

**Chapter IX**  
**Land Use**

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**LAND USE**

Land use is both the determinant of, and a response to, the character of a community. Existing land use patterns are the physical expression of numerous public and private decisions which have been made in the past; in turn, patterns of existing land use have a substantial impact on the rate, location and type of growth which will occur in the future.

Land use considerations are closely related to virtually every other facet of community planning. Each piece of the Comprehensive Plan, which addresses population, housing, the local economy, community services and facilities, and transportation, relates in some way to land use. For example, the economic development strategy is in part, a land use recommendation since it recommends the allocation of land for industrial and commercial purposes. The land use plan is a synthesis of land use considerations and recommendations of the Plan.

Much of Burrillville's planning and future decision-making revolves around the proper use of manmade and natural resources. Manmade resources include public water and sewer systems, the road network, public and private buildings, parking areas and community facilities. The Town's natural resources include its forests, surface and groundwater, scenic views, clean air, wildlife, minerals and soils. They present both opportunities and constraints to development, and must be conserved or used with care, so as not to preclude their continued use. Historically, development has shown that some areas are naturally more suitable for a particular use than others. If Burrillville is to protect its natural resources and provide a high quality of life for its citizens, the capability of its natural resources to accommodate development must be respected.

**IX.1 Existing Conditions, Trends and Projections**

The following sections describe historic land use patterns, recent land use trends, and projections for the future land use of the community. The Town has consulted and coordinated with all its abutting neighboring towns in Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Massachusetts.

**Historic Land Use Patterns** - Burrillville experienced an early agricultural phase, industrialization in the nineteenth century, and continued residential and industrial growth in

the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> Topography is important to understanding Burrillville's development. Glacial deposits, scouring of the soil as glacier retreated, and long periods of erosion gave Burrillville an irregular topography, which informed settlement patterns and land use. A number of streams and small rivers cross the town, and small bodies of water include a number of natural lakes and several man-made reservoirs. The presence of moving water across the Town's landscape encouraged settlement and played an important role in industrial development before the advent of steam. The higher, rugged areas remained more thinly populated than the lower, broader, river valleys. Burrillville's natural resources, moreover, are important for recreation and leisure use and their aesthetic qualities.

The eighteenth century settlement pattern of the town was characterized by a rural population scattered about the Town with farms on the most arable land. Farming continued into the twentieth century, and farm complexes evolved over time are important in defining the Town's character: barns, corncribs, sheds, stone walls, orchards, and open fields are among the agricultural resources common to the rural landscape.

As agriculture prevailed in the eighteenth century, industry dominated in the nineteenth century. Aided by improvements in transportation and technology, sleepy hamlets became bustling mill villages that saw dramatic changes in physical form. Improvements in transportation began in 1805 with the construction of Douglas Pike (Route 7). Railroad service, from Providence in 1873 and from Woonsocket in 1893, came later, and, indeed, its late arrival may well have limited the Town's growth potential in the nascent years of industrialization. Greater access to Burrillville followed the advent of the automobile and an improved road network, including the Victory Highway (1922 et seq., Route 102), the refurbished Louisquisset Pike (Route 146), and Interstate Highways 95 and 195 to the south and east.

In addition to the mills, the villages that grew around them included mill offices and other auxiliary structures, dams, raceways, bridges, shops, institutional buildings, worker's housing, mill superintendent's housing, and occasionally mill owner's housing. Most of these villages remain, but the early mills themselves have been lost to fire; though extensive rebuilding has occurred on original industrial sites.

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared by Mack Woodward, Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, August 1990.

The town's rural character attracted new institutional use, including a tuberculosis hospital (now the Zambarano Hospital Complex) at Wallum Lake in the 1890's; Casimir Pulaski Memorial State Park in the 1930's, and the creation of several Management Areas.

Burrillville continued to develop in the twentieth century. The presence of Austin T. Levy and his Stillwater Worsted Company had a profound effect on the town. Not only did Levy purchase and operate existing mills, but also built large amounts of new worker's housing. Levy also recast the village of Harrisville in a "New England Village" mode through his contributions of the Town Hall, The Assembly, The Ninth District Court, and the Jesse M. Smith Library.

As the State underwent extensive suburbanization after World War II, Burrillville received large numbers of new suburban residents. The construction of new houses, most of which are strung out along the Town's many roads, is a trend dissimilar to the strong village settlement pattern which characterized Burrillville's historic development.

**Recent Land Use Trends** –As Burrillville continues to suburbanize, the total acreage dedicated to land uses such as residential should increase. As shown on Table IX-1 and Map 1, a substantial amount of Burrillville remains largely undeveloped and forested. However, the demands associated by large lots and frontages within the F-5 zoning district leave little land for development 'by-right' without having to file dimensional variance petitions. Therefore, despite a vast amount of undeveloped land area in town, a majority is already legally subdivided.

The newer 2004 Land Use data was calculated utilizing RIGIS Land Use (Code95). The RIGIS data was then compared to Land Use data obtained from the Town Assessor's 2004 CAMA Data. Both data sets were compared to 1990 in effort to find comparable measures. The 1990 data was properly cited, but hard copies were not located, which leaves its methodology in question. For example, the 2004 data utilized local parcel information to create a total street area which is slightly less than the 1990 data –a difference of negative 28 acres-. Burrillville's local parcel data is aggressively updated and considered most accurate. Upon comparing the data, it is believed that the 1990 data was also a combination of RIGIS Data and local data which was submitted as part of the 1998 Comprehensive Plan.

Roughly, 30 percent of the Town's land area is currently utilized as residential, which increased 10.2 percent since 1990. Nearly 25 percent of the town's land area is utilized as

conservation land; a large percentage of which is RIDEM Game lands in addition to local Farm Forest and Open Space.

**Table IX-1**  
**Land Use Trends, 2000-2004**

<b>1990</b>		<b>Percent of Total</b>	<b>2004</b>		<b>Percent of Total</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
Residential (1)	10,313	28.1	Residential (1)	9,258	30.6	(10.2)
Commercial	563	1.5	Commercial (2)	828	2.7	47.1
Industrial	148	0.4	Industrial (3)	120	.4	(18.9)
Gov't/Institutional	1,459	3.9	Gov't/Institutional (4)	178	.6	(87.8)
Recreation (2)	1,916	5.2	Recreation (5)	3,122	10.3	62.9
Conservation (3)	7,355	20.0	Conservation (6)	7,401	24.5	06
Agriculture (4)	1,006	2.7	Agriculture (7)	1,499	5	49
Undev'd Land	11,014	30.0	Undev'd Land (8)	5,259	17.4	(52.3)
Streets	900	2.4	Streets (9)	872	2.9	(3.1)
Other (5)	1,998	5.4	Other (10)	1,695	5.6	(15.2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>36,672</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>30,232</b>		<b>(17.6)</b>

1990 Notes:

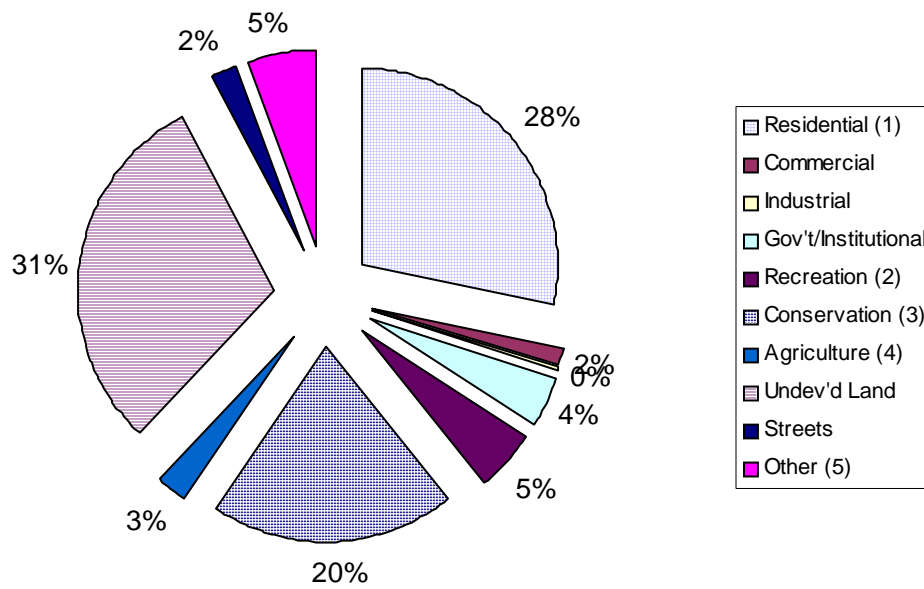
- (1) In zoning districts with five-acre minimum lot sizes, full parcel acreage was counted, i.e., if a parcel of 20 acres was zoned for five acre minimum lot size, the full 20 acres was included in the above calculations.
- (2) Per the 1987 Recreation, Conservation, Open Space Plan.
- (3) Includes land taxed under the Farm, Forest and Open Space Act.
- (4) Observation indicates there is more agricultural land than is included on the tax roll.
- (5) Other category includes utilities and tax classification "other improved land."

2003 Notes:

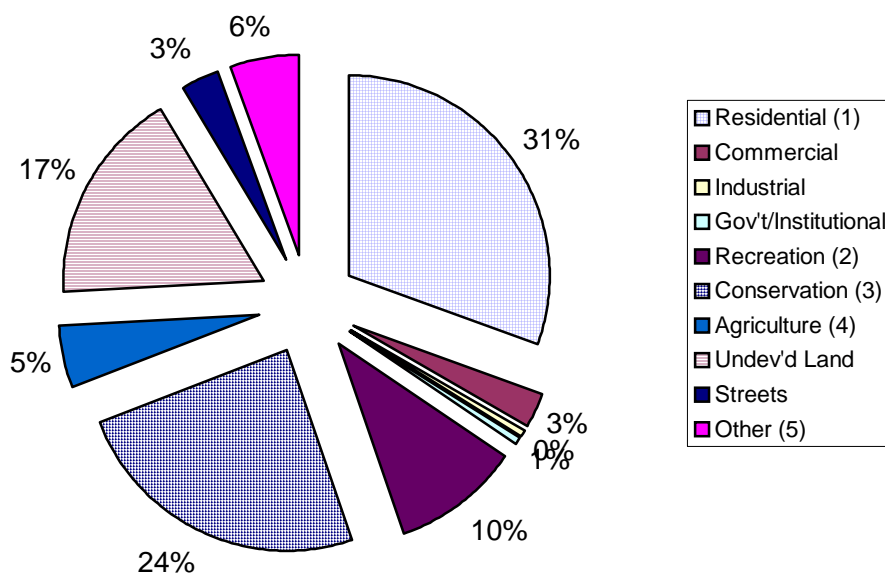
- (1) Burrillville Tax Assessor, 2004 RI State Codes: 01, 02, 03, 11, 23 and 97. (1966 figure was 768, the 1990 figure was incorrect –not data source could be found.
- (2) Burrillville Tax Assessor, 2004, RI State Codes: o4, 05 and 06.
- (3) RIGIS Land Use, Data set Code95.
- (4) RIGIS Land Use, Data set Code95
- (5) RIGIS Land Use, Data set Code95 – included lakes.
- (6) Burrillville Tax Assessor, 2004, RI State Code: 33 – includes all FFOS properties
- (7) RIGIS Land Use, Data set Code95
- (8) Burrillville Tax Assessor, 2004, RI State Codes: 13, 14, and 15.
- (9) Burrillville GIS Parcels Map, 2004.
- (10) RIGIS Land Use, Data set Code 95

When comparing Figures IX-1 and IX-2 several changes can be noted that are consistent with the town's normal growth trends. For example, the total developed residential land area increased 3 percent from 1990 to 2004. The percentage of undeveloped land decreased by 14 percent, while the percentage of conservation land area increased slightly, up 4 percent. The conservation land area increase is consistent with RIDEM's acquisition of 167 acres of forest land located on the western lake shore of Spring Lake since 1990. Other privately owned parcels have been sold to RIDEM in addition to the Spring Lake acquisition.

**Figure IX-1  
Burrillville Land Use  
1990**



**Figure IX-2  
Burrillville Land Use  
2004**



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**Land Use Map** - An existing land use map was prepared for the Comprehensive Plan and based upon the Tax Assessor's land use database (which is broken down according to the Rhode Island State Tax Code) and RIGIS Code95 Land Use Data. A generalized version of this map is shown on Map 1. Appendix IX-A shows the metadata land use code which was developed by RIGIS. Subcategories from the State's uniform tax code were aggregated into categories for ease of use.

**Land Capability Analysis** - The land capability analysis is a method of determining how much development is feasible in a given area based on different zoning scenarios and combinations of environmental constraints. Every community has a carrying capacity for development. Theoretically, that capacity is reached when every buildable parcel of land is subdivided so that it satisfies the minimum zoning requirements. Once the land is subdivided, residences and businesses are assumed to be constructed on the developable parcels according to the zoning ordinance.

It is possible for towns to reach this theoretical capacity; however, it is unlikely because some developable land can be expected to remain in lower intensity uses, such as recreation, agricultural, open space etc.

With historical building records and a series of assumptions, it is possible to estimate when a town will reach its development capacity. For example, if it is determined that build-out will be reached with the addition of 3,000 housing units, and an average of 150 permits for new residences were issued per year in the last decade, it is estimated that it will take approximately 20 years to reach build-out (3,000 units/150 units per year = 20 years). Factors such as the economy, technology and environmental regulation will affect the development rate, and no amount of historical analysis will enable an accurate depiction of the rate at which development will occur in the future. In any given decade there are likely to be peaks and valleys in the economy which will affect the development rate. The period of the mid 1980's to early 1990's serves as a good example of how swings in the economy effect the rate at which development occurs. The boom economy of the mid 1980's saw sharp increase in residential development, by the early 1990's, which was characterized as a crisis economy; residential building rates had decreased dramatically.

The ability to predict the amount of development that can occur in a town is vital for a town that is attempting the long-range planning of services. Reliable information regarding the development potential of the town is essential for the various departments to plan for in-

creases in service demand. The great expense associated with capital improvements make it necessary for towns to start budgeting for them well in advance of the actual need. Understanding the potential future population of the town based on the land capability analysis will allow a town to avoid making costly incremental decisions regarding capital improvements.

The land capability analysis considers existing land use, undeveloped land, developable land, number of single and multi-family residential units, and square feet of industrial and commercial space permitted by current zoning, other zoning ordinance requirements, and the natural capability of the land to support development. Based upon the amount of available land, the number of housing units or square feet of commercial or industrial space, which could potentially develop in a specified area, was estimated.

**Assumptions** - The following assumptions were employed in this analysis.

1. All land (lots) not currently actively developed was defined as undeveloped land. Prime agricultural land is included as undeveloped land because of its unprotected nature and generally good development conditions.
2. To determine development potential of the undeveloped land described in Assumption 1 above, various environmental conditions were considered, including steep slopes, soils with limited development capability, flood zones, wetlands and associated jurisdictional buffers. These areas were extrapolated from mapping prepared by the Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS) and provided by the Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Planning. Upon analysis, a development constraint of 33 percent was assumed. This constraint figure was merged with a 7 percent roads, utility easement and open space deduction yielding a modest, but realistic, 40 percent development constraint –the same constraint amount was used for Chapter V’s Affordable Housing Strategy, which is included in this build out.
3. It was assumed that multifamily development would occur in R-12 and R-20 zoning districts. However, the number of units is still calculated according to minimum lot area requirements and for environmental purposes.
4. The Village Planned Development – Land Development Project Inclusionary Overlay Zone Ordinance (Section 11-8.9 of the Burrillville Zoning Code) and associated lot

potential density bonuses, which expand the R-12 zone district to several lots zoned R-40, F-2 and F-5, was applied to the saturation figures (see Chapter V for specific details on VPD Overlay and Affordable Housing Strategy). The measure's of Chapter V must be incorporated into the build out analysis.

5. Current population is assumed to be 15,796 persons (per the 2000 census). There are approximately 5,821 existing housing units with 100 percent occupancy assumed.
6. Current household size is therefore assumed to be 2.71 persons (16,000 persons / 5,368 housing units = 2.71 persons per household).
7. Current minimum lot sizes, and lot coverages were assumed in determining the potential number of housing units and square footage of commercial and industrial space. These are as follows:

<b>Zone District</b>	<b>Minimum Lot Area (Acres or Sq. Feet)</b>	<b>Lot Coverage (Percent)</b>
F-5	5 Acres	20
F-2	2 Acres	15
R-40	40,000	15
R-20	20,000	25
R-12	12,000	25
VC	20,000	30
GC	20,000	25
LI	20,000	25
GI	NA	25
O-1	5 Acres	

Source: Burrillville Zoning Regulations, 2004

8. To determine the estimated development trends over the life of this Plan, projections were made, assuming a more recent annual growth rates. Annual rates computed for residential uses were based on a recent residential building permit trend. For the period 2000 to 2003, 47 +/- new units per year are estimated. This same rate was utilized for Chapter V and associated Affordable Housing Strategy, which utilized zoning overlay tools as a mechanism for affordable housing growth. The above-mentioned affordable housing strategy accounts for additional unit construction through density bonuses that were applied to the town's growth rate and saturation figures as determined by the 2000 census baseline population data and build out as prescribed in this chapter.

**Methodology**

The land capability analysis involves the following steps:

1. Mapping soils which are indicative of wetlands, steep slope or limiting to on-site septic systems - Soil types as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service (SCS) were mapped on computer by RIGIS, and then were digitally measured by the Town Planning Department to determine the areas of various soil constraint. Soils are considered limiting for individual sewage disposal systems (ISDS) due to high groundwater table, slow percolation rates, susceptibility to flooding, presence of rocks and boulders and excessive permeability. The areas defined by the SCS need to be verified on a site by site basis, but provide a good guideline as to areas which could pose potential environmental problems. In addition, soils with slope limitations (more than 15 percent) were included. The levels of constraint are as moderate, high and severe, defined as follows:

**Moderate** - Areas with moderate constraints are those which are generally suited to residential development. These soils are considered fully developable in this analysis, i.e., parcels located on these soils can be built to the maximum density allowed by zoning.

Some soils in this group have constraints to development and evaluations must be made on a case-by-case basis. The constraints consist of: 1) very rapidly permeable soils which have a higher potential for groundwater contamination; 2) slowly permeable soils which tend to have greater septic system failure rates and 3) extremely stony soils, which are expensive to excavate and grade for residential development. Also included are disturbed areas which are often suitable for residential development, but which need site-specific evaluation. Examples include gravel pits, cut and fill areas, and paved areas.

Prime agricultural soils are defined as those best suited for producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops, and also available for these uses. These soils are considered fully developable in this analysis.

**High** - Areas with high constraints to development are those which have a seasonal high water table (19 inches to 42 inches depth), bedrock (shallow soils, rock outcroppings), or slopes greater than 15 percent (15 feet of vertical rise over 100 feet of horizontal distance). Steep slopes increase the potential for soil erosion during construction, and make construction of on-site septic systems difficult. Shallow soils, and rock outcrops impair the construction of roads, buildings, buried utilities and on-site septic systems.

A percentage of these areas has been developed in the past and will continue to be developed in the future. For the purposes of this analysis, severe constraints (i.e., wetlands, buffers, etc., account for 33% development constraints). Many of these soils have additional constraints to development, such as slow permeability or, in a few instances, very rapid permeability.

**Severe** - Areas with severe constraints are hydric soils (wetlands), which have a high water table (0" - 18") year-round, or those soils which are excessively rocky or sandy. As previously stated, these areas not considered developable in the future.

3. Mapping vacant developable land - The next step involved creating a map which illustrates vacant, developable land. This involved overlaying the undeveloped land areas with the environmental constraint maps to indicate which areas had moderate, high or severe limits to development. Assessor's data was used to identify all vacant land.
4. Mapping zoning districts - The Town's zoning map is superimposed upon the vacant developable land map, and forms the basis for calculating the potential number of dwelling units, commercial and industrial space and population that the Town can accommodate.
5. Measurement of vacant developable land by zoning districts - Each area of vacant developable land is measured. These areas are then totaled to give an indication of vacant developable land in each zoning district. Thirty three percent of the area considered by RIGIS to be highly constrained is subtracted from the vacant developable category.
7. Subtraction of a percentage for roads and infrastructure - In order to estimate future development potential, a factor must be subtracted to account for land that would be used for roads, sidewalks, service easements and municipal uses, as well as non-conforming lots and thus would not be available for development. A factor of seven percent was used.
8. Calculation of the number of dwelling units - Once total developable land is calculated, the next step is to determine the number of dwelling units per residential zoning

district. This is based upon the minimum lot requirements as specified by the zoning regulations.

9. Calculation of square feet of commercial and industrial space - This is determined in the same manner as residential land, taking into account maximum lot coverage as allowed by the Burrillville Zoning Ordinance
10. Calculation of potential build-out population - The build-out population is calculated based on the total number of new dwelling units that can potentially be built. This number is multiplied by the Town's average household size to give the total saturation or build-out population. The additional number of dwellings and population is then added to the 2000 figures. This can be used to estimate the need for future facilities, services and infrastructure.

**Results** - The Town has approximately 26,974 acres of residentially zoned land, 400 acres of commercial-zoned land and 700 acres of industrial-zoned land (see Summary Table IX-2).

**Residential Land** - Of the existing residential-zoned land, about 2.9 percent is zoned R-12, 4.5 percent is zoned R-20, 6 percent is zoned R-40, 9.5 percent is zoned F-2 and 77 percent is zoned F-5.

Approximately 56 percent of existing residential-zoned land is currently developed. Of the 11,856 undeveloped acres, 33 percent are developable (3,915 acres). This could potentially yield 1,893+/- housing units based on the assumptions of this analysis.

It is estimated, based on historic annual growth rates and recent state and local subdivision policies, that approximately 47+/- new housing units, on average, will be built annually over the next ten years.

Approximately 23 percent of the future residential development can be expected in the Harrisville and Pascoag area in the R-12, R-20, R-40 and F-2 zones. Seventy-seven percent of future development will be in the F-5 zone where dispersed pockets of undeveloped, unconstrained soils are found. These figures are based on land area which obscures the effort to focus growth according to the smart growth policies prescribed herein and in Chapter V – Housing. Those policies are expected to bring the above percentages into a more equal balance

**Table IX-2  
Land Capability Analysis  
Summary Table - Town wide Data**

Zoning District	Total Acres	Developed Acres	Undeveloped Acres	Developable Acres	7% Design Factor for Roads etc.	Total Developable Acres	Potential Development
Notes	1	1	1	2	3		4
<b>Residential</b>	<b>26,974</b>	<b>15,109</b>	<b>11,865</b>	<b>3,915</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>3,641</b>	(Housing Units)
F-5		10,717	10,038	3,313	232	3,081	616
F-2		1,697	876	289	20	269	135
R-40		1,169	458	151	11	140	152
R-20		925	294	97	7	90	196
R-12		601	199	66	5	61	221
<b>VPD Overlay Zone</b> (see Chapter V)						129.4 (*)	573
Subtotal							1,893
<b>Commercial</b> (GC and VC)	400	179	221	73	5	68	
<b>Industrial</b> (GI and LI)	700	336	364	120	8	112	
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,074</b>	<b>15,624</b>	<b>12,450</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>1,893</b>
<b>Total residential units / commercial &amp; industrial sq. ft.</b>						<b>2,395,800</b>	<b>20,926</b>

- Notes:**  
**1 Assessor's Database, 7/19/04**  
**2 Deduct 33% average**  
**3 Deduct 7% average**  
**4 Extrapolate zone district minimums**  
**5 Use average building lot coverage % 27.5**  
**\* Does not include area for redevelopment projects**

**Population Saturation** - Population saturation is defined as the number of people the Town could support if all its developable land were developed under existing zoning regulations. Based upon the number of new housing units predicted, the current average household size and future population projections, for Burrillville, the ultimate saturation population was estimated to be 19,373 +/- people (see Table IX-5). If the VPD-LDP Overlay Zone is utilized to the fullest extent possible, an estimated population of 20,926 is projected.

**Commercial Land** – There are approximately 88 acres of developable commercially zoned land in the Town, of which 30 percent developable area would yield a potential 1,149,984 square feet of commercial space. Village Commercial district areas, which encompass the villages of Harrisville and Pascoag, are included in this estimate.

A Route 102 Development Management District Plan was adopted to control commercial development along Route 102 and fashion its intensity in such a way as to not compete with the mixed-use commercial/residential uses within the village areas. Per recommendation of the Route 102 Study Committee, the Route 102 Plan rezoned all C-1 and C-2 and spot zoned C\*'s to General Commercial, with a provision that allows mixed use buildings by right. In addition, HC, Highway Commercial, was deleted from the zoning ordinance for purposes of discouraging big box retail from Route 102.

**Table IX-5  
Burrillville Residential Land Capability Analysis  
Estimated Timing of Future Residential Development and Population**

Zoning District	Potential New Development	W/in Five Years	W/in Ten Years	W/in 15 Years	W/in 20 Years	W/in 25 Years	W/in 30 Years	Remainder
F-5	(Houses) 616	(Houses) 102	(Houses) 204	(Houses) 306	(Houses) 408	(Houses) 510	(Houses) 612	(Houses) 4
F-2	135	22	44	66	88	110	132	3
R-40	152	25	50	75	100	125	150	2
R-20	196	32	64	96	128	160	192	4
R-12	221	36	72	108	144	180	216	5
Subttl Res.	1,320	217	434	651	868	1085	1302	18
<b>Total Pop.</b>	19,373 (1)	16,751 (2)	17,645 (3)	18,692 (4)	19,791 (5)	20,816 (6)	21,723 (7)	19,373 (8)
<b>With VPD-LDP Overlay - Chapter V</b>	<b>573</b>	Estimate is based on potential density bonus that may or may not be exacted though overlay zone ordinance. The number is derived from 4 Growth Areas and is above and beyond the estimates derived from conventional zoning						
<b>Subttl Res. (1320+573)</b>	<b>1893</b>	Estimate based on (1,320 + 573)						
<b>Total Pop.</b>	<b>20,926</b>	Estimated total saturation population if VPD –LDP Overlay Zone is utilized 100% : ((1,893 *2.71)) + 15,796						

- Notes:
- 1: ((1320 \*(2.71)) + (15,796)
  - 2: ((217 \*2.71)) + (16,163)
  - 3: ((434 \*2.71)) + (16,469)
  - 4: ((651 \*2.71)) + (16,928)
  - 5: ((868 \*2.71)) + (17,439)
  - 6: ((1085 \*2.71)) + (17,876)
  - 7: ((1302 \*2.71)) + (18,195)
  - 8: ((1320 \*2.71)) + (15,796)

Based on recent land use growth trends within Rhode Island's decreasing office space market, it is estimated that existing commercial space would not be built out until well after 2020.

**Industrial Land** - There are 112 acres of developable industrial-zoned land in Burrillville, to which a maximum percent lot coverage of 25 percent would yield approximately 1,219,680 potential square feet of additional industrial space. The largest area of developable industrial land is in the newly developed Burrillville Commerce Park, located on Route 102. The Town acquired the property for purposes of retaining a local manufacturing concern, Daniele Prosciutto, Inc. – a tenant of Burrillville for nearly 30 years. Remaining land exists in the Clear River Industrial Park, if property along Clear River Drive, and existing redevelopment mill sites.

**Summary** - Two factors will control the Town's residential development in the future: 1) the natural constraints which will limit the extent of development (33 percent of the undeveloped residentially zoned land is considered developable) and 2) the extensive area of large lot zoning (F-5). Over 20,000 acres of land in the Town is zoned as F-5, of which less than 34 percent is considered developable.

This shows the influence that large lot zoning will have upon the Town's growth in the future. There are 26,974 acres of residentially zoned land in the Town, with 11,865 undeveloped acres. Of the 11,865 acres, 10,038 acres is zoned for a five-acre minimum lot size (F-5), translating to approximately 1,100 new housing units. This in itself is a controlled growth mechanism, which will help the Town minimize future costs associated with providing services for new residents. However, it is not without its own inherent problems - long narrow frontage lots carved along public roads detracting from the overall rural atmosphere of the Town, long driveways potentially creating erosion problems, dispersed development of less energy efficiency, higher costs associated with police patrols in servicing the larger developed area, etc. Recently adopted policy, with regards to providing additional village-type development and creating site development guidelines for large lot zones is expected to relieve these concerns.

The land capability analysis looks at the Town in a selected moment in time, and cannot account for changing economic, social or governmental conditions. The priorities of the Town in terms of providing affordable housing and economic development opportunities have been incorporated into the analysis. The expansion of the R-12 district will result in a larger

number of housing units and a greater population base. These, in turn, will affect the Town's need to provide services. It is critical that the Town relates its development patterns to its ability to provide services to residents. The R-12 districts can be expanded to provide additional housing opportunities, but should be directed toward areas served by or planned for public sewers and water. The VPD as explained adequately addresses the above. The School Department's ability to accommodate additional students should also be considered.

The Town's zoning districts as they exist today are not necessarily the most suitable for their particular environmental conditions, accessibility or adjacent land uses. The CPC should review the zoning map in conjunction with the natural constraints mapping to determine which zones may require amendment in the future. The most problematic zone is the aquifer overlay zone, which was superceded by the VPD Overlay Zone in order to properly focus growth in areas served by existing utilities. The future land use map, Map 2 depicts the increased land use density within the village areas in order to create consistency between this plan and the VPD Overlay Zone, which is part of the zoning ordinance. Additionally, to protect the rural character and water quality of the Towns lakes and ponds, including but not limited to Pascoag Reservoir, Wilson's Reservoir and Wallum Lake, the future land use map supports the maintenance of low density rural land use intensity around those water bodies located outside the village centers.

## **IX.2 Land Use Issues**

The following issues have been identified as important to the Town's planning process over the next five years, and beyond.

### **Substandard Areas**

It is found that there exists blighted and substandard areas at and near the following sites: **Harrisville Village:** the Stillwater Mill Complex, bound by East Avenue, Clear River and Harrisville Main Street; the former Granite Mill Site, bound by River Street, Chapel Street and Callahan School Street; Chapel Street, from Foster Street to Harrisville Main Street; **Oakland Village:** the former Remington Lumber Mill Site, bound by Victory Highway, East River Street and Oak Street; the former Cove Manufacturing Mill site located at the end of Mill Street; **Pascoag Village District A:** beginning at intersection of South Main Street and Reservoir Road to High Street, including the block of Pascoag Main Street including Bridge Way, Sayles Avenue and Pascoag Main Street; **Pascoag Village District B:** western side of

North Main Street, both sides of Grove Street and a portion of Centennial Street (See Redevelopment District Maps, Addendum A, and Documented Photographs Addendum B).

These areas exhibit one or more of the following deficiencies: inappropriate platting and street configuration, functional obsolescence and deterioration of site improvements, all of which are impairing each of the villages' revitalization and growth. Said deficiencies are perpetuating deterioration to the point where natural market forces alone, fail to function as a redevelopment mechanism. In addition, low morale and complex ownership issues are prevalent and contributing to village decline yielding community liabilities in some cases, specifically within abandoned mill sites, requiring redevelopment in the interest of the health, safety, morals and general welfare of the Town of Burrillville and its residents. It is recommended that the areas above be designated for redevelopment.

#### Comprehensive Plan Consistency

Recognizing these substandard areas as areas that warrant redevelopment support the comprehensive plan, which contains goals and policies that promote village revitalization efforts, pedestrian-scale developments and tourism. The idea is to employ sensible growth, "smart-growth" techniques, to preserve the residents' natural and cultural resources. It is recommended that a Redevelopment Agency be established to work closely with the Town's Planning Board, Town Council and various State Agencies such as the Historic Preservation Commission to allow future development to utilize existing utilities and infrastructure.

#### **General Growth and Development**

- The understanding and acceptance that some growth is inevitable in the future, the plan is focused with the goal of maintaining the existing quality of life characterized by the rural qualities of the Town. For example, low density, mostly wooded land with historic stone walls. Due to low level of development, most roads are two lanes with minimum right-of-way clearing. The Village Centers are small and dominated by municipal buildings and /or service/retail stores.
- A need for a balanced tax base which will support the Town's nature as a largely residential community.

- Ensuring that borderland uses are compatible with those of adjacent communities.
- Two factors will control the Town's residential development in the future: 1) the natural constraints which will limit the extent of development, and 2) the extensive area of large lot zoning (F-5).
- Under current zoning conditions, the Town could grow to a population of 21,000 +/-.
- For a balanced tax base, the Town should strive to achieve a contribution of 15 percent of its property tax revenues from commercial and 15 percent from industrial uses. Currently, the distribution is approximately 70 percent from residential uses, 9 percent from commercial uses and 1 percent from industrial uses.

### **Commercial Uses**

- Elimination of the potential for strip commercial along the major arterials of the community, particularly State Route 102. COMPLETE – See Route 102 DMD Plan, attached.
- Provision of areas for adequate future commercial development primarily associated with the existing villages.
- Promoting sensitivity to surrounding land uses and the environment in general, and encouraging and overall high quality of design in all commercial developments through a new site plan review process. ONGOING

### **Industrial Uses**

- Maintenance of appropriate areas for industrial development, where public services and adequate transportation access exists or is planned. See Route 102 DMD Plan, attached
- Promoting sensitivity to surrounding land uses and the environment in general, and encouraging and overall high quality of design in all industrial developments through a new site plan review process.

- Provide for mixed uses, such as mixed residential and commercial within existing mills which are surrounded by typical Village development. The objective shall be to allow for the reuse of these structures compatible with the Village uses.

**Residential Uses**

- Improving the design and layout of residential subdivisions through the use of planning tools such as planned unit development and cluster development. ONGOING
- Promoting sensitivity to surrounding land uses and the environment in general, and encouraging and overall high quality of design in large residential developments through a new site plan review process. ONGOING
- Ensuring the integrity of zoning districts and existing land uses by a system of vegetated buffers.
- Providing for higher density residential uses to promote housing affordability where public services and adequate transportation facilities are available or planned, largely within the villages. See Chapter V
- Continuing to maintain a rural residential area outside of the villages, where services are not available or planned.

**Public and Semi-Public Uses**

- Promoting sensitivity to surrounding land uses and the environment in general, and encouraging and overall high quality of design in public utility developments through a new site plan review process. ONGOING
- Relating future municipal use sites to the existing village layout, availability of services, population density and overall traffic pattern of the community.
- Providing adequate municipal recreational sites, for active and passive development, to serve the anticipated population as determined in the projections (Chapter I, Introduction).

- Providing appropriate sites for the anticipated future expansion of municipal services, including the library, school facilities, Town Hall, public works department, animal shelter, solid waste disposal, recycling, and others as indicated in Chapter III, Community Services and Facilities.

**Preservation**

- Preservation of the Town's rural character, defined as:
  - The village atmosphere and identity, including the mills and mill housing around which each village grew;
  - The rustic landscape, including forested areas, open fields, farmland, rural roads, stone walls and other similar landscape features; and,
  - The lakes, ponds, rivers and streams found throughout the Town.

(See the VPD-LDP and Route 102 Overlay District Ordinances).

- Protection and maintenance of the high quality natural resources of the community, including surface water, groundwater, wetlands, prime farmland soils, unique ecological features, forested areas, open fields, wildlife and other areas that are considered fragile.
- Protection of active agricultural lands where possible.
- Preserving the quality visual aspects of the community.
- Preservation of the historical and cultural elements of the community.

**IX.3 Goals, Policies and Implementation Actions**

IX. Land Use Goals	Policies	Implementation Actions
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<p>IX.1 To provide a land use pattern which is capable of meeting present and future community needs in an efficient, environmentally sound, economic, equitable and aesthetically pleasing manner.</p>	<p>IX.1.a Develop residential, commercial, industrial and mixed-use areas which are compactly grouped, attractive and compatible with the ability of land and water resources to support the development.</p>	<p>IX.1.a.1 Promote low overall residential densities in those areas where public services are currently unavailable or not planned to be available.</p>
		<p>IX.1.a.2 Reserve sites and buildings suitable for commercial and industrial development which are served by, or planned to be served by, public sewer and water, have adequate access to major arterial roadways, and will not intrude upon less intensive land uses.</p>
		<p>IX.1.a.3 Prevent the preemption of undeveloped commercial and industrial sites by limiting their conversion to uses with less demanding locational requirements, such as residential uses. (Does not include mill sites within Village)</p>
		<p>IX.1.a.4 Consider the location of planned industrial and commercial districts when planning new or expanded public sewer and water services and highway improvements.</p>
		<p>IX.1.a.5 Develop a site plan review process to address potential impacts on surrounding land uses and the environment in general, and to encourage an overall high quality of design in all nonresidential and large residential developments as determined by the Town. COMPLETE</p>
		<p>IX.1.a.6 Require commercial and industrial developments to meet a series of performance standards to be determined by the Town regarding site layout and design, landscaping, parking, lighting and other related site elements. ONGOING</p>
	<p>IX.1.b Relate the use of land to its natural characteristics and varying suitability for development.</p>	<p>IX.1.b.1 Promote clustering of residential and commercial development where possible, particularly in the R-12, R-20, R-40 and F2 districts.</p>

		IX.1.b.2 Develop and implement a Planned Unit Development section in the Zoning Ordinance which permits a parcel of land, except in the F5 district, to be planned and developed as one unit, and contains a mix of residential and commercial uses and common open space. Developer may vary building location and density within a larger tract of land.
		IX.1.b.3 Work toward eliminating nonconforming uses through enforcement of current zoning laws, recognizing the need for changes in regulations where warranted.
		IX.1.b.4 Limit the use of land along water bodies to water dependent uses, or to mixed-use development in which a water dependent use is combined with other uses.
IX.2 To maintain and improve the small village character of the Town.	IX.2.a Encourage continuation of the village development pattern through zoning.	IX.2.a.1 Promote the maintenance and expansion of R-12 and R-20 zones within the villages of Harrisville, Glendale, Oakland, Mapleville, Pascoag and Nasonville.
	IX.2.b Relate the use of land to the level of public facilities and services available, or planned to be available.	IX.2.b.1 Promote the establishment of higher residential densities and smaller lot frontages in the village center areas, where public water and sewer service is present or planned.
		IX.2.b.2 Encourage the Sewer Authority and Fire Districts to provide needed infrastructure in the villages, and limit expansion of public facilities to outlying areas.
		IX.2.b.3 Establish a Redevelopment Agency for the purpose of establishing Redevelopment Districts within specifically distressed village areas. Coordinate this action with action IX.1.b.2 to encourage multi-use/mix-use land use patterns within the villages, creating compact traditional village land use patterns.

	IX.2.c Preserve historic buildings, districts and archaeological sites.	IX.2.c.1 Further the identification and strict protection of state and national register historic properties and districts as an integral part of preserving Burrillville's cultural landscape.
	IX.2.d Preserve and enhance the economic development opportunities within the villages of Harrisville, Glendale, Oakland, Mapleville, Pascoag and Nasonville.	IX.2.d.1 Encourage local participation in federal and state business district revitalization programs.
		IX.2.d.2 Establish and support an organization of business people in the Town of Burrillville to improve the overall business climate.
		IX.2.d.3 Encourage investment by the public and private sectors that will stabilize and improve economic opportunities in downtown Pascoag, including preservation and reuse of historic buildings.
		IX.2.d.4 Provide an adequate and safe system of pedestrian walkways and sidewalks in village centers.
		IX.2.d.5 Ensure the regular maintenance of pedestrian walkways and sidewalks.
		IX.2.d.6 Provide and maintain safe, easy-to-find, and well-lit public parking areas in the village centers.
		IX.2.d.7 The Town should study the feasibility of future commercial expansion in these areas.
	IX.2.e Stimulate the expansion of economic development activities, including cultural, recreational and educational, in the downtown Pascoag and Harrisville areas.	IX.2.e.1 Attempt to locate new schools and other community facilities in or near village centers.
		IX.2.e.2 Tie historic preservation and revitalization efforts in with economic development and promotion of tourism in the Town.

		IX.2.e.3 Utilize the powers of the Redevelopment Agency to expedite the relocation of the Jesse M. Smith Library to the former Stillwater Mill Complex.
IX.3 To establish a balance between residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, public facility, agricultural and conservation land uses that service the needs of the community.	IX.3.a Strive to achieve equity between the costs and benefits of new development.	IX.3.a.1 Relate the location of residential developments and neighborhoods to employment and commercial centers, community facilities and services, and mass transit corridors.
		IX.3.a.2 Promote neighborhood development by locating housing, recreation and education facilities, and shopping areas in close proximity to one another, with provision for safe pedestrian movement.
		IX.3.a.3 Conserve and enhance desirable existing industrial areas, shopping areas and concentrations of service activities to maximize the investment and utilization of existing infrastructure.
		IX.3.a.4 Relate industrial and commercial development to overall land use by promoting use of development controls and performance standards that mitigate conflicts with other land uses and activities.
		IX.3.a.5 Prepare and circulate a developer's information handbook, including information on subdivision regulations, utilities, zoning, erosion and sedimentation controls, groundwater aquifers regulations, Planning Board meeting schedule and time deadlines, and the Comprehensive Plan.

	IX.3.b Recognize the importance of recreation, open space, public access to water bodies, and historic resources to the Town's economy, in tourism development and in attracting and retaining industry, and endeavor to protect and enhance these resources in economic development siting and design activity.	IX.3.b.1 Create open space systems and corridors that protect complete ecologic units and provide structure and character to the built environment.
		IX.3.b.2 Retain open space spaces large enough to serve as wildlife habitat, store flood waters, abate air and water pollution, provide a sense of openness, and serve as buffers and aesthetic amenities to existing development.
		IX.3.b.3 Form a land trust committee to establish land trusts in Burrillville. COMPLETE
		IX.3.b.4 Preserve, and where necessary restore, rivers, and water bodies and their shorelands for recreational use, wildlife habitat, water supply and open space corridors.
		IX.3.b.5 Expand public access to water bodies by preserving existing recorded public access ways, seeking to maximize the access potential of existing committed shore lands, acquiring key access points, and stipulating access opportunities in new shoreline developments.
IX.4 Promote the preservation, improvement and enhancement of the positive and desirable characteristics of Burrillville's traditional New England environment and land use patterns.	IX.4 a Preserve and support existing agricultural endeavors	IX.4.a.1 Utilize methods such as purchase of development rights, and permitting limited, clustered residential development, except in the F5 district, at the edges of large agricultural properties toward preserving agricultural lands.
	IX.4.b Recognize the Town's scenic rural landscapes, roads and vistas as important cultural and economic resources, and act to preserve them.	IX.4.b.1 Designate certain roads in the Town as "rural roads" and prepare a rural road ordinance or policy which will serve to protect the visual qualities of these corridors, including stone walls, trees and other unique features.

		IX.4.b.2 In future applications for open space grant funds, consider for acquisition or other forms of protection, those areas having unique visual qualities as identified in the Natural and Cultural Resources Element (Chapter IXI).
IX.5 Recognize the important role the Town plays as a host to major energy suppliers, and ensure that the interests of the Town and its residents are maintained in the forefront of future siting decisions.	IX.5.a Develop adequate location and siting criteria within the Town's land use policies for power generating plants. These criteria shall be used to negotiate with power plant developers and State Energy Facility Siting Council.	IX.5.a.1 Amend the Zoning Ordinance to adequately address power generating plants, including consideration of a floating zone, performance standards, and site plan review.
	IX.5.b Minimize the adverse impacts of power generation and transmission facilities on the environment.	IX.5.b.1 Discourage incompatible land uses in areas adjacent to power generating facilities, and require a minimum vegetated buffer between such facilities and adjacent properties with special concern given to high-energy electromagnetic fields.
IX.6 The Town recognizes the importance of regional developments and issues on its future. Therefore, the Planning Board and the Town Council shall make an effort to meet with their counterparts in abutting communities on an annual basis to encourage communication and discussion of regional issues.	IX.6.a The Town of Burrillville is opposed to the development of any regional airport in the communities of Douglas and Uxbridge, Massachusetts. A regional airport is contrary to the economic development objectives of the Town of Burrillville, its efforts toward historic preservation and its long-term land use plan which preserves open space resources and the low-density character of the community.	IX.6.a.1 The Town will pursue various avenues to register its opposition to any regional airport site, including working closely with State officials.
		IX.6.a.2 The Burrillville Planning Board and Town Council should meet on an annual basis with abutting communities to encourage regional communication with abutting states.

	<p>IX.6.b The Town of Burrillville is opposed to the development of any regional landfill and/or incinerator within the Town's boundaries or within abutting towns where they may affect Burrillville. Any regional landfill and/or incinerator facility is contrary to the Town's economic development strategy of promoting tourism and the use of open space and recreational resources in that effort. The Town considers any landfill a potential source of pollution to public drinking water supplies.</p>	<p>IX.6.b.1 The Town will continue to actively voice its opposition to the siting of a regional landfill and/or incinerator facility within its boundaries or within abutting towns but located where they may affect Burrillville.</p>
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#### **IX.4 Future Land Use Plan Map**

The planned future land use of the Town of Burrillville is illustrated on Map 2 (See map at the end of this document.) This map is a graphic representation of the Town's goals and policies relating to land use, natural and cultural resources, open space preservation and recreation, economic development, housing, and community services and facilities.

A number of areas have been suggested for future study and/or for proposed changes in zoning, as follows (keyed to map):

1. Examine area between Chapel Street and Hill Road, currently zoned M-1 and C-2, for potential change to high density residential and village commercial to reflect actual use of land and reduce nonconforming uses. COMPLETE
2. Study area between Mowry Road and Steere Farm Road, currently zoned as M-1, for potential zone change to medium density residential. COMPLETE
3. Study area between Central Avenue and the Clear River currently zoned M-2 for potential zone change which is more compatible with existing surrounding land uses and the environmental character of the land. COMPLETE
4. Examine area on south side of Bronco's Highway in Glendale at the intersection of Joslin Road/Snake Hill Road for suitability of C-2 zoning. SEE ROUTE 102 DMD PLAN
5. When sewers are installed, consider rezoning portions of Joslin Road from F5 to R20 to 1) reflect the land's ability to accommodate higher density and 2) to reflect the intensity of development already existing.
6. Study possibility of rezoning small section of M-1 zoned land in southeast quadrant of Route 102/Route 7 intersection to village commercial toward the objective of reestablishing the village of Nasonville. SEE VPD & ROUTE 102 DMD PLAN
7. Examine the suitability of M-1 zoning in an area fronting the north side of Slatersville Reservoir, south of Victory Highway.
8. Study the potential of rezoning an M-2 zone at the juncture of Route 7 and the North Smithfield Town line (gravel bank/EPA Superfund site). SUCCESSFULLY REUSED
9. Rezone undeveloped section of land fronting on Wilson and Pascoag Reservoirs from R20 to R40 and R20 to F2 respectively in order to protect water quality.
10. Rezone undeveloped strip of land, currently zoned C-1, on Broncos Highway extending from Lapham Farm Road to the Gloucester line to R-40. COMPLETE ROUTE 102 DMD PLAN