical Society. Recognizing the importance of these archives, the Society, through a cooperative agreement with the Town, leases a large, climate-controlled vault in the basement of the new Town Hall, occupied in 2007. The Jamestown Historical Society actively works in the vault for the benefit of Jamestown's history.

5.7.5. Houses of Worship

Jamestown has several houses of worship, which are important cultural resources in the community. They include the St. Mark Catholic Church, St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, the Central Baptist Church, and the Quaker Meeting House on Weeden Lane.

5.7.6. Museums and Cultural Institutions

Jamestown has many organizations that are responsible for providing various cultural activities in the community. These include: Conanicut Island Art Association, Jamestown



Community Band, Jamestown Community Theatre, Jamestown Arts Center, Out of the Box Art Gallery, Jamestown Community Chorus, Jamestown Community Piano Association, Friends of the Library, Jamestown Historical Society, and the Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association. Activities provided by these groups include arts exhibits, museum exhibits, craft shows, adult and children's theatre events, concerts, and lectures.



Cultural resources in Jamestown include several key museums that highlight the Town's history. The Jamestown Museum showcases the Town's maritime and agricultural heritage, while the Fire Department Memorial Museum honors local firefighters and their history. Together, these institutions provide valuable insights into the community's history and cultural legacy.

5.8. Threats to Historic and Cultural Resources

Jamestown's historic resources are threatened by natural aging processes and by activities of property owners. People may be unaware that they own a historic structure, have cultural resources on their property or live on or near a historical site. In addition, people may not know how to care for such properties or cultural resources. Development of vacant land and new construction may disturb archeological resources.

Rehabilitation or destruction of historically significant buildings is also a potential threat to the Island's historic resources. This problem results from a lack of awareness of the value of these resources. While rehabilitation is strongly encouraged, any repairs should be consistent with the character of the building and align with best preservation practices, as outlined by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Over the past several decades, the village has seen notable changes in occupancy patterns. Although many older homes are being restored, many are also being demolished.

121

Building Department records indicate that **121 homes have been demolished in the last 10 years**, from 2014-2024

12

An average of **12 per year**

Restoring homes to their original appearance is a choice by existing or new property owners and not guaranteed. The historically significant "Casino" at Shoreby Hill was demolished due to years of neglect and the unwillingness of the new property owner to restore the structure. This highlighted the need for increased awareness of the historic value of historic structures to Jamestown.

The inventory in this chapter describes all properties that are recognized and/or have documented historic or cultural value. This inventory can be used in conjunction with 1995 Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission's (RIHPC) report on the Historic and Architectural Resources of Jamestown, to make residents more aware of the development of Jamestown and its role in regional history.

5.9. Preservation Activity in Jamestown



Residents are proud of Jamestown's historic resources, and along with the Jamestown Historical Society, have worked to conserve them. Past historic preservation activities in Jamestown include establishment of the Windmill Hill Historic District, relocation of the Tiddeman Hull House, care of the Meeting House and windmill, rehabilitation of the one-room schoolhouse occupied by the Jamestown Museum, maintenance of the lighthouses at Beavertail and on Dutch Island, and preservation and development of the Conanicut Battery historic site.

Past archeological activities have revolved around construction activities that require Federal funds and therefore compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act. Projects at the Jamestown Schools site, the former Town Offices site on Southwest Avenue and the Jamestown Housing Authority have all encountered rich archaeological resources associated with Native Americans. The Town has worked with the Narragansett Indian Tribe (NIT), RIDOT, FHWA, and RIHPC to respect archeological resources and will continue to do so in the future. The Planning Office has attempted to work with the NIT in developing a Native American Recognition Program with limited success. It is the Town's position that the NIT must be a partner in telling the story of the Tribe in all information that is disseminated to the public.

Jamestown funds a housing rehabilitation loan program, available to low- and moderate-income homeowners. The Town has committed to RIHPC that work performed on historic structures will be in conformance with preservation standards.

Survey results for Jamestown, Rhode Island, reveal strong community support for preserving the Town's historical and cultural identity. A majority of respondents favor efforts to protect significant resources (90%) and maintain the Town's rural and historic village character (94%), with 66% also endorsing the creation of historic regulations, reflecting a shared priority to align development with the community's values (Town of Jamestown, 2024).

One example of the community's commitment to historic preservation is when residents of the first subdivision of Shoreby Hill worked with the Town to have the subdivision listed to the National Registry of Historic Places, which was formalized in September 2011. Shoreby Hill residents have also presented to the Town a plan for local historic district zoning with Shoreby Hill as the first area so zoned. Although the Town support this action, the residents of Shoreby Hill could not all agree on this action.

5.10. Issues and Opportunities



Jamestown faces the ongoing challenge of protecting its historic and cultural resources, which are key to maintaining the Town's unique identity and supporting its tourism economy. Without proactive measures, Jamestown risks losing key elements of its cultural heritage, which contribute to the Town's character, economic vitality and community pride.



5.10.1. Unprotected Historic Sites

Many historic properties lack protection, leaving them vulnerable to neglect, inadequate maintenance and demolition. These vulnerabilities play out as:

- Development pressures that threaten scenic landscapes and historic sites, potentially altering the Town's historic character.
- A lack of prioritization of preservation efforts by property owners, particularly investors, leading to the deterioration of historically significant structures.
- Many residents being unaware of the historical value of their properties and not having the knowledge or resources to maintain them properly.

However, there are significant opportunities to strengthen historic preservation efforts:

- Expand preservation programs and partnerships, particularly with the Jamestown Historical Society, to support conservation efforts and promote awareness.
- Incorporate historic and scenic resources into land use planning to ensure that future development aligns with Jamestown's heritage.
- Maintain and update inventories of historic properties, alongside adding plaques and markers, to enhance education and community engagement.
- Streamline regulations and targeted preservation initiatives to support the trend of owners restoring older homes, which reflects a growing appreciation for historic character.

5.10.2. Regulation Modernization

Regulatory resistance to historic districts presents another challenge, as some community members are concerned about restrictions on property use. This highlights the need for a balanced approach that combines preservation incentives with flexible regulations.

To address this, establishing historic regulations in key areas like Jamestown Village, Beavertail, and Shoreby Hill can help protect significant structures and landscapes while maintaining community character.

5.10.3. Cost of Historic Preservation

The high costs associated with maintaining and restoring historic homes deter many property owners from investing in preservation, underscoring the need for financial assistance programs.

To make preservation efforts more accessible:

- Introduce a process for demolition delay, tax credits, grants, and financial incentives for maintaining and restoring historic homes.



- Develop heritage tourism opportunities, such as the already existing guided tours and historic site programs, to attract visitors and generate economic benefits while increasing public interest in preservation.

By taking these steps, Jamestown can balance growth with conservation, ensuring that its historic and cultural resources remain a defining part of the community for future generations.





6 OPEN SPACE, AGRICULTURE, & RECREATION



Open Space, Agriculture, & Recreation

Background

This chapter discusses the status, benefits, and needs associated with the Town's open space, agricultural areas, and recreation facilities and activities. The conservation and open space section describes properties that have been preserved and new acquisitions, and the agriculture and recreation sections also cover trends and status of these areas. The Conservation Commission is responsible for developing and maintaining the Recreation Conservation and Open Space Plan for Jamestown. They are in the process of updating the 1994 Plan. A recreation and open space plan can assess the status of protected properties, identify potential new acquisitions, and ascertain future needs for conservation and recreation.

Goals



Preserve and manage significant conservation and open space on the Island.



Develop a comprehensive Land Acquisition Action Plan to raise funds through local funding, bonding, and grants to acquire and/or protect the remaining ecologically significant undeveloped land and working farmland in Jamestown for the preservation of drinking water, coastal resources, scenic vistas, access to the shore, and open space.



Promote public awareness and community stewardship for the conservation of open space and shoreline access.



Protect and where possible increase the current acreage of working farmland, while supporting sustainable agricultural practices and agritourism consistent with Jamestown's rural character.



Provide all residents and visitors with safe, inclusive, and accessible passive and active recreational opportunities, including enhanced shoreline and boating opportunities.

Policies

1. Investigate and apply growth management strategies that recognize Jamestown's island geography and limited resources and prioritize conservation of open space and limit development pressure on ecologically sensitive lands.
2. Promote innovative and collaborative land conservation tools, including easements and land preservation partnerships.
3. Support public education and stewardship initiatives focused on open space, shoreline access, and ecosystem health.
4. Utilize preservation strategies to protect natural resources, scenic views, shoreline areas, and critical habitats.
5. Ensure long-term protection of publicly owned open spaces through active management and public access planning.
6. Identify and prioritize acquisition of undeveloped land that supports groundwater protection, scenic quality, and habitat continuity.
7. Maintain farming as a viable economic and cultural land use through farmland preservation and community-based agriculture.
8. Support sustainable aquaculture as part of Jamestown's rural economy while safeguarding water quality and marine ecosystems.
9. Maintain public participation in community recreational programs at the current high rates.
10. Improve and expand, where necessary, indoor and outdoor recreational facilities.
11. Promote implementation of the 2024 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan to enhance access to recreation and open space.
12. Support expansion of passive and active recreation facilities to accommodate the growing population on the Island.
13. Implement additional improvements to the Town-owned park at Fort Getty to improve residents' access, experience, and environmental sustainability.

See Implementation table for all goals, policies, and actions for this chapter

Disclaimer: goals and policies are in draft form and subject to further review and approval by the Town of Jamestown

5.0 OPEN SPACE, AGRICULTURE, AND RECREATION

Our Vision: Recreation is central to Jamestown's identity, and it depends on both physical access and the preservation of the Island's scenic character. Areas intended for public access should be carefully matched with the level of use they can sustainably support. Sailing, boating, and other marine activities are an important aspect of Jamestown's rural coastal character. The qualities that make Jamestown's natural and recreational resources so attractive can also draw demand that exceeds what the community can sustainably accommodate. Agriculture remains an important part of Jamestown's heritage and landscape and should continue to be supported so that it is not displaced by development pressures or threatened by rising land values and taxation.

6

Introduction

This chapter describes the status, benefits, and needs associated with the Town's open space, agricultural lands, and recreation facilities and programs. It summarizes existing protected properties, recent acquisitions, and emerging trends in conservation, agriculture, and recreation use.

The Jamestown Conservation Commission is responsible for developing and maintaining the Recreation Conservation and Open Space Plan. The current update effort builds upon the original 1994 Plan and its 2002 revision, which was not formally adopted. A contemporary recreation and open space plan allows the Town to assess the condition of its protected properties, identify potential new acquisitions, and evaluate future needs for recreation, conservation and open space, and agricultural support. State guidance requires this plan to be updated every five years to ensure that community needs, land use trends, and resource protection goals remain aligned.





Community Insights

The Community Insights section summarizes survey results and key themes shared by residents during the public engagement process. These responses highlight communities priorities for open space, agriculture, and recreation, as wells as views on funding, access, and long-term land preservation.

95%

...of survey respondents report that land preservation is a priority.

61%

...feel that additional open space/recreation land should be purchased in Jamestown regardless of the associated cost

21%

... support purchasing open space/recreation land only if it does not cost anything.

When asked about preferred funding methods for acquiring additional open space and recreation land, respondents expressed strong support for public-private partnerships (79%), followed by municipal bonds (60%) and ,when necessary, development impact fees paid prior to construction (44%). Residents also identified the most important purposes for open space acquisition:, protecting natural resources (89.3%), safeguarding drinking water supplies (86%), and preservation of agricultural land (73%).

Survey respondents generally feel that Jamestown has adequate opportunities for active recreation (63%), passive recreation (64%), and boating (57%). Among the 25% who believe boating facilities are inadequate, frequently mentioned needs include additional boat ramps, boat rental, resident boat storage, and boating safety lessons. Recreational fishing access received mixed reviews, with 48% satisfied and 17% dissatisfied, while opinions about recreational fishing facilities were more polarized (30% satisfied and 38% dissatisfied). Only 43% of respondents feel that Jamestown has an adequate number of accessible, public rights-of-way to the Bay.

Agriculture remains highly valued in the community. Most respondents appreciate local farms as a food source (80%) and as contributors to the Town's open space character (89%), and 84% believe protected farmland should continue to operate as working farms. Views on regulating farm stands are divided, with more residents opposing regulations (39%) than



supporting it (34%). A large majority (81%) support using Jamestown's waters for aquaculture.

Open Space Preservation

Open space is critically important to Jamestown's identity and is a defining feature of the Island's scenic beauty, ecological health, and community well-being. Open space takes many forms on the island including watershed protection lands, wetlands, farmland, and shoreline access. Preserving and enhancing Jamestown's open space is essential to maintaining the Island's character, improving resilience to climate change, protecting groundwater and public drinking water resources, providing passive recreational opportunities, and supporting the Island's sensitive ecosystem. This section catalogs the Town's current open space resources and outlines the Town's approach to open space preservation currently and into the future.

Functions of Conservation Land and Open Space

The term open space refers to land that is preserved, maintained, or intentionally planned for environmental, public services, recreational, scenic, or agricultural purposes. Undeveloped land refers simply to land that is not currently developed. Open space is typically undeveloped land, but undeveloped land is not always open space. This is an important distinction when considering and planning for conservation purposes.

The key difference between open space and general undeveloped land relate to:

- The purpose and use of the land
- The ownership and management, and
- The extent of protection and public benefit it provides.

Undeveloped land becomes open space when it is owned or controlled by the Town or a conservation entity and is protected against future development through a conservation easement, deed restriction, or other legal mechanism. Limited development may be allowed for recreation purposes, typically only to the extent needed to support the land's open space function (such as trails, signage, or basic access). Undeveloped land that does not have such protections, whether privately owned or held by the Town, is not considered open space in this analysis and discussion.

Conservation land and open space areas serve a wide range of community benefits, including scenic value, recreational opportunity, habitat protection, and public health and economic benefit. While all land may have some characteristics worth protecting, open space preservation should be guided by the specific functions a land area serves and the goals of the community. Jamestown's unique island setting presents both challenges and opportunities for conservation.



The Island's rocky shoreline, undeveloped beaches, public water supply reservoirs and watersheds, wetlands, unique salt marshes, freshwater marshes, and open farmland all contribute to community character and ecological health. These natural areas also provide habitat for native plants and wildlife. Of great concern and priority for the community is the protection of resources that contribute to the public health and safety of its residents. The Natural Resources Element further discusses the function of natural resources and the importance of their protection.

Due to public health implications and a limited water supply, ground water recharge areas, wetlands, and public drinking water supplies are also given high priority for protection. Groundwater recharge areas include wetlands throughout the Jamestown Shores neighborhoods and the north end of the Island. The Town's public water supply watershed includes over 1,000 acres of land in the Center Island District (refer to Map 4.8). Although some protective measures are in place for these areas, including federal, state, and local regulations and ordinances, only permanent tools, such as outright purchases, purchases of development rights, or conservation easements, will ensure these areas remain protected in the long-term. Evaluating undeveloped land and prioritizing water recharge areas and watershed lands for protection remain central to Jamestown's open space strategy.

Research by the Trust for Public Land has demonstrated the economic benefit of open space to communities. Protected land often requires fewer municipal services than residential development, and communities with more protected land frequently enjoy lower property tax rates. While permanently protected land is removed from the taxable property base, the loss in potential tax revenue is typically more than offset by the avoided costs of new roads, schools, water and wastewater infrastructure, and other services that would be required to support additional development.

History of Open Space in Jamestown

Over the past 40 years, housing development has significantly reduced the amount of undeveloped land and increased pressure on environmental and recreational resources, such as water resources and shoreline access areas. Recognizing the importance of protecting natural resources and open space areas from development, the Town has sustained an active land-preservation program. The creation of the Conservation Commission in 1983 and the private Conanicut Island Land Trust (CILT) in 1984 formalized Jamestown's public and private commitment to natural resource protection. The Conservation Commission's advocacy for thoughtful land use, such as recommending sites for preservation through the Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plan and encouraging housing projects to locate away from environmentally sensitive areas, demonstrates the continued commitment to balance development with conservation.

Although the Island still retains undeveloped open space, much of this land is privately owned and remains eligible for development. Properties that once provided informal shorelines access across private property have been developed, resulting in the loss of



access in some locations. Development has also strained groundwater and surface water resources. To preserve Jamestown's quality of life and rural character, the Town must continue to identify and protect natural resources, farmland, high-value open space, and important plant and animal habitats.

A buildout analysis of the Town conducted for this plan indicates that approximately 2,870 acres of land are considered undeveloped. This land, about 47% of Jamestown's total land area, is categorized in the land cover data as beaches/sandy areas, brushland, forest, rock outcrops, vacant, and wetlands. It includes all privately owned property that is not developed or protected by deed restrictions. This figure does not account for environmental constraints such as high water tables or wetlands, which limit development potential.

The Town has set a clear agenda for the continued preservation of Jamestown's open space and natural resource areas. Both public and private resources are necessary to advance this agenda. By encouraging and accepting land donations for preservation, the Town can support preservation while offering potential tax benefits to donors. Protection methods include the purchase or donation of development rights on farmland and sensitive areas, the outright purchase of property with combined federal, state, local, and private funding, and the donation of conservation easements to the CILT or other preservation entities.

In 1995, recognizing the significant public investment in land preservation, the Town adopted "Dedication of Land for Public Purposes" including a fee In-lieu-of land dedication provision based on the Rhode Island Development Impact Fee Act. This requires all new lots contribute to recreation, conservation, and open space either through land dedication or payment of a fee. Preserved lands may include recreation areas, recreational development, wetland or watershed protection areas, farmland preservation, and other lands deemed necessary to ensure that adequate public facilities are available to serve new growth and development.

Map 5.1: Conservation Areas by Ownership depicts permanently protected lands, temporarily protected lands, wetlands, ponds, reservoirs, and watershed areas. It also shows lands that have been designated as "Conservation Intent", which are not strictly protected by law. The map identifies several different types of ownership or protection mechanism:

- **Conservation Intent:** Land where the owner (often the Town or a homeowners' association) has indicated a strong intention to maintain the property as undeveloped open space or lightly developed park and recreational land.
- **Easement:** The legal right to use the land of another for a specific purpose, such as conservation. Easements do not convey possession, only limited use and/or protections.
- **Fee Simple Interest/Ownership:** Full ownership of real property
- **Deed Restriction:** A legal covenant placed in a deed that limits future use or development of the property and typically "runs with the land".

Section 3.3 in the Land Use Element discusses permanently protected land, permanently protected farmland and the Farm, Forest and Open Space (FFOS) program categories. The



Farm, Forest, and Open Space (FFOS) Program, administered by RIDEM, allows qualifying properties to be taxed at their current-use value rather than their full development value. In return, landowners agree not to develop the property while it is enrolled. Participation is voluntary, and landowners may withdraw from the program by paying a penalty fee or remain enrolled for the full term to avoid the withdrawal charge. CILT protects land through land holdings as well as conservation easements on private properties, which may not be fully captured in the state-level conservation data layers in RIGIS.

Over the past 25 years, the Town's land-preservation program has focused on protection of the public drinking-water watershed, farmland, salt marshes, and of lands on the Beavertail peninsula. Protecting watershed lands is critically important, as more than 55% of the Island's residents rely on the public drinking water supply system. Approximately 85% of the watershed is now permanently protected. Approximately 20% of the watershed consists of Watson Farm and is permanently protected by deed, another 7% is temporarily protected under the FFOS program. In 2018, the Town acquired and protected an additional 5.5 acres at the North Reservoir's headwaters through an easement as part of the Carr Lane affordable housing project, funded by a \$150,000 RIDEM grant. This collaboration between affordable housing and open space preservation is a model the Town should continue to pursue.

The Town has used a variety of funding sources and protection strategies in partnership with the Conservation Commission, CILT, the Rhode Island Agricultural Land Preservation Commission, the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and private organizations such as the Audubon Society and The Nature Conservancy, and private landowners participate FFOS Program.

From 1999 through 2009, the Town annually reserved funding in the budget for water and natural resource protection. The Water Resources Protection Committee was established to develop an acquisition strategy and recommend use of these funds to the Town Council. The Town has used the funds to preserve over 100 lots in the Jamestown Shores and to assist with the purchase of development rights to the Dutra Farm, located in the watershed. Jamestown Community Farm has leased privately owned farmland in central Jamestown for more than 20 years and is now working to permanently protect the site through its "One Chance" campaign and a purchase agreement with the landowner. To support this effort and safeguard watershed open space, Town voters in 2022 authorized up to \$400,000 in municipal funding as a local contribution toward the nonprofit's eventual land purchase. Town voters also authorized bond funding in 1998, not to exceed \$5 million, for purchasing and developing open space and recreational land. To date, the bond funding has been used once, to protect 32 acres of land at the Conanicut Island Sanctuary.

Looking ahead, Jamestown's open space program must respond to several emerging trends: increasing development pressure on remaining private open lands, growing demand for passive recreation and trail access, climate-related stress on wetlands and shorelines, and the need for more active stewardship of conserved lands to address invasive species, erosion, and overuse. These trends will shape future priorities for land acquisition, management, and community partnerships.



Conanicut Island Greenway Trail System Plans

Jamestown has long recognized the need for a cohesive, island-wide trail and bicycle network that connects neighborhoods, open spaces, and key destinations. In response, the Town Planner, the Conservation Commission, and CILT collaborated to develop a plan for a trail system in response to the lack of dedicated bicycle trails and on-street bicycle accommodation throughout the Island. In 2010, the Town Council formed the North Road Bike Path Design Committee, whose work ultimately led to the development of the Ice Road Bike Path' Completed and dedicated to former Police Chief James Pemantell in 2024, the path provides a key north-south connection and serves as an important early component of a larger island-wide system envisioned to expand recreation access and improve bicycle and pedestrian mobility.

The 2020 Rhode Island Statewide Bicycle Mobility Plan, developed by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT), provides a statewide strategic framework for improving bike infrastructure across the state. It highlights the importance of statewide connectivity, aiming to link urban centers, rural areas, and transportation hubs through continuous and safe bike routes.

For Jamestown, the plan highlights the Island's role as a link between Aquidneck Island and the mainland. It recommends installation of buffered bike lanes on the Jamestown-Verrazzano Bridge by narrowing existing vehicle lanes, with a longer-term goal of developing a shared-use path.

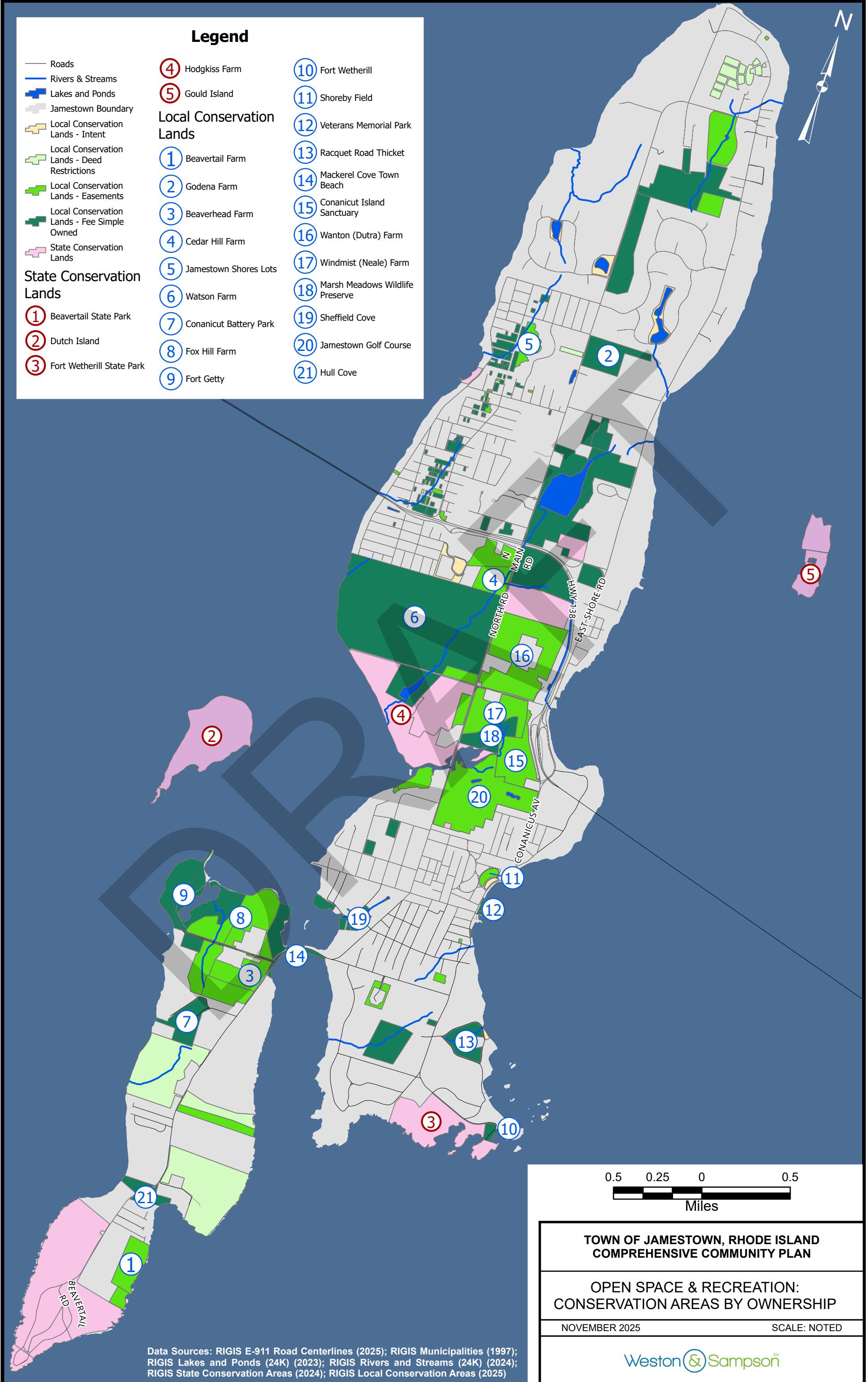
At the local level, the 2024 Jamestown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, initiated by the Jamestown Bike Path Committee, lays out a comprehensive vision for an interconnected network of safe, accessible bike and pedestrian paths across the Island. The Committee, formed in 2022, includes residents, Town staff, and other stakeholders committed to Jamestown becoming more bike- and pedestrian-friendly. The plan evaluates existing conditions, identifies gaps in connectivity, and prioritizes high-need areas, including North Road and East Shore Road. Recommended strategies include shared-use paths, widened shoulders, and traffic calming to enhance safety and access.

Community feedback played a significant role in shaping the recommendations, ensuring that improvements align with residents needs while supporting broader mobility goals. Together, these statewide and local planning efforts create a coordinated foundation for a future Conanicut Island Greenway—a trail and bicycle network that links neighborhoods, open spaces, shoreline access points, and key destinations throughout Jamestown.



Legend

- Roads
 - Rivers & Streams
 - Lakes and Ponds
 - Jamestown Boundary
 - Local Conservation Lands - Intent
 - Local Conservation Lands - Deed Restrictions
 - Local Conservation Lands - Easements
 - Local Conservation Lands - Fee Simple Owned
 - State Conservation Lands
- Local Conservation Lands**
- ④ Hodgkiss Farm
 - ⑤ Gould Island
 - ① Beavertail Farm
 - ② Godena Farm
 - ③ Beaverhead Farm
 - ④ Cedar Hill Farm
 - ⑤ Jamestown Shores Lots
 - ⑥ Watson Farm
 - ⑦ Conanicut Battery Park
 - ⑧ Fox Hill Farm
 - ⑨ Fort Getty
 - ⑩ Fort Wetherill
 - ⑪ Shoreby Field
 - ⑫ Veterans Memorial Park
 - ⑬ Racquet Road Thicket
 - ⑭ Mackerel Cove Town Beach
 - ⑮ Conanicut Island Sanctuary
 - ⑯ Wanton (Dutra) Farm
 - ⑰ Windmist (Neale) Farm
 - ⑱ Marsh Meadows Wildlife Preserve
 - ⑲ Sheffield Cove
 - ⑳ Jamestown Golf Course
 - ㉑ Hull Cove
- State Conservation Lands**
- ① Beavertail State Park
 - ② Dutch Island
 - ③ Fort Wetherill State Park



Open Space Management

Preserving open space is not enough on its own; the land must also be actively and appropriately managed. Without proper stewardship, conserved areas can lose their ecological value, recreational function, and scenic character. For this reason, land management plans should accompany preservation efforts and clearly identify the entity responsible for ongoing maintenance. Cooperative management, particularly between state and local agencies, can strengthen these efforts and ensure consistency across properties.

The CILT operates an active stewardship program where a "Steward" is assigned to each property under its care. The Conservation Commission and CILT have also worked together over the past 25 years to expand public understanding of Jamestown's open spaces and important natural resources. To support this effort, the Conservation Commission published "The Island Trail Guide" and has added trail signage with QR codes linking to additional information about the sites. The Commission has also expressed interest in taking on a greater role in stewardship of the Town's open spaces. The organizations jointly sponsor the Earth Day Fair and beach cleanup to engage the community in education and sustainable practices. The Conservation Commission manages the Conanicut Island Sanctuary, and CILT previously held "Hey Day," which provides educational activities, nature walks and environmental education, and has since transitioned to school-based partnership programs. Together, these stewardship practices help ensure that Jamestown's conserved lands continue to provide long-term ecological, educational, and recreational benefits.

Inventory of Conservation and Open Space Land

The following narrative inventory is drawn from the 1994/2002 Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plan for Jamestown, which is currently being updated by the Conservation Commission. It summarizes the major public and private lands that contribute to Jamestown's conservation, recreation, ecological, and historic resource network. Many of the properties serve multiple functions, and several are discussed in more detail elsewhere in this plan. For a consolidated depiction of these areas, refer to Map 6.1.

Conserved Open Space with No or Limited Public Access:

Dutch Island

Dutch Island, located in the West Passage of the Narragansett Bay, is owned by the State of Rhode Island and is 75 acres in size. The park is not open to the public. An old lighthouse and fortifications remnants dating to the Civil War and the early 1900s still exist on the Island. The lighthouse, a 42-foot brick tower built in 1857, was constructed to replace a lighthouse established in 1826 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A significant restoration was completed in 2007 by the Dutch Island Lighthouse Society (DILS). The two-year project included interior and exterior repairs to the stucco and brick structure, guano removal, replacement of floors and metal work, and the repairs to interior stairs. DILS reacquired the lighthouse lens from the American Lighthouse Foundation in Maine and



connected the red-flashing light to operate on solar power. The project was paid for with \$135,000 in private fundraising and \$120,000 from the RI Department of Transportation - Federal Transportation Enhancement Funds.

Gould Island/Bay Island Park System

The southern portion of Gould Island, located in the East Passage of Narragansett Bay, is owned by the State and is part of the Bay Islands Park System. The park is 16.9 acres and provides habitat for wildlife and plants. The park is not currently open to the public, but through the Army Corp of Engineers (ACOE) Restoration Advisory Board process, Jamestown and neighboring communities have adopted resolutions encouraging RIDEM to consider opening the southern portion of the island for public recreation.

The ACOE is conducting a multi-year process of environmental remediation on the island to address structures and materials remaining from its former military use. All buildings have been removed except the torpedo-launching building. The Town zoned the northern half of the island as Open Space II - Parks and Recreation and the southern half as Open Space I – Conservation Reserve. In 2024 RIDEM committed to completing a Master Plan for the island focused on its future use.

North Reservoir

This area contains a total of 114 adjacent acres of protected land within the watershed, of which approximately 28 acres are a water body. The property is owned by the Town of Jamestown and is used for the Town's drinking water supply. Jamestown has had an ongoing water supply protection program that includes efforts to purchase buffer areas around the North Reservoir. Due to the potential threat to the public drinking water supply, public access is restricted.

South Pond Reservoir

The South Reservoir is owned by the Town and contains slightly over 25.3 acres of land and water. The Pond serves as a backup to the main reservoir and public access is limited. The South Pond water pumped up to the North Reservoir by pipe so the mixture can be treated and utilized by the Town public water supply system.

Racquet Road Audubon Thicket Site

This 19-acre wildlife habitat is located on Racquet Road in the Dumplings area of Jamestown. The area is approximately two acres of salt marsh and is accessible by permission from the Audubon Society of Rhode Island.

Sheffield Cove Audubon Site

This important wildlife habitat is approximately 13 acres of salt marsh located on Beavertail Road across from Mackerel Cove. Owned by the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, the cove is open to the public with restricted access in certain areas.



Fox Hill Audubon Site

This is a salt marsh area of 32 acres owned by the Audubon Society of Rhode Island that borders the Fort Getty Town Park. Wildlife and rare plants can be found here. A permit from the Audubon Society is required for entry, and public access is restricted in certain areas.

Lippincott Easement

The easement over this property is held by the Conanicut Island Land Trust and protects approximately 20 acres encompassing 800 feet of shoreline. The use of this property is restricted to the property owners. Its location is just south of Beavertail Farm and just north of Beavertail Park on the east side of Beavertail Road.

Beavertail Farm Conservation Easement

The Beavertail Farm easement is held by The Nature Conservancy and consists of 23.25 acres of shoreline property. The use of this conservation easement is restricted to the property owners.

Commerce Oil Wetlands

This Town owned property, Plat 2 Lots 2, 3, 57 and 61, contains approximately 35 acres located along the east side of North Road located behind East Passage Estates.

138 (The John Eldred Parkway) Wetlands

RIDEM holds title to approximately 50 acres of wetlands acquired for construction of the new Route 138 (John Eldred Parkway) in the early 1990s. A conservation easement held by the Town of Jamestown exists over the wetlands to prevent future development.

Jamestown Estates II Conservation Easement

This conservation easement lies over seven house lots and consists of approximately 10 acres of wooded swamp and salt marsh. This wetland is part of the Great Creek Complex. The easement, negotiated as part of a land subdivision is held by the Conanicut Island Land Trust and is not open to the public.

Shoreby Hill Green

Held for common use by lot owners of the first subdivision of Shoreby Hill, this 1.3 acre parcel of land is located at the entrance to the Shoreby Hill subdivision along Conanicus Avenue opposite the East Ferry beach. This property is not open to the public although permission has been granted for a limited number of community activities including the annual live nativity pageant on Christmas Eve.

Shoreby Hill Field

Owned and maintained by five adjacent Shoreby Hill property owners, this property consists of four acres located just west of the Shoreby Hill Green. The development rights to this property have been donated to the Conanicut Island Land Trust, and no public use is permitted.



Emmons Property

The Emmons Property is located on Walcott Avenue and is one acre in size. About one-half of the property contains a unique wetlands area. This property was donated to the Conanicut Island Land Trust in 1985, the first year the Land Trust was organized. No public access is permitted.

Ryng Property

The Conanicut Island Land Trust acquired this property in 2000 for its prime location within the public water supply watershed and subsequently sold it to the Town in the Town's inventory of properties within the North Pond watershed.

Watershed Property

The Town, through a DEM grant, along with Town funds and owner donation acquired this property north of Eldred Avenue. It is approximately 10 acres and is located within the Town's public drinking water watershed.

Sunset Farm Conservation Easement

This area, located in the Jamestown Shores neighborhood, contains approximately 10 acres of wetlands that are part of the Sunset Farm subdivision. An easement was granted to the Conanicut Island Land Trust to limit the future use of this area and protect and conserve its natural state.

Cedar Hill Farm Conservation Easement

The conservation easement on this property covers the wetland area that consists of six subdivided lots with frontage along North Road. The total area protected by the easement is approximately 28 acres and is located in the Jamestown Brook watershed. The Conanicut Island Land Trust holds the easement on this property and no public access is permitted.

Open Space with Recreation Access:

Great Creek

The area is composed of property owned by the State of Rhode Island and the Audubon Society of Rhode Island (Marsh Meadows Wildlife Area), as well as the Town. The area, approximately 95 acres, is located on both sides of North Road and is a habitat for wildlife and rare plants. Use of the property is limited in some areas by marsh and other natural terrain.

Conanicut Island Sanctuary

The Conanicut Island Sanctuary, part of the Great Creek Complex, is located adjacent to the Marsh Meadows Audubon area. The sanctuary is owned by the Town of Jamestown and managed by the Conservation Commission. The area consists of a salt marsh, wooded swamp, freshwater wet meadow, upland woodlands, shrub/scrub and meadow areas. The sanctuary is managed for wildlife although public access is encouraged on a mile-long trail



system and a newly added wildlife observation platform. Cross-country skiing is also allowed. The State of Rhode Island holds a conservation easement on this property. The property contains approximately 33 acres.

Taylor Point Park

Taylor Point Park is a Town-owned 25-acre rocky shoreline overlook area that was improved in Potter's Cove in 1988 with assistance from State grant funds. It is located along Bay View Drive and Freebody Drive and is a popular place for swimming, fishing, picnicking, and diving.

Fort Wetherill State Park

This Park, located amongst the Dumplings and Ocean Highlands neighborhoods, is a regional facility offering spectacular views of the entrance to Narragansett Bay and Newport Harbor. Activities include hiking, fishing, boat launching, scuba diving, and snorkeling. The 58-acre park also contains remains from old fortifications and there is ample parking. This area played a vital role in the coastal defense system of the United States from the Revolutionary War through World War II. The remaining old concrete fortifications and surrounding grounds now provide dramatic coastal views, as well as abundant opportunities for hiking, fishing, and picnicking. The coastline of the park is recognized nationally as a significant scuba and skin-diving area. The high scenic value and the low intensity recreational use at the park make it a popular tourist attraction. Restrooms are available. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) developed a fisheries laboratory in three historic buildings in 2000, in the east end of the park.

Hull Cove/Franklin Hollow

This is owned by the CILT and public access is available by parking on Hull Cove rights-of-way.

Parker Property (formerly Viera Farm)

This is a 45-acre parcel stretching from North Road to East Shore Road, with access from East Shore Road at the north end of the Island. The Conanicut Island Land Trust acquired this property in 2000. Trails have been developed for public use.

Waterfront Open Space with Public Access:

Hammond Pond

Located in the Jamestown Shores neighborhood bounded by Spirketing Street, Beacon Avenue, Garboard Street, and Stanchion Street, this pond and adjoining upland were donated to the Town and consists of approximately 5.5 acres. The property is designated for passive recreational use and wildlife habitat. Public access is allowed, although dense thickets prohibit use of most of the area. A small wayside park is located on the norther border of the property. The Eagle Scouts completed a project that enhanced and improved the area in 2000.



Fort Getty Park

Fort Getty Park is a Town-owned facility located at the terminus of Fort Getty Road and is 41 acres in size. Fort Getty is primarily a recreational-vehicle campground that also contains a small tent camping area. The Park itself has old fortifications, a rocky beach, a public boat ramp, dock, and event pavilion. The Kit Wright walking trail runs along the Fox Hill Marsh and includes a wildlife observation platform. Views of the Jamestown Bridge and across the West Passage make this park one of the Town's major recreational and open space resources. Additional information about public access and amenities are described in Section 5.4 Recreation.

Figure 5.1. Beavertail Light



Source: Town of Jamestown RI

Beavertail State Park

One of the State's primary open space areas, Beavertail Park, is located at the southern tip of Conanicut Island. The 183-acre park is a popular fishing and passive recreation area. The Beavertail Lighthouse and Lighthouse Museum are located at the southernmost end of the park and are manned by volunteers. The lighthouse is one of the few remaining in the state still in operation. It is operated by the United States Coast Guard.



The Beavertail Lighthouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2024, the Federal Government transferred the Lighthouse property to RIDEM, adding it to the state park already owned and operated by RIDEM, which also contains nine physical structures and more than seven acres of land. The Town is party to a Memorandum of Agreement with the RIDEM and the Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association to own and maintain the property and structures in accordance with the provision of the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act (NHLPA) of 2000.

The old foghorn building has been converted to an aquarium, which attracts a significant number of summer visitors. A Park Naturalist is present during the summer months to conduct programs on the natural history of the area. Ample parking is available, and no fees apply.

Public and Private Beaches:

Jamestown offers several beaches and shoreline access points that are permanently reserved for public use, providing residents and visitors with opportunities for swimming, fishing, and passive recreation along Narragansett Bay. These access points range from fully managed municipal beaches with lifeguards and facilities to smaller, lower-intensity shoreline access areas with limited amenities. Collectively, Jamestown's public beaches reflect the Town's rural character, environmental constraints, and limited shoreline capacity, with parking and access restrictions common throughout the system. In addition to Town-owned and managed beaches, some shoreline access in Jamestown is provided through privately managed facilities that offer limited public use, contributing to the overall network of coastal access on the island.

Jamestown Shores, Head's Beach

Representing public beach access for the north end of the island, this property was purchased through joint funding from the RIDEM and the Town. This property is approximately three acres of shorefront and includes a picnic area and limited parking, with approximately 1.7 acres comprising Head's Beach. The Town Recreation Department is responsible for management of this property. The town beach sticker allows parking access to Head's Beach.



Figure 5.2. View of Head's Beach



Source: Town of Jamestown RI

Mackerel Cove Beach

This is the Town's primary beach facility and is located on the sandy isthmus between the mainland of Jamestown and the Beavertail peninsula. Dune restoration projects undertaken by the Conservation Commission help maintain the coastline from erosion and storm damage. The beach area is approximately one acre and offers swimming and sunbathing.

It is open to the public and maintained and guarded by the Town of Jamestown during the months of June, July, and August. Season beach stickers are sold to residents, and daily passes are sold to non-residents. The facility includes seasonal lifeguards, parking facilities, and a lifeguard post. The beach is used by families as it has a shallow sandbar area approximately 150 yards out from shore and has minimal wave action due to its sheltered location. During off-hours many sport-fishermen use the beach for recreational fishing.

Park Dock Beach

Park Dock Beach is a small, quiet public waterfront access point located on the west side of the island at the end of Broad Street (accessed off East Shore Road). The area offers a more natural and understated setting compared with other beaches and is suitable for swimming, sunbathing, beachcombing, and enjoying scenic views of Narragansett Bay. Facilities are limited and users should anticipate limited to no formal services. There is a small parking area available. The Town purchased 300 feet of shoreline adjacent to Park Dock Beach in 2018.



Dumplings Area (Greens Pier Association)

A small, privately managed beach, dock, and swimming float operated by the Greens Pier Association provides limited shoreline access in the Dumplings area. While this facility is not Town-owned or publicly managed, it contributes to overall coastal access opportunities on the island with public access up to the high-water mark.

Open Space with Historic Significance:

Jamestown Windmill

The Jamestown Windmill, owned and operated by the Jamestown Historical Society, is located along North Road near the center of the island. The Windmill is a significant historic resource in Jamestown and is the focal point of the Windmill Hill Historic District. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Windmill is open to the public during weekends in the summer.

Friends Meetinghouse

The Friends Meetinghouse, acquired by the Jamestown Historical Society in 1997 and is also located along North Road within the Windmill Hill Historic District. The Friends Meeting House is a significant historic resource in Jamestown and is listed in the National Registry of Historic Places.

Artillery Garden Cemetery

The cemetery, located on the corner of North Road and Narragansett Avenue, is slightly less than 1-acre in size, and is owned by the Town. Primarily a historic cemetery, public access is permitted.

Conanicut Battery Historic Park

The Conanicut Battery, formerly known as the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Memorial, is located on Battery Lane on Beavertail. The Town-owned area encompasses 22 acres and is primarily the historic site of a fortification. The Battery has several trails that are managed by the Jamestown Historical Society.

The Friends of the Conanicut Battery was organized in 1998 to redevelop the property as a historic park and actively manage the area, improve access, and interpret the site's history. The group commemorated the reopening of the park in 2002 with a Battery Day celebration that featured military re-enactors representing the three countries that occupied the battery. Battery Day is now held biennially. Several trails, including a rustic trail built by the Boy Scouts in 2010, traverse the park and earthwork fort.

Today, management is handled by the Jamestown Historical Society cooperatively with the Town of Jamestown. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



Figure 5.3. View of the Park



Source: Jamestown Historic Society

Agriculture

History of Agriculture

Agriculture was the mainstay of Jamestown's economy from its initial settlement through the nineteenth century. In the seventeenth century, Jamestown's settlers cultivated Native American crops such as corn, peas, beans and pumpkins. Jamestown has been described as the "Garden of New England" in 1690, reflecting the productivity of its farmland.

Through the eighteenth century, agriculture and grazing continued to be Jamestown's primary source of economic well-being. Cattle and sheep herding were a major industry into the nineteenth century, and by 1850, Conanicut Island consisted of 5,513 acres of farmland and 45 farms ranging in size up to 350 acres.



Current Agriculture

Despite its agricultural history and having prime farmland soils over 70% of Conanicut Island, today only eight working farms remain (see Map 5.2: Active Farmland). This active farmland is important in maintaining the rural character of Conanicut Island. These farms produce hay, alfalfa, pasture, melons, raspberries, sweet corn, silage corn, pumpkins, squash, mixed vegetables, bedding plants, herbs, sheep, beef cattle, horses, goats, chickens, turkeys, and dairy cows.

Some residents with small lots (two acres or less) have farming activity on their property, such as keeping a few animals—usually sheep, goats, or chickens—or haying small fields. This type of farming activity helps support the local agricultural economy. Interest in raising chickens and other fowl led to a zoning update in 2024 that regulates hens (permitted in certain situations) and prohibits roosters within the community.

There is strong community support for maintaining the Island's agricultural heritage. It is important that farming remains productive in Jamestown, not only for the economic benefit, but also as a significant contribution to the community's character. Of the Island's total of 660 acres of farmland, 97% is permanently protected from development. This protected land is owned and protected by various entities, including the USDA, the State of Rhode Island, the Town of Jamestown, and private land preservation organizations, such as Historic New England, the Audubon Society, and The Nature Conservancy. The purchase of development rights and conservation easements has commonly been used to retain active farmland. In addition to permanently protected land, as of December 2023, 889 acres of undeveloped privately owned land are temporarily protected under the Farm, Forest, and Open Space Act Program (FFOS).

Farm and FFOS Protections

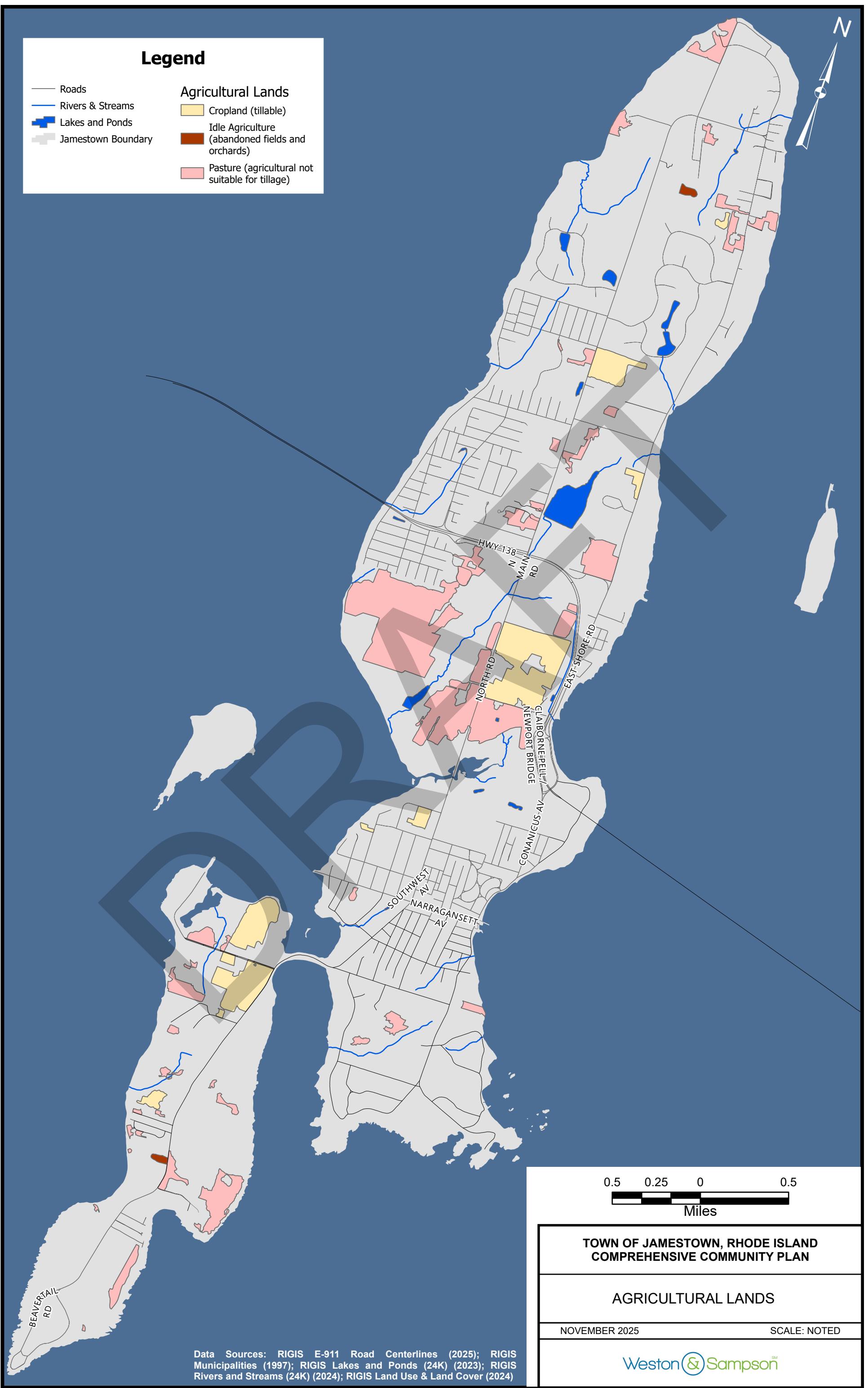
The preservation of farmland is important because of its relationship to the Island's agricultural heritage and the local economy. Farmland protection also supports the Island's rural character and aesthetic quality. Farmland has been permanently protected through Federal, State, Local, and non-profit land preservation programs, as well as private contributions. Farm protections include: the Godena Farm on North Road of 22.5 acres; Hodgkiss Farm of 43.5 acres; the Watson Farm of 259 acres; the Dutra (Wanton) Farm of 100 acres; the Neale (Windmist) Farm of 44 acres; the Beaverhead Farm of 40 acres; and the Fox Hill Farm of 45 acres.

The Beavertail Peninsula has benefited significantly from private landowners' preservation efforts through conservation easements, donations, and permanent density limitations through deed restrictions. The peninsula encompasses approximately 1,140 acres.



Legend

- Roads
 - Rivers & Streams
 - Lakes and Ponds
 - Jamestown Boundary
- Agricultural Lands**
- Cropland (tillable)
 - Idle Agriculture (abandoned fields and orchards)
 - Pasture (agricultural not suitable for tillage)



As discussed in Section 6.3.2, the Farm, Forest, and Open Space (FFOS) Program provides temporary tax incentives that support the continued agricultural use of qualifying land but does not ensure permanent protection. Within Jamestown's agricultural landscape, FFOS has functioned as an important interim preservation tool, with some enrolled farms later transitioning to permanent protection, including the Dutra and Neale farmland preservation efforts.

Protected Farms and Agricultural Lands

Watson Farm

This property of 259 acres of farmland is owned by Historic New England. The land was deeded for use as a farm in the will of Thomas Carr Watson and is considered permanently protected. This working farm is open to the public in the summer, with a small admission fee charged for visitors. The Watson Farm dates back to 1796 and is symbolic of Jamestown's agricultural heritage. A nature trail on the property has been developed in recent years.

Hodgkiss Farm

This site is located on North Road and consists of 57 acres, of which one acre is developed. The property is used as farmland and conservation land. The farm was protected through the purchase of development rights by a combined State, Local, and private non-profit effort in 1987. No public access is allowed to the privately owned portion of this property; however, the Town and State-owned portion of approximately 90 acres is open to the public on a limited basis. The property is currently farmed, and fresh vegetables and flowers are sold seasonally.

Fox Hill Farm Area

The Fox Hill Farm is located along Fort Getty Road in Jamestown and is one of the Island's working farms. The Nature Conservancy holds a conservation easement on this 61-acre area, which includes approximately 1,200 feet of shoreline. This area is not open to the public.

Godena Farm

The CILT owns approximately 25 acres of farmland on the east side of North Road and a house on the west side of the road with five acres. The farm is open to the public and includes walking trails.



Figure 5.4. Aerial View of Godena Farm



Source: Conanicut Land Trust

Beaverhead Farm

The undeveloped portion of Beaverhead Farm is protected from future development through conservation easements by the CILT, The Nature Conservancy, and Audubon Society of Rhode Island. The remainder of the property is currently enrolled under the FFOS Program. Purebred grass fed Highlander cattle are raised at the farm along with grass-fed lamb, natural pork, chickens, eggs, and turkey. Farm products have been sold on site in recent years. This property is not open to the public.

Dutra (Wanton) Farm

Dutra Farm, once owned by Joseph Wanton, Jr., Deputy Governor of Rhode Island, sold the development rights to 80 acres of land to the Town of Jamestown in 2007 with the assistance of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), RIDEM, The Nature Conservancy, and the Champlin Foundation. In addition, The Nature Conservancy holds a conservation easement on approximately 40 acres of the northernmost portion of the farm bordering Town conservation land.

Neale (Weeden) Windmist Farm

The Neale (formerly Weeden) Farm, consisting of 44 acres, has been farmed since colonial times. The Neales have been raising grass-fed Belted Galloway cattle since the 1990s. They also pasture-raise heritage pigs, Americuna chickens, lamb, Boer goats, and Katahdin sheep. All products, including eggs, are sold on site, which is open to the public during limited hours. The development rights to this farm were purchased by the Town of



Jamestown through cooperative funding from the USDA, RIDEM, The Nature Conservancy, and the Champlin Foundation.

Jamestown Community Farm

The Jamestown Community Farm, run by a nonprofit organization, grows fresh produce to support food pantries across Rhode Island. Operating on 17 acres of private land since 2001, the farm has distributed between 11 to 14 tons of vegetables annually to four local food pantries, including the McAuley House in Providence and the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center in Newport. The farm's sustainable practices—such as avoiding commercial fertilizers and prioritizing soil health—reflect its commitment to environmental stewardship. The Town has partnered with the Jamestown Community Farm to grow native dune plants for local beach restoration.

In addition to growing vegetables, the farm produces honey, hay, and eggs on approximately 15 acres of cultivated land, which includes a deer-fenced growing area, an orchard with 54 apple trees, and a composting operation to replenish the soil. The farm relies entirely on volunteers, including residents, students, and interns. After securing an option to purchase the property, the farm launched an initiative in 2023, called the “One Chance Campaign,” to raise funds for permanent protection of the site. The farm also hosts seasonal events, such as farm-to-table dinners featuring local chefs to raise funds and awareness for the its mission.

Jamestown Vineyard

Jamestown Vineyards is located on more than 20 acres in the Beavertail area of Jamestown, with views of Narragansett Bay. Although not permanently protected, the vineyard cultivates approximately 6,000 vines, producing a variety of grapes including Chardonnay, Riesling, Merlot, and Cabernet Franc. The grapes are locally harvested, processed, and bottled, with wines available in select restaurants and fine retailers. (Jamestown Vineyards, n.d.)

Recreation

Recreational activities play an important role in individual and community well-being. Participation in recreation supports physical health, relieves stress, and fosters social connection, cooperation, and personal development. Exposure to a broad range of recreational opportunities—including athletics, outdoor activities, theatre, music, crafts, art, and cultural programming--contributes to a more balanced and resilient community.

The primary responsibility for providing recreational programs and facilities lies with local communities. Jamestown has long recognized the importance of accessible recreation opportunities for residents of all ages. High participation rates, accessible facilities, a wide range of programs and activities, and strong volunteer involvement demonstrate the success of the Town's recreation system and its continued commitment to meeting community needs.



Town Recreation Facilities and Programs

The Town provides a variety of recreation opportunities through its Department of Parks and Recreation. The Department's guiding philosophy is to offer inclusive opportunities for residents of all ages and skill levels to participate in both active and passive recreation.

Passive recreational activities typically include pursuits such as walking, hiking, birding, orienteering, or fishing and are often enjoyed individually or in small groups. Active recreation generally involves the use of facilities and organized spaces, such as baseball, basketball, volleyball, soccer, swimming, and. Many Town-owned facilities accommodate both active and passive uses, allowing for flexible programming and shared community benefit.

Trends in Recreation

Over the past several decades, demand for recreational programs and facilities has increased both nationally and locally. Contributing factors include population growth, increased leisure time, greater awareness of the health benefits of physical activity, and an emphasis on promoting healthy lifestyles for residents of all ages.

Jamestown has also experienced changes in how recreation programs are organized and delivered. There has been a shift toward independently operated recreational programs supported by volunteers and nonprofit organizations. These groups coordinate closely with the Town and share facilities such as school fields, with the Recreation Department assisting in scheduling and overall coordination. Examples include baseball, soccer, and sailing programs.

A wide range of community organizations, including the Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force, the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, the Rotary Club of Jamestown, Knights of Columbus, Junior Women's Club, Fraternal Order of Police, the Jamestown Theatre Company, Jamestown Art Association, and others, also contribute to recreational and cultural opportunities. Some of these volunteer groups offer financial assistance to the Town's Recreation Department to sponsor existing programs and create alternative recreation opportunities, such as skate parks and playgrounds. Community sponsored events include the Round-the-Island kayak race, Columbus Day bike race, multiple foot races, and Independence Day fireworks, which are organized privately and funded with donations.

The Recreation Department and Senior Services Department regularly adapt and expand programming to reflect changing interests and needs. Recent examples include pickleball, yoga, youth fitness programs, and paddle and surf camps.

Water Related Recreational Activities and Facilities

Jamestown's location in Narragansett Bay provides an exceptional opportunity for water-related recreation, including swimming, boating, and fishing. Waterfront facilities are an



important component of both the Town's recreational offerings and its local economy, making their management and maintenance a continuing priority.

Sailing is a particularly popular activity. Jamestown's position at the mouth of Narragansett Bay, combined with large mooring fields at both East and West Ferry and easily accessible anchorage areas around the island, supports a wide range of boating activity. The Conanicut Island Yacht Club, with the Jamestown Yacht Club, offer youth sailing programs and host sailing events throughout the season. Fishing is also a widely enjoyed activity at locations such as Beavertail, Fort Getty, Park Dock, and Taylor Point.

The Conanicut Island Sailing Foundation (CISF), a private nonprofit founded in 2000, plays a major role in providing marine recreation and coastal education programming. CISF serves more than 1,500 participants annually through year-round programming, including school-based programs, sailing instruction, kayaking, fishing, community events, and summer camp. Scholarships are available on a rolling basis to ensure equitable access to the program. CISF's core values of education, access and opportunity, positive youth development, and stewardship nurture leadership and connections to nature and Jamestown's coastal environments through experiential learning. Since operating from Fort Getty beginning in 2012, CISF has made a substantial investment in facilities and programming that expand recreational opportunities beyond what the Town alone could provide. Under a 2022 lease with the Town, CISF is developing a permanent, year-round boating and marine education center at Fort Getty, expected to be operational in 2026.

The Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) sets policies, rules, and regulations for the preservation, protection, development, and restoration of the State's coastal resources. CRMC regulations require waterfront communities to prepare and adopt Harbor Management Ordinances and establish local commissions to regulate activities within their waters.

Jamestown's Harbor Management Ordinance and Plan, consistent with state guidelines, regulate uses and activities within Town waters and emphasize maintaining and improving public access for both active and passive recreation. The Harbor Management Commission oversees mooring placement, permitting, and waterfront improvements.

Public waterfront access ranges from neighborhood rights-of-way to larger parks with dedicated facilities (see Coastal Resources section within Natural and Cultural Resources Chapter for more information.) Moorings are permitted within the riparian areas of all public rights-of-way, however, increased demand has led to pressure to expand mooring fields beyond their intended limits. This expansion, often referred to as "mushrooming", has occurred without adequate landside facilities. Although this is discussed further in the Economic Development Chapter, it should be noted that many of these areas do not have adequate and appropriate landside facilities. Expansion of mooring fields should be limited to areas where there are adequate landside facilities or serve the immediate neighborhood.

Both the East and West Ferry have and continue to undergo major waterfront improvements including bulkhead repairs, installation of a pump-out facility, beach cleanup, a new portable



public restroom at West Ferry, and completion of the steel pier with new curbs and rails, repair of the wood pile pier and installation of a new touch-and-go float at the Town's wood pile pier at East Ferry. Private residential dockage and mooring facilities have also increased island-wide.

All activities within 200 feet of any coastal feature require an assent from the CRMC, and additional permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the RIDEM's Water Resources Division may be required depending on project scope.

Recreation Facility Improvement, Development, and Acquisition

Jamestown has used a variety of methods to improve, develop, and acquire recreational facilities and equipment. Most existing facilities have been funded through municipal appropriations or School Department budgets, with program costs primarily borne by the Town and supplemented by user fees where appropriate. The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for general maintenance of facilities and equipment.

Major capital improvements and facility development have often been achieved by combining Town resources with state funding and f volunteer support. Projects such as upgrades to school playfields, development of the Eldred Avenue soccer fields, construction of community and school playgrounds, and the construction of a public dock at East Ferry were completed through collaborative efforts involving municipal, state, and community partners.

Bond funding remains available for major capital expenditures related to recreation and open space but has been underutilized for recreation facility upgrades. Payments by developers in lieu of land dedicated for subdivisions have generated more than \$300,000 over which has been reserved for recreation, conservation, and open space acquisition. These funds have supported partial funding for purchasing the development rights to the Dutra and Neale Farm, and to purchase 300 feet of shoreline and $\frac{1}{2}$ acre of land adjacent to Park Dock Beach in 2018.

Classification of Recreational Facilities

To analyze the future need for recreational facilities, we divided Jamestown's recreation areas into a classification system. The classification system discussed below is based upon current use.

Mini Park

Recreation area that is usually located within heavily populated neighborhoods. Contains benches and other facilities for quiet relaxation and may contain playground equipment for tots.



Playground

Active neighborhood play area for recreation needs of the 5- to 12-year age group. The playgrounds are the chief centers of outdoor play for children and, in most instances, they are developed in conjunction with neighborhood schools. Features include apparatus areas, field areas for games and informal play activities, passives areas, and areas for court games.

Playfield

Active recreation area that usually serves more than one neighborhood and provides for varied forms of activities for young people and adults. A portion of the playfields is usually developed as an athletic field for highly organized team sports. Features of the playfields include: area for court games, including tennis, volleyball, basketball; sports fields for men and women for games such as softball, baseball, soccer and football; and areas including picnic areas. They may also include a field house, running track and outdoor swimming pool.

Community Park

Generally considered large areas of diverse environmental quality. Many include areas for intense recreational activities as well as natural areas for passive recreation. These parks are generally 25 acres or more and service the entire community.

Regional Park

Large natural area for passive recreational activities such as hiking, swimming, camping, fishing. This type of park serves several communities and may contain play areas.

Conservation Area

A specific area in which unique natural resources of a community are located. These areas are protected for their ecological importance but may provide passive recreational opportunities. Conservation areas include lots in the Jamestown Shores area that are generally prime groundwater recharge areas, the protected area at Shoreby Hill Green and the ponds in East Passage and West Reach Estates. Conservation areas also serve Jamestown by reducing density, protecting surface and groundwater resources, and supporting the overall goal of protecting Jamestown's rural character. As discussed in the Natural Resources and Public Services and Facilities Sections, Jamestown is a nationally designated Sole Source Aquifer and therefore national conservation area benchmarks do and should be exceeded in Jamestown.

Comparison to National Benchmarks

The National Parks and Recreation Association offers national benchmarks, or averages, to determine whether communities have sufficient facilities in place based on their population size (National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), 2025). On average, for communities of less than 20,000 people, Jamestown should have 12.6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. At the estimated current population of 5,559, this suggests the town should have at least 70 acres of parkland overall, which is well below its current inventory of over



1,000 acres of open space and recreation areas. Parkland is defined as “both maintained parks and accessible open space areas such as green spaces and courtyards.”

However, while several large state and regional parks contribute to the large total acreage, specific park types are below or just reaching the average for a town of this size.

Table 5-1. Parks and Recreation Facilities by Type

USE TYPE	EXISTING ACRES	NATIONAL AVERAGE
Mini Park	0.67	1.38 – 2.75
Playground	10	8.3
Playfield	16	11 – 22
Community Park	31.5	27.5 – 44
Regional Park	301	27.5 – 55

Mini-parks, playfields, and community parks are essential facilities for supporting healthy neighborhoods that don't require traveling far to reach them. To keep up with communities of a similar size, Jamestown could benefit from expanding these facility types, especially if its population continues to increase.

Recreational Facilities and Use Areas

Recreation spaces and open space serve related but distinct functions within Jamestown. Some recreation facilities—such as parks, waterfront access points, and multi-use fields—also function as open space and contribute to the Town's scenic character, environmental health, and quality of life. However, not all open space is intended for recreational use. Many conserved lands are protected primarily for resource protection, watershed preservation, habitat conservation, or scenic value and may allow only limited or no public access.

This section focuses specifically on recreation facilities and active-use areas that support programming, organized activities, and day-to-day recreational use by residents. While some of these facilities are also included in the open space inventory in Section 6.3, they are discussed here from a recreation and facility-use perspective to highlight amenities, programming, and management considerations. Although Jamestown includes some additional informal and neighborhood-scale recreation areas, trails, and access points, the facilities described below represent the Town's primary and most widely used recreational resources.

Pemberton Mini-Park

The Pemberton mini park is a small, landscaped area with a sitting bench. It is primarily used as a rest area for senior residents.



East Ferry Mini-Park and Beach

The East Ferry mini park is located at the eastern-most terminus of Narragansett Avenue and is a popular boating, fishing and viewing area. There is a veterans' war memorial, a sandy bench and a lawn area at this facility.

Jamestown Community Playground

The playground located at the corner of Valley Street and North Road adjacent to the Philomenian Library was recently renovated. The park officially was named in honor of Ryan Bourque, a local patrolman.

Figure 5.5. View of the New Playground



Source: Jamestown Official Website



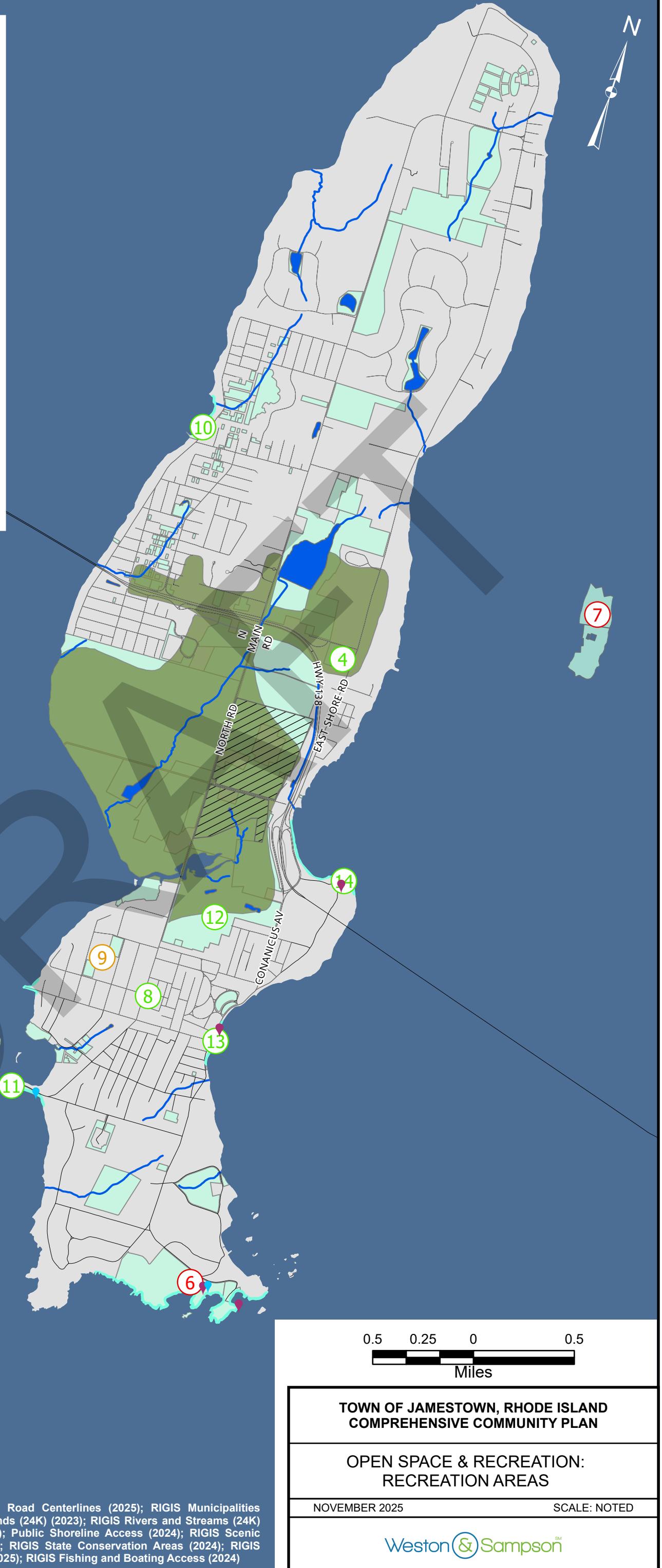
Legend

- Roads
- Rivers & Streams
- Lakes and Ponds
- Camping Sites
- Scenic Landscape Inventory
- Open Space
- Conservation Lands
- Shore ROW
- Fishing & Boating Access
- Public Shoreline Access

SCORP Inventory of Facilities

Owner

- Municipality
 - School
 - State
- | | |
|----|------------------------------|
| 1 | Bay Is. Park-Dutch Island |
| 2 | Beavertail State Park |
| 3 | DAR Memorial Park |
| 4 | Eldred Ave. Field |
| 5 | Fort Getty |
| 6 | Fort Wetherill |
| 7 | Gould Island |
| 8 | Jamestown Library Playground |
| 9 | Jamestown School |
| 10 | Jamestown Shores Beach |
| 11 | Jamestown Town Beach |
| 12 | Jamestown Town Golf Course |
| 13 | Jamestown Town Pier |
| 14 | Potter Cove Access |



Data Sources: RIGIS E-911 Road Centerlines (2025); RIGIS Municipalities (1997); RIGIS Lakes and Ponds (24K) (2023); RIGIS Rivers and Streams (24K) (2024); RIGIS SCORP (2024); Public Shoreline Access (2024); RIGIS Scenic Landscape Inventory (2024); RIGIS State Conservation Areas (2024); RIGIS Local Conservation Areas (2025); RIGIS Fishing and Boating Access (2024)

TOWN OF JAMESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION:
RECREATION AREAS

NOVEMBER 2025

SCALE: NOTED

Weston & Sampson

Jamestown Melrose Elementary Playground

The playground at Jamestown's Melrose School was recently renovated to update aging equipment. The updates replaced slides and swing sets from 1991, introduced a bridge, and crawl-in structures, enhancing offerings for older students and the preschool section. The latest phase was funded through community efforts, including a brick engraving fundraiser that allowed donors to personalize bricks for the playground's entrance walkway (Ohtadim, 2023).

Jamestown School Multi-Purpose Recreation Area

Playfield - The Jamestown School Recreation Area is located on the block between Lawn Avenue, Arnold Avenue, Watson Avenue and Melrose Avenue. The entire land parcel is 21 acres including the schools and parking areas. The actual fields, courts and other outdoor open play areas occupy approximately 6.3 acres. The Recreation Department also utilizes the school gymnasium for activities and programs.

The school gym hosts youth and adult basketball, adult volleyball, youth dances, music programs, indoor soccer, and special events. The cooperation between the School and Recreation departments is essential to the continued success of these programs.

Outdoor activities which take place at the school are tennis, softball, baseball, soccer, volleyball, golf, summer playground, track and field activities, outdoor basketball, and other passive activities such as kite flying. Outdoor facilities at the school are dedicated to the Recreation Department and School Department programs, but open to the public at all times. Baseball and soccer programs use the same field space, rotating the activity according to the season. Outdoor recreational facilities available at the school are as follows:

- **Baseball Fields** – 1 little league field, 1 lighted softball field, 1 minor league Babe Ruth field, 1 minor league grass field. These fields are used during the months of March through October.
- **Soccer** – 1 full size soccer field, 5 small side fields.
- **Mini-Park picnic area**, 2 bleachers, 4 benches, 1 lighted softball field.
- **Concession building** with storage space and 2 restrooms (men and women).
- **Tennis** – 4 tennis courts and 4 pickleball courts with fencing and one bench.
- **Basketball** – 1 full size basketball court.
- **Playground Area** with swings, a slide, climbers and handicapped accessible play areas.
- **Kids Rock** climbing features
- **Skate Park**



John Eldred Recreation Area

Playfield – The approximately eight-acre parcel consists of four acres for active recreation, with one full-size and one youth-size soccer field, and roughly four acres of wooded open space. Deed restrictions on the property when deeded from RIDOT prevent any further development and specifically prevent the temporary or permanent installation of athletic field amenities, such as bleachers, restroom facilities, concessions, and digging of a well for irrigation/watering. The field is useful for spring and summer soccer leagues, relieving the overcrowded situation at the school fields, and providing better field maintenance opportunities at the schools. The field needs significant reconditioning due to drainage issues and poor soils on the site. The Town is in negotiation with RIDOT and FHWA to have some of the deed restrictions lifted so improvements such as bathrooms, a concession stand, additional parking and possibly pickleball courts can be added to the facility.

Fort Getty Recreation Area

Community Park – Fort Getty Recreation Area is a town-owned, multi-purpose recreational facility located on the west side of the island at the terminus of Fort Getty Road, covering approximately 41 acres with stunning views of the Jamestown Bridge and West Passage, positioning it as one of Jamestown's major recreational and open space resources. The park primarily operates as a recreational vehicle campground, featuring 75 seasonal RV sites and 26 tent sites, with a waiting list due to high demand. Additional amenities at Fort Getty include a boat ramp, dock, boat outhauls, outdoor pavilion, fishing areas, the Kit Wright Nature Trail around Fox Hill Marsh, a Wildlife Observation Platform, rocky beaches, and picnic areas. Fees are charged during the summer months for non-resident parking and boat launching, and a Beach sticker is needed for residents to enter in the summer season. The Town is also in the permitting stage for a new bathroom facility.

The Conanicut Island Sailing Foundation signed a lease agreement in 2022 with the Town to construct a permanent Marine Education and Sailing facility at Fort Getty, anticipated to be operational in 2026, after nearly a decade of operations in a tent and temporary trailer. This new facility will enhance the educational and recreational offerings at the park.

The Fort Getty pavilion, reconstructed following a collapse in 2011, now offers open-air seating for up to 200 people, supporting community and private events. Seasonal camping fees and daily parking fees provide a steady source of revenue for the Town, contributing to Fort Getty's maintenance and continued improvements.

Taylor Point Park

Regional Park – described in more detail in Section 5.1.4. Taylor Point Park is a 25-acre overlook area developed by the Town in 1988 with assistance from State grant funds. It is located along Bay View Drive and is a popular place for picnicking, swimming, fishing, and clamming. Potter's Cove, located at the Taylor Point Park site, is an ideal spot for boating, and includes an anchorage area.



Jamestown Golf Course and Country Club

Special Use Area – The 75-acre, owned by the Town of Jamestown since 1987, is privately leased and operates as a nine-hole golf course. It is open to both residents and non-residents, with applicable fees. The property is adjacent to the Town-owned Conanicut Island Sanctuary, enhancing its significance as a recreational and natural resource.

The Town undertook a project to replace the existing clubhouse and construction of the new clubhouse facility began in March 2020, following Town Council approval of a \$2.81 million contract. The new clubhouse was completed and opened in June 2021. The second-floor conference room accommodates meetings of up to 75 people and has bathrooms and a catering kitchen. The Great Room on the first floor provides a restaurant, with sweeping westward views over the fairways of the golf course, making it ideal for small functions and gatherings. Additionally, the new facility provides ancillary golf operations and golf cart storage.

Jamestown Shores Beach

Special Use Area – described in more detail in Section 5.1.4. The Jamestown Shores Beach, also known as Head's Beach, is located along Seaside Drive in the Jamestown Shores neighborhood north of Eldred Avenue. The three-acre beach has public access for swimming, fishing, neighborhood picnics, boat launching and field activities.

Issues and Opportunities

Jamestown's open space, recreation, and agricultural resources are central to the Town's character, sustainability as an island and quality of life. Community feedback and recent planning efforts highlight both persistent challenges and clear opportunities to strengthen access, equity, and long-term sustainability across these systems.

Public Land Access and Development Pressure

Issues identified:

- Continued development pressure on remaining undeveloped land, much of which is privately owned and lacks permanent protection
- Loss of informal shoreline access and increasing difficulty maintaining equitable access to coastal areas
- Community concerns regarding the intensity and balance of uses at Fort Getty Park, including the extent of camper use relative to broader public access

Opportunities in response:

- Prioritize permanent protection of high-value open space through acquisition, conservation easements, and land trust partnerships



- Evaluate management strategies for high-demand coastal parks to balance recreational uses and improve public access
- Use conservation planning tools to protect scenic, ecological, and shoreline resources while maintaining public benefit

Recreational Facilities , Waterfront Access, and Infrastructure

Issues identified:

- Limited public access to boating and fishing facilities, including boat ramps, storage, and shoreline access points
- Physical and operational constraints at key recreational facilities, such as drainage issues, limited amenities, and accessibility challenges at John Eldred Recreation Area and Taylor Point Park
- Expansion of mooring fields near neighborhood rights-of-way without corresponding landside facilities, creating operational, environmental, and access concerns

Opportunities in response:

- Invest in targeted upgrades to existing recreation facilities to improve usability, accessibility, and resilience
- Align mooring management decisions with landside capacity and infrastructure planning
- Implement recommendations from the Jamestown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to improve access to recreation areas without increasing vehicle demand

Agriculture and Working Landscapes

Issues identified:

- Ongoing challenges facing working farms, including high operating costs, limited labor, and evolving land use expectations
- Need for clearer guidance on accessory agricultural uses, such as farm stands and agritourism activities

Opportunities in response:

- Build on successful models like the Jamestown Community Farm, which integrates food production, environmental stewardship, and community engagement
- Support active agriculture through zoning clarity, policy alignment, and partnerships that encourage agritourism and local food production



- Continue efforts to permanently protect farmland while ensuring farms remain economically viable

Stewardship, Self-Sufficiency, and Long-Term Investment

Issues identified:

- Jamestown's island geography limits opportunities to share regional infrastructure and recreational resources with neighboring communities
- Increasing need for proactive stewardship to manage protected lands, facilities, and ecological corridors

Opportunities in response:

- Leverage state and federal grants, developer impact fees, and land trust partnerships to fund conservation, farmland protection, and recreation facility improvements
- Expand public education, volunteer stewardship, and land management programs through organizations such as the Conservation Commission and Conanicut Island Land Trust
- Promote island-wide self-sufficiency by supporting aquaculture, agritourism, and connected ecological corridors that strengthen resilience and local food systems





7

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Economic Development

Background

The Economic Development chapter provides an overview of the state of Jamestown's economy and potential for future growth. It examines Jamestown's ever-changing economy over the last 50 years from a small Town dominated by agrarian pursuits, full time and seasonal residences and a small commercial district to more year-round and an increasingly wealthy demographic with larger seasonal residences. Today, the economy is more hospitality-focused with many new restaurants reopened and planned since the post-Covid closures, new owners of the east and west ferry boatyards, and an abundance of short-term rentals since Jamestown's adoption of its 2023 ordinance. This chapter provides the reader a thorough understanding of the key drivers that have led to this change, including an expanded focus on summer tourism, maritime activities and trade with nearby municipalities and beyond.

Goals



To achieve a diverse local economy that caters to residents by offering an abundance of job opportunities and a wide variety of basic goods and services, while maintaining an affordable tax base.



To promote year-round tourism that reduces off-season economic decline and ensures local businesses can be self-sustaining.

Policies

1. Incentivize growth of local businesses in existing commercial zones.
2. Encourage a robust year-round economy that highlights local businesses and the most scenic, historic, and culturally significant parts of Jamestown.
3. Leverage the waterfront's rich history and architectural character to enhance the local economy and foster sustainable growth in commercial districts, while balancing goals to preserve the town's historic integrity.
4. Ensure that new or expanded development within the commercial zones is compatible with existing character of the community.
5. Participate in State and Regional Planning to monitor and influence the effect, on Jamestown and its residents, of changes in surrounding communities and activities within the environment including Narragansett Bay.
6. Prioritize affordable rentals to support for local businesses to grow in Jamestown.
7. Explore and support new lodging options (i.e. small inns, B&Bs) as alternatives to Short Term Rentals to encourage tourism while balancing visitor demand and encouraging year-round housing availability without straining water and sewer capacity.
8. Maintain public access to Jamestown's vibrant commercial waterfront including high-quality public landside facilities.

See Implementation table for all goals, policies, and actions for this chapter

Disclaimer: goals and policies are in draft form and subject to further review and approval by the Town of Jamestown

7.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Our Vision: The village center should remain pedestrian-friendly and low-key, while providing a strong sense of place. Commerce should be diverse and focused on meeting local needs, including the essentials of Island life. Tourism should remain compatible with Jamestown's community character, and anticipated revenues should support—rather than undermine—the broader values established in this Comprehensive Community Plan.

7.1. Introduction

7

The Economic Development chapter provides an overview of the current state of Jamestown's economy and its potential for future change. Over the past 50 years, Jamestown's economy has evolved from a small town characterized by agrarian activity, a modest commercial district, and a mix of full-time and seasonal residences to one increasingly shaped by seasonal wealth, tourism, and hospitality-based activity. Despite these changes, many long-time residents remain, contributing to the Town's enduring sense of community and local identity.

Today, Jamestown's economy is predominantly hospitality-focused. Several restaurants have reopened or are in the planning stages following closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. New ownership has also emerged at both the East and West Ferry boatyards, reflecting continued investment in maritime-related commerce. In addition, the adoption of the Town's 2023 short-term rental ordinance has resulted in a notable increase in short-term rental units, further influencing the Island's seasonal economy.

This chapter examines the key drivers behind these economic shifts, including an expanded focus on summer tourism, the continued importance of maritime industries, and Jamestown's economic connections with nearby municipalities and the broader region. By understanding these trends and influences, this chapter establishes a foundation for the goals, policies, and actions that follow, which are intended to support a resilient local economy while remaining consistent with Jamestown's community character and long-term planning objectives.





7.2. Community Insights

Residents shared reservations and concerns related to business development through the public workshop and online survey. A recurring theme was the highly seasonal nature of Jamestown's tourism economy and its impacts on year-round residents and local businesses. Additional concerns included rising commercial rents that have contributed to small business closures, as well as increasing regulatory burdens affecting aquaculture and fishing industries.

During the public workshop voting exercise, the strongest consensus among participants centered on the potential for off-season events and festivals to support local businesses, extend the tourism season, and strengthen year-round economic activity without intensifying summer congestion.

Residents also spoke at length about the emotional and practical impacts of losing essential local services. The closure of Baker's Pharmacy in 2019, along with the loss of the laundromat and dry cleaner, has left residents more reliant on off-Island travel for basic services and essential medications. These impacts were described as particularly challenging for year-round residents and those with limited mobility or transportation options.

Concerns related to maritime access and waterfront use were also prominent. Residents emphasized the importance of mooring availability for Jamestown residents and expressed growing concern about the perceived dominance of private boats at the East Ferry Waterfront during the summer season. Jamestown's location within Narragansett Bay and its maritime heritage were consistently identified as foundational to the Town's economy, workforce, and identity. Issues affecting these industries were viewed as having direct impacts on local families and businesses.

Residents additionally expressed concerns about the visual character of waterfront properties and the importance of supporting a balanced mix of uses within Dutch Harbor.

Together, these public engagement activities provided critical insight into community priorities and challenges, helping to inform the goals, policies, and actions presented later in this chapter.





94% of respondents felt year-round Town residents of Jamestown should receive **priority over non-residents for Town-owned moorings, docks and boating facilities.**



Residents are concerned over the decline and loss of **essential community goods and services** on the island with increasing rental costs for small local businesses leading to accelerated closures.



Residents are proud of **Jamestown's maritime industries and Narragansett Bay location** and voiced strong concerns about regulatory and environmental issues weakening industry and tourism.

7.3. Jamestown's Economic History

Jamestown has historically experienced slow economic growth shaped by seasonal activity, small-scale commercial development, and agriculture. To understand Jamestown's economy today, it is helpful to look back to the 1970s, when the Island experienced its most recent economic downturn. During that period, commercial activity was moderate to low, and most businesses primarily served local needs.

At that time, Jamestown lacked many categories of retail and service establishments commonly found in larger communities, including general merchandise, furniture, apparel, and accessory stores. The majority of sales and service activity was concentrated in retail uses, particularly grocery stores, restaurants, and gasoline service stations. This pattern reflected the Island's small population, limited land area, and seasonal economy.

As a small community, Jamestown had limited economic self-reliance in the 1970s, and the outlook for attracting new tax-generating businesses and industry was low. Many communities within Rhode Island and other states were actively seeking new economic development opportunities and had more competitive offerings than Jamestown.

By the early 2000s, a majority of Jamestown residents were employed in education and health-related industries, as well as in governmental roles within the Town (United States Census Bureau, 2000). Several hundred Jamestown residents were also employed in sales and manufacturing occupations. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's OnTheMap tool, which tracks where employees work compared to where they live, approximately 17% of Jamestown's working population is employed within the Town (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024).



This historical context illustrates the long-standing economic characteristics that continue to influence Jamestown's economy, including its limited land base, seasonal population, and reliance on off-Island employment opportunities.

Jamestown's Changing Economy

Jamestown's economy is shaped by a combination of physical, geographic, and market constraints, including its island geography, limited land area, relatively small workforce, and high land costs. At the same time, Jamestown benefits from its proximity to surrounding communities and relatively easy access to off-Island employment centers, which expands economic opportunities for residents while reinforcing reliance on nearby municipalities.

Despite this access, many residents perceive gaps in the availability of goods and services on the Island. Only 47% of respondents to the 2024 Planning Commission Community Survey indicated that they were satisfied with the goods and services available in Jamestown. In contrast, 87% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the long-standing community goal "to achieve a diverse local economy which provides job opportunities as well as basic goods and services for residents and maintains an affordable tax base."

These findings reflect an ongoing tension within Jamestown's economy. While residents broadly support the goal of economic diversity and fiscal sustainability, the Island's physical limitations and market conditions continue to constrain the range of goods and services that can be supported locally. This dynamic underscores the importance of aligning economic development strategies with community values, infrastructure capacity, and realistic market conditions.



Jamestown's Workforce

Jamestown's workforce reflects the Town's growing tourism economy while continuing to serve the needs of year-round residents. All businesses in Jamestown are considered "small," defined as having fewer than 500 employees (United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2024). These small businesses play a significant role in the local



economy, serving both residents and visitors by providing hospitality, retail, marine services, and professional occupations.

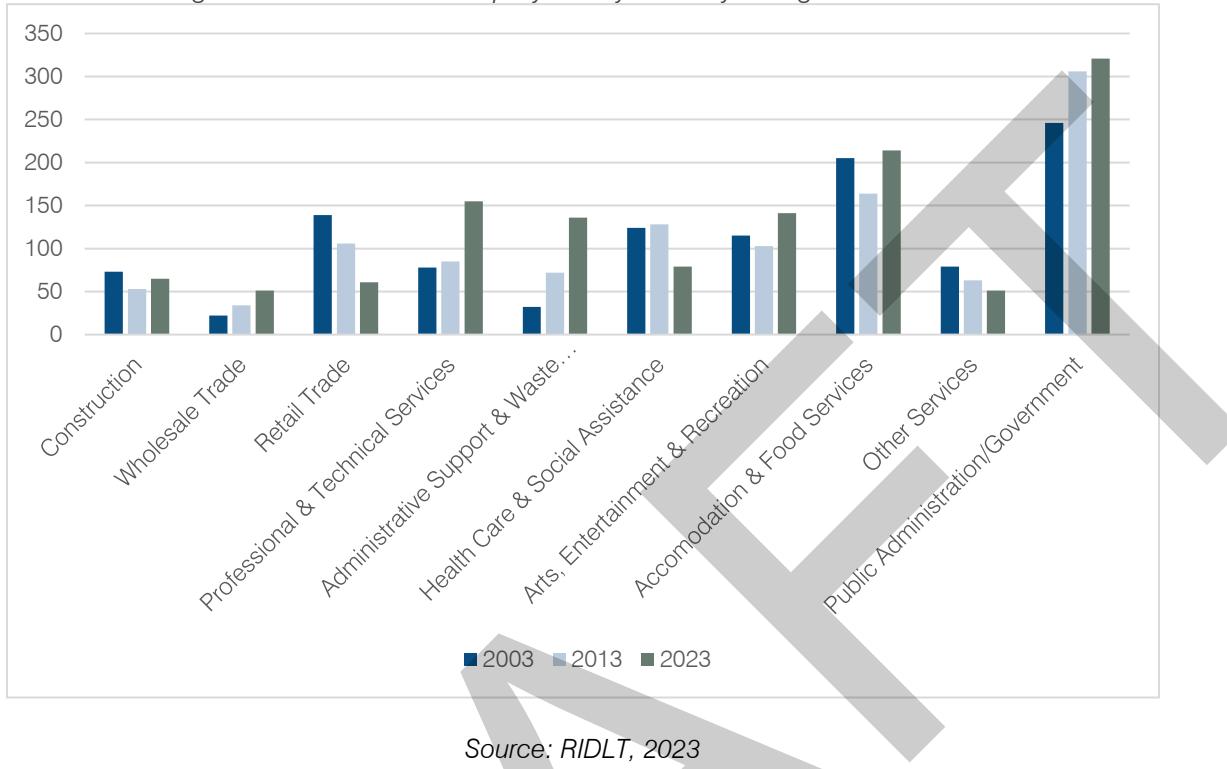
Employment data from the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (RIDLT) indicate that private employment in Jamestown increased by approximately 11%, or 111 employees, between 2010 and 2023. This increase may, in part, reflect higher rates of residents working from home. As of 2022, 16% of Jamestown residents reported working from home, compared to 8% in 2010 (United States Census Bureau, 2022). During the same period, total wages increased by approximately 83%, representing an increase of nearly \$37 million.

It is important to note that wage growth has occurred in both the private and public sectors since the COVID-19 pandemic, even without a corresponding increase in the number of employees. Since 2010, the average wage per working resident has increased by approximately \$24,000. This figure was calculated by examining average wages per Jamestown resident, rather than total employment, to ensure that increases were not solely attributable to a larger workforce.

The 2023 Census of Employment and Wages by City and Town, prepared by RIDLT, provides a detailed overview of employment by sector for Jamestown residents. Figure 6-1 illustrates the ten largest employment sectors over the past 20 years and the number of residents employed in each sector. As shown, governmental employment has steadily increased between 2003 and 2023, with approximately 75 additional employees during that period. In contrast, retail trade employment has declined. At the same time, growth in Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation employment—an increase of approximately 27%—and the relatively stable number of employees in Accommodations and Food Services reflect Jamestown's continued emphasis on tourism (RIDLT, 2023).



Figure 7-1. Number of Employees by Industry Living in Jamestown



Source: RIDLT, 2023

Figure Notes:

- a. This figure reflects overall employment by Jamestown residents. Since not all residents work in Jamestown, this figure is not intended to depict the top industries in Jamestown, rather than typical employment opportunities in the area.

Jamestown's unemployment rate has historically remained lower than that of surrounding municipalities. Following the recession, unemployment peaked at approximately 7.5% in 2009. By 2023, Jamestown's unemployment rate had declined to approximately 2%, compared to a statewide rate of 3%, placing Jamestown among the communities with the lowest unemployment rates in Rhode Island (RIDLT, 2023).

Commercial Enterprises

Jamestown's small businesses have experienced a gradual decline in their overall share of the Town's tax base over the past decade. In 2024, commercial properties accounted for approximately 2.7% of the Town's tax base, compared to 4% in 2010 (Town of Jamestown, 2024). Jamestown's total commercial real estate tax base is approximately \$93,561,000. Despite this decline, the number of private companies operating in the Town has increased. In 2023, the State reported 276 private companies in Jamestown, up from 198 in 2015 (RIDLT, 2023).

National trends toward remote work and online shopping have contributed to this shift, increasing the number of registered businesses while reducing the presence of brick-and-mortar establishments on the Island. The increase in residents working from home over the



past decade further reflects this changing economic landscape and may partially explain the decline in Jamestown's commercial tax base. Despite these trends, the Town remains committed to supporting a vibrant Downtown that provides job opportunities and essential services for residents.

Several factors have influenced changes in Jamestown's commercial districts over the past decade. The national recession that ended in 2009 was followed by the global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, both of which had lasting local impacts. Comparing data from the 2015 Comprehensive Plan to conditions in 2024 shows that 35 businesses have closed in Jamestown's business districts, while 16 new businesses have been established during the same period. In some cases, businesses expanded into adjacent spaces, while other commercial properties were converted to residential use.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic created significant challenges for small businesses in the early 2020s, most local establishments in Jamestown were able to remain in operation. Three restaurants closed during this period and subsequently changed ownership, with reopening occurring gradually. As of 2024, unemployment in Jamestown remains at its lowest level since at least 1990, based on records available from the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (RIDLT, 2024).

Residents participating in the public workshop expressed strong frustration with the closure of Baker's Pharmacy in May 2019, which had operated as an independent, family-run business for 42 years. Its closure created both an emotional and economic impact, including the loss of 15 local jobs and the need for residents to travel off-Island or rely on home delivery for pharmaceutical services. When combined with the loss of the local laundromat and dry cleaner, access to daily essentials has become more difficult and time-consuming for many residents.

Additional impacts have resulted from state infrastructure projects. The State's purchase and anticipated demolition of Zeek's Creek Bait and Tackle as part of the Rhode Island Department of Transportation's North Road elevation project has further reduced access to everyday goods and services, requiring longer travel distances for residents and visitors. The loss of long-standing, family-owned businesses has had cultural as well as economic consequences for the community.

New construction and revitalization projects continue to shape Jamestown's commercial village. As of 2024, several commercial construction projects have been completed or are underway along Narragansett Avenue within the Commercial Downtown Zoning District, including new mixed-use buildings at 29 and 68 Narragansett Avenue. The development at 29 Narragansett Avenue includes two commercial condominiums on the first floor and two residential units above, while 68 Narragansett Avenue includes one commercial unit and two residential units. In addition, numerous building renovations have occurred throughout the Town over the past decade.



Results from the 2024 Community Survey indicate that a majority of respondents believe Jamestown currently has sufficient commercial development to accommodate future needs.

7.4. Jamestown's Summer Economy

The summer season brings a substantial influx of visitors, day-trippers, and seasonal residents to Jamestown, significantly boosting the local economy and supporting service- and tourism-oriented businesses. Many restaurants and retail establishments rely on summer activity for a large share of their annual revenue and expand staffing levels during peak months to meet increased demand.

Seasonal employment plays an important role in Jamestown's workforce during the summer months. The Town hires seasonal employees for a range of positions, including lifeguards, beach managers, park rangers, and camp counselors, as many recreation and public-facing services operate primarily during the summer season (Town of Jamestown). These seasonal positions support both local services and the visitor economy while providing employment opportunities for students and temporary workers.

Community assets are central to Jamestown's summer economy and overall economic vitality. Notable destinations include Taylor Point Beach, the East Ferry Waterfront, Beavertail State Park, Fort Getty Town Park, Fort Wetherill State Park, Conanicut Battery Historic Park, and the municipally owned golf course. These sites support a wide range of recreational activities, including swimming, boating, scuba diving, fishing, clamming, picnicking, camping, children's camps, and outdoor events.

Additional attractions such as the Jamestown Ferry, the historic windmill, and local farms further contribute to the Island's appeal. Jamestown's scenic waterfront, historic resources, and coastal landscapes are widely recognized and draw visitors from across the region. Together, these assets support tourism activity while also serving as valued amenities for year-round residents.

Tourism

The Town's vision for tourism remains focused on supporting this important component of Jamestown's economy while minimizing negative impacts on year-round residents. The Town actively supports the Jamestown Chamber of Commerce in advancing this goal. Economic Development action items related to tourism are identified in the Economic Development Action Plan. Despite the ongoing challenge of balancing seasonal visitation with residential quality of life, 87% of respondents to the 2024 Community Survey indicated that tourism is beneficial to Jamestown.

While tourism plays a central role in the local economy, lodging options on the Island remain limited. Jamestown currently has one operating bed and breakfast establishments, compared to three identified in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan. Two timeshare condominium



associations, comprising a total of 85 rooms and managed by Wyndham Hotels and Resorts, LLC, have announced plans to close both the Bay Voyage and Newport Overlook properties by December 31, 2025. The Bay Voyage property includes an on-site restaurant. Bed and breakfast accommodations are limited to commercial zoning districts.

Only 23% of respondents to the 2024 Community Survey reported that they or a family member had rented accommodations in Jamestown within the past two years. Approximately 59% of respondents indicated satisfaction with the number of lodging rooms available, while 18% were dissatisfied and 24% were unsure.

Privately owned rentals also contribute to Jamestown's visitor accommodations. Short-term rentals are permitted in all zoning districts, and a formal licensing process has been in place since January 2024. Approximately 150 short-term rentals were approved during the first year of implementation. The Town's short-term rental ordinance requires registration and limits occupancy to two people per bedroom. Survey participants were asked whether short-term rentals should be further regulated by location, parking, or number; nearly 60% supported additional regulation, while 25% opposed further regulation and 16% were unsure. Although short-term rentals may help address gaps in lodging availability, their growth has had noticeable impacts in the absence of hotels and bed and breakfast establishments.

Figure 6-2: The front porch at Lionel Champlin Guest House, Jamestown RI



Source: Lisa Sallee, Proprietor of the Lionel Champlin Guest House

Tourism Facilities

Town manages a seasonal campground at Fort Getty Town Park that includes 75 recreational vehicle sites and 26 tent sites (Town of Jamestown, 2024). Over time, the Town has made improvements to the Park, including construction of a new pavilion and a recently



completed gatehouse. In 2015, a story-circle fire pit was constructed on the western shore using private funds, and the Pavilion remains a popular gathering space for residents and visitors.

Additional improvements have been approved or are under consideration at Fort Getty Town Park. In 2022, the Town Council leased land for construction of a new headquarters for the Conanicut Island Sailing Foundation, whose mission is to encourage marine recreation through education programs and a summer camp. Approved future improvements include a new centrally located bathhouse and a fireplace at the Pavilion. The Town is also considering construction of an equipment storage facility and an additional bathhouse adjacent to the gatehouse and tent camping area.

Community perspectives on the campground remain mixed. When asked in the 2024 Community Survey what they would like to see happen to the RV campground, 45% of respondents indicated that it should remain as is, while 27% supported a reduction in size and 28% favored elimination. These responses closely mirror results from the 2015 Comprehensive Plan survey, in which 42% supported maintaining the campground, 21% favored reduction, and 37% favored elimination.

When asked whether Fort Getty Town Park should continue to serve as a generator of Town revenue, 69% of respondents responded yes, 19% responded no, and 12% were unsure. This represents a slight increase in support compared to the 2015 Comprehensive Plan. The 2024 Community Survey also included numerous write-in responses identifying preferred revenue-generating uses, listed from most to least preferred as follows:

- Open-air pavilion
- Multi-season pavilion
- Tent camping
- RV camping
- Boat storage

The community has largely succeeded in achieving the stated policy from the 2015 Comprehensive Plan to continue directing commercial development into existing commercial zoning districts. Only a limited number of grandfathered businesses remain within residential zones, and the Commercial Limited (CL) District has experienced additional commercial growth since the previous plan, despite the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on local businesses.

Some industries, including agriculture and fishing, have historically been permitted in most zoning districts. More recently, aquaculture and marinas have been allowed by Special Use Permit. Amendments to these provisions have been proposed to better recognize the need



for land-side amenities associated with these uses, while also limiting potential impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Customary home occupations, which have long been permitted in all zoning districts, have shown increasing importance to the local economy. Home-based businesses have expanded over the past decade as access to online resources, home delivery, shipping services, and participation in the “gig” economy have become more common. At the same time, there is ongoing discussion within the community regarding whether short-term rentals should be considered a commercial use within residential zoning districts.

Together, these findings reflect the community’s ongoing interest in balancing tourism-related activity with the protection of Jamestown’s character, infrastructure, and quality of life. Public input related to lodging, short-term rentals, and revenue-generating uses at Fort Getty Town Park underscores the importance of carefully managing tourism in ways that support the local economy while remaining responsive to resident concerns.



Arts and Culture

Figure 7-3: Jamestown Arts Center (JAC)



Source: Jamestown Arts Center

Jamestown has a robust and growing community of artists and artisans that contributes to the Town's cultural identity and economic vitality. The Jamestown Arts Center (JAC) was founded in 2007 by a group of Jamestown residents who envisioned a dynamic arts center in the heart of Town. This group formed the nonprofit organization's founding board, establishing a long-term community resource dedicated to arts and culture.

Today, the Jamestown Arts Center hosts a wide range of programming, including art exhibitions, film screenings, concerts, theater and dance performances, and educational programs in art and design for people of all ages. These offerings serve both residents and visitors and support year-round cultural activity within the village center.

Out of the Box Gallery, located on Clinton Avenue, was founded in 2006 and expanded its exhibition space in 2018. The gallery serves as a hub for community arts, attracting professional and aspiring artists as well as residents and visitors interested in creative expression. The gallery operates under a membership model that includes individual and family memberships, with members retaining 70% of their exhibition sales. Out of the Box Gallery provides exhibition and studio space, technical support, networking opportunities, and creative inspiration for its members, along with a variety of programs open to the broader community.

In 2016, the Conanicut Island Arts Association led an arts and culture initiative supported by the Town Planning Office to assess opportunities for strengthening Jamestown's arts



community. Building on this effort, the Town Council established a Public Art Committee in 2019 to guide the acceptance of public art donations and identify potential locations and corridors for public art installations throughout Jamestown. The Town's Policy for Public Art was adopted later that year, formalizing the Town's commitment to supporting public art as a component of community character and economic development.

Maritime Activities

Boating and maritime activities account for a significant portion of Jamestown's economic base and contribute to the Town's commercial stability and Island character. These activities support employment, recreation, tourism, and long-standing working-waterfront uses that are central to Jamestown's identity.

Commercial marinas currently operating in Jamestown include TPG Conanicut Marina, Clark Boat Yard, TPG Dutch Harbor Boat Yard, and Safe Harbor Jamestown Boat Yard. Rental dock slips are available at both Safe Harbor Jamestown Boat Yard and TPG Conanicut Marina. The Conanicut Yacht Club, which owns its facilities, and the Jamestown Yacht Club both operate from the East Ferry area. In addition, the Fort Wetherill Boat Owners Association leases marina space from the Town at the Fort Wetherill Basin and provides 40 slips to boat owners.

Commercial Marinas & Moorings - 2024			
	Moorings	Slips	Outhauls
Clark Boatyard	65		
TPG Conanicut	150	100	
TPG Dutch Harbor	118		
Safe Harbor JBY	81		13
CMS	10		
Conanicut Yacht Club	33		
Fort Wetherill		40	
Total	457	40	13

Source: Town of Jamestown



Figure 7-4: TPG Conanicut Marina Aerial View



Source: TPG Conanicut Marina

The 2015 Comprehensive Plan reported 1,103 total mooring permits, including both commercial and private moorings, up from just over 1,000 in 2000. Since that time, Jamestown has experienced a modest increase in mooring density. Between 2015 and 2024, 33 additional moorings were added, bringing the total to 1,136. Overall, 136 moorings have been added since 2000, representing an increase of approximately 15% over 24 years.

Growth in waterfront activity has increased demand for land-based amenities, including parking, boat storage, and restroom facilities. The 2015 Comprehensive Plan established goals to maintain the number of mooring permits issued by the Town and the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) and to manage the harbor within that capacity. The Plan also tied new commercial moorings and slip permits to the provision of additional land-side support amenities such as parking, public access, and sanitary facilities. While new mooring technologies and demand from waitlists have resulted in additional moorings, corresponding land-based improvements have not always kept pace.

The East Ferry Waterfront represents a mix of public access, water views, commercial marinas, ferry operations, and fishing activity that together create a working-waterfront environment central to Jamestown's Island character. This area also supports private recreational boating, sometimes resulting in overlapping and competing uses. The 2024 Community Survey indicated that many residents feel private boaters dominate the East Ferry Waterfront during the summer months. The Town has expressed interest in identifying ways to better balance these uses and ensure the area serves a broad cross-section of the community.

Approximately 94% of survey respondents indicated that Town residents should receive priority over non-residents for moorings, docks, and boating facilities. Consistent with the



Economic Development Action Plan, the Town remains committed to allowing future expansion of commercial moorings and slips only when adequate land-based support, including parking, public access, and sanitary facilities, is provided. The Harbor Management Commission plays a central role in advising the Town on strategies to support existing moorings and reduce pressure on the village district.

The Jamestown-Newport Ferry Company and its sister business, Coastal Queen Cruises, operate from the East Ferry and have more than doubled passenger capacity since 2015. Service has expanded from two vessels with a combined capacity of 80 passengers to four vessels with a combined capacity of 313 passengers. Ferry service provides residents and visitors with an alternative to driving during the peak summer season, though public workshop participants expressed concern about associated parking impacts. The 2019 Parking Survey identified East Ferry as having some of the most constrained parking conditions during summer weekends. The 2024 Community Survey found that 51% of respondents felt private boaters dominate East Ferry during the summer, while 25% felt ferry users and operations were the primary source of congestion.

West Ferry also supports a mix of commercial and private maritime uses, including fishing vessels, recreational boats, and public access. While historically less active than East Ferry, West Ferry is experiencing growing demand and similar constraints related to land-based amenities. Commercial boat storage is permitted through lease arrangements on the public side of the pier due to space limitations at the TPG Dutch Harbor Boat Yard. The northern portion of the pier is leased for winter boat storage and summer parking, while the southern face includes outhauls leased to both commercial fishermen and private boaters. West Ferry also includes a transient anchorage area and Town-owned floating docks used for pump-out services, dinghy storage, and short-term tie-ups.

Dutch Harbor is expected to remain a busy port for recreational boaters traveling through the West Passage of Narragansett Bay and is anticipated to grow in popularity as a destination harbor. Future planning efforts should account for increased demand while preserving working-waterfront functions, resident access, and adequate land-based support. An update to the 2015 Harbor Management Plan is currently underway, and more recent data for the West Ferry Commercial Waterfront District were not available at the time of this plan's publication.

Commercial fishing remains an active industry off Jamestown's shores. Fishing activities include trawling, rod-and-reel fishing, fish pots, lobstering, and shellfishing. Economically important species harvested in waters surrounding Jamestown include American eel, black sea bass, striped bass, bluefish, summer flounder, winter flounder, scup, tautog, weakfish, butterfish, skate, squid, lobster, oysters, shellfish, scallops, conch, and, more recently, sugar kelp.



Figure 7-5: Dutch Harbor Boat Yard



Source: TPG Dutch Harbor Boat Yard

Aquaculture is an increasingly important component of Jamestown's maritime economy. The Town's first aquaculture operation was approved by the Coastal Resources Management Council in 1997 and remains active along Jamestown's west coast. Shellfish farming has grown in importance as wild fisheries decline. As of 2024, nine marine fisheries were identified along Jamestown's coastline on Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Marine Fisheries maps, with additional shellfish operations proposed in the West Passage area. (The Jamestown Press, 2024; RIDEM, 2024).

7.5. Issues and Opportunities

The following issues and opportunities reflect how economic, environmental, and community factors intersect across Jamestown and point toward strategies that align economic development with community values, infrastructure capacity, and long-term sustainability.

Tourism, Lodging, and the Seasonal Economy

Jamestown's economy is highly seasonal, with activity peaking during the summer months and declining significantly during the winter. This seasonality affects business stability, employment, and the availability of year-round services. Tourism remains the Town's most significant economic driver, drawing visitors to Jamestown's coastal landscapes, village center, and cultural amenities. However, limited lodging options continue to shape visitor behavior and neighborhood dynamics, with many visitors staying off-Island or relying on short-term rentals.

Jamestown experiences a sharp seasonal economic decline each winter, limiting revenue for local businesses and reducing year-round services.



Public input highlighted strong interest in expanding off-season activity as a way to support local businesses without intensifying peak-season pressures. Residents also raised questions about infrastructure capacity—particularly water, wastewater, and village-scale services—as key considerations in any future tourism or lodging decisions.

Issues identified include:

- Limited traditional lodging options, increasing reliance on short-term rentals.
- Infrastructure constraints that limit the ability to accommodate additional visitors.
- Seasonal fluctuations that affect economic stability and village vitality.

Opportunities for action include:

- Supporting off-season events, programming, and partnerships to extend economic activity beyond the summer months.
- Aligning tourism and lodging decisions with infrastructure capacity to ensure sustainable tourism growth.

These opportunities position Jamestown to maintain a healthy visitor economy while protecting community character and infrastructure capacity.

Maritime Economy, Working Waterfront, and Environmental Regulations

Jamestown's maritime economy—including fishing, aquaculture, boating, and other working-waterfront uses—remains central to the Town's economic base and community identity. These industries provide employment, support tourism, and reinforce Jamestown's historic relationship with Narragansett Bay. At the same time, they operate within a complex regulatory environment shaped by state and federal agencies.

Residents expressed concern about access to the waterfront, availability of moorings, and the balance between commercial, recreational, and private uses—particularly in high-demand areas such as East Ferry. These issues were consistently framed as both economic and cultural concerns.

Issues identified include:

- Regulatory constraints and environmental protections that affect marine industries.
- Constrained parking at East Ferry
- Limited mooring availability and long waitlists for water access.
- Complex permitting processes for commercial and recreational users.

Opportunities for action include:



- Strengthening coordination with RIDEM and CRMC to support local operators and clarify regulatory expectations.
- Coordinate with the Chamber of Commerce to explore alternative parking scenarios.
- Exploring local improvements to mooring and marine permitting processes to reduce delays.
- Protecting and promoting the working waterfront as a core component of Jamestown's economic and cultural identity.

By supporting access to the water and the viability of marine industries, the Town can help preserve one of its most distinctive economic and cultural assets.

Retail Shifts and the Loss of Local Goods and Services

Like many small communities, Jamestown has experienced shifts in its retail landscape as online shopping, rising operating costs, and increasing commercial rents place pressure on brick-and-mortar businesses. Several long-standing local establishments have closed in recent years, changing how residents access everyday goods and services and altering the character of the village center.

These shifts have increased reliance on off-Island travel for basic needs, creating particular challenges for older adults, households without reliable transportation, and residents managing medical or routine errands. Workshop participants and survey respondents consistently identified commercial rents and the cost of goods as significant barriers to sustaining small, locally owned businesses.

While broader retail trends are largely beyond municipal control, opportunities exist for the Town to support business retention, succession planning, and access to technical and financial assistance. These efforts can help maintain essential services, support locally owned businesses, and preserve the role of the village center as a functional and accessible hub for year-round residents.

The loss of essential services, including the island's only pharmacy, now requires residents to travel farther for everyday needs.

Issues identified include:

- Loss of essential services due to business closures and shifting retail trends.
- Rising commercial rents and operating costs that challenge small businesses.
- Reduced local access to daily needs for residents.

Opportunities for action include:

- Expanding access to state and federal small-business loans, grants, and technical assistance.



- Supporting business retention and succession planning to maintain essential services.
- Exploring new partnerships and municipal roles that strengthen business development capacity.

These tools can help sustain the mix of small businesses that support residents' needs and contribute to the Island's identity and quality of life.

Adapting to a Changing Economic Landscape

Despite the challenges identified throughout this chapter, Jamestown possesses several strengths that support long-term economic resilience. These strengths include the Town's maritime heritage, natural and cultural assets, active arts community, and strong community engagement.

Public input and existing conditions analysis highlight opportunities to strengthen the local economy through thoughtful tourism management, targeted support for small businesses, expanded partnerships, and careful alignment of economic activity with infrastructure capacity. Together, these approaches can help Jamestown respond to changing economic conditions while maintaining the Island's character and quality of life.

These considerations help inform the goals, policies, and implementation actions that follow, which are intended to guide economic development in a manner that supports residents, protects community character, and promotes long-term sustainability.





8

PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES



Public Services and Facilities

Background

This chapter describes the public services and facilities in Jamestown and the potential needs for these based on future development and demographic trends. Jamestown has a history of providing high quality public services to its residents while maintaining a low tax rate. Jamestown has made use of its robust network of existing services and facilities, as well as external funding partners, to ensure residents have access to everyday needs without the need for high taxes. In 2022, Jamestown ranked fourth lowest in the state for effective tax rate and third highest in both per-capita property value and median household income, when compared to other Rhode Island municipalities.

Goals



Achieve high-quality facilities that integrate energy efficiency, resilient design, and meet the needs of residents without compromising neighborhood character or community resources.



Maintain high quality, affordable public services to Jamestown residents as feasible and cost efficient.



Achieve a multifaceted solid-waste program that meets the state's recommended 35% recycling and 50% waste diversion rates.



Develop a technologically advanced network of public facilities to meet the evolving needs of residents of all ages.

Policies

1. Site, design, build, maintain, and operate public facilities to be compatible, as far as possible, with the character of the neighborhood in which they are located.
2. Ensure the cost of public services remains reasonable.
3. Increase the quantity and improve the quality of the Town's existing public drinking water supply.
4. Ensure development does not exceed safe yield of water and/or wastewater capacity and ensure future public services plan is adequate to accommodate Jamestown's growing population.
5. Integrate Townwide energy and sustainability goals into municipal building design and construction.

Policies (continued)

6. Consider the consolidation of the Lawn Avenue and Melrose Avenue schools to account for declining student populations.
7. Assess technological upgrades across facilities to keep pace with a modernizing world.
8. Promote library programs that are educational and engaging for residents of all ages.
9. Maintain the library's vast collection online and in-person to ensure equitable access for all.
10. Consider options for the redevelopment of the Town's building at Fort Wetherill.
11. Continue to integrate Recycling recommendations into standard practices of the Transfer Station and Town overall.
12. Identify sources of inflow and infiltration and remove from sewer collection system.
13. Allocate sufficient funding to emergency service departments to adequately protect public safety and security.
14. Retain a healthy, age-appropriate, and volunteer where appropriate, force of emergency personnel to maintain public safety.
15. Consider constructing a satellite fire station located in Jamestown's North End.
16. Support social programs that help residents of all ages to live long, fulfilling lives.
17. Consider food composting as a Town-wide service to reduce solid waste stream and meet State and local solid waste goals.

See Implementation table for all goals, policies, and actions for this chapter

Disclaimer: goals and policies are in draft form and subject to further review and approval by the Town of Jamestown

8.0 PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Our Vision: Jamestown will deliver essential public services through a responsive and fiscally responsible local government that balances volunteer engagement with professional expertise, modern facilities, and long-term infrastructure planning to ensure safety, resilience, and quality of life for all residents.

8

Introduction

Jamestown has a long history of providing high-quality public services to its residents while maintaining a tax rate that consistently ranks among the lowest in the State. The Town has leveraged a strong network of municipal services and facilities, along with partnerships and external funding sources, to ensure residents have access to essential public services without placing undue burden on taxpayers. According to the most recent statewide data released in 2022, Jamestown ranked fourth lowest in effective tax rate and third highest in both per-capita property value and median household income when compared to other Rhode Island municipalities (Town of Jamestown, 2023; Rhode Island Division of Municipal Finance, 2025).

In recent years, the Town has used American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding and voter-approved bonds to advance key infrastructure and facility improvements, including upgrades to Jamestown schools and the Wastewater Treatment Facilities. By coordinating capital improvement schedules with available grant funding, the Town has maintained a stable debt profile while continuing to support essential public services and capital investments.

8.1. Community Insights



The Community Insights section reflects the 2024 community survey results and issues and opportunities identified by residents during community engagement focusing on the town's



services and facilities. A large percentage (82%) of respondents feel well educated about recycling requirements in Jamestown. Composting received strong support, with 65% of respondents favoring either home pickup or a centralized drop-off option for food scraps, indicating interest in expanded waste diversion and sustainability initiatives.



Strong support for expanded senior programming:



Fewer residents report seeing themselves benefitting from meal site dining (45%) or tax assistance (53%). Despite varying levels of anticipated use across individual programs, 73% of respondents support the use of a municipal bond to redesign and renovate the Community Senior Center.

At the public meeting on November 13, 2024, public services and facilities was the fourth most common topic with participants emphasizing concerns related to system capacity and long-term resilience, including water infrastructure, renewable energy projects, stormwater management, and transportation upgrades needed to address development pressures and climate change impacts.

8.2. Fiscal Analysis

The total proposed budget for Jamestown for FY 2025/2026 is \$30,841,871, representing a 4% increase from FY 2024/2025 (Town of Jamestown, 2025). Jamestown's general budget consists of both the Town budget and the School Department budget. The Town budget includes all municipal departments and services excluding school funding, while the combination of the two represents the Town's total general budget.

Of the total proposed general budget, the Town budget accounts for approximately \$14 million (45%), compared to 46% in 2024 and 37% in 2010. The School Department accounts for approximately \$16 million (55%), a proportion consistent with 2024 but reduced from 63% in 2010 (Town of Jamestown, 2025). Since the adoption of the previous Comprehensive Plan, the Town has increased its net position by more than \$4 million, in part due to external funding sources and changes in post-employment benefits. Over the same period, the Town's outstanding debt decreased by 17%, from \$10.7 million in 2010 to \$8.8 million.



Jamestown's capital improvement program (CIP) has played a key role in maintaining and upgrading public services and facilities. For FY 2025/2026, the Town supported two bond issuances for municipal facilities, repairs, equipment projects, and public works vehicles and equipment. The six-year Capital Improvement Program (FY26–FY31) includes planned investments in the Fire Station, Town Hall, Recreation Center, and a range of recreational facilities, including tennis courts, basketball courts, Lawn Avenue fields, Eldred Avenue soccer fields, and construction of a new bathroom at Fort Getty Town Park. The final phase of the North Road Bike Path is scheduled for completion in FY 2026, and a North-End Fire Station study is also included in the CIP. These planned investments are reflected in this Comprehensive Plan's policies and implementation actions (see Implementation chapter).

Table 8.1 summarizes current and proposed expenditures compared to FY 2010/2011.

Table 8.1. Fiscal Analysis			
Budgetary Item	Year	Percentage of Budget	Percent Change from 2010/2011
Town Budget	Proposed 2025/2026	45%	22%
	2024/2025	45%	22%
	2010/2011	37%	N/A
School Budget	Proposed 2025/2026	55%	-13%
	2024/2025	55%	-13%
	2010/2011	63%	N/A
Public Safety	Proposed 2025/2026	25%	-32%
	2024/2025	25%	-32%
	2010/2011	37%	N/A
Public Works	Proposed 2025/2026	17%	-29%
	2024/2025	18%	-25%
	2010/2011	24%	N/A
Property Taxes Levy**	Proposed 2025/2026	N/A	N/A
	2024/2025	99%	2%
	2010/2011	97%	N/A

Source: Town of Jamestown, 2025

Table Notes: * Percentage of Town and School budget ** Percentage of Town budget only



The Town of Jamestown derives approximately 82% of its revenue from real and tangible property taxes, with the remaining 18% coming from local, state, and pass-through revenues. Revenue sources include fees for land transfers, subdivision fees for recreation, conservation, and open space, document recording, licenses and permits, camping and boating fees at Fort Getty, inspection fees, parking fees at Mackerel Cove Beach, transfer station fees, school revenues, fines, interest on late payments, and investment income. Revenue generated through the property tax levy has declined by approximately 21% since FY 2010/2011.

The FY 2025/2026 property tax rate is \$5.64 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, compared to \$7.17 in FY 2024/2025 and \$9.11 in FY 2010/2011. Property taxation is based on assessed real estate values. Full revaluations are conducted every nine years, with statistical updates every three years. The most recent full revaluation was completed on December 31, 2021, and the most recent statistical update occurred in 2024.

8.3. Town Government

Jamestown operates under a Home Rule Charter, originally adopted in 1974 and most recently amended by ballot in 2016. The Charter establishes a Town Council–Town Administrator form of government. The Town Council consists of five members elected at large for two-year terms and is responsible for legislative and policy-making functions. The Charter also defines the roles and responsibilities of the Town Administrator, department heads, and the Town's boards and commissions.

The following sections describe the Town's primary municipal facilities, which are also shown on the Services and Facilities Map.

8.3.1. Town Hall



Jamestown Town Hall has been located at **93 Narragansett Avenue** since 2007. The building houses most of the Town's administrative departments, including Town Administration, Building and Zoning, the Town Clerk's Office, Finance Department, Planning Department, Public Works Department, Tax Assessor's Office, and Tax Collector's Office.

Town Hall includes a large meeting hall and a separate multi-purpose meeting room, providing dedicated space for Town boards, commissions, and public meetings. The building also contains a historical vault in the basement, funded by the Jamestown Historical Society, which provides secure storage for the Town's historical archives. The vault is



occupied several days per week, and the Society's volunteers play an important role in stewarding these records.

Town Services & Facilities



After nearly twenty years of use, Town Hall remains a functional and well-maintained municipal facility. No significant issues related to building condition or occupancy have been reported, and the facility is expected to continue meeting the Town's space needs for the foreseeable future. Ongoing investment in technology and communications infrastructure will be necessary to support efficient operations and public engagement. Potential improvements include upgraded audiovisual systems for public meetings, enhanced cybersecurity protections, cloud-based data management, and routine updates to computer hardware and software. Regular assessment of these needs will help ensure high-quality service delivery and accessible, transparent government operations.

Figure 8.1. Jamestown Town Hall



Source: Town of Jamestown, 2024

8.3.2. Recreation Center



The Recreation Center, located at 41 Conanicus Avenue in the East Ferry area, is a 4,218-square-foot facility that houses the Jamestown Parks and Recreation Department and serves as a community center for a wide range of users.

The facility includes a large gymnasium, equipment storage room, game room, shower room, public restrooms, teen center, and a platform stage. The teen center provides after-



school programming for youth residents, while other areas of the building support activities such as volleyball and basketball, youth open recreation, community theater rehearsals and performances, concerts, dances, arts and crafts events, and large public meetings.

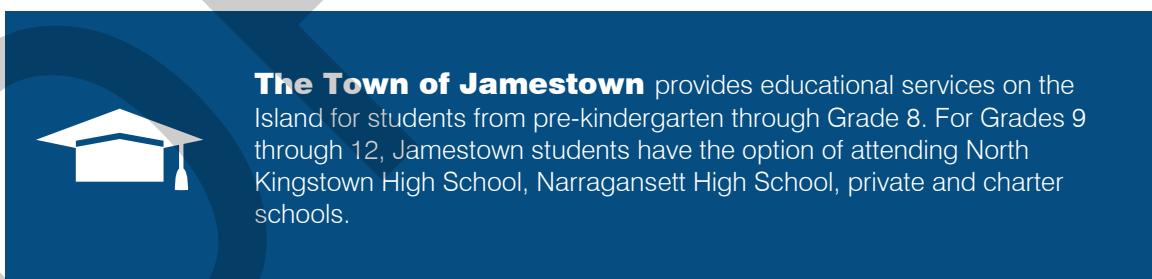
Interior improvements have been completed since the 2015 Comprehensive Plan, including installation of a new boiler and heating system. Additional exterior improvements—such as window, trim, and siding upgrades, and potentially expanded exterior storage—are anticipated as part of the Public Facilities Bond.

Figure 8.2. Jamestown Recreation Center



Source: Town of Jamestown, 2024

8.3.3. Educational Services and Facilities



The Town of Jamestown provides educational services on the Island for students from pre-kindergarten through Grade 8. For Grades 9 through 12, students have the option of attending North Kingstown High School through a long-standing intermunicipal agreement,



or Narragansett High School under an agreement established in 2014. Some students also attend private or charter schools in the region.

Educational facilities on the Island consist of two schools: Melrose Avenue School and Lawn Avenue School. The Melrose Avenue School, constructed in 1991, serves Pre-K through Grade 4, while the Lawn Avenue School, constructed in 1955, serves Grades 5 through 8.

A total of 406 Pre-K through Grade 8 students currently attend school in Jamestown, representing an 18% decrease from 492 students in 2010 (RIDE, 2025). Approximately 160 Jamestown students attend either North Kingstown High School or Narragansett High School. Staffing levels have remained relatively stable over the past decade, with a current total of 91 school employees, including teachers, administrative staff, and support personnel.

Ongoing facility improvements are intended to ensure that both schools continue to meet safety, performance, and educational standards. In 2018, Jamestown residents approved a \$5.9 million school construction bond to finance major replacements, renovations, and upgrades to school facilities.

Improvements to the Lawn Avenue School

- Installation of roof-mounted solar panels
- Asbestos abatement
- Renovation of the Grade 5 wing, including a Maker Space and STEAM Lab
- Window replacements
- Installation of a new generator
- Cafeteria renovation and expansion
- New roof and HVAC system, including controls and a new boiler
- Construction of a new vestibule serving the office and gymnasium
- Renovation of administrative offices
- Fire and life-safety shut-off systems
- Locker room upgrades

Improvements to the Melrose Avenue School

- Installation of a carport solar array
- Bathroom renovations and ADA compliance improvements
- Installation of new HVAC controls and a new boiler
- New roof and HVAC system
- Replacement of classroom doors



- Installation of a kitchen hood and grease trap

Additional interior and exterior upgrades—including flooring renovations, window installations, painting, and expanded classroom technology—are planned as part of the Jamestown School Department’s Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan (2025–2029).

Due to declining enrollment over the past decade, the School Committee has indicated it will discuss the potential consolidation of students into a single school facility. Consolidation could present an opportunity for adaptive reuse of one of the existing school buildings, depending on future enrollment trends and facility needs.

Student performance on NECAP assessments continues to exceed state averages and has shown steady improvement in recent years. Additional performance information is available through the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE).

Figure 8.3. Melrose Avenue School



Source: Town of Jamestown, 2024

Figure 8.4. Lawn Avenue School



Source: Town of Jamestown, 2020



8.3.4. Library Services



The Philomenian Library is a cornerstone of the Jamestown community and has served residents at its current location for more than 50 years.

The Philomenian Debating Society was founded in 1828, with members contributing one dollar annually toward the establishment of a library. In 1874, that collection was combined with another lending library on the Island to form the Jamestown Philomenian Library. Over time, the library operated from private homes, the rear of Town Hall, and a former school before a permanent facility was constructed at 26 North Road in 1971.

In 1993, a \$1.4 million expansion added space for a collection of approximately 35,000 volumes and a meeting hall accommodating up to 125 people. In January 2024, the library completed a comprehensive \$5.1 million interior and exterior renovation and expansion, addressing both aging infrastructure and evolving service needs.

Renovations included reconfiguration of interior spaces to better serve patrons of all ages. The adult and children's areas were swapped to create a dedicated children's wing with separate areas for children and tweens, supported by a centrally located Youth Services desk. Electrical and mechanical systems were fully upgraded to meet modern demands, including replacement of the HVAC system and full restroom renovations. Additional office space was added to accommodate staffing growth, which has tripled since the 1993 expansion.

During construction, library services were temporarily relocated to the Jamestown Golf Course clubhouse. Staff curated and moved more than 28,000 volumes to the temporary "Clubhouse Library," which remained active with patrons of all ages using computers, borrowing materials, and attending small group programs. Larger programs—such as story times, movie matinees, and summer reading activities—were held at Town- and nonprofit-owned offsite locations.



Figure 8.5. Philomenian Library in Jamestown



Source: Town of Jamestown, 2020

The library currently employs 12 staff members, including a director, youth services librarian, outreach librarian, circulation manager, substitute librarian, youth services assistant, and six library assistants. The COVID-19 pandemic temporarily halted in-person services but accelerated the library's expansion of virtual access. While physical circulation has remained stable, there has been a substantial increase in eBook and audiobook use through the Libby app. Program participation has not fully rebounded to pre-pandemic levels; however, new offerings such as Grab & Go crafts and activities continue to attract interest.

The Friends of the Jamestown Library play an active role in supporting library programming, sponsoring film and music series, and coordinating speakers and events for both children and adults. Since 1993, the library has also participated in the Ocean State Libraries network, providing patrons with access to shared catalogs, online databases, and digital periodicals. Additional technology enhancements since the previous Comprehensive Plan include self-checkout stations, scan-to-email services, and expanded printing capabilities, supporting both in-person and remote patron needs.



8.3.5. Public Works Services and Facilities



The Public Works Department (DPW) is responsible for a wide range of municipal services, including administration and engineering, geographic information systems (GIS), wastewater management, highway operations, transfer station and recycling programs, water treatment, and sewer treatment.

Administration and Engineering

The DPW Director oversees the administration of all public works services and personnel. In 2011, the Director's responsibilities expanded to include the Highway Department and engineering services related to public facilities. Today, the department is supported by a civil engineer/GIS coordinator and a highway superintendent, who assist the Director with specialized and operational responsibilities.

Maintaining a professional engineer (P.E.) on staff has proven to be highly cost-effective. The Town engineer advances, designs, and manages a range of capital projects, including roadway paving, street and sidewalk repairs, stormwater and drainage improvements, and the North Road Bike Path extension.

Highway Department

The Highway Division operates out of the Town Garage at Taylor Point. After many years of discussion, a new highway garage facility was constructed in 2011. The facility provides adequate indoor storage with three heated bays, as well as a sign shop, locker rooms, a meeting room, a lunchroom, and office space for the highway superintendent.

In 2022, a new workshop was constructed adjacent to the highway garage to support the Town carpenter and public works staff. These employees have completed several Town projects, including construction of the bathrooms at Mackerel Cove and the Gate House at Fort Getty, along with other renovation and building efforts.



Figure 8.6. Public Works Highway Garage



Source: *Town of Jamestown, 2025*

The current highway garage replaced the former facility at Fort Wetherill, which had been used for Town vehicle and equipment storage until 2024, when a portion of the building was leased to the Fort Wetherill Boat Owners & Operators Association (The Jamestown Press, 2024). The Fort Wetherill structure, originally constructed during World War II as a submarine mine storehouse, is a reinforced concrete building totaling approximately 9,744 square feet.

The property was declared excess by the Federal government in the 1970s, and the Town acquired title in 1974 for public health purposes. The building is currently in poor condition, and its construction type makes major alterations difficult and costly. In addition, the single access garage doors limit its suitability for large vehicle storage.



Figure 8.7. Former Highway Garage – Fort. Wetherill



Source: Town of Jamestown, 2025

The Town has examined long-term reuse alternatives for the Fort Wetherill building and surrounding land. Retaining public ownership of the site remains in the community's best interest, and a long-term lease may offer an opportunity to facilitate redevelopment while preserving public control of the property.

Waste Disposal

Jamestown does not provide municipal trash pickup. Residents are responsible for their own waste disposal, either by using the Jamestown Transfer Station or by contracting with a private hauler. The Town's Transfer Station is located off North Road at the north end of the island on the site of the former municipal landfill. Constructed in 1985, the facility remains in good condition.

The Town sells transfer station stickers through its OpenGov platform for \$170. In 2024, 1,118 stickers were sold to residents, including 797 online purchases, 188 purchases made onsite, and 133 households that purchased a second sticker for \$10. Trash is compacted onsite and hauled to the State Landfill in Johnston.



Composting is available to residents for leaves, clippings, and grass. After processing, finished compost is made available to residents free of charge for lawn and garden use.

Jamestown also operates a mandatory, fully paid household recycling program, as required by State law. Recyclable materials include glass, plastic, aluminum, paper products, and newspapers. Rhode Island General Law §23-19-13(3) requires municipalities contracting with the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation to divert at least 35% of solid waste through recycling and 50% through overall diversion.

In response, the Town Council formed a Recycling Committee in 2010 to identify strategies to improve participation. The Committee met 19 times over one year and issued recommendations focused on education, Transfer Station improvements, and financial incentives. Many of these recommendations have since been implemented, including infrastructure upgrades and ongoing public outreach conducted in coordination with the Town's recycling hauler.

Weekly curbside recycling is provided through a Town contract with Island Rubbish. In 2024, Jamestown achieved a 45.5% recycling rate and a 45.8% diversion rate, well above the statewide municipal averages of 28.7% and 29.5%, respectively, and approaching the State's 50% diversion goal.

Jamestown has also demonstrated strong interest in food waste diversion. In 2019, the Town launched a voluntary, subsidized curbside food composting program through the Healthy Soils, Healthy Seas Rhode Island initiative, spearheaded by Clean Ocean Access and funded by 11th Hour Racing. Approximately 120 households currently participate. The Town will continue to explore options for expanding food composting, including the feasibility of a communitywide curbside program to further reduce waste sent to the State landfill.

Continued investment in education, facility improvements, and expanded recycling and composting options will help Jamestown maintain and build upon its strong waste diversion performance.

Public Water Supply and Treatment

The Town Council sits as the Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners. This Board is the governing body of the Town's water supply. The Board creates and administers public water policies through the Public Works Director. The Public Works Department and Water Division personnel are responsible for the full implementation and operation of the public water supply. Because the Town does not sell water outside of the municipality, it is not regulated by the Public Utilities Commission.

The Town's public water system dates back to the 1890s, when it was run as a private company. In 1969, the Town purchased the system, which consists of:

- two reservoirs with combined usable capacity of 68 million gallons
- two bedrock wells
- a water treatment facility



- approximately 20.5 miles of water distribution lines

Jamestown has had a water purchase agreement from North Kingstown at times since 1993 on an emergency basis. The previous water pipeline was laid by the National Guard and Jamestown Public Works across the old Jamestown Bridge that same year. When the old bridge was demolished in 2006, the Town purchased, with the assistance of RIDOT, three hose reels with 8000 linear feet of six-inch piping that can be deployed on the walking area of the new bridge. In 2019, Jamestown Water initiated a comprehensive inspection program targeting all commercial and residential water connections to ensure compliance with state and local cross-connection regulations. Cross-connections, which link public water supplies to non-potable sources or private wells, pose a significant risk to the integrity of our water system. By identifying and eliminating these cross-connections, the program aims to protect the drinking water supply from unintended contamination, enhancing overall system safety.

The Public Works Department made improvements to North Pond Damn in conjunction with the adjacent bike path development. In recent years, the Town has added new and replaced old sections of distribution PVC piping. The two water towers were also repainted in 2023.

Jamestown Water Treatment Facility

The Jamestown Public Water Supply system includes a pre-treatment facility located at South Pond. Constructed in 2010, this facility replaced an earlier treatment plant built in 1991 and provides chemical treatment for disinfection, taste and odor control, color reduction, pH adjustment, and flow monitoring. The facility is designed to treat up to 500,000 gallons per day using the existing chemical feed pumps and discharges treated water into Great Creek.



Figure 8.8. Jamestown Water Treatment Facility



Source: Town of Jamestown, 2015

As of 2022, the public water system served 1,548 customers, representing a projected service population of approximately 3,323 residents (Town of Jamestown, 2024). Of the total metered accounts, 1,420 are residential, 96 are commercial, and 32 are governmental. The majority of customers are single-family residences. The Town's water distribution system includes approximately 20.5 miles of piping ranging from six to twelve inches in diameter and approximately 181 fire hydrants maintained by the Department of Public Works (RIGIS, 2024).

Residential properties account for approximately 89% of total water usage, or 47.81 million gallons annually (Town of Jamestown, 2024). Average residential per-capita water consumption is estimated at 39.4 gallons per capita per day, a decrease from 41.3 gallons per capita per day reported in the prior WSSMP update. Commercial use averages approximately 120 gallons per day per connection. Current average daily system demand is approximately 168,000 gallons, with a maximum day demand estimated at 335,000 gallons, compared to approximately 400,000 gallons in 2011. While overall water demand has declined under current conditions, full buildout of the service area could significantly increase average and peak demand. As a result, maintaining emergency interconnections and evaluating long-term water supply options remain important considerations. The cost of maintaining water infrastructure and treatment for a relatively small service area remains an issue as Jamestown has significant water fees that are continually increasing; a major issue for residents on fixed incomes in the service area.



1,548 Water Service Accounts

91%

Residential

6.2%

Commercial

2.1%

Government

The Town maintains two one-million-gallon steel standpipes for water storage. The original standpipe was constructed in 1974 and refurbished in 1998, and a second standpipe was added in 2007. Both are located on Howland Avenue at the highest elevation in the system and operate as a gravity-fed supply with an effective capacity of approximately 0.7 million gallons each.

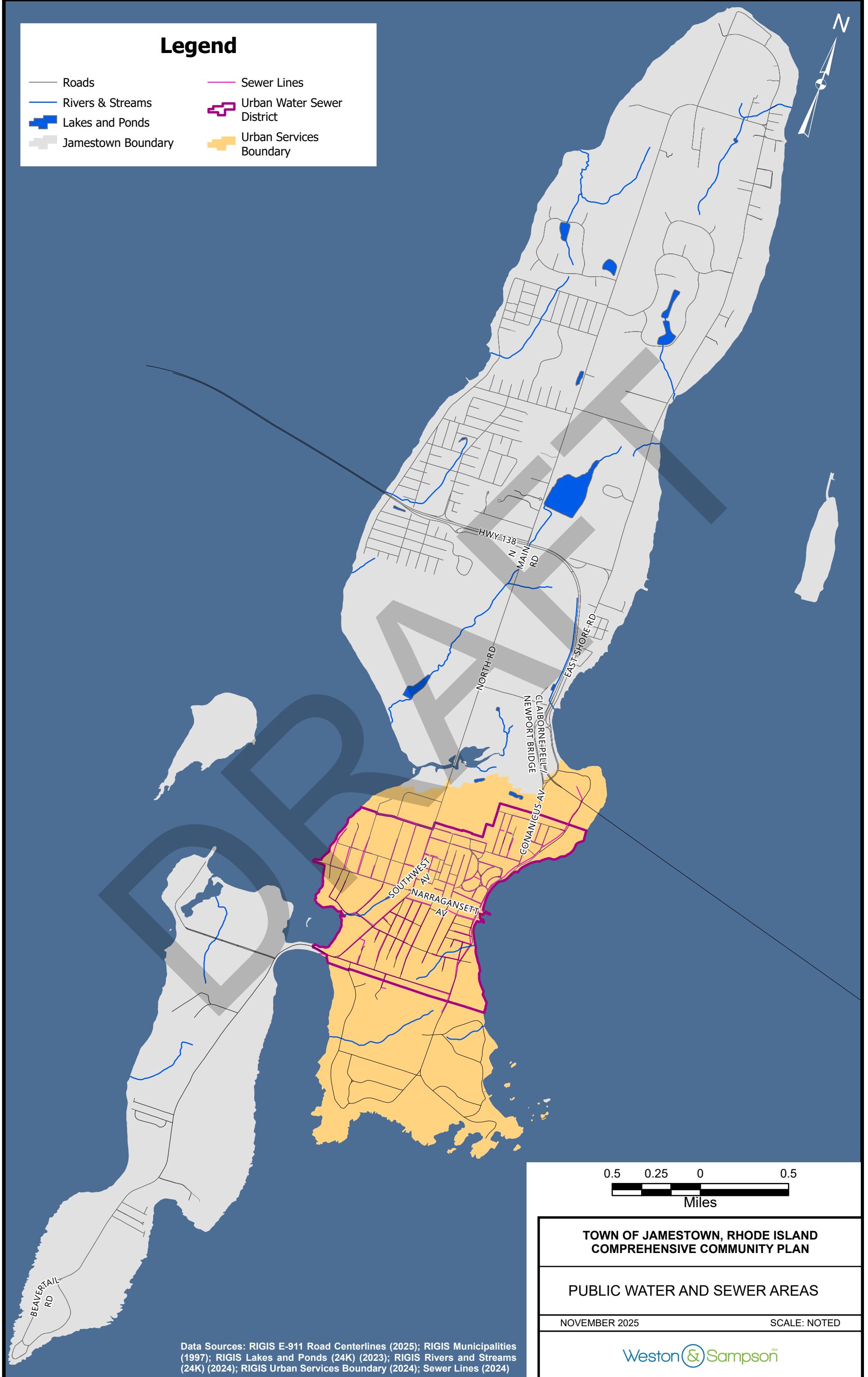
Public water service is primarily provided within the Village and Rural Water Districts. The Village District has historically served as the Island's commercial and residential center and contains the majority of public services and facilities. Water service is also provided within the Rural Water District; however, the Town's current policy limits new service connections in this district to existing lots of record. This policy is under review as of 2025. All new connections are subject to approval by the Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners and must be consistent with the Comprehensive Community Plan.

The Town has implemented several measures to protect the public water supply, including regulatory controls, active land acquisition within the watershed, zoning restrictions, and ongoing land management practices.



Legend

- Roads
- Rivers & Streams
- Lakes and Ponds
- Jamestown Boundary
- Sewer Lines
- Urban Water Sewer District
- Urban Services Boundary



0.5 0.25 0 0.5
Miles

TOWN OF JAMESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

PUBLIC WATER AND SEWER AREAS

NOVEMBER 2025

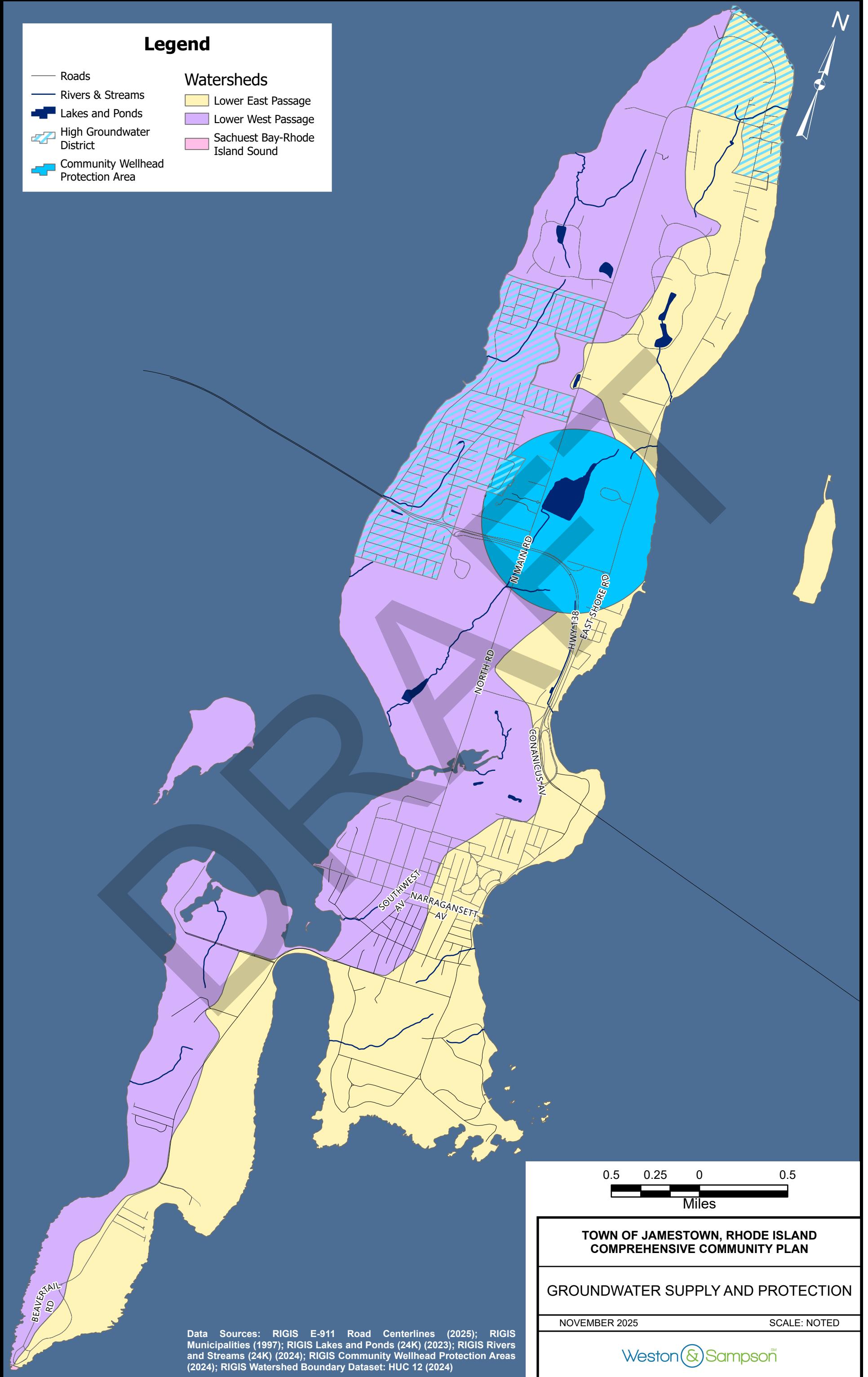
SCALE: NOTED

Weston & Sampson

Data Sources: RIGIS E-911 Road Centerlines (2025); RIGIS Municipalities (1997); RIGIS Lakes and Ponds (24K) (2023); RIGIS Rivers and Streams (24K) (2024); RIGIS Urban Services Boundary (2024); Sewer Lines (2024)

Legend

- Roads
 - Rivers & Streams
 - Lakes and Ponds
 - High Groundwater District
 - Community Wellhead Protection Area
- Watersheds**
- Lower East Passage
 - Lower West Passage
 - Sachuest Bay-Rhode Island Sound



Data Sources: RIGIS E-911 Road Centerlines (2025); RIGIS Municipalities (1997); RIGIS Lakes and Ponds (24K) (2023); RIGIS Rivers and Streams (24K) (2024); RIGIS Community Wellhead Protection Areas (2024); RIGIS Watershed Boundary Dataset: HUC 12 (2024)

**TOWN OF JAMESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN**

GROUNDWATER SUPPLY AND PROTECTION

NOVEMBER 2025

SCALE: NOTED

Weston & SampsonSM

Water Supply System Management

First adopted in 1999, the Water Supply System Management Plan (WSSMP) was most recently updated in 2024 and was originally prepared pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws §46-15.3, as amended, and titled The Water Supply System Management Planning Act. Under this legislation, the Town of Jamestown, as a public water supplier providing more than 50 million gallons of water per year, is required to prepare and adopt a WSSMP. The Plan provides a comprehensive description of the Town's public water system and includes an Emergency Management section addressing system vulnerabilities and response protocols.

The Town has implemented the recommendations and procedures of the WSSMP through the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners, most recently amended on May 18, 2009 and currently under amendment. These regulations establish requirements governing applications, transfers, and expansions of water service; water conservation; and administration of the water districts. The regulations also set forth mandatory conservation measures that are implemented during periods of emergency water shortage, including drought conditions. In accordance with State Guide Plan Element 721 – Rhode Island Water 2030, drought management is addressed within the WSSMP as a distinct planning component separate from emergency response.

The WSSMP includes an Emergency Response Plan that outlines procedures for addressing a range of potential emergency scenarios, including hurricanes, droughts, earthquakes, hazardous material spills, plane crashes, and acts of vandalism. During such events, the conservation measures established in the Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners' Rules and Regulations serve as the controlling regulatory framework.

The Town enforces water conservation through several mechanisms. All water use within Jamestown is metered for both residential and commercial customers, including public buildings. A tiered rate structure is used, with a base rate applied to the first 5,000 gallons of water consumption and increasing rates applied as usage rises, providing an incentive for conservation.

The Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners' Rules and Regulations also impose water-use limitations based on water levels in the primary drinking water reservoirs. In addition, the regulations require the use of water-saving devices, including low-flow toilets and low-water-use washing machines. Retrofitting of fixtures that reduce water use for toilets, showerheads, and dishwashers is mandatory. While rebates were previously offered to encourage the installation of water-saving toilets, the final phase of the Town's program—requiring upgrades to water-efficient washing machines by 2014—had not been fully implemented as of 2022.

Overall, water conservation measures have been effective in reducing Jamestown's water demand, with current household water use averaging nearly half of the statewide residential average. These reductions, while beneficial for long-term resource protection, can require



periodic adjustments to water rates to ensure sufficient revenue to operate the system and fund necessary infrastructure improvements.



The Rhode Island State Building Code requires all new construction to comply with the 1.6-gallon low-flush toilet standard.

Since the Town's purchase of the Water Department in 1969, Jamestown has maintained an active program to replace inadequate and substandard water lines throughout the system. The Town utilizes computerized monitoring to identify irregularities in water usage, which allows staff to investigate potential leaks and system inefficiencies in a timely manner. In addition, the Town has implemented an ongoing program to loop water lines to improve system reliability and redundancy. Developers are required to replace inadequate or substandard water lines at their own expense as part of development approvals.

Jamestown's Water Department owns and maintains all water meters within the system. During fiscal years 2025–2026, the Town is undertaking a system-wide replacement of water meters, as the existing meters are approximately 20 years old and have reached the end of their useful service life.

8.3.6. Wastewater Treatment Plant



The Sewer Division oversees the collection and treatment of wastewater within the urban sewer district.

Beginning in 2019, wastewater personnel initiated inspections of all commercial and residential sewer connections to reduce freshwater infiltration and inflow into the sanitary sewer system. These inspections, required by the State of Rhode Island and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, are intended to minimize the discharge of untreated or partially treated wastewater into Narragansett Bay during periods of heavy rainfall.

The Jamestown Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) is located on a seven-acre parcel at Taylor Point in the central portion of the Island. In 2024, the Town retained Weston & Sampson to evaluate the condition of the WWTF and its associated assets. The resulting



assessment identified a series of capital upgrades needed to maintain reliable operations, with estimated costs of approximately \$16 million over the next 20 years.

The WWTF receives sewage from the Town's sanitary sewer system, which prior to 1978 discharged directly into Narragansett Bay. Construction of the facility significantly improved environmental quality and reduced public health risks associated with untreated wastewater. The facility provides secondary treatment for sewage generated by approximately 1,292 households within the Urban Sewer District, an increase from 1,212 households served in 2010.

Figure 8.9. WWTF Office and Control Building



Source: Town of Jamestown, 2015

Since the mid-1990s, the WWTF has supplied treated effluent to the Town-owned golf course for irrigation. During summer months, the facility can divert nearly all of its discharge to the golf course, where the water undergoes additional natural treatment in a holding pond before being distributed through the irrigation system. The reuse program was developed in coordination with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, the Rhode Island Department of Health, and community stakeholders to address environmental and public health considerations. The WWTF is located approximately one mile from the golf course.

The Town Council, acting as the Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners, establishes policy related to wastewater treatment and sewer system operations. Current regulations limit system connections to properties with frontage along existing sewer lines, and upgrades to existing infrastructure are often required as a condition of connection approval. In 2024,



the Town initiated updates to the Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners' Rules and Regulations.

A continuing challenge for the sewer system is groundwater infiltration into sewer lines, which reduces overall treatment capacity. During heavy rainfall events, infiltration can contribute up to one million gallons per day of additional flow. Improper connections of gutter drains and sump pumps to the sanitary sewer system further exacerbate this issue. The Town has worked to reduce infiltration through targeted investigations, including smoke testing and door-to-door inspections conducted in conjunction with water meter upgrades.

8.3.7. Municipal Golf Course



The Town owns a golf course located in the center Island area of Jamestown. The golf course is approximately 70 acres and includes 9 holes and a clubhouse.

The new Golf Course Clubhouse Facility was completed in 2021 and includes a restaurant known as the "Caddyshack," golf cart storage, and a second-floor public and recreation space with a catering kitchen. The upper-level space is programmed by the Recreation Department and is used for a variety of public and community activities.

In 1986, the Town purchased the golf course and associated buildings to prevent future development of the site and to preserve the property as a recreational and open space resource. The golf course is currently leased and operated by a private entity. Following the Town's acquisition, a conservation easement restricting future development of the property was conveyed to the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management.

The Town utilizes treated effluent from the Wastewater Treatment Facility to irrigate the golf course, as described in the preceding section. This reuse of treated wastewater reduces demand on the public water supply while supporting maintenance of the course during peak summer months.

Figure 8.10. Municipal Golf Course Clubhouse





Source: Town of Jamestown, 2025

8.3.8. Senior Services



The Jamestown Senior Center, located in the renovated former Grange building on West Street, serves as a vital hub for the Town's older residents.

The building that now houses the Jamestown Senior Center was renovated and reopened for senior services in 1997, with funding support from the Senior Citizen Study Commission, state grants, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), and donations from nonprofit foundations. In 2024, ownership of the property was transferred to the Town of Jamestown by the Rhode Island State Grange following the closure of the local Grange chapter.

Since the initial renovation, numerous improvements have been made to enhance accessibility, comfort, and functionality. Early upgrades included installation of an elevator, replacement of windows and roofing, added insulation and exterior siding, landscaping improvements, and interior renovations. A new computer system was installed to support programming and communications. In 2008, additional CDBG funding supported a full repainting of both the interior and exterior of the building. Ongoing maintenance and improvements have frequently been supported through volunteer efforts, community partnerships, and periodic grant funding.

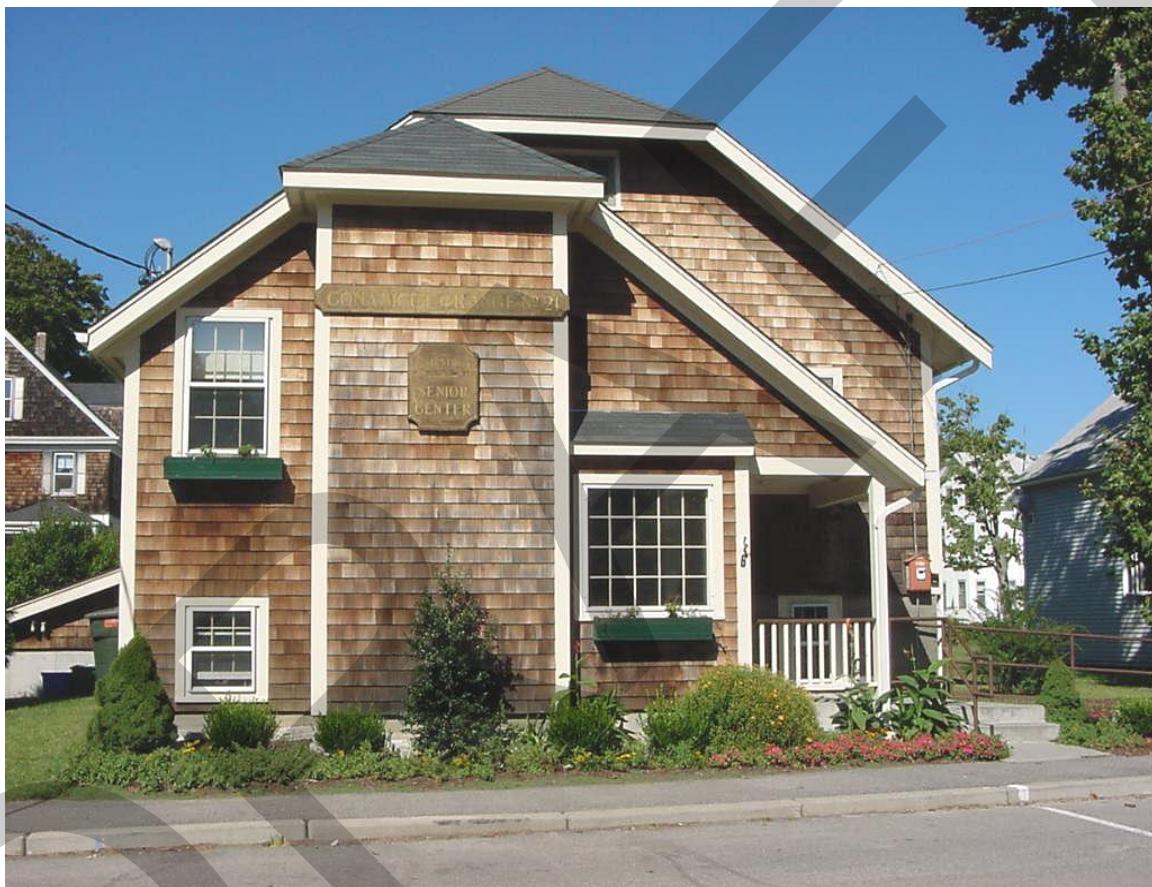
To plan for future needs, the Town convened a committee to evaluate senior services and facility requirements. As part of this effort, a programmatic and space needs assessment was completed in 2023 by Union Studio, an architectural consultant. The assessment identified the need for additional administrative office space, a new kitchen, meeting space,



rooms for private programming and consultations, and improved accessibility throughout the building and restrooms. The Town is currently underway redesigning and expanding the existing Senior Center.

To advance these improvements, a bond in the amount of \$885,000 was approved as part of the FY 2025–2026 budget. As Jamestown's senior population continues to grow and community expectations evolve, ongoing investment in facilities and programming will be essential to ensure that the Senior Center remains an accessible, welcoming, and well-equipped resource for older residents.

Figure 8.11. Jamestown Senior Center



Source: Town of Jamestown, 2025

8.3.9. Public Safety

Police Station





The mission of the Jamestown Police Department is to protect public safety and enforce the laws of the State of Rhode Island and the ordinances of the Town of Jamestown. The Department is committed to providing professional law enforcement services that support the safety, well-being, and quality of life of the community.

In addition to its enforcement responsibilities, the Police Department emphasizes proactive community engagement and partnership. By working collaboratively with residents, the Department seeks to identify and address community concerns, prevent crime, and respond effectively to the needs of Jamestown's residents. This community-oriented approach is central to maintaining public trust and ensuring a safe and resilient community.

Figure 8.12. Jamestown Police Department



Source: Town of Jamestown, 2025

The Police Station, located on Conanicus Avenue across from the municipal golf course, was expanded in 2010. The facility includes a radio room, office space, three holding cells, a confidential interview area, locker rooms, a photo lab, filling and storage space, and upgraded surveillance cameras and computer network infrastructure. Since 2015, additional improvements have been made, including installation of a new roof, office renovations, and replacement of the heating system.

The Police Department's staffing includes a chief, captain, lieutenant, three sergeants, seven patrol officers, one detective, four full-time dispatchers, and one administrative assistant/secretary. The department's fleet consists of five patrol vehicles, three unmarked vehicles, two detail cars, two variable message signs (VMS), and two mopeds. The



department also operates an emergency management agency (EMA) drone and maintains a secure wireless network as part of its continued investment in modern policing technology.

The Police Department provides several community-focused programs, including a Bureau of Investigation Unit, a Community Policing Unit, a Citizens Police Academy, and Police Bike Patrols.

Animal Control

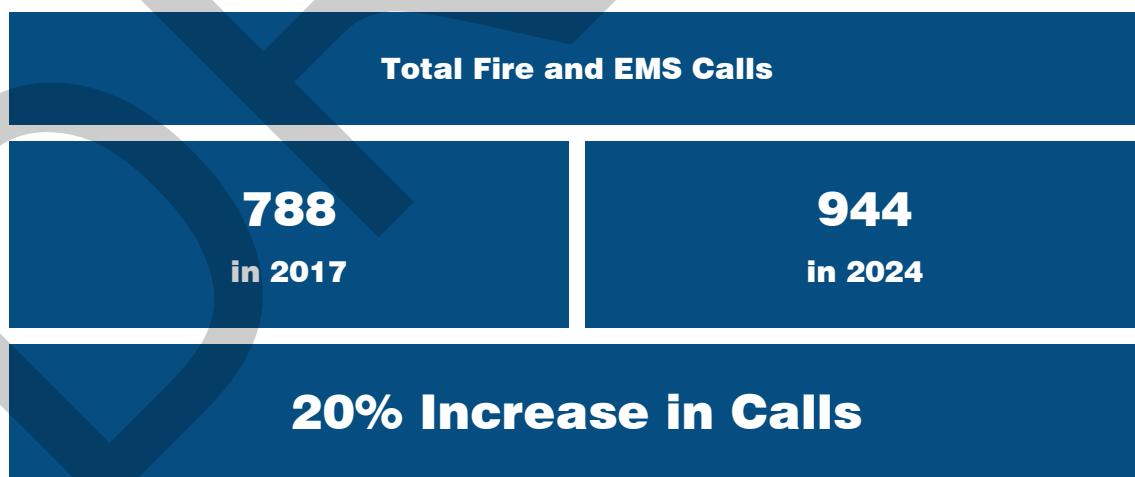
Animal Control services are administered under the authority of the Jamestown Police Department and are responsible for enforcement of local animal control ordinances. Animal Control is funded through a dedicated line item in the Town budget, with \$7,500 allocated in the proposed FY 2025–2026 budget.

The Town does not employ a dedicated animal control officer; instead, the Police Department responds to animal-related issues, including complaints involving domestic animals. Police officers respond to emergency situations involving wildlife and refer non-emergency wildlife concerns to the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM). The Town also contracts with North Kingstown to provide animal sheltering services.

Fire and Rescue

Fire protection and emergency response in Jamestown are provided by the Jamestown Fire Department (JFD), which operates as a volunteer department. The department is organized into two primary divisions: Fire Suppression and Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

Call volume has increased steadily in recent years. Total Fire and EMS calls rose from 788 in 2017 to 944 in 2024, representing an increase of nearly 20 percent (Jamestown Fire Department, 2024). The majority of calls involve fires, carbon monoxide incidents, motor vehicle accidents, water and cliff rescues, and mutual aid responses to surrounding communities.



In addition to emergency response, JFD provides a wide range of community services. These include wellness checks, smoke and carbon monoxide detector installations, home safety education, quarterly blood drives, and management of a community medical device loan closet. Many of these non-emergency services are coordinated through the department's Auxiliary Company, including the C.O.A.S.T. Team (Community Outreach and Support Team), which was established in 2023. The department is also planning to introduce non-emergency medical transport services in the future.

The department currently has 119 active members, including 65 firefighting members, 34 EMS members, and 22 Auxiliary members. Leadership consists of a Fire Chief and three Deputy Chiefs, one of whom oversees EMS operations. The Fire Suppression Division includes seven captains, seven lieutenants, and 47 firefighters. The EMS Division includes one EMS supervisor, one captain, two lieutenants, and 30 volunteer EMTs. EMS personnel provide Advanced Life Support services, allowing for administration of certain medications and delivery of advanced medical care.

Department members receive specialized training in technical rescue, hazardous materials response, and oil spill mitigation and decontamination in coordination with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. Of the 65 firefighting members, 26 are certified as NFPA 1001 Firefighter I and II. In addition, nine members are certified as NFPA 1021 Fire Officers, five as NFPA 1041 Fire Instructors, five as NFPA 1521 Fire Incident Safety Officers, and four as NFPA 1031 Fire Inspectors.

Despite recent increases in membership, the Town continues to face challenges maintaining adequate volunteer staffing levels. Over the past two decades, the average age of firefighters and EMS providers has increased from approximately 40 to 48 years, raising concerns about the long-term sustainability of volunteer-based emergency services. Additionally, nearly two-thirds of volunteers reside in the northern portion of the Island, which presents operational challenges for responding to emergencies south of Weeden Lane, particularly during major storm events.



Figure 8.13: Jamestown Fire Department



Source: Jamestown Fire Department, 2025

The Town's Fire Station, which houses both Fire and Emergency Medical Services, is located on Narragansett Avenue in the downtown area. The facility contains fire and rescue apparatus bays, duty rooms with sleeping quarters, a small meeting room, three offices with shared meeting space, and a large meeting area on the second floor. Adequate parking is provided on site, and the station is easily accessible from Narragansett Avenue.

At present, there is no immediate need for construction of a new fire station. However, the Town has recognized increasing demand for fire protection services in the North End as the population continues to grow. Ongoing discussions regarding the potential construction of a North End fire station reflect concerns about response times and service coverage, particularly during storm events. The former Emergency Medical Services facility is currently used as the Harbormaster's office, and the Town is evaluating alternative long-term uses for the building, including potential affordable housing.

The Fire Department operates three pumper trucks, one ladder truck, one rescue vehicle, three tankers with a capacity of 2,500 gallons each, a portable air/cascade trailer, a bucket truck, and a rescue boat. Significant capital investment will be required in coming years to replace and upgrade personal protective equipment, fire apparatus, and communications equipment.

Due to the high water pressure required for firefighting, engines within the public water supply system cannot draw from more than one hydrant at a time. As a result, multiple simultaneous



fire incidents could strain system capacity. The Department's tanker trucks, which carry their own water supply, are therefore critical to effective fire suppression, particularly in areas outside the public water service area. Ongoing replacement of water mains and hydrants in the village area has improved water pressure and flow, helping to mitigate these limitations.

Emergency Management

The Jamestown Emergency Management Agency was established in 1980 to develop policies and procedures for responding to Town-wide emergencies. The Town's Emergency Operations Plan, most recently amended in 2025, outlines response protocols for a range of manmade and natural disasters. Copies of the plan are distributed to all personnel identified in the emergency organizational structure.

The Town Council appoints the Director of Emergency Management, a position currently held by a Captain in the Police Department. The Emergency Operations Plan clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of Town personnel involved in disaster response. In the event of an emergency or impending disaster, local officials convene at the Police Station to coordinate response activities and resource deployment. All emergency responders are required to maintain certification through the Incident Command System (ICS), with certification levels aligned to assigned duties. Participating departments include Public Works, Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Police, Town Administration, and Finance.

Jamestown's Hazard Mitigation Plan was most recently updated and approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in 2025. The Planning Office led this effort in coordination with multiple Town departments. The Emergency Management Agency has also developed an Emergency Preparedness Plan for Hurricane Defense, which outlines precautionary measures and response actions specific to hurricane events. Hazard considerations were also incorporated into the 2024 Water Supply System Management Plan, which evaluates potential impacts from hurricanes, drought, earthquakes, and manmade disasters on the Town's water supply.

Emergency generators have been installed at the Melrose Avenue School, the Lawn Avenue School, and the Fire Station. Following receipt of a Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency grant, the Melrose Avenue School now serves as the Town's primary emergency shelter. The Fire Station functions as a secondary shelter, while the Lawn Avenue School is designated for emergency animal sheltering if needed.

The Town's hazardous materials response procedures follow a chain-of-command structure consistent with the Emergency Operations Plan. The Fire Department provides first response to hazardous material incidents and maintains an inventory of hazardous materials stored or used on the Island. Two fully equipped spill containment kits are maintained on site, including containment booms, absorbent materials, protective suits, and related equipment.

To strengthen preparedness and response capacity, Town officials regularly participate in State-sponsored emergency management training and workshops. Continued participation



in these programs supports interagency coordination, improves response effectiveness, and enhances community awareness of emergency preparedness.

8.3.10. Social Services



Jamestown residents receive social services through local, regional, and state agencies. Given the Town's small population, many services are provided via regional collaborations, which have proven effective.

The Town has appointed a Welfare Director who serves as a key liaison between Jamestown residents and a range of regional and community-based social service providers. Many essential social services in Jamestown are delivered through partnerships with nonprofit organizations that operate locally or regionally, supported in part by Town representation, funding, and coordination.

East Bay Community Action Program (EBCAP)

Formerly known as New Visions for Newport County, the East Bay Community Action Program (EBCAP) provides a comprehensive range of services to Jamestown residents, including substance abuse prevention, energy assistance, home weatherization, community health programs, career and employment development, and referrals to additional social service resources. Jamestown maintains representation on EBCAP's Board of Directors and provides funding to support its programs.

Church Community Housing Corporation (CCHC)

The Church Community Housing Corporation assists low- and moderate-income residents with housing-related needs, including home repair assistance, down payment assistance for first-time homebuyers, and the development of affordable housing. CCHC has played an important role in the creation of affordable housing units in Jamestown and surrounding communities.

Visiting Nurse Home & Hospice

Formerly known as Visiting Nurse Services of Washington County and Jamestown, Visiting Nurse Home & Hospice provides prenatal and parenting support, counseling services, home health care, and hospice care. These services allow residents to receive medical and supportive care in their homes, supporting aging in place and continuity of care.

Looking Upwards (formerly Bridges)

Looking Upwards is a nonprofit organization that provides residential and support services for individuals with developmental disabilities in Jamestown. Services include group homes,



assisted living arrangements, individualized supports, and programs that promote community integration and independence. The organization operates a mix of independent and assisted living units, as well as group homes, and supports individuals living in their own homes or apartments. A new residential development consisting of twelve apartment units is under construction in 2024–2025, adjacent to five units developed in 2012. Individuals served by Looking Upwards have become integral members of the Jamestown community.

Women's Resource Center of Bristol and Newport County

The Women's Resource Center provides confidential services to victims of domestic abuse, including a 24-hour hotline, emergency shelter, legal and law enforcement advocacy, counseling, and support groups. The Town has consistently provided financial support for this organization through Community Development Block Grant funding.

Juvenile Hearing Board

The Juvenile Hearing Board addresses cases involving individuals under 18 who are referred by local law enforcement for violations of state or Town laws. The Board may recommend sanctions such as fines of up to \$100, community service, or restitution. Its approach emphasizes accountability, rehabilitation, and early intervention rather than incarceration, offering young people opportunities for corrective action and community reintegration.



8.4. Issues and Opportunities

Jamestown faces a number of pressing challenges related to the provision and maintenance of public services and facilities.

8.4.1. Education Costs and Enrollment

Over 50% of the Town's annual budget is allocated to education, in part due to Jamestown's tuition agreements with the North Kingstown and Narragansett School Districts. Although this supports educational attainment, it limits the amount of available funding for other essential municipal services and infrastructure needs.

Declining enrollment in the Jamestown School District has prompted the Town to begin evaluating whether consolidating the Lawn Avenue and Melrose Avenue schools would be more cost-effective and efficient than maintaining both. With the current student population significantly lower than in previous decades, consolidating school operations into one facility may be necessary, despite the significant logistical challenges of consolidating operations into a single school facility.

Issues identified include:

- High proportion of the Town's annual budget dedicated to education.



- Declining student population over the past few decades.

Opportunities in response:

- Analyze the Town's annual budget to determine if the proportion of funding given to education is appropriate.
- Evaluate a consolidation of the Lawn Avenue and Melrose Avenue schools into one K-12 school, and use the other building in adaptive reuse for other municipal facilities or community programming.

8.4.2. Emergency Response System

The Town has also experienced strain regarding its emergency response system. Despite the Jamestown Fire Department's commitment to providing high-quality services, an aging and declining volunteer base threatens the sustainability of these services into the future. As the average age of service members continues to rise and attracting new volunteers becomes increasingly difficult, Jamestown may not be able to support its residents in emergency situations as effectively. Meanwhile, concerns over response times and accessibility to certain portions of the Island have been ongoing issues for decades and remain a primary concern of residents.

Conversations surrounding the establishment of a new fire station in Jamestown's north end could improve response times and ensure residents feel safe and secure regardless of their location on the Island.

Issues identified include:

- Longer response times and limited accessibility during storm events for farther parts of the island.
- Aging and declining volunteer firefighter team with difficulty attracting new and younger volunteers.

Opportunities to address these include:

- Evaluate the feasibility of a new fire station in the north end to improve the neighborhood's response times and serve as a hub during storm events.
- Brainstorm new ways to increase outreach for volunteer firefighters and provide incentives.

8.4.3. Water and Wastewater Capacity

The Town's water and wastewater systems are areas of concern for residents fearing that long-term drinking water reliability could be affected by climate change, system capacity limits and costs, and contamination risks. Major storms, which may also be exacerbated by climate change, can overwhelm wastewater infrastructure and lead to drinking water



contamination. Droughts, which are expected to increase in frequency and severity as climate change worsens, may also reduce the amount of available drinking water for residents. Additional concerns surrounding climate change and the water supply can be found in Chapter 10, *Sustainability and Resilience*.

Issues identified include:

- Major storms and droughts can contaminate and reduce the supply of drinking water, respectively.
- Overconsumption of the water supply threatens to reduce the amount of potable drinking water available for residents into the future.
- Groundwater and surface water are both susceptible to contamination when the sewer system is overwhelmed by large quantities of runoff and cannot effectively treat contaminated water.
- Aging sewer lines are particularly vulnerable to insufficient treatment capacity and water supply treatment and infrastructure maintenance costs are ever increasing and both remain ongoing issues within Jamestown.

Opportunities in response:

- Limit future development so the water capacity is not threatened.
- Construct rain gardens and other stormwater infrastructure to absorb stormwater before it reaches the sewer system.
- Devise a long-term plan to repair and maintain aging sewer lines.

8.4.4. Municipal Building Maintenance

Jamestown continues to manage an inventory of aging public buildings and facilities. The Town has consistently demonstrated its ability to modernize facilities such as those at Town Hall and the library and is prepared to continue adapting to emerging technologies. As the community ages and programming demands change, the Town can continue leveraging its various municipal buildings to meet various needs.

- Jamestown's former highway garage at Fort Wetherill has been in structural decline for years and may require demolition.
- The senior center could benefit from renovations to address space limitations and accessibility challenges or the construction of an entirely new facility.
- The recreation center needs upgrades to its exterior to maintain its neighborhood character and remain an inviting public space for all.

Opportunities in response:



- Redevelop, rather than demolish, the Fort Wetherill former highway garage for other purposes by the Town or a private developer.
- Renovate the senior center and recreation center.
- Identify the best civic space among the senior center, recreation center, library, and Town Hall to meet the needs of resident programming regardless of age or interest. This allows for flexibility and cost-effective space planning when programs may overlap at the same time or location.
- Enhance transparency, service efficiency, and community engagement across departments using technological advancements in digital communications, cybersecurity, and cloud-based systems.

8.4.5. Sustainable Facilities

As discussed in Chapter 10, *Sustainability and Resilience*, Jamestown has a commitment to sustainable development, including its municipal facilities. The Town's longstanding success with recycling and composting programs, especially through its partnership with Clean Ocean Access and the Healthy Soils, Healthy Seas Rhode Island initiatives, provides a strong foundation for advancing toward the state's recycling (35%) and waste diversion (50%) goals. Integrating green energy strategies and sustainable building practices into both new municipal construction and adaptive reuse projects remains an ongoing priority of the Town.

Opportunities for further improvement:

- Increase outreach, financial incentives, and expanded curbside composting to increase local participation and reduce environmental impacts. Jamestown's Recycling Committee has already begun implementing new procedures to improve these outcomes.
- Consider incorporating solar arrays, geothermal heating, energy-efficient retrofits, and smart design standards into future projects to align with state and local goals alike. These improvements are intended to help reduce operational costs and environmental impact while advancing the Town's climate-resilient future.



A blue-toned photograph of a road with power lines and a car. The image has a large, semi-transparent watermark in the center that reads "P2V" in a stylized, blocky font.

9

TRANSPORTATION



Transportation

Background

Jamestown's transportation network plays a vital role in supporting mobility and connectivity both within the island and to the broader region. With its unique geography as an island community, Jamestown relies on a combination of state and local roadways, public transit services, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and marine transportation to facilitate movement.

This chapter assesses the Town's existing transportation infrastructure, identifies challenges and opportunities, and outlines goals, policies, and actions aimed at improving safety, efficiency, and accessibility. It provides a framework for maintaining and enhancing Jamestown's transportation system to ensure it remains resilient, environmentally responsible, and responsive to community needs.

Goals

-  Provide safe, efficient, and balanced local circulation patterns that prioritize safety for all transportation modes and accommodate existing and future population growth consistent with a "Complete Streets" policy.
-  Promote multimodal transportation infrastructure to support healthy lifestyles, environmental sustainability, and community resilience.
-  Strengthen connections between transportation and land use planning to reduce congestion, parking pressures, and dependency on single-occupancy vehicles.
-  Enhance Jamestown's connectivity to the broader region through reliable and efficient public transit and marine transportation consistent with Jamestown's rural character and parking availability.

Policies

1. Create a "Complete Streets" policy that promotes alternative forms of transportation and a coordinated system of bicycle and walking routes linking residential areas to recreation, scenic and cultural areas throughout the island while retaining roads rural character.
2. Improve roads to provide an acceptable level of service at a reasonable cost to the taxpayer.
3. Provide an acceptable level of service for parking in the village commercial area.
4. Expand and enhance bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to provide safe, convenient, and accessible transportation options for all ages and abilities.
5. Integrate green infrastructure and sustainable practices into transportation projects to mitigate environmental impacts and adapt to climate change.
6. Monitor trends and adopt town policies for the proper accommodation and use of e-bikes, e-scooters, electric vehicles (EVs) and low-speed electric transportation to reduce carbon emissions and enhance local air quality.
7. Encourage compact, walkable, and bike-friendly development patterns in village areas and near key community destinations.
8. Align parking strategies with economic development goals, balancing the needs of local businesses, residents, and visitors.
9. Work with RIPTA and regional partners to consider the feasibility of a local park-and-ride and to improve bus and shuttle service frequency, reliability, and connectivity for Jamestown residents.
10. Support ferry services and marine transportation options, particularly connections to Newport and Providence while not increasing parking congestion in the Village.

See Implementation table for all goals, policies, and actions for this chapter

Disclaimer: goals and policies are in draft form and subject to further review and approval by the Town of Jamestown

9.0 TRANSPORTATION

Our Vision: Jamestown's transportation system should support safe, accessible, and reliable mobility for residents and visitors while preserving the Island's rural character and natural setting. Roads, pathways, transit, and marine connections should function together as a coordinated, multimodal network that reflects Jamestown's island constraints, enhances resilience, and prioritizes context-sensitive design over urban roadway standards.

9

Introduction

Jamestown's transportation network plays a vital role in supporting mobility and connectivity both within the island and to the broader region. As an island community, Jamestown relies on a combination of state and local roadways, public transit services, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and marine transportation to facilitate movement. The Town's primary transportation corridors—including John Eldred Parkway (Route 138), North Road, and East Shore Road—provide essential links for residents, businesses, and visitors. Jamestown contains approximately 83.3 miles of roadway. Connectivity to the mainland is provided by the Jamestown–Verrazzano Bridge, while the Claiborne Pell Newport Bridge links Jamestown to Aquidneck Island and the East Bay.

The Town's circulation patterns are influenced by its rural character, historic village center, and seasonal fluctuations in traffic. Limited public transportation options and a reliance on single-occupancy vehicle travel underscore the need for multimodal strategies to enhance mobility and access. At the same time, growing interest in expanding bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure reflects the community's commitment to sustainable, active transportation and healthy lifestyles.

This chapter evaluates Jamestown's existing transportation infrastructure, identifies key challenges and opportunities, and outlines goals, policies, and actions aimed at improving safety, efficiency, and accessibility. It provides a framework for maintaining and enhancing the Town's transportation system to ensure it remains resilient, environmentally responsible, and responsive to community needs.





9.1. Community Insights

9.1.1. Community Survey

Results from the 2024 Community Survey indicate mixed opinions among residents regarding vehicle-related transportation policies in Jamestown. Support for public fee-for-use electric vehicle charging stations is divided, with 43% of respondents in favor and 38% opposed. Similarly, there is no clear consensus on allowing low-speed vehicles, such as golf carts and electric carts, on Town roadways, with 40% supporting legalization and 46% opposed.

Use of public transportation, both on and off the Island, remains low. Ninety-five percent of respondents reported that they do not regularly use public transit. However, a portion of respondents expressed conditional interest in increased usage: 28% indicated they would be more likely to use public transportation if it were more convenient, 16% if service frequency increased, and 9% if additional stops were provided.



Interest in expanding multimodal transportation options is strong among residents, with 76% of survey respondents supporting the development of a connected network of bicycle and pedestrian routes in Jamestown. Preferences for bicycle facility design vary: 53% favor bike paths separated from major roadways by a grass buffer, while 40% support roadway widening to better accommodate cyclists. An additional 40% of respondents expressed support for off-road routes developed through easements or land acquisition.

9.1.2. Public Meeting



At the public meeting held on November 13, 2024, the most strongly supported transportation issues and opportunities focused on expanding bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and improving alternative mobility options. Participants emphasized the need for safer bike and pedestrian paths, along with additional bus, trolley, or shuttle services to improve mobility across the Island.

There was also interest in less conventional transportation options, including electrified golf carts and trolleys, as well as expanded ridesharing. While these ideas received less support than improvements to biking, walking, and transit infrastructure, they were still identified as areas of potential interest.

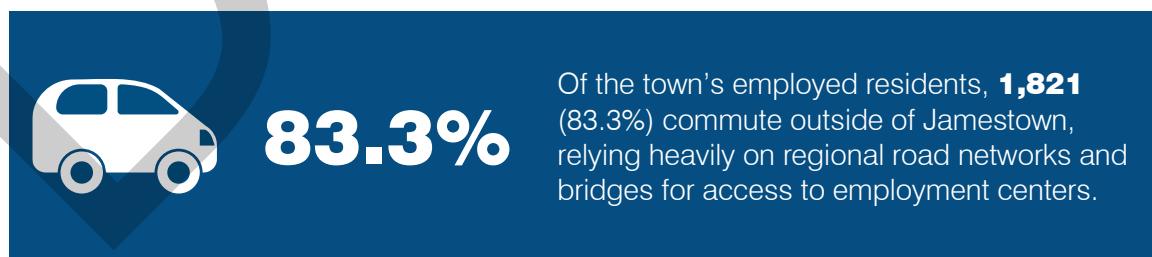
Additional transportation concerns received fewer votes but were nonetheless highlighted by participants. These included inconvenient RIPTA route schedules, the cost of the Newport Bridge tolls, and the absence of a low-cost water taxi service to Newport. Some participants also expressed interest in expanding ferry service to Providence.

Parking was frequently discussed in relation to economic development, with questions raised about whether existing parking requirements may limit business growth. Concerns were also raised about restaurant patrons' difficulty finding parking and the need for improved access to recreational areas through better walking, biking, and designated parking facilities. Suggested solutions included shuttle services connecting the village, the North End, and the Eldred Avenue area.

Speed limit enforcement also emerged as a concern, with some participants advocating for stronger regulation of vehicle speeds on local roads. Overall, transportation discussions reflected a range of priorities, with varying levels of support across different proposals.

9.2. Vehicular Transportation Patterns & Roadway Network

Jamestown residents rely heavily on private automobiles for travel both on and off the island due to limited local employment opportunities and the absence of robust public transportation options. In 2012, approximately 6,000 vehicles were registered in Jamestown, compared to a population of 5,559 according to the 2020 Census (Rhode Island Division of Motor Vehicles; U.S. Census Bureau).



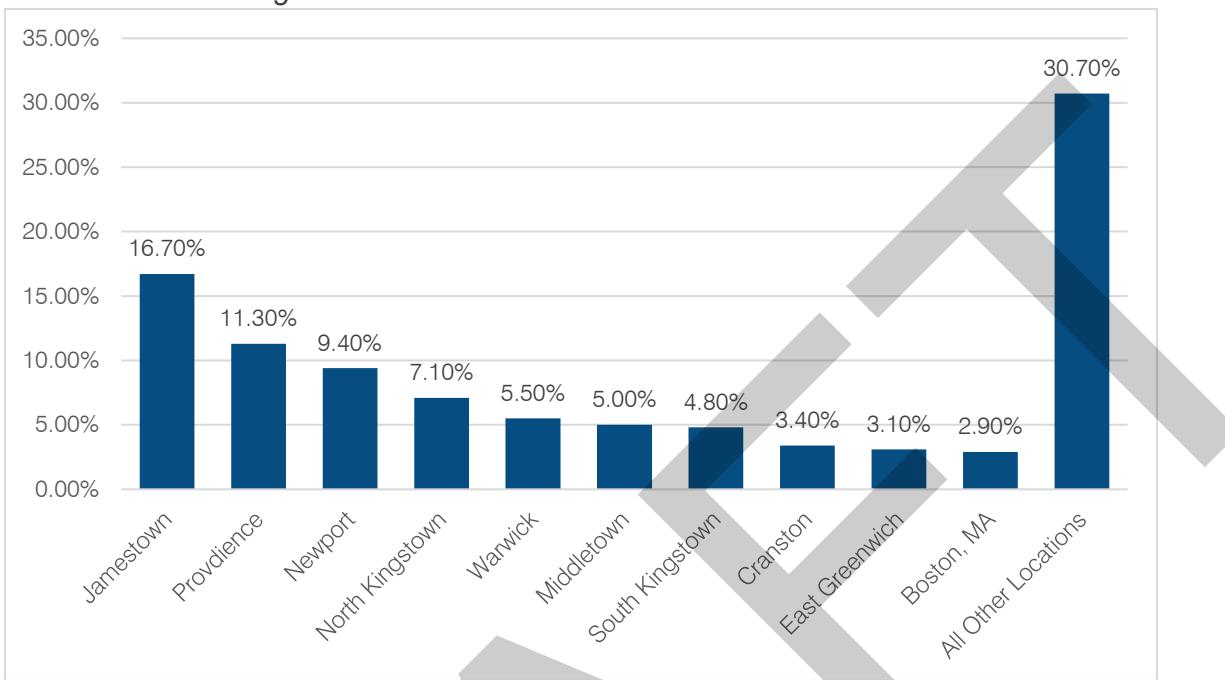
According to the 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, Jamestown exhibits distinct commuting patterns that reflect its primarily residential character. Approximately 1,722 workers are employed within Jamestown. Of these workers, the majority (1,224) commute by car, truck, or van, with nearly all driving alone (1,197) and only a small number carpooling (27). Public transportation use is minimal, with only seven workers reporting bus use, and no workers reporting rail or ferry use, as neither service is available for commuting within Jamestown. An additional 77 workers reported commuting by other unspecified means, while a significant portion—414 workers, or approximately 24 percent—work from home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).

In contrast, Jamestown has approximately 2,692 employed residents who commute to jobs both within and outside the Town. Of these residents, most (2,017) drive alone to work, with very limited carpooling or public transit use. Smaller numbers commute by walking (66 residents) or by other means such as taxis, motorcycles, bicycles, or similar modes (34 residents). A substantial portion of residents—575 individuals, or approximately 21 percent—also work from home, reflecting broader regional and national trends toward remote employment (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).

The differences between these data sets underscore Jamestown's role as a residential community whose workforce largely commutes off island, while a comparatively smaller number of jobs within Jamestown are filled by local residents. Because Jamestown's population is relatively small, estimates for less common commuting modes are subject to larger margins of error and should be interpreted with caution (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).



Figure 9.1. Work Locations for Jamestown Workers



Source: LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics.

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Origin-Destination Employment Statistics further illustrate this imbalance. Only 366 employed residents, or approximately 16.7 percent, both live and work within Jamestown. The most common work destinations for Jamestown residents include Providence (11.3 percent), Newport (9.4 percent), North Kingstown (7.1 percent), and Warwick (5.5 percent). Additional commuting destinations include Middletown, South Kingstown, Cranston, East Greenwich, and Boston, with nearly one-third of residents commuting elsewhere. To support these commuting patterns, Jamestown residents have access to regional commuter parking facilities near the Jamestown Bridge in North Kingstown and at the intersection of Routes 2 and 4 in East Greenwich (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).

At the same time, approximately 713 workers commute into Jamestown from other municipalities, meaning that non-residents hold more than two-thirds of local jobs. This pattern reflects limited housing availability within Jamestown, particularly housing that is affordable or attainable for the local workforce. As a result, reliance on regional transportation infrastructure remains high, placing pressure on roadway capacity, bridge access, and parking, especially during peak travel periods (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).

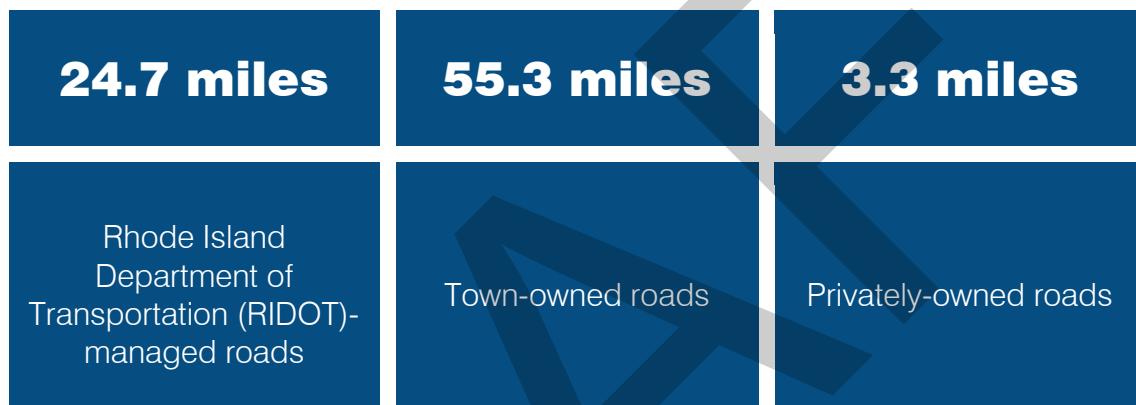
It is important to note that LEHD and ACS data differ due to variations in methodology. LEHD data are derived from employer payroll records and provide detailed insights into commuting flows and work locations, while ACS estimates are based on household surveys that focus on commuting modes and broader travel characteristics. These methodological differences



should be considered when interpreting commuting trends and planning transportation initiatives.

9.3. Jamestown's Roads

Of the Town's 83.3 miles of roadway, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) maintains approximately 24.7 miles, including Route 138 and other state-designated roadways. The Town of Jamestown is responsible for approximately 55.3 miles of local roads, while the remaining 3.3 miles consist of privately owned roads with platted rights-of-way.



Jamestown's roadway network is structured around a series of north–south and east–west corridors that provide access within the island and connections on and off the island. Primary north–south routes include North Road from John Eldred Parkway south to Southwest Avenue; Southwest Avenue continuing south to Beavertail Road; Beavertail Road extending south to the end of the island; Walcott and Conanicus Avenues; and East Shore Road, which follows the East Passage from the Newport Bridge Toll Plaza to the north end of the island. Beavertail Road serves as the sole collector roadway for the Beavertail peninsula.

East–west travel is accommodated by John Eldred Parkway, Narragansett Avenue, Hamilton Avenue, High Street, Carr Lane, and America Way, which together provide access across the island and to bridge connections.

The State of Rhode Island classifies roads as arterial, collector, or local. In Jamestown, a large proportion of roadways function as arterials due to the island's geography and limited number of through routes. John Eldred Parkway (Route 138) and East Shore Road are classified as urban principal arterials. Urban minor arterials include Narragansett Avenue (from Southwest Avenue to East Ferry), North Main Road (north to Capstan Street), East



Shore Road (from Eldred Avenue to Carr Lane), and Conanicus Avenue (north from Narragansett Avenue to the Newport Bridge Toll Plaza).

Urban collector streets include Walcott Avenue (south to Blueberry Lane), Hamilton Avenue, and Narragansett Avenue (west to West Ferry). Residential side streets branching from Narragansett Avenue and Conanicus Avenue within the downtown area are classified as urban local streets.

Rural major collectors include Beavertail Road, North Main Road (from Capstan Street north to Conanicut Point), and East Shore Road (from Carr Lane north to Conanicut Point). The remainder of the island's road network consists of rural minor collectors and rural local roads.

While most roadways are assigned a specific functional classification, many serve multiple purposes. For example, Beavertail Road functions as both a rural major collector and a residential access road, as homes and driveways are located directly along the corridor. This blending of roadway functions is common in Jamestown and reflects the island's development pattern and rural character.

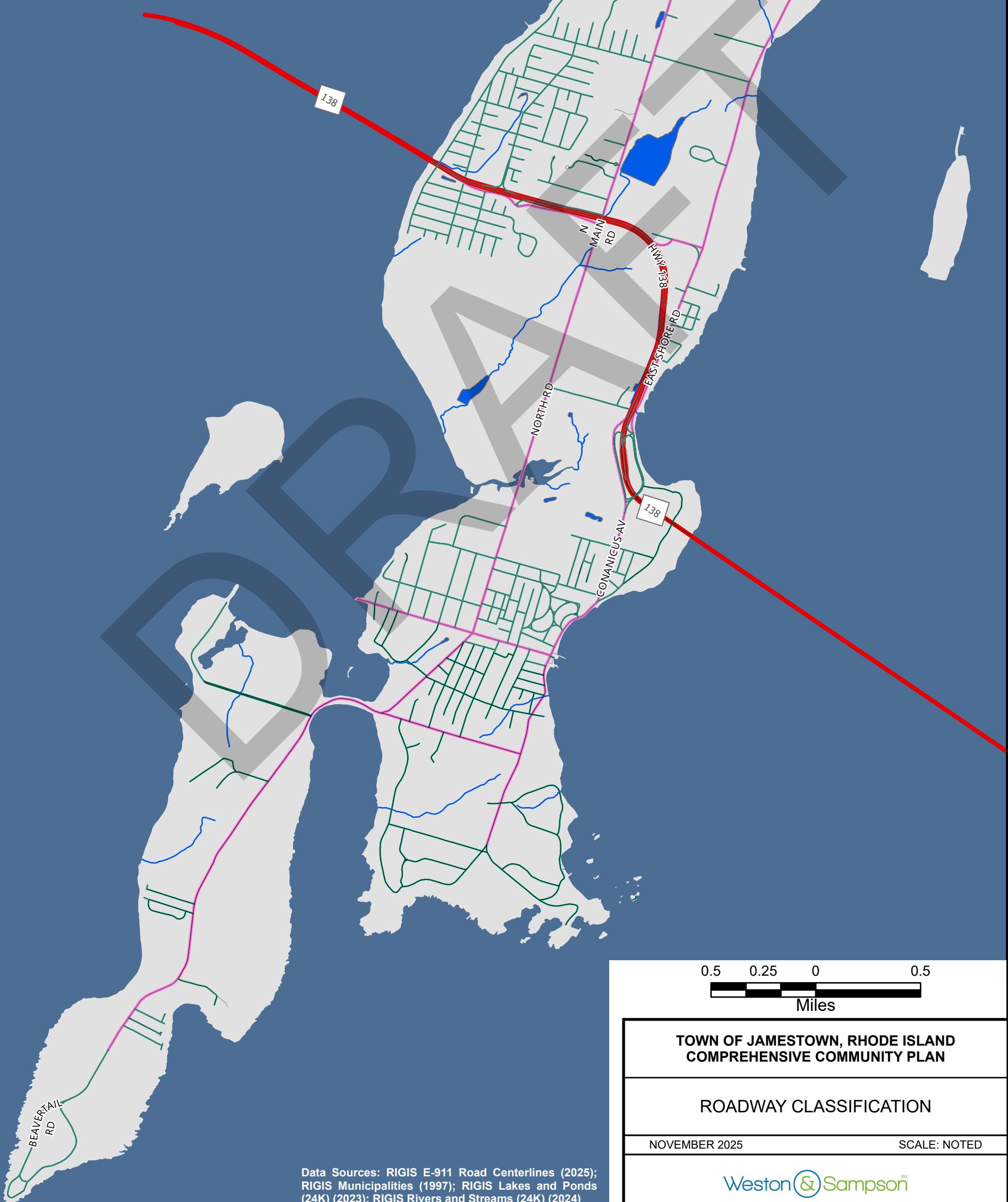
A map of Jamestown's roads according to their roadway classification is available in [Error! Reference source not found.](#)



Legend

Rivers & Streams
Lakes and Ponds
Jamestown Boundary

Roadway Classification
Local
Interstate
Urban Principal or Rural Minor Arterial
Urban Minor Arterial or Rural Major



9.3.1. State Roads

The State of Rhode Island maintains several roadways in Jamestown, including the John Eldred Parkway (State Route 138), North Road, East Shore Road, Narragansett Avenue, Southwest Avenue, Walcott Avenue/Conanicus Avenue, and Beavertail Road. Maintenance and roadway improvements on these corridors are coordinated with the State (Town of Jamestown, Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, 2024).

Jamestown's Department of Planning and Department of Administration initiate state roadway improvement requests through the Rhode Island Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The STIP is prepared with public input and includes projects proposed by state agencies and local municipal officials.

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program Projects

The Town has used the STIP to secure funding for several transportation projects in Jamestown. The 2022–2031 STIP includes five projects benefiting the community. Funding provided in 2007 and 2011 supported a Safe Routes to School project near the Melrose Avenue and Lawn Avenue Schools, which included the construction of accessible sidewalks, curb ramps, curbing, and crosswalks. Unfortunately challenges with Native American burials and funding expiration resulted in RIDOT cancelling the program.

From 2023 to 2024, Jamestown received a \$312,000 Climate Challenge Grant from RIDOT to study the feasibility of permeable pavement on North Road. In 2024, additional funding was awarded to evaluate bicycle path feasibility along the Jamestown Bridge and North Road as part of the proposed Conanicut Island Greenway Trail.

Between 2022 and 2029, the Town is receiving STIP funding for bridge repairs and roadway resurfacing, as well as sidewalk repairs along North Road and East Shore Road. From 2025 through 2028, funding is programmed for resurfacing Narragansett Avenue and installing sidewalks with associated safety improvements. Additional intersection improvements are proposed at Bay View Drive and Conanicus Avenue, Hamilton Avenue and Beavertail Road, Eldred Avenue and East Shore Road, and Southwest Avenue and High Street (Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning, 2024).

9.3.2. Local Roads

Maintenance and upgrades of local municipal roads are the responsibility of the Town's Department of Public Works (DPW). Improvements to local roads are guided by the DPW Pavement Management Plan, and the Town is responsible for paving these roadways. For FY 2024–2025, DPW received \$325,000 for road paving (Town of Jamestown, 2024). In addition, the Town's 6-Year Capital Improvement Program for 2024–2030 allocates approximately \$250,000 annually for road paving and \$80,000 annually for sidewalk improvements, striping, and drainage (Town of Jamestown, 6-Year Capital Improvement Program, 2024).



Local Subdivision Road Standards & Village Road Requirements

The Town of Jamestown's Subdivision Regulations establish standards for road construction in new subdivisions, classifying roads as minor arterial, collector, local, or minor streets. Minor arterial streets serve to circulate traffic into, out of, or around the Town and carry relatively high traffic volumes. Collector streets function as interior residential streets that connect local or minor streets to arterial roads and may also serve areas of commercial development. Local streets provide public or private access to residential lots and connect to collector streets, while minor streets provide access solely to residential lots.

Subdivision regulations specify right-of-way widths based on road classification and project type. The Planning Commission may determine alternative design criteria on a case-by-case basis if waivers are requested. Currently, rights-of-way ranging from 20 to 50 feet are required for all streets. Cul-de-sacs must have a minimum outside curb radius of 40 feet and a minimum right-of-way radius of 50 feet.

Sidewalks are primarily located within the village area and are required for subdivision street development in Village residential zoning districts. The need for pedestrian walkways is evaluated individually for each subdivision. Jamestown has not experienced subdivisions proposing more than nine lots in the past 20 years, and most subdivisions involve the creation of two lots or fewer. As a result, road extensions or the construction of new subdivision roads are infrequent.

Each year, DPW prepares a Road and Drainage Improvement Program that prioritizes roadway projects based on condition, usage, and identified problem areas. Coordination between new subdivision construction and improvements to existing roads is considered during planning. Roadway improvements are implemented throughout different areas of Town in accordance with the annual budget. Maintenance is also performed on private roads that are used by the public, although private individuals or organizations typically provide the cost of materials.

Rehabilitation and maintenance of local roads are funded through Town tax revenues and carried out using Town personnel and equipment. Jamestown has historically followed a "pay-as-you-go" approach to roadway maintenance. Heavy equipment used for maintenance is owned by the Town and replaced as needed. DPW Highway Department personnel perform road maintenance on an as-needed basis, while all paving work is contracted.

As Jamestown's population increases, traffic volumes on residential streets have also grown. Concerns related to speeding on residential streets are addressed on a case-by-case basis by the Town Council and Police Department as issues arise or neighborhood concerns escalate.



9.3.3. Private Roads

Approximately 3.3 miles of private roads are located within the Town of Jamestown. Most private roads are maintained by residents or private associations. In some cases, the Town maintains private roads by contract using private funding when those roads are accessible to the public. In other instances, the Town has assumed limited maintenance responsibilities for private roads due to historical practice or in response to resident complaints.

Over time, development pressure on downtown lots and long waterfront parcels along Beavertail Road, North Road, and East Shore Road has resulted in an increase in requests to subdivide lots served by private roads. While private roads are permitted under the Subdivision Regulations with approval by the Planning Commission, they have become increasingly controversial. Town officials have received growing numbers of requests for maintenance and improvements to private streets as responsibilities become burdensome or unclear, particularly as properties change ownership.

These challenges are especially pronounced on older private roads and platted but undeveloped or undedicated “paper streets,” where maintenance obligations are often poorly defined. In some cases, the Town has been asked to assume partial responsibility for activities such as paving, plowing, or grading. Currently, requests for Town involvement in private road maintenance are addressed on a street-by-street basis.

The Subdivision Regulations clearly state that if private streets are developed, the Town cannot be required to maintain or accept them for a period of 99 years, and any improvements must meet public road standards. Given continued development pressure, the creation of new private streets should be carefully evaluated, and future policy direction regarding their feasibility and long-term maintenance responsibilities should be considered.

The Town also periodically receives requests to subdivide lots without street frontage, as permitted by ordinance, with access provided via a private driveway. Any lot lacking street frontage must seek and obtain relief from the Zoning Ordinance through the Zoning Board.

9.3.4. Traffic Signal

Jamestown has one flashing traffic signal located at the intersection of Narragansett Avenue, Southwest Avenue, and North Main Road. The signal effectively manages traffic flow during peak morning and afternoon periods by allowing vehicles to proceed on a rotating basis. Stop signs provide additional traffic control throughout the Town.

At present, no additional traffic signals are warranted. Prior to considering future signal installations, alternative traffic-calming or control measures should be evaluated. According to the Jamestown Police Department, no intersections in Town experience more than ten accidents per year.



9.3.5. Street Lighting

Street lighting in Jamestown is concentrated at intersections and along major streets, neighborhood roads in the downtown area, and some newer subdivisions. The Town's Subdivision Regulations do not require streetlights; however, when provided, all utility lines must be placed underground.

The Town purchased its streetlight infrastructure from RI Energy to facilitate conversion to LED lighting, reducing energy use and maintenance costs. All LED upgrades were completed in 2020.

9.3.6. Parking

Parking standards in Jamestown are established by the Town Zoning Ordinance and vary by use type. The Harbor Management Ordinance includes parking requirements for marinas and moorings, which apply to all new and existing commercial marina operations. Private moorings are not subject to parking requirements.

9.3.7. Traffic Volume and Accidents

Jamestown's traffic patterns are significantly influenced by seasonal tourism. Traffic volumes increase notably between May and September due to visitors traveling to Jamestown, Newport, and South County.

Between 2019 and 2023, Jamestown recorded 596 motor vehicle accidents, including 104 injury-related incidents and no fatalities (Jamestown Police Department). Four accidents involved bicycles and six involved pedestrians. The majority of accidents occurred along primary arterial roadways.

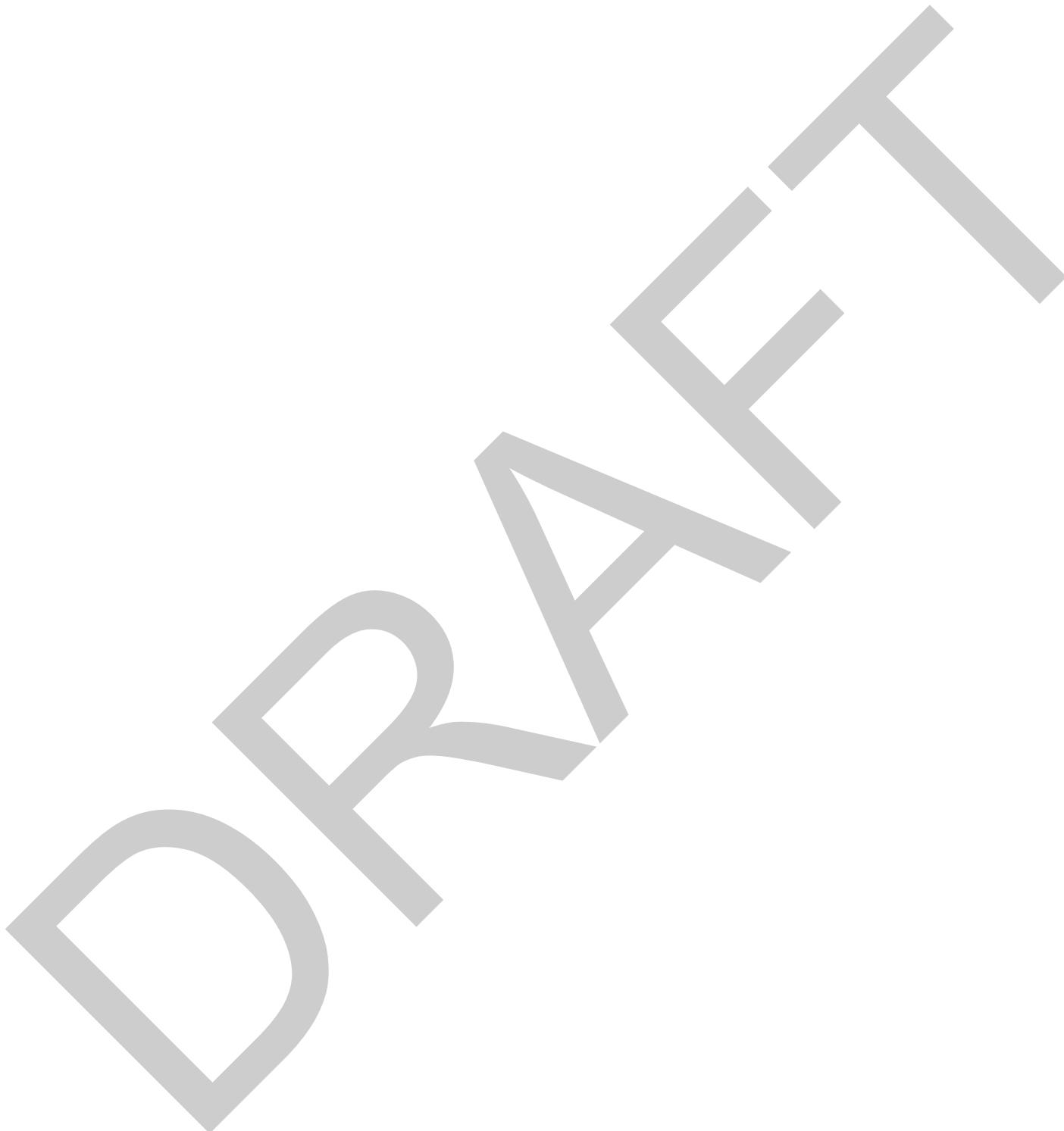
The ten roadways with the highest number of reported accidents include the John Eldred Parkway (State Route 138), Narragansett Avenue, North Road, Conanicut Avenue, East Shore Road, North Main Road, Beavertail Road, Clarke Street, Seaside Drive, Tashtassuc Road, and the Newport Bridge, with the latter three tied at eleven accidents each. Approximately 32 percent of all reported accidents occurred along State Route 138.

9.4. Multimodal Transportation and Connectivity

Alternative transportation options, including biking, walking, and marine travel, play an important role in Jamestown's transportation system. As fuel costs fluctuate and seasonal congestion increases, these modes provide practical alternatives that help reduce traffic volumes and parking demand, particularly during the summer months. Jamestown's bike paths, sidewalks, ferry services, and public docks support both daily travel and recreational



use, offering connections within the Town and to nearby destinations such as Newport. Map 9.2 illustrates Jamestown's multimodal transportation network.



Legend

- Roads
- Rivers & Streams
- Lakes and Ponds
- Jamestown Boundary
- Bus Stops
- Bus Routes
- Ferry Routes
- Completed Bike Paths

N

Data Sources: RIGIS E-911 Road Centerlines (2025); RIGIS Municipalities (1997); RIGIS Lakes and Ponds (24K) (2023); RIGIS Rivers and Streams (24K) (2024); Ferry Routes (2025); RIPTA Bus Routes (2024); RIPTA Bus Stops (2024)

**TOWN OF JAMESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN**

MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION

NOVEMBER 2025

SCALE: NOTED

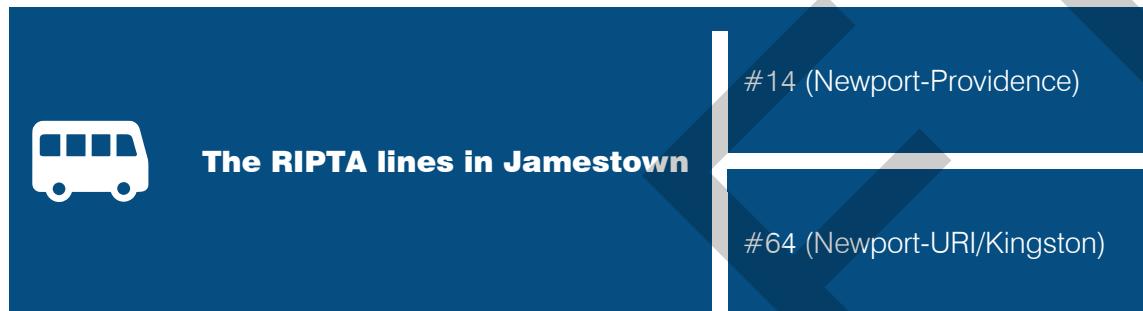
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9.4.1. Public Transportation

The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) provides limited public transportation service to and from Jamestown, connecting the Island to Providence, Kingston/Wakefield, and Aquidneck Island. Two RIPTA routes serve Jamestown:

#14 (Newport-Providence)
#64 (Newport-URI/Kingston)



Both routes begin at the Helm Street off-ramp of Route 138 near the Jamestown-Verrazzano Bridge. Some buses immediately return to Route 138 and continue across the Island toward the Claiborne Pell Bridge and Newport. On-Island service continues along North Road to Narragansett Avenue, with a bus shelter located at the intersection of Narragansett Avenue and Conanicut Avenue. Additional stops occur along the route as requested by riders.

Weekday service on both the #14 and #64 routes generally operates every one to two hours, providing regional access for commuters traveling between Jamestown, Newport, URI/Kingston, Providence, and surrounding communities. Weekend service varies by route: the #14 offers more frequent morning service, typically operating on an hourly schedule, while Saturday service on the #64 is more limited, with four inbound and four outbound trips per day (RIPTA, 2024).

RIPTA also provides transportation for individuals with disabilities through its Ride Program, which offers door-to-door paratransit service by reservation. This service includes a loop serving senior housing along Pemberton Avenue. Reduced-fare bus service is available to seniors and individuals with disabilities during weekends and holidays, improving access for these populations (RIPTA, 2024).

Recent RIPTA initiatives elsewhere in the region provide useful context for Jamestown. In Newport, the Hop-On Hop-Off seasonal bus service was launched in summer 2023 to help reduce traffic congestion during peak tourist months. Operating from Memorial Day through October and funded by Discover Newport and the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island, the free service connected beaches and key community destinations. During the 2023 season,



the program recorded more than 168,000 passenger trips across two routes, demonstrating the potential effectiveness of targeted seasonal transit solutions.

While this program does not currently extend to Jamestown, it illustrates a model that could inform future seasonal transportation strategies for the Island, particularly in addressing parking demand, ferry access, and tourism-related congestion. RIPTA has also conducted community outreach efforts in Jamestown, including Photo ID Community Site Visits in 2024 that allowed residents to apply for reduced-fare passes locally at the Jamestown Housing Authority.

Together, these services and initiatives highlight both the limitations of existing transit options in Jamestown and potential opportunities for enhancing regional connectivity through targeted improvements and partnerships.

9.4.2. Bicycling

Bicycling is a popular and important mode of transportation and recreation in Jamestown for much of the year. Strong community support exists for improving bicycle infrastructure, with 76% of respondents to the 2024 Community Survey favoring the development of a townwide network of bicycle and pedestrian routes. While Jamestown does not yet have an extensive system of dedicated bike facilities, recent investments have improved safety and connectivity, particularly along North Road.

The Town has made progress expanding off-road bicycle infrastructure through projects such as the shared-use path extending from the reservoir to Eldred Avenue. This path follows Town-owned land through wooded terrain and provides a safe, off-road connection for people walking and riding bicycles. In 2024, the Ice Road Bike Path was formally dedicated in honor of former Police Chief James Pemanell, recognizing his lifelong commitment to public safety and outdoor recreation in Jamestown.

Elsewhere on the island, people riding bicycles rely primarily on existing roadways and shoulders. However, many of Jamestown's major corridors do not meet the minimum four-foot shoulder width needed for safe and comfortable cycling. As a result, cyclists frequently travel within vehicle lanes, creating safety concerns—particularly for children, older adults, and less experienced riders. Existing bicycle facilities include the shared-use path along North Main Road, the Reservoir Trail (Ice Road Bike Path), and striped on-road bike lanes on Walcott Avenue, though some of these facilities require maintenance due to pavement deterioration and vegetation encroachment. Low-volume residential streets generally provide lower-stress cycling conditions, but critical gaps remain along high-speed corridors such as North Road, East Shore Road, and Beavertail Road.





The Ice Road Bike Path, completed in 2020, provides a critical east-west connection between North Road and East Shore Road.

The 2024 Jamestown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan evaluated existing conditions and identified opportunities to improve walking and bicycling infrastructure across the island. The plan focused on high-priority corridors connecting the village center, North End neighborhoods, schools, and major recreational destinations including Fort Getty and Beavertail State Park. Key challenges identified include narrow roadways, lack of dedicated bicycle facilities, obstructive utility poles and vegetation, and high-stress locations such as highway ramps. The plan also identified opportunities, including repurposing wide travel lanes, implementing traffic calming on low-volume streets, and expanding separated bicycle facilities along major corridors.

As an island community, Jamestown faces unique challenges related to regional connectivity for people walking and riding bicycles. The Jamestown-Verrazzano Bridge and the Newport Pell Bridge are the only connections to the mainland and Aquidneck Island. While the Jamestown-Verrazzano Bridge includes a narrow pedestrian path, it presents significant constraints for bicyclists and is currently not permitted. The Rhode Island Statewide Bicycle Mobility Plan (2020) identifies buffered bike lanes as a short-term improvement and a shared-use path as a long-term goal. Jamestown received funding in 2024 to study bicycle and pedestrian access on the bridge and along North Road as part of a potential future Conanicut Island Greenway Trail. The Town continues to coordinate with RIDOT on these efforts.

The Newport Pell Bridge does not permit bicycle or pedestrian access. However, bicycles are allowed on rack-equipped RIPTA buses traveling between Jamestown and Newport, and the Jamestown-Newport Ferry operated by Conanicut Marine Services accommodates bicycles, providing an important alternative connection for cyclists. While ferry-based bicycle connections have been identified as a potential strategy at the state level, no additional bicycle-specific ferry services are currently planned.

Community advocacy has played an important role in shaping bicycle planning efforts. Groups such as Rolling Agenda have supported surveys and workshops emphasizing the need for safe, accessible routes for people of all ages and abilities.

The 2024 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan identifies several priority actions, including expansion of the shared-use path system along North Road and East Shore Road; implementation of advisory bike lanes and widened shoulders where full bike lanes are not feasible; traffic calming measures to reduce vehicle speeds; and installation of bicycle facilities near the village center, Fort Getty, and Beavertail State Park. As roadway projects move forward, the



Town will continue to seek funding opportunities and incorporate bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure into future road construction and improvements whenever feasible.

9.4.3. Walking

Walkability in Jamestown is strongest in the village center, where sidewalks are concentrated and provide connections between key destinations. Sidewalks along Narragansett Avenue are generally in good condition and link the business district to schools, the library, and senior housing areas via Pemberton Avenue, Watson Avenue, and Lawn Avenue. However, gaps in pedestrian connectivity remain, particularly along Melrose Avenue and Arnold Avenue, limiting safe walking access to school facilities. Sidewalk maintenance and strategic infill along major streets and school routes remain a priority.

Outside the village center, pedestrian infrastructure is limited and inconsistent. Many sidewalks are narrow, interrupted by utility poles or vegetation, or in fair to poor condition. In much of the Town, walking occurs along road shoulders or on low-volume residential streets, which can present safety and accessibility challenges, especially for older adults and children (Town of Jamestown, Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, 2024).



Jamestown also offers a network of off-road walking trails that support both recreation and alternative pedestrian movement. Three of the longest trail systems are located at the Conanicut Island Sanctuary, Conanicut Battery Town Park, and Beavertail State Park. The Beavertail trail runs along the eastern waterfront for approximately 3,000 linear feet. The Conanicut Island Sanctuary features a double-loop trail system of approximately one mile designed to highlight diverse plant communities. Conanicut Battery Town Park includes a looping trail connecting the parking area, South Battery Lane, historic battery structures, and World War II fire control stations. This park is maintained by the Town, with oversight and maintenance recommendations provided by the Jamestown Historical Society through its Battery Committee.

Additional public trails are located at Fort Getty (the Kit Wright Nature Trail) and on Town-owned land near the Water Treatment Plant. The trail near the Water Treatment Plant currently terminates at private property owned by Hodgkiss Farm, and the Town continues to explore options for improving public access to the adjacent state-owned shoreline without encroaching on private land.



Several popular off-road trail systems are managed by the Conanicut Island Land Trust, including Parker Farm and Godena Farm. Parker Farm offers a scenic loop trail through meadows and woodlands, while Godena Farm provides an extensive trail network through grasslands, wetlands, and forested areas and serves as an educational resource focused on habitat restoration and conservation.

Pedestrian access is also provided at numerous public shoreline access points located around the Island. Public shoreline access, greenways, and pedestrian connections are discussed in greater detail in the Conservation and Open Space element of this Comprehensive Plan.

9.5. Marine Transportation

Because Jamestown is located within Narragansett Bay, marine transportation provides an important alternative to vehicular travel for both residents and visitors. The town is accessible by water via both the East Passage and West Passage, which serve as major navigational routes through the bay.

The East Passage functions as the primary deep-draft shipping channel in Narragansett Bay, with depths of approximately 60 feet that accommodate large cargo vessels, including automobile carriers. Approximately 100 car carrier ships travel through the East Passage each year en route to the Port of Davisville, one of Rhode Island's principal marine freight hubs. Many of these vessels anchor overnight near the entrance to the bay before continuing north in the early morning hours. The West Passage, while seeing less commercial freight activity, is primarily used by tugboats, barges, and large commercial fishing vessels and serves as an alternate navigation route when conditions restrict travel in the East Passage (Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council, 2011).

Jamestown's boating facilities include private moorings and marina services concentrated primarily at East Ferry and West Ferry. Major facilities include TPG Conanicut Marina, TPG Dutch Harbor Boat Yard, Clark Boat Yard, and Safe Harbor Jamestown Boat Yard. Most marinas provide transient moorings for visiting vessels. Public docking facilities are available at both East Ferry and West Ferry. Private boating plays a significant role in Jamestown's economy and recreational identity, supporting tourism, waterfront businesses, and marina operations while serving as an important mode of transportation and leisure for residents and visitors alike.

Ferry service between Jamestown and Newport was discontinued in 1969 following the opening of the Newport Bridge but resumed in 1993 with the launch of the Jamestown–Newport Ferry. Today, the ferry operates seasonally from May through October, offering hop-on/hop-off service that provides a convenient connection between Jamestown and Newport's waterfront destinations. Ferry stops include East Ferry in Jamestown and multiple locations in Newport, such as Rose Island Lighthouse, Fort Adams, Ann Street Pier, and Perrotti Park. Ferry access is the only public means of reaching Rose Island Lighthouse.



Although the ferry primarily serves recreational and tourism-related trips, it also offers an alternative transportation option. Tickets are available online, at the Jamestown ticket office, and at designated locations in Newport (Jamestown Newport Ferry, n.d.). This seasonal service continues one of the oldest ferry traditions in the country, preserving Jamestown's maritime heritage while adapting to contemporary transportation needs.

Ongoing local discussions continue to examine the relationship between ferry operations, parking availability at East Ferry, and opportunities to better integrate marine transportation into the Town's broader multimodal transportation system.

9.6. Issues and Opportunities



Jamestown's transportation system reflects the challenges of an island community with limited access points, a strong reliance on private vehicles, and growing seasonal pressures. Community input, data analysis, and recent planning efforts consistently point to the need for safer, more flexible, and more resilient transportation options.

9.6.1. Pedestrian and Bike Infrastructure

The town's pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is currently inadequate, with many areas needing maintenance or completion for safety and accessibility.

Issues identified:

- Pedestrian connectivity is strong in the village core but limited elsewhere on the Island, with gaps in sidewalks, poor maintenance, and accessibility barriers such as narrow widths, utility poles, and vegetation.
- Major corridors, including North Road, East Shore Road, and Beavertail Road, lack adequate bicycle and pedestrian facilities and shoulders, creating safety concerns for cyclists and walkers of all ages.
- The Jamestown-Verrazzano Bridge and Newport Pell Bridge present significant barriers to pedestrian and bicycle travel, limiting non-motorized connectivity on and off the Island.
- Trail systems and shared-use paths exist but are not fully connected into a cohesive network that links neighborhoods, schools, recreational areas, and the village center.

Opportunities in response:

- Expand and connect bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in alignment with the 2024 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, particularly along high-priority corridors.
- Build upon the existing sidewalk network in the village center to improve walkability to schools, public facilities, and commercial areas.



- Advance feasibility studies and funding efforts to improve bicycle and pedestrian access on the Jamestown-Verrazzano Bridge, East Shore Road/Conanicus Avenue and along North Road as part of a future island-wide greenway.
- Continue integrating off-road shared-use paths, traffic calming measures, and safe routes to schools to improve safety and accessibility for all users.

9.6.2. Public Transportation and Additional Modes

Public transportation options are limited and inconvenient, leading residents and visitors to rely heavily on private automobiles.

Issues identified:

- Public transportation usage is low due to limited service frequency, routing constraints, and lack of convenience for daily travel.
- Seasonal traffic congestion highlights the lack of alternative transportation options for residents, commuters, and visitors.
- Marine transportation options are largely seasonal and recreational, limiting their effectiveness as consistent transportation alternatives.

Opportunities in response:

- Enhance public transit options through improved RIPTA service frequency, expanded routes, and potential shuttle or trolley services connecting key areas such as the village, North End, and recreational destinations.
- Explore expanded ferry and marine transportation services to reduce automobile dependence, and improve regional connectivity.
- Evaluate emerging transportation modes such as low-speed electric vehicles, ridesharing, and seasonal transit solutions as complementary mobility options.
- Coordinate transportation planning efforts with neighboring communities and regional agencies to improve access beyond the Island.

9.6.3. Road Maintenance, Capacity, and Standards

Jamestown's roadways can be improved in terms of speed limit enforcement, maintenance, traffic volumes, parking standards, and electric vehicle adoption.

Issues identified:

- Heavy reliance on private automobiles places ongoing pressure on road capacity, bridges, and parking, particularly during peak tourist seasons.
- Speeding and traffic safety concerns persist on residential streets and major corridors.



- Responsibility for maintenance of private roads remains unclear and increasingly contentious as development pressure continues.
- Parking availability and standards in the village commercial area may constrain economic activity and access to local businesses.
- Roadways are vulnerable to climate-related impacts, including flooding, erosion, and storm damage.
- Community support for electric vehicle infrastructure and related policies remains mixed.

Opportunities in response:

- Implement targeted traffic calming measures and enhanced speed enforcement on residential and high-risk roadways.
- Reevaluate parking standards and management strategies to better support economic development and multimodal access.
- Clarify policies related to private road construction, maintenance, and long-term responsibility.
- Incorporate roadway resilience strategies into capital planning and emergency preparedness efforts.
- Continue coordinating state and local roadway investments through the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and the Town's Capital Improvement Program.

Together, these issues and opportunities highlight the importance of a multimodal, context-sensitive transportation strategy that prioritizes safety, accessibility, environmental stewardship, and the unique constraints of Jamestown's island setting.





10 HOUSING



Town of Jamestown, Rhode Island

Community Comprehensive Plan Update

Housing

Background

Housing Element of the Jamestown Comprehensive Community Plan serves as the affordable housing plan for the Town. The previous version of the plan was adopted by the Jamestown Planning Commission on April 6, 2015, subsequent to review by the State of Rhode Island.

This chapter provides an overview of Jamestown's housing conditions, identifies key trends and challenges, and outlines strategies to guide future housing decisions. By taking a thoughtful and comprehensive approach to housing, Jamestown can address current needs while preparing for future growth and change.

Goals



Create a Diversity of Housing Types (such as homeownership, rental, employee preference, etc.) to meet the needs of Jamestown's low-moderate income residents, town employees, and special populations while maintaining Jamestown's unique mixture of village and rural character.



Attain and strive to exceed the 10% low and moderate housing goal set by the state.



Ensure the Long-Term Affordability of Jamestown's Housing Stock.



Strengthen partnerships and build community support for affordable housing development.



Revise the zoning ordinance to further promote affordable housing and aging in place.



Identify potential locations for affordable housing development.



Identify existing resources and develop new dedicated, consistent funding source(s) for affordable housing development.

Policies

1. Support workforce housing initiatives for local employees and essential workers.
2. Promote housing rehabilitation and adaptive use of existing structures.
3. Preserve existing affordable housing units through extended affordability restrictions.
4. Implement programs which ensure the long term affordability of Jamestown's housing.
5. Strengthen partnerships and build community support for affordable housing.
6. Revise the Zoning Ordinance to promote affordable housing and aging in place.
7. Regulate short-term rentals to protect year-round housing availability.
8. Encourage small-scale housing solutions.
9. Identify and prioritize suitable location for affordable housing development.
10. Expand and secure consistent funding sources for affordable housing projects.
11. Invest in infrastructure improvements to support affordable housing development.

See Implementation table for all goals, policies, and actions for this chapter

Disclaimer: goals and policies are in draft form and subject to further review and approval by the Town of Jamestown

10.0 HOUSING

Our Vision: Residential use should continue to be village-like in character. Residential use should also strive to be available to all income levels. Jamestown has been a summer community as well as a farming and fishing village. All of these need to be represented. Housing should not preempt all the existing open areas; it should be developed within the natural landscape, not apart from it.

10

10.1. Introduction

Housing is a foundational element of community health, economic stability, and overall quality of life. In Jamestown, providing a range of housing options is essential to meeting the needs of residents across life stages and income levels, supporting the local workforce, and sustaining a diverse and resilient community.

Housing affordability and availability have been long-standing challenges in Jamestown, but over the past decade these pressures have reached a critical level. Housing that is attainable for low- and moderate-income households—and increasingly for middle-income residents—has become extremely limited. Rental opportunities are scarce, and homeownership options that are attainable on the open market are effectively nonexistent. At the same time, funding resources for housing production remain limited and highly competitive statewide. Jamestown has often struggled to compete for these funds due to the high cost of land and construction. While the Town's annual contribution to the Housing Trust Fund has become an essential source of gap funding for local housing projects, this funding is not guaranteed from year to year as overall municipal budget pressures increase. A local, dedicated, and permanent housing funding source is more necessary than ever to support the creation of diverse and attainable housing options for Jamestown residents.

These challenges are not unique to Jamestown. Communities across Rhode Island are experiencing rising housing costs, limited supply, and changing household demographics, all of which have placed increased pressure on housing affordability. As a result, more households are spending a disproportionate share of their income on housing costs. These trends have far-reaching implications for workforce retention, neighborhood continuity, community diversity, and long-term economic vitality.



In recent decades—locally, statewide, and nationally—it has become clear that housing affordability challenges are no longer confined to households earning less than 80 percent of area median income. Increasingly, moderate- and middle-income households are also affected by rising housing costs. This shift is evident in Jamestown, where strong community support exists for expanding housing diversity. More than 70 percent of respondents to the 2024 Community Survey agreed or strongly agreed with creating a broader range of housing types, including ownership, rental, and employee-oriented housing, to meet the needs of low- and moderate-income residents, employees, and special populations while maintaining Jamestown's village character and rural landscape (Town of Jamestown, 2024).

Recent housing market data further illustrates the severity of the affordability gap. Statewide, personal income increased 19.7 percent between 2020 and 2024, while the median sales price of a single-family home rose by 52.9 percent during the same period (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2025; RI Living, 2025). In Jamestown, the median sales price for a single-family home reached \$1,157,500 in 2024—an increase of 14 percent from the previous year and more than 78 percent since 2020. At this price point, a median-priced home is affordable only to households earning approximately \$347,250 annually, far exceeding the Town's median household income (RI Living, 2024; HousingWorks RI, 2024).

Affordability pressures are also evident in the rental market. Median rents in Jamestown increased by nearly 28 percent between 2012 and 2022, reaching \$1,623, consistently exceeding statewide averages (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). Rising rents further constrain access to stable, long-term housing for many residents and workers. A balanced and diverse housing stock is critical to addressing these challenges by creating opportunities for residents to live, work, and contribute to the community.

This chapter provides an overview of Jamestown's housing conditions, identifies key trends and challenges, and outlines strategies to guide future housing decisions. By taking a thoughtful and comprehensive approach, Jamestown can address current housing needs while planning for long-term sustainability and change.

The Housing Element of the Jamestown Comprehensive Community Plan also serves as the Town's Affordable Housing Plan. The previous version of this element was adopted by the Jamestown Planning Commission on April 6, 2015, following review by the State of Rhode Island.

10.2. Key Definitions

10.2.1. Affordable Housing Costs / Housing Cost Burdened

Housing affordability is generally defined as a household spending no more than 30 percent of its gross income on housing-related costs. These costs typically include rent or mortgage payments, property taxes, insurance, and basic utilities. Households that spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing are considered “housing cost-burdened” (U.S.



Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2014). This benchmark is used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the administration of its affordable housing programs and is widely applied in housing policy and planning efforts at the federal, state, and local levels. Area Median Income / Income Limits

Affordable housing programs typically rely on funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the state of Rhode Island, which sets income eligibility standards based on Area Median Income (AMI) adjusted for household size and defined geographic areas, such as the Providence-Fall River, RI-MA Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which includes Jamestown. These standards ensure resources are directed to households most in need. The FY 2025 income limits for the Providence-Fall River MSA are listed in Table 10.1.

Table 10.1. 2024 Jamestown Income Limits for Low/Moderate Income Households

	Household Size (persons)							
% Area Median Income	1 person	2 person	3 person	4 person	5 person	6 person	7 person	8 person
30% AMI	\$ 24,050	\$ 27,450	\$ 30,900	\$ 34,300	\$ 37,650	\$ 43,150	\$ 48,650	\$ 54,150
50% AMI	\$ 40,050	\$ 45,750	\$ 51,450	\$ 57,150	\$ 61,750	\$ 66,300	\$ 70,900	\$ 75,450
80% AMI	\$ 64,050	\$ 73,200	\$ 82,350	\$ 91,450	\$ 98,800	\$ 106,100	\$ 113,400	\$ 120,750
100%	\$ 80,010	\$ 91,440	\$ 102,870	\$ 114,300	\$ 123,450	\$ 132,600	\$ 141,750	\$ 150,900
115%	\$ 92,120	\$ 105,220	\$ 118,330	\$ 131,450	\$ 142,030	\$ 152,490	\$ 163,070	\$ 173,540
120%	\$ 96,120	\$ 109,800	\$ 123,480	\$ 137,160	\$ 148,200	\$ 159,120	\$ 170,160	\$ 181,080

Source: RI Housing

10.2.2. Low- and Moderate-Income Housing

“Low- or moderate-income housing” is defined by the State of Rhode Island as housing—whether built or operated by a public agency, nonprofit organization, limited-equity housing cooperative, or private developer—that is subsidized by a federal, state, or municipal government program to assist in the construction or rehabilitation of housing affordable to low- or moderate-income households. Such housing must remain affordable through a land lease and/or deed restriction for ninety-nine (99) years, or for another period agreed to by the applicant and the municipality or prescribed by the funding program, but not less than thirty (30) years from initial occupancy (Rhode Island General Laws, 2024).



Under state law, rental units restricted to households earning less than 80 percent of AMI and ownership units restricted to households earning less than 120 percent of AMI qualify as low- and moderate-income housing units (Rhode Island General Laws, 2022).

10.3. Purpose of the Housing Plan

Jamestown has long recognized the importance of housing diversity and affordability in maintaining a healthy, stable community. In 1989, the Town established an Affordable Housing Committee to help ensure that housing opportunities are available to residents across a range of income levels. Under Rhode Island's Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Act, municipalities are required to maintain at least 10 percent of their year-round housing stock as low- and moderate-income (LMI) housing. A unit qualifies as affordable if it receives a federal, state, or local subsidy and is subject to an affordability restriction for a minimum of 30 years (Rhode Island General Laws, 2024).

While affordability remains a central focus of this Housing Element, the plan also takes a broader approach to evaluating Jamestown's housing stock, consistent with the expectations of Statewide Planning. In addition to assessing progress toward the statutory 10 percent LMI housing goal, this chapter examines the overall variety, condition, and availability of housing to meet the needs of residents across different income levels, household sizes, and life stages. This broader lens is intended to support long-term community stability, workforce retention, and demographic balance.

This plan outlines the Town's housing needs and identifies obstacles to developing affordable and attainable housing, including land constraints, infrastructure limitations, regulatory requirements, and financial feasibility. It also estimates the number of additional affordable units needed to meet the 10 percent goal and identifies strategies the Town may use to support housing production and preservation. Affordable housing initiatives described in this plan are generally targeted to households of one to eight persons earning between approximately \$24,050 (30 percent AMI for a one-person household) and \$120,750 (80 percent AMI for an eight-person household), based on the 2025 HUD Income Limits (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2025).

In addition to affordability, the plan considers housing availability across a range of price points, the condition of existing housing stock, and gaps in middle-range housing options that serve moderate-income households, seniors, young families, and the local workforce. Expanding housing choices beyond affordability alone will help Jamestown foster a more balanced and inclusive housing market that supports residents throughout their lives while remaining consistent with the Town's village character and rural landscape.





10.4. Community Insights

10.4.1. Community Survey

According to the 2024 Jamestown Community Survey, 73% of respondents support creating a greater diversity of housing types—including homeownership, rental, and employee-preference housing—to meet the needs of Jamestown's low- and moderate-income residents, local employees, and special populations, while maintaining the Town's distinctive mix of village and rural character. Support for the State-mandated goal of maintaining 10% low- and moderate-income housing stands at 65%, and 72% of respondents support policies that ensure the long-term affordability of Jamestown's housing stock. Nearly 29% of respondents report being housing cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing.

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) continue to receive strong community support, with 73% of respondents in favor overall, including 71% support for ADUs within primary dwellings and 75% support for detached ADUs.

Support for higher-density housing types varies depending on location. While 42% of respondents supported duplexes and multi-family housing in their own neighborhoods in 2010, that figure declined to 27% in 2024, even when such development is regulated to fit neighborhood scale and character. In contrast, 61% support duplexes outside their immediate neighborhoods, while support for multi-family housing outside respondents' neighborhoods remains lower, at 31%.

Respondents also expressed interest in financial tools to support housing affordability. Nearly 400 respondents favored incentives such as tax credits and a housing trust fund as mechanisms to increase affordable housing. Additionally, 75% of respondents support limiting the overall size of residential or commercial structures, and 61% support the creation of an impact fee—applied to residential building permits exceeding \$1,000,000—to help fund affordable housing programs.

10.4.2. Public Meeting

Housing emerged as the highest-priority concern at the November 13, 2024 public meeting, with participants emphasizing the need for additional affordable and attainable housing options. Attendees consistently identified the shortage of year-round rental housing as a critical issue, noting its relationship to declining school enrollment, reduced economic diversity, and challenges in retaining younger residents and workers.

Participants expressed particular concern about the impacts of short-term rentals on the availability of long-term housing, including effects on the volunteer fire department's ability to recruit younger members. The potential long-term budgetary implications of reduced



volunteer staffing were also raised. In addition, participants cited inconsistent funding for affordable housing initiatives and concerns that new residential development often does not align with the Town's established scale and character.

A range of potential strategies was discussed, including higher tax rates for non-primary residences (excluding year-round rentals), impact fees on high-value or oversized homes, and fees tied to infrastructure usage such as water service. Other ideas included point-of-sale or transfer fees dedicated to housing, limits on the size of new homes, and the adaptive reuse of existing structures to create additional affordable units. Collectively, these comments reflect a desire to balance housing affordability, fiscal sustainability, and preservation of Jamestown's character.

10.5. Housing Stock

10.5.1. Inventory

In 2020, Jamestown contained 3,122 housing units, representing a 4.1% increase since 2010 (Table 10.2). This growth rate is comparable to that of Newport County and the State of Rhode Island over the same period (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Jamestown's housing stock is overwhelmingly composed of single-family detached homes. In 2022, an estimated 2,356 units—approximately 94% of occupied housing—were single-family detached structures. Even among rental units, the majority (approximately 60%) are located within detached single-family homes rather than multi-unit or apartment buildings (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).

Table 10.2. Housing Stock in Jamestown from 2010 to 2020

	Jamestown			Newport County			State		
	2010	2020	Change in %	2010	2020	Change in %	2010	2020	Change in %
Total Housing Units	2,998	3,122	4.1%	41,796	43,422	3.9%	463,388	483,474	4.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, 2020 Census

Jamestown has a substantially higher rate of owner occupancy than both Newport County and the state overall. In 2020, owner-occupied units accounted for 80.1% of occupied housing in Jamestown, compared to 63.9% in Newport County and 59.4% statewide (Table 10.3). Conversely, renter-occupied housing represented only 19.9% of Jamestown's housing stock, well below county and state averages. Between 2010 and 2020, Jamestown experienced a 4.5% decline in renter-occupied units, while Newport County and Rhode Island saw increases of 4.9% and 10.3%, respectively. This divergence underscores



Jamestown's increasingly limited rental supply, which constrains housing options for renters and contributes to demographic shifts as regional demand for rental housing grows.

Table 10.3. Housing Units by Tenure in Jamestown from 2010 to 2020

	Jamestown			Newport County			State		
	2010	2020	Change in %	2010	2020	Change in %	2010	2020	Change in %
Renter-Occupied Units	513	490	-4.5%	12,886	13,513	4.9%	162,648	179,377	10.3%
Owner-Occupied Units	1,846	1,976	7.0%	22,024	22,967	4.3%	250,952	261,897	4.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, 2020 Census

Vacancy patterns further distinguish Jamestown's housing market. The 2020 Census reported 656 vacant housing units, representing 21% of total housing stock (Table 10.4). Of these, 500 units—approximately 16% of all housing—were classified as seasonal, recreational, or occasional-use homes, a rate substantially higher than the statewide average of 3.7% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). From 2010 to 2020, the number of seasonal units increased by 6.6%, reflecting Jamestown's growing appeal as a seasonal and second-home community.

Table 10.4. Housing Units by Tenure in Jamestown from 2010 to 2020

	Jamestown			Newport County			State		
	2010	2020	Change in %	2010	2020	Change in %	2010	2020	Change in %
Vacant Units	639	656	2.7%	6,885	6,942	0.8%	49,788	42,200	-15.2%
Occupied Units	2,359	2,466	4.5%	34,911	36,480	4.5%	413,600	441,274	6.7%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use*	469	500	6.6%	n.a.	4,596		17,077	17,946	5.0%

*Seasonal units are a subgroup of vacant units

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, 2020 Census



The prevalence of seasonal housing has important implications for year-round residents. As more homes are removed from the year-round housing market, the supply of available units for permanent residents declines, placing upward pressure on home prices and rents. This dynamic can undermine neighborhood continuity and make it increasingly difficult for first-time buyers, renters, and working households to secure stable, long-term housing in Jamestown.

Jamestown also experiences a unique rental market dynamic associated with the presence of Naval War College families stationed in nearby Newport. Over the past decade, Jamestown has become an attractive location for military households due to its schools, community character, and coastal setting. While these families contribute positively to civic life and volunteerism, federally provided housing allowances have contributed to rising rental prices. Many military households require housing for only part of the year, enabling property owners to occupy or short-term rent units during off-season months. This pattern has further reduced the supply of year-round rental housing and contributed to sustained upward pressure on rental costs due to chronic scarcity.

10.5.2. Housing Characteristics and Unit Sizes

Jamestown's housing stock is predominantly composed of larger homes. Approximately 69% of all housing units have three or more bedrooms, a pattern that is consistent across both occupied units (69%) and vacant units (64%), as shown in Figure 10.1. This distribution reflects a housing market that is heavily oriented toward larger, single-family homes.

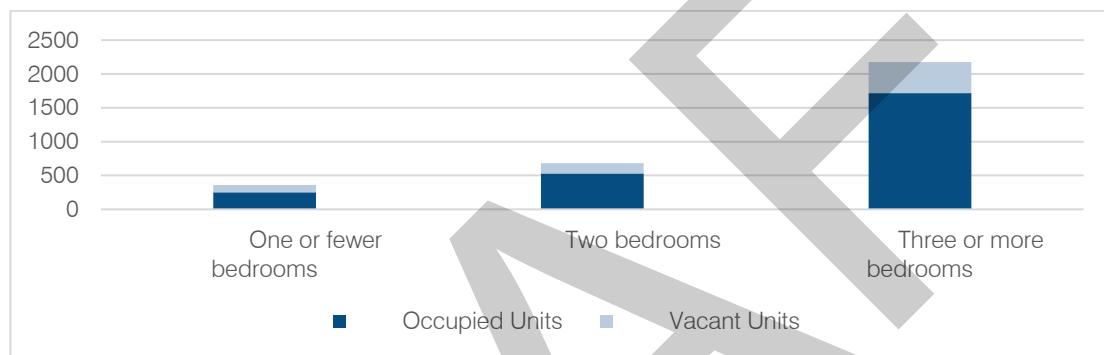
Two-bedroom units account for approximately 21% of the total housing stock. Of these units, 78% are occupied and 22% are vacant, suggesting moderate availability but limited supply relative to demand for smaller homes. Housing units with one bedroom or fewer are the least common, comprising only about 10% of the total housing stock. Of these smaller units, 69% are occupied and 31% are vacant.

The prevalence of larger housing units highlights a potential mismatch between the existing housing supply and the needs of certain populations, including single adults, smaller households, seniors seeking to downsize, young families, and members of the local workforce. Limited availability of smaller and more moderately sized units constrains housing choice and affordability, reinforcing the importance of policies and strategies that support a more diverse range of unit sizes to better meet current and future housing needs.



The U.S. Census Bureau defines a **vacant housing unit** as one that is unoccupied at the time of the survey, regardless of whether it is available for rent or sale. Vacancy classifications include **seasonal, recreational, or occasional use homes**, which encompass second homes, vacation properties, and potentially short-term rentals (STRs) if they are not occupied by a permanent tenant. Short-term rentals that are consistently used as commercial lodging but are vacant at the time of data collection may also fall under the "**Other Vacant**" category.

Figure 10.1. Number of occupied and vacant units by house size



Source: American Community Survey, 5 Year Estimates, 2022.

10.5.3. Age of Housing

Jamestown's housing stock is relatively old, with a substantial share constructed prior to 1980. Of the approximately 2,702 total housing units, 711 were built before 1940, and nearly 970 additional units were constructed between 1941 and 1980 (Town of Jamestown, 2024). By comparison, Newport County has a larger and somewhat newer housing stock, reflecting more recent development and a broader distribution of housing ages (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).

Homes built before 1978 often contain lead-based paint, which can pose serious health risks—particularly to young children—if paint deteriorates or is disturbed during renovations. Older homes may also contain asbestos, which can become hazardous if fibers become airborne.

According to the 2025 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook, fewer than five Jamestown children entering kindergarten in fall 2025 were identified with elevated blood lead levels, a significant improvement from 2015, when approximately seven percent of children showed elevated levels (Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, 2025; Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, 2015).



Despite this progress, any rehabilitation project involving pre-1978 structures must include testing for lead-based paint and appropriate abatement when required.

While there has been steady residential construction over recent decades—789 units built between 1981 and 2000 and an additional 590 units since 2001—the majority of Jamestown's housing stock remains older and may require modernization to meet current safety, energy efficiency, and accessibility standards. This pattern is reflected in building permit activity over the past nine years, during which approximately 50 percent of total construction costs were associated with additions and renovations rather than new construction.

A concerning trend in Jamestown has been the demolition of older homes not because they are beyond repair, but to make way for significantly larger new homes, often serving as seasonal or second residences. Between 2014 and 2024, 121 homes were demolished—an average of roughly 12 per year (Jamestown Building Official files, 2024). This trend may further constrain housing supply, particularly smaller and more attainable units, and contribute to ongoing affordability challenges.

Programs focused on lead and asbestos hazard mitigation, accessibility upgrades, energy efficiency improvements, and historically sensitive rehabilitation can help preserve Jamestown's character while improving livability, safety, and long-term housing sustainability for year-round residents.

10.5.4. Housing Production

Historically, Jamestown issues approximately 22 building permits per year, the vast majority of which are for single-family dwellings. As shown in Table 10.5, housing production in Jamestown over the past decade has been limited and largely oriented toward single-family construction.

Between 2015 and 2024, only a small number of units were created in multi-family structures, and those occurred in just a few isolated years. This pattern reflects long-standing zoning, market, and infrastructure conditions that have constrained housing diversity and limited the creation of smaller, more attainable units.

The predominance of single-family construction, combined with low overall production levels, has contributed to ongoing housing supply challenges, particularly for renters, first-time buyers, and households seeking smaller or more affordable units. While modest year-to-year fluctuations occur, the overall trend indicates that housing production has not kept pace with local or regional demand, nor with the Town's stated goal of expanding housing options across income levels and household types.

Table 10.5 summarizes residential building permit activity in Jamestown since 2015.



Table 10.5. Housing Unit Building Permits

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Units	13	24	22	30	25	24	21	14	26	24
Units in Single-Family Structures	13	24	6	30	25	24	18	11	26	24
Units in All Multi-Family Structures	0	0	16	0	0	0	3	3	0	0

* using number of units required to meet 10% goal

10.5.5. Housing Projections

Housing growth in Jamestown is constrained by the Town's finite land area, environmental limitations, and existing development patterns. With limited developable land remaining, long-term residential capacity is modest and requires careful planning to balance growth with infrastructure capacity, public services, and natural resource protection. The buildout analysis, discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3 and Appendix B, provides a framework for estimating future residential development and guiding growth management over the coming decades.

Based on this analysis, Jamestown is projected to accommodate a maximum of approximately 3,175 housing units by 2046. As of the most recent inventory, the Town has 110 Low- and Moderate-Income (LMI) housing units, representing approximately 4.24% of the total housing stock. To meet the State's 10% affordability goal at buildout, Jamestown would need to add approximately 165 additional LMI units, for a total of 265 affordable units.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) represent an additional factor affecting future housing growth. Projecting the number of new ADUs is challenging due to evolving state legislation and local regulatory changes. Recent legislation allowing ADUs by right on residential lots—provided they meet dimensional and design standards—may result in development patterns that exceed traditional buildout assumptions. Jamestown currently has approximately 45 ADUs among 2,746 dwelling units, equating to fewer than two ADUs per 100 units. Based on comparable communities and development trends, an additional 50 to 100 ADUs could be constructed at full buildout.

While ADUs have the potential to expand housing options and support aging in place or workforce housing, they may also contribute to increased density and population pressures if not carefully managed. Continued monitoring of ADU development will be important to ensure consistency with infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, and the Town's overall planning goals.



As discussed in Chapter 2, Land Use, Jamestown's limited supply of vacant and developable land places an upper bound on future residential growth. When compared with recent building permit trends, these projections suggest that Jamestown could approach buildout within the next two decades, underscoring the importance of strategic housing policies that prioritize affordability, diversity, and long-term community sustainability.

10.6. Market Trends

Housing costs in Jamestown have increased rapidly over the past decade, reflecting both statewide trends and local market pressures unique to island communities. Between 2020 and 2025, Rhode Island experienced a 74.2% increase in home prices, ranking first nationally for the fastest rate of appreciation (Federal Housing Finance Agency, 2025). Jamestown's housing market has been among the most expensive in the state during this period, with a 2024 median single-family home sales price of \$1,157,500—second only to New Shoreham, where the median price reached \$1,650,500. By comparison, median home prices in larger mainland communities such as Warwick (\$450,000) and Cranston (\$405,000) remain significantly lower (RI Living, 2025).

10.6.1. Home Prices & Assessed Values

As of July 2025, the median listing price for a home in Jamestown was \$949,950, representing a 15.1% increase since July 2020, when the median listing price was \$824,950 (RI Living, 2025). While household incomes have increased during this period, growth has not kept pace with housing costs. Median household income in Jamestown rose by approximately 25.3% between 2017 and 2022—an average annual increase of roughly 5%—compared to substantially higher increases in home values over the same timeframe (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017; U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).

The widening gap between housing prices and household income has made homeownership increasingly unattainable for many residents, including middle-income households that historically would have been able to purchase homes in Jamestown. These trends underscore the growing affordability challenges facing the community and contribute to broader impacts on workforce retention, demographic diversity, and long-term housing stability. Table 10.6 illustrates changes in median home sale prices in Jamestown and statewide between 2012 and 2022.



Table 10.6. Median Sales Price, Single Family Homes

	Jamestown			State		
	Median Price	Annual Change	%	Median Price	Annual Change	%
2000	\$245,000	-		\$135,976	-	
2010	\$450,000	83.6%		\$210,000	54.4%	
2011	\$450,000	0.0%		\$195,000	-7.1%	
2012	\$472,000	4.9%		\$190,000	-2.6%	
2013	\$467,800	-0.9%		\$205,000	7.9%	
2014	\$430,000	-8.1%		\$214,900	4.8%	
2015	\$585,000	36.0%		\$225,000	4.7%	
2016	\$560,000	-4.3%		\$239,900	6.6%	
2017	\$651,250	16.3%		\$255,000	6.2%	
2018	\$689,000	5.8%		\$270,000	5.9%	
2019	\$595,000	-13.6%		\$285,000	5.6%	
2020	\$649,950	9.2%		\$319,900	12.2%	
2021	\$950,000	46.2%		\$365,000	14.1%	
2022	\$997,500	5.0%		\$401,000	9.9%	
2023	\$1,015,000	1.8%		\$425,000	6.0%	
2024	1,450,000	42.8%		489,500	15.2%	
% Change 2014-2024	\$245,000	-		\$135,976	-	
% Change 2014-2024	237.2%				127.8%	

Source: *rliving.com, Residential Market Trends*

10.6.2. Assessed Values

In recent years, Jamestown has experienced a significant increase in residential assessed values, reflecting broader housing market trends, the town's growing desirability, and increased demand from seasonal residents. In 2000, only 11 housing units in Jamestown were assessed at more than \$1,000,000. By 2023, that number had risen to more than 840



units—approximately 27% of the town’s total housing stock (Jamestown Tax Assessor, 2023).

Rising assessed values have important implications for both individual homeowners and the broader community. Because property taxes are based on assessed value, increases in assessments can place a disproportionate burden on “cash-poor, house-rich” residents—those whose home values have risen significantly while their incomes have not kept pace. For these households, accessing increased equity often requires selling their home or taking on debt, both of which can introduce financial strain and undermine housing stability.

The growing prevalence of seasonal and second-home ownership can further intensify these pressures by contributing to higher assessments and increased competition for housing, without corresponding benefits to year-round affordability. As assessed values continue to rise, targeted tax relief measures—such as abatements or exemptions for income-qualified residents—may play an important role in helping long-term and lower-income homeowners remain in the community. These dynamics will continue to shape Jamestown’s housing affordability and long-term community stability.



Table 10.7. Median Home Assessed Value from 2012 to 2022

	Jamestown			State		
	Median Price	Annual Change	%	Median Price	Annual Change	%
2012	\$518,300	-		\$259,400	-	
2013	\$491,000	-5.3%		\$247,400	-4.6%	
2014	\$503,600	2.6%		\$241,200	-2.5%	
2015	\$516,200	2.5%		\$238,000	-1.3%	
2016	\$563,900	9.2%		\$238,200	Negligible	
2017	\$582,100	3.1%		\$242,200	1.7%	
2018	\$641,800	10.3%		\$249,800	3.1%	
2019	\$656,800	2.3%		\$261,900	4.8%	
2020	\$664,900	1.2%		\$276,600	5.6%	
2021	\$701,900	5.6%		\$292,600	5.8%	
2022	\$736,600	4.9%		\$343,100	14.7%	
% Change 2012-2022		42.1%				32.3%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles from 2012 to 2022, DP04 Selected Housing Characteristics.

10.6.3. Rental Rates

Jamestown residents consistently identify the shortage of affordable rental housing as a growing concern. Available data indicate that rental costs in Jamestown are significantly higher than the state average and have increased more rapidly than in many other Rhode Island communities.

In 2022, the median gross rent for one- and two-bedroom housing units in Jamestown exceeded \$1,623 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). While more recent local data are limited, it is likely that rental costs have continued to rise and have outpaced increases in median household income, further constraining affordability for renters.

High rental costs, combined with the limited supply of year-round rental units, make it increasingly difficult for residents—particularly young adults, families, and members of the local workforce—to secure stable housing on the island. Table 10.8 summarizes rental trends based on Rhode Island Housing rent survey data.



Table 10.8. Median Rent from 2012 to 2022

	Jamestown			State		
	Median Price	Annual Change	%	Median Price	Annual Change	%
2014	\$1,571	\$923		2014	\$1,571	
2019	\$1,660	\$1,004		2019	\$1,660	
2022	\$1,623	\$1,195		2022	\$1,623	
% Change 2014-2022		3.3%			29.5%	

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles from 2012 to 2022, DP04 Selected Housing Characteristics; 2022 Fair Market Rental Rates for Jamestown 1BR=\$1,026 2BR=\$1,234 3BR=\$1,525; HUD 2022,
https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr/fmrs/FY2022_code/2022summary.odn.

10.7. Housing Needs and Demand

Housing affordability and availability present growing challenges in Jamestown, affecting residents across income levels, age groups, and employment sectors. Rising housing costs have forced many households to spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing or to leave the community altogether, weakening generational ties and reducing economic diversity.

Jamestown faces persistent shortages of housing options for young families, seniors seeking to downsize, and essential workers, including teachers, municipal employees, and service-sector workers. These gaps affect workforce retention, volunteer capacity, and the long-term stability of the community. At the same time, an aging population and continued demand for housing place additional pressure on a limited and increasingly expensive housing supply.

Addressing housing needs in Jamestown requires a balanced approach that considers affordability, availability, and housing diversity. Expanding housing options across a range of sizes, price points, and tenure types is essential to ensuring Jamestown remains a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient community.

10.7.1. Affordability Gap and Cost Burden

The affordability gap represents the difference between what a household can reasonably afford to spend on housing and the actual cost of purchasing or renting a home in the local market. In Jamestown, this gap has widened substantially in recent years as housing prices and rents have increased at a faster pace than household incomes.



Many Jamestown households are housing cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs. This condition limits financial stability, reduces household spending on other necessities, and increases the risk of displacement. The affordability gap affects not only low- and moderate-income households but also middle-income earners who increasingly find homeownership and rental options out of reach.

Table 10.9 illustrates the affordability gap in Jamestown for both homeownership and rental housing, highlighting the growing mismatch between local incomes and housing costs.

Table 10.9. Affordability Gap in Jamestown

\$1,015,000	Median Home Price, Single Family Home
\$311,610	Annual Income Needed to Afford a Median Priced Home
\$131,875	Median Family Income
\$179,735	Gap in income

Sources: 2024 RI Housing Fact Book, HousingWorksRI at Roger Williams University,

The affordability gap presents a significant challenge for Jamestown residents. Many households spend more than thirty percent of their income on housing, placing them at increased risk of financial instability. Others are forced to seek housing outside of Jamestown in search of more attainable options, disrupting long-standing family ties and community continuity. This persistent cost burden reduces economic diversity and makes it increasingly difficult for residents to remain in the town over the long term, particularly for young families, seniors, and members of the local workforce.

10.7.2. Cost Burden & Housing Problems

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) publishes detailed information on housing cost burden and housing conditions through its Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data. CHAS data identifies households experiencing “housing problems,” defined as one or more of the following conditions: incomplete kitchen facilities, incomplete plumbing facilities, overcrowding (more than one person per room), or housing costs exceeding 30 percent of household income. Households experiencing “severe housing problems” meet the same criteria but spend more than 50 percent of their income on housing costs (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2021).

According to the most recent CHAS data (2017–2021), approximately 615 Jamestown households (30 percent) experienced one or more housing problems. Of these, 305 households (15 percent) experienced severe housing problems, indicating a substantial level of housing-related financial stress within the community.



CHAS data also provides insight into how housing problems vary by income, tenure, and age, offering a clearer understanding of which populations are most affected. As summarized in Table 10.10, key findings include the following:

- Low-income households are disproportionately impacted. In Jamestown, approximately 80 percent of low-income households experienced housing problems, compared to 72.8 percent statewide.
- Low-income homeowners are more likely than renters to experience housing problems. In Jamestown, 210 low-income homeowners experienced housing problems, compared to 50 low-income renters, reflecting the high cost of homeownership and property-related expenses.
- Housing problems increase as income declines, a trend consistent with statewide patterns.

These findings reinforce that housing cost burden in Jamestown is not limited to renters or traditionally vulnerable populations. Rising housing costs, property taxes, and maintenance expenses increasingly affect homeowners as well, underscoring the need for strategies that address affordability across tenure types and income levels.



Table 10.10. Jamestown and Rhode Island CHAS Data as of 2020

	Jamestown						State of Rhode Island					
	Number of Households											
	Tenure		Cost Burden		Housing Problems**		Tenure		Cost Burden		Housing Problems**	
Household Income	Owner	Renter	>30%	>50%	At least 1 of 4	None	Owner	Renter	>30%	>50%	At least 1 of 4	None
<=30% AMI*	230	95	255	235	260	65	16,140	47,045	45,555	34,950	46,045	17,140
>30% to <=50% AMI	65	25	50	40	55	40	19,035	27,810	34,085	15,660	34,685	12,160
>50% to <=80% AMI	90	90	105	30	100	80	37,125	30,865	30,190	6,500	32,095	35,895
>80% to <=100% AMI	35	40	0	0	0	75	26,895	15,130	10,615	1,510	11,510	30,515
>100% AMI	1,580	110	205	0	205	1,485	166,655	40,070	13,345	1,290	16,845	189,880
Total	2,000	360	615	305	615	1,750	265,850	160,920	133,790	59,920	141,175	285,595

*AMI = Area Median Income

**The four housing problems are incomplete kitchen facilities, incomplete plumbing facilities, more than one person per room, and cost burden greater than 30%.

Source: HUD CHAS Data based on 2017-2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates.



10.7.3. Household Trends

Household composition in Jamestown has continued to shift toward smaller household sizes and an aging population, trends that have direct implications for housing demand and availability. In 2022, the average household size in Jamestown was 2.16 persons, a decrease from 2.29 persons in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). This decline reflects broader demographic trends toward smaller households and an increasing share of residents living alone or as couples without children.

At the same time, Jamestown's population is aging. Fifty percent of households include at least one person aged 65 or older, an increase of approximately 10 percentage points since 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). This shift signals growing demand for housing options that support aging in place, downsizing, accessibility, and proximity to services.

According to Rhode Island Statewide Planning projections, Jamestown's population is expected to grow gradually from 5,405 in 2010 to approximately 5,674 by 2040 (Rhode Island Statewide Planning, 2013). When these population estimates are applied to current household size trends, the number of households is projected to increase even with modest population growth. Using the 2022 average household size of 2.16 persons, the number of households would rise from approximately 2,221 in 2010 to roughly 2,627 by 2040.

Recent census data aligns with this trajectory. The 2023 American Community Survey five-year estimates report a population of 5,545 and 2,563 households, while the 2020 Decennial Census reports 5,559 residents and 2,466 households. Although these datasets vary slightly due to methodology and timing, they consistently indicate continued household growth over time.

Taken together, these trends suggest that Jamestown will experience increasing housing demand driven primarily by household formation rather than population growth alone. Without an expansion of housing options—particularly smaller, more attainable units—these demographic shifts will place additional pressure on an already constrained housing market.

Table 10.11. Household Trends in Jamestown

Year	Population	Households	Average Household Size	Year
2010	5,405	2,221	2.29	2010
2020	5,559	2,466	n/a	2020
2023	5,545	2,563	2.16	2023

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, 2020 Census; ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles from 2012 to 2022.



Island Families

Rising housing costs in Jamestown increasingly challenge the ability of families to remain connected across generations—a value residents consistently identify as central to the town’s identity. As housing prices continue to escalate, many individuals who grew up in Jamestown, as well as families seeking to establish long-term roots in the community, find it difficult or impossible to afford housing locally.

As noted earlier, according to 2017–2021 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data, 45.8% of renter households in Jamestown are cost-burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on rent, and 15% are severely cost-burdened, spending more than 50% of their income on housing (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2021). The scarcity of year-round rental housing, coupled with rising rents, further limits options for young families seeking starter housing. Many households are unable to afford down payments or monthly mortgage costs for Jamestown’s increasingly expensive homes, and the shortage of long-term rentals has forced many working families to relocate off the island.

Preserving opportunities for families to live and remain in Jamestown across generations will require expanding housing options that serve a broader range of household sizes, income levels, and life stages.

Island Elderly

Jamestown’s aging population places increasing demand on the local housing market for smaller, more accessible housing options. According to 2022 American Community Survey five-year estimates, 1,836 residents—33.1% of the population—were age 65 or older, compared to 976 residents (18%) in 2012. This represents an increase of 860 residents, or 88%, over a ten-year period, while the overall population grew by only 134 people during the same timeframe (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).

Many older residents currently live in larger single-family homes that may no longer be practical due to maintenance needs, accessibility limitations, or rising property tax burdens driven by increasing assessed values. However, options for downsizing within Jamestown are limited. Smaller homes, condominiums, townhouses, and single-level units are scarce, and there are no assisted living facilities on the island. The Jamestown Housing Authority currently maintains a waiting list of two to five years for its 47 subsidized elderly housing units.

As Jamestown’s senior population continues to grow, addressing the shortage of age-appropriate housing will be critical to supporting aging in place, maintaining community stability, and reducing displacement of long-time residents.

Special Needs

Special needs housing serves a diverse range of populations, including individuals with physical or developmental disabilities, mental health needs, survivors of domestic violence,



individuals in recovery, and others requiring supportive services. According to 2022 American Community Survey estimates, approximately 196 residents under age 65 (5.3%) and 308 residents age 65 or older (16.8%) were living with a disability in Jamestown (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).

Currently, 16 units of Jamestown's low- and moderate-income housing stock are reserved for individuals with special needs. In 2025, an additional 12 units are now available on Hammett Court by Looking Upwards, Inc., which will modestly increase the Town's affordable housing inventory and raise the percentage of affordable housing to just over 5%. While these projects represent meaningful progress, demand for supportive housing continues to exceed supply.

Expanding special needs housing options will require continued partnerships with service providers, nonprofit organizations, and regional agencies to address long-term needs in a sustainable and coordinated manner.

Homelessness in Jamestown

Homelessness affects fewer households in Jamestown than in many other parts of Rhode Island. According to the 2024 statewide Point-in-Time Count conducted by the Rhode Island Coalition to End Homelessness, 2,373 individuals were identified as experiencing homelessness across the state, with no individuals counted in Jamestown (Rhode Island Coalition to End Homelessness, 2025).

Local schools also provide insight into housing instability through reporting requirements under the McKinney-Vento Act. In 2023, the Jamestown School District identified fewer than 10 students experiencing homelessness, representing less than 2% of the student population (Rhode Island Kids Count, 2025).

While homelessness is not currently prevalent in Jamestown, housing instability remains a concern, particularly as rising costs place increasing pressure on low- and moderate-income households. Continued monitoring and coordination with regional service providers will help ensure that emerging needs are addressed proactively.

10.7.4. Economic & Workforce Trends

Rising housing costs in Jamestown increasingly limit the ability of people employed on the island to live in the community they serve. As housing prices and rents continue to outpace wages, many workers are forced to seek housing off-island, despite working locally. This disconnect affects workforce stability, emergency preparedness, and the long-term viability of key economic sectors that support Jamestown's year-round community.

Jamestown's island geography intensifies these challenges. With access limited to the Jamestown-Verrazzano and Newport Pell Bridges, the inability of essential workers to reside locally creates vulnerabilities during emergencies, severe weather events, or bridge closures, when access to critical services may be delayed or disrupted.



Several workforce groups are particularly impacted by housing affordability constraints:

Municipal Employees

Many Town employees—including public works staff, police officers, teachers, and administrative personnel—cannot afford housing in Jamestown and therefore live off-island. Entry-level public safety and public works salaries generally range from \$57,000 to \$60,000 annually, supporting home purchase prices well below the Town's 2024 median home price of \$1,157,500. As housing costs continue to rise, even senior-level municipal employees may be unable to live in Jamestown, further weakening institutional continuity and emergency readiness.

Volunteer firefighters and emergency personnel

Housing affordability directly affects Jamestown's ability to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel. Despite strong training programs and recruitment efforts, volunteer participation has declined as fewer potential responders can afford to live nearby. As a result, the Town increasingly relies on paid per-diem EMS staffing to maintain coverage. Volunteer emergency services provide substantial annual cost savings—estimated between \$1.5 million and \$3 million—and declining volunteer participation places long-term pressure on municipal budgets and emergency response capacity.

Marine Industry Workers

Jamestown supports a significant marine-based workforce, including fishing, aquaculture, and marine maintenance employees. While these jobs are located on the island, wage levels in the marine trades often do not support homeownership or market-rate rents in Jamestown, forcing workers to commute from surrounding communities.

Service Industry Workers

Retail, grocery, food service, and healthcare support workers provide essential year-round services that sustain daily life in Jamestown. These workers typically hold permanent positions but face wages that are insufficient to support local housing costs. Their inability to secure affordable housing nearby contributes to workforce shortages, high turnover, and challenges in maintaining consistent services for residents.

Tourism Workers

Tourism-related employment, including accommodations, food service, and cultural institutions, is often seasonal and lower-wage. Statewide wage data indicate that average annual earnings in these sectors fall well below levels required to afford housing in Jamestown. Seasonal employment patterns further complicate access to stable, long-term rental housing, increasing competition for limited units during peak visitor months.

Overall, housing affordability constraints for Jamestown's workforce threaten the Town's economic resilience, emergency preparedness, and community stability. Addressing these challenges will require strategies that expand housing options for year-round workers while



balancing infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, and the Town's established character.

10.7.5. Conclusion

Jamestown faces a pronounced and widening mismatch between housing costs and the incomes of many residents. Analysis of home prices, rental rates, cost burdens, and demographic trends demonstrates a persistent shortage of housing that is attainable for a broad range of households, including young adults, families seeking to establish roots, seniors wishing to age in place, and workers essential to the Town's economy and public services.

Rising home values, limited year-round rental availability, and strong demand for seasonal housing have significantly constrained housing options for full-time residents. These pressures are intensified by Jamestown's island geography, limited developable land, environmental constraints, and the high cost of construction. Together, these factors limit the Town's ability to respond quickly to housing demand and contribute to increasing displacement of residents who can no longer afford to remain in the community.

Jamestown's current supply of low- and moderate-income housing remains well below the State's 10 percent goal, reinforcing the need for a strategic and sustained response. Without action, housing affordability challenges will continue to erode intergenerational connections, strain the local workforce, and reduce the community's economic and social diversity.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that expands housing diversity, preserves long-term affordability, and aligns housing policy with the Town's capacity, character, and long-term sustainability goals. By proactively planning for a wider range of housing types and income levels, Jamestown can strengthen its resilience, support its workforce, and ensure that the community remains inclusive and vibrant for future generations.

10.8. Existing Affordable Housing Stock

The Rhode Island Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Act was originally enacted in 1991 and subsequently revised in 2004 and 2023. The intent of the Act is to promote a more equitable, statewide distribution of housing affordable to low- and moderate-income households by establishing a minimum threshold for each municipality.

Under the original statute, only nonprofit developers were eligible to submit comprehensive permit applications, and qualifying units were limited to households earning no more than 80 percent of Area Median Income (AMI). Amendments adopted in 2004 expanded the Act to allow higher income thresholds for certain ownership units and authorized for-profit developers to submit applications, broadening the range of eligible housing developments.



As of 2024, Jamestown has 110 Low- and Moderate-Income (LMI) housing units, representing approximately 4.2 percent of its year-round housing stock. To meet the State's 10 percent affordability goal, the Town must add approximately 165 additional LMI units (Rhode Island Housing, 2024). Of the existing LMI units in Jamestown, 56 percent are reserved for elderly households, 29 percent serve family households, and 14 percent are designated for individuals with special needs (Rhode Island Housing, 2024).

Tables 10.12 and 10.13 present a comprehensive inventory of all housing units in Jamestown that currently count toward the State's 10 percent affordability requirement.

Table 10.12. Low and Moderate-Income Units as of 2024

Name	Address	# Units	Occupancy	Tenure	Subsidy Type
Pemberton Place	45 Pemberton Ave	12	Elderly	Rental	HUD 202
Pemberton Apartments	45 Pemberton Ave	35	Elderly	Rental	PH
Jamestown Village	21 Pemberton Ave	19	Elderly	Rental	LIHTC
Bayside Terrace	169 Conanicus Ave	13	Family	Rental	HUD Sect 8
Group Homes	Scattered	11	Special Needs	Rental	Group Homes
Hammett Court	2 Hammett Court	5	Special Needs	Rental	HOME, NOP, Thresholds
Multiple	Scattered	15	Family	Owner	Municipal Subsidy; HOME; CDBG
Total Low-Mod Units		110			
% Low-Mod of Total Housing Units		3.52%			

Source: Rlhousing



Table 10.13. Population and Characteristics of LMI Housing Stock as of 2024					
Summary	#Units	% of Total	Summary	Units	
Family	28	25%	Rental	84	76%
Elderly	66	60%	Homeownership	14	13%
Special Needs	16	15%	Other	12	11%
TOTAL	110	100%	TOTAL	110	100%

PH=Public Housing, RIH=Rhode Island Housing, LIHTC=Low Income Housing Tax Credits

Source: *Rlhousing*

10.9. Meeting Housing Needs

10.9.1. Previous Strategy Success

Jamestown has made incremental progress toward expanding its low- and moderate-income housing stock; however, past efforts have been constrained by several long-standing challenges. These include limited developable land, high land and construction costs, environmental and archaeological constraints—including the presence of Native American burial sites—and inconsistent funding sources. Together, these factors have restricted the scale and pace of affordable housing development and underscore the need for sustained, coordinated strategies moving forward.

10.9.2. Barriers to Affordable Housing Development

Jamestown faces a combination of structural, environmental, and regulatory barriers that complicate the development of affordable housing. Some of these challenges are unique to the island's geography, while others are common to communities across Rhode Island and New England.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure limitations are among the most significant barriers to affordable housing development in Jamestown:

- The Town operates a bifurcated water system: public water service is available in the village area, while most outlying areas rely on private wells.
- Outside the village, development depends on on-site wastewater treatment systems (OWTS), which involve substantial installation and long-term maintenance costs. Lot



sizes are determined by soil conditions and the land's ability to support both wells and septic systems.

- Jamestown has generally poor soils for septic absorption and the lowest groundwater yield in Rhode Island, further limiting development capacity.

These conditions significantly restrict achievable residential densities outside the village core, making cost-effective multi-unit or clustered housing difficult to implement without compromising public health or environmental protections.

In addition, Jamestown lacks robust public transportation options. Many lower-income households rely on automobiles out of necessity rather than choice. Improved transit access could reduce household transportation costs and improve access to employment, services, and daily needs, indirectly supporting housing affordability.

Zoning and Land Use

Jamestown's Zoning Ordinance reflects careful consideration of environmental constraints, public health, and community character. Residential development is permitted in nine of the Town's twelve zoning districts, with residential land accounting for approximately 34% of total land use.

Zoning districts closer to the village center—such as R-40, R-20, and R-8—allow smaller lot sizes and, in limited cases, two-family or multi-family housing by special permit. Commercial Downtown (CD) and Commercial Limited (CL) districts also permit higher-density residential uses in areas served by public water and sewer infrastructure.

While this zoning framework supports a range of housing types in targeted areas, it also limits the geographic extent where higher-density or lower-cost housing can be developed. Any increases in residential density must be balanced carefully with environmental protection, infrastructure capacity, and community character considerations.

Table 10.14. Jamestown Zoning Summary

Name	Uses	Approval Process	Minimum Lot Size (s.f.)	Description
Residential Zones				
Rural residential, RR-200	Single-family	P	200,000	Protects water supply reservoir while allowing low density residential
	Two-family	N	N/A	
	Multi-family	N	N/A	
	Single-family	P	80,000	Allows residential that does not
	Two-family	N	N/A	



Table 10.14. Jamestown Zoning Summary

Name	Uses	Approval Process	Minimum Lot Size (s.f.)	Description
Rural residential, RR-80	Multi-family	N	N/A	compromise rural character or natural resources
Residential, R-40	Single-family	P	40,000	Limits density of neighborhoods relying on septic systems to protect groundwater
	Two-family	N	N/A	
	Multi-family	N	N/A	
Residential, R-20	Single-family	P	20,000	Intended for areas surrounding downtown village that are served by public water and/or sewer
	Two-family	Y	30,000	
	Multi-family	S	80,000	
Residential, R-8	Single-family	P	8,000	Maintains integrity of densely developed downtown village, governs infill development
	Two-family	P	12,000	
	Multi-family	S	25,000	
Commercial Zones				
Commercial limited, CL	Single-family	P	8,000	Transitional area between commercial and residential
	Two-family	P	8,000	
	Multi-family	S	25,000	
Commercial downtown, CD	Single-family	P	5,000	Central business district, encourages foot traffic and street level retail
	Two-family	P	5,000	
	Multi-family	S	20,000	
	Single-family	P	8,000	



Table 10.14. Jamestown Zoning Summary

Name	Uses	Approval Process	Minimum Lot Size (s.f.)	Description
Commercial waterfront, CW	Two-family	P	N/A	Waterfront zone, restricts uses to water-dependent uses
	Multi-family	N	8,000	
Downtown condominium, DC	Single-family	N	N/A	Corner of commercial downtown, single lots with no more than 36 residential condominium units of not more than two bedrooms each
	Two-family	P	0	
	Multi-family	S	0	

Source: Jamestown Zoning Ordinance 2010,
<https://www.jamestownri.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/67/635446382135270000>.

P = Permitted Use by Right

S = Special Use Permit Required from Zoning Board

N = Not Permitted

Cost of Housing and Land

The cost of housing and land is a major impediment to affordable housing development in Jamestown. Housing prices are consistently higher than those in surrounding communities such as North Kingstown and Narragansett, making it difficult for nonprofit developers to acquire sites suitable for affordable housing (Redfin, 2024).

Since 2021, vacant and undeveloped lots in Jamestown have sold across a wide price range but remain generally expensive. Smaller, environmentally constrained parcels (approximately 0.1 acres) have sold for as little as \$42,000, while larger or waterfront properties have reached prices as high as \$3,700,000. Overall, land values remain elevated, with the average sale price for vacant lots estimated at approximately \$1,060,000 (Zillow, 2025). At these prices, it is nearly impossible to acquire land, construct housing, and maintain affordability for households earning 80% of Area Median Income, even with public subsidy assistance.

Availability of Developable Land

Even absent cost considerations, Jamestown's limited supply of developable land presents a significant barrier to affordable housing development. The town contains approximately 70 developable vacant lots and 107 developable subdividable lots. At the same time,



approximately 59% of Jamestown's land area is undevelopable or permanently protected, including forests, wetlands, farmland, and brushlands. These protections preserve rural character, safeguard natural resources, and provide recreational opportunities, but they also substantially constrain opportunities for new housing development.

Much of the remaining developable land has already been built out, particularly in the village area where infrastructure capacity is greatest. As a result, identifying suitable locations for affordable housing that balance environmental constraints, infrastructure capacity, and neighborhood compatibility remains challenging.

Native American Burial Grounds

Jamestown is home to the largest Native American burial ground in New England. Federal housing funding programs require compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which can prohibit development on land containing or likely to contain Native American burial sites. The presence or potential presence of burial grounds has limited affordable housing development in the past and continues to significantly restrict the number of sites available for future development.

Community Opposition

Community opposition remains a barrier to affordable housing development in Jamestown. A recent example includes litigation related to Church Community Housing's proposal to construct two affordable units on a nonconforming lot in the RR-200 Rural Residential District. Although the Superior Court ultimately upheld the Planning Commission's approval, determining that the project posed no significant environmental risks, the case illustrates how legal challenges can delay projects intended to address critical housing needs (Berkman, 2024).

Concerns raised during affordable housing discussions often include fears of increased crime, neighborhood decline, and reduced property values, as well as perceived impacts on community character. This opposition is frequently described as "Not In My Back Yard" (NIMBYism), reflecting a common pattern in which residents support affordable housing conceptually but oppose specific proposals near their homes.

Many of these concerns are rooted in misconceptions. Affordable housing residents are often working households who meet minimum income requirements, as well as seniors, people with disabilities, caregivers, and others in need of stable housing. Research consistently shows that well-designed affordable housing does not increase crime or reduce surrounding property values and instead contributes to neighborhood stability, workforce retention, and broader community benefits (Urban Institute, 2021; Urban Institute, 2022). Addressing these misconceptions through public education and transparent planning processes will be critical to building community support.



Funding

Since the establishment of the Jamestown Housing Land Trust in 2005 and the Jamestown Housing Fund in 2015, very few affordable housing units have been created without the assistance of these local funding sources. Rising land and construction costs have increased the amount of local subsidy required per unit, while state and federal funding programs tend to prioritize urban or lower-cost communities, making Jamestown less competitive for discretionary grants.

Past projects, including developments on Swinburn Avenue and Carr Lane, relied on local trust fund contributions to close financing gaps, typically in the range of \$150,000 per unit. Without a reliable and consistent local funding source, progress toward Jamestown's 10% affordable housing goal will remain limited. Establishing sustainable funding mechanisms will be essential to achieving long-term housing affordability objectives.

Conclusion

Jamestown's island geography presents a unique set of constraints that complicate the development of affordable housing. These challenges are structural rather than ideological and reflect long-standing physical, environmental, and economic conditions:

- 1. Limited and constrained land supply.** Jamestown has a finite amount of land, much of which is either permanently protected or unsuitable for development due to environmental constraints. Remaining developable land is scarce and often prohibitively expensive.
- 2. Infrastructure limitations.** Public water and sewer service are largely confined to the village area. Outside of the village, reliance on private wells and on-site wastewater treatment systems limits feasible residential densities. While concerns about water capacity frequently arise when higher-density housing is proposed, no housing development has been denied based on water availability to date.
- 3. High land and housing costs.** Jamestown consistently ranks among the most expensive housing markets in Rhode Island. Elevated land prices, construction costs, and limited economies of scale significantly increase the per-unit cost of affordable housing development. The absence of a consistent, dependable local funding source remains the single greatest barrier to achieving the Town's affordable housing goals.
- 4. Cultural and historic resource considerations.** The presence of Native American burial grounds, particularly within the village area, requires careful review during excavation and development activities. Compliance with federal and state preservation requirements can limit site availability and add complexity to affordable housing projects.



5. **Zoning constraints and community opposition.** While community surveys consistently show broad support for affordable housing in principle, individual projects often face opposition from abutters concerned about density, environmental impacts, or neighborhood character. Zoning regulations, while grounded in legitimate environmental and public health considerations, can also restrict the types and locations of housing most conducive to affordability.

Despite these challenges, Jamestown has demonstrated that progress is possible. Past affordable housing initiatives have succeeded when supported by strong partnerships, targeted zoning flexibility, public engagement, and gap financing through the Housing Trust and Housing Fund. Moving forward, overcoming these barriers will require a combination of reliable and sustainable funding sources, strategic land-use reforms, continued public education, and creative, context-sensitive development approaches.

By addressing these constraints directly and proactively, Jamestown can expand housing opportunities while preserving the community character, environmental resources, and quality of life that define the town.

10.9.3. Affordable Housing Assets and Resources

The successful development of affordable housing in Jamestown depends on effectively leveraging existing local, regional, and institutional resources, supporting experienced housing providers, and maintaining public engagement and trust. While Jamestown faces significant structural and market barriers to affordable housing development, the Town also benefits from a strong foundation of organizations, programs, and partnerships that can support future progress.

Jamestown Affordable Housing Committee

Established in 1989, the Jamestown Affordable Housing Committee has played a longstanding advisory role in advancing housing affordability and economic diversity in the Town. The Committee advises the Town Council on housing-related issues and serves as a review body for proposed Housing Trust Fund projects. It also conducts studies and analyses of local housing conditions to inform policy development and updates to the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan (Town of Jamestown, 2024).

Current initiatives supported or advanced by the Committee include the Sustainable Development Resident Program (a land trust model), the Affordable Lot Program, and the evaluation of Town-owned parcels for potential affordable housing development (Bryer, 2024). The Committee continues to serve as a key forum for community dialogue, policy development, and coordination among housing stakeholders.

Jamestown Housing Authority

The Jamestown Housing Authority (JHA) is an important partner in addressing housing needs for elderly residents and may play a broader role in future affordable housing efforts.



JHA currently owns and manages 47 units of subsidized elderly housing in Jamestown. In 2001, JHA established a nonprofit subsidiary, the Conanicut Housing Corporation (CHC), to expand its capacity to develop affordable housing.

While CHC has not yet undertaken development projects, recent discussions have focused on reactivating the organization to assist with future housing initiatives. JHA's existing property ownership, operational experience, and familiarity with housing finance programs position it as a potential contributor to future housing development and preservation efforts.

Church Community Housing Corporation

Church Community Housing Corporation (CCHC) is the primary nonprofit affordable housing developer active in Jamestown and a critical resource for advancing housing affordability. Founded in 1969, CCHC is the oldest community-based housing developer in Rhode Island and has extensive experience throughout Newport County. Its portfolio includes projects funded through HUD Section 202 and 811 programs, Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), Community Development Block Grants, and land trust models.

In Jamestown, CCHC has:

- Developed and operates 20 units of affordable family rental housing at Bayside Terrace, renovated in 2011.
- Developed 12 single-family affordable homeownership units through its land trust program.
- Administers the Town's down payment assistance program.
- Provides first-time homebuyer education, with program graduates eligible for down payment and closing cost assistance.

As of December 2024, CCHC has issued 110 home repair loans totaling \$952,440 to Jamestown residents through its Regional Revolving Loan Fund, including loans for foreclosure prevention and homeowner rehabilitation. These programs have played a key role in stabilizing housing for low- and moderate-income households and preserving existing housing stock..

Other Developers of Affordable Housing

Looking Upwards, Inc. is a Portsmouth, Rhode Island-based nonprofit organization dedicated to enriching the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities. The organization developed a 12-unit residential project on Hammett Court in Jamestown, consisting of independent and partially assisted apartment units. This development will expand the Town's supply of housing serving residents with special needs.

Several other Community Development Corporations (CDCs) operate throughout Rhode Island and develop affordable housing, though none have been active in Jamestown to date. Habitat for Humanity of South County develops affordable homeownership units elsewhere in the region but has not undertaken projects in Jamestown, and the Greater Providence and



East Bay Habitat for Humanity homeownership programs were inactive as of December 2024.

For-profit developers can also contribute to Jamestown's affordable housing supply through the Town's Inclusionary Zoning provisions and the state comprehensive permit process. In 2017, a for-profit developer constructed four affordable ownership condominium units at the former Portuguese American Citizens Club site at 138 Narragansett Avenue as part of a 16-unit condominium development. This project demonstrates the role private development can play in meeting affordable housing goals when supported by appropriate zoning and regulatory tools.

10.9.4. Housing Programs and Services

In addition to organizations that develop affordable housing, several regional and local agencies provide programs and services that support housing stability for Jamestown residents. These services help residents remain housed, improve housing conditions, and navigate financial or personal challenges that can threaten long-term stability.

The East Bay Community Action Program (EBCAP) is a community action agency serving low- and moderate-income residents throughout Rhode Island's East Bay. EBCAP provides a range of housing-related services, including energy assistance, home weatherization to improve energy efficiency, housing stabilization through case management and financial counseling, and food assistance to address food insecurity (East Bay Community Action Program, 2024). These programs play a critical role in helping residents remain in their homes during periods of financial hardship.

Several nonprofit organizations serving specific populations also offer case management and supportive services that help individuals find and maintain appropriate housing. These include agencies such as Newport County Community Mental Health Center, United Cerebral Palsy of Rhode Island, and AIDS Care Ocean State. While these organizations do not typically develop housing directly in Jamestown, their services support residents with mental health needs, disabilities, and chronic health conditions who may face additional barriers to housing stability.

The Town of Jamestown also provides local tax relief programs that help reduce housing-related cost burdens for vulnerable residents. The Town offers an elderly tax exemption for residents aged 65 and older who meet income eligibility requirements tied to the federal poverty level. Veterans are also eligible for a property tax exemption (Bryer, 2024). These programs help mitigate the impact of rising property values and taxes for residents on fixed or limited incomes.

Together, these programs and services complement housing development efforts by addressing affordability, stability, and long-term housing security, particularly for seniors, low-income households, and residents with special needs.



10.9.5. Town Zoning and Land Use Related to Affordable (LMI) Housing

Affordable Accessory Dwelling Units

Jamestown has permitted accessory dwelling units (ADUs) since 2014, originally limited to family members and caregivers. Following changes to state law in 2022 that removed occupancy restrictions based on familial relationship, the Town expanded support for ADUs across most residential areas. The Town recognizes that ADUs can serve multiple purposes, including housing for caregivers and family members, as well as long-term rental housing that helps address the community's shortage of year-round rental units.

Affordable ADUs are permitted in the CL, CD, R-8, and R-20 zoning districts as a recognized form of affordable housing. These units are required to be deed-restricted to ensure long-term affordability and monitored by a Rhode Island–approved monitoring agent for the duration of the restriction period. The Jamestown Affordable Housing Committee continues to explore incentives to encourage the development of deed-restricted affordable ADUs as part of the Town's broader housing strategy (Town of Jamestown, 2010).

Sustainable Resident Program

The Sustainable Resident Program is designed to help low- and moderate-income homeowners remain in their homes and manage rising housing and living costs. Through this program, a homeowner sells the underlying land at fair market value while preserving it through a land trust mechanism. The homeowner retains ownership of the structure and continues to reside in the home.

This community land trust model allows residents to unlock equity, stabilize housing costs, and age in place while permanently adding the home to Jamestown's affordable housing inventory. The Town supports this program through the Affordable Housing Trust. Currently state and federal grant funding has not been eligible for this program.

Jamestown Affordable Lot Program

The Jamestown Affordable Lot Program promotes housing and economic diversity by allowing the subdivision of oversized residential lots that would not otherwise qualify for subdivision under standard zoning requirements. In designated zoning districts—R-20, R-8, and CL—property owners may create smaller, permanently affordable lots.

For example, within the R-20 zoning district, a 34,000-square-foot lot may be subdivided into a conforming 20,000-square-foot lot and a 14,000-square-foot affordable lot. Affordable lots created through this program are deed-restricted in perpetuity to ensure long-term affordability while maintaining neighborhood scale and character.

The Town supports the Affordable Lot Program through a revolving fund and the Affordable Housing Trust, which cover subdivision-related costs and enable the Town or nonprofit



partners to acquire and steward affordable lots. Ground leases are used to preserve affordability across generations. This program also provides flexibility for property owners by allowing them to downsize, sell a portion of their land, or remain in the community while easing financial pressures, thereby supporting both housing affordability and neighborhood stability (Town of Jamestown, 2024).

Town Affordable Housing Policies

Section 82-1104 of the Town of Jamestown Code of Ordinances establishes policies to promote affordable housing development in alignment with the goals of the Comprehensive Community Plan. These policies support the creation of affordable housing through mechanisms such as accessory dwelling units, affordable lots, and housing developed within the Jamestown Village Special Development District, which is served by public water and sewer.

Within the Village Special Development District, minor subdivisions of existing lots are permitted at slightly smaller sizes than typically allowed by zoning in order to create deed-restricted affordable lots. Affordable units developed under these provisions are preserved through land trusts or long-term deed restrictions for a minimum of 99 years.

In addition to these provisions, Jamestown's zoning ordinance includes inclusionary zoning, comprehensive permitting, and incentive-based strategies to facilitate the production of low- and moderate-income housing.

Inclusionary Zoning

Jamestown's Inclusionary Zoning provision (Section 82-1705) applies to residential developments and subdivisions containing four or more units and requires that 25 percent of the units meet affordability standards. Affordable units must be integrated throughout the development, comparable in exterior design to market-rate units, and constructed to the same quality standards.

Developers may receive incentives such as density bonuses or reduced lot requirements in exchange for providing affordable units. Alternatives to on-site units include payment of an in-lieu fee to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund or off-site options such as constructing affordable units elsewhere or donating land. The Town prioritizes on-site affordable units first, followed by in-lieu fees, and then off-site options. All inclusionary units are subject to monitoring agreements and deed restrictions to ensure long-term compliance with state affordability requirements.

The Comprehensive Permit

The Rhode Island Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Act establishes a comprehensive permitting process for eligible affordable housing developments. Under this process, applicants proposing developments with at least 25 percent low- or moderate-income units may submit a single, consolidated application to the Planning Commission.



In exchange for providing affordable units, developers may receive relief from certain local zoning requirements, including dimensional standards, parking requirements, or density limitations. Municipalities that have not met the 10 percent affordability threshold are required to accept and consider comprehensive permit applications.

Comprehensive permitting offers the Town flexibility to approve changes in use or density without rezoning, while allowing the Planning Commission to impose reasonable conditions to address public health, safety, and community concerns. Even when zoning relief is not requested, the streamlined review process can reduce development costs and timelines, resulting in savings that may be reflected in lower housing prices.

Incentives & Municipal Subsidies for Affordable Housing

Section 82-1794 of the Town Code outlines incentives to encourage affordable housing development. These include prioritizing applications that include affordable units, particularly those developed in partnership with nonprofit organizations or land trusts. The Town may also waive or reduce certain fees, adjust parking requirements, provide tax incentives, or allow increased density for qualifying developments.

Under Section 82-1703, Jamestown may grant municipal subsidies in connection with comprehensive permit approvals. These subsidies may include density bonuses, fee waivers, land banking, or other negotiated incentives in exchange for specific public benefits or design considerations. In limited cases, direct financial assistance may also be considered. Approval authority rests with the Planning Commission and, where municipal funds are involved, the Town Council.

Tables 10.15 and 10.16 summarize the projected production of low- and moderate-income housing units by development strategy, household type, and tenure through buildout.

Table 10.15. Number of LMI Units to be Produced by Development Strategy and Time

Strategy	Year 1-5	Year 6-10	Year 11-15	Year 16-21	Projected Totals
Special Dev. District	4	4	4	5	17
Inclusionary Zoning	8	8	8	9	33
Existing Housing Stock Conv.	4	4	4	4	16
Accessory Dwelling Units	6	6	6	7	25



Sustainable Resident Program	2	2	2	2	8
Affordable Lot Program	4	4	4	4	16
Comprehensive Permit	8	8	8	9	33
Incentives & Subsidies	4	4	4	5	17
Total	40	40	40	45	165*

*Number of affordable units needed to achieve 10% at the time of build out.

Table 10.16. Number of LMI Units to be Produced by Household and Tenure Type

Development Strategy	Totals by Strategy	Elderly		Family		Special Needs	
		Rental	HO	Rental	HO	Rental	HO
Special Development District	17	4	2	5		5	1
Inclusionary Zoning	33	5	3	10		12	3
Existing Housing Stock Conversion	16	4	1	6		4	1
Accessory Dwelling Units	25	7	3	10		5	
Sustainable Resident Program	8	2	1	3		2	
Affordable Lot Program	16	2	2	5		7	
Comprehensive Permit	33	7	6	10		8	2
Incentives & Subsidies	17	4	3	4		3	3
Total affordable units added	165						
Totals by household type & rental or ownership		35	21	53	46	10	
Totals by Household type		56		99		10	



Additional Resources for Affordable Housing

Affordable housing initiatives in Jamestown may leverage a range of federal, state, and regional programs to support development, preservation, and housing stability. These resources are typically used in combination with local funding sources to close financing gaps and improve project feasibility.

At the federal level, programs administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provide key funding and regulatory frameworks for affordable housing, including Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnership funds, and housing assistance programs for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income households.

At the state level, Rhode Island Housing administers a variety of programs that support both rental and homeownership opportunities, including Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), down payment assistance, rental assistance programs, and gap financing for affordable housing developments. These programs are often competitive and tend to prioritize projects that demonstrate long-term affordability, regional need, and strong local support.

Additional resources may include energy efficiency and weatherization programs, housing rehabilitation grants, and financing tools offered through nonprofit organizations, regional planning agencies, and philanthropic partners. While Jamestown has historically faced challenges competing for large-scale state and federal funding due to high land and construction costs, these programs remain an important component of a comprehensive housing strategy when paired with local initiatives such as the Affordable Housing Trust, land trusts, and zoning-based incentives.

Table 10.17 summarizes the primary affordable housing funding programs and resources available as of 2024 that may be applicable to future housing efforts in Jamestown.

Table 10.17. Affordable Housing Development Resources

HUD Programs	Rhode Island Housing Programs	Other Resources
Section 202 (Elderly)	First-time Homebuyer Loans	Affordable Housing Program (FLHB)
Section 811 (Special Needs)	Homebuyer Renovation Loans	Low Income Housing Tax Credits (Federal)
Continuum of Care (Homeless)	Move Up Loans (refinance loans)	Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit (Federal)



Table 10.17. Affordable Housing Development Resources

HUD Programs	Rhode Island Housing Programs	Other Resources
Emergency Shelter Grants (Homeless)	Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8 rental assistance)	Rhode Island State Historic Preservation Residential Tax Credit (State)
Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)	Project Based Voucher Program (low-and-moderate income household rental assistance)	Neighborhood Opportunities Program (NOP) (State)
HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME)	Project Based Rental Assistance (Section 8 apartments)	Building Homes Rhode Island (State)
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	Rental Housing Production Program	Repurposing vacant schools for affordable housing (State)
Section 108 (Loan guarantees)	LeadSafe Homes program	
	Homeowner Counseling	
	Community Septic System Loan Program (CSSLP)	
	Access Independence II Program (loans for aging and special needs population housing)	

*RIH=Rhode Island Housing FHLB=Federal Home Loan Bank (Boston)
HUD=U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development*

10.9.6. Town Zoning and Land Use Related to Unrestricted Affordable Housing

Jamestown's zoning framework includes several provisions intended to support a diverse and flexible housing stock beyond deed-restricted affordable housing. These measures allow for a range of housing types—such as multifamily housing in higher-density and commercial districts, conservation (cluster) developments, and cottage cluster developments—designed to expand housing choices while maintaining the Town's character and environmental protections. Together, these strategies help create more attainable housing options across a range of household sizes and incomes.



Market Rate Accessory Dwelling Units

In 2024, Rhode Island state law was updated to clarify that accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are not subject to affordability requirements and that municipalities may not require ADUs to be designated as low- or moderate-income housing. While ADUs may be developed at market rates, they still represent a more attainable housing option than many newly constructed single-family homes and contribute to housing diversity within established neighborhoods.

Jamestown's ADU ordinance requires owner occupancy of one unit on the property. If rented, either the primary unit or the ADU must be leased on a long-term basis, defined as one year or longer. Short-term rentals of ADUs are not permitted. These requirements are intended to support neighborhood stability while allowing incremental increases in housing supply.

Conservation Development

Jamestown requires conservation (cluster) land development for subdivisions of five or more lots in the R-20, R-40, RR-80, and RR-200 zoning districts. Conservation development is designed to preserve open space, protect natural resources, maintain rural character, and reduce sprawl by clustering homes on smaller lots while permanently preserving remaining land.

Minimum lot sizes in conservation developments range from approximately 7,500 to 20,000 square feet, depending on the underlying zoning district. By allowing homes to be built on smaller lots, conservation development can reduce land and infrastructure costs, making housing more attainable. Any conservation development containing more than four units is subject to Jamestown's inclusionary zoning requirement, which mandates that 25 percent of units be designated as affordable.

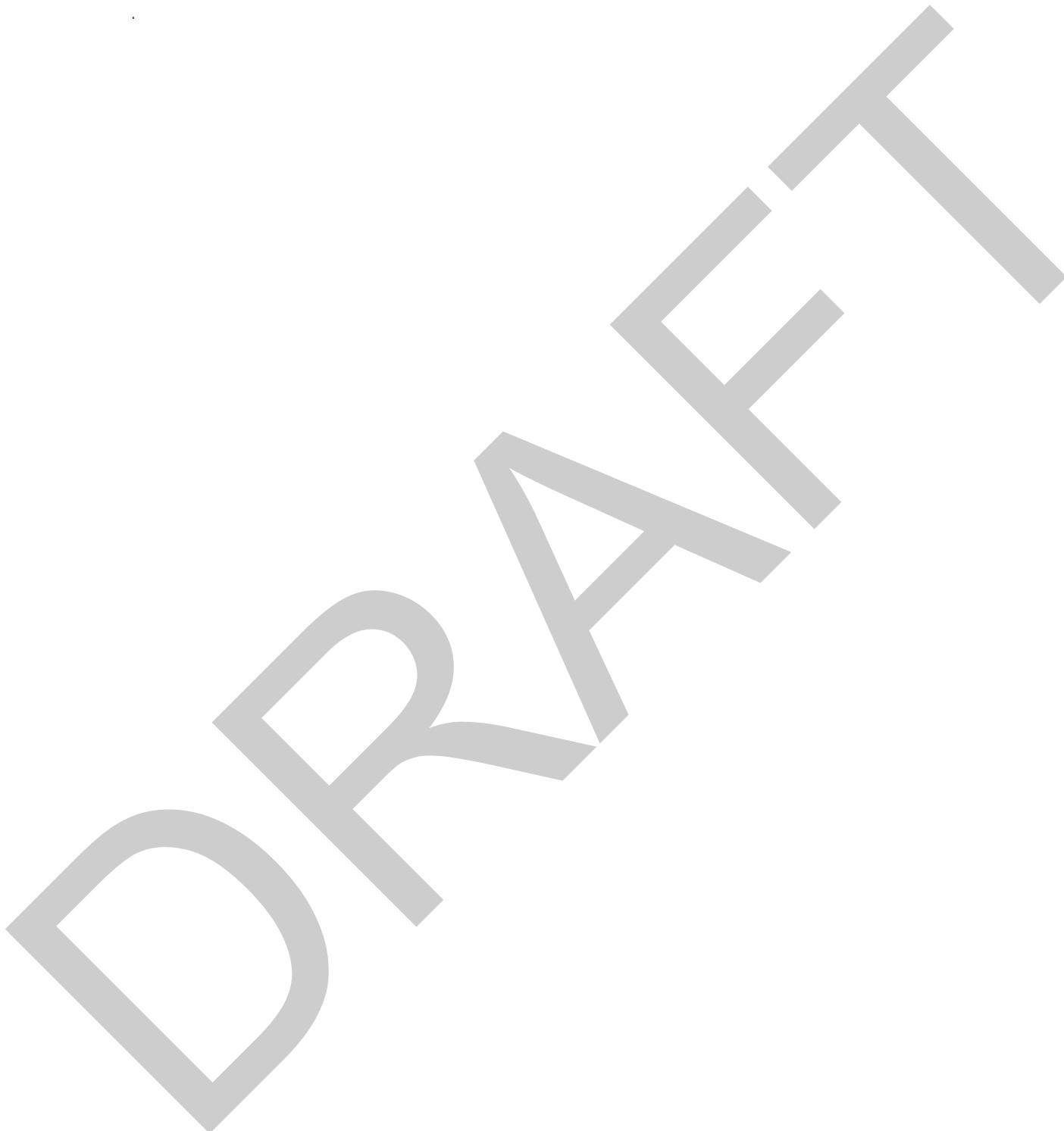
10.9.7. Conclusion

Jamestown possesses a range of assets, policies, and programs that support the creation and preservation of affordable and attainable housing, including the Jamestown Affordable Housing Committee, the Jamestown Housing Authority, Church Community Housing Corporation, and a suite of zoning tools such as inclusionary zoning, comprehensive permits, and incentive-based development standards. These resources provide important flexibility and opportunities for advancing housing initiatives that align with community goals.

However, these tools alone are insufficient to close the significant gap between housing costs and local incomes. The Town's island geography, limited developable land, high land and construction costs, and reliance on inconsistent funding sources continue to constrain housing production. Achieving meaningful progress toward Jamestown's affordable housing goals will require a stable, dedicated funding source, continued use of flexible land-use



strategies, and sustained public engagement to build support for housing solutions that preserve the Town's character while meeting the needs of current and future residents.





10.10. Issues and Opportunities

Jamestown faces significant challenges related to housing affordability, availability, and diversity. These challenges affect residents across income levels and life stages and have broader implications for workforce retention, community continuity, and long-term sustainability. At the same time, the Town has several tools, programs, and partnerships that present opportunities to address these issues in a strategic and locally appropriate manner.

10.10.1. Housing Affordability

Housing affordability in Jamestown is increasingly strained, as the gap between housing prices and median household incomes continues to widen. Many households are cost-burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on housing, making it increasingly difficult for residents to remain in the community.

The local workforce, including municipal employees, marine industry workers, and service employees, struggles to afford housing, threatening the town's ability to retain essential personnel like teachers and first responders.

The town's aging population adds another layer of complexity, as there is a shortage of suitable housing options for seniors looking to downsize and age in place. At the same time, limited housing diversity, such as a lack of small-scale multi-family residences and accessory dwelling units (ADUs), restricts options for young professionals, families, and middle-income residents.

Issues identified:

- The gap between housing costs and household incomes continues to widen, resulting in a growing number of cost-burdened households spending more than 30 percent of income on housing.
- Rising home prices and rents limit the ability of residents—including young families, seniors, and middle-income households—to remain in Jamestown. The increasing number of short-term rentals, demolition of smaller homes and seasonal homeownership has contributed to a lack of year-round rentals, lack of smaller affordable homes and rising property values, making it harder for year-round residents to find stable housing.
- A shortage of year-round rental housing, driven by seasonal use, short-term rentals, and demolition of smaller homes, restricts housing options for residents and workers. Community opposition, often fueled by misconceptions about the impact of affordable housing on crime and property values.



- High land, construction, and infrastructure costs, combined with environmental constraints and limited developable land, make affordable housing development difficult. Funding for affordable housing development remains inconsistent, making it difficult to implement long-term solutions to address the housing crisis.
- Inconsistent and limited funding for affordable housing hampers the Town's ability to plan and implement long-term solutions.

Opportunities in response:

- Establish and maintain a reliable, dedicated funding source for affordable housing to support long-term planning and project implementation.
- Expand the use of land trusts, deed restrictions, and preservation tools to maintain long-term affordability of existing and future units.
- Repurpose vacant, underutilized, or Town-owned properties for affordable or mixed-income housing where infrastructure and environmental conditions allow.

10.10.2. Housing Diversity and Community Needs

Issues identified:

- Work closely with organizations like the Jamestown Affordable Housing Committee, Jamestown Housing Authority, and Church Community Housing Corporation to advance existing assistance programs and create sustainable, long-term solutions to meet the diverse housing needs of residents.
- Jamestown's housing stock is dominated by large, single-family homes, limiting options for seniors seeking to downsize, young adults, smaller households, and first-time buyers.
- Limited availability of smaller-scale multi-family housing and accessory dwelling units restricts housing choice and flexibility.
- An aging population increases demand for accessible, smaller, and age-appropriate housing options that are currently scarce

Opportunities in response:

- Continue reviewing and updating zoning regulations to support a broader mix of housing types, including ADUs, duplexes, cottage-style development, and mixed-use housing in appropriate areas.
- Build upon successful local programs, such as the Affordable Lot Program and Sustainable Resident Program, to expand housing options while preserving neighborhood character.



- Encourage housing designs that support aging in place, accessibility, and smaller household sizes.

10.10.3. Development Barriers and Community Engagement

Issues identified:

- Community opposition to affordable housing projects can delay or discourage development, often driven by misconceptions regarding impacts on property values, density, or neighborhood character.
- Infrastructure limitations—particularly water availability and reliance on private wells and septic systems—constrain density outside the village area.

Opportunities in response:

- Expand public education and outreach efforts to address misconceptions about affordable housing and highlight its benefits to community stability, workforce retention, and economic vitality.
- Strengthen coordination among Town departments, boards, and housing partners to align land use decisions, infrastructure planning, and housing goals.
- Leverage tools such as inclusionary zoning, comprehensive permitting, and municipal incentives to balance development feasibility with community priorities.

10.10.4. Partnerships and Implementation

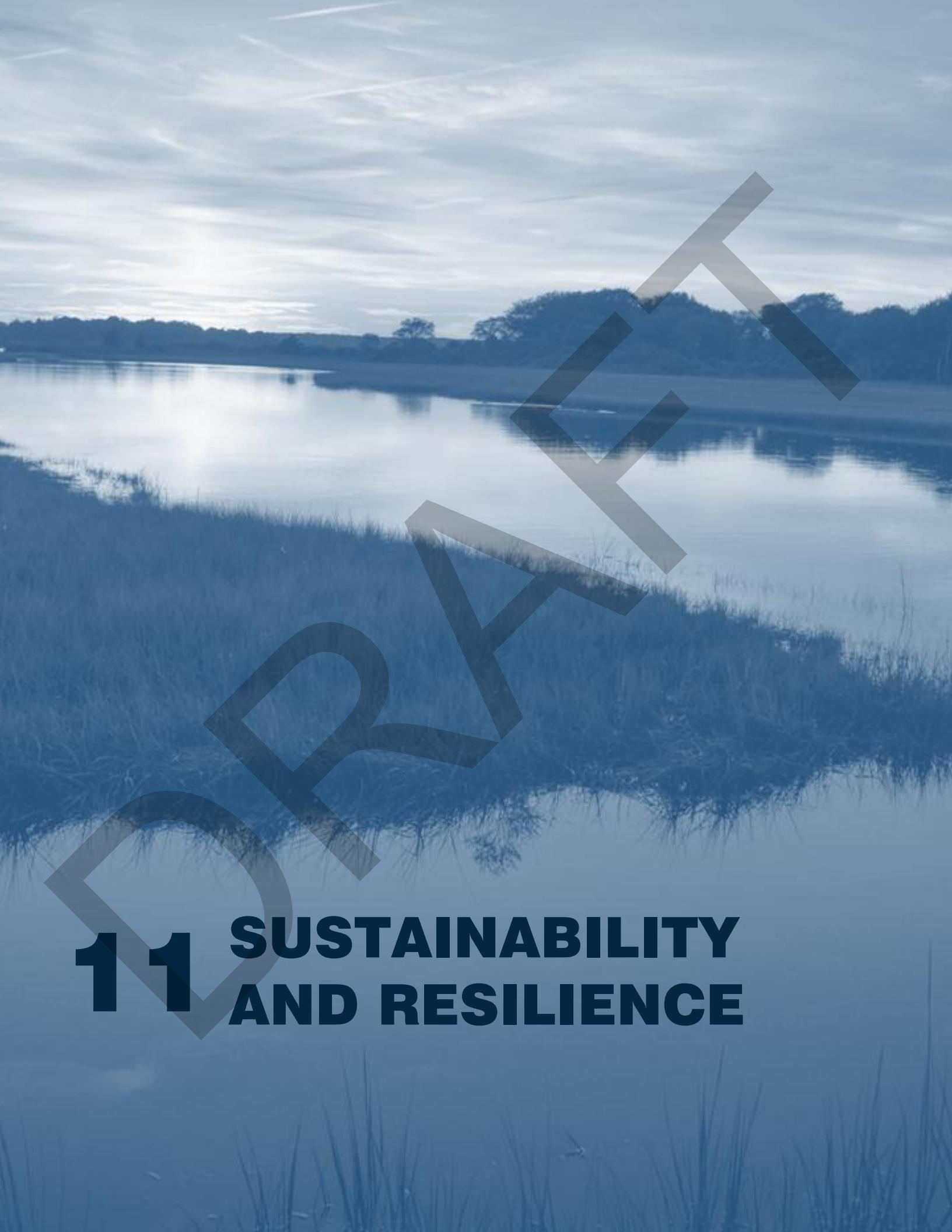
Issues identified:

- Jamestown's small scale and high costs limit competitiveness for state and federal housing grants compared to larger or more urban communities.

Opportunities in response:

- Strengthen partnerships with nonprofit and for-profit developers, housing advocates, and regional agencies to leverage expertise and resources.
- Continue working closely with organizations such as the Jamestown Affordable Housing Committee, Jamestown Housing Authority, and Church Community Housing Corporation to advance coordinated, long-term housing strategies.
- Align local housing initiatives with state and regional housing goals to improve access to funding and technical assistance.





11 SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE



Sustainability and Resilience

Background

The Sustainability & Resilience Chapter details two major but interrelated topics, sustainability and resilience. These topics are discussed in a joint chapter because they are interrelated concepts. For instance, improvements in energy efficiency and sustainable practices reduce carbon emissions and can contribute to the Jamestown's ability to withstand and recover from climate change impacts. At the same time, sustainability initiatives such as green infrastructure can help manage stormwater and mitigate flooding that occur during natural hazard events. Addressing each topic individually provides significant benefits on its own but tackling them together creates a more comprehensive approach that maximizes the Town's environmental and resilience efforts.

Goals

-  Promote a climate-resilient community by proactively planning for natural hazards, especially for fragile and scenic coastal areas.
-  Safeguard Jamestown's ecological systems and cultural assets through green infrastructure and sustainable practices.
-  Achieve a greener, more sustainable Jamestown with minimal reliance upon fossil fuels.
-  Ensure vulnerable populations, infrastructure, and essential services are supported before, during, and immediately following natural disasters.
-  Promote alternative energy systems that reduce costs to local residents.

Policies

1. Encourage the adoption of coastal adaptation measures, especially in low-lying areas of Jamestown.
2. Proactively plan for natural hazard vulnerability including those hazards which may increase due to climate change.
3. Prioritize nature-based solutions and green infrastructure to manage stormwater, reduce runoff, and mitigate flooding.
4. Consider Townwide transition to building electrification and renewable energy system installation.
5. Promote the use of electric vehicles and low-carbon transportation options to reduce carbon emissions from the transportation sector.
6. Assist vulnerable populations with planning for natural disasters.
7. Ensure critical infrastructure is protected from natural hazards to prevent significant disruptions to integral systems.
8. Manage costs associated with energy efficiency and alternative energy systems for municipal scale programs and residential scale projects.

See Implementation table for all goals, policies, and actions for this chapter

Disclaimer: goals and policies are in draft form and subject to further review and approval by the Town of Jamestown

11.0 SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Our Vision: Jamestown should live within its means, both fiscally and environmentally. This will sustain the quality of life that makes Jamestown a desirable place to live, work and visit.

11

11.1. Introduction

This chapter addresses two closely linked items that shape Jamestown's long-term environmental, societal, and economic well-being.



The Sustainability & Resilience Chapter details two major but interrelated topics, sustainability and resilience.

Sustainability involves minimizing resource use and environmental impacts while supporting economic vitality and social equity. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) describes sustainability as the ability to "create and maintain the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony to support present and future generations" (EPA, n.d.).

Resiliency focuses on the community's ability to prepare for, withstand, and adapt to, and recover from natural hazard events. As climate change intensifies droughts, storms, flooding, and heat, strengthening resilience becomes critical for protecting people, infrastructure, and natural systems.

Together, these concepts emphasize creating systems that are durable and adaptable over time. This includes improving energy efficiency, reducing waste, conserving water, and integrating green infrastructure to support healthy ecosystems. It also involves promoting



efficient land use, sustainable transportation, and climate aware building design to create resilient, thriving communities.

These topics are discussed together because sustainability initiatives often reinforce resilience. For example, improvements in energy efficiency and sustainable practices reduce carbon emissions and can contribute to Jamestown's ability to withstand and recover from climate change impacts. At the same time sustainability initiatives, such as green infrastructure, can help manage stormwater and mitigate flooding that occurs during natural hazard events. Addressing each topic individually provides significant benefits on its own but tackling them together creates a more comprehensive approach that maximizes the Town's environmental and resilience efforts.

As the chapter continues, it begins by summarizing community perspectives from surveys and workshops, then shifts into Jamestown's ongoing sustainability efforts—including energy planning, renewable energy initiatives, recycling and composting programs, and green infrastructure. The chapter then examines the Town's natural hazard vulnerabilities and existing resilience planning before concluding with key issues and opportunities to guide future action.



11.2. Community Insights

11.2.1. 2024 Community Survey

Community input plays an important role in shaping Jamestown's approach to sustainability and resilience. In 2024, the Town gathered feedback through a community survey and public workshops. The text boxes below summarize key survey findings related to renewable energy, including support for solar and wind power, preferences around siting, and comfort levels with residential-scale installations. These results help illustrate how residents view renewable energy and where additional education, engagement, or careful siting may be needed to build broader support.

60%

60% of survey takers support solar power

47%

47% support wind power being sited on public land for the benefit of residents



54% ~ 28%

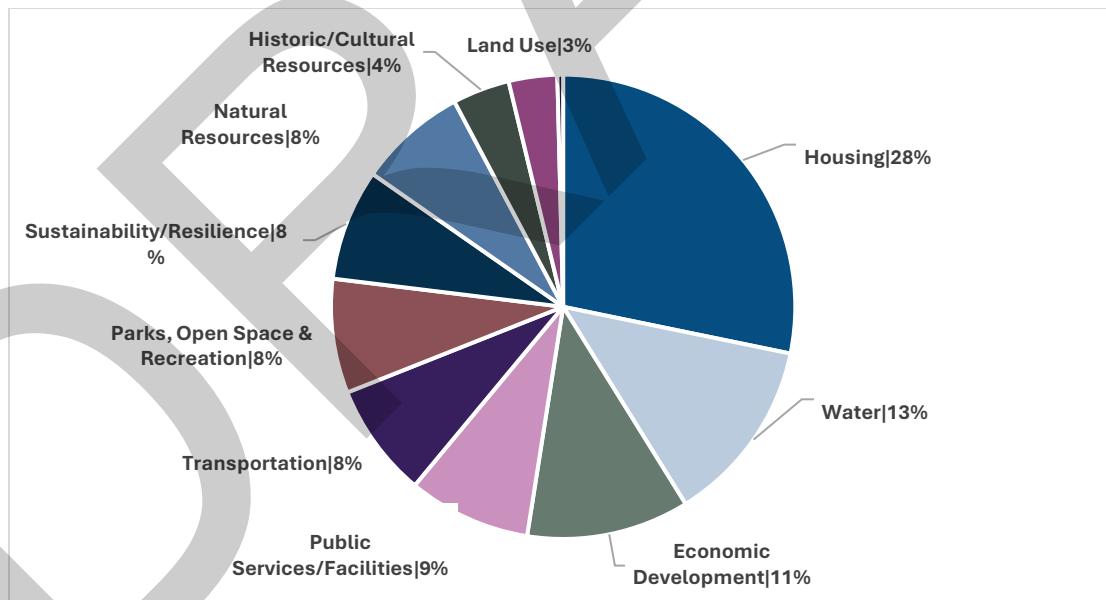
In the 2024 community survey, half (54%) of survey respondents supported residential scale wind generators in their neighborhood while 28% objected to it

With roughly half the population expressing support, renewable energy initiatives will require additional community education and input, as well as strategic siting, to ensure broader acceptance.

11.2.2. 2024 Public Workshop

At the public workshop on November 13, 2024, participants expanded on these themes and discussed a broader set of sustainability and resilience issues. Water-related challenges emerged as a primary concern, with participants emphasizing issues of water availability, infrastructure capacity, and the necessity of updated studies to ensure future resilience. Climate change impacts—such as drought, rising temperatures, sea level rise, and coastal flooding—were also highlighted as key risks for Jamestown.

Figure 11-1. Workshop Priorities by Category



Climate change threatens Jamestown's public and private water supplies and aquifers by increasing the frequency and severity of droughts, reducing groundwater recharge, and elevating the potential for saltwater intrusion into coastal freshwater sources. While



sustainability and resilience ranked as the seventh most identified category overall—behind higher priorities like housing and water—specific climate-related issues, including the development of a climate plan and strategies to mitigate sea level rise, were also among the top 20 issues identified during the dot voting.

Additional key ideas related to resilience and sustainability included:

- Development of a climate action plan to address vulnerabilities in low-lying areas, adaptation to sea level rise, and alignment with updated coastal regulations.
- Sustainable waste management emerged as another priority, with discussions around implementing town-wide composting programs and making upgrades to the Jamestown Transfer Station.
- Green alternatives to traditional solar and wind energy, as well as transitioning existing modes of transportation away from fossil fuels.
- Infrastructure improvements, including the installation of retention ponds and other green infrastructure to mitigate the impacts of climate change and natural disasters.
- Preserve the island's aesthetic character.

Collectively, these conversations reflect Jamestown's commitment to balancing immediate challenges with forward-looking strategies to build a sustainable and resilient future.

11.3. Sustainability



The Sustainability section outlines Jamestown's ongoing efforts to reduce energy and water consumption, expand renewable energy, and prepare for the impacts of climate change. It highlights the Town's recent steps to strengthen local sustainability capacity—including hiring a Sustainability Coordinator—and describes the programs, partnerships, and community initiatives that support long-term environmental stewardship and resilience.

The Sustainability section highlights Jamestown's commitment to reducing resource consumption, promoting renewable energy, and implementing innovative strategies to prepare for the impacts of climate change. These efforts include improving energy efficiency, conserving water, expanding access to renewable energy, and strengthening local programs that encourage environmental stewardship. Together, these efforts reflect a holistic approach to building a sustainable and thriving future for Jamestown.



11.3.1. Energy

Energy use is central to sustaining daily life and supporting Jamestown's long-term resilience. It is consumed across three main areas: electricity, heating and cooling, and transportation. Electricity powers homes, businesses, and public infrastructure. Heating and cooling generally rely on fuels such as heating oil, propane, electricity, and renewable technologies like solar, wind and geothermal systems. Transportation energy is primarily petroleum-based fuels (like gasoline and diesel), though some alternative fuels are gaining traction, including biofuels, electricity, natural gas, and hydrogen (State Planning Council, 2021). Jamestown currently does not have natural gas service to the island.

Understanding existing energy supply, production, and consumption patterns provides a foundation for meaningful action. Renewable energy sources—such as solar, wind, and geothermal—naturally replenish and do not require combustion of fossil fuels. By improving energy efficiency, supporting clean energy generation, and modernizing energy infrastructure, Jamestown can reduce emissions, lower costs, enhance energy access, and contribute to statewide climate goals.

Rhode Island Energy Goals

While Jamestown focuses on its local energy needs, it operates within Rhode Island's broader energy and climate policy framework, which includes efforts to achieve renewable energy targets and reduce greenhouse gas emissions as part of the regional New England power system.

Rhode Island participates in the New England power grid managed by ISO New England (ISO-NE), which supplies electricity to the state's Electric Distribution Companies (EDCs) (The Brattle Group, Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources, 2020). Jamestown's major EDC is Rhode Island Energy, the largest EDC in Rhode Island and is owned by PPL Corp. National Grid was purchased by PPL Corp in June of 2023, ending their twenty-three-year reign as the largest EDC in the state.

State policies strongly influence how energy is generated, delivered, and consumed:

- The Renewable Energy Standard (RES), established in 2004 (R.I. Gen. Laws § 39-26-1 to 10), requires utilities and suppliers to provide a growing share of electricity from renewable sources.
- In 2022, Governor McKee signed legislation requiring 100% of Rhode Island's electricity to be offset by renewable energy by 2033—the first mandate of its kind in the nation.
- The Act on Climate (2021) sets legally binding greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets of 45% by 2030, 80% by 2040, and net-zero by 2050 (compared to 1990 levels).
- The State Guide Plan: Energy 2035 outlines a statewide vision for a secure, cost-effective, and sustainable energy system, including expansions in renewable energy, improvements in energy efficiency, and modernization of infrastructure.



Together, these policies set the expectations and regulatory frameworks that shape how Rhode Island communities—including Jamestown—plan for a cleaner and more resilient energy future. Jamestown must align its planning efforts with these goals to maintain consistency with the State Guide Plan and to remain competitive for grants and technical assistance.

RIDEM publishes greenhouse gas inventories that help track progress toward Act on Climate goals. These reports are for the years 1990-2019 (Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, 2019). The 2019 inventory found that the majority of GHG emissions in 2019 were from the transportation sector (39.7%), followed by the residential heating sector (19.3%) and the electricity sector (18.9%). An updated inventory, released in December 2024, provides additional detail to guide future planning and emission reduction strategies.

Because transportation is a major contributor to GHG emissions, this chapter focuses on heating and cooling and electricity, while initiatives to reduce energy use in the transportation sector are discussed in the transportation chapter of this plan.

Jamestown's Energy Efficiency Efforts

Planning Efforts

Jamestown has taken several steps in recent years to align practices with statewide goals requiring 100% renewable electricity by 2033. The Town completed an energy audit in 2011 with the assistance of and in coordination with the Washington County Regional Planning Council (WCRPC). This study was paid for by federal ARRA funds. The audit concluded with recommendations for municipal streetlight upgrades, which Jamestown has since implemented.

Jamestown is taking steps to conserve energy and use energy more efficiently. These steps help reduce municipal energy expenditure and help mitigate carbon emissions. In 2022, The Town released the 2022 Jamestown Energy Plan to provide strategic direction for reducing greenhouse gas emissions across all buildings within the municipality. In addition to the strategies outlined in this plan, there are numerous state-wide plans and resources that the Town can utilize to address current and future energy efficiency.

Sustainable Jamestown

In the 2015 Comprehensive Plan, an action was listed under Future Land Use to prepare a sustainability plan for Jamestown. Building on that goal, the Town launched Sustainable Jamestown, an online resource and community platform that shares sustainability initiatives, provides educational materials, and outlines local actions to reduce emissions and improve environmental performance (<https://www.sustainablejamestown.com>).



Jamestown Energy Plan

The Jamestown Energy Plan builds off recommendations brought forward by Sustainable Jamestown. The Town envisions achieving the status of a Zero Energy Community. This is defined as reducing energy consumption enough to meet all its energy needs through renewable energy sources. The plan details efforts that the Town has conducted to address greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption, some of which are detailed in this chapter. The plan also provides a roadmap for strategies to achieve its goal of being a Zero Energy Community.

Municipal Actions

Jamestown's municipal government has adopted several measures to increase energy resilience and reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

- In 2024, the Town installed **heat pump systems** at the Jamestown Philomenian Library and the Jamestown Police Department.
- The Town is investing in a **ground-mounted solar installation** at the Transfer Station (former landfill), sized to meet municipal power consumption through net metering.
- In 2022, the Town purchased all municipal streetlights and converted them to **LED fixtures**, reducing energy use and long-term maintenance costs.

Past efforts also shaped the Town's approach to energy development. In 2010, voters narrowly approved a bond to study a municipal wind turbine. After extensive analysis, the Town Council found the project financially infeasible due to high interconnection costs. However, technological advances and the rapid expansion of Rhode Island's offshore wind industry—centered at the Port of Davisville in Quonset—may create new opportunities for Jamestown to reassess wind energy feasibility or participate in regional procurement efforts.

Electric Vehicle Charging

The transportation sector is the leading contributor to Rhode Island's GHG emissions (RI Division of Statewide Planning, n.d.). While Jamestown's municipal fleet and most private vehicles registered in Jamestown rely on gasoline or diesel, statewide momentum toward electric vehicles (EV) adoption is increasing. In October 2019, State of Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER) launched Electrify RI, an EV charging station incentive program that encourages the adoption of EV charging stations in workplaces, multi-unit dwellings, state and local government properties, and publicly accessible locations. This program made \$1.4 million available on a first-come, first-served basis. To date, no chargers have been installed in Jamestown through this program (State of Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources, n.d.), but the Town may face increased pressure to promote EV adoption, develop EV infrastructure, and reduce reliance on fossil-fuel-based transportation as part of statewide emissions reduction efforts.



Sustainability Coordinator

In response to growing environmental and climate-related challenges, Jamestown hired its first Sustainability Coordinator in July 2025, as a contract position in the Planning Department. This position supports community programs, public outreach, and grant development as they relate to sustainability and resilience.

Windmist Farm

Windmist Farm in Jamestown, RI is a family-owned and operated farm that utilized the Rhode Island Agricultural Energy Program, USDA's Rural Energy for America Program, and Rhode Island Commerce's Renewable Energy Fund, to install a 25.21-kilowatt solar panel system on top of two southern facing barn roofs. This has led to saving \$18,000 a year in energy costs (Resources, State of Rhode Island Office of Energy, 2024).

Resources for Energy Efficiency

State Office of Energy Resources (OER)

The State of Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources is the state's hub for resources related to energy efficiency and renewable energy: "The Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources' (OER) mission is to lead the state toward a clean, affordable, reliable, and equitable energy future. OER develops policies and programs that respond to the state's evolving energy needs, while advancing environmental sustainability, energy security, and a vibrant clean energy economy. OER is committed to working with public- and private-sector stakeholders to ensure that all Rhode Islanders have access to cost-effective, resilient, and sustainable energy solutions."

Rhode Island Energy Efficiency Program

Jamestown residents have access to Rhode Island Energy Efficiency, a state program that provides residents with no or low-cost energy saving measures. Rhode Island Energy offers many energy efficiency rebates, incentives, and services to help Rhode Island residents, businesses, and institutions manage their energy usage. These programs are funded by an energy efficiency charge on all customers' gas and electric bills, in accordance with Rhode Island law.

Rhode Island Efficient Buildings Fund (RIEBF)

The RIEBF is a revolving loan fund with low-interest loans for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in which the annual energy savings achieved exceeds the annual debt service. This funding program is jointly administered by Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank (RIIB) and Office of Energy Resources.

Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant Program

Jamestown is eligible to receive funding to reduce its carbon footprint through the Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant Program, although these federal programs are highly uncertain and vulnerable at the time of the writing of this document. This federal program,



administered by the U.S. Department of Energy, was established in 2007 through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and aims to help municipalities implement strategies to improve their energy use by improving efficiency and reducing emissions from fossil fuels.

Solarize Jamestown

Solarize Jamestown is an incentive program started in 2018 aimed at encouraging the adoption of residential and commercial solar photovoltaic (PV) systems. The program utilizes educational and marketing outreach, combined with tiered pricing to provide increased savings to homeowners. Newport Solar was the solar installer for the Town, installing 29 solar arrays in Jamestown homes with a total 223 kilowatts.

Clean Heat Rhode Island

Clean Heat Rhode Island is a heat pump program for households, small to mid-sized businesses, and non-profits. The program offers incentives for the installation of high efficiency heat pumps. The Clean Heat program is the largest energy rebate program for constituents offered by OER. This program provided rebates for 79 homes in Jamestown. According to the state energy commission, thermal emissions account for one-third of Rhode Island's greenhouse gas emissions. Heat pumps are economically and energy efficient mechanism for heating and cooling buildings.

New England Heat Pump Accelerator

The New England Heat Pump Accelerator is a regional coalition application designed to promote the adoption of energy-efficient electric heat pump technologies across New England. The program focuses on accelerating the transition to clean, renewable heating and cooling systems by providing financial incentives, technical support, and educational resources to homeowners, businesses, and communities. By reducing systemic barriers to the adoption of electric heat pumps, the program helps reduce energy consumption, lower utility bills, and decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

Zero Energy for the Ocean State (ZEOS) Program

The Zero Energy for the Ocean State (ZEOS) Program is a statewide initiative that offers grants to design and construct energy efficiency affordable housing. This program provides financial incentives, technical assistance, and resources to new construction and/or renovation projects in single or multifamily homes. This program funded 79 rebates for Jamestowners.

Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE)

PACE is a financing program that allows property owners to repay the costs of energy efficiency or renewable energy projects in conjunction with property tax payments. Commercial PACE (C-PACE) is the same type of program, but for commercial property owners. In Rhode Island, this program is administered through the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank (RIIB). Jamestown has not yet chosen to participate in this program.



Rhode Island Agricultural Energy Grant Program

The Rhode Island Agricultural Energy Grant Program is a state-supported initiative designed to help agricultural producers transition to renewable energy and make energy efficiency improvements. The grant program is administered by the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER) and provides financial assistance, technical support, and educational resources to farmers, ranchers, and growers in Rhode Island. Priority is giving to agricultural operations applications seeking funding to improve their energy efficiency, promote renewable energy, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

11.3.2. Recycling and Composting Services

Recycling is mandatory for residents who use municipal waste collection services. In fiscal year 2024, Jamestown delivered 274 tons of recyclables to the materials recycling facility (MRF), which equates to an MRF recycling rate of 31.2 %. The Town currently does not offer food waste recycling or composting services. For more information regarding current waste management policies and practices in the Town, see Chapter 7, Public Services & Facilities. As Jamestown works to reduce waste and improve material management, the Town is also expanding its use of nature-based strategies to manage stormwater, enhance water quality, and strengthen climate resilience. Green infrastructure has become an essential component of these efforts.

11.3.3. Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure refers to stormwater management practices that use natural processes to slow, filter, and absorb runoff. These approaches reduce flooding, improve water quality, and support healthy ecosystems, while also enhancing community resilience to extreme precipitation and coastal impacts associated with climate change. Unlike traditional “gray” infrastructure—such as pipes and culverts—green infrastructure mimics natural hydrology and offers environmental co-benefits, including groundwater recharge, habitat creation, and reductions in urban heat and pollution.

Green infrastructure is an increasingly important component of Jamestown’s sustainability and resilience efforts. The Town already employs several green infrastructure projects, and these examples demonstrate how nature-based solutions can help address stormwater, reduce localized flooding, and support long-term environmental health.





The Clean Water Act, Section 502, defines green infrastructure as:

"...the range of measures that use plant or soil systems, permeable pavement or other permeable surfaces or substrates, stormwater harvest and reuse, or landscaping to store, infiltrate, or evapotranspire stormwater and reduce flows to sewer systems or to surface waters (EPA, n.d.)."

Green infrastructure can provide benefits beyond stormwater management, including improving water and air quality, providing connected habitat and wildlife, increasing publicly available recreation areas, and increasing property values (EPA, 2021). Green infrastructure can also assist Jamestown in achieving its energy and emission goals as it can lower building energy demands and reduce energy costs (EPA, 2025).

Green Infrastructure Practices

Jamestown has incorporated several green infrastructure practices into local projects. The Town has installed bioswales and rain barrels to increase water absorption and reduce runoff. A green roof at the Environmental Packing International facility on Clinton Ave captures rainfall and moderates stormwater discharge while providing energy-efficiency benefits. Additional opportunities for green infrastructure are identified in the Jamestown Brook Watershed Plan, which outlines actions to maintain and improve water quality (RIDEM, n.d.). In the 2021 Jamestown Community Resilience Building Summary of Findings also highlights green infrastructure as a priority strategy for enhancing the town's resilience to climate-related hazards (Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank, 2021).

Together, these practices demonstrate Jamestown's commitment to integrating nature-based solutions into municipal planning, stormwater management, and climate resilience efforts.

The Green Infrastructure Coalition (GIC)

The Rhode Island Green Infrastructure Coalition (GIC) is a statewide partnership of nonprofit groups, design professionals, policy-makers, and local stakeholders that promote the use of nature-based strategies—such as rain gardens bioswales, and permeable surfaces—for stormwater management, runoff pollution reduction, and climate resilience. Membership is free and open to any Rhode Island organization that supports the organization's mission and encourages the use of green infrastructure. Jamestown not currently a member of this organization. To date, the City of Providence is the only municipality listed as a member of this organization (Rhode Island Green Infrastructure Coalition, n.d.).



11.4. Resilience

11.4.1. Introduction



Resilience is essential for Jamestown in responding to the risks posed by natural hazards. Building resilience requires analyzing hazards, identifying vulnerabilities, and implementing strategies to reduce risks and protect lives, infrastructure, and property.

Jamestown is particularly vulnerable to hurricanes and storm surge as an island community situated at the southern end of Narragansett Bay. Conanicut Island, as along with Dutch Island and Gould Island, experiences the full effects of its coastal setting, which increases exposure to climate-related hazards, including sea-level rise, coastal erosion, and flooding in low-lying areas. While portions of the island's topography provide some natural buffering from the strongest wave action and storm surge, this protection is limited and does not eliminate the risks associated with extreme coastal events.

Despite this natural protection, Jamestown remains exposed to other significant hazards. Severe weather events, such as hurricanes and nor'easters, bring heavy rainfall/snow, high winds, and tidal flooding that can overwhelm infrastructure. Increasingly intense rainfall events elevate the risks of localized flooding, while droughts and heatwaves may threaten water supply and strain infrastructure as climate change intensifies weather patterns. These vulnerabilities highlight the importance of resilience planning to reduce risks and safeguard the community against future hazards.

State law (RIGL 45-22.2-6(b)(10) requires that the Comprehensive Plan "include an identification of areas that could be vulnerable to the effects of sea-level rise, flooding, storm damage, drought, or other natural hazards" and further mandates that goals, policies, and implementation actions be identified to help avoid or minimize these impacts on lives, infrastructure, and property.

11.4.2. What Are Natural Hazards?

A natural hazard is defined as "an event or physical condition that has the potential to cause fatalities, injuries, property and infrastructure damage, agricultural loss, damage to the environment, interruption of business, or other types of harm or loss." A natural hazard can also be exacerbated by societal behavior and practice, such as building in a floodplain, along a sea cliff or earthquake fault. Natural disasters are inevitable, but the impacts of natural



hazards can, at a minimum, be mitigated or, in some instances, prevented entirely (RIEMA, 2024).

Although most of the hazards posed by such events can be anticipated, other risks are emerging as the climate changes and some hazards are expected to increase in risk and severity over the next 20 years, such as intensity of storm events and associated flooding. As climate conditions continue to change, some hazards—particularly severe storms, flooding, and extreme heat—are expected to increase in both frequency and intensity over the next several decades. Identifying these hazards and understanding how they interact with Jamestown's physical environment is essential for developing effective resilience strategies.

Jamestown's location at the mouth of Narragansett Bay and its limited access points make it particularly sensitive to natural hazards. While the Town's topography provides some buffering in certain areas, the Island remains highly exposed to high tides, coastal flooding, and weather-related disruptions. These vulnerabilities make it critical to evaluate hazard risks systematically and incorporate resilience measures into municipal planning and infrastructure decisions.

The following sections summarize Jamestown's hazard planning framework and provide a detailed assessment of natural hazards identified in the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Map 11-1 illustrates flood hazard areas across Jamestown. Many of the roadways and areas susceptible to flooding are found within these flood zones.

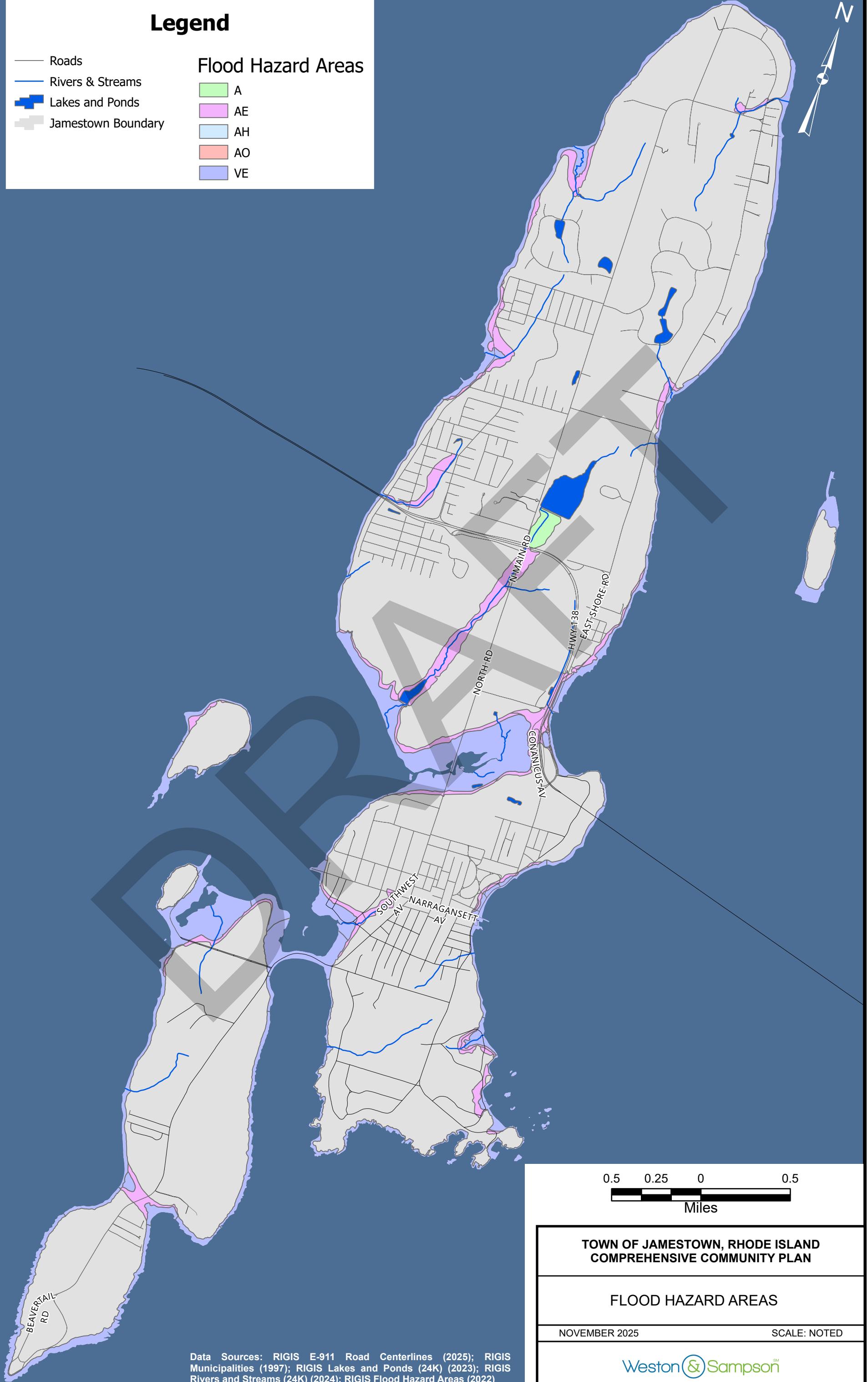


Legend

- Roads
- Rivers & Streams
- Lakes and Ponds
- Jamestown Boundary

Flood Hazard Areas

- A
- AE
- AH
- AO
- VE



TOWN OF JAMESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND
COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

NOVEMBER 2025

SCALE: NOTED

Weston & Sampson

Data Sources: RIGIS E-911 Road Centerlines (2025); RIGIS Municipalities (1997); RIGIS Lakes and Ponds (24K) (2023); RIGIS Rivers and Streams (24K) (2024); RIGIS Flood Hazard Areas (2022)

11.4.3. Planning for Resilience

In addition to this Comprehensive Plan, the Town prioritizes resilience through several other regularly updated plans.

The Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP), required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for eligibility in certain funding programs, identifies the natural hazards that may impact Jamestown and provides an action plan for mitigating them. Jamestown's 2025 HMP Update was approved by FEMA on January 27, 2025 and serves as the Town's primary technical resource for hazard risk assessment and mitigation strategies. The Town's HMP is also an important tool discussed in the Natural Resources and Public Services & Facilities chapters.

The Jamestown Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) complements the HMP by enhancing the community's capacity to respond to and recover from natural hazards and climate change impacts. The EOP includes components such as a hazard assessment and vulnerability analysis, emergency response and recovery plans, public engagement, and strategies aimed to enhance resilience of critical infrastructure and essential services.

The Jamestown Comprehensive Harbor Management Plan provides a long-range vision for controlled growth and development of harbor and shoreline areas of the Town. It evaluates municipal harbor management activities, relevant ordinances, and regulatory programs, and identifies strategies to manage moorings, public access, and coastal resources. Because Jamestown is particularly vulnerable along its shoreline, the Harbor Management Plan plays a key role in balancing existing uses with the need to prepare for sea level rise, flooding, and extreme weather events such as hurricanes and nor'easters. Jamestown's Emergency Management Director is responsible for implementation and updates of these plans.

Many of Jamestown's key transportation routes, located along the coastline or in low-lying areas, making them especially vulnerable to climate change impacts. It is therefore essential to prioritize resilient infrastructure upgrades in future Rhode Island Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) applications. This includes elevating roads, reinforcing bridges, and implementing stormwater management systems to better withstand coastal and inland flooding. By investing in these vulnerable routes, Jamestown can help ensure that critical transportation infrastructure remains functional during extreme weather events, maintaining access for residents, emergency services, and local businesses. These investments will not only protect Jamestown's economy and public safety but can also reduce the long-term costs of repair and recovery from climate-related disruptions.

Together, these plans and investments provide a coordinated framework for reducing risk, supporting timely response and recovery, and help Jamestown residents feel confident that the Town is thoroughly prepared for natural disasters and long-term climate-related challenges.



11.4.4. Risk Assessment and Vulnerabilities

Understanding the probability, frequency and extent or impact of natural hazards helps a community prioritize mitigation actions and allocate resources effectively. Jamestown's recently completed Hazard Mitigation Plan includes a comprehensive natural hazard risk analysis, which this Comprehensive Plan builds upon by linking hazard mitigation to broader community goals such as such as economic development, transportation, land use, and community services. Table 11.1 below identifies nine natural hazards that may affect Jamestown and ranks them from high to low based on frequency, extent, and expected changes in risk due to climate change. Hazards with the highest overall risk are discussed in detail below.

Table 11.1. Natural Hazard Risks by Severity			
Hazard	Frequency	Extent	Probability of Future Occurrence due to Climate Change
Hurricanes/Tropical Cyclones	Low	Catastrophic	Medium
Tornadoes	Low	Serious	Medium
High Wind/Thunderstorm	High	Minor	High
Severe Winter Weather	High	Serious	High
Flooding	High	Serious	High
Coastal Erosion	High	Serious	High
Wildfires	High	Serious	Medium
Drought/Extreme Heat	Medium	Minor	High
Earthquakes	Low	Minor	Cannot be predicted

Source: Jamestown HMP, 2024

Floods (riverine flooding, coastal storm surge, erosion and sea level rise)

Flooding occurs when large quantities of water accumulate rapidly in an area. Extended wet periods combined with Jamestown's poorly drained soils can create saturated conditions, causing runoff to exceed natural and built drainage capacity. Flash floods develop with little



warning and can cause rapid rises in water levels. Storm-surge flooding occurs when strong onshore winds push seawater onto normally dry land, particularly during nor'easters or hurricanes. The most severe flooding occurs when storm surge coincides with high tide.

While much of Jamestown's coastline rises steeply from the Bay and is characterized by rocky shores, several low-lying areas remain vulnerable, as shown in Map 11-1. Sea level rise is expected to increase the extent and duration of tidal flooding and elevate storm-surge impacts. Areas most susceptible to flooding include Fox Hill Pond, Zeek's Creek (Great Creek), the Conanicus Avenue seawall, Sheffield Cove, Potter Cove, Hull Cove, and Mackerel Cove. High groundwater tables throughout the Island can exacerbate drainage challenges, causing basement flooding and structural instability.

Jamestown has experienced several major flooding events in recent decades. The March 2010 floods resulted in statewide emergency declarations and widespread property damage. Hurricane Irene (2011) and Superstorm Sandy (2012) caused significant coastal erosion and infrastructure damage, particularly along Mackerel Cove, Potter Cove, and Bay View Drive. Although repairs have been made, erosion continues to increase vulnerability.

Evacuation during major storm events is complicated by limited access off the Island. A 2016 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers study estimated that up to 2,175 residents may evacuate using nearly 1,200 vehicles during a major hurricane. Flooding along Beavertail Road may isolate residents living south of the isthmus, increasing risk during extreme events.

Flooding remains one of the most frequent and costly natural hazards in Rhode Island. In addition to coastal storms and hurricanes, dam failures—while rare—can result in catastrophic flash flooding due to the sudden release of impounded water.

Hurricanes and Severe Thunderstorms

Hurricanes and severe thunderstorms are increasing in intensity across southern New England as atmospheric and ocean temperatures rise. These storms can produce lightning, hail, heavy precipitation, and high winds capable of causing significant property damage. Hurricanes, with sustained winds exceeding 74 mph, are the most damaging; tropical storms with winds between 39 and 73 mph also pose substantial risk.

Although less frequent than winter storms, recent hurricanes and tropical storms have caused considerable damage in Jamestown, as shown in Table 11-2. Hurricane Sandy produced widespread coastal flooding, high winds, and storm-surge impacts that damaged roads and seawalls, including Beavertail Road. Tropical storms Isaias (2020) and Henri (2021) brought strong winds and precipitation, resulting in power outages and debris blockage.

High winds may damage roofs, siding, windows, decks, and other structural components. Windborne debris poses risks to public safety and can contribute to additional property loss. Heavy rainfall during hurricanes and severe thunderstorms can overwhelm drainage systems, increasing the likelihood of localized flooding. As climate change intensifies rainfall



rates, precipitation-driven flooding may become more frequent even outside major hurricane events.

Table 11.2. Previous Occurrences of Hurricanes and Tropical Storms

Name	Date	Property Damage ^a	Deaths ^b
Tropical Storm Henri	Aug. 28, 2021	\$500k	0
Tropical Storm Isaias	Aug. 4, 2020	\$0	0
Hurricane Sandy	Oct. 29, 2012	\$3M	0
Hurricane Irene	Aug. 28, 2011	\$20k	0

Source: Jamestown HMP, 2024

Notes:

1. ^a Property damage is an estimated total cost of damage across Newport County for a storm event.
2. ^b Number of deaths includes all deaths from storm event across Newport County.

Severe thunderstorms and hurricanes can have a wide array of impacts on the local economy and daily life. High winds can lead to long-term power outages and road blockades due to debris. Sustained winds can also cause building components, including gutters, screened enclosures that are not structurally tied to the house, roof coverings, shingles, car ports, porch coverings, overhangs, siding, decking, windows and even walls and roofs to fail. Flying debris endangers residents and can lead to additional property damage (Town of Jamestown, 2024).

Heavy precipitation and storm surge also raise concerns about flooding from severe thunderstorms. Areas with poor drainage in close proximity to the coast are particularly vulnerable to flooding and residents in these areas are at higher risk for property damage. As sea level rises, storm surge is expected to move further inland. Warmer temperatures create ideal conditions for heavier rainfall rates during major storms.

Sea Level Rise

Sea level rise (SLR) presents a long-term challenge for Jamestown's low-lying areas and coastal infrastructure. Rising tides increase the frequency of tidal flooding and amplify the impacts of storm surge and coastal erosion. Areas already prone to flooding—Fox Hill Pond,



Great Creek, Conanicus Avenue seawall, Sheffield Cove, and Mackerel Cove—may face chronic inundation in the coming decades.

SLR also threatens the Island's freshwater supply. More than half of Jamestown residents rely on groundwater, and saltwater intrusion into aquifers can occur as sea levels rise, particularly following storm events or during drought conditions. Increased demand, combined with climate-related shifts in precipitation, may further strain water availability. Saltwater contamination would pose significant challenges for households, agriculture, and emergency response.

Drought

Drought conditions may become more frequent and unpredictable as climate patterns shift. Extended periods of reduced precipitation limit groundwater recharge, lowering water levels in local freshwater sources such as Fox Hill Pond and contributing to reduced aquifer capacity. These shortages can strain the Town's water supply, particularly during the high-demand summer months.

Historical droughts have resulted in regional water emergencies. In 1991, low water levels in North Kingstown's system required support from the National Guard, reflecting vulnerabilities that could similarly affect Jamestown. As climate variability increases, the Town will need flexible water conservation strategies and infrastructure planning to ensure adequate supply.

Drought also impacts local agriculture, reducing soil moisture and irrigation availability, which may affect crop yields and livestock operations.

Winter Weather

Jamestown experiences winter storms characterized by heavy snow, ice, high winds, and freezing temperatures. Nor'easters pose a major threat, bringing hurricane-force wind gusts, coastal flooding, and blizzard conditions to southern New England. Although winter storms occur less frequently than coastal storms in other seasons, they can still produce significant impacts.

Heavy snow and ice can damage buildings, particularly flat-roofed structures, and may cause hazardous conditions on roadways. Accumulated snow can lead to localized flooding during melt periods. High winds and ice accumulation can break power lines and disrupt utility services, leaving residents without heat or electricity—conditions especially dangerous for vulnerable populations.

Recent winter events listed in Table 11-3 have caused prolonged outages and infrastructure damage. Although warming temperatures may reduce overall storm frequency, winter storms are expected to become more intense and unpredictable, necessitating continued preparation to protect public safety and utility systems.



Table 11.3. Winter Weather Events Since 2015

Date	Type of Winter Weather
February 2, 2015	Winter Weather
February 8-9, 2015	Winter Weather
February 14-15, 2015	Heavy Snow
February 24-25, 2015	Winter Weather
February 2, 2015	Winter Weather
March 1-2, 2015	Winter Weather
March 5, 2015	Heavy Snow
January 23-24, 2016	Heavy Snow
February 5, 2016	Heavy Snow
February 8, 2016	Winter Weather
March 21, 2016	Winter Weather
January 7, 2017	Winter Storm
February 9, 2017	Winter Storm
March 10, 2017	Winter Storm
December 14, 2017	Winter Weather
January 4, 2018	Winter Weather
March 13, 2018	Blizzard
March 3-4, 2019	Winter Weather
December 16-17, 2020	Heavy Snow
February 7, 2021	Heavy Snow



Table 11.3. Winter Weather Events Since 2015

Date	Type of Winter Weather
January 28-29, 2022	Blizzard
February 27-28, 2023	Heavy Snow

Source: Jamestown HMP, 2024

11.4.5. Programs Related to Resilience

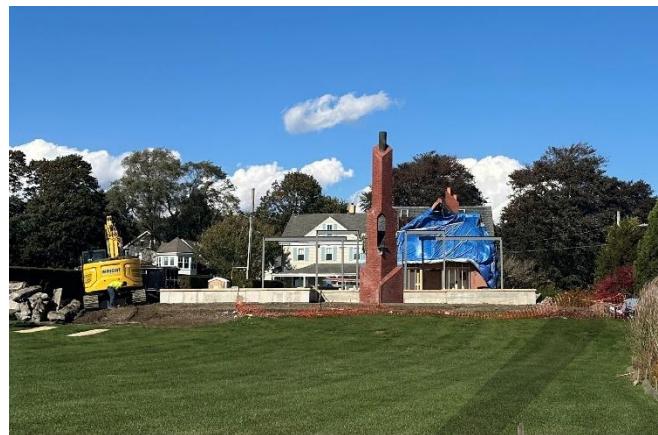
The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administers the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to reduce losses associated with flooding and to lessen the financial burden of disaster assistance. The NFIP is built on three components: flood insurance, floodplain regulations, and mapping. Communities participating in NFIP must adopt and enforce minimum floodplain management requirements to ensure that development in flood-prone areas undertaken safely.

Jamestown joined the NFIP in 2010 with adoption of its Community Flood Plain Ordinance for Special Flood Hazard Areas as part of the Zoning Ordinance. Through this program, FEMA provides detailed flood hazard maps that identify areas at risk of flooding, helping communities assess their vulnerability to flood events. Additionally, the NFIP offers federally backed flood insurance to property owners, renters, and businesses, providing financial protection in the event of flood damage. This insurance helps ensure that individuals and communities can recover and rebuild after a flood, while also encouraging responsible development and floodplain management practices in flood-prone areas. All 39 communities in Rhode Island participate in the NFIP. According to Jamestown's HMP, there have been five NFIP claims since the 2017 HMP, with 132 active policies across Jamestown as of May 24, 2024. There is one repetitive loss property in Jamestown, which has received an aggregated total building payment of \$25,153.96 on two total losses (Town of Jamestown, 2024). More information on the NFIP program and specific data can be found in the HMP or through FEMA.

The State Building Code allows for development in flood hazard areas (where permitted by zoning) provided the building is structurally flood-proofed and the first-floor elevation is 1-foot above the base flood elevation (in accordance with ASCE 24-05). Figure 11-2 illustrates an example of floodproofing and elevated building design on Conanicus Avenue that conforms to these state requirements.



Figure 11-2. Home Elevation on Conanicus Avenue



Source: Town of Jamestown

In addition to federal and state programs, Jamestown's participation in NFIP, and its enforcement of floodplain regulations help reduce the long-term vulnerability, supports safe building practices, and ensures eligibility for federal disaster relief and mitigation grants. These programs also reinforce the Town's hazard mitigation efforts outlined in the Hazard Mitigation Plan and complement resilience strategies in this Comprehensive Plan.

11.4.6. Jamestown Vulnerabilities and Assets

Jamestown's geographic location and topography present both advantages and challenges for resilience planning. While the Island's rocky coastline minimizes the impacts of sea level rise, meaning that there are less structures in harm's way, the majority of vulnerable structures are residential and will be the focus of Jamestown's future mitigation and resiliency efforts, as outlined in the HMP.

Map 11-2: Sea Level Rise, adapted from the HMP, illustrates three different sea level rise models, ranging from 1 to 5 feet of sea level rise. The map also depicts where critical and non-critical community lifelines are located. By comparing where community assets are with sea level rise projections, it becomes clear which assets are most vulnerable to occasional flooding versus chronic inundation.

The Jamestown Village commercial area is particularly vulnerable to chronic inundation at both East and West Ferry, and the potential impacts of an event warrant proactive mitigation measures. Any disruption to this area would have serious ramifications for Town residents, especially since many of the assets, including roads, that residents rely on are concentrated in this area. Beyond the downtown commercial area, all residents in the Town are at a heightened vulnerability due to its island geography. Both bridges close when wind speeds reach approximately 68 miles per hour. When the bridges close, people are dependent upon those critical services provided within the Town, including McQuade's Market, Bank Newport, Cumberland Farms gas and convenience mart, and Jamestown Family Practice Center.



Damage to these businesses and other goods and services could pose significant economic and social hardships.

The damage to and destruction of the built environment, particularly in the critical lifeline sectors (Communications, Emergency Services, Energy, Healthcare and Public Health, Transportation, Water), represents enormous economic, social, and general functional costs to the community, while also impeding emergency response and recovery activities. Since Jamestown is a coastal community, it has increased vulnerability to extreme weather events like hurricanes.

Jamestown's electric power infrastructure is particularly vulnerable due to its reliance on underwater transmission cables to bring electricity onto the island as well as above ground transmission lines that supply power on the island. Two underwater transmission cables supply electricity from the mainland, both landing at Ft. Wetherill, making it susceptible to disruptions from severe weather, maritime activity, and mechanical failures. A notable example of this vulnerability occurred when the "Big Red Boat" dragged its anchor during a storm, damaging both underwater power lines and leaving the island without electricity for a week. Incidents like this highlight the risks associated with submerged infrastructure and the need for enhanced resiliency measures, such as backup power systems, grid redundancy, and improved anchorage regulations to prevent similar disruptions in the future.

Jamestown's local government is dependent on the functionality of municipal facilities to carry out its municipal functions. Without these existing structures, the Town would face a limited capacity in fulfilling its administrative and departmental responsibilities. These major municipal structures include the Town Hall, Police Station, Fire Station, and the Melrose Avenue School that serve as the Town's primary emergency shelter. This shelter can accommodate 600 to 1,000 individuals with support from the American Red Cross. The Jamestown Library serves as a heating and cooling center during extreme temperature events.

Certain populations are more susceptible to harm or hardship during disasters, emergencies, or extreme events due to their physical, social, economic, or environmental characteristics.

Definitions

Critical Community Lifelines

Based on FEMA's definition of community lifelines, which are institutions that "enable the continuous operation of critical government and business functions and is essential to human health and safety or economic security."

Examples include: police department, fire department, government institutions, schools

Non-Critical Community Assets

Defined as other assets that Jamestown has identified as being valuable to the community, but not essential to the safety and security of the community following a disaster.

Examples: Beavertail Lighthouse, historic sites,

Source: Jamestown HMP, 2024



Vulnerable groups are at a greater risk of injury, trauma and/or death from natural and manmade hazards (Ebi, 2013).

Approximately 770 children under the age of 18 (14.1% of the population) and 1,800 people aged 65 or older(32.8%) live in Jamestown (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). These populations have greater dependency on caregivers and limited ability to respond to emergencies, making them particularly vulnerable during disasters.

People with limited financial resources may lack access to safe housing, transportation opportunities, healthcare coverage, or emergency preparedness resources available online. They may also face difficulty evacuating or taking preventive actions due to financial constraints. Flood insurance and flood-proofing places of residence can be expensive. Low-income families may lack financial resources to invest in these opportunities and improvements to protect themselves against flooding and property damage. Jamestown is not located in any of the RI Environmental Justice Areas as defined and mapped by RIDEM (Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM), 2023).

The restricted access off the Island creates a barrier for those with mobility impairments or without access to personal transportation, making it more difficult for these individuals to evacuate during emergencies or access critical services such as medical care and shelter.

Jamestown is home to three group homes that service the needs of a portion of the Town's disabled population. In addition, according to the 2022 ACS, Jamestown was home to 504 residents with a disability, of the total 5,538 residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024). Residents with disabilities may need additional messaging or assistance in the case of an evacuation or sheltering in place. Each group home will be identified and evaluated in terms of access to evacuation routes and capacity of the home itself, to ensure that any residents within those facilities can be provided for in the case of a natural disaster or evacuation. The three elderly/disabled persons housing is located on Pemberton Avenue in the downtown area.

Table 11.4. Emergency Shelters for Jamestown

Name	Location	Occupancy
Melrose Avenue School	76 Melrose Avenue	600-1,000
Jamestown Fire Station	50 Narragansett Avenue	100

Town of Jamestown Emergency Operations Plan, 2025.

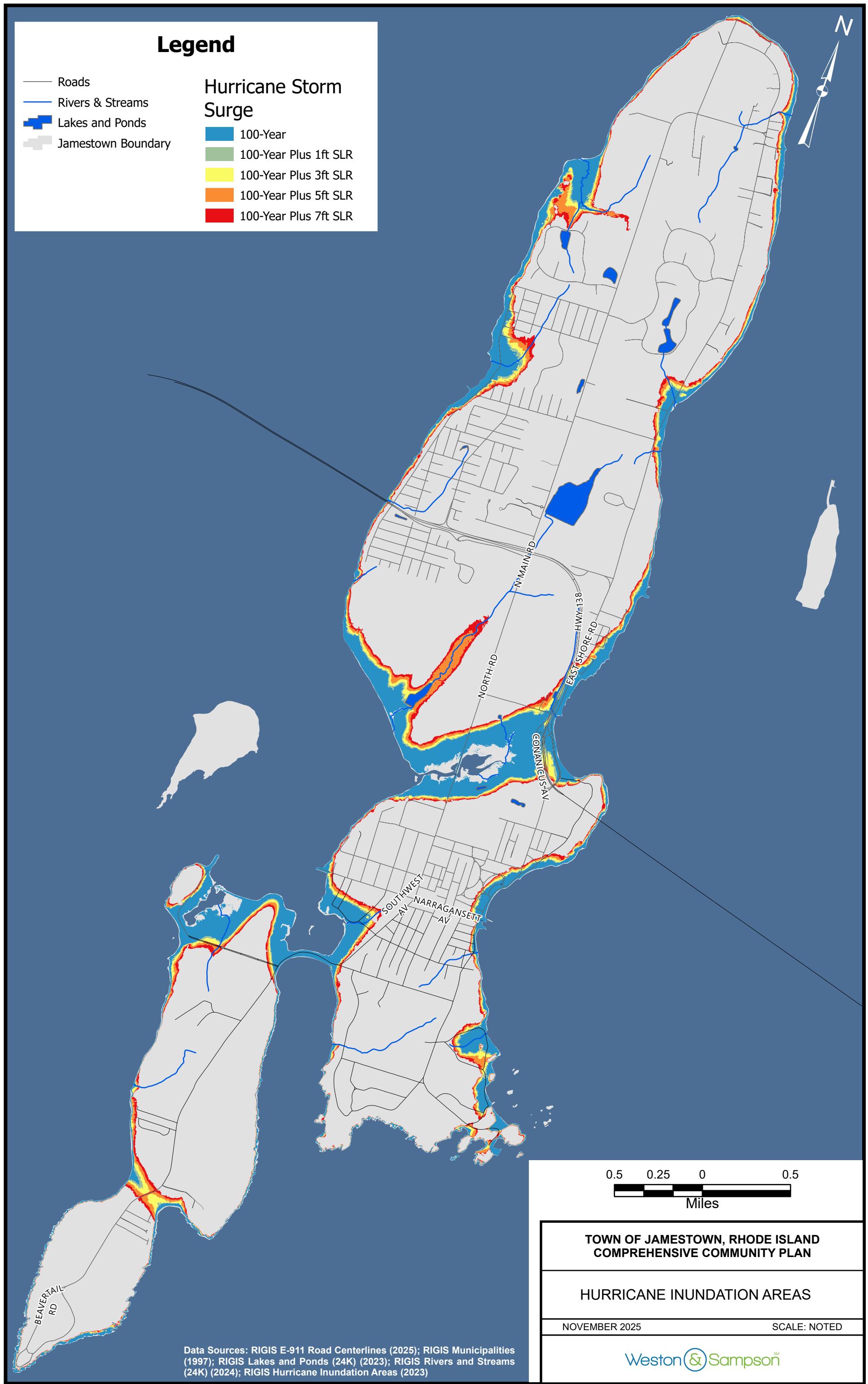


Legend

- Roads
- Rivers & Streams
-  Lakes and Ponds
-  Jamestown Boundary

Hurricane Storm Surge

- 100-Year
- 100-Year Plus 1ft SLR
- 100-Year Plus 3ft SLR
- 100-Year Plus 5ft SLR
- 100-Year Plus 7ft SLR



11.5. Issues and Opportunities



Jamestown faces a variety of interconnected climate and infrastructure challenges that threaten public safety, utility reliability, and environmental health. The Town's low-lying infrastructure and coastal areas are increasingly vulnerable to flooding from storm surge, tidal inundation, and sea level rise, which places property and lives at risk.

Jamestown's ability to thrive in the face of climate challenges depends on how well the community understands its vulnerabilities and mobilizes the tools, partnerships, and resources available. The key Issues and Opportunities outlined below distill the major themes that emerged throughout this chapter—from infrastructure and environmental risks to renewable energy, water supply, and community preparedness. These themes point to where targeted action can meaningfully improve the Island's long-term sustainability and resilience.

11.5.1. Sustainability and Regional Collaboration

Jamestown has several pathways to advance a more sustainable and resilient future. In addition to accessing to a variety of state and federal funding opportunities for sustainability initiatives, the Town benefits from local programs funded and supported by Jamestown residents. These include Solarize Jamestown, Clean Heat Rhode Island, and Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grants, which can be leveraged to support broader sustainability and resiliency projects.

Building upon its existing capabilities by partnering with surrounding communities, such as Newport and Narragansett, will further strengthen the Town's ability to implement shared sustainability initiatives.

Opportunities to enhance sustainability:

- Expand participation in energy-efficiency and clean-energy programs, including Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grants.
- Deepen collaboration with surrounding communities—such as Newport and Narragansett—to implement shared climate, energy, and coastal resilience initiatives.
- Strengthen community education on sustainability practices and available incentives.



11.5.2. Vulnerability During Severe Weather

Vulnerable populations, including the elderly and disabled, are at particular risk as a result of severe weather. These hazards are further compounded by Jamestown's limited evacuation routes. Bridge closures during high wind events and recurrent flooding along Beavertail Road can leave residents in the southern part of the island isolated during emergencies.

Issues identified include:

- Create Limited off-island access during hazardous conditions.
- Isolation risk for residents south of Beavertail Road during storm events.
- Communication and outreach challenges for hard-to-reach populations.

Opportunities in response:

- Create and distribute an emergency response plan to reach vulnerable and less accessible populations on the Island.
- Maintain and upgrade flood response measures for the bridge along Beavertail Road.
- Update and expand green infrastructure, from bioswales to rain gardens, green roofs, and street tree plantings, to absorb stormwater.

11.5.3. Water Supply and Access

Jamestown's water supply resources face growing pressure from climate change, sea level rise, and increasing demand. The Island's reliance on a limited number of groundwater wells makes it vulnerable to drought, saltwater intrusion, and over-extraction.

Issues identified include:

- Droughts conditions that deplete freshwater resources.
- Saltwater intrusion into aquifers due to sea level rise and coastal flooding.
- Limited supply of groundwater pumping wells, which will only be further strained as groundwater is pumped more quickly than the rate at which the aquifers are replenished.

Opportunities in response:

- Invest in alternative freshwater sources that can be used as the aquifer becomes depleted.
- Limit future development to avoid straining the water supply further.



11.5.4. Energy Transition

Jamestown's reliance on non-renewable energy delivered via underwater transmission cables makes the community susceptible to long-term power outages stemming from storm damage or cyber threats.

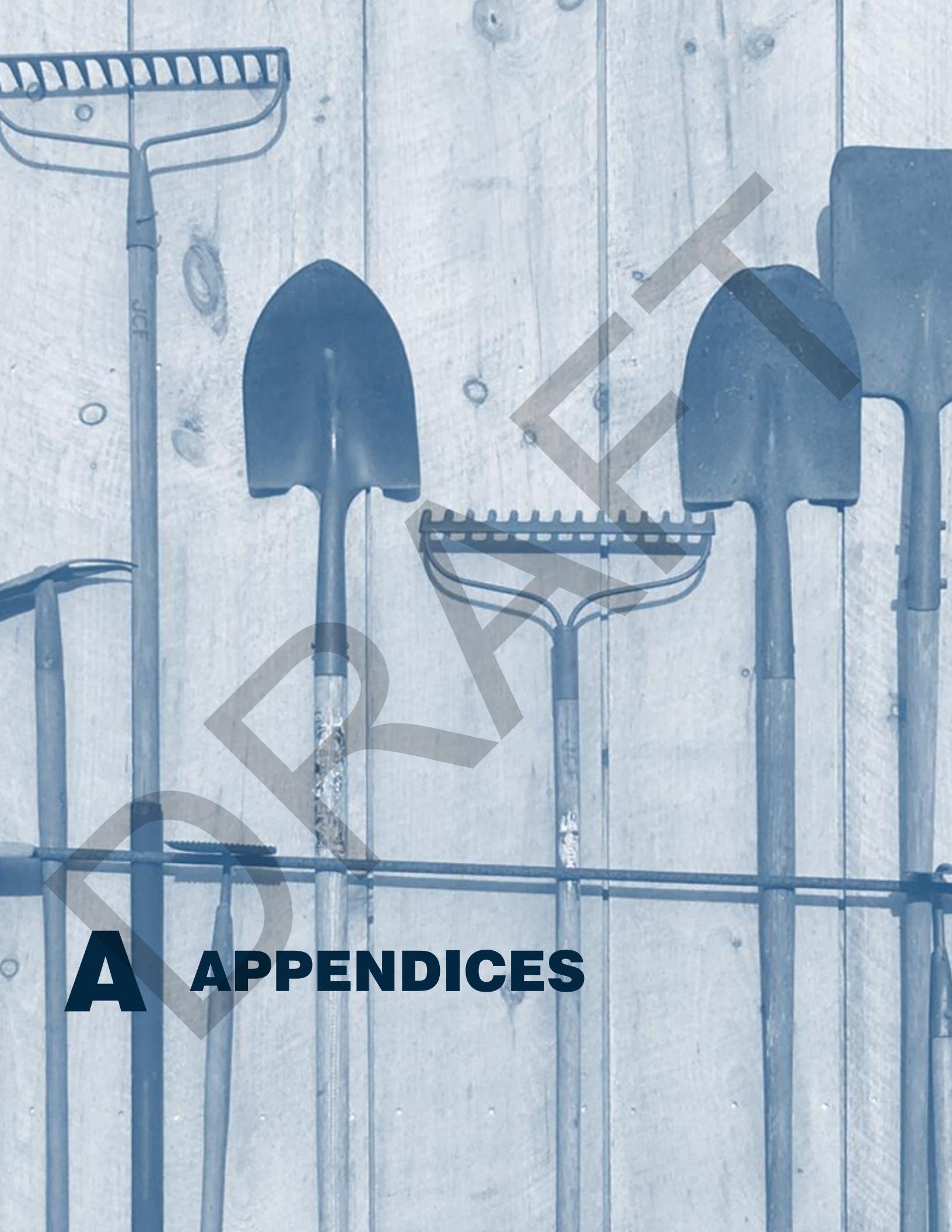
Issues identified include:

- High vulnerability of underwater transmission cables to storm damage or vessel activity.
- Limited progress on local renewable energy projects due to cost, community concerns, and permitting requirements.
- Growing need to diversify energy supply and reduce carbon emissions.

Opportunities in response:

- Expand alternative energy installations at municipal facilities.
- Revisit the feasibility of wind energy as technologies and cost structures evolve.
- Explore cost-effective alternatives to diversify its energy portfolio.
- Electrifying public transportation and expanding electric vehicle charging infrastructure will reduce emissions and improve local air quality.





A APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Public Engagement

Public engagement is a cornerstone of Jamestown's planning process, reflecting the community's dedication to thoughtful and inclusive decision-making. Citizen participation is essential for ensuring that the Comprehensive Community Plan represents the needs, values, and aspirations of the town. Jamestown's engaged residents, well-attended workshops, and active boards and committees exemplify a collaborative approach to planning.

This section highlights the various ways the town has involved the public throughout the planning process, including a community-wide survey, interactive public workshops, and opportunities for residents to provide comments.

The 2024 Community Survey Summary

A key part of the planning process is engaging residents. Jamestown has a long history of using citizen surveys to gather input, with surveys conducted in 1978, 1990, 1998, and 2010. In 2024, the Planning Commission decided to conduct another survey to gather feedback on various aspects of life in Jamestown. Each survey asks similar questions, for continuity and tracking over the decades, as well as new topics that are relevant at that time. These surveys have played an important role in shaping the goals, policies, and strategies of the town's Comprehensive Community Plan.

The survey was available to all Jamestowners and advertised by flyer through the Jamestown Press as well as advertisements and posting on the Town's website, reaching approximately 2,500 households (ACS 5-Year Survey, 2022). The survey itself was hosted online, and the postcard advertised the online link. Eight hundred twenty-four residents responded in either partial or complete to the survey. Six hundred thirty residents responded in full to the survey. Based on the survey return figures, the return rate of the complete survey is 25%.

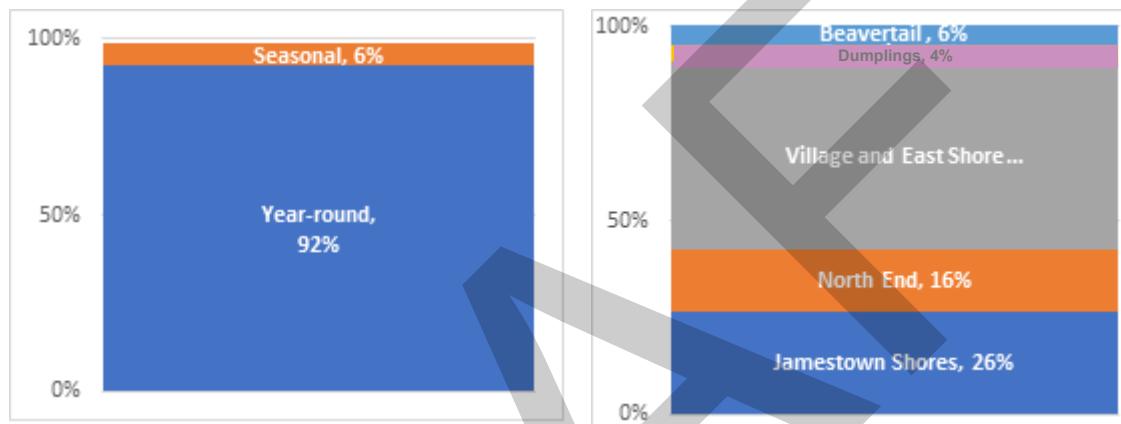
This summary will provide a synopsis of the 2024 survey as well as provide some comparison between the 2010 and the 2024 surveys.



Survey Profile

Almost 92% of the respondents were year-round residents, and the median age of the respondents was between 61 and 80 whereas the median age of Jamestown is slightly younger at 58.3 years of age (ACS 5-Year Survey, 2022). Almost half (49%) of respondents live in the village and East Shore Road areas, followed by 26% from the Jamestown Shores and 16% from the North End (Figure A.1. Residence Pattern (left) and Neighborhood of Respondent (right)). Approximately 22% of respondents had also responded to the 2010 survey and 43% of those felt that their views have changed very little since that time, while 49% felt that their views had changed somewhat.

Figure A.1. Residence Pattern (left) and Neighborhood of Respondent (right)



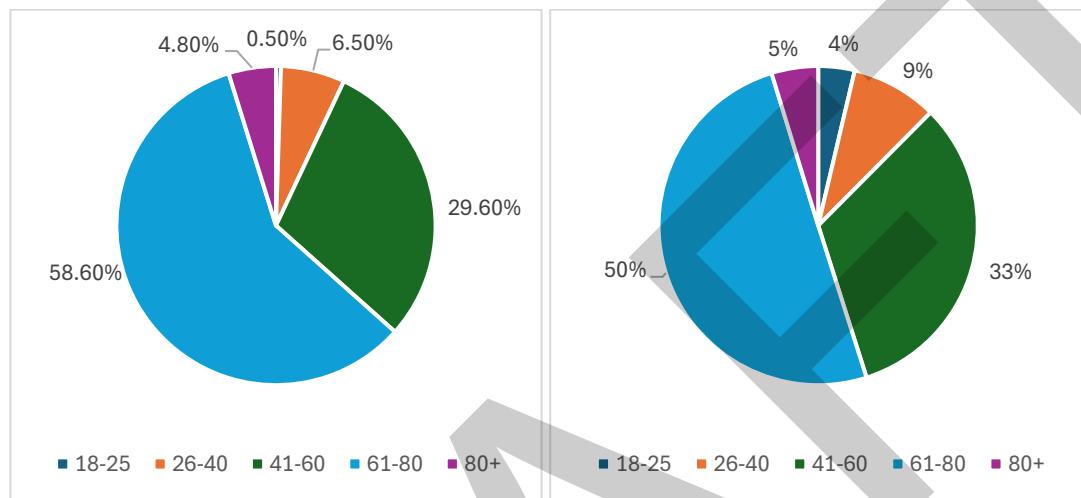
Around 69% of respondents have lived in Jamestown for more than 11 years, and 92% own their own home. In response to a question that instructed to “check all that apply to your household”: 22% work in Jamestown, 30% work from home, 18% work on Aquidneck Island, 18% work in northern Rhode Island including Providence, 10% work in Southern Rhode Island, and 7% work in southeastern Massachusetts or Boston. 7% responded “other” and 38% were retired.

When comparing the survey respondents to the overall demographics of Jamestown as reported by the 2022 American Community Survey (ACS), several key differences emerge.



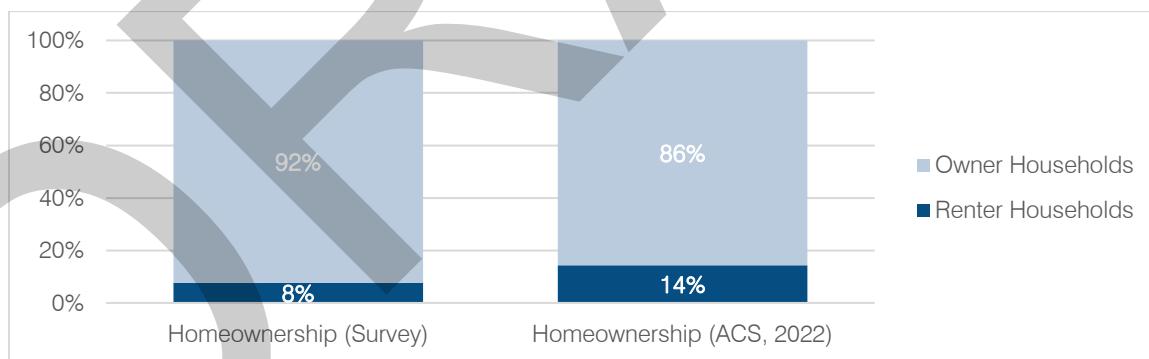
Age Distribution: The median age of Jamestown residents is 58.3 years according to the ACS, which is slightly younger than the survey's median respondent age of 61 to 80 years. This difference, shown below, reflects that 14% of the Town is under 18 and did not take the survey, as well as an active senior population that responded to the survey (Figure A.2).

Figure A.2. Age Distribution of Survey Respondents (left) and ACS, 2022 (right)



Homeownership: The survey shows a 92% homeownership rate among respondents, whereas the ACS reports a lower overall homeownership rate for the Town (Figure A.3). Renters are thus slightly underrepresented in the survey.

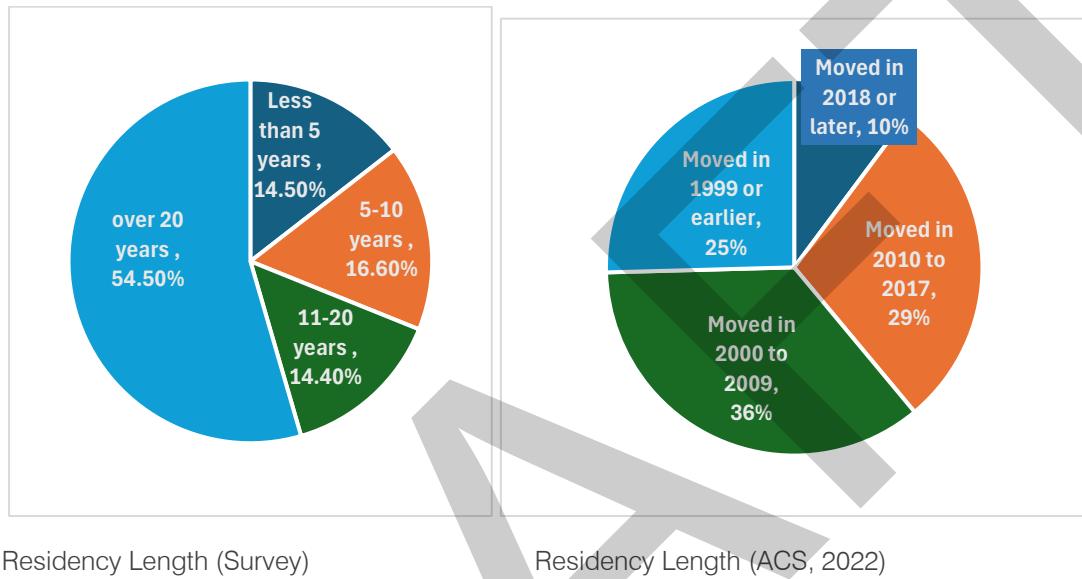
Figure A.3. Homeownership Rates



Length of Residency: 69% of survey participants have lived in Jamestown for over 11 years (

Figure A.4). Long-term residents are more represented in the survey compared to newer residents.

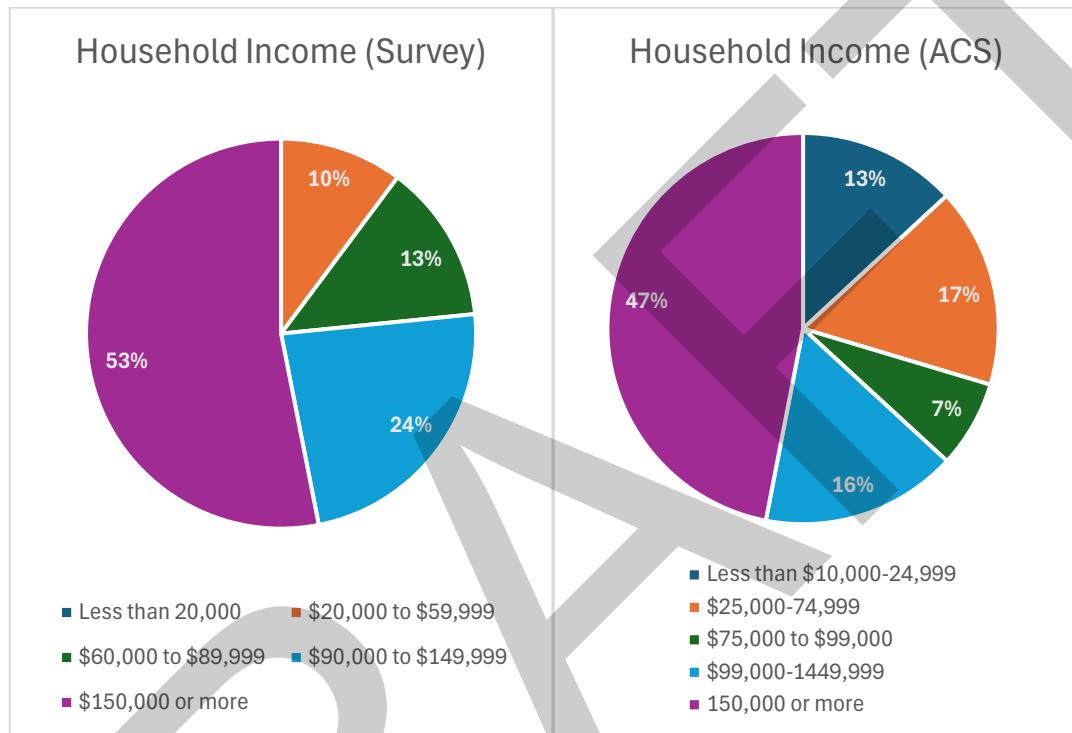
Figure A.4. Length of Residency



Employment and Income: The median household income among survey respondents is between \$150,000 and \$299,999, significantly higher than the Town's median household income of approximately \$114,000 reported by the ACS (

Figure A.5). This suggests that higher-income residents are slightly overrepresented in the survey.

Figure A.5. Household Income



Data Summary

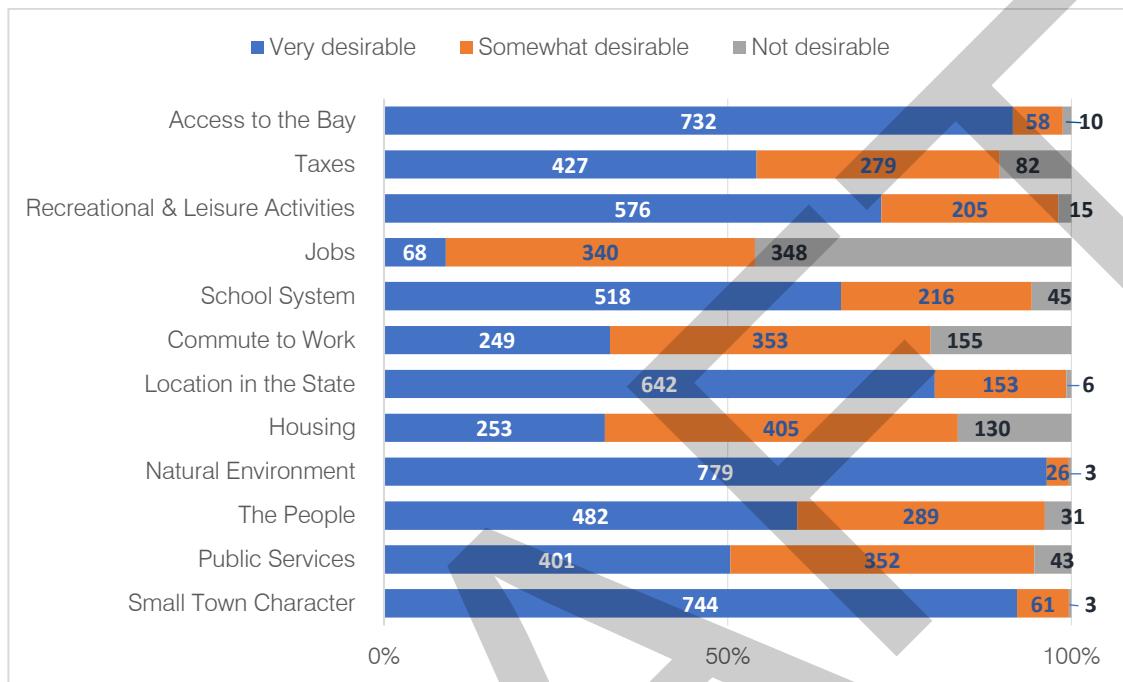
The 2004 and 2015 Comprehensive Plans identify maintaining the Island's rural character as the overriding goal for Jamestown, a sentiment echoed by 87% of survey respondents who agree this should remain the town's focus. Survey results also show that the "natural environment" (96%), "small town character" (92%), and "access to the bay" (92%) are considered the most desirable qualities of living in Jamestown, underscoring the community's strong connection to these defining features (

Figure A.6). Other very desirable qualities include Jamestown's location in the state (80%), recreational and leisure activities (72%), and the people (60%). Survey respondents identified "jobs" as the least desirable aspect of living in Jamestown, with only 9% rating it as "very desirable" and 46% marking it as "not desirable." Similarly, the "commute to work" received low ratings, with just 33% of respondents finding it "very desirable" and 20% considering it



"not desirable." Housing was another area of concern, as only 32% rated it as "very desirable," while 16% felt it was "not desirable."

Figure A.6. Aspects of Living in Jamestown (Survey answers)



Conclusion

Respondents largely agree with the goals of the 2010 Comprehensive Community Plan, which the questions of the 2024 Community Survey reflected. Goals held in high favorability will continue to be promoted in the 2024 Comprehensive Community Plan Update, with policies and actions molded to reflect changes from the past decade.

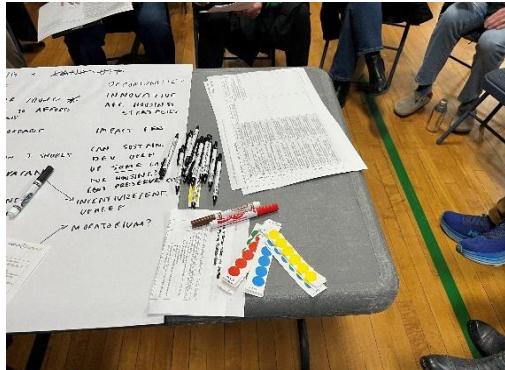
This information as well as the above information will be useful to the Planning Commission in forming or reiterating overall goals and policies for the updated Comprehensive Plan. The information, however, will not be used as an all-inclusive indicator of public preferences for land use decisions and policy formulation.

Public Workshop #1

A public meeting held on November 13, 2024 focused on gathering community input to inform future priorities. Held at the local recreation center, the meeting attracted more than 150 participants. Attendees participated in roundtable discussions on key topics of housing, neighborhoods & land use; economic development, historic & cultural preservation; natural resources, parks, open space & recreation; and public facilities & services, sustainability & resilience and transportation, sharing concerns and identifying opportunities. The meeting

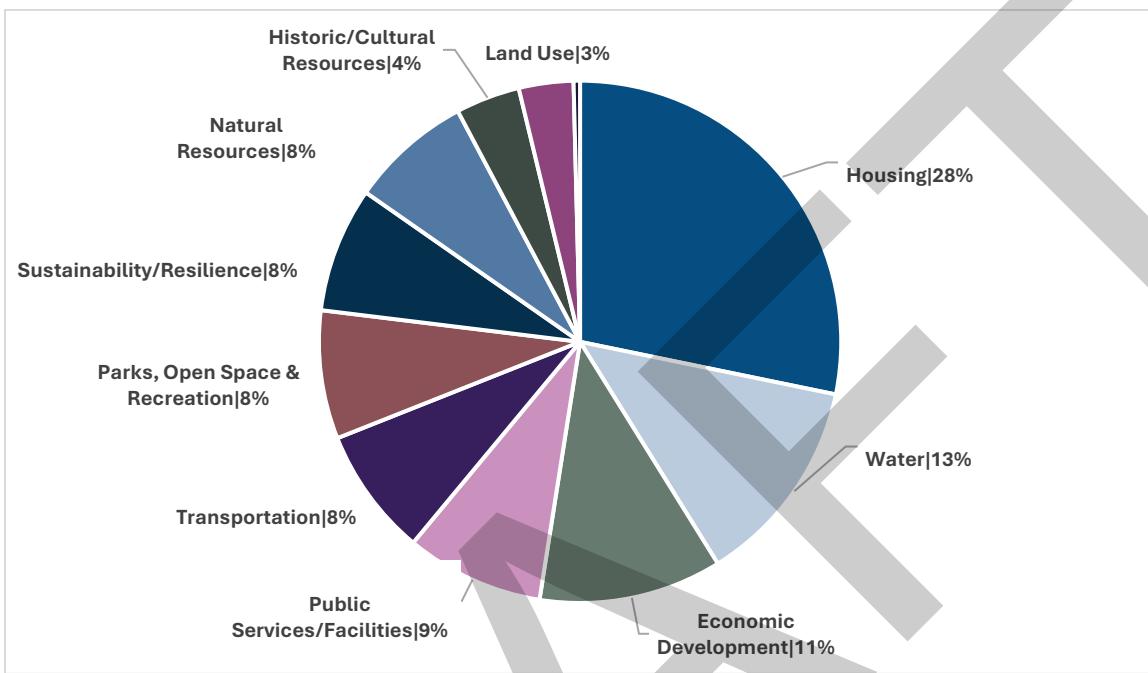


concluded with a dot-voting exercise to prioritize the most pressing issues, ensuring resident input shapes the updated plan.



At the workshop, participants were given six sticker dots to place next to the issues or opportunities that were generated during the workshop that they found most important. Housing received the most attention, accounting for 28% of the votes, followed by water concerns at 13% and economic development at 11%. Public services, sustainability, and transportation each garnered between 8% and 9% of the votes, reflecting a strong focus on both immediate and long-term community needs.

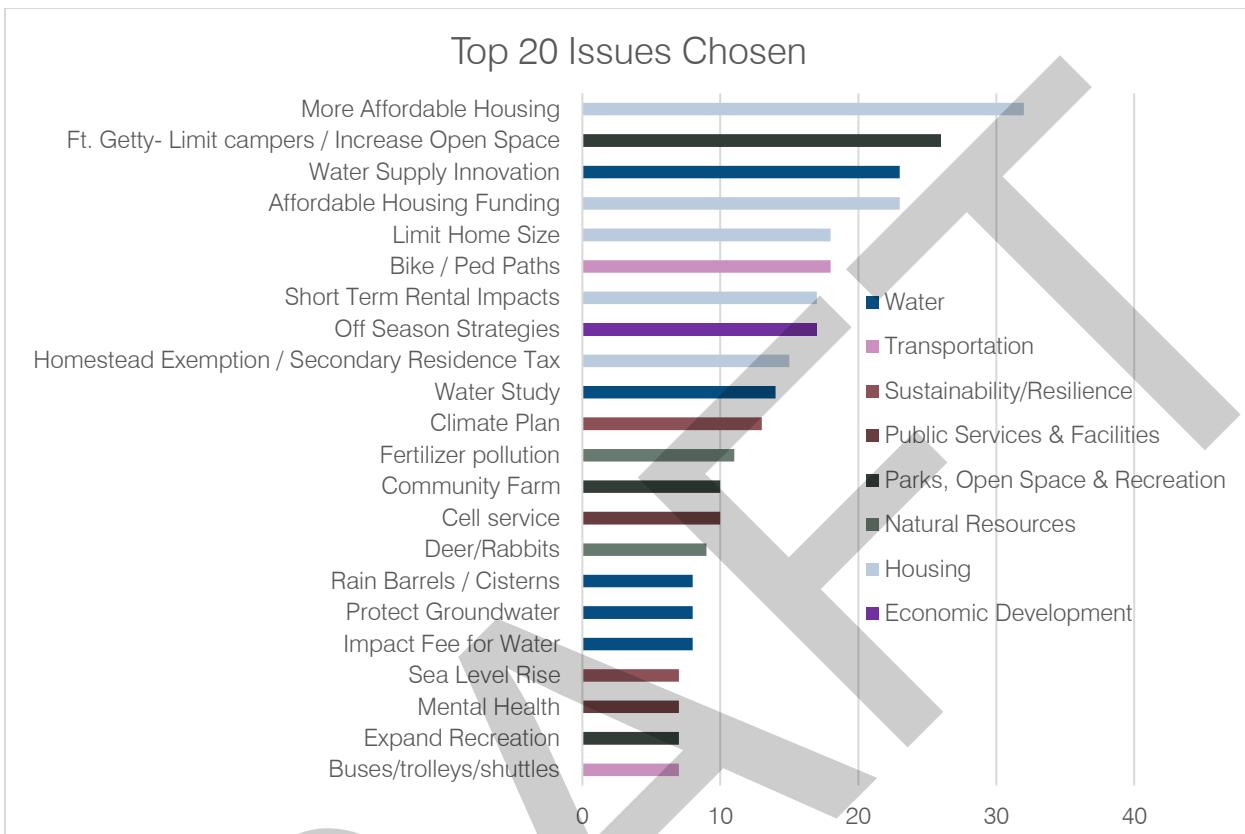
Figure A.7. Workshop Priorities by Category



The top 20 issues and opportunities from the Jamestown Comprehensive Plan meeting reflect a range of community priorities (see Figure A.8, next page). Issues related to **"More Affordable Housing"** received the highest support with 32 votes, followed by issues related to **limiting campers and increasing open space at Fort Getty** with 26 votes. **Water supply innovation** and **affordable housing funding** each garnered 23 votes. Issues related to **limiting home sizes** and expanding **bike and pedestrian paths** both received 18 votes, while **short-term rental impacts** and **off-season strategies** each received 17 votes. Other notable priorities included the homestead exemption (15 votes), water studies (14 votes), and climate resilience planning (13 votes). Environmental concerns like fertilizer pollution (11 votes), community farming (10 votes), and improving cell service (10 votes) also ranked highly. Additional votes went to addressing sea-level rise (7 votes), enhancing recreation opportunities (7 votes), and expanding bus or trolley services (7 votes), reflecting the community's interest in balancing development, environmental stewardship, and quality of life.



Figure A.8. Top Issues and Opportunities from Meeting



Key Concerns Expressed by Participants

1. Housing Affordability:
 - Many attendees shared their struggles with Jamestown's rising housing costs, emphasizing that young families, essential workers, and long-term residents are increasingly priced out of home ownership and rental opportunities. Several participants pointed out that short-term rentals exacerbate the issue by limiting the availability of year-round housing.
 - Others expressed concern over the impact of large-scale luxury homes, which they felt undermined the town's character and further strained affordability.
2. Water Availability and Quality:
 - Residents frequently raised concerns about the town's limited water resources. Participants cited the increasing strain on groundwater supplies and called for innovative solutions, such as water conservation programs, rainwater harvesting, and desalination technologies.
 - The protection of water quality, both potable and environmental, particularly in areas with older infrastructure or vulnerable ecosystems, was also a recurring theme.



3. Climate Resilience:

- Sea-level rise and flooding emerged as significant concerns. Participants emphasized the need to prioritize resilience planning, with many pointing to areas like Mackerel Cove and North Road as particularly vulnerable.
- Attendees called for proactive measures, such as infrastructure upgrades, to mitigate the impacts of climate change and ensure the safety of residents and critical services.

4. Transportation and Connectivity:

- The need for improved bike and pedestrian infrastructure was a common topic. Participants advocated for expanded pathways to enhance connectivity and safety across the island.
- Some residents also suggested exploring public transit options, like shuttles or trolleys, to reduce traffic congestion and support tourism. Parking remains a concern for residents.

Opportunities Highlighted by the Community

1. Expanding Affordable Housing Options:

- Attendees proposed creative solutions to address the housing crisis, such as encouraging accessory dwelling units (ADUs), smaller-scale developments, and preserving year-round rental housing. Many saw this as a way to maintain Jamestown's sense of community and support its workforce.

2. Economic Diversification:

- Participants suggested leveraging Jamestown's natural and cultural assets to boost the economy. Eco-tourism and heritage tourism were seen as promising avenues for attracting visitors while preserving the island's character.
- Off-season festivals and events were also proposed to generate income year-round and strengthen the local business community.

3. Preserving Natural Resources:

- Many attendees stressed the importance of protecting open spaces and wetlands. Suggestions included limiting development in sensitive areas, encouraging sustainable landscaping, and expanding conservation initiatives.
- There was strong support for enhancing recreational opportunities, such as developing a greenway bike path and upgrading parks.

4. Sustainable Infrastructure Investment:

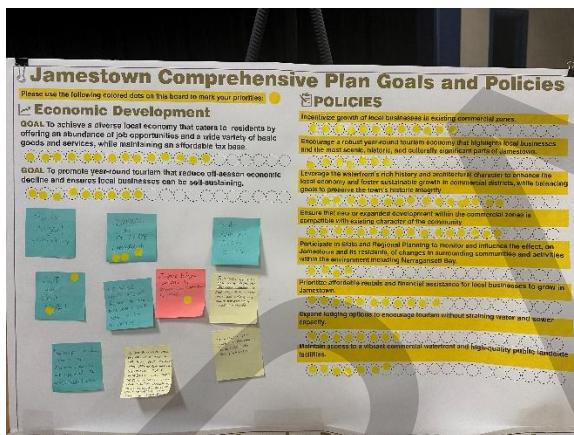
- Participants expressed interest in renewable energy initiatives for public facilities, including solar and wind energy projects. They also highlighted the need for improved stormwater management and other infrastructure upgrades to balance development with environmental sustainability.

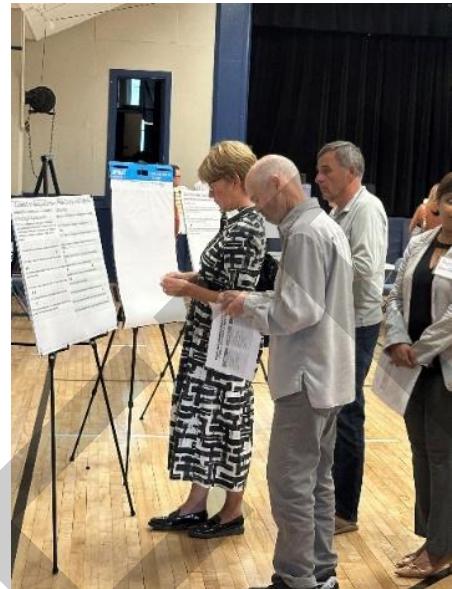


Public Workshop #2

A second public workshop was held on September 17, 2025, from 5:30–7:30 p.m. at the Recreation Center, 41 Conanicus Avenue, Jamestown, MA. The open-house style event drew 101 participants, including residents, stakeholders, and Planning Board members. A looping presentation introduced the planning process milestones and highlighted results from the first public meeting to set the stage for participant input.

Four interactive stations focused on Housing & Neighborhoods/Land Use; Economic Development/Historic & Cultural Preservation; Natural Resources/Parks, Open Space & Recreation; and Public Facilities & Services/Sustainability & Resilience/Transportation. Boards displayed draft goals and policies, and facilitators guided conversation, gathered feedback, and encouraged additional input. A dot-voting exercise on the goals and policies allowed participants to identify community priorities, ensuring resident input directly guides the next phase of the Comprehensive Plan.

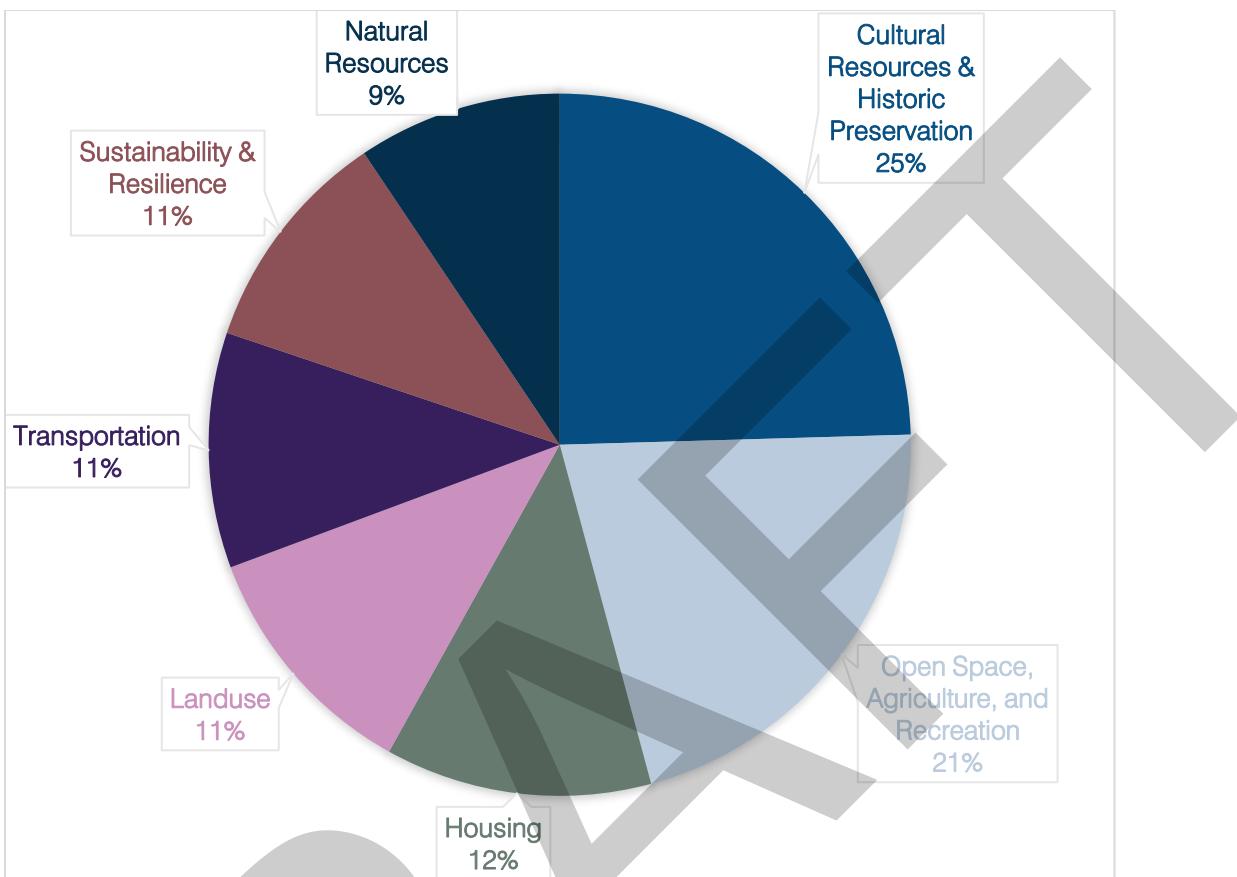




During the Jamestown community workshop, participants were invited to vote on their top goals and policies across the nine Comprehensive Plan chapters. This exercise provided a clear picture of the community's priorities, because of the top goals receiving the most votes. The pie chart illustrates how the most popular goals and policies were distributed among the chapter topics: Cultural Resources & Historic Preservation (120 votes) and Open Space, Agriculture, and Recreation (104 votes) were the top priorities, followed by Housing (60 votes), Land Use (55 votes), Transportation (53 votes), Sustainability & Resilience (51 votes), and Natural Resources (46 votes)



Figure A.9. Priority Goals and Policies by Category

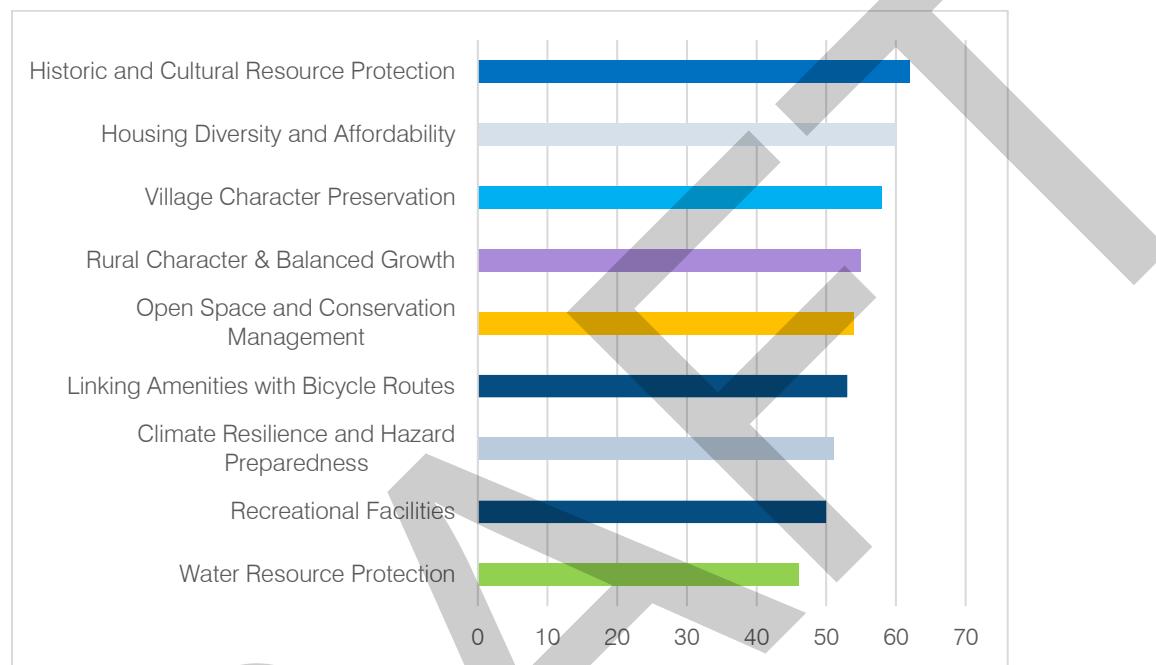


These votes reflect that residents are most concerned with protecting Jamestown's cultural and historic identity, preserving open space, agriculture and recreation areas, enhancing housing diversity and affordability, and planning for climate resilience, while also managing growth and safeguarding natural systems. The bar chart below displays the specific themes within these chapters that received the highest levels of support. The strongest priorities were Historic and Cultural Resource Protection (62 votes) and Village Character Preservation (58 votes), underscoring the community's desire to maintain Jamestown's historic integrity and small-town feel. Housing Diversity and Affordability (60 votes) and Rural Character & Balanced Growth (55 votes) highlight the importance of providing housing choices while ensuring new development fits the island's rural setting. Meanwhile, Open Space and Conservation Management (54 votes), Recreational Facilities (50 votes), and Water Resource Protection (46 votes) show strong community interest in conserving landscapes and protecting critical natural resources in ways that the community can enjoy, with a major focus on water. Access and connectivity on the island is a priority, including Linking Amenities with Bicycle Routes receiving 53 votes. Also, Climate Resilience and Hazard Preparedness (51 votes) signals awareness of Jamestown's coastal vulnerabilities and the need to plan for long-term environmental change.



Taken together, the charts demonstrate a consistent theme: Jamestown residents value preservation of character and heritage, balanced and affordable growth, environmental stewardship, and preparedness for the future. These shared priorities will help guide policies and implementation strategies in the Comprehensive Plan to reflect the community's vision.

Figure A.10. Top Themes from Workshop (Number of Votes on Goals and Policies)



Land Use

Several missing topics identified by participants on the write in board included recognizing Fort Getty as a seasonal neighborhood along with needing more affordable housing options. Participants also emphasized the importance of preserving Jamestown's rural character while ensuring that future growth is balanced and sustainable. Feedback highlighted concerns about preventing "blighted" land uses in vacant camping areas after seasonal or temporary activities conclude, and underscored the need to align development with the community's small-town identity, such as addressing impacts of new larger development as well as neighborhood noise and light conditions from new commercial development. Residents also stressed the connection between land use and housing, noting the importance of integrating housing strategies that retain young families and essential workers.

Housing

Participants called for expanding affordable and workforce housing opportunities beyond the state's 10% requirement for affordable housing and to create a more economically diverse and inclusive community. They wanted housing to be developed that meets not only "affordable" standards set out by the State but also moderate-income levels to ensure the workforce needs are accommodated. They expressed interest in small-scale, village-style



housing such as duplexes, cottages, and adaptive reuse projects rather than high-density apartments. Comments emphasized the importance of long-term affordability protections and strategies to help seniors age in place, as well as stronger regulation of short-term rentals to protect year-round rental housing supply. Residents also called for ensuring that any new development is supported by adequate infrastructure, including parking, and for creating opportunities for renters and lower-income households to directly shape housing solutions through community engagement.

Economic Development

Public feedback underscored the need for zoning updates that allow appropriately scaled commercial growth with sufficient room for commercial businesses and streamlined permitting to “cut the red tape.” Participants reinforced the need to strengthen Jamestown’s year-round economy by supporting local businesses, expanding lodging alternatives other than short term rentals, tourism opportunities, and maintaining an affordable tax base. They also support proactive planning for sea level rise to protect East Ferry and marina-based businesses. Comments recommended the redevelopment of specific properties for economic uses, such as the ambulance barn, and called for strategies to capitalize on assets like Fort Getty Campground. Adequate infrastructure, including parking and bike path connections, was again identified as essential to supporting both economic vitality and sustainable tourism.

Cultural Resources & Historic Preservation

Residents called for greater preservation and security at key sites such as Fort Wetherill, along with stricter design standards to prevent new, nontraditional development from clashing with historic character. Scenic corridors like Fort Getty and Great Creek were identified as priorities for protection, while additional suggestions also included supporting National Register nominations for important buildings such as the Town Hall and Baptist Church. Public feedback recognized the value of increasing education and awareness through signage, programming, and heritage tourism, with particular interest in highlighting Quaker history and its significance in colonial America. Collectively, these comments reflect a desire to safeguard Jamestown’s cultural heritage while enhancing community pride and tourism appeal.

Natural Resources

Participants expressed interest in using regulations to protect Jamestown’s natural resources, especially for water supplies and trees. Residents strongly supported enhanced water conservation, stormwater, and wastewater practices, with several calling for gray water systems to be required in new construction or bans on the use of chemicals to protect water bodies. Concerns about overgrown tree density and loss of farmland character were countered with requests to safeguard heritage trees. Comments also suggested expanding and encouraging eco-friendly practices at town-owned facilities such as the golf course through existing certification programs. Wildlife management, particularly addressing the deer overpopulation problem, was raised as a pressing issue for both ecological health and



resident safety. Overall, the feedback emphasizes support for proactive management and natural resource policies—enhancing existing habitat protection efforts with practical solutions like water management innovations, stricter regulations on chemical use, and strategies to maintain both biodiversity and community quality of life.

Open Space, Agriculture, and Recreation

Community members expressed strong interest in maintaining and enhancing access to Jamestown's open spaces, recreation areas, and shoreline, especially prioritizing residents. Repeated comments stressed the need to protect shoreline access and enforce public rights-of-way for residents and visitors. Concerns were also raised about vandalism and noise at Fort Wetherill, with calls for stronger enforcement, noise regulation, and improved management. Fort Getty also emerged as a focal point, with some divided views: some called for its continued use as a campground to generate town revenue and support local businesses, while others suggested repurposing or more tightly regulating its use. Participant priorities included upgrading recreation amenities such as utilities, parking, and waterfront facilities such as the boat ramp and pier, while also ensuring high-quality scenic and recreational opportunities for boating, swimming, and picnicking. Collectively, participants underscored the value of preserving open space, ensuring equitable access for residents, and balancing recreation, revenue generation, and stewardship of coastal and ecological resources.

Transportation

Participants highlighted the need for safer, more sustainable, and accessible mobility options across Jamestown and to the broader region. Residents strongly supported expanding walkability and bike-friendliness through sidewalk improvements, bike lanes, and especially the completion of the North End Bike Path. There was also interest in reducing single-occupancy vehicle dependence with new park-and-ride facilities and expanded transit options, including water taxis and affordable marine shuttles to Newport. Parking management was a recurring theme, with calls to balance local business needs, resident access, and seasonal visitor demand through strategies like charging for public parking, staging areas for boat ramp users, and improved signage. The community also emphasized investment in EV charging infrastructure, along with regulations to address e-bike safety and speed. Collectively, feedback called for a multimodal, sustainable transportation system that supports residents while managing seasonal pressures.

Public Services & Facilities

Residents expressed strong interest in maintaining and upgrading Jamestown's public services and facilities to ensure quality, rural character, and resilience. A recurring concern was the maintenance of existing infrastructure—from public buildings to sidewalks—before pursuing costly new projects. One participant suggested repurposing the Lawn Ave. school as a senior center if it is merged and closed. Connectivity and accessibility were recurring priorities, including improved transportation to airports, better sidewalks, and specifically noting better North End cell service as a critical technological upgrade. Opinions about the



Great Creek Bridge were mixed, with some supporting it and others discouraging oversized or “fancy” bridge redesigns that disrupt Jamestown’s rural scale. Noise from vehicles and light pollution from signs were also noted conflicts with maintaining the rural character. Opinions on town-wide composting included support from some and concerns from others, which indicate the need for education on how to compost to address health concerns.

Sustainability & Resilience

Participant feedback confirmed Jamestown’s growing urgency to address climate change, coastal vulnerabilities, and environmental protection, specifically noting critical vulnerabilities such as the water treatment plant’s exposure to sea level rise and hurricanes. Residents called for explicit alignment with the Rhode Island Act on Climate, ensuring local actions and long-term planning reinforce state-level goals.



APPENDIX B

Jamestown Buildout Analysis

Methodology

Buildout analyses are utilized to estimate future development patterns. The data and information gained through a buildout analysis is important to future planning efforts and provides the community with a general understanding of future development conditions under the current zoning framework. As part of this comprehensive plan update a thorough desktop analysis was conducted using GIS, to determine how much additional development would be feasible in Jamestown. This analysis was based on existing assessor's data, zoning regulations, development constraints, and projected development patterns.

Buildable areas were determined using assessor's parcel data, Jamestown's zoning ordinance, Town data on legally protected lots, and publicly sourced environmental data. GIS was used to exclude undevelopable, environmentally constrained, or protected parcels. Zoning for the remaining parcels was then analyzed to estimate the number of additional dwelling units that could be built, concluding the maximum future dwelling unit capacity in Jamestown. As this is a high-level desktop analysis, additional research would be required to evaluate specific infrastructure constraints and determine the Island's capacity to accommodate new development in the future.

Data Preparation

1. The layers below were collected for the analysis:

Data Type	Layer Name	Original Dataset	Data Updated Date	Source
Location	Jamestown Parcels	Assessor's Data	2023	Town
Location	Jamestown Boundary	Municipalities (1997)	2025	RIGIS
Environmental Constraint	Wetlands	Wetlands (1988)	2025	RIGIS
Environmental Constraint	Rivers and Streams (24K)	Rivers and Streams (24K)	2024	RIGIS
Environmental Constraint	Lakes and Ponds (Quarter to 10 Acres)	Lakes and Ponds (24K)	2024	RIGIS
Environmental Constraint	Jamestown Reservoir	Lakes and Ponds (24K)	2024	RIGIS
Environmental Constraint	Roadway	RIDOT Roads (2016)	2024	RIGIS
Environmental Constraint	Flood Hazard Areas	Flood Hazard Areas	2024	RIGIS
Environmental Constraint	Conservation Lands	Local & State Conservation Areas	2024	RIGIS
Environmental Constraint	Land Use	Land Use and Land Cover (2020)	2025	RIGIS



2. The layers were clipped to Jamestown's boundary. Dutch Island and Gould Island were excluded because they are currently state parkland.

Step 1. Identify Protected Lots

The first step was to identify protected lots and paper streets, or streets that only exist on a map but are not yet built, from the parcel data. A total of 3,705 parcels were initially brought into the analysis from the assessor's parcel data, excluding Dutch and Gould Islands. An additional column, "Area (Acres)," was created to include the area of parcels. The "calculate geometry" tool was used to populate this field.

Weston & Sampson created a new column, "Protected Lot," in the "Jamestown Parcels" dataset to denote whether a parcel was developable or not. All parcels, regardless of their protected lot status were included in the subsequent geospatial analysis. The Town provided a list of properties to be excluded from the analysis due to protected status. The "Protected Lot" column was populated with a "Yes" if it was identified as being protected by the Town or another entity. Otherwise, it was denoted as "No."

Step 2. Remove Development Constraints

The team conducted a development constraints analysis on the 3,705 parcels to determine which lots were non-buildable.

Development constraints were used to define unbuildable areas to inform the calculation of development potential. Some layers were included with a buffer sized to account for state and local regulations regarding development around environmentally sensitive areas, as listed in Environmental Constraint Buffered Layers Below, and as shown below in "Development Constraint Layers." Flood Hazard Areas were included without any buffer. Land uses were included based on their attributes, as described in the table below.

Development Constraint Layers and Buffers

Layer	Data Updated Date	Buffer	Details
Conservation Lands	2024	None	None
RIGIS' Wetlands (1988)	2025	100 ft	Per RIDEM regulations
RIGIS' Rivers and Streams (24K)	2024	100 ft	Per RIDEM regulations
RIGIS' Lakes and Ponds (24K)	2024	100 ft	Per RIDEM regulations
Jamestown Reservoir	2024	200 ft	Per RIDEM regulations
RIDOT Roads (2016)	2024	30 ft	An average roadway width from the roadway's centerline
Flood Hazard Areas	2024	None	None
Land Use & Land Cover (2020)	2025	None	Land Use Types Included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beaches • Other Transportation (terminals, docks, etc.)



Layer	Data Updated Date	Buffer	Details
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power Lines (100' or more width) • Roads (divided highways > 200' plus related facilities) • Rock Outcrops • Sandy Areas (Not Beaches) • Waste Disposal (landfills, junkyards, etc.) • Water • Water and Sewage Treatment • Wetland

The constraints exercise is designed to consider the aggregate of all development constraints and their outermost boundaries, so while overlapping datasets occur, they are not counted separately so overlaps do not impact the results of this analysis.

The buffered development constraints and Development Constraints layers listed above were merged using the “Merge” tool. This is referred to as the “Combined Development Constraints” layer in later steps.

Step 3. Generate “Final Parcel” Shapefiles

The “Erase” tool was run using the “Combined Development Constraints” layer to remove all areas with development constraints from the “Jamestown Parcels” layer. This new data was saved as “Final Parcels.”

Two new columns, “Updated Area (Acres)” and “Updated Area (Square Feet)” were added to the “Final Parcels” shapefile. The “calculate geometry” tool was run to obtain the updated, unconstrained areas of the new parcel boundaries (in acreage and square footage). Note that the updated area calculation maybe imprecise if GIS data does not perfectly align with real-world property lines.

A new column, “Meets Criteria?” was added to the “Final Parcels” shapefile to note which lots meet criteria for further development. All protected lots and paper streets were added to this column as “No – Protected Lot” and “No – Paper Street,” respectively. Any lots that did not meet the minimum lot size requirement of the district they were located within, per Jamestown’s zoning ordinance, were listed in the “Meets Criteria?” column as, “No – Minimum Lot Size.” All remaining lots that met the criteria were populated with “Yes” in the “Meets Criteria?” column.

The “Final Parcels” shapefile was exported to an Excel Spreadsheet where further analysis was conducted.

Step 4. Categorize Development Potential (Number of Potential New Units per Parcel)

For this step, we added five columns to the Excel Spreadsheet to calculate potential new units per parcel. Using Jamestown assessor data and zoning regulations, the number of existing dwelling units and potential dwelling units were identified for each parcel. They were based on the underlying zoning district of the parcel, shown in this table:



Zone	Max # of Units	(Max Unit) Minimum Lot Area (SF)
R-20	1	20,000
R-40	1	40,000
R-8	2	8,000 for 1 unit; 15,000 for 2 units
RR-200	1	200,000
RR-80	1	80,000

The five additional fields were:

Field	Description	Source
Dwelling Units	Number of existing dwelling units on a given parcel	Assessor's Data
(Max Unit) Minimum Lot Size	Minimum lot size for the maximum number of units, as denoted in table above	Zoning Ordinance
Total Lots if Subdivided	Divide Updated Area Square Feet by Minimum Lot Size and round down. If value is 3 or greater, reduce Updated Area Square Feet by 15% to account for potential roadway and recalculate.	Calculated in Excel spreadsheet
Additional Lots if Subdivided	Divide Updated Area Square Feet by Minimum Lot Size and round down. If value is 3 or greater, reduce Updated Area Square Feet by 15% to account for potential roadway and recalculate. Subtract one from final number to account for existing lot.	Calculated in Excel spreadsheet
Max Units for Minimum Lot Size	Maximum number of units for the minimum lot size, as denoted in table above	Zoning Ordinance
Number of Potential Units This Lot:	Maximum number of units for Minimum Lot Size*Updated Area Square Feet/Minimum Lot Size, rounded down	Calculated in Excel spreadsheet
Number of Potential Units Net Of Existing	If the Dwelling Units > Number of Potential Units this Lot, Else, Number of Potential Units this Lot – Dwelling Units	Calculated in Excel spreadsheet

The Excel fields of Number of Net Potential Units were then summed for all rows where Meets Criteria equaled Yes or Blank, for a total of 429 new units. The number of potential units this lot and the net potential units are estimates that may overestimate or underestimate the actual number due to infrastructure considerations, zoning updates, and ongoing property changes.

The State of Rhode Island General Assembly passed H7062 in 2024, pertaining to Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) development, as a method of addressing the ongoing housing crisis. This legislation permits homeowners to develop a single ADU by right “to accommodate a disabled family member, or within the existing footprint of their structure or on any lot larger than 20,000 square feet, provided that the ADU’s design satisfies building code, size limits and infrastructure requirements” (H 7062, 2024). Information provided by Freddie Mac suggests that on average about 1% of homes have an ADU. Jamestown’s records show that approximately 45 ADUs exist, which is roughly 1.6% of existing dwelling units.



Although this buildout cannot provide an exact number of ADUs that will be built in Jamestown, an estimate can be derived from the number of eligible lots and recent ADU development trends. A total of 1,131 existing lots are larger 20,000 square feet and so would be eligible to build an ADU by right. It is difficult to predict what percentage of homeowners would build an ADU that are eligible. Town data from the last 20 years indicates that 10 ADUs existed in 2014, 25 were developed between 2014-2023, and 10 more in 2024-2025. If these trends continue, between 2.5-5 ADUs could be developed annually going forward.

Step 5. Calculate Total Units at Buildout, Years for Buildout and Total Population

1. The total number of new dwelling units at buildout (429) were added to the current number of dwelling units (2,746) to determine the total number of units at buildout (3,175).
2. The total number of new units at buildout was then divided by the average number of new dwelling units per year (21) to determine the year by which residential buildout can be expected (2046).
3. The total population at buildout was then calculated based on the average persons per household (2.2) multiplied by the total number of units at buildout (3,175), providing a total buildout population (6,985).

Total # of Developable Vacant Lots	70	
Total Number of Developable Subdividable Lots	107	
Total # of New Dwelling Units at Build-Out	429	
Total # of New ADUs in 2046	50-100	
Current # of Dwelling Units within Municipality (2021)	2,746	
Current # of ADUs within Municipality (2025)	45	
Total # of Units at Build-out within municipality	3,175	
Average # of New Dwelling Units Per Year	21	
How many years will it take to build all new units?	21	
Year by which residential build out is likely to occur	2046	Required Data Point
Persons per household (avg 2019-2023 census)	2.2	
Total Population at Build-Out	6,985	Required Data Point

