

PORTSMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

ELEMENT 7 - SERVICES AND FACILITIES

7.1 SERVICES AND FACILITIES VISION

PORTSMOUTH WILL BE A COMMUNITY WHERE COST-EFFECTIVE, HIGH-QUALITY MUNICIPAL SERVICES AND WELL-MAINTAINED PUBLIC FACILITIES MEET THE CHANGING NEEDS OF CURRENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS.

This section addresses Portsmouth’s public infrastructure, facilities and services under the following categories:

- Town administration and elected leaders
- Educational facilities and services
- Public safety and emergency services
- Public works services
- Solid waste management
- Wastewater management
- Storm water management
- Library and community services

One or more maps showing the location of all municipally owned and/or operated buildings will accompany this element.

7.1.1 BASIS FOR PLANNING

This section of the Portsmouth CCP update relies on:

- Population projections as determined in Technical Paper 162 prepared by Rhode Island Statewide Planning using FY 2012 – 2013 census data.
- Local opinion of facilities and services as determined by a 2013 opinion survey.
- Town staff assessment of services and facilities both as they currently exist and for their ability to meet projected need.

7.1.2 POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Portsmouth's population is projected to increase by a modest 2.3% over approximately the next 20 years. Anticipated need in each of the categories within the services and facilities element detailed herein have been informed by this Statewide Planning population projection.

7.1.3 OPINION SURVEY OF PORTSMOUTH SERVICES AND FACILITIES

In March 2013, the Town of Portsmouth conducted a residential telephone survey as part of the comprehensive planning process. The survey was conducted by a national research firm and included 600 randomly selected Portsmouth residents.¹ In summary, survey made three principal findings:

- Satisfaction with the existing level of service in Portsmouth is fairly strong.
- Residents of the Town generally feel that the cost of services and facilities should be borne by all tax payers as opposed to individual users.
- Residents generally accept their current level of taxation for services and facilities but have limited willingness to pay more for services and facilities; although, to some extent this would depend on the added cost and for what that cost is paying.

7.2 ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE, FACILITIES AND SERVICES

7.2.1 TOWN ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTED LEADERS

Portsmouth operates under a Home Rule Charter, first adopted in November 1972. All powers of the Town (including those powers formerly vested in and exercised by the Financial Town Meeting, which was discontinued) are vested in the elected Town Council. Elected biennially in even years, the seven-member Town Council, may enact local legislation subject only to the limitations imposed by Charter, the State Constitution and the General Laws. Under the Charter, the Council determines policy, enacts law and appoints the town administrator.

The Town Administrator is the chief executive and manages the day-to-day operations of town government. All town department heads report to the Town Administrator. As of June 30, 2015, there were a total of 109 full-time employees occupying positions in the following departments:

¹ Statistically, a sample of 600 surveys represents a margin for error of +/-4.0% at a 95% confidence level [for the size of Portsmouth's population]. In theory, a sample of Portsmouth residents will differ no more than +/-4.0% than if all Portsmouth residents [with landlines] were contacted and included in the survey. That is, if random probability sampling procedures were reiterated over and over again, sample results may be expected to approximate the larger population values within plus or minus +/-4.0% -- 95 out of 100 times.

Town Administrator	Building / Zoning	Planning
Police	Tax Assessor	Finance/Human Resources
Public Works	Fire	Town Clerk
Registrar of Voters	Recreation	

Town Boards include:

Zoning Board of Review	Planning Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Review Board 	Waste Water Appeals Board
Board of Canvassers	Tax Assessment Board of Review	Juvenile Hearing Board

Active Town Committees include:

Agriculture Committee	Tree commission	Housing Authority
Melville Park Committee	Lower Glen Farm Preservation Committee	Bristol Ferry Town Common Committee
Conservation Commission	Mooring Assignment Appeal Committee	Dog Park Committee
Prudence Island Planning Commission	Portsmouth Prevention Coalition	Glen Manor House Authority
Glen Park Working Authority	Economic Development Committee	Solid Waste/Recycling Committee
Tank Farm Advisory Committee	Harbor Commission	

7.3 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES

7.3.1 BUILDING CAPACITY AND ENROLLMENT

Capacity of Portsmouth’s current school facilities is calculated by the School Department and assumes the current class organization, educational programming and state-mandated class sizes. With total district enrollment declining over the next decade and no individual school nearing capacity, the Town does not anticipate the need for construction of new school facilities to address capacity needs within the next ten years.

Current Enrollments and Estimated Pupil Capacities

School	Capacity	Grades	September 2015 Enrollment
Hathaway Elementary	463	K-3	359
Melville Elementary	394	PK-3	299
Portsmouth Middle	1,056	4-8	918
Portsmouth High	1,250	9-12	828
Totals	3,163	PK-12	2,458

Source: Portsmouth Public Schools

Portsmouth Public Schools Projected Enrollment 2014-2025				
	PK-3	4-8	9-12	Total District Enrollment
2014-15	656	963	945	2,564
2015-16	664	940	929	2,533
2016-17	657	901	935	2,493
2017-18	655	880	906	2,441
2018-19	636	867	916	2,419
2019-20	626	862	901	2,389
2020-21	632	854	852	2,338
2021-22	631	852	827	2,310
2022-23	635	844	798	2,277
2023-24	635	826	800	2,261
2024-25	635	812	813	2,260

Source: New England School Development Council (NESDEC)

Projected enrollment appears to be well within the capacity of the Town’s existing facilities. No expansion of existing school facilities is planned. School facilities are, however, in need of maintenance and upgrades. The School Department has developed a 5-year RIDE Stage II Capital Improvement Plan for years 2016 – 2020, it adjusts annually. The plan recommends allocation of \$4.4M over the 5-year period. Improvements are recommended for each of the school buildings in the district. Recommended improvements include upgrades to electrical systems, boilers, roofs, lighting, furniture and fixtures, weatherization, energy efficiency.

The Portsmouth Public School System consists of two elementary schools, one middle school, one high school and an administration building. As of September 2015, the Portsmouth Public Schools employed approximately 301 people, including 210 certified teachers, 30 teacher aides, 16 administrators, 21 clerks, 16 custodian, three maintenance specialists and five technology specialists.

Portsmouth High School - Constructed in 1963, with additions completed in 1981, 1989, 2000, and 2006, Portsmouth High School serves students in grades nine through twelve and is located on a 42-acre campus at 120 Education Lane. PHS contains approximately 88 educational and 40 education-related rooms spanning 193,500 square feet. Outdoor facilities include 57,600 square feet of tennis courts, four baseball/softball fields, one football/soccer/lacrosse stadium with a synthetic running track and four multi-use practice fields. As of September 2015 there were 882 enrolled students.

Portsmouth Middle School - Constructed in 1971, Portsmouth Middle School is located on 37 acres at 125 Jepson Lane. PMS contains 54 educational and 50 education-related rooms spanning 157,800 square feet. The facility serves students in grades four through eight and had 918 students enrolled as of September 2015. Outdoor facilities include two basketball courts, one soccer field, and two baseball/softball fields.

Howard W Hathaway Elementary School - Located on 10.75 acres at 53 Tallman Avenue, the Howard J. Hathaway Elementary School was originally constructed in 1951 with major additions completed in 1967, 1990, and 2003 and currently serves students in grades kindergarten through three. Hathaway School contains approximately 27 educational and 13 education-related rooms spanning 50,145 square feet. As of September 2015, there were 359 enrolled students.

Melville Elementary School - The Melville Elementary School serves pre-kindergarten through grade three students. The building was originally constructed in 1965 with major additions in 1989 and 2000. Located on 3.55 acres at 1350 West Main Road, the school contains 31 educational and seven education-related rooms spanning 44,810 square feet. As of September 2015, there were 359 enrolled students.

The Mario Mancieri Administration Building - Located at 29 Middle Road, in close proximity to Portsmouth Town Hall, the 5,960 square foot School Department Administration Building houses administration offices and a maintenance workshop on a 1.0-acre site.

7.4 PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

This section discusses services provided by the police and fire departments.

7.5 POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Portsmouth Police Department is located at 2270 East Main Road adjacent to the Fire Department and the Public Works Department and is currently housed in one 5000 square foot building constructed in 1975. In response to a comprehensive building assessment study identifying significant space and structural deficiencies and recommending replacement of this building, new construction of a larger police station on the same site began in 2017. The Police Department provides 24-hour public safety response and patrols for the community through a dispatch center staffed round the clock.

The department currently employs 32 full-time officers. The authorized strength is 34 officers, one School Resource Officer, one Animal Control Officer, one civilian clerk and one Prudence Island Public Safety Officer. The department

also includes the position of Harbormaster. The department has a minimum staffing level of four officers per shift with one officer assigned to dispatch and three on the road.

In Fiscal Year 2015, the department handled 22,305 calls for service, made 775 adult arrests and 40 juvenile arrests. Traffic and traffic enforcement are primary responsibilities and the officers conducted 5902 motor vehicle stops and also handled 505 accidents. The state police barracks in Portsmouth was closed due to staffing shortages in 2011 and Portsmouth PD also handles primary response on Route 24.

The department has mutual aid agreements with our surrounding communities of Tiverton, Bristol and Middletown and we are required to respond to emergencies in those communities as they are for Portsmouth.

The department has a fleet of 21 vehicles, including 12 marked units, eight unmarked cars and one animal control truck. The department also has two patrol boats, a 25 foot and 23-foot boat for the Harbor Unit. The department has begun a new vehicle replacement plan to upgrade the fleet over the next five years.

7.5.1 POLICE DEPARTMENT - ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND ANTICIPATED FUTURE QUALITY OF SERVICE

The Portsmouth Police Department has been hampered in the quality of services provided to residents because of space related problems in the existing police building. Cellblocks did not meet federal guidelines. Records, equipment and evidence storage were very limited. There were no dedicated interview rooms requiring holding areas and a small conference room had to be used as an ad hoc interview room. There were no rooms large enough to hold a public meeting or for use as a unified command post in case of an emergency. The Town explored various options to resolve these deficiencies including modifications to the existing facility and the potential of building a completely new Fire-Police Complex. A new Police Station and maintaining the existing Fire Station turned out to be the most cost-effective alternative to provide an adequate facility to serve the community for the next 50 years.

Measuring 24,000 square feet, the new Police Station building is located on the same site as the current Police Station at 2270 East Main Rd, which is scheduled to be torn down. The project is being funded by a \$10 Million Bond approved by the voters in 2016. The building includes a modern cell block, vehicle maintenance bay and sally port, adequate space for the police force men and women, and a community room.

Construction started in October 2017 and it is planned to be substantially complete by December 2018 and provide Portsmouth's citizens with the best value for their investment while providing the police force the space and tools they need to keep our community safe.

The Police Department has seen a 20% increase in calls for service over the last five years. The expected trend is for police services to increase over the next 20 years with the expansion of cyber-crime and fraud. Police experts predict that increased public pressure for community problem solving policing will require increases in staffing levels of 5 to 10% even if overall crime rates do not increase.

Prudence Island is one area of the population that has historically been underserved. There is no police facility on Prudence Island. The summer population now averages over 2000 people. The Police Department does have one Prudence Island Public Safety officer and supplements that officer with one additional officer during the busiest summer weekends. The Island is in need of a police substation for the Prudence Island officer to take incident reports, issue hunting permits and conduct interviews. This would greatly enhance our service for our Prudence Island residents and visitors.

7.6 FIRE DEPARTMENT

Portsmouth Fire Department staff work out of a single fire station located at 2272 East Main Road. The fire station building was constructed in 1970 and contains a total of 15,319 square feet with 10,433 sq. ft. on the first floor, 4,086 sq. ft. on the second floor and 800 sq. ft. in the basement. The building contains ten apparatus bays (five drive through bays), a day room, a kitchen, a radio/dispatch room, bunk space, locker room/shower room, mechanical space and offices for the Chief and Deputy Chief, along with a combination Conference/Training room on the second floor, which serves as the Town's emergency operations center.

The Portsmouth Fire Department provides fire, rescue, emergency medical, and fire prevention services with an authorized strength of thirty-five full-time uniformed members. There are four platoons with eight firefighters assigned to each. The firefighters cross-staff apparatus, meaning two firefighters are assigned to both the second run engine and the first run ambulance, and two firefighters are assigned to the ladder truck and the second run ambulance.

The department is the first responding organization for structural firefighting and emergency medical services. The Fire Department is tasked with responding to and managing a broad spectrum of other types of emergencies, including, but not limited to, vehicle crashes, building collapse, water and ice rescue, mass casualty incidents, weather related emergencies, and natural and technological disasters.

The Portsmouth Fire Department regularly responds to and receives mutual aid requests from several surrounding communities including Tiverton, Middletown, Bristol and the Naval Station Newport Fire Department. The department also receives assistance and responds to calls for assistance to cities and towns throughout Rhode Island,

on a less frequent basis. In calendar year 2015, the department responded to calls for mutual aid 138 times. The department received assistance from its mutual aid partners 149 times during the year.

The department maintains three ambulances, two of which are in service, three engines, two of which are in service, a tower ladder, and several utility and administrative vehicles. In addition, the department three boats:

- 27 feet Maycraft kept in the water year-round for duties including emergency response to Prudence and Hog Island.
- 19 feet Boston Whaler kept trailered as primary response to emergencies in the Sakonnet River.
- 10 feet Achilles inflatable kept trailered as a primary asset for ponds and other isolated small bodies of water.

The Portsmouth Fire Department also uses a brush truck with skid pump, and ice rescue sled, technical rescue equipment including rope rescue and confined space gear. The department houses a special hazards trailer and one of the State's mass casualty trailers. Aside from normal emergency dispatch operations, the department's dispatch center is also designated as East Bay control which coordinates mutual aid requests for multi-alarm fires in the east bay area.

7.6.1 FIRE DEPARTMENT - ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE QUALITY OF SERVICE

The Fire Department has identified the following deficiencies within the fire station building:

- No separation of male/female locker room spaces.
- No separation of male/female toilet facilities.
- No separation of male/female bunk facilities.
- Office space and work space is inadequate with no area for a future administrative assistant.
- No public toilet facility that meets accessibility requirements.
- No shower/decontamination facility located reasonably close to apparatus bays.
- Minimal clearance above the tower ladder when passing through the overhead doors.

With a department goal of all responders arriving safely on the scene of an emergency within four minutes, the current location of the single fire station is increasingly impacting acceptable response times to the north and south ends of the town. Increased demand for fire and emergencies services at the extreme ends of town along with increases in traffic have slowed down response times considerably. While mutual assistance response by surrounding communities can mitigate this problem somewhat, the Town needs to consider new substation facilities in various locations throughout town.

FIRE DEPARTMENT EMERGENCY RESPONSE TIMES FROM PRESENT STATION - 2009	
Location	Response Time
Coggs Hall School	5.7 minutes
Schoolhouse Lane	4 minutes
Clearview Ave.	5 minutes
Fieldstone Drive	6 minutes
Union Street	7 minutes
Sandy Point Ave.	8 minutes
Woodland Drive (off East Main Road)	9 minutes
Wapping Road	8-11 minutes
Farmlands Drive	10 minutes
Black Point Lane	9 minutes
Old Mill Lane	12 minutes
Cottontail Drive (off Indian Avenue)	14 minutes
Bayberry Road (off Indian Avenue)	17 minutes

The Fire Department should continue to monitor simultaneous call trends and evaluate the feasibility of staffing at least one ambulance with a dedicated crew that is not assigned to other apparatus. By independently staffing an ambulance, a higher level of fire protection coverage can be maintained. However, this would require the hiring of eight additional firefighters.

The fire prevention office has been vacant since 2012. This is a critical Fire Department need as one of the core functions of the department is to provide public fire education, ensure fire code compliance, and investigate the cause and origin of all fires that do occur. In the future, the Town should make it a priority to staff the fire prevention office with at least two firefighters.

7.7 PUBLIC WORKS SERVICES

The Department of Public Works was created in 1972 as one of the many significant changes to Portsmouth government brought by the enactment of the Home Rule Charter. The Charter change envisaged the transformation of the old “Highway Department” into a modern multipurpose organization with wide ranging duties including street lighting, public parking lots, solid waste disposal, park maintenance, public buildings maintenance, new public and private infrastructure inspection and other public works projects as they are initiated.

The Department is based at the Public Works facility off Hedly Street. This 12,000 square foot building houses the bulk of the Department’s equipment, its office, workshop, and a repair facility for all Town vehicles (with the exception of the specialized vehicles of the Fire Department). The surrounding 3+ acre “yard” area includes areas dedicated to the storage of sand, gravel, and a variety of construction materials required to carry out the

Department's duties. In addition, the Department maintains a smaller facility on Prudence Island and operates the Prudence Island Transfer Station.

Department personnel currently include the Director, Deputy, two Foremen, two mechanics, and twelve operators. Two of these men are permanently assigned to Prudence Island. The Director of Public Works oversees the operation of the Department and reports to the Town Administrator.

Among its numerous other duties, Public Works is responsible for approximately 111 miles of Town roads. Routine maintenance activities include roadside vegetation control, grass cutting, street sweeping, plowing, sanding, patching, and the installation and maintenance of roadside signs. On Prudence Island, additional, regular activities on the primarily gravel road system include grading, shaping, and dust control.

7.7.1 PUBLIC WORKS - ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE QUALITY OF SERVICE

With only modest growth in population and residential development expected within the planning period of this Comprehensive Plan, demand for services are not expected to rise dramatically. The department does still, however, need to maintain a high level of service and needed improvement are identified in several areas.

The Public Works Department needs to develop a 10-year Strategic Plan to address current and future service demands, management procedures, assets inventory maintenance and replacement, staffing levels and budgeting procedures. This effort should include a 5-year, annually reviewed and updated department specific Capital Improvement Plan. Current management practices, while excellent in the short term, are not sustainable. A concerted effort towards long-term planning needs to be instituted.

Staffing levels in the department continue to be a problem. Inherent to managing a short staff with a heavy task load is the problem of day-to-day operations accommodating vacation time, sick leave, light duty and other disability issues. Long-term decisions need to be made to address this problem, not only regarding field operators but administrative staff as well.

The Town and the Public Works department needs to continue to investigate opportunities for sharing responsibilities and staffing with surrounding communities and the School Department.

Yard storage of materials is an on-going problem.

7.8 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Approximately half of Portsmouth households' drop-off their waste and recycling at one of the Town's two Transfer Stations. The remaining households and businesses contract with private waste and recycling haulers. Portsmouth's Transfer Stations are available to residents only and are verified using auto registrations. Portsmouth businesses must contract with private waste and recycling haulers. Portsmouth schools have contracts with private waste and recycling haulers. Municipal solid waste and recycling materials are taken to the transfer station by Public Works personnel.

As of November 2015, e-waste collection was halted at Portsmouth Transfer Stations because the company that collected and processed e-waste lost a significant amount of their capacity to process and sell the recycled electronic materials. State law prohibits e-waste from the landfill and municipalities continue to face stiff fines if these materials are found in their solid waste loads. Until a solution to this problem can be found, Portsmouth will continue to sponsor standalone e-waste collection events and promote nearby e-waste collection sites operated by the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation.

Since 2009, the Portsmouth transfer station has been operated as an Enterprise Fund with costs of operation covered by vehicle sticker sales, recycled material sales and other income specific to solid waste management. As of 2017, costs of operation of the Prudence Island transfer station are covered by the taxpayer supported general fund. Day-to-day operations of both transfer stations, including compacting and hauling are managed by private contractor. In an effort to reduce the price of vehicles stickers and to increase recycling rates, the Town instituted a pay-as-you-throw program in 2017.

7.8.1 SOLID WASTE - ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE QUALITY OF SERVICE

The Portsmouth transfer station continues to be plagued by the small overall size of the facility. However, with continuing improvements in efficiency, the capacity of the station to accept current amounts of waste and recyclable materials is adequate and can likely accommodate modest increases in the near future. Recycling rates have dramatically improved with the pay-as-you-throw program and abuse of the system has declined due to increased monitoring of incoming refuse. Factors including the size of our local facilities, increased tipping fees and capacity problems at the Johnston landfill call for an urgent need in long term planning for new waste management strategies.

7.9 WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT

The Town of Portsmouth relies almost exclusively upon individual on-site wastewater treatment systems for wastewater disposal. There is no publicly owned wastewater treatment system anywhere in Town. The Town relies on and encourages private, on-site wastewater treatment facilities for commercial enterprises. There are however, several multi-user private wastewater treatment systems in Town serving large facilities and/or subdivisions, and

the Newport Wastewater Treatment Facility has an extension serving a portion of the naval housing complex near Melville on the west side of Town. Raytheon has a treatment system for its West Main Road facility, but currently the system is off-line and operates as a holding tank from which effluent is trucked to Newport.

The Town has made a policy decision to forego the installation of a publicly owned wastewater treatment system in Portsmouth and, as an alternative, adopted an On-Site Wastewater Management Plan to manage and regulate wastewater treatment throughout town. The plan provides a set of strategies and implementation items to ensure the proper management, inspection, use and maintenance of on-site wastewater treatment systems. The Town recognizes that poorly managed on-site systems are prone to failure with age, outmoded design, overuse, poor soil conditions, or improper installation, repair or maintenance and that failing on-site systems jeopardize the health, safety and welfare of the community.

Overseen by a full-time Wastewater Manager, the plan and its accompanying Wastewater Management District Ordinance commit to the inspection of every on-site wastewater treatment system in Portsmouth by the end of 2022.

7.9.1 WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT - ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE QUALITY OF SERVICE

The Town does not anticipate the need for construction of a publicly owned wastewater treatment systems in Portsmouth within the 20-year planning period of this Comprehensive Plan and will rely on the wastewater management plan and ordinance to properly manage the treatment of wastewater in Portsmouth.

7.10 STORM WATER MANAGEMENT

The storm water drainage system in Portsmouth consist of approximately 2,750 catch basins, 72 outfalls discharging into waters of the state, some 48 miles of underground connecting pipes and 127 off-road structures. The Portsmouth storm water drainage system is interconnected with the State's drainage systems in numerous places around Town, most notably along Park Avenue in Island Park. There are several significant privately-owned storm water drainage and treatment structures owned and maintained by homeowners and condominium associations across town. Maintenance of the Town-owned storm water drainage system is conducted by the Department of Public Works with annual costs included in the DPW budget.

Prohibited discharges to the Town's storm drainage system are regulated by Portsmouth's Storm Water Discharge Control Ordinance. A vigorous illicit discharge detection and elimination program, the scope of which is detailed in the Town's On-Site Wastewater Management Plan, is conducted jointly by the Public Works and Planning

Departments in the neighborhoods of Island Park and Portsmouth Park. The goal of this on-going and multi-year program is to isolate and eliminate the sources of contaminated discharges which have been found in town-owned outfall pipes in these neighborhoods.

7.10.1 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT - ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE QUALITY OF SERVICE

While funding is adequate for on-going catch basin cleaning, street sweeping and other regular maintenance activities (and these activities are effective at achieving desired outcomes), little if any funding is being programmed into the Town's Capital Improvement Program for stormwater infrastructure upgrades or replacement. Nearly one-third of the underground pipes in the system are approaching fifty years since installation. The system is starting to show its age. A comprehensive investigation of the town-owned storm water drainage system needs to be performed, particularly in areas of known problems, so that funds can be dedicated in the CIP before system failures overwhelm the town's resources.

Nearly all of the neighborhood of Island Park is low-lying and vulnerable to both storm surge and future sea level rise. The State and town-owned storm drainage systems in this neighborhood, particularly along Park Avenue are particularly vulnerable. Currently, at extreme high tides, with no input from rainfall or storm surge conditions, two outfalls along the waterfront roadway back up with seawater flooding the roadway surface. The Town estimates that even under normal tide and weather conditions, these two drainage outfalls function properly only half the time. They routinely back up with any appreciable rainfall and actually reverse flow with even modest storm surge conditions. Future sea level rise will only exacerbate this predicament. An urgent engineered response to this condition is needed as Park Avenue is the principle arterial to service the entire neighborhood of some 700 homes and 1500 Portsmouth residents.

An appreciable amount of storm water runoff in Portsmouth flows into private system detention/retention ponds and other stormwater handling and treatment structures. While development agreements and homeowner's association/condominium documents generally spell out maintenance responsibilities for these private facilities, often routine maintenance and emergency repairs fall to the Town at the Town's expense. A Post-Construction Storm Water Management Ordinance is needed to strengthen the town's ability to enforce maintenance of these private stormwater treatment facilities and bring the Town into compliance with RIDEM Phase II stormwater regulations.

7.11 LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

7.11.1 LIBRARY

The Portsmouth Free Public Library is located at 2658 East Main Road. There are seven full-time staff members (3 of which are professional librarians) and 13 part-time staff members. A Board of Trustees comprised of 16 members appointed to staggered terms oversees library operations. Two board members are appointed by the Portsmouth Town Council.

As of FY 2015, the library collection contains 65,786 books, 1,054 serials, 2,352 non-print materials, as well as discount passes to area cultural institutions. There are 24 public computer stations with internet access and 10 laptop computers for special computer instruction classes. There were 20,150 individual public computer uses in FY 2015 including 622 Wi-Fi connections to the internet.

Library programs include adult, young adult, and children's programs. These programs include summer reading programs for young adults and children, book clubs, story hours, craft programs, special performances, STEAM-based science programs, a genealogy club, and MakerSpace & computer instruction programs. The library conducted 326 program events with a total of 5,497 people of all ages attending. A used book store operated by volunteers was added in 2010 and is open during the library's regular hours of operation.

7.11.2 Library - Assessment of Current and Future Quality of Service

With only modest growth in student and overall population expected within the planning period of this Comprehensive Plan, demand for library services are not expected to rise dramatically. The Library does still, however, need to maintain a high level of service and needed improvement are identified in several areas as identified above in the Library Strategic Plan.

7.11.3 PORTSMOUTH MULTI-PURPOSE SENIOR CENTER

Operating in the town-owned Anne Hutchinson Building at 110 Bristol Ferry Road, has served the 55 and over community since 1981. Open weekdays from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, *"the Center is a private, non-profit community focal point for residents of Newport County and surrounding communities where older persons can come together for services and/or activities which enhance their dignity, reflect their experience and skills, support their independence, encourage their involvement in and with the Center and the community and respond to their diverse needs and interests."* Supported by annual appropriations from the town and dues from its members, the Center serves from 100 – 200 people in various activities on a daily basis. The Center serves approximately 4000 lunch-time meals per year.

With 14,100 square feet of usable space, the Center includes a Computer Lab, a Fitness Center, a Game Room, a Library, a Dining Hall/Multi-Purpose room, and a Thrift Shop. Services and activities include art classes, tax preparation services, computer training, exercise classes, medical equipment loan, daily lunch-time meals, a variety of social activities and much more.

7.11.4 SENIOR CENTER - ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE QUALITY OF SERVICE

Quality of service at the Portsmouth Senior Center is negatively impacted in two important ways.

First, those wishing to use the Portsmouth Senior Center must provide their own transportation to get there which may be an impediment to some. RIPTA bus service is available to the front door of the Center but does not extend into Portsmouth's neighborhoods, so public transportation to the center is poorly used. Secondly, while services and activities are effectively delivered, and desired outcomes are achieved for the time being, Center staff, members and volunteers identify a strong need to expand the range of activities for seniors. Lack of space in the Anne Hutchinson Building is however a severe impediment and much of that desired expansion cannot take place. Quality of service is likely to worsen over time without improvements in transportation to and from the Center, constant maintenance and upgrade of the facility itself, and a dedicated effort by the town to identify other facilities for the expansion of not only senior services but services and activities for the benefit of other disadvantaged individuals and families in the community.

7.12 GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

7.12.1 GOAL SF-1 - *Deliver cost-effective, high-quality municipal services and ensure that all public facilities are well-maintained.*

7.12.1.1 Policy SF-1.1 – Town Administration

Improve procedures to maintain a physical inventory of all Town facilities and assets in order to inform both short and long-term Capital Improvement Programs.

Action SF 1.1a - ~~Establish a Department Head working group to create~~ Maintain a baseline physical inventory of all Town structures, facilities and town-owned land for condition, adequacy, obsolescence and desired improvement in operations and other non-real estate assets.

Action SF 1.1b - Update the physical inventory on an annual basis during Q1 of each fiscal year.

7.12.1.2 Policy SF-1.2 – Town Administration

Manage long-range maintenance and improvement programs for all existing public facilities and town-owned land in order to protect prior public investment.

~~Action SF-1.2a – Develop comprehensive, long-term Use Plans for all major town properties and facilities including, but not limited to the Glen Farm Property, Glen Manor House, Glen Farm Stables, Bristol Ferry Landing, Elmhurst Park, the 3S property and Coggeshall School.~~

Action SF-1.2b - Develop comprehensive and detailed maintenance and/or phased replacement/divestiture plans for all structures, facilities and town-owned land.

~~Action SF-1.2c – Pursue strategic opportunities to acquire and/or form public/private partnerships for key properties in Portsmouth including, but not limited to the Navy Tank Farms and Old Stone Bridge.~~

Action SF-1.2d – Undertake a comprehensive upgrade in the operational capacity of Portsmouth Town Hall including:

- A structural and space needs analysis;
- An evaluation of security issues and implement necessary security measures;
- Monitor Town Hall air quality and implement necessary mitigation measures;
- Create a maintenance and upgrade schedule for all interior facilities and resources;
- Plan and implement comprehensive IT hardware and software improvements to Portsmouth Town Hall.
- Collaborate with the Portsmouth School Department on shared IT resources.

Action SF-1.2e – Inventory all Town-owned buildings and facilities for ADA compliance.

7.12.1.3 Policy SF-1.3 – Town Administration

Maintain sound fiscal management of Portsmouth’s financial resources by developing sustainable annual budgets that promote long-term financial stability.

Action SF-1.3a - Prepare the annual budget and tax rate calculation in Q4 of Portsmouth’s fiscal year.

Action SF-1.3b – Prepare and annually update a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). All improvements to the Town’s facilities and assets are to be prioritized through the CIP.

Action SF-1.3c – Prepare and annually update a 5-year Operational Budget Forecast to accompany the CIP.

~~Action SF-1.3d – Pursue opportunities to share administrative services such as accounts payable, payroll and other options with the Portsmouth School Department.~~

Action SF-1.3e – Pursue Pension Plan, OPEB and employee healthcare reforms in a fair and equitable manner.

Action SF-1.3f – Evaluate annual budgets with the goal of restoring and maintaining Portsmouth’s Fund Balance at a minimum of 16%.

Action SF-1.3g – Evaluate annual budgets with the goal of maintaining Portsmouth’s bond rating at current Standard & Poor’s AAA and Moody’s AA2 ratings.

Action SF-1.3h – Continuously evaluate fiscal management, tax collection methods and record keeping procedures for ways to improve efficiency and transparency of government.

Action SF-1.3i – Review and update the Impact Fee Ordinance for applicability to current and future growth projections and school construction needs.

7.12.1.4 *Policy SF-1.4 – Town Administration*

Continuously seek grant opportunities and ways to increase revenue to the Town in order to offset the costs of providing services.

~~Action SF-1.4a – Establish and fund a Grant Coordinator position with the twofold task of tracking existing grants and aggressively seeking future grant opportunities.~~

Action SF-1.4b - Pursue annual Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for projects that meet program guidelines.

Action SF-1.4c – Reevaluate all current Town property leases for opportunities to renegotiate terms more beneficial to the Town.

7.12.1.5 *Policy SF-1.5 – Town Administration*

Coordinate with neighboring communities and non-governmental organizations to determine if shared facilities and/or services may increase effectiveness.

Action SF-1.5a – Participate in regional planning efforts where appropriate.

Action SF-1.5b – Continuously investigate opportunities to share equipment, facilities, infrastructure, and services to maximize the benefit to Portsmouth taxpayers.

7.12.1.6 *Policy SF-1.6 – Town Administration*

Improve municipal services and facilities to Prudence and Hog Islands commensurate with the inherent limitations of access being by ferry or private vessel only.

Action SF-1.6a – Coordinate with and provide appropriate support to all entities responsible for maintaining high-quality, continuous ferry service to Prudence Island.

Action SF-1.6b – Continue to investigate the re-establishment of limited ferry service to Hog Island.

~~Action SF-1.6c – Partner with the Prudence Island Planning Commission and other stakeholders to develop 10-year strategic plans for the island.~~

7.12.1.7 Policy SF-1.7 – Town Administration

Ensure a high level of administrative functions from all town departments and enhance effective communication between town staff and citizens.

~~Action SF-1.7a – Develop a department-wide Technology Plan highlighting adaptation to changes in communications, facilities and equipment.~~

Action SF-1.7b – Pursue advanced technological means to improve transparency of government and communications with citizens.

~~Action SF-1.7c – Review the adequacy of municipal government administration services in accordance with internal standards, and in conformance with modern management practices.~~

Action SF-1.7d - Review all Town Boards and Committees for mission, performance, and consistency of by-laws.

Action SF-1.7e - Institute professional leadership development, mentorship programs and succession planning strategies for appropriate Town staff.

Action SF-1.7f - Pursue expansion of the Municipal Court.

7.12.1.8 Policy SF-1.8 – Town Administration

Ensure that the Town maintains compliance with all state and federal regulations and with the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island.

~~Action SF-1.8a – Complete and approve the Comprehensive Community Plan and update the Zoning Ordinance for compliance with the new Plan.~~

Action SF-1.8b - Review, update and codify all Town Ordinances.

Action SF-1.8c - Continue to implement and update all State-approved, locally adopted plans including:

- The Harbor Management Plan
- The On-Site Wastewater Management Plan
- The Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan
- The Stormwater Management Plan
- The Low-Moderate Income Housing Plan
- The Portsmouth Recycling Plan

Action SF-1.8d – Continue to work with State agencies in a cooperative manner to resolve issues of mutual interest.

7.12.1.9 Policy SF-1.9 – Public Works

Preserve the current high level of public works activities by continuously prioritizing service demands, supporting appropriate staffing levels and managing effective facilities and equipment maintenance / replacement programs.

~~Action SF-1.9a – Develop comprehensive Public Works 10-year Strategic Plans to address current and future service demands, management procedures, assets inventory maintenance and replacement, staffing levels and budgeting procedures.~~

Action SF-1.9b – Prepare and submit an annual public works budget to the Town Administrator in Q3-4 of Portsmouth’s fiscal year.

Action SF-1.9c – Annually, prepare and submit a comprehensive list of infrastructure improvements and other essential projects, including cost estimates, to be included in the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Action SF-1.9d – Continue the road paving and maintenance program as a top priority for the department.

Action SF-1.9e – Investigate and implement shared responsibilities and staffing with the School Department in the management of both Town and School facilities.

Action SF-1.9f – Pursue improvements to the public works facility on Prudence Island and investigate methods and procedures for improving service to islanders.

7.12.1.10 Policy SF-1.10 – Stormwater

Advance efficient and environmentally sensitive programs and practices to manage storm water runoff to mitigate adverse impacts on receiving waters.

Action SF-1.10a – Continue to comply with RIPDES Phase II requirements for stormwater management in municipally owned storm drain systems.

Action SF-1.10b – Investigate and prioritize improvements to the Town’s stormwater system infrastructure for inclusion in the 5-year CIP.

Action SF-1.10c – Continue to implement a sampling program to detect and eliminate illicit discharges from town-owned storm drains into receiving waters and report compliance to RIDEM.

Action SF-1.10d – Complete connectivity mapping of the stormwater collection system and develop a GIS database of all surface and underground features.

Action SF-1.10e - Conduct a program to educate the public on the problems associated with impaired stormwater quality, the conditions which contribute to impaired water quality, and the

actions which can be taken by the community both individually and as a whole to improve the quality of stormwater runoff.

~~Action SF 1.10f – Create a database of storm drains in Portsmouth that are located within projected sea level rise scenarios and monitor during flood events and/or extreme high tides.~~

~~Action SF 1.10g – Amend the local land development and subdivision regulations to include low-impact development standards and develop regulations to provide density bonuses or other incentives when low impact development techniques are used.~~

~~Action SF-1.10h – Draft and adopt a Post-Construction Storm Water Management Ordinance to strengthen the town’s ability to enforce maintenance of private stormwater management facilities.~~

7.12.1.11 Policy SF-1.11 – Wastewater

Advance efficient and environmentally sensitive programs and practices to manage on-site wastewater treatment to mitigate adverse impacts on receiving waters.

~~Action SF 1.11a – Adopt a Wastewater Management District Ordinance to ensure that Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) systems are inspected and properly maintained, repaired, and replaced.~~

~~Action SF-1.11b - Develop a homeowner education program to discourage the disposal of environmentally harmful chemicals such as cleaners, solvents, paint, acid, and the like in on-site wastewater treatment systems.~~

~~Action SF 1.11c – Hire and fund a full time Wastewater Manager position to implement the Portsmouth Wastewater Management District Ordinance.~~

~~Action SF 1.11e – Compile a record or database of damage and/or improvements of on-site wastewater treatment systems (OWTS) in Special Flood Hazard Areas and consider long term viability of OWTS systems on properties that are projected to be inundated by sea level rise scenarios over the design life of the system.~~

7.12.1.12 Policy SF-1.12 – Solid Waste

Promote adequate solid waste disposal and recycling programs that will serve the community with a minimum impact on the environment and assure compliance with the State’s minimum goals for recycling and solid waste diversion rates.

~~Action SF-1.12a - Draft and implement a Solid Waste Recycling Plan designed to achieve a minimum 35% solid waste recycling rate and a minimum 50% solid waste diversion rate as required by Rhode Island General Law.~~

~~Action SF 1.12b – Hire a Recycling Coordinator to implement the Solid Waste Recycling Plan.~~

Action SF-1.12c - Promote public awareness through community education programs that reduce solid waste, increase recycling, and ensure the proper disposal of household hazardous waste.

~~Action SF 1.12d – Adjust the annual determination of transfer station user fees to match up with the fiscal year rather than the calendar year.~~

~~Action SF 1.12e – Review and address solid waste management provisions for Prudence and Hog Islands.~~

Action SF-1.12f – Pursue adequate full-time provisions for electronic waste disposal at the transfer station.

Action SF-1.12g – Work with the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation to host quarterly hazardous waste disposal events in Portsmouth.

~~Action SF 1.12h – Seek a composting site in Portsmouth or a compost facility closer to Portsmouth than the RIRRC site in Johnston, in order to reduce the transportation footprint of leaf and yard waste.~~

7.12.1.13 Policy SF-1.13 – Community Services

Recognize the Portsmouth Free Public Library as a cultural center and a critical public service by assisting the library's efforts to not only maintain but expand and diversify library facilities and programs.

Action SF-1.13a – Advocate for the library at the state level to increase State Grant In-Aid funds to support library services.

Action SF-1.13b – Set annual appropriations for the Portsmouth Free Public Library at or above the prior year's level.

7.12.1.14 Policy SF-1.14 – Community Services

Improve on the current array of programs, services, and facilities for the benefit of senior citizens and disadvantaged individuals/families in the community.

~~Action SF 1.14a – Establish a Community Services Coordinating Committee to develop and oversee current and future community services programs.~~

~~Action SF 1.14b – Prepare a 10-year plan for physical upgrades to the Anne Hutchinson Building (the Senior Center).~~

Action SF-1.14c – Pursue annual CDBG funding to improve the operational capacity of the Portsmouth Multi-Purpose Senior Center.

Action SF-1.14d – Pursue opportunities to improve the transportation system for seniors wishing to use the Senior Center.

Action SF-1.14e - Conduct a comprehensive study and community survey to determine the future needs and preferences of community services.

Action SF-1.14f – Fund substance abuse and other community service programs at increased levels as needed.

7.12.2 GOAL SF-2 - *Protect residents and property by delivering coordinated, cost effective, high-quality fire protection, law enforcement, emergency medical services and emergency disaster response.*

7.12.2.1 Policy SF-2.1 – Public Safety

Continuously assess the adequacy of public safety facilities, resources, and equipment to ensure the highest state of readiness.

~~Action SF-2.1a – Prepare and submit a comprehensive list of short-medium term facilities improvements and other essential projects, including cost estimates, to be included in the 5-year CIP.~~

Action SF-2.1b – Review the current use of public safety technology including communications and warning systems for adequacy. Upgrade as necessary.

Action SF-2.1c – Investigate the establishment of a primary emergency shelter within the Town to adequately meet the needs of Portsmouth residents.

7.12.2.2 Policy SF-2.2 – Public Safety

Maintain and continuously seek to improve the current high level of public safety services within the constraints of budgetary realities and best-practice standards

~~Action SF-2.2a – Develop comprehensive Public Safety Administration 10-year Strategic Plans to address current and future service demands, personnel management procedures, assets inventory management, staffing levels and budgeting procedures.~~

Action SF-2.2b – Prepare and submit an annual Police Department, Fire Department and emergency management budgets to the Town Administrator in Q4 of Portsmouth’s fiscal year.

Action SF-2.2c – Develop a program of annual measurements to assess service demand and performance against resources in both the Police and Fire Departments.

Action SF-2.2d – Bi-annually update the Portsmouth Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).

Action SF-2.2e – Investigate the establishment of a seasonal or permanent police substation on Prudence Island.

7.12.2.3 *Policy SF-2.3 – Public Safety*

Plan for future population changes and potential new development to ensure capacity to deliver appropriate public safety services at appropriate levels.

~~Action SF-2.3a – Develop comprehensive Public Safety Resources 10-year Strategic Plans to address the adequacy of facilities, resources and equipment to meet medium-long term service demands.~~

Action SF-2.3b - Study the need (and identify potential sites) for a new fire and rescue sub-station at the south end of town.

~~Action SF-2.3c – Pursue through referendum the construction of a new Police Station at its present location.~~

Action SF-2.3d - Study the need for and identify potential docking sites for new police and fire boats for the eastern shore of Portsmouth.

7.12.2.4 *Policy SF-2.4 – Public Safety*

Ensure that all public safety staff is adequately trained with proper levels of certification for their public safety duties.

Action SF-2.4a – Pursue Federal and State accreditation for the Portsmouth Police Department.

7.12.3 **GOAL SF-3 - *Provide students with a consistently superior public education in safe, efficient, well-maintained school buildings and facilities.***

7.12.3.1 *Policy SF-3.1 – Public Education*

Engage all students in rigorous learning opportunities supported by a high quality and challenging curriculum and superior teaching to prepare them to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Action SF-3.1a - Develop, implement and annually update 5-year Strategic Plans for the Portsmouth School System in coordination with the Rhode Island Basic Education Program.

7.12.3.2 *Policy SF-3.3 – Public Education*

Ensure that school facilities have the capacity to meet enrollment needs, are well maintained and are continuously evaluated for their utility as a setting for academic excellence.

Action SF-3.3a – Develop, implement and update 5-year Capital Improvement Plans for School District facilities that complies with Board of Regents standards for education facilities construction approval and funding.

~~Action SF-3.3b – Evaluate and upgrade all school facilities, where required, based upon the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) standards, including removal of asbestos and lead base paint.~~

~~Action SF-3.2c – Pursue opportunities to share facilities management and maintenance with Portsmouth Public Works Department.~~

7.12.3.3 Policy SF-3.2 – Public Education

Under the provisions of the Town Charter, maintain open and cooperative relations between the School Department, and the Town Administration.

Action SF-3.2a – Prepare and present a proposed School Department budget to the Town Administrator by March 25th prior to the start of the next fiscal year.

Action SF-3.2b – Pursue opportunities to share administrative services such as accounts payable, payroll and other functions with the Portsmouth Finance Department.

Action SF-3.2c – Adopt the administrative practice of having the Superintendent of Schools attend all Town staff meetings.

Action SF-3.2d – Adopt the administrative practice of having at least one Town Department Head-level staff member attend all regular School Committee meetings.