

**Action 2:** Continue working complete streets concepts into land development and subdivision projects, where practical, to ensure multiple transportation options.

**Goal 3:** Promote public health and a sense of community through local food initiatives.

**Policy 1:** Encourage the development of a local community food system.

**Action 1:** Work with local farmers to facilitate new marketing opportunities.

**Action 2:** Work with the school superintendent's office to promote school gardens in all town schools.

## Physical Development and Creative Placemaking

### Physical Development

A concrete example of the Town's commitment to community building through physical development is the redevelopment of the Kendall Dean School building, located at 83 Green Street near some of the oldest residences of the town. The building was constructed during the 1930s as part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) program and was designed in the Neo-Classical architectural style common to many WPA projects. The building is currently in the National Historic District as a contributing structure and is included in the Local Historic District as well.

While it will be far more convenient to all of North Smithfield's residents to have a Town Hall with all local government offices and services in one location, the rehabilitation and renovation of Kendall Dean, Bushee School, and repurposing of the Halliwell School property, will provide opportunities where community members can be involved in local government. Walls within the building can be used for art exhibits featuring local artists and students. The town could host community picnics, game nights, and other events that promote community building.

~~This redevelopment of the Kendall Dean School will ensure that the building continues to contribute to the small New England village charm of the Slatersville Historic District and the Town of North Smithfield, while providing opportunities for residents to come together and forge new, stronger relationships. Its close proximity to Heritage Hall may provide more use of Grange Hall.~~ The redevelopment of the Halliwell Elementary School and the surrounding property will allow for a community use that actively engages all members of the community. Its location is ideal for a variety of opportunities, events and the like.

### Placemaking

There are numerous spaces within North Smithfield that contribute to the small-town New England charm and community character of the area. A few of these include Union Village, the Slatersville Village Green and Congregational Church, North Smithfield Public Library, Scouter's Hall, Slatersville Granite Commercial Blocks, and various playgrounds and athletic facilities, among others. The potential of these areas to promote a sense of community through creative placemaking is significant.

## VI. SERVICES AND FACILITIES

### Introduction

It is the intent of the Services and Facilities Element to make residents aware of existing services and facility locations, evaluate existing conditions, determine short and long-range needs, and plan for cost-effective solutions into the future. It discusses police, fire, emergency management, library and school services, and public utility services.

Currently, departments are located at the Town Hall, a Municipal Annex, and the Public Works Garage at the northernmost point in Town.

The town is planning for major capital expenses through investments in its schools and municipal offices. In April 2017, North Smithfield Schools contracted with the architectural and engineering firm SMMA (<http://www.smma.com>) to help develop a Master Education and Facilities Plan. SMMA was chosen due to its extensive experience developing similar plans for K-12 school districts throughout Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

For North Smithfield, this plan will include decommissioning , [envisioning and execution of new plans for](#) Halliwell Elementary School, address NEASC Accreditation issues at North Smithfield High School (locker rooms, science labs, and 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills/spaces) and a map as to how to best fix, improve, and maintain our facilities to support instruction now and into the future. North Smithfield Schools are following the clearly defined Necessity of School Construction process defined by the Rhode Island Department of Education. A link to comprehensive information is provided here: <http://www.northsmithfieldschools.com/master-educational-and-facilities-plan.html>

### Inventory of School Facilities

The North Smithfield School District is comprised of the High School, Middle and Elementary School, along with Halliwell Elementary School. Halliwell contains multiple buildings in a campus arrangement and is no longer effective to maintain due to its wood frame and wood sided construction. Capacity exists within the schools and student population projections show continued declines out to 2026 that will allow grade adjustments when removing the Halliwell school.

### Current and Projected School Enrollment

School enrollment for grades K-12 has decreased from a high of 1871 students in 2007 to 1685 students in 2016. New England School Development Council or NESDEC maintains a decline in student population through 2026 down to 1573 students. See comprehensive data analysis on projections here:

[http://www.northsmithfieldschools.com/uploads/9/4/0/8/94089809/nesdec16\\_north\\_smithfield\\_analysis.pdf](http://www.northsmithfieldschools.com/uploads/9/4/0/8/94089809/nesdec16_north_smithfield_analysis.pdf)



### Existing Capacity and Adequacy Analysis

According to the recent school facilities master plan of 2017, NESDEC projections depict the following capacities out through the year 2021/2022. There is capacity within the system to support grade separation alternatives.

#### Halliwell Elementary

Enrollment: 348

Capacity: 346

#### North Smithfield Elementary School

Enrollment: 453

Capacity: 606

#### North Smithfield Middle School

Enrollment: 450

Capacity: 550

#### North Smithfield High School

Enrollment: 500

Capacity: 672

### Inventory of Town [Buildings](#) [Administration](#)

Three buildings provide space for the administration of town services. They are the Town Hall, the Municipal Annex, and the Public Works Garage. Map 1 depicts all of the public services and facilities within Town.

#### [Halliwell Community Center](#)

[Located at 358 Victory Highway, Halliwell Memorial Elementary School was built in 1957, and contains 11 wood framed buildings. The buildings have all fallen into various forms of disrepair, rendering some unusable. It is located on approximately 35 acres of land, with access from Victory Highway, Greene Street, and a potential to be accessed from School Street. Many community members leave town and go to other surrounding towns to use the community center and senior centers.](#)

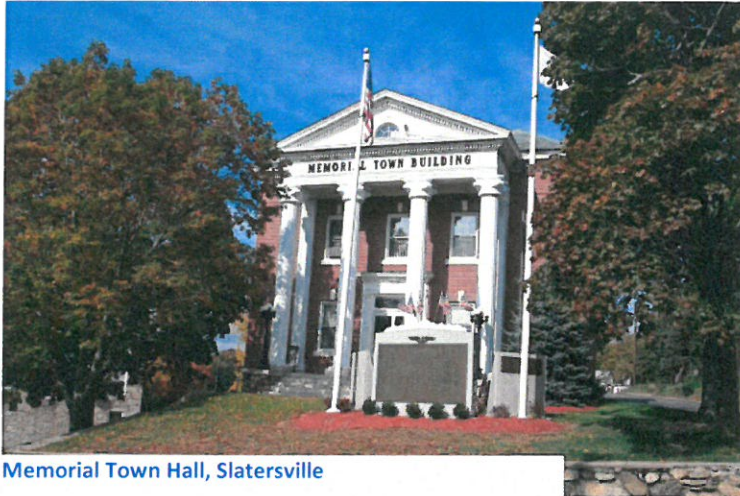
[The school was transferred in 2019 by the School Department and left in the care of the town. Multiple discussions and meetings have been had in regards to the future of the project. A meeting in March 2020 held by the Town Council and Town Administrator allowed for community members to voice their opinions on the various uses and potential that the site could have.](#)

[The creation of a community center would allow for the residents of North Smithfield to have a place to meet and participate in a variety of activities. Some activities or programmatic elements suggested by members of the community include, \(but not limited to\): Library, Art/Innovation Center, Skate Park, Food Pantry, Community Gardens, Rentable Conference Rooms, place for Passive Recreation, Veterans Center, Community Pool, Dog Park, Basketball Court, Technical/Vocational Classrooms, Walking Trails, Playground, Theater Group, Incubator Spaces, Senior Center, and many others.](#)

[The community center could potentially be a multi-phased project to ensure its success. A full assessment of the property and buildings should be completed \(or expanded upon of the 2014 RGB/CA Pretzer Associates assessment\) by a team of registered professionals. The Planning Board \(or formed committee\) should oversee the process, along with members of Zoning, Asset Management, and the community at large.](#)

## Town Hall

Located at the intersection of North Main and Main Streets in Slatersville, the Town Hall has an elevated site overlooking the Branch River, located within the Slatersville Historic District listed in the State and Federal Registers of Historic Places.



Memorial Town Hall, Slatersville

Current usage by floor is as follows: first floor (there is ground level access at rear of building) - Planning and second floor Town Administrator, Finance Director and staff. There is a conference room on the first floor used for administrative meetings and several Boards such as the Economic Development Commission and Recreation Commission.

Over the years, various proposals for creating a new municipal center have been considered and most recently have settled on consolidating services at the Kendall Dean School.

## Municipal Annex

~~The Municipal Annex is in the former Bushee School on Route 146A near Park Square approximately three miles south of the Town Hall. Originally constructed in 1926, with an addition in 1935, the early 90's conversion to municipal use has provided a modernized facility~~



~~with parking in the rear and side for municipal users and parking in the front for police purposes. The site covers 2 acres.~~

~~Present occupants include the Police Department, Clerks Office, Tax Assessor's Office, Tax Collector, Building Inspection and the Town's Emergency Operations Center. This meeting room needs HVAC improvements and parking is tight during well-attended public meetings.~~

~~The main drawback to the present facility is the split nature of municipal management; there is inefficiency in traveling between the Town Hall and Municipal Annex for matters that cannot be handled by a phone call or e-mail. The public is often inconvenienced by mistakenly going to the wrong facility. The relocation of the Building Inspectors office to the Annex has helped to rectify this to an extent; Building Inspection and the tax offices work together closely on many projects, so the relocation was beneficial. Also, the building floor plan is painfully inadequate in terms of serving a police department which would benefit from a more modern design that fits current needs.~~

### **Public Works Garage**

The Public Works Garage (right) is located on a 3.5-acre site at 281 Quaker Highway adjoining the Uxbridge, Massachusetts Town and State line. Although situated far from a convenient central location, this is a good area because the facility does not adversely influence on properties either in North Smithfield or Uxbridge.

The Public Works Department's responsibilities include highway maintenance and construction, inspections, and parks and recreation. The garage has six bays used for the storage of Public Works



vehicles and equipment and repair of police and other Town vehicles. There is a partially enclosed salt storage shed on the site. A recent addition to the facility included office space and a record storage area. The site also functions as a limited recycling center where Town residents can bring waste oil and compost to the site.

### **Water and Sewer Department**

The Water and Sewer Department is housed in a 40' x 60' two-bay building on Main Street. This building provides storage for the Department's vehicles, equipment and has a small office for the Superintendent.

### **Police Department**

~~The North Smithfield Police Department is located at the Municipal Annex. Two lock up cells are sufficient for normal conditions. The staff includes the Chief, 20 officers and 4 civilian employees.~~



~~There are twelve vehicles, and one van assigned to the Animal Control Officer. The cars are fueled and maintained at the Public Works Garage. Fine tuning is done by a private garage as the Town does not have a computer diagnostic facility. For police protection purposes, the Town has been divided into three districts. There is ample onsite parking; all is uncovered.~~

Presently, the Police Department is housed in the Bushee School. The building in its current state requires a number of upgrades to ensure the building complies with local and state building codes, as well as the health, safety and welfare of the occupants. The current building cannot serve as an effective police headquarters due to the fact that the building was designed to be a school.

The police station will need substantial upgrades to meet not only building codes, but also mandates set forth by the RI State Police, and the RI Police Accreditation Commission. Some of the items include (but are not limited to); temperature and humidity controlled evidence rooms; separate drug and fire arms evidence rooms; separate male, female, and juvenile holding cells with restroom facilities; compliant sloped ADA ramps; sally port loading areas; separate evidence handling areas; hazardous materials remediation. Identifying the short falls of the station in its current state, will allow the town to plan for future upgrades, renovations, or new construction. With the town offices now relocated to Kendall Dean, the department does have the ability to expand into the now vacant offices.

The police department in our town require a facility to enable them to perform their job appropriately and remove any potential liability for the town. A call for studies should be had to evaluate the costs of renovations, upgrades, and/or new construction. A team of licensed professional with a record of designing police stations in Rhode Island should be engaged with to look at feasibility options with associated costs and potential inflation, and to help assist and determine the best paths moving forward.

### **Fire Protection and Rescue Services**

The North Smithfield Volunteer Fire Department, Primrose Fire Department and the North Smithfield Ambulance and Rescue Association form North Smithfield Fire and Rescue Services, Inc. (NSFRS) which provides fire and rescue services to the entire Town.

NSFRS operates as a non-profit organization receiving the bulk of its income through annual contracts with the Town. Supplemental financing is provided through periodic fund raisers and third-party billing. Most of the major equipment has been purchased by the Town and is leased to the NSFRS. The fire stations are independently owned by the NSFRS.

NSFRS has two stations. Station #1 is located on St. Paul Street at the intersection with Route 146A is convenient to the more urbanized sections of Town and Station #2 is located on Providence Pike to the north of Greenville Road, is situated to serve the more rural areas. Dispatching is handled at the North Smithfield Fire and Rescue Station #1. NSFRS has 21 full-time employees and 15 volunteers. The amount and expense of training required for certification

**State Guide Plan Element 711, Blackstone Region Water Resources Management Plan**

Sewer services will be limited to areas of higher densities. Generally, lots of 1 1/2 acres or larger will be served by private wells and individual subsurface disposal systems.

**State Guide Plan Element 721, Water Supply Policies of Rhode Island**

The Town has partnered with the local Watershed Councils (as is discussed in greater detail in the Natural and Cultural Resources Element of this Comprehensive Plan) to help protect the water supply.

Some large lot zoning remains, and is proposed, to specifically protect individual wells and reservoirs.

**State Guide Plan Element 722, Water Supply Plan for Rhode Island**

North Smithfield is pursuing its water resource needs through regional and interstate cooperation.

Goals	Policies		Actions
1. Organize public buildings in a manner which will allow efficient delivery of public services while enhancing community character.	1.a. <u>Provide services for a variety of demographic and age groups.</u> <del>Focus redevelopment in existing urban areas while preserving undeveloped, select rural spaces.</del>		1.a.1. <u>Consider a community use for Halliwell and establish a committee to oversee site design and construction.</u> <del>Redevelop Kendall Dean School into a new Town Hall that will house municipal administrative functions.</del>
	<u>Strive to maintain modern and efficient public safety and police services at the Bushee school site</u>		<u>With design professionals, examine feasibility options to design a police station that meets current police accreditation and building code standards.</u>
			1.a.2. Redevelop ATP brownfield for mixed uses



- **Local Streets** - These highways emphasize a high level of land access. They provide the highest level of property access, at the lowest speeds, and the lowest level of mobility. They generally have the lowest design standards and are typically two-lane highways with no striping or other painted markings. They represent the bulk of the mileage in the public highway network.

### **Road Repair**

The Town of North Smithfield, through its Department of Public Works, has a continuing 5-year program for the repair and resurfacing of the local street system. This program is prioritized from a professionally-prepared pavement management system analysis. Roadwork is funded as a capital expense requiring annual allocation through the town's budgeting process. Bonding such improvements must be avoided.

At the State level the Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Planning, in cooperation with local towns and cities and the Department of Transportation, prepares a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP sets priority schedules for repair of state and federal-aid roadways.

RIDOT maintains statewide mapping depicting North Smithfield's Highway Functional Classification (see weblink here: <http://www.dot.ri.gov/about/maproom/index.php>)

### **Traffic insufficient flow areas**

The major traffic generators in North Smithfield include the following: 1) the industrial areas along and near North Smithfield Industrial Drive and at the Branch River Industrial Park complex; 2) retail development at the intersection of Route 5 and Victory Highway; 3) retail, commercial and office development along Route 146A, particularly at Park Square and Dowling Village; and 4) the commercial activities along the non-limited access portions of Route 146.

Regionally, major out-of-town destinations include businesses and industries in Woonsocket, the mall and office parks in Lincoln, and the interchange of I-295 and Route 146. Route 146 provides direct access to areas to the north and south, while I-295, which passes within one-half mile of the southern boundary of the Town, facilitates movement to points to the east, west and south. Route 99, an Industrial Highway which connects with Route 146 immediately to the south of the town line funnels off considerable amounts of regional traffic which used to pass through North Smithfield on its way to destinations in Woonsocket; approximately two-thirds of the traffic traveling north to the industrial areas of Woonsocket uses Route 146 and 146A.

In September of 2020, RIDOT announced the design and reconstruction effort for 146 including the ~~The removal of a~~ signalized intersection at Sayles Hill Rd and 146 ~~which is a safety hazard causing causes~~ traffic backups that affects ~~adjacent collector~~ ~~nearby~~ roads in ~~the area that~~ vicinity. One of only two signalized intersections along Route 146 from Providence to Worcester, the proper solution is to remove the signal and create either express lanes or a bridge/underpass.



maintenance difficult in the context of blurred boundaries between public and private road systems. Until a comprehensive analysis is performed utilizing professional land surveyor and title services, the Planning Board must occasionally rely on the development community to formulate such information as part of the subdivision and land development process.

### Scenic Roads

The town may wish to consider adopting a scenic roads inventory as a means of preserving rural characteristics from development. The National Park Service offers a Heritage Landscape Inventory that could serve as the basis around which to work with subdivision and land development applicants to preserve features of the landscape that contribute to rural character. See weblink: <https://www.nps.gov/blac/learn/management/heritage-landscape-inventory.htm> One of the strong recommendations of the Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan for the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor is the preservation of the country roads which, along with the more densely developed mill villages, give the region its unique character.

Goals	Policies	Actions
1. Maintain safe, efficient and convenient transportation that promotes conservation and environmental stewardship.	1.a. Promote traffic safety on new and existing roadways.	1.a.1. <a href="#">Monitor the 146 construction project and work with RIDOT to limit delays.</a> <del>Improve safety at West Acres interchange on Route 146 where 146 and 146A diverge/merge. (including south to north U-turn).</del>
	1.b. Commit annual funding to a road and sidewalk capital improvement program as to avoid unnecessary bonding.	1.b.1. In accordance with RIGL 45-23.1, create and adopt a Mapped Street Ordinance and official road map.
	1.c. Collaborate with DPW, Police, and Fire to improve safety in problem areas through selective roadway alignments, and intersection improvements.	<del>1.c.1. Eliminate traffic congestion due to the signalized intersection at Route 146 and Sayles Hill Road through the State</del>