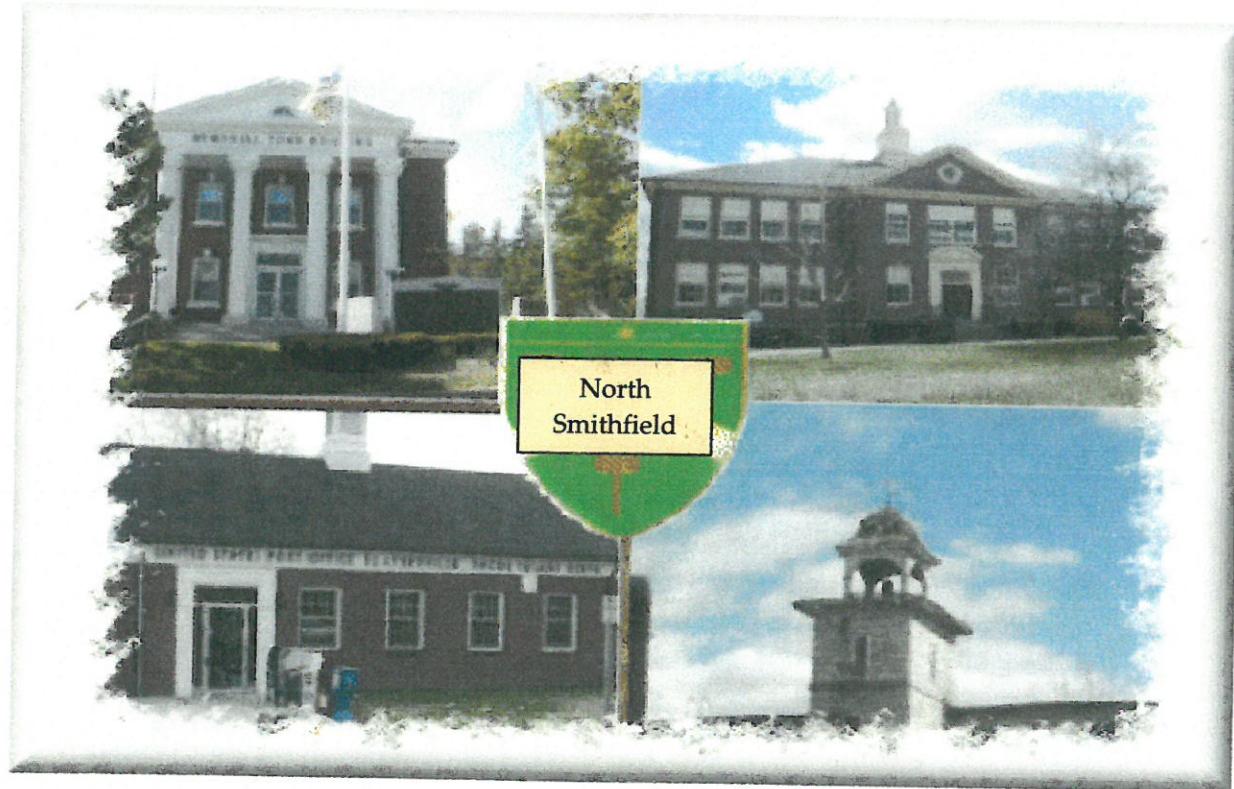


# Town of North Smithfield Rhode Island

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FIVE-YEAR UPDATE 2006**



Adopted by Town Council  
March 20, 2006

## **Town of North Smithfield Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Update**

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## Five-Year Update Summary

### Goals and Policies

**Amendments:** (Briefly describe any land use related amendments and indicate date of adoption)

The only Element that was amended since the Plan's adoption by the Council in 1992 was the Housing Element. Specifically, an Affordable Housing Production Plan was adopted in December 2004 as an appendix of the Housing Element and contained a series of new implementation items.

Identify significant changes to the plan's goals and policies based upon past experience and updates of the functional elements

Summary	Text/Map Page
Examine Slatersville Mill for new, consolidated Town Hall and Library locations.	Goal #2 B p.H-2
Two new schools buildings are needed, Jr./Sr. High School needs rehab.	Goal #1B p.H-2
Wastewater Management Districts may be solution to failed ISDS and cost of sewerage.	Goal #1B p.G-2 Goal #4B p.H-3
Wastewater Management Plan needs updating.	Goal #3F. p.H-3
New goals, policies and actions included for implementation of Stormwater Mngt.	Goal #4A-J p.G-4, Goal #6 A-C. p.H-3
Require land dedication for all development projects through Conservation Development, easements, etc. or through fee in lieu of dedication	Goal #1E p.D-6 Goal #5B p.G-5 Goal #1E & F. p.I-2
Develop formal trails system along Branch River, railroad rights of way.	Goal #1 C, p.I-2
Improve existing facilities.	Goal #1-#3, p.H-2-H-3
Improve Kelly Complex/Mammoth Mill site.	Goal #1 I-K p.I-3
New road between Pound Hill and Greenville Roads no longer proposed.	-
Extension of (private) Rankin Path by Town no longer proposed.	-
Scenic roads Ordinance needed.	Goal #6 G p.G-6 Goal #3A p.J-2
Traffic calming measures needed	Goal #8A p.J-3
Pedestrian access components to become a part of all land developments.	Goal #2B p.D-7 Goal #7A p. J-3
Goals, policies and actions have been added to implement the Stormwater Management Plan	Goal #4 p. G-4+5
References to "clustering" of homes has been revised to reflect "conservation development"	Goals in D, G, +I
Resource/Site Analysis Maps will be required as part of the Master Plan review stage.	G-2.0 #3 D
Goals, policies and actions have been added to implement the Slatersville Area Plan	D-2.0 #3 D
Subdivision & Land Dev. Regulations will be improved to better protect resources.	G-2.0 #1 D
An Agricultural Business Zone is proposed.	D-3.1.6 p. D-15
An Open Space Zone is proposed.	D-3.1.5 p. D-15
A Mill Rehabilitation Zone is proposed.	D-4.2 #2 p. D-25
A Village Residential Zone is proposed.	D-4.2 #2 p. D-25
A Mixed Use Commercial/Office Zone is proposed.	D-4.2 #2 p. D-25
A Mixed Use Retail Zone is proposed.	D-4.2 #2 p. D-25
A new goal ad several policies and actions attempt to institute "smart growth" techniques.	D-2.0 #2 p. D-7
Several policies and actions relate to techniques intended to improve design.	D, E, F, G, H, I
The goals have been reoriented to focus on the Town's capacity to manage a comprehensive economic development program.	F-2.0 #1 D p. F-2
It is recommended that the NS Industrial Development Commission be given more extensive authority.	F-2.0 #1 C p. F-2

## Five-Year Update Summary

### Land Use Element

**Amendments:** (Briefly describe any land use related amendments and indicate date of adoption)  
There were no amendments to this Element.

#### **Significant Changes:** Land Use or Infrastructure

Given that it has been over 10 years since the 1992 Plan was finalized, the Element has been significantly revised. All text and statistics have been updated with 2000 US Census data and many sentences and entire sections were rewritten based on information and reports that have been generated since 1992.

Summary	Text/Map Page
The sewer system has been expanded in conformance with many of the recommendations contained in the 1993 Wastewater Facilities Plan.	H-3.11 H-16-17
Over 600 acres have been acquired and put into protected status since 1992.	Map D-2 & I-3.1.1 I-5
The area behind Landmark Medical proposed in 1992 as a Mixed Use/ District, is in the process of being developed for a mixed use development.	D-3.4.4 D-21
The 1995 Land Use/Land Cover RIGIS data is included.	D-3.0 D-11

#### **Significant Changes:** Land Use Demand (e.g. population, employment)

Summary	Text/Map Page
Although Statewide Planning's population projections are low, over 850 new dwelling units were approved since 2000. As such, there is a need for growth management.	D-1.1.2 D-3
The build-out has been revised to take into account the BRVNHC 2001 build-out, new lots created by zoning (in response to affordable housing needs and economic development needs), and recently approved/permited development and redevelopment projects.	D-3.1.7 D-16

#### **Significant Changes:** Future Land Use Allocations

Summary	Text/Map Page
Several Town and State-owned parcels will be rezoned as Open Space.	D-3.1.5 D-15
Three historic mill complexes will be rezoned to encourage rehabilitation and reuse.	D-3.4.1 D-19
Certain areas will be rezoned to generate economic activity (1991 Industrial Site Survey).	D-3.4.1 D-21
The density of mill villages is to be maintained/encouraged.	D-3.4.2 D-20

#### **Land Use Goals and Policies Changes**

Summary	Text/Map Page
An Agricultural Business Zone is proposed.	D-3.1.6 D-15
An Open Space Zone is proposed.	D-3.1.5 D-15
A Mill Rehabilitation Zone is proposed.	D-3.4.1 D-19
A Village Residential Zone is proposed.	D-3.4.2 D-20
A Mixed Use Commercial/Office Zone is proposed.	D-3.4.3 D-21
A Mixed Use Commercial/Office/146A Zone is proposed.	D-3.4.4 D-21
A new goal and several policies and actions attempt to institute "smart growth" techniques.	D-2.0 #2 D-7
Several policies and actions relate to techniques intended to improve design.	D-2.0 #3 D-8

#### **Land Use Implementation Changes**

Summary	Text/Map Page
Most 1992 Zoning proposals were adopted; the mixed use proposals were not adopted.	-
The Subdivision Regulations were amended in accordance with the Comp Plan & State law.	-

## Five-Year Update Summary

### Housing Element

**Amendments:** (Briefly describe any housing related amendments and indicate date of adoption)  
 This Element was amended in December 2004 with the Town Council's decision to adopt the "Affordable Housing Production Plan" as an appendix of the existing Element.

#### **Significant Changes:** Housing Inventory and Programs

Summary	Text/Map Page
The Affordable Housing Production Plan appendix has been brought into the body of the Element's text. More specifically, the appendix text has replaced most of the 1992 text in the Element. The Element, as revised, incorporates all 2000 US Census data and is in conformance with both the Low and Moderate Income Housing Act of 2004 and the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act.	
The data contained in the new Element has not changed from what had been submitted in December 2004, the Element has simply been reformatted to make it more similar to the format of other Elements in the Plan Update.	

#### **Significant Changes:** Housing Demand (by type of unit and household)

Summary	Text/Map Page
The data contained in the new Element has not changed from what had been submitted in December 2004, the Element has simply been reformatted to make it more similar to the format of other Elements in the Plan Update.	

#### **Significant Changes:** Housing Affordability (supply and demand)

Summary	Text/Map Page
The data contained in the new Element has not changed from what had been submitted in December 2004, the Element has simply been reformatted to make it more similar to the format of other Elements in the Plan Update.	

#### **Future Housing Demand Impacts on Land Use and Related Elements**

Summary	Text/Map Page
The Land Use Element included rezoning as specified in the Housing Element, build-out takes the rezoning proposals into account.	E-3.2.3 & 4.2 E-15 & E-27
The Housing, Land Use and Economic Development Elements have been reconciled such that the people filling the jobs created by rezoning can find housing in North Smithfield.	Elements D – E – F
In response to a revised build-out, more land will need to be acquired to maintain an active recreation standard.	E-3.2.3 E-15 I-3.1.4 I-8
The Services and Facilities Element recognizes the need to secure more public water and proposes the use of Wastewater Mngt. Districts to protect groundwater from failing ISDS.	H-4.6 H-20

#### **Housing Implementation Changes**

Summary	Text/Map Page
There is still an insufficient amount of affordable housing available.	E-3.2.3 E-15
Accessory dwelling units are now allowed by right.	Zoning Ord.
A Housing Commission still needs to be created.	E-4.1 E-26

## Five-Year Update Summary

### Economic Development Element

**Amendments:** (Briefly describe any economic development related amendments and indicate date of adoption)  
There were no amendments to this Element.

#### ***Significant Changes:*** Economic Base

Given that it has been over 10 years since the 1992 Plan was finalized, the Element has been significantly revised. All text and statistics have been updated with 2000 US Census data and many sentences and entire sections were rewritten based on information and reports that have been generated since 1992.

Summary	Text/Map Page
Several historic mills are targeted for rehabilitation with housing as its primary uses – design of units are such that a small percentage of the units will have children may have a positive impact on the tax base.	D-2 #6A D-9 D-3.4.1 D-19+20 F-2.0 #3 B, C F-2
Housing remains the largest tax generator (84%), but also the largest user of services.	F-3.1.3 F-7

#### ***Significant Changes:*** Industrial/Commercial Site and Space Inventory

Summary	Text/Map Page
The 1991 Maguire Industrial Site Survey remains relatively current and certain rezoning proposals are based on Maguire's recommendations.	F-3.1.3 F-7
Areas on Quaker Highway would lend themselves to more intensive uses.	F-3.1.4 F-7
A 137 acre mixed-use development is proposed behind Landmark Medical.	F-4.1 F-8
The Branch River Industrial Park remains a prime site for new industrial development.	F-4.1 F-8

#### ***Significant Changes:*** Gaps between Economic Development Resources and Needs

Summary	Text/Map Page
More land needs to be rezoned for commercial/industrial purposes to help subsidize the tax base, but also to acknowledge that much of the vacant land zoned for comm./industrial uses has significant development constraints.	F-3.1.4 F-7
The rehabilitation of mills for purely industrial uses appears to be impossible. In order to preserve the buildings, proposed residential activities should also include some commercial uses.	F-4.1 F-8

#### ***Analysis of Ability to Address Gaps***

Summary	Text/Map Page
The goals have been reoriented to focus on the Town's capacity to manage a comprehensive economic development program.	F-2.0 F-2-3
It is recommended that the NS Industrial Development Commission be given more extensive authority.	F-2.0 #1 F-2

#### ***Economic Development Implementation Changes***

Summary	Text/Map Page
The Mixed Use districts designed to encourage economic activities were incorporated.	F-4.1 F-8
The Town continues to work with the Chamber of Commerce, and NS Advisory Group to retain businesses.	F-4.4 F-10

## Five-Year Update Summary

### Natural and Cultural Resources Element

**Amendments:** (Briefly describe any natural & cultural resource related amendments and indicate date of adoption)

There were no amendments to this Element.

#### **Significant Changes:** Inventory of Resources

Given that it has been over 10 years since the 1992 Plan was finalized, the Element has been significantly revised. All text and statistics have been updated with 2000 US Census data and many sentences and entire sections were rewritten based on information and reports that have been generated since 1992.

Summary	Text/Map Page
Current list of rare/exemplary species was added from the Natural Heritage Program.	G-3.1.5 G-17
Added a section on Booth Pond –biodiversity and endangered species.	G-3.1.5 G-16
“Historic Areas” and “Historic Landscapes” as identified by the State have been added.	G-3.2.2 G-28
New text from the Rivers Classification Plan has been added.	G-3.1.4 G-14
Findings from the Woonasquatucket Greenspace Mapping Project have been incorporated.	Maps D-3 - D-5
Properties in the Farm, Forest and Open Space Tax Act have increased.	G-3.1.2 G-9
FEMA’s 1993 report findings were incorporated.	G-3.1.4 G-15
USGS findings regarding the Tifft Well have been incorporated.	H-3.1.4 H-12

#### **Significant Changes:** Threats to Resources

Summary	Text/Map Page
CERLIS site data has been updated, all new text for Superfund sites has been included.	G-3.1.8 G-19-24
Failing septic systems continue to threaten groundwater.	G-4.1.1 G-39
Threats to historic and cultural resources (deterioration, inactivity, etc.) have been updated.	G-3.2.5 G-31-32

#### **Significant Changes:** Analysis of Sustainability of Resources

Summary	Text/Map Page
Dept of Health & URI developed drinking water pollution risk assessments for the Slattersville Public Water System and the Woonsocket Water System that includes areas of North Smithfield.	G-3.1.4 G-12
Text has been added describing the Watershed Associations as partners.	G-4.1.2 G-41
Wastewater Mgmt. Districts requiring ISDS inspection is offered as a water quality solution.	G-4.1.1G-39G-41
The BRVNHC is recognized as an important partner in the protection of the Blackstone River and Watershed – its reauthorization by Congress in 2006 is supported.	G-4.2.2 G-43-G-45
References to the Stormwater Mgmt. Plan and Hazard Mitigation Plan have been added.	G-4.1.1 G-40

#### **Natural & Cultural Resources Goals and Policies Changes**

Summary	Text/Map Page
Goals, policies and actions have been added to implement the Stormwater Management Plan.	G-2.0 #4 G-4
References to “clustering” of homes has been revised to reflect “conservation development”.	G-2.0 #5 G-5
Resource/Site Analysis Maps will be required as part of the Master Plan review stage.	G-2.0 #3 G-4
Goals, policies and actions have been added to implement the Slattersville Area Plan.	G-2.0 #10 G-7
Subdivision & Land Dev. Regulations will be improved to better protect resources.	G-2.0 #1 G-2

#### **Natural & Cultural Resources Implementation Changes**

Summary	Text/Map Page
“The Blunders” has been designated as a local historic district.	G-3.1.5 G-16
The Soil Erosion & Sediment Control Ord. was updated-enforcement remains an issue, Further revision is needed	G-4.1.1 G-39

## Five-Year Update Summary

### Services and Facilities Element

**Amendments:** (Briefly describe any services & facilities related amendments and indicate date of adoption)  
There were no amendments to this Element.

#### **Significant Changes:** Inventory of Services & Facilities

Given that it has been over 10 years since the 1992 Plan was finalized, the Element has been significantly revised. All text and statistics have been updated with 2000 US Census data and many sentences and entire sections were rewritten based on information and reports that have been generated since 1992.

Summary	Text/Map Page
Text incorporates findings from 2004 School Facilities Master Plan.	H-3.1 H-4, H-9
Text incorporates findings from 1993 Wastewater Management Plan.	H-3.11 H-16
Text incorporates findings from 2004 Hazard Mitigation Plan.	H-3.5 H-12
Text incorporates findings from 2004 Stormwater Management Plan.	G-4.1.2 G-42
All text was reviewed/updated by local Departments/organizations.	-

#### **Significant Changes:** Current Demand Versus Available Capacity

Summary	Text/Map Page
Schools are currently deficient in size based on NESDEC standards.	H-3.1.3 H-9
Town services are divided between 2 buildings, leading to confusion/inefficiency.	H-3.2.2 H-10
Library is too small, and can not be expanded in its current location.	H-3.6 H-14
The water supply is insufficient based on needs of several, permitted land developments.	H-3.10 H-15

#### **Significant Changes:** Project Future Demands and Analyze Capacity Sustainability

Summary	Text/Map Page
Senior population has grown - this group will require new/improved services.	H-3.8 H-14
Population growth rate is accelerating, Town needs growth management plan.	D-1.2 D-5

#### **Services & Facilities Goals and Policies Changes**

Summary	Text/Map Page
Examine Slatersville Mill for new, consolidated Town Hall and Library locations.	#2 H-2
Two new schools buildings are needed, Jr./Sr. High School needs rehab.	#1B H-2
Wastewater Management Districts may be solution to failed ISDS and cost of sewerage.	#4 H-3
Wastewater Management Plan needs updating.	#3 F H-3
New goals, policies and actions included for implementation of stormwater management	#6 A-C H-3

#### **Services & Facilities Implementation Changes**

Summary	Text/Map Page
Water Authority was created in 1993 but was recently disbanded; new water sources are still being sought.	H-3.10 H-15
Fire Departments were consolidated; municipalization being considered.	H-3.4 H-11
Town Hall overcrowding was temporarily relieved with use of a municipal annex.	H-3.2.1 H-9

## Five-Year Update Summary

### Open Space & Recreation Element

**Amendments:** (Briefly describe any open space related amendments and indicate date of adoption)  
There were no amendments to this Element.

#### **Significant Changes:** Facilities & Programs

Given that it has been over 10 years since the 1992 Plan was finalized, the Element has been significantly revised. All text and statistics have been updated with 2000 US Census data and many sentences and entire sections were rewritten based on information and reports that have been generated since 1992.

Summary	Text/Map Page	
Total acreage for all open space and recreation expanded from 831 in 1990 to 1,494 in 2005.	I-3.1.1	I-5+6
Major acquisitions included the Blackstone Gorge, Pacheco Park and Mammoth Mills.	I-1.0	I-1

#### **Significant Changes:** Needs Assessment for Various Populations

Summary	Text/Map Page	
Insufficient playing fields for children, documented in School Facilities Master Plan.	I-3.1.5	I-9
Insufficient linear parks/formal paths for walking or cycling.	I-3.1.5	I-9
Active recreation deficiency of 18 acres based on 2000 US Census population.	I-3.1.4	I-8

#### **Significant Changes:** Project Future Needs and Analyze Program & Facility Adequacy

Summary	Text/Map Page	
Conservative build-out suggests need for at least 20 add'l active recreation acres by 2010.	I-3.1.4	I-8
Create bicycle paths, connect to existing bicycle paths.	I-4.3	I-12
Create/improve access to Branch and Blackstone Rivers.	I-4.2	I-11

#### **Open Space & Recreation Goals and Policies Changes**

Summary	Text/Map Page	
Require land dedication for all development projects through Conservation Development, easements, etc. or through fee in lieu of dedication.	I-4.1	I-10
Develop formal trails system along Branch River, railroad rights of way.	I-4.3	I-12
Improve existing facilities.	I-4.0	I-9
Improve access to Kelly Complex and develop Mammoth Mill site.	I-4.2	I-11

#### **Open Space & Recreation Implementation Changes**

Summary	Text/Map Page	
Land Trust was created and is operating successfully.	I-3.1.1	I-5-6
Soccer fields and toilet facilities added to NSCS Elementary School.	I-4.1	I-10
Pacheco Park expanded and skateboard facility added.	I-3.1.1	I-5
Blackstone Gorge property expanded by 64 acres.	I-3.1.1	I-5
More land surrounding the Woonsocket Reservoir was purchased for water quality protection.	I-4.5	I-15

## Five-Year Update Summary

### Circulation Element

**Amendments:** (Briefly describe any circulation related amendments and indicate date of adoption)  
There were no amendments to this Element.

#### **Significant Changes:** Transportation Facilities and Services

Given that it has been over 10 years since the 1992 Plan was finalized, the Element has been significantly revised. All text and statistics have been updated with 2000 US Census data and many sentences and entire sections were rewritten based on information and reports that have been generated since 1992.

Summary	Text/Map Page
Route 99 was constructed relieving some congestion on local roads.	J-3.1.4 J-6
Improvements to Route 146 have been initiated by the DOT.	J-4.1 J-10

#### **Significant Changes:** Facility Design Standards and Maintenance Programs

Summary	Text/Map Page
Potential scenic roads included in text.	J-4.8 J-13-14
Current TIP projects included.	J-4.4 J-11-12
2004 traffic volume data included.	J-3.1.4 J-6

#### **Significant Changes:** Project Future Demand and Identify Potential Problems Areas

Summary	Text/Map Page
Traffic will become heavier due to accelerated growth, improved pedestrian facilities needed.	J-4.6 J-12
Improved bus service to Providence and car-pooling areas needed for commuters.	J-4.10 J-15
Route 146/Sayles Hill Road intersection is dangerous and is expected to get worse.	J-3.1.6 J-9

#### **Circulation Goals and Policies Changes**

Summary	Text/Map Page
New road between Pound Hill and Greenville Roads no longer proposed.	-
Extension of (private) Rankin Path by Town no longer proposed.	-
Scenic roads Ordinance needed.	#3 A J-2
Traffic calming measures are needed.	#8 A J-3
Pedestrian access components to become a part of all land developments.	#7 J-3

#### **Circulation Implementation Changes**

Summary	Text/Map Page
Recommitment to use of TIP and Enhancement funds.	J-2.0 J-2
Warnings regarding electrical transmission lines removed.	-
Rankin Path extension and new road between Pound Hill and Greenville were removed because of cost considerations.	-
New traffic light at School St/102 intersection was installed.	-
DOT reclassification of certain roads removed because of the unlikelihood of DOT accepting responsibility for additional roads.	-

## Five-Year Update Summary

### Implementation

**Amendments:** (Briefly describe any land use related amendments and indicate date of adoption)

The only Element that was amended since the Plan's adoption by the Council in 1992 was the Housing Element. Specifically, an Affordable Housing Production Plan was adopted in December 2004 as an appendix of the Housing Element and contained a series of new implementation items.

Provide a status report of implementation activities by functional element (e.g. Land Use, Housing, etc.)

#### Implementation Activity

LAND USE: Zoning Ordinance updated in 1994; Subdivision Regulations updated in 1992, last amended 2003; Development Plan Review and design standards still need to be adopted; Slatersville Mill needs rezoning

HOUSING: A Housing Partnership has not yet been created; CDBG funding for housing rehabilitation and code enforcement remain ongoing

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Branch River Industrial Park still needs rezoning; the Town continues to use various means to retain existing industries;

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES: Monitoring of EPA CERCLIS/Superfund sites continues; The Town will look to DEM for vigilance on Underground Storage Tanks; a private developer has plans for a turf farm near the Trout Pond Study Area; The Watershed Associations are functioning as the called for Regional Watershed protection Committee; a Hazard Mitigation Plan is in place; one add'l structure was added to the National Register

SERVICES & FACILITIES: the Wastewater Facilities Plan was adopted in 1993, but needs updating; Space for a consolidated Town Hall has not yet been found; a Water Authority was created; Wastewater Mngt Districts remain a viable option to sewerizing.

OPEN SPACE & REC.: The Branch River Greenway Plan needs to be implemented; a Land Trust was created

CIRCULATION: Scenic Roads were not identified, an Ordinance has not been adopted; The Sayles Hill Rd/Route 146 intersection remains hazardous; No pooled parking areas were created; Construction of a new road between Pound Hill and Greenville Roads and the extension of Rankin Path are no longer planned; a traffic light has eased the problems at School St and East Harkness Road; the DPW has not yet initiated a pavement mngt study; It is no longer assumed that DOT will change highway classifications

Identify major implementation accomplishments and shortcomings from original plan. The Plan did not help anticipate the large amount of new dwelling units (850) proposed and permitted since the year 2000. There were actions identified than the Town had resources to fund or implement. Certain tasks weren't accomplished because they were closely linked to the efforts of the private development community, for which the Town has little control of. On the positive side, the preservation/rehabilitation of Slatersville is moving forward, a significant amount of land has been set aside for open space, and the town is working to provide reliable, safe water sources for residential and commercial needs.

Identify significant changes to implementation activities based upon update of functional elements (if addressed within each element, indicate.)

Significant changes to each Element are contained within the text of each Element, are summarized in the Implementation Element (section L-3.0) of the Plan, and are again summarized on the attached Update Summary Sheets for each Element.

Community: North Smithfield, RI

Date of Council Adoption of Plan Update: March 20, 2006

Note: The Housing Element goals, policies and actions have not changed since they appeared in the "Affordable Housing Production Plan" appendix to the Housing Element adopted by the Town Council in December 2004 and were then forwarded to the State for adoption.

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## **A - OVERVIEW**

## A. OVERVIEW

### A-1.0 Purpose of Comprehensive Plan

The major purposes of the North Smithfield Comprehensive Plan are as follows:

The Plan is a guide to the future growth and development of North Smithfield; this is an Update of the Town's 1992 Comprehensive Plan (which replaced the Town's first Plan dated 1969).

The Plan sets forth a vision of what the community wishes to become during the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Plan is a document to be used as a guide by elected and appointed officials in making decisions relating to the use of land and the provision of community facilities.

The Plan is designed to improve the quality of the living, working and recreational environment as well as to promote the health, welfare and safety of all citizens and residents of North Smithfield regardless of age, sex, income or race.

The Plan is to be used as a reference by State and local agencies in developing consistent plans and projects.

### A-2.0 Legal Basis of Comprehensive Plan

Pursuant to the provisions of the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act of 1988 as amended, all Rhode Island towns and cities are required to update and/or replace prior Comprehensive Plans. The act prescribes the following:

Nine required plan elements.

Coordination with the planning of neighboring communities.

Participation by the general public in the planning process.

Procedures for adopting and amending the plan.

Procedures for State review and appeals of State decisions.

Consistency with the State Guide Plan

Bringing the zoning ordinance and map into conformance with the Comprehensive Plan within eighteen months of the plan's adoption.

### A-3.0 Planning Process

The 1992 Plan, adopted by the State of Rhode Island in 1995, was the result of extensive public participation. Given that the last Comprehensive Plan was dated 1969, the Council saw fit to appoint a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to work with the Planning Department, Planning Board and consultant, Burk Ketcham and Associates, on the Plan. A series of public workshops were used to test the Plan's conclusions and proposals.

The Plan's updating began, as the State required, in the year 2000. However, primarily as a result of wanting to utilize the new Census data, the Update's completion was postponed. Public input on the Update has taken several forms, ranging from a survey to community workshops to the Plan's review by land use consultants. As a result of the delayed submission to the State, the Update has become stronger and better reflects the needs of the citizens and growth pressures that have significantly accelerated over the past five years.

A written survey sent out in early 2001 to approximately 7,900 of the Town's registered voters was a component of the Visioning Study and served as critical input to this Update. An analysis of the respondents indicated that the survey, in fact, reached a representative cross-section of the population. The survey generated a response rate of 13%. Responses to particular questions have been woven through this document.

Another opportunity for citizens to provide input into the Town's planning process was provided on January 20, 2001. Dr. John Mullin of the University of Massachusetts was hired to facilitate a charette designed to help citizens articulate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing North Smithfield. The forum also provided an opportunity to determine preliminary actions as they relate to sustainable development and long-term planning. Findings and recommendations from the charette have also been incorporated into this document.

Also included in this Comprehensive Plan Update are the suggestions from land use planner Randall Arendt pertaining primarily to the protection of North Smithfield's natural and cultural resources. This effort, paid for through the RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM), was geared toward helping the Town identify how more innovative land use mechanisms could be incorporated in the Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and Subdivision and Land Development Regulations. The mechanisms reflect North Smithfield's approach to all land use policies contained within, i.e., how to offer the development community more flexibility while protecting and preserving scenic, historic, and natural characteristics that if lost would adversely impact the quality of life the residents of North Smithfield currently enjoy.

A direct benefit from Mr. Arendt's work and partnering with the DEM are the consolidated natural resource maps contained in this Update. In 2004, the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council hosted a series of meetings and workshops to help citizens in the watershed identify their most critical natural, cultural and recreational resources areas and to consider how to preserve them. The project was funded by the US Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and resulted, in part, in the composite maps contained in this Update.

In addition to those public efforts identified above, the Town's Planning Board and Planning Department have held a series of meetings and workshops during which this Update was discussed/drafted.

#### **A-4.0 Organization of Comprehensive Plan**

The North Smithfield Comprehensive Plan has been organized into thirteen (13) sections as follows: Section A introduces the plan and Section B provides an area where amendments may be recorded; Sections C through L are the nine planning elements required by the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act plus a special element for the John H. Chaffee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. The 1992 Plan and its format served as the base document. Text has been updated, as appropriate. The Implementation Element is comprised of two parts to help bridge the old and new proposals. Specifically, there is a 2005 Action Table which lists current goals, policies and actions, their timeframes, costs and who is responsible for their implementation; the second section provides a list of the proposed actions contained in the 1992 document and their status. Incomplete or ongoing proposed actions from 1992 are brought forward and are contained in the 2005 Action Table.

#### **A-5.0 Consistency**

In recognition that North Smithfield is one part of a broader regional community, the Comprehensive Plan has been developed to be consistent with the goals and policies of the State Guide Plan and the plans of adjoining communities. Each element of the Plan has a section which validates consistency.

#### **A-6.0 Affirmative Action**

This Comprehensive Plan has been developed to consider the needs of all present and future residents and employees of the Town of North Smithfield without regard to their age, race, color religion, sex or national origin.

#### **A-7.0 Adoption**

The North Smithfield Comprehensive Plan and its Five-Year Update were adopted as follows:

Following a November 7, 1991 public hearing and receipt of the Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Planning Board, the North Smithfield Town Council, on March 16, 1992, adopted the Comprehensive Plan. A copy of the adopting resolution can be found in the Appendix. The Director of the Rhode Island Department of Administration approved the North Smithfield Comprehensive Plan on November 20, 1995. A copy of the approval letter to the Town of North Smithfield may also be found in the Appendix.

Following a November 22, 2005 public hearing and receipt of the Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Update adopted by the Planning Board, the North Smithfield Town Council, on March 20, 2006 adopted the Comprehensive Plan Update. A copy of the adopting resolution can be found in the Appendix. The Director of the Rhode Island Department of Administration approved the North Smithfield Comprehensive Plan on \_\_\_\_\_.

## **B - AMENDMENTS**

## **B. AMENDMENTS**

### **B.1.0 Amendment Procedure**

Given that the 1992 Comprehensive Plan was amended only once (to include the Affordable Housing Plan) since its adoption, it is not anticipated that there will be many amendments to this 2005 Plan Update. For ease of replication and distribution, this Update is bound. However, any changes (amendments) will be dated, and this page has been made available to help document changes.

Amendments are adopted in the same way as the original Plan was adopted. Following a public hearing, the Planning Board must forward a recommendation to the Town Council who must adopt the amendment and forward same to the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Administration for final approval.

In accordance with the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act, the Town may not amend the Comprehensive Plan more than four times in any calendar year.

The Town will update the Comprehensive Plan at least once every five years, as required.

### **B.2.0 Amendments**

Amendments to the North Smithfield Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Update have been made as follows:

Amendment #	Element	Section	Pages	Date Approved		
				Planning Board	Town Council	State

## **C - GOALS AND POLICIES**

## **C. GOALS AND POLICIES**

### **C-1.0 Goals and Policies Overview**

The Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act requires the inclusion of a Goals and Policies Statement as follows:

“Identifies the goals and policies of the municipality for its future growth and development. The statement shall enumerate how the Plan is consistent with the overall goals and policies of the chapter, the State Guide Plan and related elements.”

The Handbook on the Local Comprehensive Plan, prepared in 1989 by The State Planning Council and the Division of Planning of the Rhode Island Department of Administration, clearly articulates the difference between goals and policies as follows:

“For the purposes of the local planning process, goals may be treated as ends or results toward which the planning process is directed. Policies may be defined as the courses or methods of action governing municipal decisions designed to reach goals. Both must address issues or problems associated with the development of the city or town.”

**To facilitate the use of the North Smithfield Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Update, all goals, policies and actions are presented within the Element (as Section 2-0) to which they apply rather than as a separate Element. Additionally, each Element includes a Consistency Statement (at the end of each Element in Section 5-0) that relates local planning efforts to the overall goals found in the State Guide Plan.**

## **D – LAND USE**