

# IV. Services & Facilities

## INTRODUCTION

The City of Woonsocket provides a broad range of services to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the community. The level at which these services are delivered is influenced by changes in population, development, environmental factors, and economic conditions. Evaluating service capacity in conjunction with anticipated changes in community needs can help the City determine strategic infrastructure and program investments in the near- and long-term.

### Vision for Services & Facilities

*Over the next 20 years, Woonsocket will be a financially stable, self-sustaining service provider to its residents, providing a level of service that meets community expectations in a resilient manner and supports a high quality of life.*

For greater detail about City services and facilities, see the Services & Facilities chapter of the Baseline Report of the Comprehensive Plan.

## WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT

Woonsocket's City-owned sewer system and Woonsocket Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) transport and treat wastewater from 95% of Woonsocket, while the remaining 5% is served by private septic systems. Woonsocket's sludge facility, Woonsocket Thermal Conversion Facility, dries and incinerates sludge produced as a byproduct of wastewater treatment and generates revenue for the City by processing sludge from other wastewater treatment plants. Private utility companies operate the sewer system, WWTF, and sludge facility under contract with the City.

The City has ongoing programs to maintain and upgrade its wastewater management system. Through targeted repair and replacement of sewer pipes and manhole covers, the City has reduced seepage of rainwater into sewers, thereby improving sewer capacity and WWTF efficiency. Recent upgrades at the WWTF have reduced phosphorus and nitrogen loading to the Blackstone River, and improvements at the sludge facility have reduced odors.

Despite this progress, the City faces many challenges to maintaining a good level of service and protecting public health and the environment. Continued investments will be needed to

address aging infrastructure, WWTF and sludge facility operational issues, Blackstone River water quality, odors, and climate risks.

## WHAT WE HEARD

Based on the community survey, 53% of respondents expressed that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the City’s wastewater management services, while 35% were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. Residents expressed concerns about odors, flood risks, and recent water-quality violations at the WWTF. A few respondents expressed concerns about discharges from the WWTF into the Blackstone River, and 71% of respondents indicated that protecting and improving the water quality of the Blackstone River and its tributaries was “Very Important.”

*“Wastewater treatment is a critical service, but there are best practices that can be adopted to eliminate all of the negative externalities produced by this facility.” – Survey Respondent*

## UPGRADE AGING SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE

Much of the City’s sewer system was originally constructed in 1897 out of vitrified clay pipe, within which cracks and leaky joints allow rainwater to seep into the sewer. The City will continue its program to replace, repair, or line aging pipes and replace vented sewer manhole covers. The City will continue to monitor infiltration/inflow (I/I) with camera inspections targeted to problem areas, and will accelerate sewer upgrades in areas most susceptible to I/I and sanitary sewer overflows.

## PREPARE WWTF FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

Positioned along the Blackstone River, the WWTF is vulnerable to river flooding and will be more at risk in the future as climate change leads to more frequent and severe floods. A study in 2018 found that portions of the WWTF would be inundated during a future 100-year flood event and that operation of the four pump stations would be impacted. The City will further evaluate potential flood risks and will implement recommended flood-mitigation actions such as installing flood barriers and watertight doors, raising walls, installing and/or elevating backup generators and fuel sources, and upgrading pumps.



Woonsocket Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (Google Earth)

## MITIGATE ODORS AT THE WWTF AND SLUDGE FACILITY

The Woonsocket WWTF has a long history of odor problems, due in part to its proximity to residential and commercial areas. The City recently implemented odor-control improvements to the WWTF and sludge facility, such as installing and sealing covers, adjusting airflow systems, and upgrading air scrubbers. Odors from trucks transporting dewatered sludge to the sludge facility remain an ongoing issue. The City will assess additional operation and facility improvements to alleviate odor impacts on the neighborhood.

## PROTECT THE BLACKSTONE RIVER FROM WASTEWATER POLLUTANTS

The City is permitted by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) to discharge treated wastewater to the Blackstone River, provided that it meet limits on pollutant concentrations. The WWTF has adequate capacity and treatment processes; however, recent operational failures have caused discharges of untreated or undertreated sewage to the Blackstone River. To prevent future failures, the City will investigate and improve upon operations and maintenance of the WWTF and sludge facility, as well as improving the City's industrial pretreatment and fat-oil-grease programs. The City will also explore operational and equipment upgrades at the sludge facility to reduce phosphorus concentrations in its waste stream.

## WATER SUPPLY

Woonsocket is fortunate to have ample water supply, modern drinking water treatment and distribution infrastructure, and good water quality at the tap. Woonsocket owns three water supply reservoirs, along with some of the watershed land contributing to those reservoirs. In 2021, the City completed construction of the new Woonsocket Water Treatment Plant (WTP) in the Bernon Heights neighborhood, along with transmission main upgrades and a new raw water pump to convey water from the former Charles Hamman WTP to the new treatment plant. The water supply system has adequate capacity to meet Woonsocket's current water demand (3.97 MGD in 2018) and future projected water demand (4.60 MGD in 2040). The water distribution system has interconnections with water systems in the neighboring towns that have the capability to provide water in emergency situations. The Woonsocket Water Division's (WWD's) ongoing and future projects will protect water supplies, maintain and improve the distribution system, and reduce water demand.

## WHAT WE HEARD

Based on the community survey, 56% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with Woonsocket's drinking water system, while 33% were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. Residents expressed concerns about water safety, taste, and fluoride.

*"I have always thought Woonsocket has the best tap water out of everywhere I've ever been." – Survey Respondent*

## PROTECT DRINKING WATER SUPPLY RESERVOIRS

The Woonsocket Water Division (WWD) plans to purchase additional watershed land under the Rhode Island Water Resources Board Watershed Protection Bond Program.

## MAINTAIN & REHABILITATE THE WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

WWD will continue ongoing infrastructure inspections, maintenance, and rehabilitation, including:

- Flushing of hydrants and tanks,
- Replacement of hydrants and distribution pipes,
- Cleaning and lining of transmission mains, and
- Upgrades to storage tanks and pump stations.



Woonsocket Water Treatment Plant (New England Construction)

WWD will implement several projects to further improve drinking water distribution:

- Comprehensive water meter replacement program. Most existing water meters were installed in 2004 and are nearing the end of their useful life. WWD will replace residential and commercial water meters with new meters with radio encoders and implement a system for remote meter-reading and monthly billing.
- Park Avenue transmission main. A new transmission main, augmenting an existing main on Park Avenue, will boost water pressure in the service area.

## MANAGE WATER DEMAND

WWD will continue its ongoing program for detecting and fixing water leaks. It will also implement policies to monitor drought and impose a series of restrictions and actions to control demand as drought conditions warrant.

## STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The City owns and maintains stormwater infrastructure that collects runoff from streets and properties and releases it into the Blackstone River and other waterbodies and wetlands. To reduce stormwater pollution, the City inspects and cleans its drainage infrastructure, educates the public about pollution prevention, enforces stormwater management

regulations for development projects, sweeps streets and municipal parking lots, and manages road salt applications. The City also partners with environmental organizations to implement low impact development and green stormwater infrastructure practices, which reduce the creation of stormwater runoff and the transport of pollutants to receiving waters. Waterbodies continue to be impacted by stormwater pollution, however. The drainage infrastructure also faces challenges, with many pipe networks lacking adequate capacity to move water quickly during intense storms, leading to localized flooding. It is anticipated that flooding and water quality issues will become more challenging due to climate change.



High waters during Hurricane Irene (Flickr)

## WHAT WE HEARD

Based on community surveys and other methods of public engagement, residents expressed concerns about erosion and flooding, localized flooding during storm events due to overwhelmed or unmaintained infrastructure, and the adequacy of funding for the maintenance program. Many residents suggested that the City should prioritize improving the water quality of the Blackstone River, with 71% of respondents indicating that protecting and improving the water quality of the Blackstone River and its tributaries was “very important”. Of survey respondents, 41% indicated that protecting neighborhoods, businesses, and infrastructure from flooding, storms, and other natural hazards was “Very Important.”

*“We should look into putting tree pits/street trees wherever possible (including making provisions to maintain them) to reduce stormwater runoff and increase tree canopy cover.” – Survey Respondent*

## EDUCATE THE COMMUNITY ABOUT STORMWATER

Residents and businesses play an important role in preventing stormwater pollution. The City will continue its efforts to educate residents and businesses about pollution prevention, such as picking up dog waste and covering dumpsters. The City will also continue to support environmental stewardship opportunities, such as Earth Day cleanup events.

## ENHANCE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT ORDINANCES

The City will continue to enforce its stormwater management ordinances: *Illicit Discharge Detention and Elimination Ordinance* (Ordinance Chapter 16-17), *Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance* (Ordinance Chapter 7 ½), and *Post Construction – Storm Water Control*

*Ordinance* (Ordinance Chapter 7 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>). The City will explore opportunities to improve upon those Ordinances.

### REDUCE STORMWATER POLLUTION FROM CITY OPERATIONS

The City will continue its illicit discharge and good housekeeping program to prevent stormwater pollution from City roads, properties, and drainage infrastructure. The programs include drainage system inspections and water quality sampling; street and parking lot sweeping; catch basin cleaning; optimized sand and salt applications; and maintenance of stormwater pollution controls at the Highway Garage.

### UPGRADE DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE TO PREVENT FLOODING

As climate change leads to more intense downpours and extreme storms, the City's drainage infrastructure will struggle to move runoff quickly enough to prevent flooding. Two areas in the City already experience chronic drainage flooding. The City will evaluate drainage infrastructure capacity and backflow preventers and will develop and implement a plan for infrastructure upgrades to prevent localized flooding.

### IMPLEMENT AND PROMOTE LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT & GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Many survey respondents expressed that there were not enough natural resources in their neighborhood, with several suggesting that additional plants, flowers, and trees would be welcome additions. Respondents also expressed a desire for better parks. Low impact development (LID) practices and green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) can help reduce stormwater pollution while providing natural habitat, beautification, and public amenities. Likewise, investments in land conservation, ecological restoration, street trees, and revegetation can reduce stormwater runoff and pollutants.

The City will develop and implement procedures for evaluating LID and GSI opportunities on municipal capital projects, including road, streetscape, facility, and park projects. The City will also continue to partner with the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, the Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone, and Blackstone River Coalition to advance LID and GSI projects in Woonsocket.

## SOLID WASTE

The City provides curbside trash and recycling pick-up for residents with City-issued bins through a private contractor, as well as curbside yard waste pickup in the spring and fall. The City also manages a Recycling Facility & Drop Off Center where residents can bring recyclable materials. The solid waste contractor collects all waste and recycled materials and transports them to the Rhode Island Resource Recovery facility in Johnston. Woonsocket is required by State law to recycle a minimum of 35% of its solid waste and divert a minimum of 50% of its solid waste. The City has not yet reached those targets.



Recycling Public Notice (Woonsocket Solid Waste Division)

## WHAT WE HEARD

Based on the community survey, 75% of respondents reported that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the City’s solid waste services, while 15% were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. 46% of respondents indicated that increasing opportunities for residents/businesses to reduce trash going to the landfill (recycling, composting, reusing etc.) was “very important.” Residents expressed a desire for more options for recycling, yard waste, and disposal of large items. They also expressed a desire for more frequent collection.

## INCREASE SOLID WASTE RECYCLING & DIVERSION

To meet its required recycling and diversion rates, the City will evaluate and implement best practices such as source reduction, reuse and donation opportunities, food waste composting, textile recycling, mattress recycling, summer yard waste pickup, and community education and engagement. The City will periodically review and update its Solid Waste Plan.

## EDUCATION IN WOONSOCKET

The Woonsocket Education Department provides public education services to the City’s children from pre-K through grade 12. The Department is comprised of seven elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools. The former Woonsocket Middle School at 357 Park Place is still vacant, though the City recently sold it to a private entity with plans to redevelop the imposing, historic structure.

Residents recognize the connection between a high-quality public school system and a community’s ability to attract families and businesses. Residents want to improve academic outcomes at Woonsocket’s schools, which are performing below statewide averages for

metrics measuring basic subject matter proficiency and graduation rates. Improving outcomes in Woonsocket’s schools will go beyond having a good curriculum. Students need high-quality learning environments and staff (e.g., instructional, administrative, and other support staff) and access to necessary social services and both in and outside of school environments.

## WHAT WE HEARD

Based on surveys and other engagement, residents want the City to focus on:

- Recognizing the connection between high-quality public schools and the overall social and economic wellbeing of the community, as a robust public school system is imperative to attracting and retaining families and businesses and maintaining student enrollment.
- Improving academic outcomes and graduation rates within the Woonsocket Education Department’s school system.
- Offering early education and daycare opportunities for families with young children.
- Improving the physical condition of school facilities and ensuring schools are adequately supplied with classroom supplies and equipment.
- Advancing citywide sustainability and energy goals through energy and efficiency upgrades to school facilities.
- Supporting the library by making it more accessible to residents and improving its physical condition.
- Offering additional library programming for residents of all ages, interests, and needs.

*“Our public schools drastically need resources to retain talented teachers and ensure good outcomes for students. Communities with a thriving public school system will draw residents.” – Survey respondent*

*“We need to keep our schools and public facilities in good shape... to encourage our youth to enter.” – Survey respondent*

## ENSURING COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

While formal definitions may vary, ensuring “college and career readiness” means that all of Woonsocket’s students have the skills to succeed in a post-secondary education (including trade and vocational schools) setting or the workforce. Often, “college and career readiness” is conceived to go beyond just academic or content knowledge, including social and emotional intelligence and other life skills and behaviors.

Laying the groundwork for college and career readiness is a community effort. For example, the City can actively support opportunities that build students’ social and emotional growth by encouraging local businesses to provide co-op programs or supporting community organizations that provide extracurricular programs. Students also need access to necessary social services and educational supports that enable successful learning and growth.



The Education Department has two high schools.

Woonsocket High School offers a typical academic curriculum and also includes several pathways that introduce students for possible careers in relevant fields.

The Woonsocket Area Career & Technical Center (WACTC) offers programs that prepare students for the workforce as well as post-secondary educational institutions. Students receive hands-on learning opportunities and work-based experience, and many students graduate with relevant career certifications. WACTC is open to all Rhode Island resident students entering or in high school. Transportation is provided for students living in Woonsocket, Cumberland, Burrillville, and North Smithfield for free.

### IMPROVING THE PHYSICAL CONDITION OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

Every child in Woonsocket deserves to be in a high-quality learning environment. In 2017, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE)'s School Building Authority (SBA) engaged Jacobs and Cooperative Strategies (Jacobs) to conduct a statewide facility condition assessment and master plan, which included preparing condition assessments for each local school district.<sup>1</sup> A site's deficiencies are listed by building system (roofing, structural, exterior, etc.) and priority to address. Cost estimates are included and projected over the course of five years. Local departments can use this information to plan for capital improvements and other needs at their



Woonsocket High School Students (Woonsocket High School)

schools. Overall, the condition assessment for the Education Department found that the interior (e.g., flooring, ceilings, hardware) and mechanical (e.g., heating) building systems had the highest deficiency costs. Most deficiencies are those characterized as “necessary improvements required to maximize facility efficiency and usefulness” (e.g., plumbing improvements) and “items or systems that may be considered improvements... may be aesthetic or provide greater functionality” (e.g., repaving, educational accommodations for

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<https://www.ride.ri.gov/FundingFinance/SchoolBuildingAuthority/FacilityDataInformation.aspx#37541409-master-plan>

special programs).<sup>2</sup> The City, which does not have bonding capacity, has struggled to meet these facility needs. According to the 2017 assessment, the schools with the greatest five-year need were Woonsocket High School, Globe Park School, and Bernon Heights School.

The data collected during the assessment also informs the statewide Recommended Action Plan. Relevant to Woonsocket, the statewide Recommended Action Plan recommends that RIDE focus on supporting local school districts by applying the planning concept of “newer and fewer” to districts with multiple exceptionally small schools that have significant condition needs. Rather than continuing investment in such facilities, which is often not in the district’s long-term interest, a “newer and fewer” approach calls for investment in building a limited number of new schools capable of providing modern learning environments for as many students as possible. This strategy highlighted Woonsocket, specifically Kevin K. Coleman and Leo A Savoie Elementary Schools. The Education Department also supports this approach.

In May 2023, the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approved \$100.2 million in facility construction and renovations for the Education Department.<sup>3</sup> The state share will total approximately \$86.5 million. The project will construct a new elementary school at Barry Field, consolidating operations at the Kevin K. Coleman, Globe Park, and Bernon Heights Elementary Schools. Additionally, the project will also address district-wide security needs and result in renovations and repairs at existing elementary and middle schools.<sup>4</sup>



Coleman Elementary (Rhode Island Current)



Middle School Students (Woonsocket Middle School)

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<sup>2</sup> <https://ride.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur806/files/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Funding-and-Finance-Wise-Investments/SchoolBuildingAuthority/State-of-Rhode-Island-Schoolhouses.pdf> (pg. 20)

<sup>3</sup> [https://media.ride.ri.gov/BOE/CESE/05232023Meeting/Encl5g\\_SchoolBuildingApprovals.pdf](https://media.ride.ri.gov/BOE/CESE/05232023Meeting/Encl5g_SchoolBuildingApprovals.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://governor.ri.gov/press-releases/rhode-island-council-elementary-and-secondary-education-approves-255-million-school>

## INVESTING IN CONTINUING EDUCATION

Life-long learning opportunities are key for supporting economic and workforce development. Whether you are honing the skills you already possess or pursuing new interests, all residents should have access to education and training resources regardless of age and background. Ultimately, empowering residents through continuing education opportunities can increase their economic mobility and quality of life while also creating local economic and job opportunities within the community.

The Woonsocket Education Center (WOC) is managed by the Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner. Opened in 2022, WOC offers a space for public-private collaboration on continuing education and workforce training. WOC partners include the Community College of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, and many businesses, industry associations, and job placement organizations.

There are several places and organizations for residents to pursue continuing education, including the Woonsocket Education Center, Rhode Island Regional Adult Learning, Harbour Youth Center, and Project LEARN. These programs and organizations provide a variety of resources and classes for continuing adult education, including adult basic education courses, test preparation, English as a Second Language courses, and more.

## HARRIS PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Harris Public Library has been serving the City since 1868 and has the distinction of being the first public library in the State. Originally situated on Main Street in City Hall, the Library moved to its current location in 1974. The City finished a major expansion and renovation project of the Library in 2001. The Library previously had two branches, the Social Branch (1927-1974) and Fairmount Branch (1998-2007).

Like many other libraries, the Harris Public Library is more than just a space to borrow reading materials or study quietly; instead, libraries are centers for lifelong learning and act as important community spaces; the Harris Public Library has the dual core objectives of increasing literary empowerment and building community connections. Library staff are trained to connect people with the things they need and to serve as a hub of local and regional information, both in person and online.



Children's Resources (Harris Public Library)

The Library offers a wide variety of educational programs and services for children, adults, and families. Children and teenagers can take advantage of cooking and acting classes,

informational lectures, summer reading programs, and more. Adults also have access to book clubs, fitness classes, language learning, test preparation, and more. The Library provides access to computers, printers, Wi-Fi, and other equipment and resources that may not be available at home, as well as books, music, and DVDs.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

The City's Police, Fire, and Emergency Response services are critical for keeping people safe day-to-day and during emergency situations. A public safety complex would be an efficient way to meet the demands and needs of both the police and fire departments, potentially providing an integrated space for training, health, and wellness of officers and firefighters.

### WHAT WE HEARD

Based on the community survey and other engagement, residents want the City to focus on:

- Crime prevention and response.
- More police and EMS/fire coverage and staff.
- More traffic enforcement/traffic cameras.

About  $\frac{2}{3}$  of public survey respondents said they are 'Satisfied' or 'Very Satisfied' with Police Department response times. About 58% said they are 'Satisfied' or 'Very Satisfied' with traffic law enforcement (though less than 14% are 'Very Satisfied'). Concern about crime remains high for many residents. Only just over 40% said they are 'Satisfied' or 'Very Satisfied' with crime prevention programs (and less than 10% are 'Very Satisfied'). About  $\frac{3}{4}$  of survey respondents said they are 'Satisfied' or 'Very Satisfied' with Fire Department response time and with ambulance/emergency medical services.

### POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Police Department is part of the local community. It is committed to community policing, which promotes community, government, and law enforcement partnerships, proactive problem solving, and community engagement to address the causes of crime, the fear of crime, and other community issues. The Department has built partnerships with several organizations within and outside the City to meet the goal of community policing and improve the quality of life for City residents.

The Police Department is headquartered on Clinton Street, where it also operates the joint dispatch for the Police and Fire Departments. It also has a substation on Hamlet Avenue. The Department has reached capacity at its headquarters facility with limited space to expand personnel offices, training rooms, and locker rooms. The building, built in 1975, is in need of significant renovations to the roof, windows, holding areas and cells, and HVAC system, among other issues. The site also lacks enough space for vehicle storage, including the Department's day-to-day vehicles plus employees' vehicles. The Hamlet Avenue substation provides space for officers, but the building itself is not open to the public because it is not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

## FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Emergency Management Agency is within the Fire Department. Its primary role is to coordinate with other City departments and regional and state agencies in the event of a natural disaster or crisis situation. The Fire Department is also home to the regional team that responds to natural disasters and other incidences and becomes the command center during events. Equipment is stored at the Department's headquarters facility.



Woonsocket Fire Department (City of Woonsocket)

The Woonsocket Fire Department operates out of five stations. Many of these facilities are at capacity and do not have space for growth. Layout and space cannot accommodate more modern delivery of services, including space for personnel offices, mandatory training needs, and vehicle and equipment storage. All buildings are in need of repairs and/or renovations.

## GOVERNANCE

In many ways, the issue of governing well is at the core of the Comprehensive Plan. Without a well-run government, it is difficult to imagine implementing a lot of the actions in the Plan. Governance touches every Element in the Plan because projects need to be assigned, managed, funded, and evaluated. Residents and business owners will need to continue to be engaged for many programs to succeed, and many departments will need to increase capacity and efficiency and improve customer service.

## BEST PRACTICES IN REGULATION & MAINTENANCE

So much of what makes a city function smoothly and serve its residents well are the “nuts and bolts” of regularly maintaining existing ordinances, regulations, policies, and procedures as well as regularly maintaining and investing in physical facilities. While sound policy and procedures can be difficult and time consuming to update, the benefits are long lasting. It is also worth noting that even the best policies and ordinances will fail to succeed if they are not actively implemented and enforced by the appropriate City staff or department. It is important that all these things are embedded as systems.

## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION & COORDINATION

In a community as diverse as Woonsocket, communication and engagement are critical to the successful operation of government. If residents are unaware of important decisions being made by the City, the inevitable result will be distrust in government; similarly, if residents do not engage with leadership about important issues, officials and staff cannot be expected to make decisions that represent their citizens' interests.

## INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY & DATA

Investing in modern technology can be a bumpy transition, but once these improvements are in place, they can give a significant boost to economic activity and customer service. Whether a new business is trying to navigate the development process or a local organization is seeking a permit to close a street for a block party, there should be a one-stop-shop online to submit information and track the review process. Better access to (non-personal) public data creates enormous opportunities for government to positively impact the lives of residents. It also empowers City departments to track their own success against stated goals and identify areas for improvement. Investments in data access, management, and analysis can improve government efficiency by streamlining processes, promoting innovation, and encouraging greater interagency cooperation.



Woonsocket City Hall (City of Woonsocket)

## GETTING IT DONE

GOAL IV-1: Provide City residents with an efficient delivery of services and adequate community facilities.

POLICY IV-1.1: Establish a set of priorities to guide actions.

ACTION IV-1.1.a: Conduct periodic public surveys of appropriate segments of the population to gauge service satisfaction and assess the needs of those surveyed.

ACTION IV-1.1.b: Per State law, the City's Comprehensive Plan must be revised no less than every ten years. At year eight, the Planning Board should initiate all processes for review and public participation that are necessary for the Plan's revision. There may be instances when an update is warranted sooner than mandated by the State law.

ACTION IV-1.1.c: The Planning Board shall develop a strategic implementation plan for the Comprehensive Plan to be reviewed annually per state law.

POLICY IV-1.2: Resolve to make changes in municipal functions under the direction of an orderly plan.

POLICY IV-1.3: Pursue new avenues of resource generation for the support of needed programs.

POLICY IV-1.4: Commit to on-going maintenance programs for all City facilities.

POLICY IV-1.5: Provide creative options for private sector investment in the City.

POLICY IV-1.6: Adopt an annual or periodic maintenance program to ensure greater life expectancy for all existing facilities.

POLICY IV-1.7: Complete detailed physical evaluations of facilities, recognizing replacement or renovation actions required.

POLICY IV-1.8: Plan and evaluate capital improvement needs, including the identification of preferred options for the most cost-effective expenditure of public funds.

ACTION IV-1.8.a: Annually prepare, adopt, and implement a comprehensive 5-year Capital Improvement Program for the City, and link to an annual capital budget so that actions are funded intentionally and systematically.

GOAL IV-2: Provide a safe, accessible, and efficient public infrastructure and public works system.

POLICY IV-2.1: Provide a high level of maintenance and operation for all City infrastructure through a comprehensive maintenance program.

ACTION IV-2.1.a: Continue the City's industrial wastewater pretreatment and fat-oil-grease programs.

ACTION IV-2.1.b: Continue illicit discharge detection and elimination program to prevent and remove non-stormwater discharges to the City's stormwater infrastructure.

ACTION IV-2.1.c: Continue and improve upon DPW's stormwater good housekeeping program to reduce stormwater pollution from municipal roads, properties, and operations.

ACTION IV-1.1.d: Evaluate and implement best practices for solid waste reduction, recycling, and diversion.

ACTION IV-2.1.e: Periodically review and update the City's Solid Waste Plan.

POLICY IV-2.2: Replace obsolete or worn-out system components with state-of-the art equipment and materials.

ACTION IV-2.2.a: Pursue state and federal grants for infrastructure improvements and pollution prevention initiatives.

ACTION IV-2.2.b: Replace or repair aging sewer pipes and vented sewer manhole covers, targeting inspections and upgrades to areas most susceptible to infiltration/inflow and sanitary sewer overflows.

ACTION IV-2.2.c: Evaluate flood risks for the sewer system, wastewater treatment facility, and sludge facility; implement recommended flood-mitigation actions.

ACTION IV-2.2.d: Evaluate and implement operational and facility improvements at the wastewater treatment and sludge facilities to alleviate odor impacts on the neighborhood.

ACTION IV-2.2.e: Improve operations of the wastewater treatment and sludge facilities to prevent operational failures and permit violations.



ACTION IV-2.2.f: Study and implement operational and equipment upgrades at the sludge facility to reduce phosphorus concentrations in its waste stream.

ACTION IV-2.2.g: Pursue acquisition and protection of watershed land around water supply reservoirs.

ACTION IV-2.2.h: Continue water distribution system inspections, maintenance, and rehabilitation.

ACTION IV-2.2.i: Implement a comprehensive water meter replacement program.

ACTION IV-2.2.j: Construct a new drinking water transmission main on Park Avenue to boost water pressure in the service area.

ACTION IV-2.2.k: Continue the City's ongoing program for detecting and fixing water leaks.

ACTION IV-2.2.l: Develop and implement a plan for stormwater infrastructure upgrades to prevent localized flooding.

ACTION IV-2.2.m: Develop and implement procedures for evaluating LID and GSI opportunities on municipal capital projects, including road, streetscape, facility, and park projects.

POLICY IV-2.3: Educate and engage with residents, businesses, and organizations to promote pollution prevention and environmental stewardship.

ACTION IV-2.3.a: Educate residents and businesses about stormwater pollution prevention, such as picking up dog waste and covering dumpsters.

ACTION IV-2.3.b: Support environmental stewardship opportunities for residents and businesses, such as Earth Day cleanup events.

ACTION IV-2.3.c: Partner with environmental organizations to promote and implement low impact development and green stormwater infrastructure.

POLICY IV-2.4: Enforce ordinances to protect City infrastructure and maintain the City's compliance with environmental permits.

ACTION IV-2.4.a: Implement policies to monitor drought and impose a series of restrictions and actions to control water demand as drought conditions warrant.

ACTION IV-2.4.b: Enforce the City's stormwater management ordinances: *Illicit Discharge Detention and Elimination Ordinance* (Ordinance Chapter 16-17), *Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance* (Ordinance Chapter 7 ½), and *Post Construction – Storm Water Control Ordinance* (Ordinance Chapter 7 ¾).

ACTION IV-2.4.c: Amend stormwater management ordinances to incorporate best practices.

GOAL IV-3: Produce a school system recognized for its excellence that prepares students for college and career readiness.

POLICY IV-3.1: Institute programs and policies aimed at decreasing the drop-out rate and making universal completion of high school a highest priority.

ACTION IV-3.1.a: Support and implement early intervention services and programs.

POLICY IV-3.2: Develop and implement programs aimed at improving the skills of graduating students.

ACTION IV-3.2.a: Continue to increase partnerships between local employers and the Woonsocket Education Department's career and technical education programs to connect students to a diversity of experiential learning opportunities.

POLICY IV-3.3: Ensure that the education system prepares the City's youth to become well-rounded, well-adjusted, productive members of society.

ACTION IV-3.3.a: Facilitate connections between the Woonsocket Education Department and community-based organizations to expand instructional and extracurricular opportunities for students.

POLICY IV-3.4: Develop a progressive educational system to enhance the quality of life for the whole community.

ACTION IV-3.4.a: Attract higher educational institutions and programs to Woonsocket (e.g., Community College of Rhode Island, New England Institute of Technology).

ACTION IV-3.4.b: Support and expand early education opportunities for Woonsocket residents, including evaluating options for an early childhood center.

POLICY IV-3.5: Develop a school housing program to implement the neighborhood school concept.

POLICY IV-3.6: Provide adequate facilities to address increasing school enrollment.

ACTION IV-3.6.a: Using the statewide Recommended Action Plan and Woonsocket Education Department condition assessments, annually prioritize the school facilities most in need of investment.

POLICY IV-3.7: Expand opportunities for residents to pursue post-graduate training and further intellectual development.

GOAL IV-4: Provide a high-quality public library system for the benefit of all community members.

POLICY IV-4.1: Effectively disseminate all types of information in order to meet basic human needs.

ACTION IV-4.1.a: Develop outreach programs aimed at those sectors of the community not currently utilizing the Library.

POLICY IV-4.2: Expand days and hours of operation and library programs in order to better serve all segments of the population with a special emphasis placed on the minority and adult population sectors.

POLICY IV-4.3: Provide increased levels of service to the community by providing special programs and assistance in locating available information.

GOAL IV-5: Provide basic public safety services that efficiently maintain or improve existing quality in order to meet community needs.

POLICY IV-5.1: Continue to explore suitable funding, location, and design of a new public safety complex.

POLICY IV-5.2: Continue to provide basic police services for the enforcement of laws and ordinances; the preservation of peace and public order; the protection of life, liberty, and property; the prevention and repression of crime; the detection of violations of the law; the apprehension of violators; and the prosecution of those apprehended.

POLICY IV-5.3: Continue provision of basic firefighting services, including the obtainment of the quickest possible response time in responding to fires so as to result in a well-protected community and the education of the public on fire prevention measures and emergency medical techniques.

ACTION IV-5.3.a: Complete ongoing reviews of the fire stations, to determine where there are needs for upgrades, closures, consolidations, etc.

POLICY IV-5.4: Implement policies that will increase the efficiency of service provision, including the adoption of a detailed maintenance and replacement program for police and fire fighting vehicles and other apparatus; the implementation of widespread and more efficient fire warning systems; and the restructuring of personnel so as to obtain greater levels of efficiency.

ACTION IV-5.4.a: Continue to carefully plan and schedule the refurbishment and replacement of all police and fire apparatus, (alarm console, trucks, aerial ladder, pumper, rescue vehicles, and protective clothing), as part of the City's 5-year Capital Improvement Program.

POLICY IV-5.5: Institute community outreach programs in an effort to educate the community and to gain their help and cooperation in fighting crime.

GOAL IV-6: Provide efficient professional management of City finances with an integrated network of data and information systems.

POLICY IV-6.1: Engage in sound financial planning and budgeting.

POLICY IV-6.2: Complete fair and equitable tax assessments.

POLICY IV-6.3: Achieve efficient collection and reporting of revenue.

POLICY IV-6.4: Make wise and prudent investment of City funds.

POLICY IV-6.5: Monitor the enforcement of prescribed procedures for the obtainment of the best product at the lowest cost to the taxpayer.

POLICY IV-6.6: Utilize fair and equitable procedures for employment of the most capable and well-trained personnel.

ACTION IV-6.6.a: Continue to implement the City's Affirmative Action Program in City hiring practices.

POLICY IV-6.7: Increase the technology and data sharing capabilities across City departments.

ACTION IV-6.7.a: Invest in technology upgrades as warranted in City government.

ACTION IV-6.7.b: Move towards a universal data system for all City departments.

ACTION IV-6.7.c: Work towards further integration of the City's computer system to allow for the efficient transfer of accurate, current data and information between departments.

POLICY IV-6.8: Upgrade and improve the City's website to make it user-friendly and informative for residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

GOAL IV-7: Provide efficient administration and coordination of all City departments, agencies, and boards and their delivery of services.

POLICY IV-7.1: The Mayor's Office is responsible for establishing and implementing overall City policies and priorities for the various service providers.

POLICY IV-7.2: The Mayor serves as the City's advocate and receives designated funding from State and federal governmental agencies.

POLICY IV-7.3: The Mayor provides overall public leadership.

POLICY IV-7.4: The Mayor works with other chief elected officials from neighboring communities on regional initiatives.

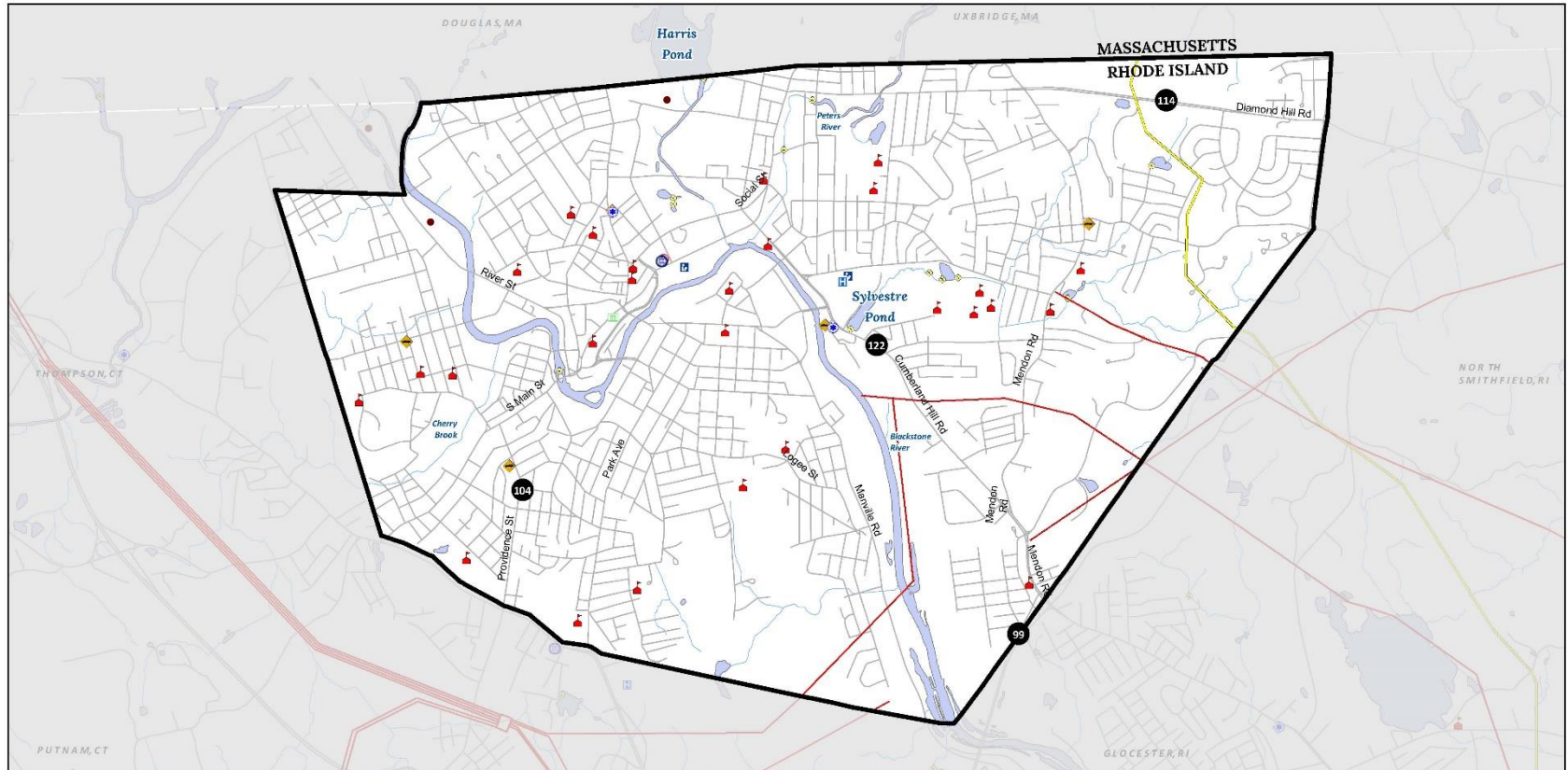
ACTION IV-7.4.a: Investigate the expansion of the Municipal Court to include other Northern Rhode Island communities on a regionalized basis.

POLICY IV-7.5: The Law Department provides effective and efficient legal representation to all departments, boards, and agencies of the City of Woonsocket.

POLICY IV-7.6: The Law Department effectively prosecutes all charged individuals in the various State and local municipal courts.

POLICY IV-7.7: The City Clerk's Office provides efficient storage and cataloging of all important City records and legal documents.

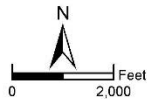
POLICY IV-7.8: The Board of Canvassers provides efficient service to voters and candidates in the administration and implementation of the election process.



**CITY OF WOONSOCKET COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - APRIL 2021**



**RIGIS**



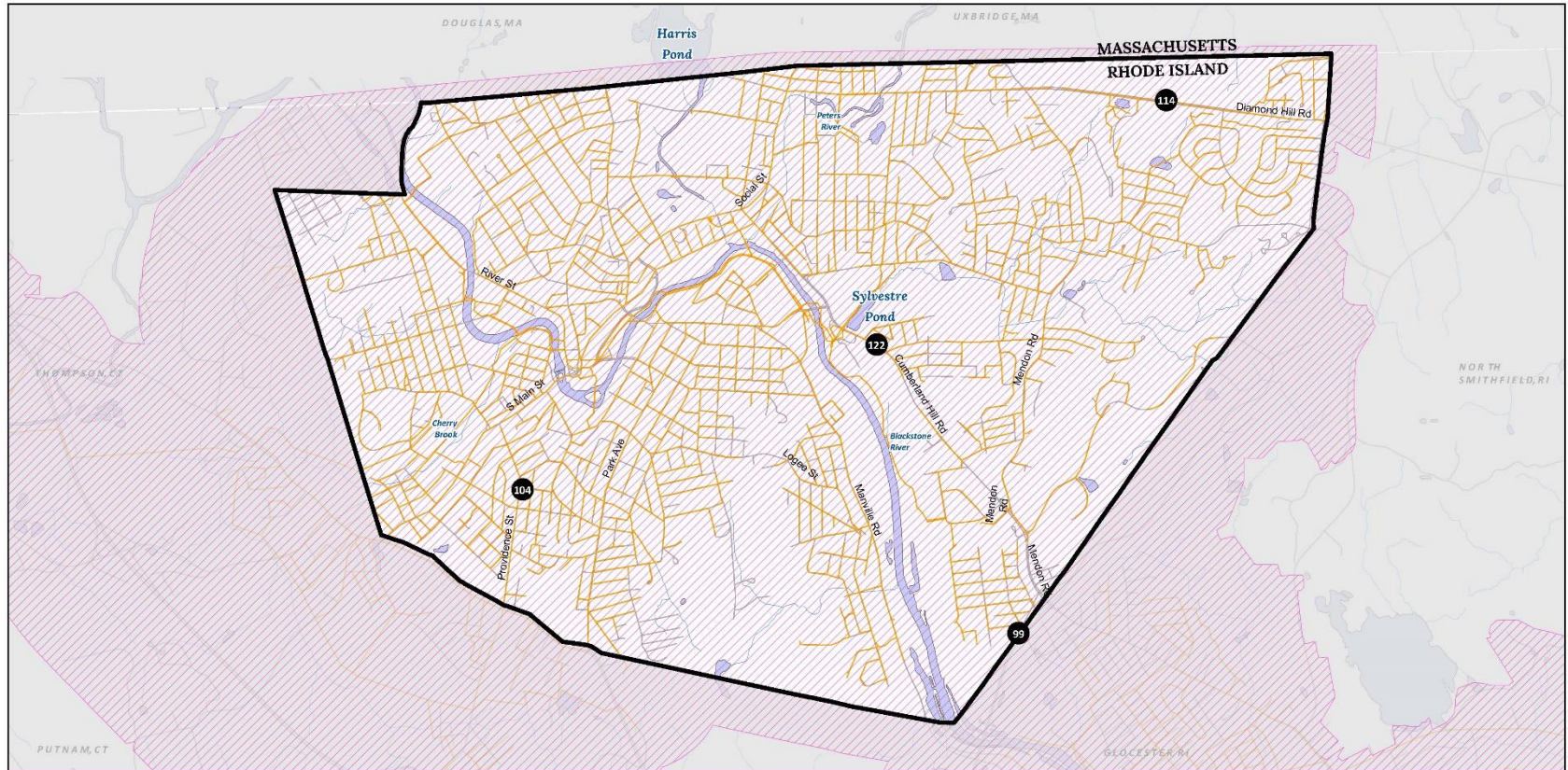
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- Electrical Transmission Lines
- Natural Gas Transmission Lines
- Ⓜ Correctional Institutions
- Ⓜ Dams
- Ⓜ Emergency Medical Services

**Public Infrastructure & Facilities**

- Ⓜ Fire Stations
- Ⓜ Hospitals
- Ⓜ Law Enforcement
- Ⓜ Libraries
- Active Soil Waste Sites
- Ⓜ Schools
- Ⓜ City Hall

\*Data Source: RIGIS

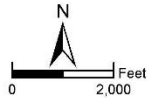


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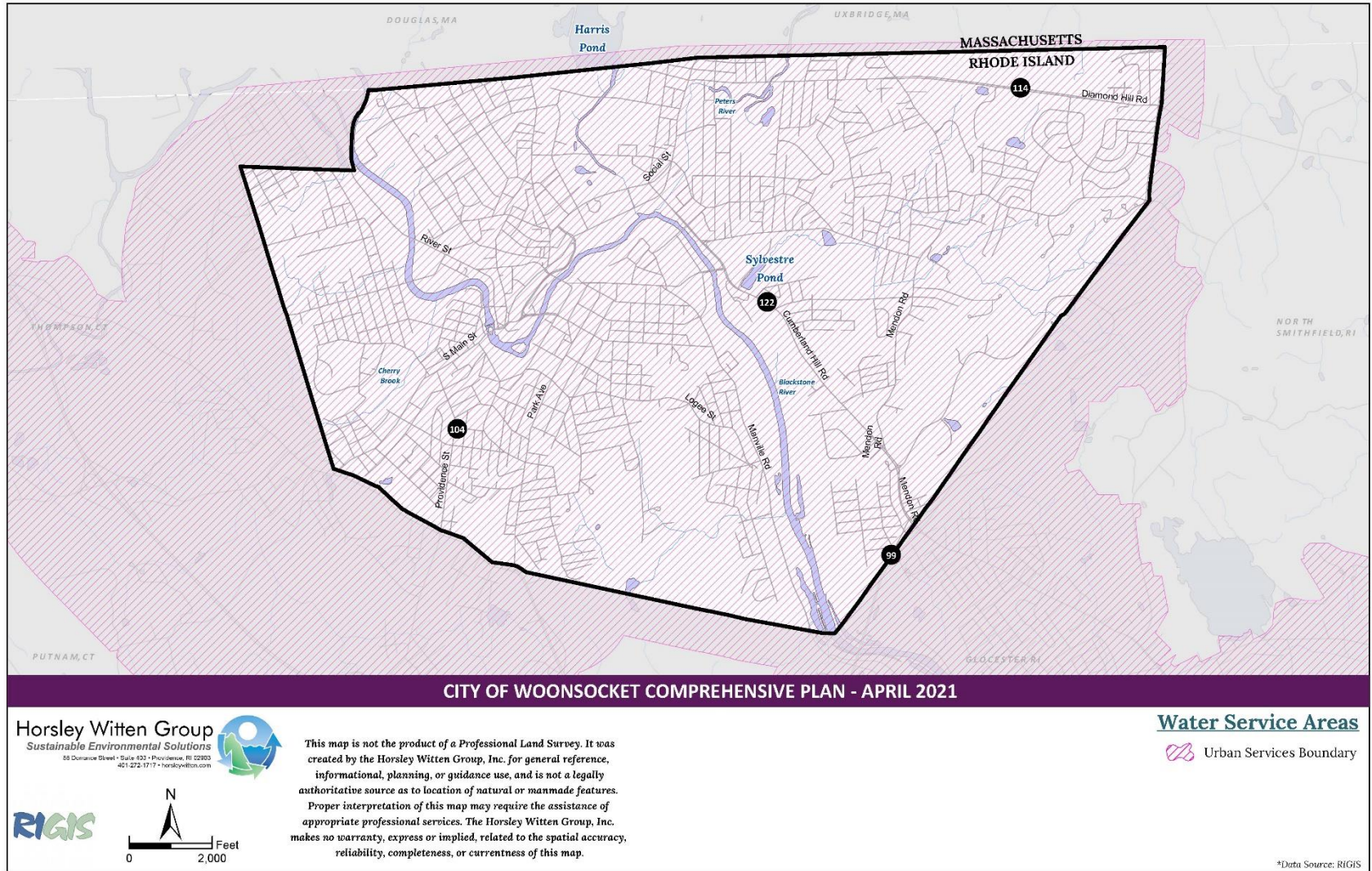


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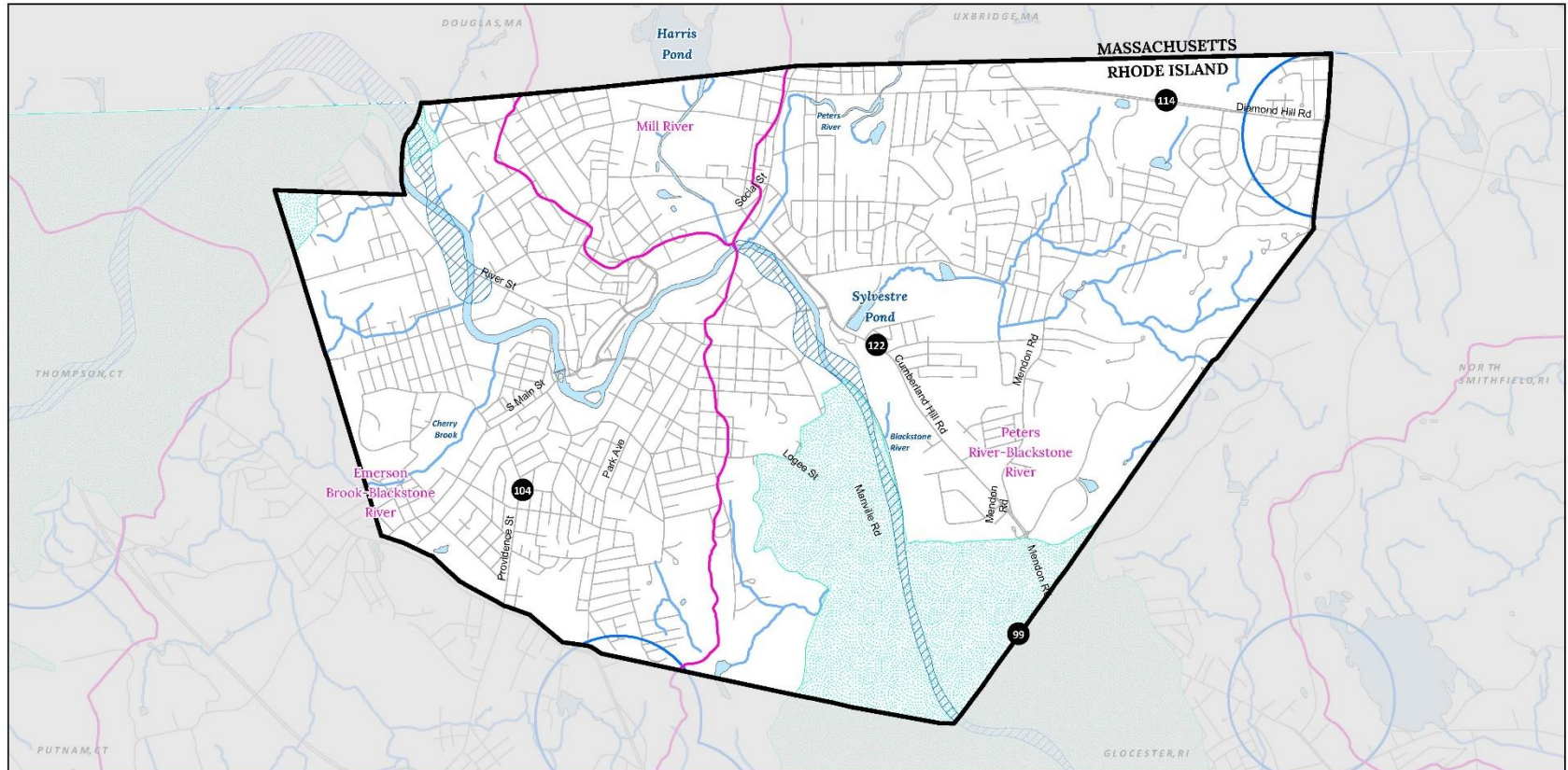
**Sewer Service Areas**

- Urban Services Boundary
- Sewer Lines

\*Data Source: RIGIS

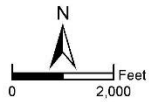






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- Watershed Boundary HUC 12
  - Groundwater Reservoirs
  - Groundwater Recharge Areas
  - Wellhead Protection Area Non Community
- Water Supply**
- Lakes and Ponds
  - Freshwater Rivers and Streams

\*Data Source: RIGIS