5.0 HOUSING

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Housing is the bedrock of a thriving community; communities are made up of people, and people need homes. Without safe and affordable housing, people and families cannot move to Coventry, or stay here.

Coventry faces a challenge in the difference between its current housing stock – dominated by single-family homes— and the growing needs of smaller households, aging residents, and renters. With housing costs rising and its affordable housing inventory well below the 10% state threshold, the town must act to ensure it remains a community that serves all residents.

This chapter will examine Coventry's existing housing stock, local market trends, and demographics to anticipate housing issues over the next twenty years. The last part of the chapter focuses on affordable housing and ensuring that Coventry can meet its obligation to meet the housing needs of its low-income residents.

The Town of Coventry produced an Affordable Housing Production Plan (AHPP) in 2005 that is being subsequently included as an amendment to this 2026 Comprehensive Community Plan Update. This AHPP is the most recent housing-related planning document adopted by the Town and will be the main point of comparison when discussing past plans.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

5.2.1 SUMMARY OF POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

Coventry is a town of nearly 36,000 people with over 14,000 households (see Table 5.1). It has a higher median household income (MHI) than Kent County or Rhode Island, but a lower MHI than the smaller towns to its north and south. The 2020 Census showed a 1.9 growth rate from the Town's 2010 population of 35,014. Coventry's growth rate has been slowly flattening since an all-time peak in the 1960 Census (see Figure 5.1).

Table 5.1. Demographic Summary

	Coventry	Kent County	Rhode Island
Population (2020)	35,688	170,363	1,097,379
Pop. Growth Rate 2010-2020	1.9%	2.5%	4.3%
Total Households	14,223	70,085	414,730
Avg. Household Size	2.4	2.5	2.3
Median Household Income	$84,623	$75,857	$70,305

	Coventry	Kent County	Rhode Island
Median Year Structure Built	1969	1965	1961
Poverty rate (Individual)	9.40%	8.10%	11.60%
Childhood poverty rate	13.40%	9.70%	15.70%
Elderly poverty rate	9.70%	8.90%	9.40%
Source: Census 2020; American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2016-2020			

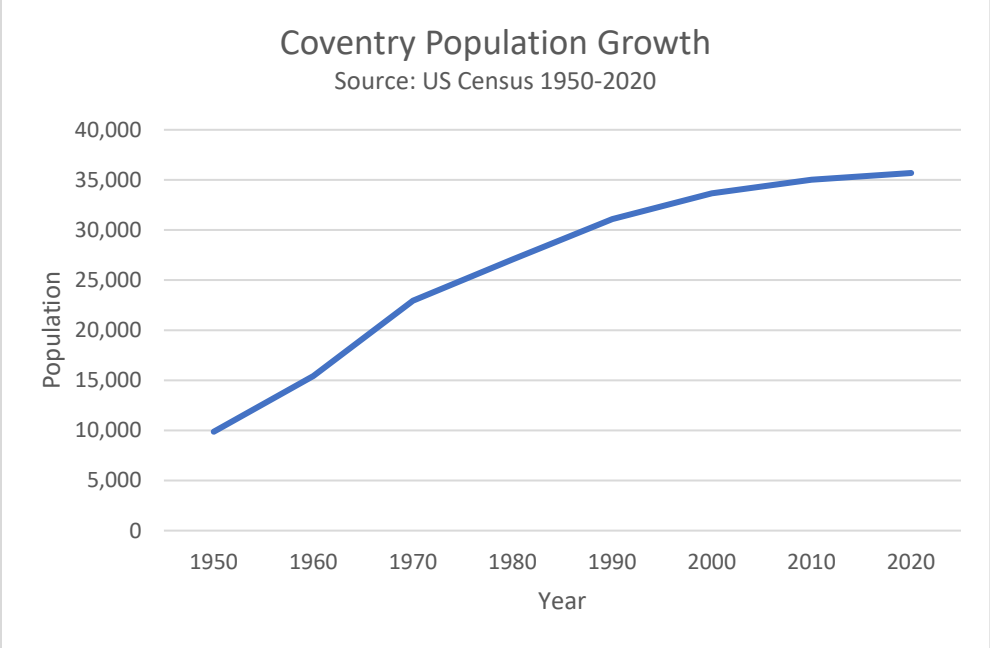
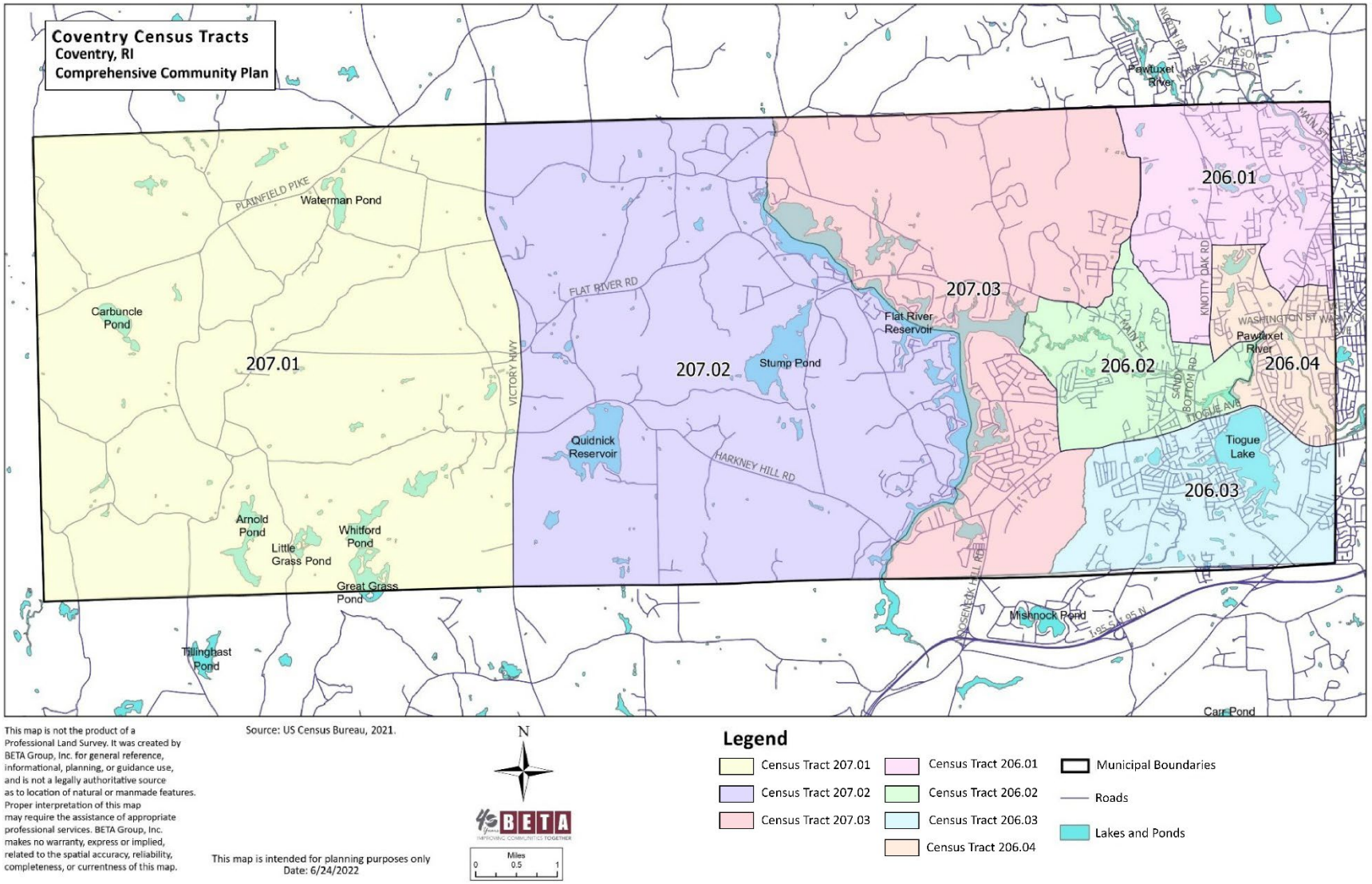


Figure 5.1 Coventry Population Growth

Coventry is a large town with a diverse set of distinctive neighborhoods, so it is not enough to examine housing statistics for the Town as a whole. This section will regularly present data breaking Coventry into its seven Census Tracts, geographic units of roughly equal population that the Census Bureau uses to collect data at a more detailed level than by municipality. Table 5.2 provides a summary of each of Coventry's tracts, and they are shown on Map 5.1.



Map 5.1. Census Tracts

Table 5.2. Summary of Coventry Census Tracts

Tract #	Description	Population	Households	Avg. Household Size	MHI	Median Year Structure Built	Poverty Rate (Individual)
206.01	Northeast Corner/Blackrock	6,431	2,351	2.74	$91,994	1969	10.4%
206.02	East Coventry, north of Route 3	3,512	1,629	2.16	$61,250	1964	14.2%
206.03	Southeast corner/Tiogue Lake/Centre of New England	6,791	2,811	2.42	$75,591	1969	15.1%
206.04	Anthony/West Warwick border	5,441	2,295	2.37	$58,769	1961	11.0%
207.01	West Coventry, including Greene, west of Route 102	1,894	665	2.85	$76,923	1980	3.2%
207.02	Central Coventry, east of Route 102	4,595	1,768	2.60	$103,056	1981	8.7%
207.03	Between Flat River Reservoir & Colvintown Road, Reservoir Road	7,024	2,704	2.60	$123,397	1975	1.8%

Source: Census 2020; American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2016-2020

5.2.1.1 Housing Production Trends

Table 5.3 shows the annual permitted residential units based on certificate of occupancy data issued by the Coventry Building Department. Since 2010 there has been a consistent number of residential units permitted each year, an average of 56 with a low of 43, although the types of structures have changed. The unit counts in Table 5. have been affected by the permitting of several large projects. For example, many of the certificates of occupancy issued for condominiums in 2012 were related to the Coventry Meadows development, and 2013-2014 saw apartment units from the redevelopment of Anthony and Harris mills. The yearly average of new one- to two-family units since 2010 is 40, most of which were single-family units.

Table 5.3. New Residential Units Per Year – By Certificates of Occupancy Issued

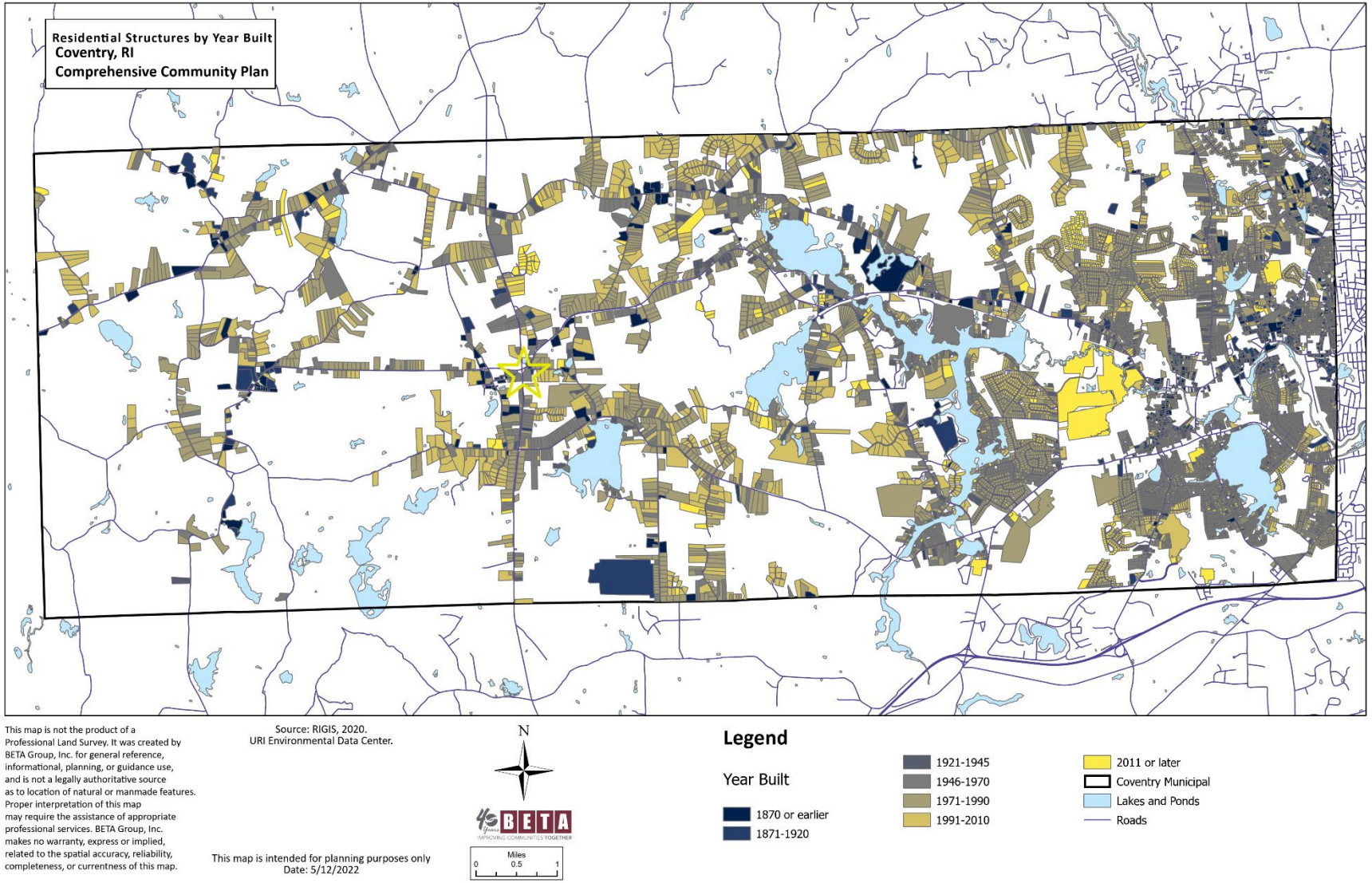
Year	1-2 Family Dwelling	Condo Unit	3+ Unit Apartments	Mobile Home	Total Units
2010	27	15	-	1	**43**
2011	20	24	-		**44**
2012	23	32*	-	1	**56**
2013	27	5	9	-	**41**
2014	36	9	9	-	**54**
2015	51	29	-	1	**81**
2016	48	13	-	2	**63**
2017	56	2	-	2	**60**
2018	47	8	-	1	**56**
2019	39	12	-	5	**56**
2020	49	12	1	5	**67**
2021	52	1	-	-	**53**
2022	23	-	-	-	**23**

** Some condo buildings with multiple units were issued a single permit, so some units are likely missing.*
Source: Coventry Building Department

5.2.1.2 Age of Housing

The median age for a structure containing an occupied housing unit in Coventry is 53 years old. However, the age of housing is not uniform across town. Map 5.2 shows that on average, homes are newer in west Coventry and older in east Coventry, although the west has many historic structures and the east has seen new development in recent years.

Figure 5. shows when Coventry's occupied housing units were constructed and compares the age of its housing stock to Kent County and Rhode Island as a whole. A majority of Coventry's housing units were constructed in 1970 or later, making the Town's housing stock much newer than the county and state. Coventry has a higher percentage of units built after 2010 than any surrounding community except West Greenwich.



Map 5.2. Residential Structures by Year Built

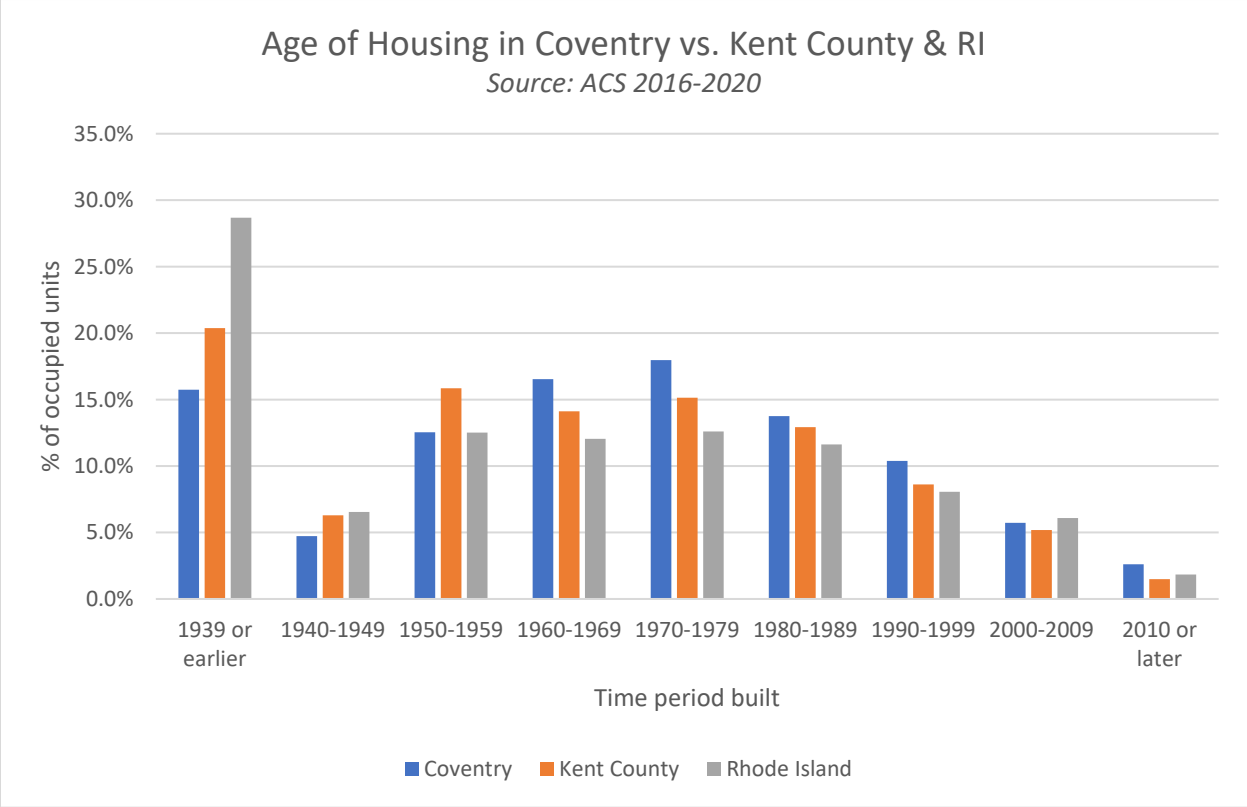


Figure 5.2. Age of Housing in Coventry vs. Kent County & Rhode Island

Table 5.4 shows housing units based on how many other units are in the same structure. 76.3% of units in Coventry are in detached, single-family structures[1] while 13.5% are in multifamily structures of three or more units.

Table 5.4. Occupied Housing Units in Structure

Housing Unit Type	Coventry		Kent County		Rhode Island	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1, Detached	11,212	77.3%	49,665	68.2%	248,773	56.3%
1, Attached	295	2.0%	3,101	4.3%	18,687	4.2%
2 apartments	460	3.2%	3,991	5.5%	46,017	10.4%
3 or 4 apartments	265	1.8%	3,150	4.3%	48,961	11.1%
5 to 9 apartments	305	2.1%	2,534	3.5%	20,555	4.7%
10 or more apartments	1,066	7.3%	9,308	12.8%	54,806	12.4%
Mobile Home or Other Type of Housing	902	6.2%	1,090	1.5%	3,771	0.9%

[1] As opposed to an attached single-family structure, which are housing units that are one-family but that are attached to other housing units by a wall extending from the ground to the roof, such as with row houses or townhouses.

Total Units	**14,505**		**72,839**		**441,570**	
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2024)						

5.2.1.3 Occupancy and Tenure

Only 4.7% of the housing units in Coventry are vacant (see Table 5.5), a lower vacancy rate than Kent County (5.3%) and Rhode Island as a whole (8.7%). An estimated one-quarter of vacant units in 2020 were on the market for sale or rent or had recently been sold but not yet occupied. Another 29% of vacant units were occupied seasonally (likely vacation homes). The remaining 46% of vacant homes, about 400 units, may be longer-term vacancies. Since 2010, the number of occupied housing units has increased by 5.9% and vacant housing units have decreased overall, by 19.4%.

Table 5.5. Occupancy and Tenure

	Coventry		Kent County		Rhode Island	
	Count	**Percent**	**Count**	**Percent**	**Count**	**Percent**
Occupancy Rates						
Occupied Units	14,223	95.3%	72,063	94.7%	441,274	91.3%
Vacant Units	708	4.7%	4,021	5.3%	42,200	8.7%
Total Units	14,931	100.0%	76,084	100.0%	483,474	100.0%
Tenure						
Owner-Occupied	11,221	79.2%	49,214	70.2%	255,450	61.6%
Renter-Occupied	2,945	20.8%	20,871	29.8%	159,280	38.4%
Total Occupied Units	14,223	100.0%	70,085	100.0%	414,730	100.0%
Source: Census 2020; American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2016-2020)						

About 80% of housing units in Coventry are owner-occupied, and the remaining 20% are occupied by renters. The Town has a higher proportion of rentals than the surrounding rural and suburban communities but still has more homeowners than urban areas like West Warwick, the county, or the state. Coventry has been steadily adding to its rental stock over the past decade, adding an estimated 500 rental units since 2010.

Vacancy rates and tenure vary significantly across Coventry, as shown in Table 5.6. Tract 206.4 on the West Warwick border has a nearly equal number of owners and renters, while Tract 207.01 in west Coventry only has an estimated 24 renter households. Tract 207.03 in Central Coventry has the highest vacancy rate at an estimated 10%.

5.2.1.4 SHORT-TERM RENTALS

"Short-term rental" is a general term to describe the renting of a housing unit on a night-by-night basis, commonly through an app like Airbnb. Short-term rentals do not always noticeably impact a community's year-round housing market, but a strong short-term rental market can incentivize property owners to convert a year-round unit into a full-time vacation rental, which would be counted as a vacant unit. Coventry has an estimated eleven unique active rentals on the apps Airbnb and Vrbo as of August 2022[2], so this market likely does not have a significant impact on Coventry's housing stock.

Table 5.6. Occupancy & Tenure by Census Tract

	Occupied		Vacant			Owner-Occupied		Renter-Occupied	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent		Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Tract 206.01	2,354	97.9%	51	2.1%		1,980	84.1%	374	15.9%
Tract 206.02	1,548	96.2%	61	3.8%		1,216	78.6%	332	21.5%
Tract 206.03	2,928	97.9%	62	2.1%		2,221	75.9%	707	24.2%
Tract 206.04	2,497	90.7%	255	9.3%		1,354	54.2%	1,143	45.8%
Tract 207.01	670	94.0%	43	6.0%		646	96.4%	24	3.6%
Tract 207.02	1,746	93.2%	127	6.8%		1,604	91.9%	142	8.1%
Tract 207.03	2,423	89.9%	272	10.1%		2,200	90.8%	223	9.2%
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2016-2020)									

5.2.1.5 HOUSING MARKET TRENDS

Coventry's housing market has largely stayed in line with statewide trends. The volume of home sales in Coventry has trended upwards since 2009, reaching a high of 770 transactions in 2021 (see Figure 5.3). This trend is largely set by single-family home sales, which make up a majority of sales in Coventry for every year and of which nearly 500 were sold in 2021.

[2] AirDNA, LLC, https://www.airdna.co

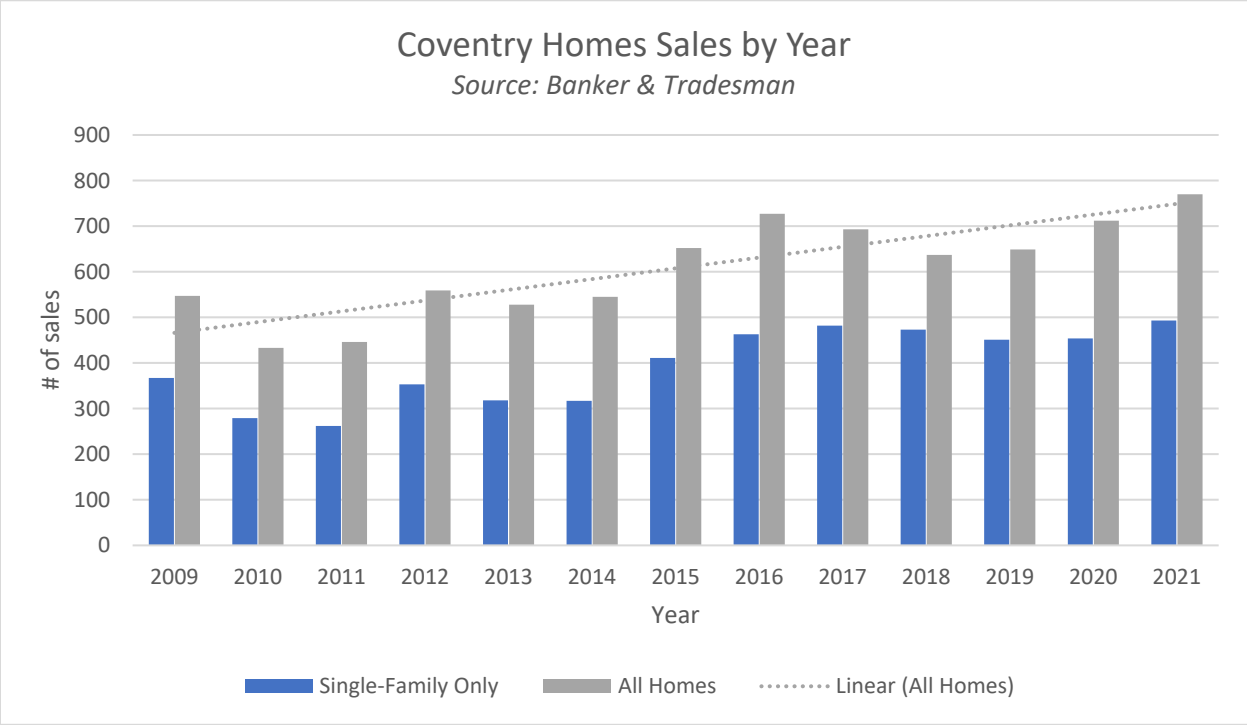


Figure 5.3. Coventry Homes Sales by Year

The median sales price for homes has risen along with the volume of sales, both in Coventry and Rhode Island as a whole. 2022 saw an all-time high for single-family units of $345,000 (see Figure 5.4). In 2007 and from 2013 through 2016, the median sales price for condos was higher than that of single-family homes. These increases in condo price coincided with large volumes of new condominium units coming on the market.

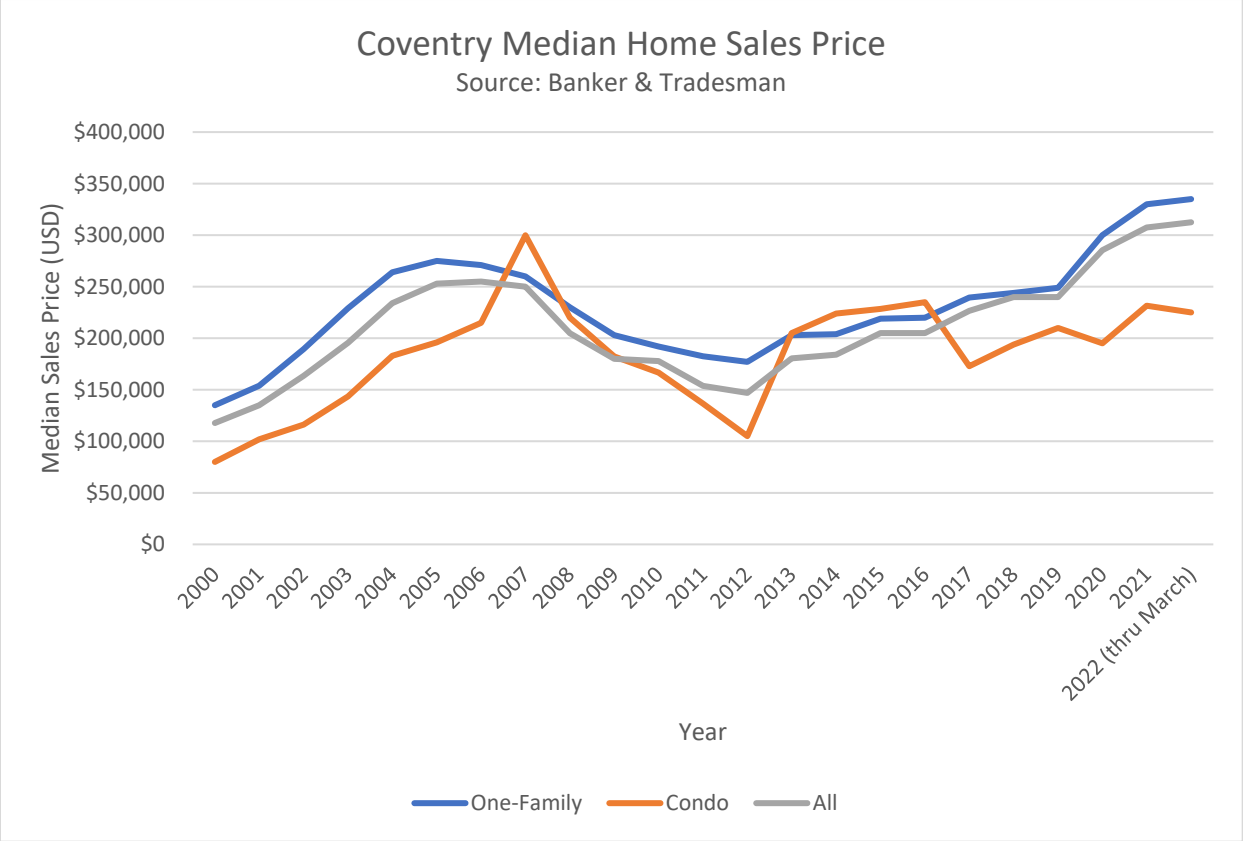


Figure 5.4. Coventry Median Home Sales Price

HousingWorks RI releases an annual report, the Housing Factbook, which estimates the most and least affordable municipalities in which to obtain housing. Based on 2023 data, it was estimated that a household needed to earn $113,262 per year in order to afford to purchase a median priced home in Coventry, at $345,000, making it the seventh-most affordable community in Rhode Island in which to purchase a home. The Town's median household income in 2023 was estimated at $88,779, so a median-earning family could likely not afford to purchase a median-priced home. The other data sources cited in this chapter indicate that this annual earnings threshold for home purchase will most likely continue to rise, further complicating the housing market in Coventry.

5.2.1.6 Rental Price Trends

Rental price trends in Coventry are derived from CoStar, a service that aggregates market data for multifamily residential properties with three units or more. Coventry has twenty-four multi-family residential properties. Four of these properties have over one hundred units, including the Westwood Estates mobile home park, which has 464 units. The remaining three largest properties are all apartment buildings: Woodlands Apartments (276 units, including affordable units), Harris Mill Lofts (157 units), and the Lofts at Anthony Mill (122 units).

Table 5.7. Large Multi-Family Rental Data

Year	# of Units	Asking rent/unit (average of all bedroom sizes)	Change in asking rent	Vacancy Rate
2010	878	$1,058	1.6%	4.0%
2011	878	$1,064	0.6%	3.4%
2012	878	$1,071	0.7%	3.7%
2013	961	$1,083	1.1%	5.9%
2014	1,029	$1,092	0.8%	6.7%
2015	1,029	$1,141	4.5%	3.2%
2016	1,029	$1,200	5.2%	4.3%
2017	1,029	$1,240	3.3%	7.8%
2018	1,029	$1,306	5.3%	3.3%
2019	1,029	$1,335	2.2%	1.9%
2020	1,029	$1,369	2.5%	1.7%
2021	1,029	$1,506	10.0%	0.9%
2022	1,029	$1,539	2.2% (YTD)	1.0%
			10.1% (predicted)	

Source: CoStar, May 2022

Rents have risen every year since 2010, but have dramatically risen by 10% since the beginning of 2021, a trend expected to continue in 2022 (see Table 5.). Vacancy rates have also fallen to a ten-year low of under one percent in 2021, and increased by just 0.1% the following year. High rents and low vacancy indicate a highly competitive rental market that may be pricing out some local renters.

The two mill redevelopment apartment complexes are the largest and newest rental properties in Coventry, and they are both aimed at higher-income households. These units ask rents of about $1,700 per month for mostly two-bedroom units, which is higher than the town wide average of $1,535

The larger developments reported on by CoStar account for roughly half of the rental units in Town. Table 5.8 summarizes rent data from the other half, properties with only one or two units, using data from Rentometer, a service that aggregates rental listings. The sample size is much smaller than in Table 5.7 as there are relatively few rental units in Coventry, and small rental units in one-to-three family structures are more likely to be rented out informally and therefore not appear in Rentometer's database. For an alternate estimate, HousingWorks RI reports that the average rent for a two-bedroom unit in Coventry was $1,842 in 2022.

Table 5.8. Rentometer Area Rents (24 months, May 17, 2022)

Unit Size	Median Rent	Sample Size
1-bedroom	$1,390	26
2-bedroom	$1,588	48
3-bedroom	$1,460	15
Rentometer Area Rents (12 months, May 17, 2022)		
Unit Size	Median Rent	Sample Size
1-bedroom	$1,350	17
2-bedroom	$1,710	25
3-bedroom	$1,513	8
Source: Rentometer.com		

The 2023 Housing Factbook discussed in relation to home sales price also reports the income required to afford a median rental in each Rhode Island municipality. Coventry is the fifteenth-most affordable place to rent for which data was available, requiring an annual income of $75,300 to afford the median rent for a two-bedroom apartment, $1,883. This is below the Median Household Income of $88,779.

5.2.2 Existing Housing Patterns and Conditions

Location of housing

Most housing units are built or being built in the densely populated eastern portion of Coventry.[3] Table 5.2, shown on page 4, shows the number of households per Census Tract, and about 64% of all households are in the four tracts that are roughly equivalent to eastern Coventry. Map 5.2 on page 7 only parcels containing residential structures, with a clear delineation in density between east and west.

While access to public transportation in Coventry is limited, there are some residential areas that have access to the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA)'s Route 13 bus line. The line serves the Woodland Manor affordable apartment complex and makes several stops along Tiogue Avenue and Washington Street before heading into West Warwick and Warwick. Recently, RIPTA added Route 23 traveling through eastern Coventry from the Centre of New England development to Warwick. Bus routes are a valuable amenity for nearby households and expanded service might make these areas more desirable for new housing development. Further information on transportation statistics, needs, and goals are discussed in Chapter 9 of this plan.

[3] Eastern Coventry is colloquially defined as the part of town that is east of Hamlet Road and Williams Crossing Road; Western Coventry is colloquially defined as the part of town that is west of Route 102/Victory Highway, and Central Coventry is the part of town between those two boundaries.

Eastern Coventry is a mix of typical suburban developments and older mill villages. Public water is available in eastern Coventry, but sewerage is only available in the Route 3 area. Eastern Coventry is generally zoned for 20,000 sq. ft. and two-acre residential lots, and there is relatively little available, undeveloped land. In contrast, both central and western Coventry are much more rural and undeveloped, and there is a great deal of available land. Land in central Coventry is primarily zoned for three-acre lots, while land in western Coventry is primarily zoned for five-acre lots. Western Coventry is sparsely populated compared to eastern Coventry and so a majority of infrastructure resources such as public water and sewer are dedicated to eastern Coventry. Mobile home parks are located primarily in eastern and central Coventry.

Condition of housing

The Coventry Tax Assessor's office classifies nearly all residential structures in Town as being in "average" condition or better. However, community stakeholders have expressed concerns about the deteriorating condition of the older housing stock of east Coventry in particular. Many of the older units in town are associated with the early mill housing and with multi-family developments of the 1960s and 1970s and have higher renter occupancy rates for these units than newer, single-family homes. Given the large number of older units in Coventry that could contain lead, all property renovations that disturb lead paint are required to follow certain procedures and have to be conducted by a licensed lead renovation contractor.

Local regulations

Existing patterns of residential development and future opportunities to build housing are shaped by the Town's zoning ordinances. Zoning regulations state where residential structures can be built and regulates the form of those structures. Chapter 13, Land Use, discusses Coventry's zoning in detail, but this section summarizes some relevant housing regulations.

Single-family homes can be constructed by-right in most of Coventry. "By-right" means that a type of development does not require any special permissions from local government as long as it complies with all local and state regulations. The lowest density residential areas in western Coventry require each home to be situated on a lot at least five acres in size (zoned RR-5), with the required lot size getting smaller the farther east in Town you go. The highest density residential zone (R20) has a minimum lot size of 20,000 feet for single-family homes and is only found in eastern Coventry. Multifamily housing is not currently allowed by right anywhere in Town.

Accessory dwelling units are small attached or detached dwellings that are clearly secondary to an existing, primary home on a property. Coventry's code was recently amended to allow these units in all residential districts, and generally follows State Law for restrictions and criteria.

5.2.3 Assessment of Existing and Future Housing Needs

Households and demographics

Coventry's population continued to grow in the 2010s, albeit at a slower pace than previous decades (see Figure 5.1). During this time, the Town's population became more racially diverse. Table 5. shows that while Coventry is still 90% White, the absolute number of White residents shrunk slightly between 2010 and 2020 while every other racial group grew.

Table 5.9. Racial Makeup of Coventry 2000-2020

	2000		2010		2020	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
White	32,605	96.8%	33,361	95.3%	32,127	90.0%
African American or Black	122	0.4%	206	0.6%	311	0.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native	37	0.1%	58	0.2%	63	0.2%
Asian	186	0.6%	260	0.7%	458	1.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	8	0.0%	5	0.0%	7	0.0%
Other	22	0.1%	28	0.1%	121	0.3%
Two or More Races	303	0.9%	425	1.2%	1,372	3.8%
Hispanic	385	1.1%	671	1.9%	1,229	3.4%
Total	**33,668**	**100.0%**	**35,014**	**100.0%**	**35,688**	**100.0%**
US Census Bureau						

Despite growing diversity, compared to Kent County and Rhode Island, Coventry has a higher proportion of White residents and the same or lower proportion of all other racial groups (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1. Population by Racial/Ethnic Group

	Coventry		Kent County		Rhode Island	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
White	32,127	90.0%	144,761	85.0%	754,050	68.7%
African American or Black	311	0.9%	2,889	1.7%	55,386	5.0%

	Coventry		Kent County		Rhode Island	
	Count	**Percent**	**Count**	**Percent**	**Count**	**Percent**
American Indian and Alaska Native	63	0.2%	364	0.2%	3,513	0.3%
Asian	458	1.3%	4,830	2.8%	38,367	3.5%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	7	0.0%	32	0.0%	320	0.0%
Other	121	0.3%	767	0.5%	11,392	1.0%
Two or More Races	1,372	3.8%	7,055	4.1%	52,250	4.8%
Hispanic	1,229	3.4%	9,665	5.7%	182,101	16.6%
Total	**35,688**	**100.0%**	**170,363**	**100.0%**	**1,097,379**	**100.0%**
US Census Bureau, Census 2020						

2020 estimates indicate that about one-third of the Town's population is aged 55 or older (see Table 5.2), up from approximately 27% in 2010. This represents an increase of approximately 2,000 adults age 55 and older, over ten years.

Table 5.2. Population by Age

	Coventry		Kent County		Rhode Island	
Age Group	**Count**	**Percent**	**Count**	**Percent**	**Count**	**Percent**
17 years or younger	6,635	19.1%	30,775	18.8%	205,444	19.4%
18-24 years	2,518	7.2%	11,599	7.1%	110,984	10.5%
25-34	4,363	12.6%	21,866	13.3%	146,797	13.9%
35-44 years	4,253	12.2%	20,188	12.3%	123,964	11.7%
45-54 years	5,530	15.9%	23,066	14.1%	139,330	13.2%
55-64 years	5,617	16.2%	25,658	15.6%	148,793	14.1%
65-74 years	3,286	9.5%	17,992	11.0%	103,407	9.8%
75 years or older	2,545	7.3%	12,978	7.9%	79,079	7.5%
Total	**34,747**	**100.0%**	**164,122**	**100.0%**	**1,057,798**	**100.0%**
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2016-2020)						

Most households in Coventry are made up of only one or two people (see Table 5.3). Household size in Coventry is roughly in line with state and county trends, although the Town has a slightly lower proportion of very small and very large households, tending more towards three-to-four person households.

Table 5.3. Households by Size

	Coventry		Kent County		Rhode Island	
Household Size	**Count**	**Percent**	**Count**	**Percent**	**Count**	**Percent**
1-Person Household	3,256	23.0%	20,772	29.6%	126,890	30.6%
2-Person Household	5,381	38.0%	24,412	34.8%	139,083	33.5%
3-Person Household	2,716	19.2%	11,682	16.7%	66,382	16.0%
4-Person Household	1,564	11.0%	8,055	11.5%	51,408	12.4%
5-Person Household	740	5.2%	3,333	4.8%	21,231	5.1%
6-Person Household	345	2.4%	1,228	1.8%	6,337	1.5%
7-or-More Person Household	164	1.2%	603	0.9%	3,399	0.8%
Total Households	**14,166**	**100%**	**70,085**	**100%**	**414,730**	**100%**
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2016-2020)						

While Coventry households tend to be small, most are related family members living together (about 70%; see Table 5.4). The remaining nonfamily households are either single people or groups of unrelated individuals living together. Married-couple families make up a majority of all households.

Table 5.4. Households by Type

	Coventry		Kent County		Rhode Island	
Household Type	**Count**	**Percent**	**Count**	**Percent**	**Count**	**Percent**
Married-Couple Family	7,611	53.7%	33,603	47.9%	184,719	44.5%
Male Householder, no spouse	750	5.3%	3,099	4.4%	19,320	4.7%
Female Householder, no spouse	1,517	10.7%	7,138	10.2%	53,810	13.0%
Nonfamily Household	4,288	30.3%	26,245	37.4%	156,881	37.8%
Total Households	**14,166**	**100%**	**70,085**	**100.0%**	**414,730**	**100.0%**

	Coventry		Kent County		Rhode Island	
Household Type	**Count**	**Percent**	**Count**	**Percent**	**Count**	**Percent**
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2016-2020)						

Population projections

In 2013, the Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program released population projections for the state's municipalities through the year 2040. Table 5.5 contains projections for Coventry, its neighbors, the rest of Kent County, and the state as a whole. Coventry is consistently projected to be the second-fastest growing among these places, behind West Greenwich, for the entire time period shown. The rate of population growth in Coventry is predicted to slow from 2025 onward, as is shown in Table 5.5 for the entire state.

Table 5.5. Population Projections – Kent County and Rhode Island (2025-2040)

Place	2025	Change	2030	Change	2035	Change	2040
Coventry	37,152	2.4%	38,050	1.8%	38,740	1.10%	39,172
E. Greenwich	13,784	2.0%	14,053	1.4%	14,245	0.70%	14,342
Foster	4,850	2.4%	4,963	1.7%	5,048	1.10%	5,101
Scituate	10,535	1.1%	10,648	0.5%	10,702	-0.10%	10,685
Warwick	78,671	-1.1%	77,778	-1.7%	76,472	-2.30%	74,702
West Greenwich	7,731	7.2%	8,290	6.1%	8,796	5.00%	9,234
West Warwick	28,563	-0.2%	28,506	-0.7%	28,293	-1.40%	27,902
Kent County	165,900	0.5%	166,678	-0.1%	166,546	-0.7%	165,353
Rhode Island	1,061,796	0.8%	1,070,677	0.3%	1,073,799	-0.30%	1,070,104
Source: Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program, Division of Planning							

Income and poverty

Figure 5.1 shows a clear upward trend in median household income (MHI) in Coventry over the past decade, reaching a high of $84,623 as of 2020. Figure 5.2 compares the estimated annual change in MHI with the estimated annual change in median home sales price. In the past five years, growth in sales price has tended to outpace growth in income in Coventry, and this trend is even more pronounced in Rhode Island as a whole. On a national level, income rose faster than housing prices more often than not over the same time period.[4]

[4] *Economic Data,* Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

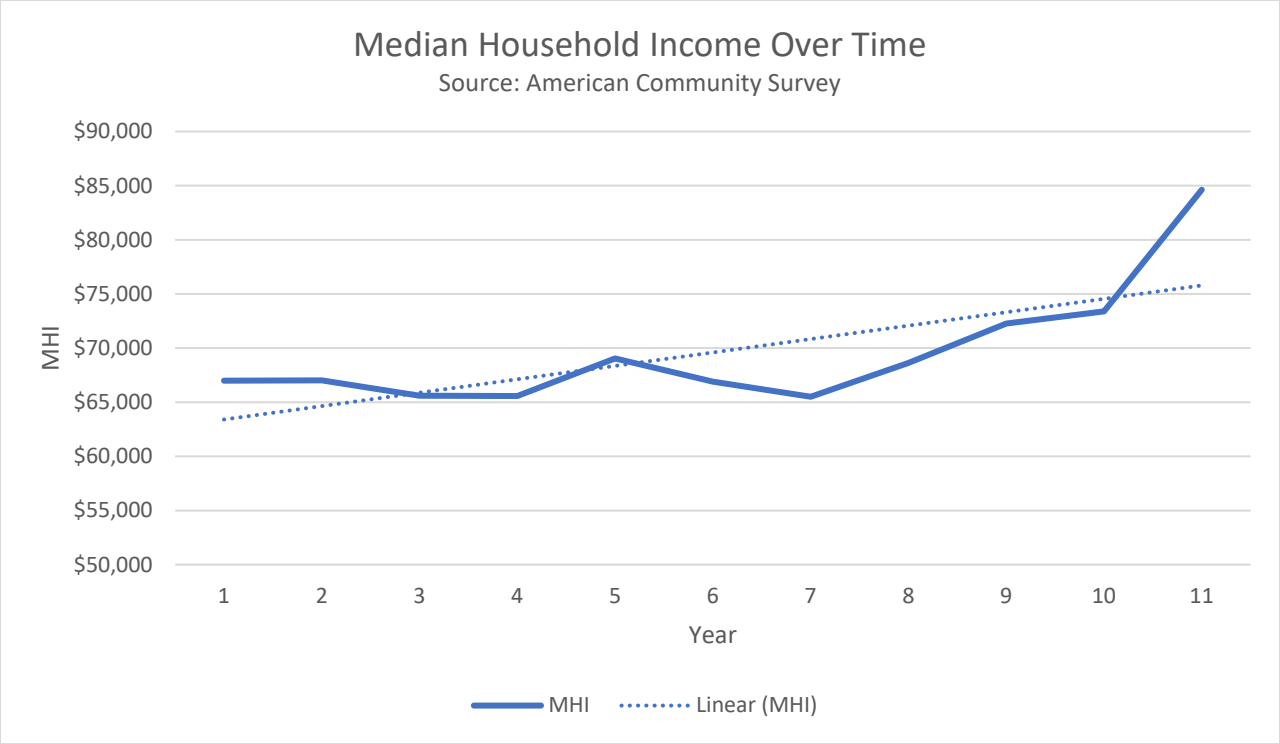


Figure 5.1. Median Household Income Over Time

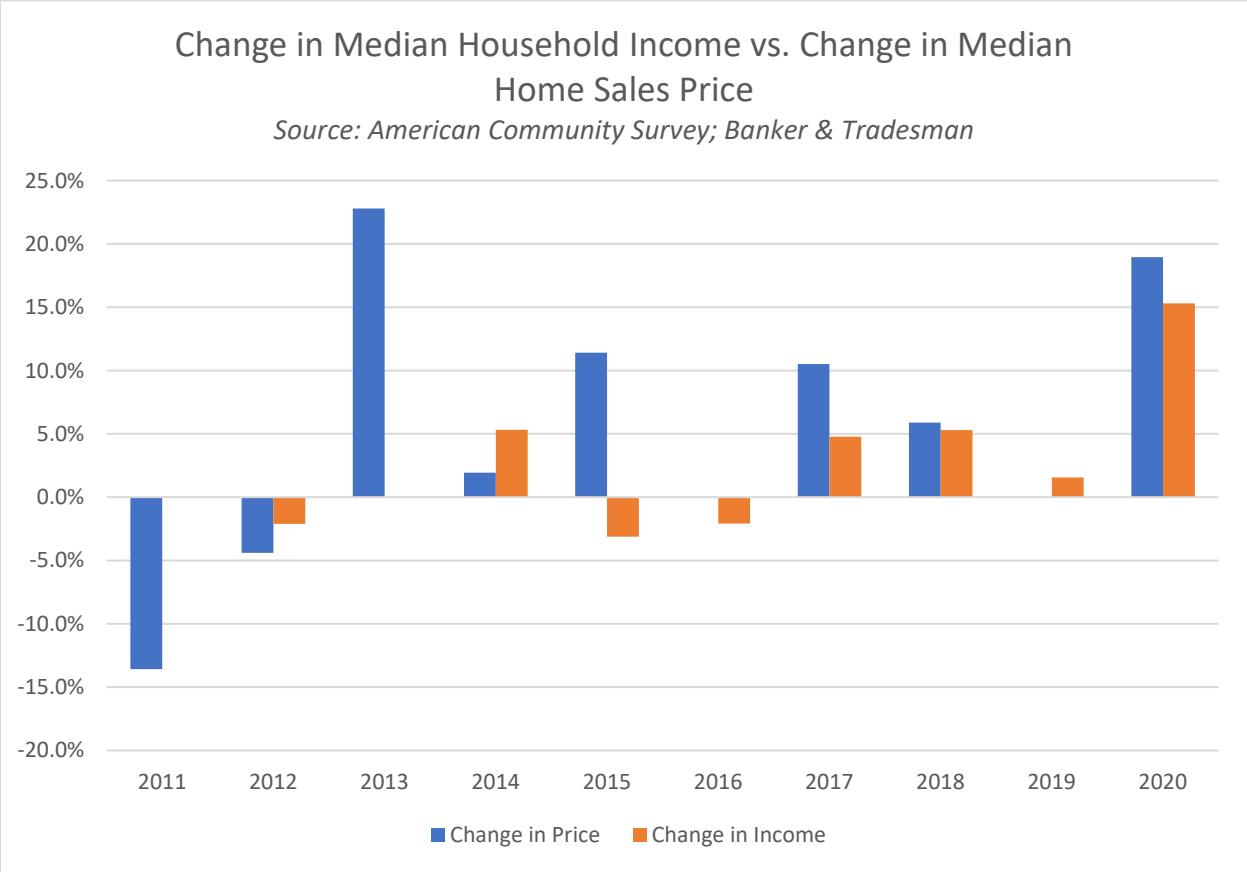


Figure 5.2. Change in Median Household Income vs. Change in Median Home Sales Price

Table 5.13 shows several poverty rates for Coventry and its neighboring communities. Coventry has a higher individual poverty rate than its rural and suburban neighbors and Kent County as a whole, but a lower rate than all of Rhode Island. Childhood poverty rates are higher but follow a similar trend.

Table 5.13. Poverty Statistics for Coventry and Surrounding Communities

	Coventry	E. Greenwich	W. Greenwich	W. Warwick	Foster	Scituate	Kent County	Rhode Island
Poverty rate (Individual)	9.40%	4.70%	1.70%	12.10%	5.40%	3.40%	8.10%	11.60%
Childhood poverty rate	13.40%	4.90%	0.20%	17.90%	2.60%	4.40%	9.70%	15.70%
Elderly poverty rate	9.70%	5.10%	2.10%	10.10%	10.60%	0.50%	8.90%	9.40%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2016-2020)

Homelessness

There are no short- or long-term homeless shelters in Coventry, although there are several assistance agencies and shelters in Warwick and West Warwick. Rhode Island is served by a single state-wide Continuum of Care (CoC), so community-specific statistics on homelessness are not available. The state CoC conducts an annual "point in time" count, which provides a snapshot of people experiencing homelessness at the time of the count. In 2022 there were an estimated 1,577 people experiencing homelessness in Rhode Island, representing an increase of 300 people since 2021. Both Rhode Island and the rest of the United States have seen a steady increase in their unhoused population since at least 2018.

Housing cost burden

A household is considered "cost burdened" when it pays more than 30% of its total income on housing costs, which include all expenses relating to maintaining housing such as monthly rents, mortgage payments, or utilities. Table 5.14 shows the number of households in Coventry that are considered housing cost burdened, broken down by household income level. For example, the first row of the table indicates that about 85% of extremely low-income households (making 30% or less of AMI) are overly burdened by their housing payments.

The bottom half of Table 5.14 shows those households that are *severely* cost burdened, meaning that they pay more than half of their total income in housing costs. A majority of extremely low-income households and nearly one-third of very low-income households are severely burdened.

Table 5.14. Cost Burden and Severe Cost Burden for All Coventry Households

Income Group	Cost burden > 30%		Cost burden < 30%		Total Households	
Income 30% AMI or less	1,170	84.8%	210	15.2%	**1,380**	**100%**
Income 30%-50% AMI	835	61.9%	515	38.1%	**1,350**	**100%**
Income 50%-80% AMI	820	40.2%	1,220	59.8%	**2,040**	**100%**
Income 80%-100% AMI	610	40.5%	895	59.5%	**1,505**	**100%**
Income greater than 100% AMI	585	7.6%	7,125	92.4%	**7,710**	**100%**
Total Households	**4,020**	**28.8%**	**9,955**	**71.2%**	**13,975**	**100%**
Income Group	**Cost burden > 50%**		**Cost burden < 50%**		**Total Households**	
Income 30% AMI or less	935	67.8%	445	32.2%	**1,380**	**100%**
Income 30%-50% AMI	405	30.0%	945	70.0%	**1,350**	**100%**
Income 50%-80% AMI	185	9.1%	1,855	90.9%	**2,040**	**100%**
Income 80%-100% AMI	30	2.0%	1,475	98.0%	**1,505**	**100%**
Income greater than 100% AMI	75	1.0%	7,635	99.0%	**7,710**	**100%**
Total Households	**1,635**	**11.7%**	**12,340**	**88.3%**	**13,975**	**100%**

Source: HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy 2014-2018

Local waitlists

The Coventry Housing Authority administers several federal and state affordable housing programs that account for nearly half of affordable housing units in Town. Despite housing hundreds of low-income households, the Housing Authority still has a waitlist of hundreds more families and individuals trying to get into an affordable unit (see Table 5.15).

Table 5.15. Coventry Housing Authority Waiting List by Property (as of March 12, 2025)

Property name	Housing type	Units	Total Households on Waitlist	Local Coventry Households on Waitlist	Percent of Local Households on Waitlist
Knotty Oak Village	Public housing-elderly	75	267	114	42%
Golden Ridge	Supportive housing-elderly	34	127	65	51%
Coventry Crossroads	LIHTC*- family	32	507	125	24%
Coventry Meadows	LIHTC- family	44	447	113	25%

**Low Income Housing Tax Credit*
Source: Coventry Housing Authority

Many households have applied for multiple waiting lists, so the total number of individual households represented in Table 5.15 is 189. For every property managed by the Housing Authority, there are more households on the waitlist than there are total units. The demand for subsidized housing is clearly much higher than the current supply.

The Coventry Housing Authority also administers local Section 8/Housing Choice vouchers. Families with vouchers must find their own suitable housing, but once they do the voucher will allow them to receive monthly federal subsidies for rental or homeownership costs. The Housing Authority currently administers 278 vouchers.[5] Rhode Island has a single statewide Section 8 waitlist that includes 275 additional Coventry households as of April 2022. These households are given a weighted preference for local units but may ultimately find housing in other communities.

5.2.4 Low- and Moderate- Income Housing

Rhode Island adopted the Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Act in 1991, requiring municipalities to maintain a number of affordable housing units greater than or equal to 10% of their total year-round housing stock. “Affordable Housing” is defined by this law as housing that costs no more than 30% of the total income of a family making 80% of the area median income

[5] Coventry Housing Authority

(AMI). Coventry's affordable income limits are calculated using the Greater Providence AMI, shown in Table 5.16.

Table 5.16. FY2025 RI Income Limits (Greater Providence)

% of AMI	Household Size				
	1 person	2-person	3-person	4-person	5-person
30% (extremely low income)	$24,050	$27,450	$30,900	$34,300	$37,650
50% (very low income)	$40,050	$45,750	$51,450	$57,150	$61,750
80% (low income)	$64,050	$73,200	$82,350	$91,450	$98,800
100% (moderate income)	$80,010	$91,440	$102,870	$114,300	$123,450
120%	$96,120	$109,800	$123,480	$137,160	$148,200
Source: RI Housing					

Calculating Low- and Moderate- Income Housing (LMIH) Requirements

According to the 2024 Low and Moderate Income Housing Chart from RI Housing, there are a total of approximately 14,710 year-round housing units in Coventry, of which 978 were classified as LMIH units. Thus, Coventry's current LMIH percentage is 6.65% (see Table 5.19). Rhode Island classifies affordable units based on the population they are designed to serve: elderly housing is restricted to occupants age 62 or older[6], special needs housing caters to residents with a wide range of health issues or disabilities, and family housing is open to all types of households including those with children. There are two projects in town that have received Final Plan approval in the year 2024, and it is projected they will be occupied by the end of 2025. As such, they are included in Table 5.17.

This Comprehensive Plan will provide guidance for the Town over the next two decades, and the number of housing units will increase over that time. Coventry expects a much faster pace of growth in the next 5 years due to several large-scale housing development projects currently moving through the permitting process. Thus, the need to gain new LMIH units as part of those developments is a pressing concern at this time. The Town expects over 2,500 units to be added to Coventry's housing inventory, with between 15 and 20% of those units being designated as LMIH. This will raise the LMIH percentage by several points bringing Coventry much closer to 10%. If the number of households in Coventry continues to grow at the same rate as in the previous decade and the proportion of year-round units remains similar, the Town will have an estimated year-round count of 15,501 units by 2030, increasing the LMIH threshold to 1,550 units. This analysis assumes that, by 2046, the Town will be referring to 2040 Census numbers. Thus, to meet the state-mandated 10% affordable goal by 2046, Coventry would need an average of 41 new affordable units per year from 2026 on to make up for a total projected deficit of 817 units.

Table 5.17. Coventry LMIH Inventory (projected end-of-year 2025)

Population Served	Name	Tenure	Units	Affordability Level
Family	Coventry Meadows*	Rental	44	50%, 60% AMI
	The Ponds*	Homeownership	9	80% AMI
	Ramblewood Estates and Mapleroot Village (MHPs)*	Homeownership	178	50% AMI
	The Ponds (2)*	Homeownership	10	80% AMI
	LaColle Lane/Coventry Crossroads	Rental	32	50%, 60% AMI
	South Main Street*	Rental	2	80% AMI
	Riverside Landing*	Rental	8	50% AMI
Special Needs	Group Home Beds	N/A	30	N/A
Elderly	Golden Ridge*	Rental	34	50% AMI
	Woodland Manor I	Rental	81	30%, 50%, 80% AMI
	Woodland Manor II	Rental	126	30%, 50%, 80% AMI
	John O. Haynes Manor	Rental	24	N/A
	Knotty Oak Village	Rental	75	N/A
	North Road Terrace, Phases I & II	Rental	96	N/A
		Total LMIH Units	**978**	
Total Year-Round Units	**14,710**	**LMIH %**	**6.65%**	

**Added to LMIH since Coventry's previous Comprehensive Plan*
Source: RI Housing, 2024; Coventry Housing Authority; Coventry Planning and Development Department

Ten out of the nineteen developments in Coventry's inventory have been added since the adoption of the Town's Housing Production Plan in 2015. The majority of LMIH units in Coventry are restricted to elderly occupants, and approximately 67.6% are rental units (see Table 5.18). Most homeownership units are mobile homes in the Ramblewood Estates and Mapleroot Village parks, leaving only 49 traditional single-family homes. Most rental units are elderly housing, with fewer than 100 affordable rental units open to all families, as of 2024.

Table 5.18. LMIH Inventory Snapshot

Category	#	%
Units by Population Served		
Elderly	241	24.6%
Family	512	52.4%
Special Needs	52	5.3%
Total	978	
Units by Tenure		
Rental	522	82.5%
Homeownership	198	20.2%
Vouchers	228	23.3%
Total	978	
Source: RI Housing; Coventry Housing Authority		

Production of LMIH units

Coventry's inventory of low- and moderate-income housing had remained stagnant at around 750 units since around 2014, but the percentage of LMIH units jumped by over 200 units in 2024 primarily due to the State's new practice of counting housing vouchers as eligible units. This was a unique occurrence due to changes state law on eligible units. All municipalities across the state also gained a similar boost when this state law was passed. Aside from this occurrence, the Town has a history of only small gains of a handful of units most years, while occasionally losing some. For example, between 2020 and 2021, Coventry lost 16 affordable units from its LMIH inventory and did not gain any (see Table 5.19). Nine of these lost units were group home beds, but the remaining seven were all family homeownership units. While new units were added in 2022, the percentage of LMIH units dropped due to the 2020 census numbers representing an increase in the total number of homes in Town. As the total number of housing units in Town continues to grow, Coventry's LMIH unit percentage will continue to decrease unless the stock of affordable housing is actively expanded through local measures. The Affordable Housing Strategies in the section below are intended to address the Town's overall goal to strive toward a greater percentage of LMIH units.

Table 5.19. Coventry Low-and Moderate-Income Homes by Year

Year	Coventry LMIH Count	LMIH %
2024	978*	6.65%
2023	745	5.06%
2022	744	5.06%
2021	733	5.21%
2020	749	5.32%
2019	754	5.35%
2018	759	5.39%

Year	Coventry LMIH Count	LMIH %
2017	753	5.39%
2016	743	5.39%

Source: RIHousing
** Note: RIHousing's 2024 LMIH Chart includes 198 existing section 8 housing vouchers in Coventry that were not counted in previous years.*

The most active nonprofit developer of affordable housing is the Coventry Housing Associates Corporation (CHAC), a subsidiary agency of the Coventry Housing Authority formed in 1996. The CHAC obtains funding and develops properties, then hands them over to the Housing Authority to manage. Several major projects in Coventry's LMIH inventory were developed by the CHAC, including Coventry Crossroads, Coventry Meadows, and Golden Ridge.

An immediate consequence of remaining below the 10% affordable unit threshold is the ability for developers to apply for state-authorized Comprehensive Permit Applications. Comprehensive Permits encourage the production of affordable housing by streamlining and incentivizing the application process for projects with at least 25% LMIH units. The purpose of these laws is to encourage the private developers to provide affordable housing through the provision of state-mandated density bonuses.

Affordable housing strategies

This section provides Coventry's core affordable housing strategies that will result in the production of LMIH units. This includes an estimate how many units each strategy might be expected to create over the next 50 years. These estimates use the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) from Chapter 1: Land Use and recent development trends to estimate where and at what densities residential development would likely occur in Coventry (see Table 1.8). It is worth noting that Inclusionary Zoning is not listed as affordable housing strategy in this section. As currently written, Coventry feels that the state statute is not compatible with the Town's approach to furthering affordable housing. However, the Town will keep close track of the progress and shape of state law on this topic and remain open minded about adopting Inclusionary Zoning provisions in the future.

Table 5.20: Projected LMIH Units from Housing Strategies by 5-year Timeframe

	2026-2030	2031-2035	2036-2040	2041-2045	2046-2050	2051-2055	2056-2060	2061-2065	2066-2075
1. Updating the zoning Code	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
2. Supporting community partners	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15

3. Prioritizing affordable housing strategic locations	175	50	50	40	40	30	30	25	25
4. Accessory Dwelling Units	5	5	5	5	5	5	10	10	10
5. Adaptive Reuse	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
6. Mobile home LMIH units	80	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Total new units by year	305	103	103	93	93	83	88	83	83
Total LMIH units at end of 5-year period (+745, rounded from 2023)	**1,283**	**1,386**	**1,489**	**1,582**	**1,675**	**1,758**	**1,846**	**1,929**	**2,012**

1. Core Strategy: Updating the Zoning Code

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) lays out a plan for Coventry to continue to grow while minimizing impacts to the natural environment. Following the lead of Land Use 2025, the state's current land use plan, the FLUM shows an increase in density in the areas of eastern Coventry that have already been developed to minimize disturbances to the natural environment and take advantage of existing infrastructure.

The Zoning Code amendments should be explored to incentive development, and corresponding affordable housing units, in the eastern areas of Coventry connected to public sewer and water. As one example, the code previously allowed mixed-use development in certain commercial zones, but no longer does as Coventry removed that approach due to changes in state law. In addition, the code for mixed-use previously required twice as much commercial floor area as residential. The reintroduction of this type of development in certain zones could create opportunities for additional housing units in mixed-use areas of Town. Duplexes and multi-family dwellings are others example of housing types that are currently not allowed through the current Zoning Code. When considering zoning allowances for such uses, The Town should explore incorporating affordable housing requirements into the regulatory structure around these new uses. The power of regulatory incentives should be leveraged to encourage housing development in the most suitable areas of Coventry.

2. Core Strategy: Support Community Partners

The Town of Coventry has benefitted from the efforts of local housing nonprofits, especially the Coventry Housing Authority (CHA) and its subsidiary the Coventry Housing Associates Corp., as well as other non-profit groups, such as the Housing Network of RI, Housing Works, Women's Development Corporation, and One Neighborhood Builders. Through the Housing Associates Corp, the CHA has developed 76 units of Affordable family housing using Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), and it manages another 195 units of public housing. It is vital that the Town

continue to cooperate with and support these entities in identifying potential development sites, working with state and federal funding sources, and connecting with other partner organizations.

As part of this strategy, the Town can engage with private, local developers and builders to better understand the barriers to producing affordable units. Key questions include when and where does the intended housing market favor rentals vs. ownership, what are effective incentivizes to create affordable units over market-rate alternatives, and whether small-scale builders are aware of and equipped to navigate affordable deed restriction and monitoring requirements.

3. Core Strategy: Prioritize Affordable Housing in Strategic Location

This strategy is to prioritize and incentivize the inclusion of affordable units across all application types, regardless of whether such units are expressly required by state law or local regulation, in strategic location where such development is most suitable. While Coventry does not have an Inclusionary Zoning ordinance, the Planning Department and Planning Commission have both made it a priority to strongly advocate for inclusion of affordable units in all housing developments that are supported by public water and sewer, and can be incorporated into existing neighborhoods. The main focus of this strategy is on the medium and large developments where the financial impact of providing LMIH units can be spread across a larger number of units. These projects, while not comprehensive permits, can provide between apportion of 15-20% affordable units through mutual agreement.

This strategy can be non-linear in its effectiveness. As an example, Coventry may see a large number of projects in the 2026-2030 development pipeline, but once those specific projects are built, it is unclear the pace at which new large-scale projects will be proposed. This makes each project vital to add to the LMIH count and get Coventry closer to its 10% goal.

4. Core Strategy: Accessory Dwelling Units

Given the rising costs of housing combined with the aging population, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), both attached and detached, are becoming a popular option for many families. Coventry had previously allowed ADUs only in very select cases, but state law has enabled ADUs throughout the residential zones of the Town, and Coventry's zoning is now aligned with the new state law.

To encourage residents and builders to construct ADUs as deed-restricted affordable units, the Town could offer regulatory intensives on ADU size or location in exchange for affordability requirements. Even if the ADU is not legally deeded as affordable, these units can become lower rent apartments that would fit the 80% AMI classification, therefore being affordable to the majority of residents. As part of this strategy, the Town can conduct a basic cost-benefit analysis to determine whether the regulatory relief offered for deed-restricted ADUs provides sufficient cost savings to offset the inclusion of affordability restrictions.

5. Core Strategy: Adaptive Reuse

Adaptive reuse is the redevelopment of non-residential buildings into a residential use. Mill buildings or schools that are no longer in use and old churches are a few examples of potential locations for this kind of redevelopment. The adaptive reuse of these properties can increase the number of housing units available with the potential to have some of the units designated as affordable. Current statute says that for Adaptive Reuse projects that will allow for a density of 15 units per acre or more, 20% of the units created must be affordable.

A project such as this will most likely occur east of the Flat River Reservoir due to the buildings available, especially in areas of Town where there is public water available. This may have other benefits to the Town as well, such as avoiding the destruction of greenspace that can occur with new developments, or the saving of a historic building. This can be attractive for developers as well, as they may be able to save on some development costs. While two out of the three large mill buildings in Coventry have already been redeveloped into apartments, there are still many buildings that have the potential to also be converted.

The feasibility of adaptive reuse varies significantly by building type. Mill buildings, schools, churches, and commercial structures each present different structural, environmental, and financial considerations that affect project viability and the potential for affordable unit inclusion. The Town can inventory candidate buildings and assess feasibility by category, considering factors such as structural condition, environmental remediation needs, existing utility connections, and the scale of conversion possible for each type. Based on this assessment, the Town should develop tailored strategies for each building type.

6. Core Strategy: Mobile Home Units

The Town will partner with the Housing Network of RI to conduct an inventory of mobile home units eligible to be counted towards Coventry's LMH count. In accordance with RIGL § 45-53-3, each eligible mobile home units will count as ½ of an LMIH unit toward the municipality's overall LMIH stock. To be eligible, a mobile home unit must meet the following requirements, as set forth in RIGL § 42-128-8.1: the home must (1) constitute the primary residence of the occupant, (2) be located within a mobile home community that is be resident-owned, (3) have been constructed after June 1976, and (4) meet all HUD standards for manufactured home construction and safety. The Town expects the largest number of eligible units to be located in Sherwood Valley Cooperative, which is resident-owned and contains a total of approximately 170 mobile homes per Tax Assessor records. Following the initial inventory, the Town shall conduct periodic inventories of mobile home units in Town to ensure the LMIH count is accurate for any mobile home units that may be added or removed.

Unit deficit

The strategies listed above account for a total of 2,012 LMI units that the Town is estimated to have created by 2075. It is estimated the Town will reach 10% LMIH units between 2031 and 2035 and continue to gain affordable units at a steady pace afterward. For this Comprehensive Plan, the Town has calculated that Coventry will reach close to total housing build-out

somewhere between 2065 and 2075. The numbers used for the build-out analysis can be found in the Land Use section of this Comprehensive Plan. The number of building permits for all types of units has increased year over year from 2010 to 2020, and the Town predicts it will continue to do so in the near-term future. However, the number of permits will level out and start to decrease in the future as buildable land gets increasingly scarce, and the rate will slow as build-out approaches.

Affordable housing objective – incentivize 60% and 80% AMI Housing Units
One of the most significant housing issues in the state of Rhode Island and Coventry specifically is the lack of affordable rental units, especially those at lower price points. Even affordable units that are deed-restricted as 120% area median income (AMI) can be out of reach for many people. While federal subsidies allow for the development of 60% and 80% AMI rental units, there are currently no state incentives with that same objective. With this in mind, the Town should seek every opportunity to include 60% and 80% AMI rental units in future housing developments.

Per RIGL § 44-5-13.11, affordable housing that has been issued an occupancy permit after substantial rehabilitation is subject to a tax of 8% of the property's previous year's gross scheduled rental income or a lesser percentage.

5.3 Needs and Opportunities

5.3.1 Assessment of previous affordable housing strategies

According to local stakeholders involved in affordable housing issues, Coventry has not been proactive in implementing the strategies identified in its Affordable Housing Production Plan (AHPP), appended to the Town's previous Comprehensive Plan and most recently revised in June 2005. In the last two decades there has been a relatively high turnover rate in the Planning Director position making the long-term implementation of housing strategies difficult.

The AHPP contained five strategies, each supported by a series of action items:

1. *Amend the Zoning Ordinance to promote affordable housing development that meets the needs of all Coventry citizens.*
2. *Identify Potential Locations for Affordable Housing Development*
3. *Strengthen Partnerships and Build Community Support for Affordable Housing*
4. *Identify Existing and New Resources for Affordable Housing Development*
5. *Implement programs which ensure the long-term affordability of Coventry's housing stock*

5.3.2 Housing issues

The following housing issues were gathered from public meetings held as part of the community feedback process for Coventry's Comprehensive Plan. This provided an opportunity

for the Town and consultants to hear from the public on their experiences finding, living in, and developing housing in Coventry. While these points are based on the perceptions of residents, most are corroborated by the data in this section.

a. Housing Issues in Coventry

- Rental housing is difficult to find, with few vacancies.
- Existing rental housing is expensive, and rents are increasing.
- Homeownership opportunities have decreased, while prices have increased.
- There is a desire to limit sprawl in central and eastern Coventry.

b. Regulatory Issues

- Minimum lot sizes in most areas are too large for affordable housing production to be feasible.
- Current zoning ordinances limit multifamily unit production to a few zoning districts with relatively little developable land.
- Extensive subdivision and land development regulations add to the cost of housing production.

c. Other Issues

- There is a negative perception of affordable housing in the community.
- The lack of public sewer and water infrastructure in parts of Coventry limits the number of housing units that can be part of a development.
- Local review time for projects can be extensive, especially those that are not allowed by right.

5.4 Goals, Policies, and Actions

A complete list of goals, policies, and actions regarding the housing development of Coventry, Rhode Island can be found in Volume 1 of the 2026 Coventry Comprehensive Plan.

6.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

For thousands of years, the area of modern-day Coventry was inhabited by the Shawomet people, who farmed, hunted, and fished across the area. When Europeans first settled in Coventry in the eighteenth century, they primarily engaged in agricultural activities as well. Modern Coventry began to take shape as the Town's economy underwent a dramatic transformation during the industrial revolution of the early nineteenth century. Fueled by mills along the Pawtuxet River, spanning from Tiogue Lake to the Providence River to the east, industry transformed the economy and social life of Coventry as it did across New England. The mills were concentrated in the eastern half of the town, which led to the development of Coventry's historic villages. The introduction and expansion of railways further fueled this growth.

After World War II, Coventry became part of the national trend towards suburbanization and many single-family homes were built. This initiated the Town's transformation from an industrial center to a bedroom community for people working in Providence, Cranston, Warwick, and other cities in southern New England. Access to Interstate I-95 and state Routes 3 (Tiogue Avenue), 115, and 116 in the east made Coventry an attractive location for these commuters. While Coventry is no longer a regional employment center, the local economy is still essential to providing residents with jobs and access to goods and services, as well as providing tax revenue for the Town.

Western Coventry remained a rural area defined by farms, cropland, and forests. Farming and manufacturing have both waned in recent decades, but the rural-urban divide between western and eastern Coventry has remained. Now, most economic activity is concentrated in the east, consisting largely of retail sales and some light industrial uses. Tiogue Avenue/Route 3 and Main Street/Route 117 are the Town's major commercial corridors, with many chain restaurants, grocery stores, auto parts stores, thrift stores, dollar stores, liquor stores, gas stations, and banks. Construction of the Centre of New England, a major mixed-use development with along Coventry's southeastern border with West Greenwich and East Greenwich, was initiated in the 2000's, though full build out of the project was never completed. The Centre contains a significant commercial element, including big box stores, hotels, restaurants, industrial and office space, as well as over 120 single-family condominiums and an age-restricted apartment complex.

The vision and goals for this section will help Coventry further the statewide goals described in *Rhode Island Rising: A Plan for People, Places, and Prosperity.* That plan describes a Rhode Island in 2035 that has an innovative and competitive economy, job opportunities and quality education for all, and a focus on equity and sustainability. Coventry shares this vision and will work to bring it to fruition on the local level through the goals, policies, and action items below. This section will note where policies and actions align with the goals of *Rhode Island Rising*, which are:

1. *Provide educational and training opportunities to activate a 21st-century workforce.*

2. *Foster an inclusive economy that targets opportunity to typically underserved populations.*

3. Support industries and investments that play to Rhode Island's strengths.

4. Create great places by coordinating economic, housing, and transportation investments.

5. Create a stronger, more resilient Rhode Island.

6. Make Rhode Island a state where companies, our workers, and the state as a whole can develop a competitive advantage.

6.2 OVERVIEW OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

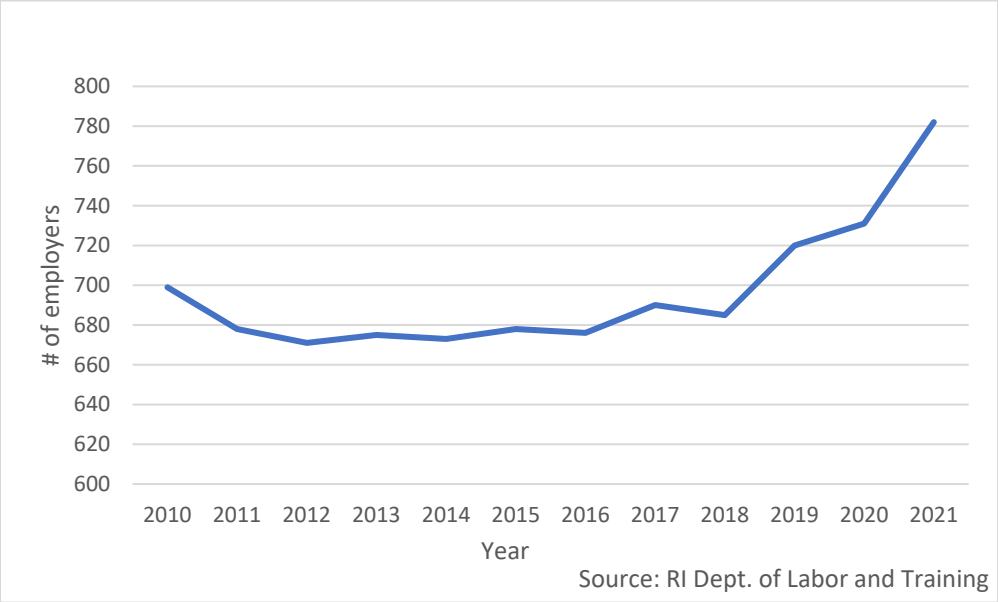
Coventry primarily serves as a residential "bedroom community," or a place where many residents commute elsewhere for work. Workers in Coventry are more likely to travel to larger employment centers like Providence and Warwick than work locally. The percentage of Coventry residents who also work in Coventry (19.8 percent) is far below the state (28.6 percent) and county (25.3 percent). Those who do work in Coventry participate in a wide variety of industries.

6.2.1 EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES

According to the 2021 Rhode Island Employment & Wage Report released by the Department of Labor and Training, there were 782 private employers in Coventry, with an average total employment of 6,690 and total wages of over $313 million.[1] Since 2010 the reported number of employers in Town has grown from 699 to 782, although a large amount of that growth took place post-2018 (see Figure 6.1). This growth is similar to that of Rhode Island over the same time period; from 2018 to 2021 the number of employers in Coventry grew by 14.2 percent and in RI by about 13 percent.

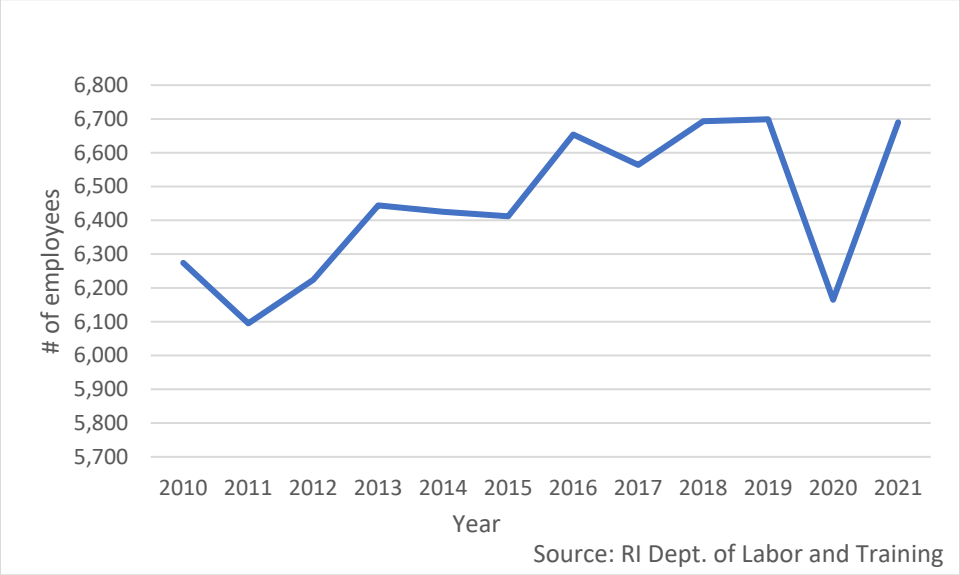
[1] 2021 Rhode Island Employment & Wage Report, Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

Figure 6.1 Private Employers in Coventry



The total number of workers employed in Coventry and the total annual wages they earn has also grown despite a sharp but temporary dip in the workforce in 2020 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (see Figure 6.2). Despite losing about 530 employees between the 2019 and 2020 Department of Labor and Training reports, the number of employers in Coventry increased over the same period.

Figure 6.2 Private-Sector Employees in Coventry



6.2.2 TAX BASE

In 2021, Coventry's residential and commercial tax rates were both the thirteenth-highest out of Rhode Island's 39 municipalities. Despite its relatively high tax rate in a statewide context, the

Town has historically had a lower tax rate than its surrounding communities, which makes it a relatively attractive place to live for the area (see Table 6.1). Out of the municipalities that border Coventry, only Scituate has a lower residential tax rate, while the Town's commercial tax rate is closer to the area median.

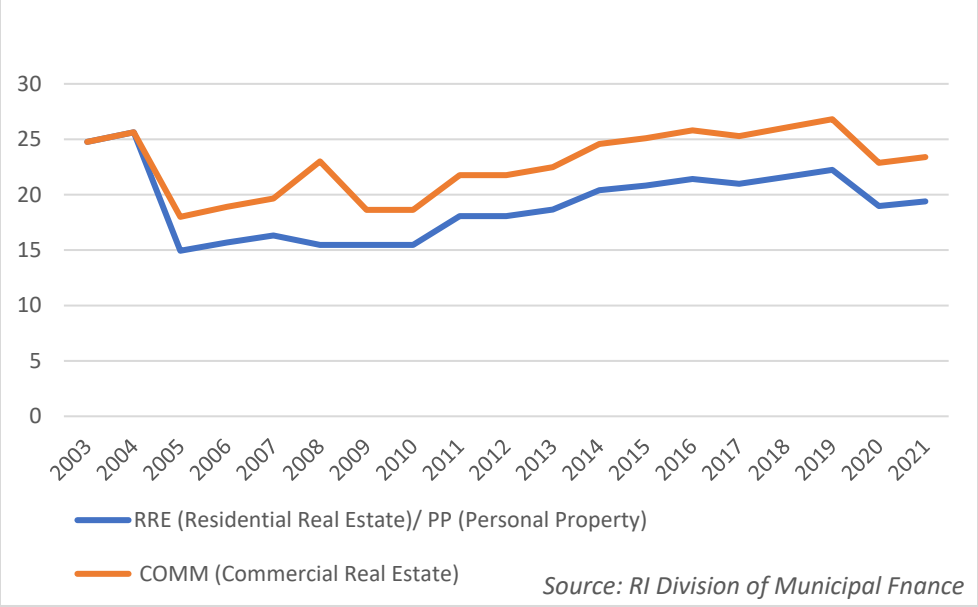
Table 6.1 Tax Rates in Coventry and Neighboring Municipalities (2021)

Municipality	Residential Tax Rate ($ per $1,000 in assessed value)	Commercial Tax Rate ($ per $1,000 in assessed value)
Coventry	19.40	23.39
East Greenwich	21.01	23.25
Foster	21.34	21.34
Scituate	18.69	23.19
West Greenwich	24.03	24.03
West Warwick	23.00	32.43

Source: Rhode Island Division of Municipal Finance

Like many of the communities in the orbit of Providence and Warwick, Coventry's population is projected to grow in the coming years to just under forty thousand in 2040.[2] While most of Coventry is zoned for residential development, commercial development is a critical piece of Coventry's economy. Coventry's commercial real estate tax rate has been higher than the Residential Real Estate rate ever since the rates were decoupled in 2005, with the gap between the two reaching a 7.6 percent peak in 2008 (see Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3 Coventry Property Tax Rates



[2] Rhode Island Population Projections 2010-2040

6.2.3 LOCAL INDUSTRIES

One way to measure the strengths of certain industries is by examining each one's "location quotient" (LC). This figure can provide an estimate of the relative strength of a local industry against the same industry in a different place such as a county, metro area, or state.[3] An LC between 0.9 and 1.1 is considered to represent "balance" or rough comparability to the employment base of the larger reference economy, while a lower ratio may indicate weakness, and a higher number may indicate a particular strength or unique attribute of the local economy. While location quotients alone cannot be used to determine a municipality's strongest industries, they can highlight unique aspects of a local economy.

[3] Location quotients in this document are calculated by dividing the proportion of the labor force employed in a particular industry at the local level by the proportion of the labor force employed in that same industry at the state or county level. The relative prominence of an industry in Coventry is then expressed as a simple ratio. For example, a location quotient of exactly 1.0 for a given industry would mean the same proportion of workers were employed in that industry in both locations.

Table 6.2 Coventry Location Quotients Compared to Rhode Island (by Industry)	
Industry	**LQ**
Retail Trade	2.16
Construction	1.83
Wholesale Trade	1.24
Government	1.15
Transportation & Warehousing	1.14
Professional & Technical Services	1.06
Accommodation & Food Services	1.01
Admin. Support & Waste Management	0.95
Other Services	0.84
Health Care & Social Assistance	0.83
Manufacturing	0.66
Real Estate & Rental/Leasing	0.36
Finance & Insurance	0.29
Educational Services	0.27
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0.24
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	0.18
Information	0.11
Mining	0
Unclassified	0
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, & Hunting	*
Utilities	*
** Some data are not shown due to the possibility of identifying data of a specific employer.*	
Source: Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training, 2021	

Table 6.3 shows the total number of employers, average employees, and total wages for each sector of Coventry's economy. There were almost 800 different employers in town in 2021, employing nearly 8,000 people and generating about $380 million dollars in wages for the year. The health care industry has the most employers, while retail trade had the most employees.

Table 6.3 Employment and Wages in Coventry by Sector (2021)			
Sector	**Employers**	**Average Employees**	**Total Yearly Wages ($)**
Government	16	1,161	65,939,362
Retail Trade	94	1,703	55,920,483
Health Care & Social Assistance	95	1,082	46,714,374
Professional & Technical Services	75	502	43,132,848
Construction	131	621	36,628,326
Manufacturing	37	436	33,447,533
Wholesale Trade	47	326	30,943,054
Administrative Support & Waste Mngmnt.	69	453	19,890,772
Accommodation & Food Services	58	770	17,088,680
Other services	78	231	7,438,186
Finance & Insurance	33	123	7,401,767
Transportation & Warehousing	11	220	5,986,516
Management of Companies & Enterprises	6	51	3,660,241
Educational Services	11	91	2,061,908
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	20	36	1,220,192
Information	7	10	793,482
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	8	21	524,144
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	3	*	*
Utilities	1	*	*
Mining	0	0	0
Total	**798**	**7,851**	**$ 379,434,397**
** Some data are not shown due to the possibility of identifying data of a specific employer.*			
Source: Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training, 2021			

6.2.3.1 Trade (Retail and Wholesale)

Coventry's trade industries dominate the town's economic landscape. Even in 2020, a year that negatively affected nearly every sector of the economy, the retail and wholesale trades dominated the outlay for total wages at nearly $84 million. Retail trade alone accounted for $56 million in total wages and wholesale accounted for $31 million. Compared to the rest of the state

and county, the location quotients for both industries are both quite high, which indicates their strength relative to other communities (see Table 6.2).

Much of this trade occurs along Tiogue Avenue, Coventry's main commercial corridor, along Main Street, and in the big box stores in the Centre of New England development. While Coventry has some local retail establishments, large national companies like Walmart, Home Depot, Walgreens, or GameStop make up the majority of job options for retail workers. The most notable wholesale business in town is BJ's Wholesale Club, also in the Centre of New England.

6.2.3.2 Public Sector

The sector with the second-most total wages in Coventry is not an industry *per se.* Instead, it is government and public administration jobs that brought $62,886,362 in total wages to the town in 2021 alone. Total public sector wages and the number of public employers has been consistent over the last decade compared, growing slowly most years, even though the number of offices has decreased slightly.

6.2.3.3 Construction

Coventry has a relatively prominent construction industry compared with Kent County (LC of 1.34) and Rhode Island (LC of 1.83). This was especially true during the beginning of the pandemic. While average employment dipped, total wages rose by over $1.7 million. Part of this was due to the COVID-19 pandemic: some interviewees reported that they had converted their spare rooms and underutilized garages into home offices and studies, in keeping with a nationwide trend. The growth of Coventry's construction industry predates the pandemic, however, with total wages increasing by over $10 million from 2015 to 2021.

The relative strength of the Town's construction industry is likely due to a combination of a strong market for new residential units and a lack of other major industries compared to Rhode Island's cities. Since 2010, about 500 new single-family units and multiple large condo developments have been permitted by the Coventry Building Department, and as of 2022 several residential subdivisions were under construction across eastern Coventry.[4]

6.2.3.4 Health Care & Social Assistance

The last ten years have seen a marked increase in business for the health care & social assistance industry, with places of employment rising from 40 in 2010 to 95 in 2021. Total wages have kept pace with this growth, increasing from $29 million to nearly $47 million in 2021. There are many reasons for this, from the consistent rise in health care costs to the increase in the Town's elderly population, which creates more demand for health services. Coventry has several health clinics and assisted living facilities that contribute to this industry.

6.2.3.5 Administrative support & waste management

The field of administrative support and waste management is a "balanced" industry compared to the state and has seen growth through the years; in 2010, its location quotient was .70, rising to 0.95 in 2021. Like most industries, waste and recycling companies can largely be found in the

[4] *Coventry Building Department, Certificates of Occupancy, 2010-April 2021*

industrial zoning districts in eastern Coventry. The year 2021 saw places of employment for this industry reach a recent high of 69, an increase of nine over the past year.

6.2.3.6 Accommodation & food services

The restaurant industry has a mixed reputation in Coventry. Interviewees noted that there were many restaurants in town but that certain types, especially higher-end establishments, had difficulty gaining a foothold. In recent years, the accommodation and food services industry was heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as patrons stayed away from public eateries due to fear of becoming ill and local health regulations. As a result, restaurants across the country closed, and Coventry was no exception. The total wages earned in this sector dropped by nearly $3 million between 2019 and 2020, even as restaurants pivoted to outdoor dining and contact-free takeout. Present location quotients rank this industry as "balanced." Compared to the 2010 location quotients for Kent County (1.13) and Rhode Island (1.32) the industry appears to have lost ground compared to others in Coventry. However, the total wages earned by workers in accommodation and food service has recovered to surpass pre-pandemic levels.

Food services in Coventry, like the trade industries, are primarily located in the commercial areas of eastern Coventry. The Town has few hotels, mostly concentrated around the Centre of New England and Route 95 in the southeast.

6.2.3.7 Real Estate

The proportion of workers involved in Coventry's real estate industry has never been especially large, even as the New England real estate market has grown increasingly competitive. There has been a consistent level of production of single-family residences in the twenty-first century, but much of this activity is captured in the construction industry. Coventry has relatively few rental units (see Chapter 5, Housing) that would include positions in rental or leasing offices.

The number of yearly real estate transactions in Coventry has trended upward since 2009, and the average sales price of a single-family home has grown from $182,500 in 2011 to $335,000 in 2021[5]. Coventry's size and location have kept housing prices beneath those of Providence and other cities, and the town is considered one of the most affordable in Rhode Island to buy property in[6]. However, a frequent concern raised by interviewed stakeholders was the residential tax rate, which reached 19.1 percent in 2021.

6.2.3.8 Manufacturing

Coventry's manufacturing sector is in transition, with 37 places of employment as of 2020. However, while this represents slight growth from 2019, that year alone saw a decline from an average employment of 510 in 2019 to 436 two years later. While the COVID pandemic saw job losses across almost all industries, Coventry's manufacturing sector long been facing a gradual decline. For comparison, in 2010 Coventry was home to 44 manufacturing job sites that employed 628 people. Even though total wages increased across that decade, the low location

[5] *Banker & Tradesman*
[6] HousingWorks RI at Roger Williams University, "2021 Housing Factbook." Out of 40 localities, Coventry is estimated to require the eleventh-lowest annual income to purchase a home.

quotient in Table 6.2 show that manufacturing no longer dominates Coventry's economy as it did in the nineteenth century.

6.2.4 Workforce Characteristics: Unemployment, Labor, and Commuting

Coventry's economy depends not only on its residents who work locally, but on those who commute to Coventry. By looking at the places of origin and destination of commuters – "Journey to Work"[7] data – it becomes easier to understand where Coventry is attracting labor, where members of its resident labor force are headed, and where employment gaps may exist. The Census Bureau's Journey to Work data always lags by a few years by nature of its regular release schedule, so the new work from home paradigm brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic is not reflected in this data.

6.2.4.1 Daytime population

A community's daytime population is its *total* population *plus* non-residents working in the community, *minus* residents commuting out-of-town. This figure provides an approximate snapshot of how many people are in Coventry during daylight hours, when money is more likely to be spent.

Table 6.4 Ratio of Daytime Population to Total Population

Location	Daytime Pop.	Total Pop.	Ratio
Coventry	39,482	34,747	1.136
West Warwick	34,493	28,937	1.192
West Greenwich	8,673	6,297	1.377
Kent County	217,348	164,122	1.324
Rhode Island	1,408,824	1,057,798	1.332

Source: ACS 5yr 2016-20, Tables B01003, B08604, B08009

Coventry's daytime population ratio of 1.136 demonstrates that people are coming to Coventry daily and spending money. However, this ratio is lower than those of Kent County and Rhode Island, as well as the neighboring communities of West Warwick and West Greenwich. This may be due to relatively fewer people commuting in, more people commuting out, or both. The following sections examine commuter data in more detail.

6.2.4.2 Who is working in Coventry?

Of the 7,365 people working in Coventry, 3,209 also reside in Coventry, which is a 43 percent share.[8] According to Table 6., the outside community that supplies the largest number of workers for Coventry is West Warwick, followed by Warwick, Cranston, and West Greenwich. Map 6.2 clearly illustrates that Rhode Island communities supply the majority of inbound commuters in

[7] Journey to Work (JTW) data is based on 2011-2015 5-Year American Community Survey commuting flows. This is the most recent JTW data computed by the U.S. Census Bureau.
[8] Journey to Work, U.S. Census Bureau

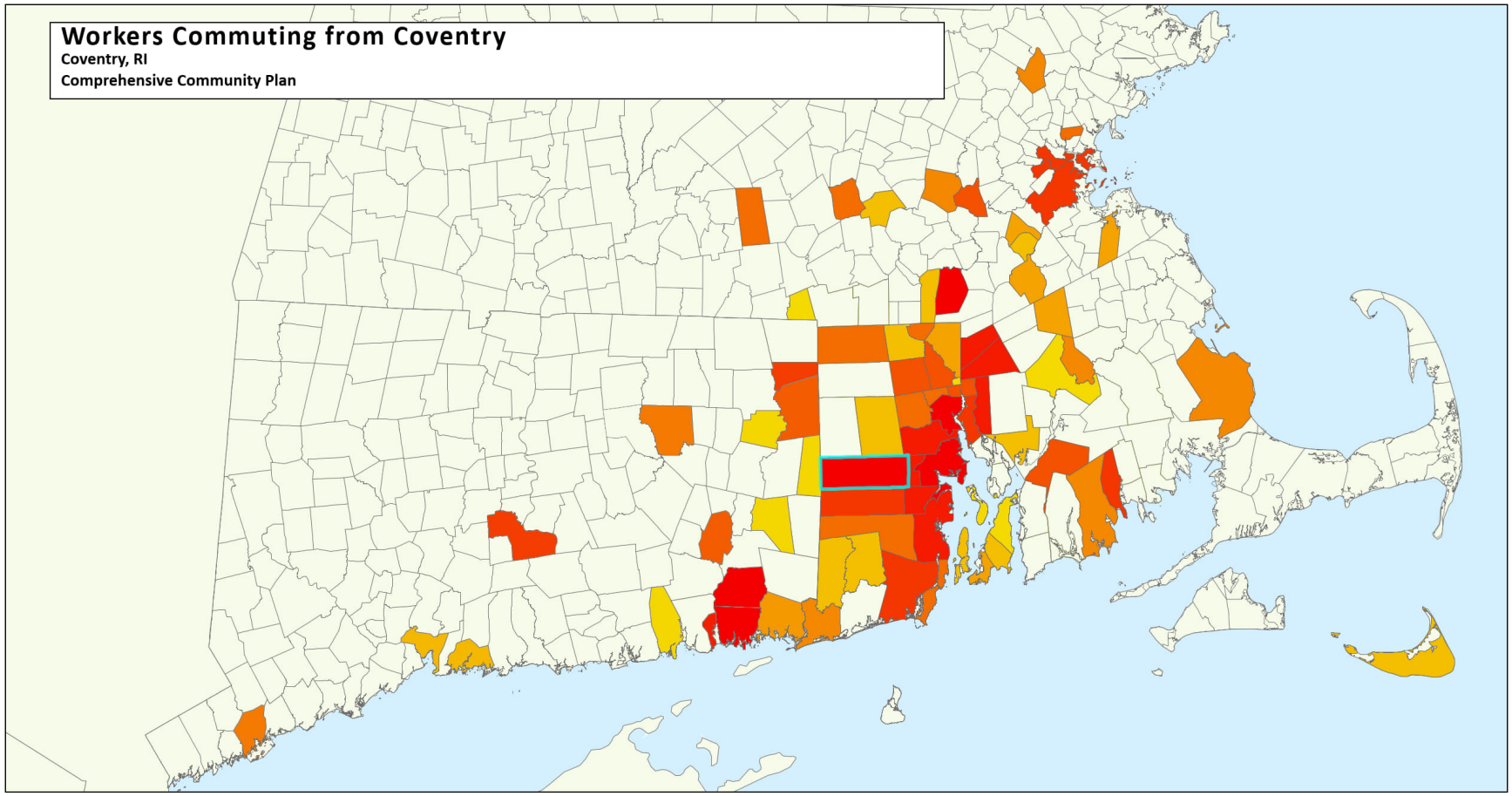
Coventry, about 90 percent. Massachusetts and Connecticut account for the remaining six and four percent of commuters, respectively.

Most commuters to Coventry come from the more populous cities and towns that border it in the east and from the rest of Greater Providence. Many of Coventry's neighbors are small, rural communities that cannot impact the labor market to the same degree, but they all have residents that work in Coventry. The 260 West Greenwich residents that commute to Coventry and the 441 Coventry residents that travel in the opposite direction indicate a strong economic relationship between the communities. The out-of-state community that sends the most labor to Coventry is Plainfield, Connecticut, ranked twentieth overall with 66 people in the commuter flow.

Table 6.5 Communities with Over 100 Commuters to Coventry

Municipality	Commuters	% all commuters to Coventry
West Warwick	763	18.4%
Warwick	575	13.8%
Cranston	386	9.3%
West Greenwich	260	6.3%
Providence	246	5.9%
Johnston	125	3.0%
South Kingstown	123	3.0%
Narragansett	108	2.6%
Exeter	108	2.6%
North Kingstown	105	2.5%

Source: Journey to Work, U.S. Census Bureau (2010-2015)



Map 6.1: Workers Commuting from Coventry

6.2.4.3 WHERE ARE COVENTRY RESIDENTS WORKING?

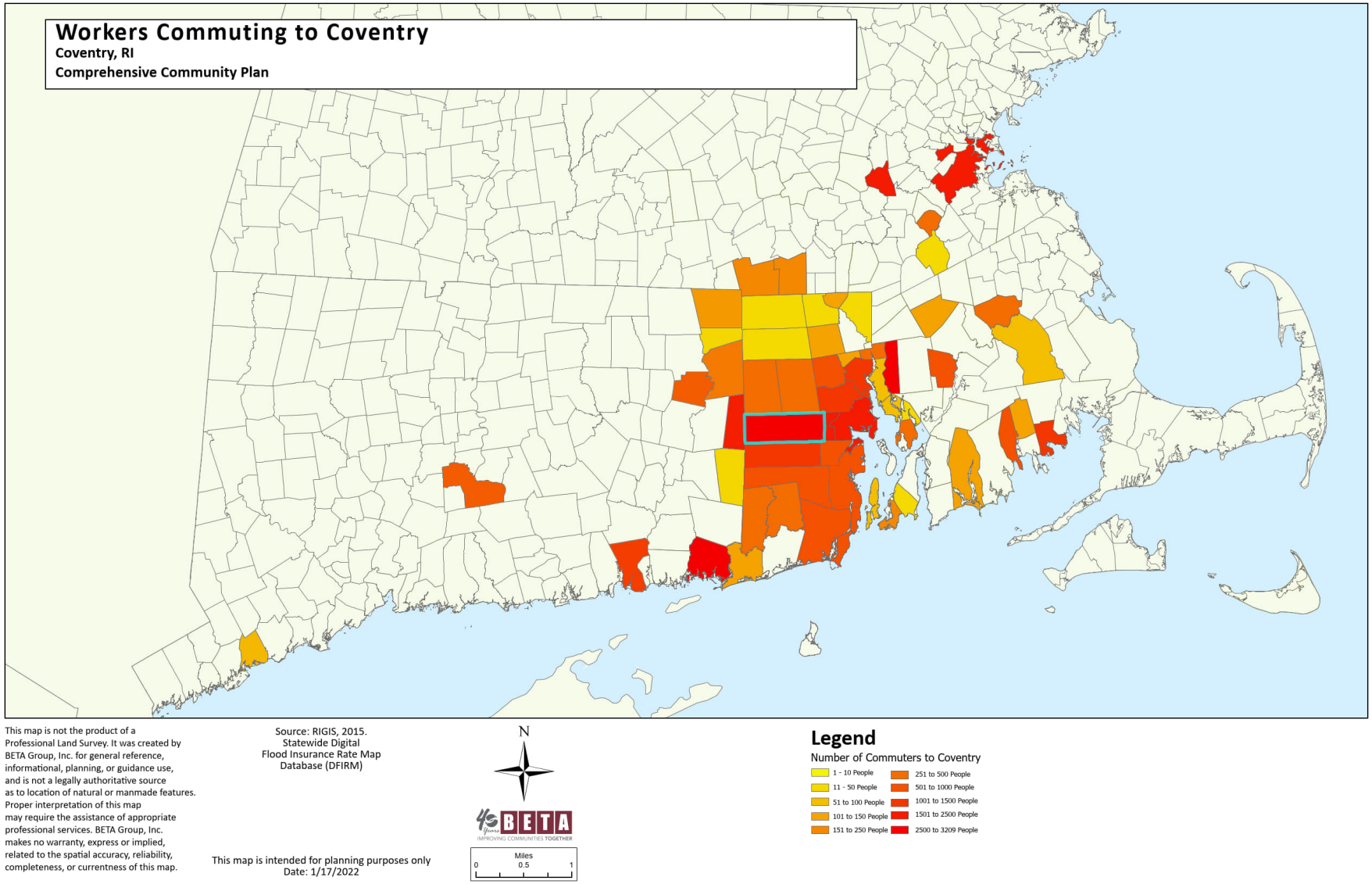
Map 6.1 shows the place of work for Coventry residents who commute to other communities. The top three destinations for workers are the three most populous cities in Rhode Island, which demonstrates the economic pull of Greater Providence's urban core. More Coventry residents work in the most common commuter destination, Warwick, than the town itself (3,291 and 3,209 respectively). Out of the state's three largest cities, Warwick's is the closest downtown to downtown Coventry.

Table 6.6 Top Destinations for Coventry Commuters (at Least 1% of All Commuters)

Municipality	Commuters	% Commuters out of Coventry*
Warwick	3,291	22.2%
Providence	2,439	16.5%
Cranston	1,143	7.7%
West Warwick	1,056	7.1%
North Kingstown	937	6.3%
East Greenwich	777	5.3%
East Providence	449	3.0%
West Greenwich	441	3.0%
South Kingstown	406	2.7%
Pawtucket	333	2.3%
Lincoln	271	1.8%
Smithfield	227	1.5%
Burrillville	196	1.3%
North Providence	183	1.2%
Johnston	182	1.2%
Groton, CT	167	1.1%
Narragansett	158	1.1%
Woonsocket	151	1.0%
Ledyard, CT	144	1.0%

**Does not include Coventry residents who work in Coventry*

Source: Journey to Work, U.S. Census Bureau (2010-2015)



Map 6.2: Workers Commuting to Coventry

About 92 percent of Coventry's workforce work in Rhode Island, including those who work in Coventry itself. Outside of the state, Massachusetts is the destination for 822 Coventry workers, mostly in towns on or near the state border like Franklin, Seekonk, and Attleboro. More than half of the Town's 567 Connecticut commuters are traveling to the neighboring towns of Groton and Ledyard in New London County.

Coventry is a net exporter of labor. When a community's ratio of jobs to resident workers trends above 1.000, it is a net importer of labor, meaning that there are more local jobs than can be filled by local residents. For example, Table 6.7 shows that Coventry has an estimated 478 construction jobs yet over 1,400 residents who work in construction. The resultant low job to resident workers ratio indicates that most Coventry residents in that industry must go elsewhere to find work. None of Coventry's industries meet the 1.000 mark, though wholesale trade almost does with a score of 0.962. (See Table 6.7).

Table 6.7 Jobs to Resident Workers

Sector	# Jobs	# Resident Workers	Ratio
Wholesale Trade	302	314	0.962
Retail Trade	1,713	2,425	0.706
Administrative and Waste Services	427	711	0.601
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	8	20	0.400
Professional and Technical Services	323	899	0.359
Construction	478	1,475	0.324
Manufacturing	447	2,207	0.203
Transportation and Warehousing	127	645	0.197
Finance and Insurance	107	929	0.115
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	32	298	0.107
Other Services, Except Public Administration	77	808	0.095
Accommodation and Food Services	56	1,189	0.047
Information	12	310	0.039
Health Care and Social Assistance	90	3,253	0.028
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	6	291	0.021
Educational Services	11	2,028	0.005
Utilities	-	138	-
Management of Companies and Enterprises	56	0	-
Public Administration	17	856	0.020
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil & Gas Extraction	0	-	-
Total	**7,320**	**12,837**	**0.570**

"-" denotes that a sample size too small to produce data

Source: Department of Labor and Training (QCEW), ACS 5-Year Estimates 2016-2020

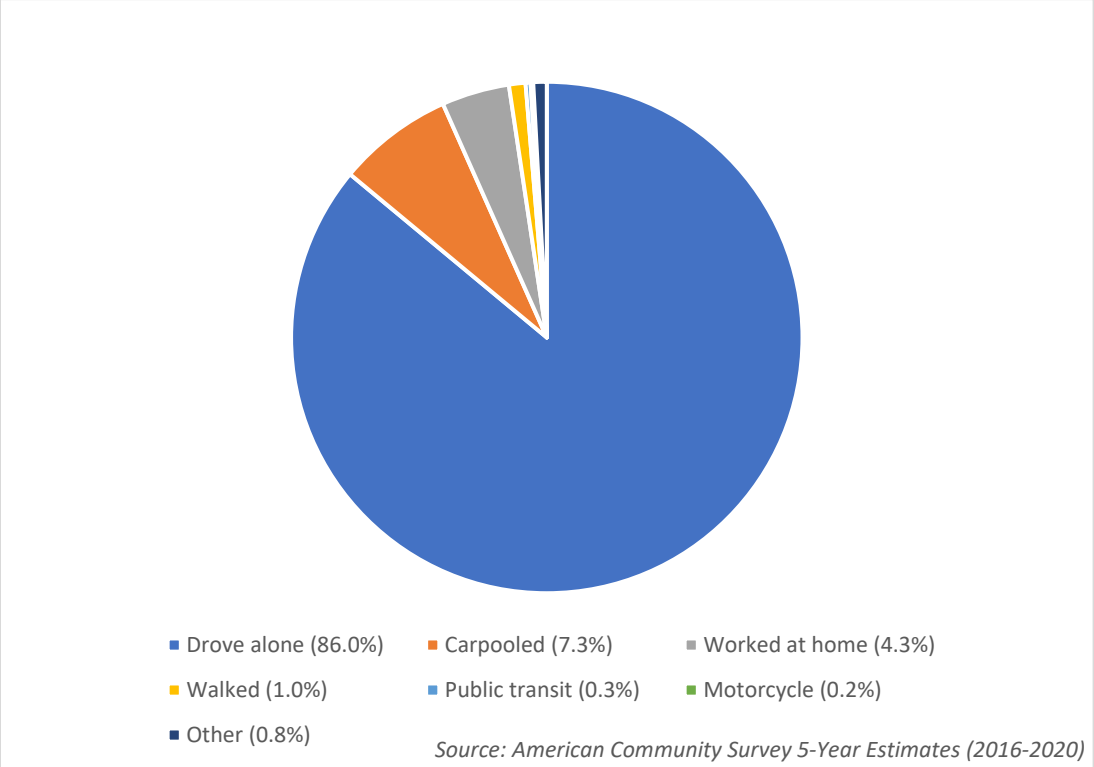
6.2.4.4 How are Coventry residents getting to work?

Coventry's residents rely almost entirely on private automobiles to get to work. Access to routes 3, 14, 102, and 117 as well as Interstate 95 makes driving to work a viable and attractive option, and over 90 percent drive to work either alone or in a carpool (see Figure 6.4).

Fewer than one percent of Coventry workers utilize Coventry's limited public transportation options, with only one Rhode Island Public Transit Authority bus line operating in the town. The southernmost commuter rail stop (operated by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority) is the line's terminus in Providence, while Amtrak trains operate along Rhode Island's coast.

The latest American Community Survey estimates do not list any Coventry residents that cycle to work, but due to margins of error there may be a small number who take advantage of cycling infrastructure like Trestle Trail, which spans the Town from east to west. Only one percent of workers in Coventry are estimated to walk to work.

Figure 6.4 Means of Transportation to Work for Coventry Residents



6.2.4.5 Unemployment

Table 6.8 shows that about two-thirds of Coventry's population aged 16 and over participate in the labor force. Out of this labor force, an estimated 4.1 percent were unemployed in 2020. Both of these statistics are in line with state and country trends, although statewide unemployment was higher on average.

Table 6.8 Unemployment and Labor Force Participation Rate				
Geography	**Labor Force Participation Rate**	**Civilian Labor Force**	**Employed**	**Unemployment Rate**
Coventry	67.1%	19,449	18,658	4.1%
Kent County	67.0%	91,633	87,720	4.3%
Rhode Island	65.0%	566,403	535,140	5.5%
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2016-2020)				

Unemployment in Coventry is estimated to have fallen every year since 2015, leading to a 2020 unemployment rate less than half that in 2015 (see Table 6.9). The Town's labor force participation rate and total labor force has trended downward over the same period. In 2020, there were nearly 1,000 fewer people in the labor force than there were in 2015, which likely accounts for some of the reduction in the unemployment rate.

Table 6.9 Unemployment in Coventry Over Time			
Year	**Unemployment Rate**	**Labor Force**	**Labor Force Participation Rate**
2020	4.10%	19,449	67.1%
2019	4.40%	19,206	67.1%
2018	5.30%	19,403	67.5%
2017	6.70%	20,282	70.0%
2016	7.50%	20,101	69.3%
2015	8.90%	20,374	70.0%
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2016-2020)			

6.2.4.6 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Another factor affecting Coventry's workforce is educational attainment. A worker's level of formal education is often a good indicator of their earning potential. Table 6.10 compares educational attainment in Coventry, Kent County, and Rhode Island. Coventry has a lower proportion of residents who received a four-year degree than the county or state but a higher proportion of residents who have at least a high school-level education. Coventry is also below state and county averages in the attainment of post-bachelor's degrees (6.5 percent, compared to 12.5 percent for the county and 14 percent statewide)[9].

Table 6.10 Educational Attainment			
Highest Degree Earned	**Coventry**	**Kent County**	**Rhode Island**
Less Than High School	6.8%	7.6%	10.9%

[9] American Community Survey (ACS) 2016-2020 5-Year Estimate, Tables B15003 and B08121

High School/GED	52.6%	49.0%	45.9%
Associate's Degree	12.7%	10.9%	8.2%
Bachelor's Degree	18.4%	20.2%	21.0%
Graduate/Professional Degree/Doctorate	9.5%	12.5%	14.0%
Source: ACS 5yr 2016-20, Tables B08121, B15003			

6.2.5 AGRICULTURE

Coventry has an agricultural tradition that goes back to the practices of the indigenous peoples inhabiting the lands even before its founding by Europeans. Today, agriculture remains concentrated in the west with several active operations, although the agricultural sector is no longer a dominant part of the Town's overall economy. However, many Coventry residents wish to preserve the history and culture of the Town's agricultural areas and maintain existing farms.

6.2.5.1 SIGNIFICANT AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS

One of the definitions of "farmland" used by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) is land owned by a farmer that consists of at least five acres which are "actively devoted [to] agricultural and horticultural use" which produce a gross income of at least $2,500 in at least one of the last two years[10]. According to 2019 data from the Rhode Island Food Policy Council (RIFPC), Coventry had 39 farms that met this definition as well as 59 commercial fishers (including individual residents with commercial fishing licenses) and five food processors (any business that processes raw agricultural products into food)[11]. There is also a community garden located at the Town Hall Annex on Flat River Road, which provides food for the local food pantry[12]. Several farms are devoted to the raising of livestock and others devoted to the stabling of horses.

Beyond farming, there are plenty of businesses that rely on Coventry's agricultural products and services, including landscapers and florists. According to RIDEM, there are two gardening centers and nurseries operating in Coventry[13].

6.2.5.2 AGRICULTURE'S IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

Coventry's public school district purchases locally grown produce for use in its school meals, ensuring that its students have access to fresh and nutritious food throughout the school day. This is especially meaningful for the 2,970 students (as of 2019) that are eligible for free or reduced meals. In that same year, there were seven farm stands/farmers' markets reported to be operating in Coventry, though none of the town's 2,794 SNAP participants or 282 WIC

[10] A Citizen's Guide to the Rhode Island Farm, Forest, and Open Space Act
[11] http://www.rifoodcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/117020_RIFoodPolicy_Fact_Sheets_2019_m1_Coventry.pdf
[12] https://www.ricentral.com/coventry_courier/coventry-community-garden-volunteers-clean-up-for-the-start-of/article_ad80ad72-4988-11e8-8be9-83420541f1b8.html
[13] http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/agriculture/ri-grown.php

participants were able to spend any of their benefits at the farmers' market. The nearest farmers' markets that do accept these benefits are in Warwick and West Warwick.

6.2.5.3 The Future of Coventry Agriculture

Coventry's agricultural industries face several challenges in the years ahead. The difficulty in making small-scale agriculture economically viable and rising property prices make subdivision an increasingly attractive option to struggling farmers. The impact of the climate crisis will force farmers to rethink their choice of crops and their planting methods as soil aridity and pH levels shift with fluctuating weather patterns. These changes will each bring their own economic impact.

Compounding these looming economic challenges, Coventry's farming businesses do not appear to have much presence in wider business circles. In a directory of businesses for the Central Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, only one farm and one farmstand are listed – both in Warwick[14].

6.2.5.4 Agriculture and Local Government

While Coventry has adopted several zoning regulations that support agricultural-based businesses and encourage growth of a strong local food system,[15] it has no local department dedicated to the oversight of the industry. For information about area farming opportunities, regulations, and concerns, both RIDEM and RIFPC are the premier sources for Coventry farmers.

The closest entity that exists is the Coventry Land Trust. Founded in 1990, the Trust exists to "promote preservation of Coventry's rural, rustic, and historic character that defines the town[16]." However, its role in preserving Coventry's agriculture is purely reactive. Faced with the increasing loss of farmland to development, subdivision, and the climate crisis, the Trust takes an array of threatened private lands into its ownership. This is done under the Farm, Forest, and Open Space Act, which allows these lands to be assessed at their present usage and not their commercial values.[17]

6.2.6 Other Economic Development Issues

The years since 2020 have been difficult for Coventry's business community. The economic instability brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic put great pressure on Coventry's economy and residents, although the town has largely rebounded. However, other economic development concerns must be addressed if the recovery is to last.

6.2.6.1 Local policies and practices

Economic development is driven by private companies and individuals acting based on local and national market trends, but there are many strategies municipalities can use to enable and encourage economic growth. Coventry has an active Economic Development Commission (EDC) that acts in an advisory capacity to the local business community, compiles information and

[14] https://www.centralrichamber.com/1043/business/business-directory/
[15] Rhode Island Food Policy Council
[16] https://www.coventryri.org/coventry-land-trust
[17] A Citizen's Guide to the Farm, Forest, and Open Space Act.

statistics, and serves as a liaison between Town, state, and federal governments to further economic goals. The EDC also maintains an *Economic Development and Small Business Resources* page on the Town's website.

Tax stabilization agreements encourage commercial development by slowly increasing a property's tax rate over a fixed period of time, until the full taxation amount is reached. This helps developers and business owners spread out the financial cost of making improvements to their property. The Town has one active tax stabilization agreement with the Centre of New England development, which represents a significant portion of local commercial space. The agreement began in 1997 but has been extended through 2038 and will relieve current and future tenants of a gradually decreasing portion of their annual property tax as long as the agreement remains active.

In March 2023, the EDC conducted an online survey that indicated there may be limited public awareness of online economic development resources and local tax treaties.

Coventry uses federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to help low- and moderate-income households with improvements, but Town staff report that current funds are insufficient to meet local demand. The Town also actively participates with its legislative delegation locally, statewide, and at the Congressional level to advocate for economic development plans, programs, and funding that benefit the Town's residents, businesses, and visitors.

6.2.6.2 COVENTRY'S BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

A municipality's regulations and the culture of its local government contribute to whether it has a "business friendly" reputation. Regulations that can help promote a strong business environment include unambiguous, predictable laws and regulatory documents and fair, timely administrative processes**.** Members of the business and economic development communities interviewed for this plan were nearly unanimous in their assessment of Coventry's business climate. It is seen as lacking, with little variety of business types, and with permitting and approval processes that are viewed as onerous. As one business leader commented:

"I see the business climate in Coventry currently as weak. We need to push to bring in more commercial growth while speeding up the process for applications. I often hear [that] opening a new business in Coventry is like jumping through hoops. We need to get creative into drawing different kinds of business..."

Interviewees also report that more ambitious projects – projects that can attract new levels of tourist dollars to Coventry – are often not realized because they are not supported by voters during town budget season.

6.2.6.3 ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

Another common concern among residents is a dissatisfaction with the common types of businesses found in the Town. These include chain restaurants, auto part stores, "dollar" stores, banks, car lots, and storage units. Participants in the Comprehensive Plan public engagement process desired more unique, local businesses and restaurants that could make Coventry more

of a "destination." Comprehensive Plan survey respondents considered developing entertainment and recreation resources a high priority.

Instead of strip-style business development, residents and members of the economic development community alike expressed hope that Coventry would be able to attract businesses that would make it a destination for downstate Rhode Islanders looking to spend money on family-friendly leisure activities without going all the way up to Providence. Coventry's central geographic location could allow it to fill this role by investing in recreational businesses and by promoting its natural beauty.

6.2.6.4 Lack of a Town Center

Coventry's lack of a traditional town center was a recurring theme in the community outreach and data collection process. This is due to Coventry's unique history and geography: as the largest municipality in Rhode Island, it developed as a decentralized group of individual villages. While Tiogue Avenue is easily identifiable to Coventry residents as a center for business activity, it is not constructed for the foot and cycle traffic expected of a traditional New England town center. It also lacks any sort of central village green or public commons for public gatherings.

The Village Commercial zoning districts (see Chapter 1: Land Use), which allow for commercial, residential, and mixed-use development in a "village center" style may be potential locations for a town center. However, both of these districts are located away from the population center of the eastern Coventry.

6.2.6.5 Sewer and Water

First proposed in the 1960s and then implemented in the 1980s, Coventry's public sewer infrastructure is limited to part of the Route 3 corridor and depends on the West Warwick Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant. There is significant potential to expand the Town's sewer service, as of 2021 Coventry was only using roughly 10 percent of its 2.25-million-gallon daily flow[18]. Expanding public sewer access further down Route 3 could open more commercially zoned land for development and provide a wider variety of possible reuse options for existing buildings.

Coventry's sewer ordinance states that user fees are to be the sole source of funding for the operation and maintenance of the Town's sewer systems. Therefore, if only a few residential areas participate in the municipal sewer program, it may result in a significant cost burden for those households. Citing these potential costs, community members in public engagement meetings often proposed that sewage adoption be mandated only for new commercial development and not residential areas.

Public water is supplied solely by the Kent County Water Authority (KCWA) to 8,483 individual service connection in Coventry (see Map 7.1 "Drinking Water Service Areas"). According to the Executive Summary of the KCWA's Water Supply System Management Plan 5-year Update, 2021, 77 percent of Coventry's population is served by the KCWA, with the remaining

[18] https://www.ricentral.com/kent_county_daily_times/coventry-town-council-to-talk-future-of-sewers/article_f22650c6-92e1-11eb-8f4a-f38f7ec335aa.html

properties serviced by private wells. Most commercial properties are located in the KCWA's service area, although there are some businesses in the Village Commercial zoning districts in central and western Coventry that are not.

The KCWA has completed several major infrastructure projects in Coventry over the past decade that have improved water capacity for the Town's commercial areas, including building the Mishnock Water Treatment Plant off of Nooseneck Hill Road and replacing water mains along Sandy Bottom Road. KCWA is set to publish a new five-year capital improvement plan in 2023 and continue to work with the Town of Coventry to maintain public water service.

6.2.6.6 Cultural Tourism and Indigenous History

Coventry has multiple major tourist attractions linked to its colonial history, such as the Nathaniel Greene homestead and Paine House Museum. However, the area's history of human settlement predates the arrival of Europeans by millennia. In 2022, the Town partnered with the Providence Cultural Equity Initiative (PCEI) to help identify and create educational tourism opportunities around Coventry's indigenous history. For example, the village of Blackrock in northeastern Coventry is named after a large black rock in the area, which has been a marriage site for the local indigenous community for at least 200 years. There are also a number of sounding rocks in Coventry, which were used as a means of communication across a large area. [19] Highlighting the history and culture of the Shawomet and other local native peoples is a worthy historic pursuit in its own right but building a local tourism infrastructure that embraces these stories and landmarks could generate local, regional, and global cultural tourism and generate local revenue with minimal impact on the current character and quality of life in Coventry.

The Town, in partnership with the PCEI, is pursuing innovative strategies to highlight indigenous history such as an interactive virtual reality tour of important locations. Cultural tourism around indigenous history can strengthen and supplement Coventry's existing inventory of important sites from colonial history.

6.2.6.7 Environmental Issues and Hazardous Waste

Some types of economic activity generate waste and pollution that have a negative impact on human health and the immediate environment. Map 6.3 shows several types of hazardous waste contamination sites in Coventry that might limit a location's development potential without an investment in cleanup.

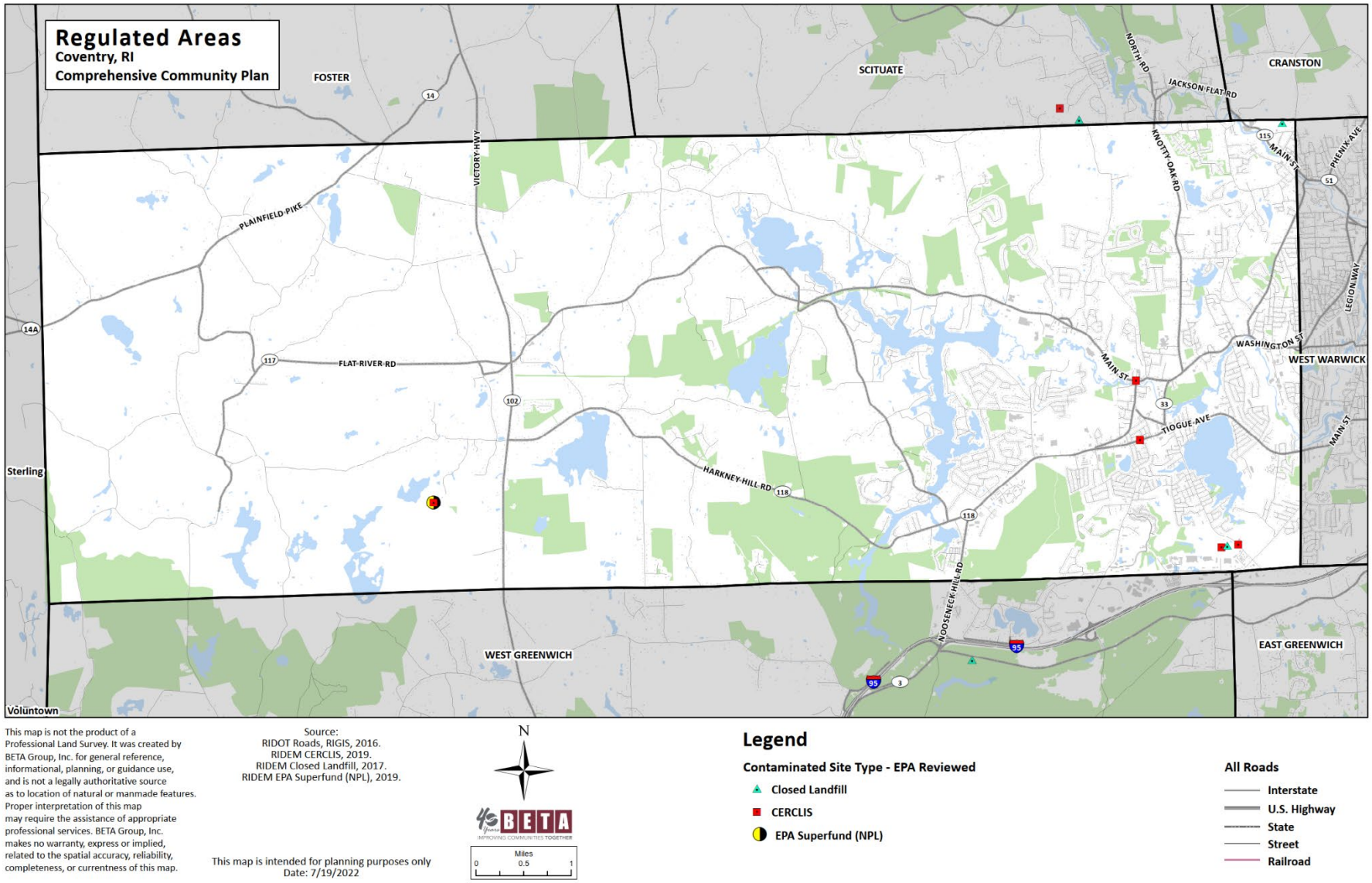
Coventry has five EPA-designated Superfund sites, including one on the National Priorities List. The designation allows the EPA to force responsible parties to clean up their properties or undertake and fund cleanup efforts itself. Most of these are in the commercial areas of east Coventry, including the municipal landfill.

In addition to sites identified by the federal government, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) identifies 76 sites that have been investigated for the presence of hazardous materials. 14 of these, including the Superfund sites, are considered active with one more site on Main Street listed as "monitoring."

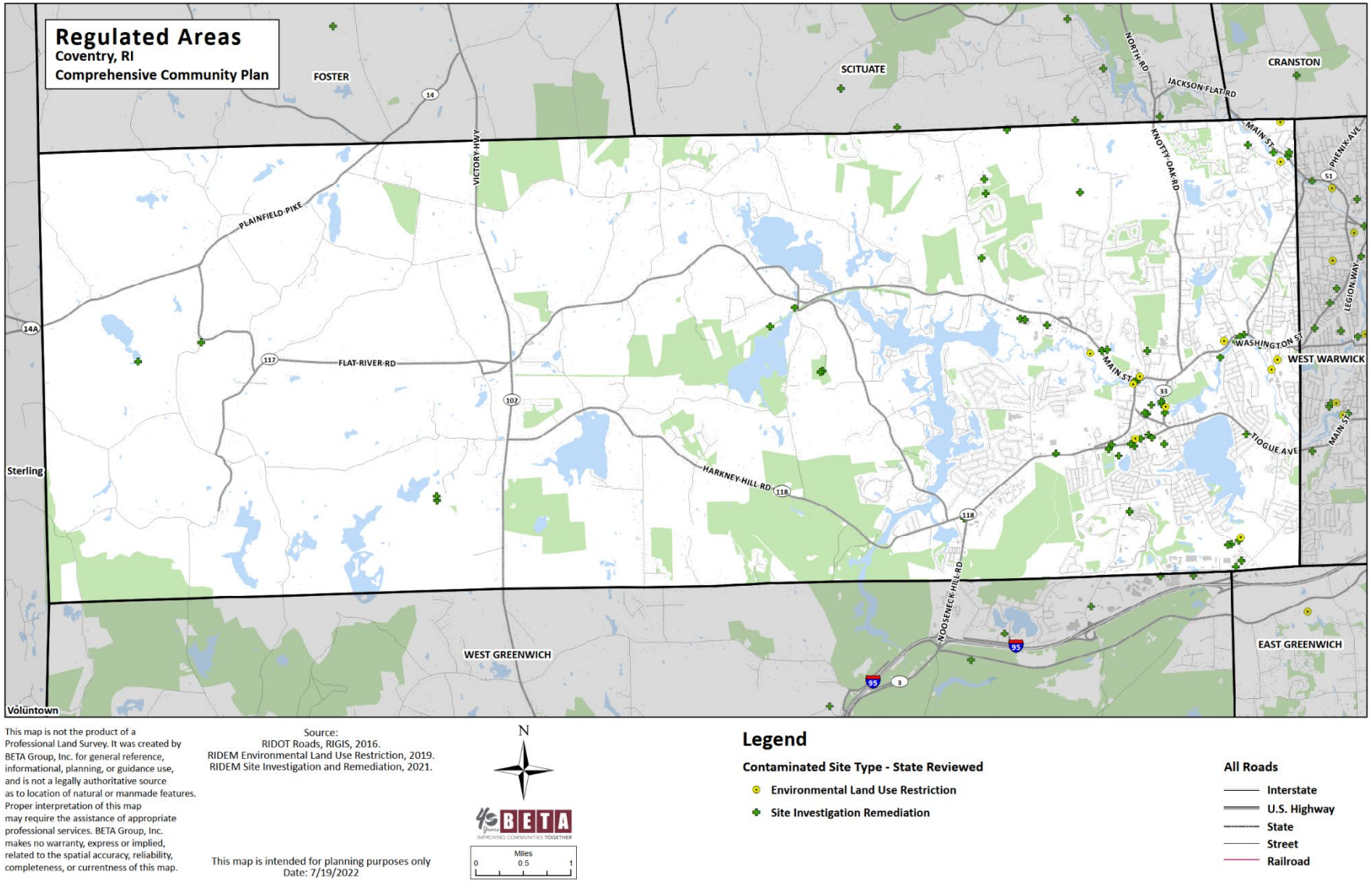
[19] Interview with Raymond Two Hawks Watson, Providence Cultural Equity Initiative, June 15, 2020.

RIDEM lists eleven more sites with land use restrictions due to the continued presence of hazardous materials. New construction on these sites requires adequate remediation to prevent exposure to dangerous substances. Most sites are clustered in industrial areas near the Pawtuxet River (see Map 6.4)

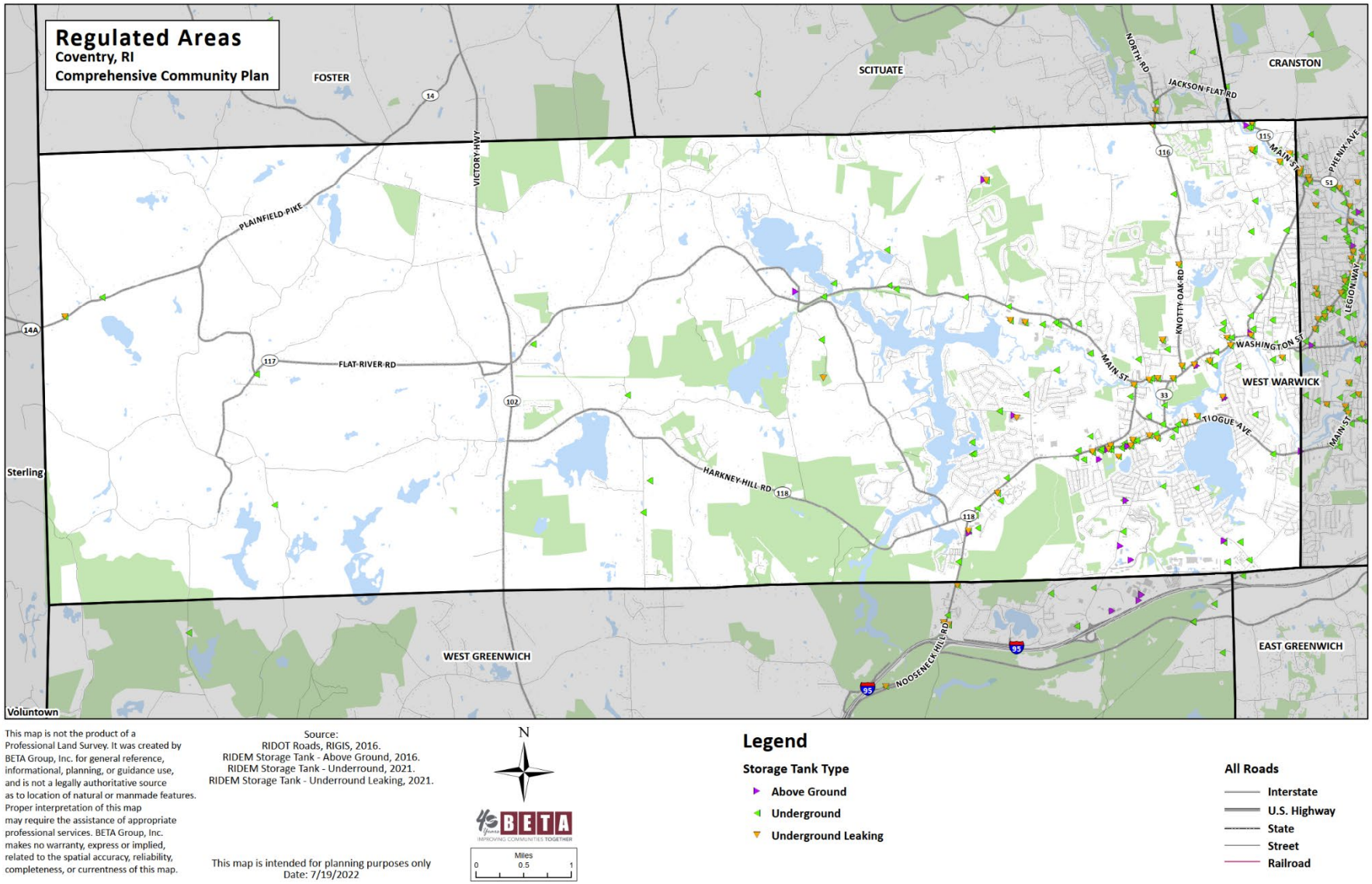
Underground storage tanks (USTs) line the commercial corridors along Routes 3 and 117. Underground storage of hazardous materials carries the risk that these materials can leak into the soil and contaminate groundwater. Eight USTs in Coventry have leakage issues that are considered “active” cases as of July 2022, although dozens of others have required remedial actions in the past.



Map 6.3: EPA Regulated Areas and Contaminated Sites



Map 6.4: State Designated Regulated Areas



Map 6.5: Storage Tanks Located in Coventry by Type

6.3 NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Based on these economic development issues, the following themes for needs and opportunities have been identified:

- The establishment of a designated "town square" or "town center" in an area that is readily accessible for as many residents as possible, preferably in the east. This could potentially encourage a greater centralization of point-of-purchase businesses and community interaction.
- Supporting economic innovation, expansion, and diversification with statutory reforms that will attract a greater variety of businesses and consumers to Coventry. The regionally central location of the Town would be an asset in this effort, which should be done with consideration for environmental stewardship and sustainability. An emphasis should be placed on advertising the benefits of sewage versus septic, so as to increase utilization of the system.
- The cost and feasibility of expanding the municipal sewer system to facilitate new commercial development should be explored based on the results of the Town's ongoing sewer use study.
- The introduction of a comprehensive agricultural policy (preferably including an office within Town government) to aid current working farms and agricultural businesses in Coventry while also encouraging innovation within the sector. This can range from assistance in navigating state and federal regulations for those wishing to start new agribusinesses to fostering "agritourism" and introducing more urban gardens in the east.
- Supporting new and creative opportunities to explore and spotlight Coventry's indigenous history and heritage to drive tourism and build on the Town's cultural identity.
- Incentivizing the reuse of existing vacant commercial and industrial structures and sites to revitalize areas of eastern Coventry while growing the economy.
- Promoting the Town's outdoor recreation assets (beaches, lakes, and trails) as a means of economic development. Besides the potential for the Town to benefit directly from the use of these resources (such as charging use fees) visitors would patronize other local businesses.
- Review land use policy to ensure that commercial, mixed-use appropriate types of light industrial development are encouraged in appropriate locations.
- Continue to support and expand the economic development activities of the Coventry Economic Development Commission and other Town bodies with the local business community.

6.4 GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

A complete list of goals, policies, and actions regarding the economic development of Coventry, Rhode Island can be found in Volume 1 of the 2026 Coventry Comprehensive Plan.

7.0 COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The Services and Facilities Chapter describes the existing services and facilities in town, including public schools, public safety and emergency services, library services, wastewater management, public water supply, stormwater, senior and community centers, and town-owned buildings. The Chapter also identifies issues, opportunities, and challenges identified by community members and town staff. The following municipal services and facilities are reviewed in this chapter:

- Water Supply
- Wastewater Management
- Stormwater Management
- Solid Waste Management
- Police
- Fire
- Public Education
- Public Libraries
- Community and Senior Center
- Town Buildings and Facilities

Having access to adequate services and facilities is necessary for public health, well-being and safety of residents in town. Residents interact every day with solid waste, drinking water, and wastewater and need adequate public safety services in times of emergency. The public educational system is critical to attract families and raise a civically engaged next generation, and the town-owned buildings provide centers for civic engagement and house day-to-day municipal operations. The enhancement and maintenance of these services and facilities is critically important to support the town residents in their everyday needs.

7.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

7.2.1 WATER SUPPLY

The purpose of this Services and Facilities Chapter section is to outline the existing conditions of Coventry's potable water supply, including identifying water suppliers, water sources, potable water quality, system capacity, water supply protection measures, and currently programmed major projects.

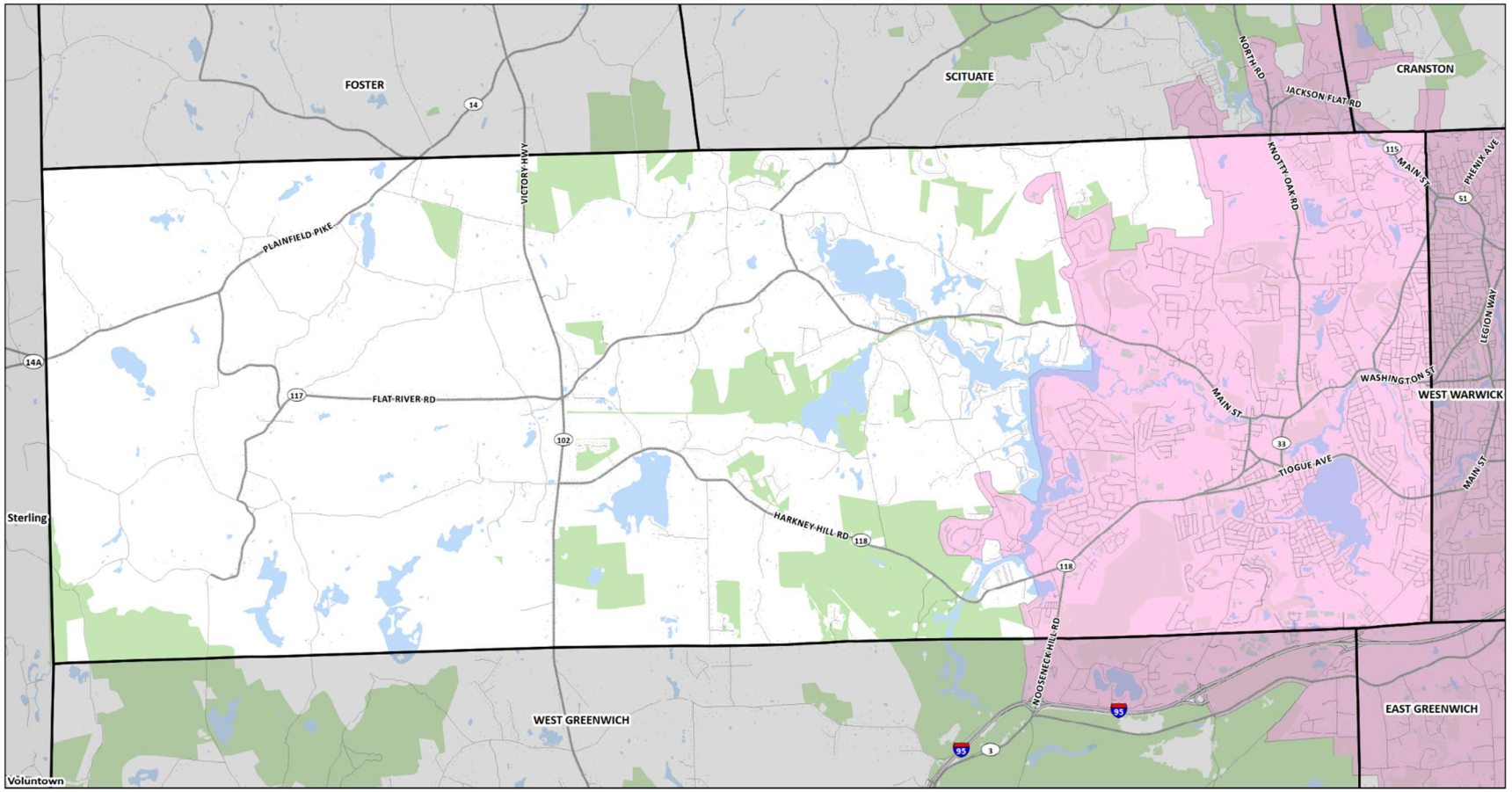
7.2.1.1 AFTER SUPPLIERS AND TOWN COORDINATION

There is only one public water supplier in Coventry, the Kent County Water Authority (KCWA), a regional water supplier in central Rhode Island that currently serves the Towns of Coventry, North Kingstown, West Greenwich, West Warwick, Scituate, East Greenwich, Warwick and Cranston. As of 2022, the system has a total of 27,392 service connections and supplies water to the majority of commercial and industrial development in these towns, as well as approximately 88,809 residents. According to the KCWA, there is currently no plan to expand the system's service area.

In Coventry, the KCWA has 8,483 "active customers" (individual service connection) and the service area extends west from the eastern town line to Read Schoolhouse Road (Map 7.1 Drinking Water Service Areas). While the KCWA does not have a system to precisely track the population served, according to the Executive Summary of the KCWA's Water Supply System Management Plan 5-year Update, 2021,

approximately 77% of Coventry's population is served by the KCWA. The remaining properties in town are serviced by either private groundwater wells or privately-owned community wells.

The Town of Coventry has one primary point of contact with the KCWA –the Director of the Department of Public Works (DPW). Coordination between the Town and KCWA is essential to ensure the Town incorporates future KCWA Infrastructure Projects into their own municipal project planning process to maintain and improve efficiency. Improving the Town's line of communication with the KCWA is also vital towards water source protection, as well as providing information to the public regarding water supply and demand management.



Map 7.1 Drinking Water Service Areas

7.2.1.2 Potable Water Sources

While there are no drinking water reservoirs in the Town of Coventry itself, approximately 80% of the KCWA potable water supply is purchased from the Providence Water Supply Board (PWSB). The PWSB sources their drinking water from the following reservoirs located in central Rhode Island: Scituate, Regulating, Moswansicut, Ponaganset, Barden, and Westconnaug. These reservoirs can provide up to 35.2 million gallons of water per day (MGD) to the KCWA system.

The remaining KCWA water supply is groundwater withdrawn from KCWA's Mishnock Wellfield (three wells) located off of Nooseneck Hill Road (Route 3) in Coventry, and their East Greenwich Well located off Post Road near the Warwick and East Greenwich town-line. Groundwater withdrawn from the Mishnock Wellfield and East Greenwich Well is treated at the Mishnock Wellfield Treatment Facility and East Greenwich Well Treatment Facility, respectively. According to the *KCWA Water Supply System Management Plan 5-Year Update* (dated 3/19/2021 – herein "KCWA WSSMP 5-Year Update"), the Wellfield and East Greenwich Well can supply up to 2.4 MGD and 2.5 MGD, respectively. A groundwater well located south of Tiogue Avenue in Coventry, known as the Spring Lake Well[1], is currently offline, primarily due to aesthetic water quality concerns and reduced yield. This well can supply approximately 0.26 MGD.

All four groundwater wells in Coventry draw water from the Mishnock Aquifer, while the East Greenwich Well draws from the Hunt River Aquifer.

The KCWA System has four active water storage tanks, which range in capacity from 1.5 to 3 million gallons, and have been designed to provide water sufficient service under maximum-day-flow-plus-fire conditions to their customers.

All potable water produced by the KCWA's wells requires treatment for mineral removal, pH adjustment, and disinfection.

7.2.1.3 Groundwater Classifications

In accordance with the RI Groundwater Protection Act of 1985, RIDEM classified the State's groundwater resources and established groundwater quality standards for each class. The classes, GAA, GA, GB, and GC, signify the level of protection afforded to a given area.

Below is a summary of each groundwater class in Rhode Island:

- GAA - groundwater resources that are known or presumed to be suitable for drinking water use without treatment and are located in:
    - One of the state's major stratified drift aquifers that are capable of serving as a significant source for a public water supply ("groundwater reservoirs") and the critical portion of their recharge area as delineated by RIDEM;
    - Wellhead protection areas for public water system water supply wells and community water supply wells that serve resident populations with at least 15 service connections or that serve at least 25 individuals; and,
    - Groundwater dependent areas that are physically isolated from reasonable alternative water supplies.

[1] This is the fourth KCWA well in Coventry that receives water from the Mishnock Aquifer, as described on the KCWA "About" webpage: https://kentcountywater.org/about-kcwa.aspx.

- GA - groundwater resources that are known or presumed to be suitable for drinking water use without treatment. Groundwater classified GA, however, does not fall within any of the three priority areas described above under GAA.
- GB – groundwater which may not be suitable for drinking water use without treatment due to known or presumed degradation.
- GC – groundwater which is or may be unsuitable for drinking water use due to certain waste disposal practices.

The majority of groundwater in Coventry is classified as GA, while about one quarter of groundwater is classified as GAA, and only a small percentage is mapped as GB. No groundwater is classified as GC in Coventry (Table 7.1 and Map 7.2).

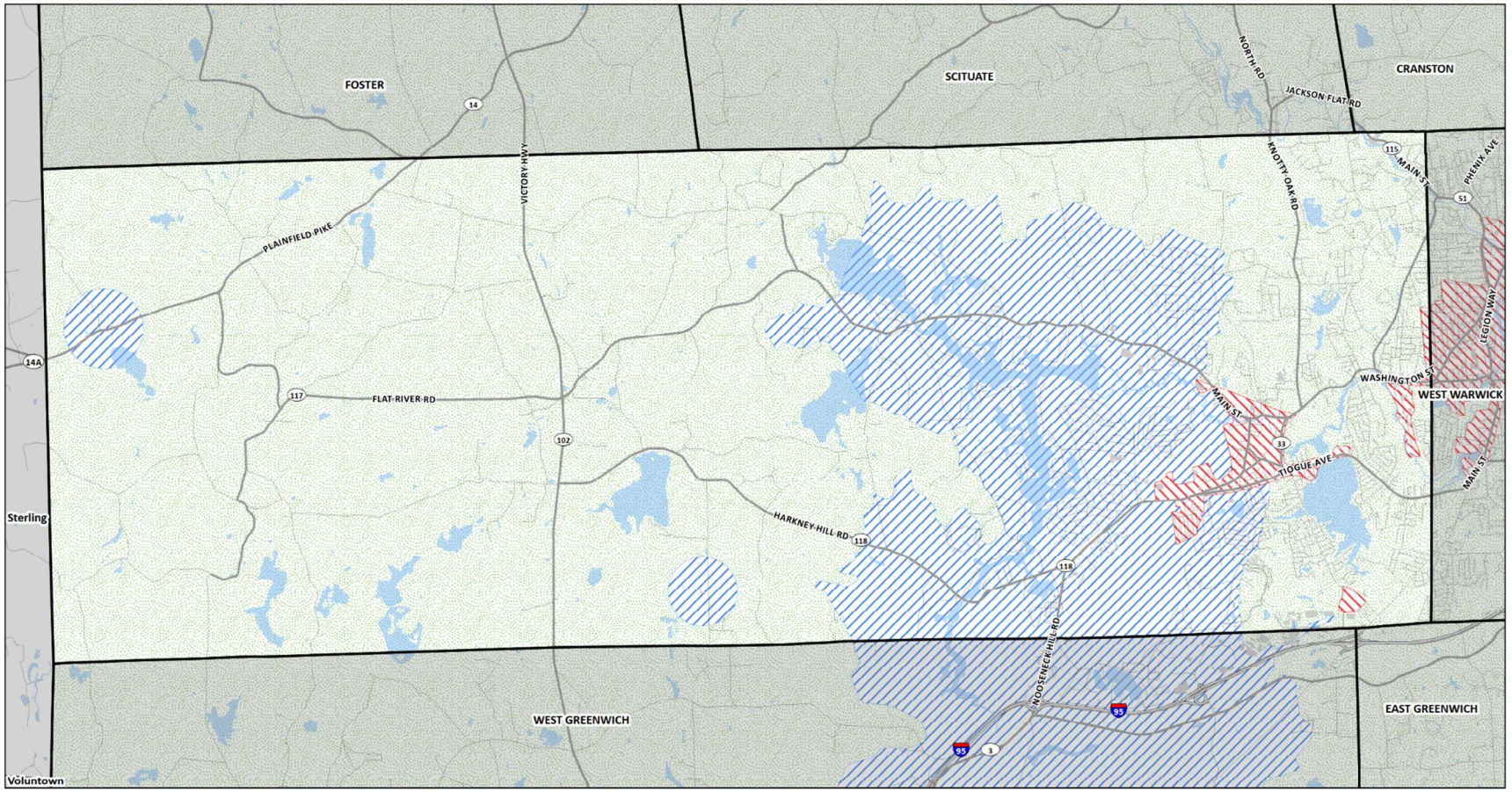
Table 7.1 Groundwater Classifications in Coventry

Groundwater Classification	Percentage of Town
GAA	23.3%
GA	75.1%
GB	1.6%

Groundwater classified as GAA and GA are subject to the same groundwater quality standards used to evaluate the impact of certain activities and define remediation goals in areas of groundwater contamination. State regulations require that pollutants in groundwater classified as GAA or GA be below concentrations which will adversely affect the groundwater as a source of safe and potable drinking water or which will adversely affect other beneficial uses of the groundwater. The numerical groundwater quality standards for specific substances in class GAA and GA are the federal maximum contaminant levels (MCL) for drinking water established by the United States Environmental Protection Agency National Primary Drinking Water Regulations. Numerical standards have also been established for the following contaminants, which do not have a federal MCL:

- Methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE)
- Naphthalene
- Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA)
- Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS)
- Total of PFOA and PFOS

Groundwater classified as GB and GC are subject to different standards, as there are no goals to restore these areas to drinking water quality, however, groundwater in these areas must not threaten public health or the environment; adversely impact current or future uses of property, groundwater, or surface water; or violate any surface water quality standards or surrounding groundwater quality standards.



Map 7.2 Groundwater Classification

7.2.1.4 WATER USE AND CAPACITY

According to the KCWA WSSMP 5-Year Update, the Average Daily Demand (ADD) for the period of 2015 – 2018 was 7.88 MGD and the Maximum Day Demand (MDD) for the same period was 15.55 MGD. This equates to an average monthly demand of 239.7 million gallons and maximum monthly demand of 473.0 million gallons (assuming the MDD was maintained for an entire month). These demands are based on the total volume of water metered for the KCWA system.

The projected KCWA ADD and MDD for the 20-year planning period is 8.10 MGD 15.38 MGD respectively. These projected demands equate to an estimated average monthly demand of 246.4 million gallons and estimated maximum average monthly demand of 467.8 million gallons.

The theoretical water supply that can be provided by the KCWA is currently 40.10 MGD, while the projected theoretical water supply for the 20-year planning period is 39.32 MGD, which accounts for reduction of well capacity.

According to the RI Water Resource Board - Approved Water Supply System Management Plan (WSSMP), it has been confirmed that the KCWA water supply system will be able to meet the water demand for the 20-year planning period.

While there does not appear to be a supply capacity concern for the KCWA system, based on the projected demand and theoretical water supply, there may be future concerns related to potential supply deficits experienced during the normal summer months and drought conditions, which may be exacerbated by climate change. While the KCWA has made progress through construction and operation of the Mishnock Wellfield Treatment Facility, is in the process of designing an upgraded treatment facility for the East Greenwich Well, and is planning for a new treatment system at the Spring Lake Well, additional water supply sources may be necessary in the future. No recent KCWA Reports, however, provide any indication of plans to identify and develop supplemental water supply sources for the system.

Current state regulations cap water usage at 65 gallons per person per day, including all inside and outside water use. To help decrease daily water use, the KCWA maintains a perpetual odd-even outdoor water use restriction during the summer months, allowing odd numbered addresses to use water outdoors on odd number days and even numbered addresses to use water outdoors on even numbered days. The KCWA Consumer Confidence Water Quality Annual Report, 2020, highlights additional water demand mitigation efforts that could be employed within their service area, including:

- Use of conservation plumbing fixture and “WaterSense” appliances.
- Restricting sizes of landscapes that require irrigation, the amount of water used for irrigation, and times for operating irrigation systems.
- Implementation of seasonal and block rate structures that increase the cost of use as use increases.
- Restricting new plantings to spring and fall.
- Water use education and water use audits.

7.2.1.5 DROUGHT MITIGATION

The KCWA developed a Demand/Drought Management Policy that was approved in 2003 and revised in 2006. This Policy prioritizes water use in the following manner:

1. *Public Health and Safety, including residential interior use, non-residential, sanitary uses, and fire response.*

2. *Manufacturing dependent upon critical and non-delaying water usage, including sanitary uses and product production.*
3. *Commercial agriculture and farming, including sanitary uses and production of saleable crops.*
4. *Commercial uses, including sanitary uses and normal commercial water use for intended purposes.*
5. *Recreational outdoor watering, including sanitary uses and municipal needs for recreational purposes and all commercial golf course irrigation purposes.*
6. *Residential, Industrial and Commercial sector outside uses, including landscape irrigation, recreation, vehicle washing, and all other water uses.*

In the event of a drought, the KCWA will impose specific requirements and will communicate the status of drought conditions and requirements with their customers. All stakeholders are required to strictly adhere to implemented restrictions to ensure everyone's basic needs can be met. Specific measures to be implemented by KCWA include:

1. *"Public education and conservation to reduce use during the onset of and prolonged period of drought and any demand conditions. The KCWA will consistently communicate to the public the importance of making lifestyle adjustments that incorporate efficiency and conservation in everyday water use. During demand/drought conditions, the KCWA will keep the public apprised of impending conditions and conservation mandates in affect.*
2. *Implementation of general usage reduction measures through the required use of efficient water conserving plumbing fixtures and mandatory year-round outdoor water restriction for the supply district. This phase incorporates public education as part of the enforcement action for first time violations and monetary penalties for additional violations.*
3. *As conditions worsen, a complete ban on outdoor water use will be put into effect. This phase of mitigation invokes complete elimination of outdoor uses by all customer classes and monetary penalties for first offence, followed by service shut off for repeated offences."*

The Town of Coventry's 2018 Hazard Mitigation Plan also includes discussion on the impacts of drought on the Town. This plan emphasizes the importance of fire suppression during drought conditions and indicates that the Town has capacity to enact a response plan to distribute drinking water in the event of a drought.

To ensure that the Town and the KCWA provide consistent information to residents in the event of a prolonged drought, a Coordination and Communication Plan should be developed by the KCWA and Coventry Town Planner.

7.2.1.6 Source Water Quality and Water Quality Protection

The KCWA prepared a Wellhead Protection Plan in accordance with the RIDEM and Rhode Island Department of Health regulations. The plan addresses the existing protection of the Water Authority's Spring Lake Well and Mishnock Wellfield.

The latest Source Water Assessment and Wellhead Protection Plan for the KCWA supply were completed in 2012, and according to an interview with the KCWA's Water Project Engineer, no updated source assessment is scheduled. According to the plan, KCWA wellhead areas are listed as "MODERATE" in terms of their susceptibility to contamination due to dense, unsewered residential and commercial development and highly permeable sands within their recharge areas. These wellhead areas also have elevated nitrogen levels, which may be the result of septic systems and use of fertilizers in the recharge areas. All of the Wellhead Protection Areas around KCWA wellheads in Coventry overlap with land area zoned for industrial uses. As a general rule, industrial uses are usually prohibited in Wellhead Protection Areas in

order to reduce the potential for a conflict of interests between the requirements of industrial operations and the need to protect the quality of the public water source.

In order to maintain the current groundwater quality and classes in Coventry, the Town should consider implementing protective zoning overlay districts to encompass these vital drinking water supply aquifers and implement regulations and standards for development within these districts.

7.2.1.7 Water Supply System Description

The hill and valley topography within Coventry greatly influences the hydraulic capacity to service certain geographic locations. The KCWA's water supply system contains 471 miles of water mains with distribution and transmission pipes ranging from 2-inches to 24-inches in diameter. The system serves a wide range of elevations from 5 feet Mean Sea Level (MSL) in coastal areas to the highest point in the system at 474 feet MSL in Coventry.

The water supply system requires operation of two transmission booster pump stations and three distribution system booster stations. The transmission booster pump stations increase pressure from the PWSB connections while the distribution booster stations increase pressure within the KCWA system to higher localized pressure zones to ensure all customers received adequate water pressure.

The system consists of eight pressure zones, which operate at varied hydraulic gradients, of which five pressure zones serve the majority of the service area. There are also five active water storage facilities and three inactive storage facilities, which store water for use in case of a drought or need for fire suppression.

The KCWA water supply system also includes two water treatment facilities: the new Mishnock Water Treatment Plant in Coventry, which was brought online in 2013, and the East Greenwich Treatment Plant.

Figure 1 - View of the Mishnock Treatment Facility

7.2.1.8 Water Supply Improvement Projects

Proposed system improvements are addressed in the Kent County Water Authority Water Supply System Five Year Capital Improvement Program Update (KCWA CIP); March 2016 (for the FY 2017-2022). The next KCWA 5-Year CIP Update is anticipated to be completed in the late fall/early winter of 2022. The major improvements scheduled are presented below in Table 7.2. These improvements will help to address deficiencies in supply, transmission, storage, and service reliability.

The projects outlined in the KCWA CIP provide the prerequisite planning to identify critical improvements and justify funding initiatives necessary for the KCWA to correct existing deficiencies in the public potable water delivery and supply system. The rate hikes necessary to implement this CIP must, however, obtain authorization by the State of Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission. As illustrated in Table 7.2, the KCWA has indicated that lack of funding for the CIP projects will significantly impact its ability to complete the proposed improvements. The Town will support the KCWA in its efforts to obtain funding of the projects that benefit the residents and economic development within Coventry.

The Town of Coventry will continue to work with the KCWA to implement the capital project plans in conjunction with street improvement and sewer installation projects. By scheduling the Town's improvements to coincide with the KCWA planned improvements, town funds for road and infrastructure improvements may help offset the financial impacts the KCWA projects will have on the rates of the customers within the town. New development projects that may seek to extend water service to portions of western Coventry should be coordinated with the KCWA to assure that the development planning process includes assessing the water supply, transmission, and distribution infrastructure to support the Town's plans for future growth.

Table 7.2 Kent County Water Authority Major Capital Improvement Projects (FY 2017-2022)

Project No.	Description	Status (2022)
Fiscal Year 2017		
1	Mishnock WTP High Service Mains	Completed
3	New KCWA Facility	Not funded
Fiscal Year 2018		
2	North/South High Service Connection	Completed in fall 2021
4	Hope Furnace Road High Service Loop	To be completed summer 2022
Fiscal Year 2019		
5	Replace KCWA Facility	In the final design process, with construction anticipated in Fall 2022. Construction anticipated to take 1.5 years.
3	Ball Hill Road Loop	Not funded
Fiscal Year 2020		
6	Oaklawn Gradient Emergency PRV	Under construction, to be completed end of Summer 2022
7	I-295/Providence Street Bridge Crossing	Under construction, to be completed end of Summer 2022
Fiscal Year 2021		
8	Quaker Lane PS High Service Expansion	Not funded, no projected timeline
9A	Division Road	Completed Fall 2021
9B	Shippetown Road	Completed Fall 2021
10	Quaker Lane Pump Station – High Service Pumps	Not funded, no projected timeline
Fiscal Year 2022		
11	East Greenwich Well Treatment	In design, Construction in 2023
12	Spring Lake Well Upgrades and Treatment	Not funded, no projected timeline
9C	Middle Road	Completed Fall 2021
9D	Middle Road	Completed Fall 2021

Source: Kent County Water Authority Five-Year Capital Improvements Program Update, March 2016

7.2.2 WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT

The Town of Coventry has a limited sewer system in the eastern side of town serving parts of Route 117, Route 3, Hopkins Hill Road, Route 33, New London Turnpike, and parts of the Center of New England Development (See Map 7.3 Coventry Sewer Facilities). The town has three pump stations: Woodland

Manor Pump Station, Sandy Bottom Road Pump Station, and Flat River Road Pump Station. The dry inactive sewer line down Arnold Road from Johns Boulevard to the Town Landfill is awaiting construction of the Briar Point Pump Station to service the area. There are currently 611 sewer customers in Coventry. Of these, 3 are industrial, 113 are commercial, 6 are government and 489 are residential. Approximately 97% of Coventry residences still rely on on-site wastewater treatment systems.[2]

The current sewer lines in Coventry all terminate at the West Warwick Wastewater Treatment Facility. West Warwick Wastewater Treatment Facility has a capacity of 10.5 million gallons per day (MGD) and an average flow of 6.5 MGD. Coventry owns 25% (or around 2.6 MGD) of the capacity of the facility, and historically has only used around 18-20% of their capacity[3]. Wastewater treatment at the facility includes screening, grit removal, primary sedimentation, a fine bubble aeration tank for activated sludge, secondary sedimentation, and tertiary treatment for phosphorus removal. [4]

The Coventry Town Council operates as the sewer authority, a town-hired engineering firm conducts repairs, and the town engineer is in charge of overseeing sewer connection applications.[5] The Coventry Sewer Sub-Committee was organized in 2004 for purpose of reviewing the current application process for individual sewer tie-ins, providing recommendations on sewer assessment structure, and advising on expansions. Currently, Chapter 19, Article 2 "Use of Public Sewers Required" of the town ordinance, amended on September 20, 2015, states that all parcels located abutting a street, alley, or right-of-way where a public sewer is located, are required to connect to the sewer.

The sewer system in Coventry was first established in the 1980s with the sewer line running under New London Turnpike. The most recent sewer line constructed was on Arnold Road in 2017. Continued expansion of municipal sewer in Coventry is tied to multiple local priorities, including to improve environmental quality, to attract and maintain commercial and high-density residential developments, and to increase the number of people sharing the cost of the sewer system. In recent years, the town's sewer expansion efforts have been hampered by the high cost of construction and local budget shortfalls. The best places for future expansion, as understood by Town Council and the Pawtuxet River Authority, are along existing commercial nodes such as Tiogue Avenue, and around Coventry's water bodies, with priority on Lake Tiogue. The State of Rhode Island Land Use Plan 2025[6] outlines the eastern side of town within the Urban Services Boundary as a priority for sewer expansion, shown in Map 7.3**.**

At the time of writing this report, the town is undergoing a Wastewater Facility Plan to examine the condition of the sewer system and make recommendations for future operation, expansion, and management of the Town's sewer system. The town has contracted with Fuss & O'Neil on developing this plan. [7]

[2] RI Office of the Auditor General. (2019). Town of Coventry - Sewer Program - Limited Review Report. Providence, RI.

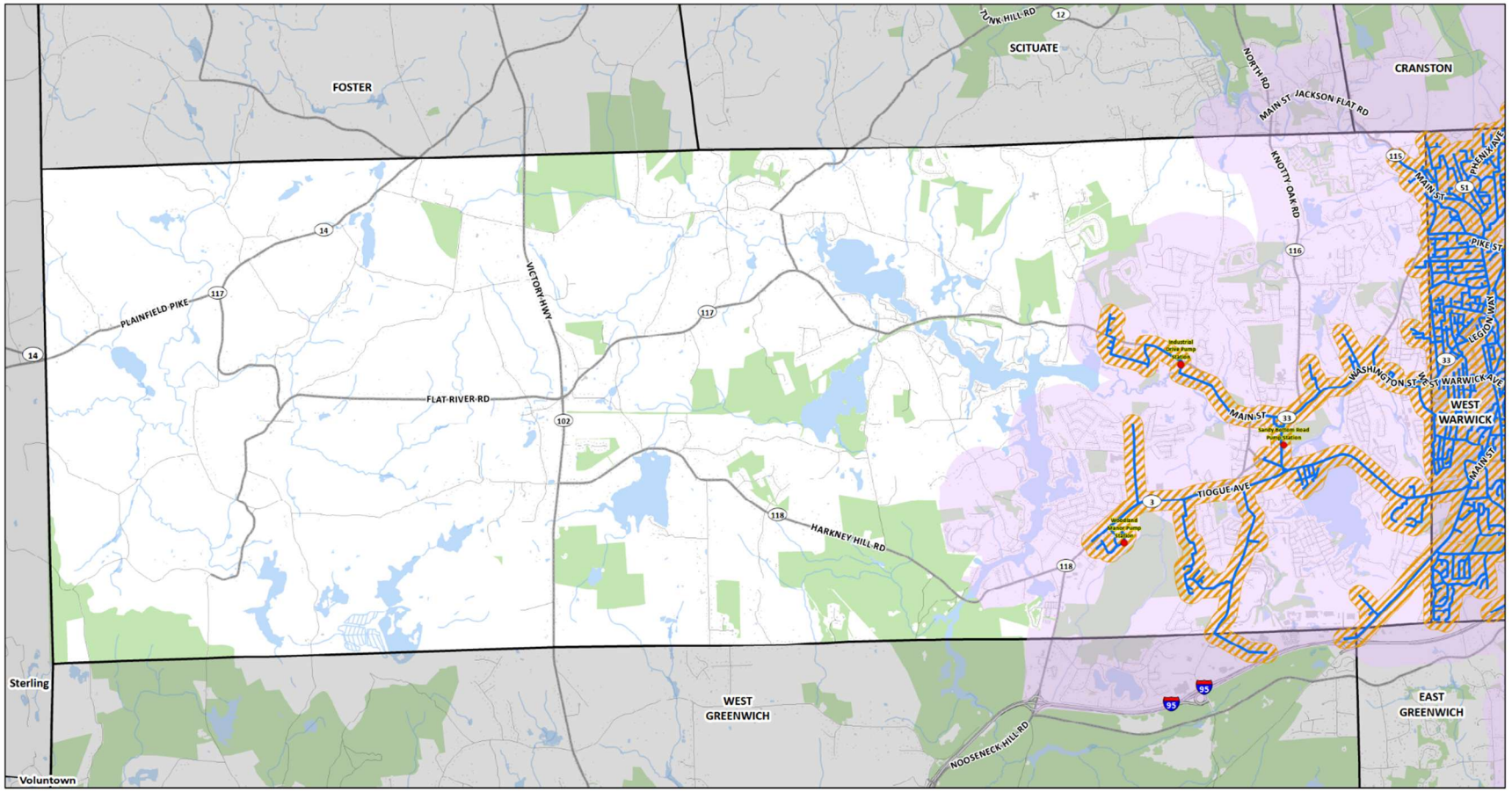
[3] Matrix Consulting Group. (2022). *Performance Audit Final Report.* Coventry, RI.

[4] Harriman; FXM Associates; FHI; Mar Hutchinson / Mapping and Planning Services. (2020). Comprehensive Plan. West Warwick, RI.

[5] Matrix Consulting Group. (2022). Performance Audit Final Report. Coventry, RI.

[6] Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning. (2006) *Land Use 2025: Rhode Island State Land Use Policies and Plan Executive Summary.* M. Allard Cox (ex.). Rhode Island Sea Grant. Narrangansett, R.I.

[7] When the town updates the Comprehensive Plan, the town shall revise the sewer maps, goals, policies and actions to reflect the findings of Wastewater Facility Plan.



Map 7.3 Coventry Sewer Facilities

7.2.3 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The purpose of this section of the Services and Facilities Chapter is to outline Coventry's approach to stormwater management, including: providing an overview of the exiting municipal stormwater system, its maintenance, condition, and capacity; identifying stormwater-impaired waterbodies; describing municipal regulations regarding stormwater management; and identifying currently programmed stormwater management improvement projects.

> Stormwater Management is the collection and treatment of rainwater and snowmelt runoff. This water can carry contaminants, including but not limited to sediment, road salt, nutrients, and oils. Stormwater runoff can overwhelm existing drainage systems, resulting in roadway flooding, and, if contaminated, can impair waterbodies.

7.2.3.1 MUNICIPAL STORMWATER SYSTEM AND INFRASTRUCTURE

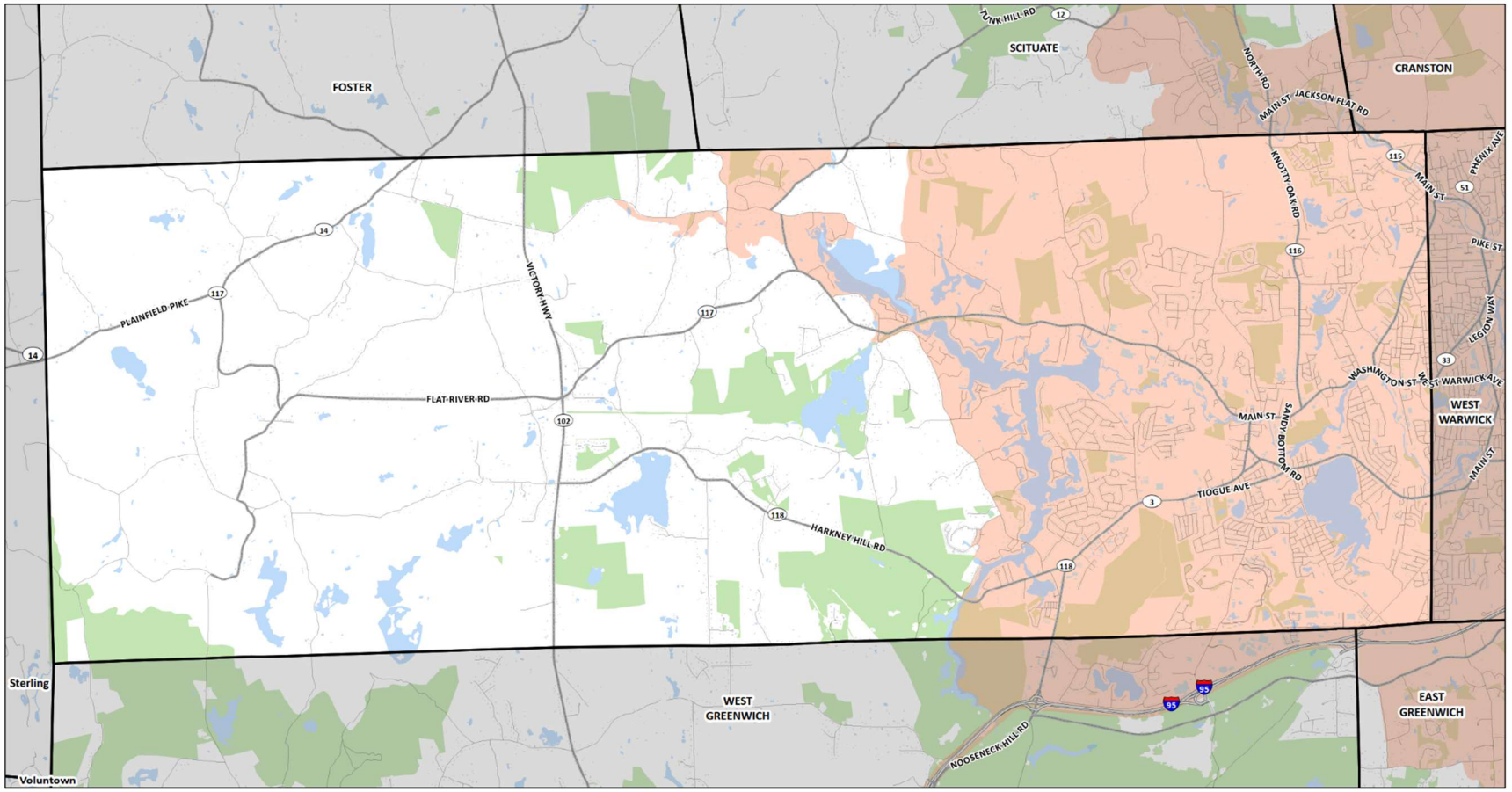
Coventry's municipal Stormwater System is managed and maintained by the Department of Public Works (DPW). This Stormwater System is regulated as a Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) as defined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), under the Rhode Island Pollutant Discharge Elimination System. The MS4 Regulated Area is situated in the urbanized area of eastern Coventry (Map 7.4 MS4 Regulated Areas). Municipal stormwater in western Coventry is generally managed through country drainage, with drainage swales along roadway. There are also State-owned and maintained stormwater systems within Coventry.

Sandy Bottom Road Infiltration Basin

The DPW is responsible for inspecting and maintaining the Stormwater System including 2,517[8] catch basins, 11 structural stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs), and 14 outfalls within the MS4 Regulated Area. It is also reported that the Town has installed drywells for stormwater infiltration, however, these structures are not included in the Town's Stormwater GIS data and are not discussed in the Town's 2022 RIPDES Small MS4 Annual Report. The Coventry Department of Parks & Recreation also owns and operates a structural BMP. Coventry does not maintain records for the length of its drainage pipe network or total number of stormwater manholes in the Town. The location of Coventry's MS4 Outfalls and RIDOT's outfalls are depicted on Map 7.5 Stormwater Outfall Locations.

Since 2011, all new drainage improvements are predicated on RIDEM's Low Impact Development (LID) Stormwater Guidelines. Closed drainage systems with point discharges are avoided whenever possible, however, opportunities for infiltration can be limited by soil and ground elevation conditions. An inventory of structural BMPs within the Town of Coventry is provided in Table 7.3.

[8] According to Section IV.B.6.b.1.ii of the Town of Coventry RIPDES Small MS4 Annual Report (Year 18), dated March 2022, there are 2,517 catch basins in Town, while the Town's GIS data from 2004 indicates there are 1,523 catch basins. The quantity of catch basins cannot be verified at this time.



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Source:
E-911 Road Centerline, RIGIS, 2021.
RIDEM MS4 Regulated Area, 2021.

This map is intended for planning purposes only
Date: 10/14/2022

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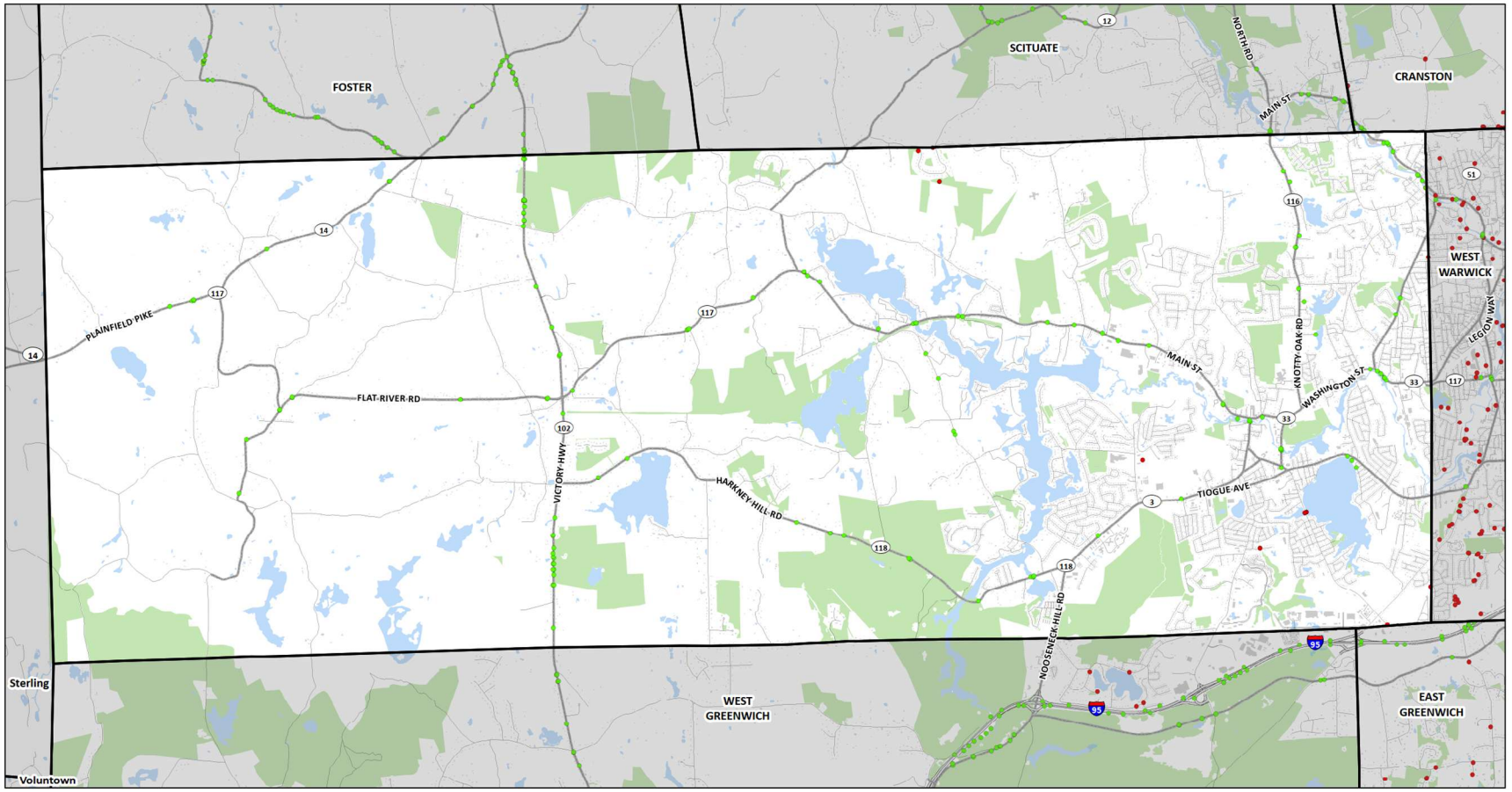
MS4 Regulated Areas

- MS4 Urbanized Areas 2010 Census
- Interstate Road
- State Road
- Local Road

Map 7.4 MS4 Regulated Areas



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Source:
E-911 Road Centerline, RIGIS, 2021.
RIDEM Stormwater Outfall, 2019.

This map is intended for planning purposes only
Date: 10/14/2022

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Miles
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Stormwater Outfall Location

- Municipal/Other
- RIDOT
- Interstate Road
- State Road
- Local Road

Map 7.5 Stormwater Outfall Locations

Table 7.3 Town-Owned Structural BMPs

Location	Owner/Operator	BMP Type
Haywood Road	Town of Coventry	Retention Basin
Shady Valley	Town of Coventry	Grassed swale
East Shore Drive	Town of Coventry	Grassed swale
East Shore Drive	Town of Coventry	Deep Sump Catch Basin
East Shore Drive	Town of Coventry	Sediment Forebay
East Shore Drive	Town of Coventry	Sediment Forebay
East Shore Drive	Town of Coventry	Deep Sump Catch Basin with Vegetated Swale
Teakwood Drive West	Town of Coventry	Detention Basin
Glenwood Drive	Town of Coventry	Detention Basin
Monroe Rive	Town of Coventry	Detention Basin
Wood Cove Drive	Town of Coventry	Detention Basin
Sandy Bottom Road	Coventry Parks & Recreation	Infiltration Basin

Source: Town of Coventry RIPDES Small MS4 Annual Report – Year 18, March 2022

7.2.3.2 MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

While Coventry's DPW conducts required annual maintenance and reporting under their MS4 Permit, the Town's current Storm Water Management Program Plan (SWMPP) is dated 2004 and does not reflect the Towns current stormwater maintenance program or stormwater management goals. Similarly, the GIS data for Coventry's Stormwater System was collected around the same time (in 2002), and the data was never field verified.

Catch basin observed along Arnold Road

Stormwater maintenance efforts carried out by the Town include:

- An annual town-wide street sweeping program to remove pollutants and other debris from the roadway to prevent the materials from entering the stormwater system.
- Annual catch basin cleaning. In 2021 the Town purchased a Vac-Truck to clean the catch basins. Prior to that, the Town contracted this service. During this effort, staff from the DPW prepare reports describing the condition of each catch basin to track the condition.
- Annual catch basins inspections and repair as needed, or as failures occur. During these inspections, the Town inspects for illicit discharges to the Stormwater System. Since 2003, Coventry has identified two (2) illicit discharges.
- DPW inspections of town-owned BMPs at least once a year. Currently, maintenance of detention ponds and swales in Town consists of mowing, and periodic removal of accumulated sediment.

7.2.3.3 System Capacity

There are several areas in Coventry that are prone to flash flooding during storm events due to under capacity and/or unmaintained infrastructure. Three of these areas are located on State-owned roadways and two are located on Town-owned roadways. Specifically,

- State-owned:
  - Washington Street at its intersection with Laurel Avenue
  - Main Street where it crossed Trestle Bridge
  - Flat River Road near house number 1668
  - Knotty Oak Road (Route 116)
  - Tiogue Avenue between Hopkins Hill Road and Jefferson Drive
- Town-owned:
  - Johnson's Boulevard at its intersection with West Lake Drive
  - Near LaForge Drive at its intersection with Gervais Street
  - Maple Valley Road
  - Industrial Drive
  - Taft Street, Greene Street, and the Pembroke Neighborhood (Neighborhoods around the Nathaniel Greene Homestead)

Roadway Flooding in Coventry during rain event

7.2.3.4 Funding

According to the DPW, while yearly maintenance is consistently conducted, the level and frequency of maintenance completed on the Town's Stormwater System is limited due to staffing and funding issues. In order to maintain all stormwater infrastructure within the Town in accordance with MS4 Requirements and install new Best Management Practices to mitigate runoff, additional funding is needed.

7.2.3.5 Stormwater Impaired Watersheds and Waterbodies

In Coventry two (2) watersheds have been designated as "Stormwater Impaired Watersheds", four (4) have been designated as potentially impaired by stormwater, and one (1) has been designated as not impaired by stormwater.

The federal Clean Water Act requires states to identify and list waterbodies that are not expected to meet state water quality standards. RIDEM is responsible for listing these waterbodies, identifying the cause of impairments, and determining whether a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) is needed for specific pollutants discharging to specific waterbodies. This list is known as the 303(d) list.

Once listed, waterbodies can be "delisted" from the 303(d) list if monitoring data indicates the standard for an impairment is met. While there are other ways to delist a waterbody, meeting the water quality standard is the most common.

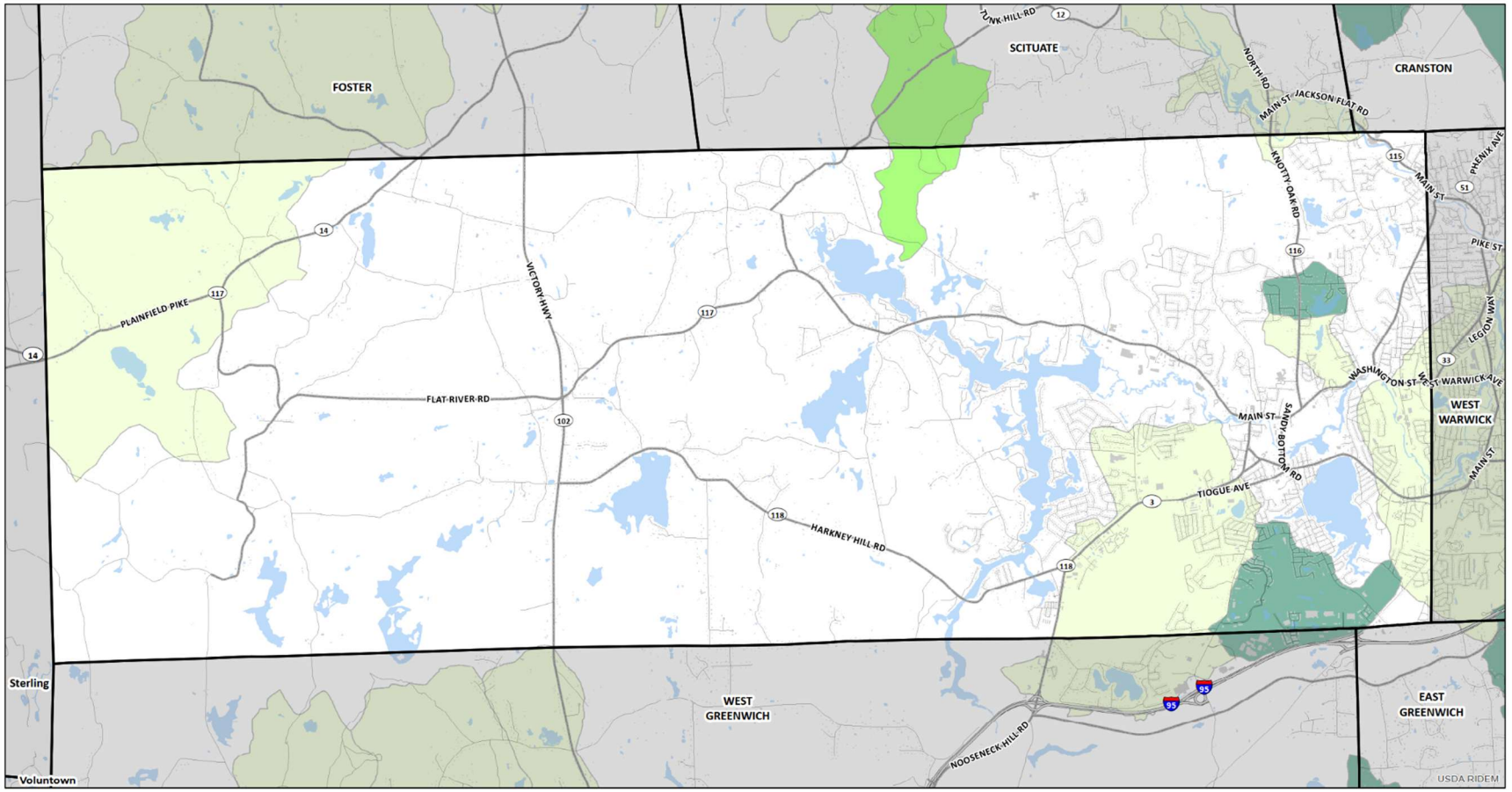
Table 7.4 Stormwater Impaired Watersheds

Watershed	Classification	Waterbody ID	Pollutant causing Impairment
Moosup River	Potential	RI0005011R-03	Enterococcus
Boyd Brook	No	RI0006013R-01	n/a
Mishnock River	Potential	RI0006014R-02	Enterococcus
Upper Dam Pond	Yes	RI0006014L-04	Total Phosphorus (TMDL) Non-native invasive plants
Anthony Brook	Potential	RI0006014R-08	Enterococcus
Tributaries to Tiogue Lake	Yes	RI0006014R-05	Enterococcus (TMDL), Non-native invasive plants
Pawtuxet River South	Potential	RI0006014R-04B	Lead
Hawkinson Brook	Potential	RI0006014R-01	Enterococcus

Source: RIDEM Stormwater Water Impaired Watershed GIS Data Layer

Coventry is committed to complete watershed improvements to address the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for Phosphorus established for Upper Dam Pond. In 2017, the Town hired a consultant to assess the waterbody, complete an inventory of stormwater outfalls, and evaluate options to mitigate the Phosphorus loading associated with stormwater runoff. The Town is in the process of implementing structural BMPs within the watershed (see the Natural Resources Section 2.3.9) to address Phosphorus.

Similarly, the Town is currently working with a consultant to inventory stormwater outfalls and evaluate options to mitigate the TMDL for Enterococcus in the Tributaries to Tiogue Lake.



Map 7.6 Stormwater-Impaired Watersheds

7.2.3.6 STORMWATER IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Coventry's FY 2023 – 2027 Capital Improvement Program includes three stormwater capacity and water quality improvements Projects as detailed in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5 Stormwater and Water Quality Improvements Projects

Project	Purpose	Time Frame	Status	Estimated Cost
Upper Dam Pond Stormwater	Water quality and capacity	2023 - 2026	Design and Construction – 5-Year Implementation Plan	$778,720
Lake George Drainage Culvert	Capacity	2025	Design	$780,000
Wash Rack System	Water quality	2023	Programmed for 2023	$281,960

Source: Coventry Capital Improvement Program – Request Overview 2023 – 2027

The Upper Dam Pond (UDP) Stormwater Project aims to improve Phosphorous removal from stormwater to address the TMDL. This project is ongoing and will include multiple phases of construction. The Phase 1 Design (2021) includes installation of two dry well systems and a Stormceptor System in the vicinity of Laforge Drive, at the northern extent of Upper Dam Pond. This Phase of the UDP Stormwater Project also aims to address localized roadway flooding associated with under-capacity infrastructure and is anticipated to be constructed in the next few years. Additional design and construction phases will follow to continue to improve stormwater treatment in the UDP Watershed.

The Lake George Drainage Culvert Project is aimed at improving water flow from an unnamed tributary to Lake George, and from Lake George to Tiogue Lake. This project is planned to be completed in 2025 and consists of increasing flow capacity by:

- Removing two 24-inch culverts under Johnson Boulevard and replacing the culverts with three 36-inch pipes,
- Replacing the existing 36-inch culvert under the driveway to 11 West Lake Drive with two 36-inch culverts, and,
- Re-grading the existing stream channel to the north and south of York Drive.

The Town also plans to construct a self-contained Wash Rack System with an enclosure to maintain DPW vehicle underbodies. Implementation of this project aims to protect waterbodies in Coventry from stormwater impacts by removing pollutants from vehicles in a controlled manner, rather than removal of pollutants during rain events.

7.2.3.7 MUNICIPAL REGULATIONS, STANDARDS, REVIEW, AND MONITORING FOR DEVELOPMENT

To protect natural resources from stormwater impacts associated with future development, the Town adopted a Stormwater Management Ordinance (Chapter 206) in 2008 that outlines requirements for post-construction stormwater design requirements. In addition, the Town adopted a Soil Erosion and Sediment

Control Ordinance (Chapter 200) in 1993 for construction-phase stormwater management. Section XIII of the Town of Coventry Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, amended in 2019, also contains standards and requirements for stormwater management, including construction-phase Erosion and Sediment Standards, as well as post-construction Drainage Standards. The Ordinances reference state regulations, however, they pre-date the current Rhode Island Stormwater Regulations, and while the Ordinances and Regulations generally align, submission requirements under the Ordinances and Regulations are not consistent.

Coventry's Stormwater and Soil Erosion / Sedimentation Ordinances require that stormwater be controlled during and after development, and also require projects subject to the Ordinance develop both stormwater management plans and soil and sedimentation control plans. These plans are reviewed by the Town Planner and the Town Engineer to ensure compliance with the Code and Regulations.

While the existing Ordinances and Regulations provide specific standards for how to design and model systems and do encourage the use of natural elements in drainage design, additional information and recommendations for low impact development (LID) approaches could be incorporated into future revisions to the Regulations and amendments to the Ordinances. In addition, updates to the Coventry stormwater-related Ordinances and Regulations should include references to current State Standards and updated to ensure that the municipal requirements provide, at a minimum, the same level of treatment required under the State Standards.

In Coventry, development plans are reviewed by the Town Engineer during the Planning Board Review process. Coventry had previously used a Technical Review Committee, consisting of department heads from the Planning, Engineering, Public Works, Fire, and Police Departments, to review certain development projects. While this process was successful, there were no specific review thresholds that triggered review by this Committee. No projects have been reviewed by the Technical Review Committee since the onset of the COVID19 Pandemic.

The Town Engineer conducts inspections of erosion and sediment controls at the time of installation and after final stabilization. In addition, monthly inspections are completed during construction. The Town Engineer is also responsible for inspecting developments for proper installation of stormwater BMPs. While the Town Engineer has found that surface BMPs are easy to inspect for proper installation, inspection of sub-surface BMPs, such as dry wells and infiltration systems, for compliance is challenging.

7.2.4 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

The Town of Coventry Public Works Department (DPW) provides curb-side trash, recycling, bulk item, and yard waste pick up to all residents in town. The town also operates a transfer station, located at the Department of Public Works complex at 1668 Flat River Road. Coventry had a 24.8 % recycling rate and 33.8% diversion rate in 2021 and is still working to achieve the 35% recycling rate and 50% diversion rate goals for the State of Rhode Island. [9] Mixed refuse and recycling is brought to the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Center.

Coventry DPW operates a weekly trash and recycling pick up program, deploying twelve town sanitation staff, including a full-time recycling coordinator and a foreman. The service relies on four automated side loader trash trucks and four automated side loader recycling trucks. Trash and recycling are collected five days a week. Yard waste is collected April through December and must be placed separately from trash and yard waste. All Housing Authority developments are included in municipal trash and recycling pick

[9] RIRRC. (2021). 2021 Municipal Summary (Detailed).

up and multi-family developments with over three residential units are included with a town council resolution. Coventry's solid waste management program is funded through the general fund.

The Coventry Transfer Station, shown in Map 7.7 Services and Facilities**,** is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM to 3:00 PM and is available for Coventry residents only. The transfer station accepts furniture, appliances, household trash and recycling, electronics, natural debris, limited construction debris, cooking oil, car batteries and metal, but it is not permitted at a particular capacity as nothing is stored there longer than a 30-day period. The town also runs a very successful furniture and bicycle bank at the transfer station where people can leave and pick up solid wood furniture and lightly used bicycles. A permit is required to drop off at the transfer station.

The town also operates one day events including a prescription take back event, an eco-depot for discarding hazardous substances, an annual earth day event and composting classes. The DPW sells municipal compost bins for $40 each, and residents who attend a free workshop on proper composting can receive up to two bins at a half discount. They work with a variety of recyclers for scrap metal, paint, mattresses, electronic waste, cooking oil, clothing, Christmas trees, auto batteries and antifreeze.

The town has municipal trash and recycling receptacles at various parks and ballfields and points along the Greenway. These are emptied and brought to the transfer station by the Department of Parks and Recreation.

When new residents move to Coventry, the town sends a packet with information about trash and recycling guidelines, and DPW posts on social media with seasonally specific solid waste guidelines.

The Town DPW operates a variety of programs to divert solid waste from the trash stream, including the bike bank, furniture bank, and compost workshops and bin discounts. The Town also has piloted other creative programs like offering coffee coupons to super recyclers in town. The town is planning a municipal compost site on Nike Site Road to increase their diversion rate. This facility could divert up to 2,000 tons of natural debris each year.[10][11]

7.2.5 POLICE

The Police Department is in the newest building in town, shared with the Senior and Resource Center at 50 Wood Street (shown in Map 7.7 Services and Facilities). The Coventry Police Department is made up of three divisions: the Patrol Division, the Detective Division and the Administrative Services Division. Animal Control, a unit of the Patrol Division, operates from 9AM-3PM daily out of an outdated and undersized building behind DPW at 1670 Flat River Road (Shown in Figure 2).

The Patrol Division includes patrol officers who respond to calls, enforces traffic laws, and undergo community relations. Patrol officers spend most of their time patrolling the town, responding to calls, and writing up reports. The school resource officers, dispatchers, and the domestic violence advocate and crossing guards are all under the command of this division. Animal Control officers, also under the Patrol Division, operate a shelter for pets and offers a rabies clinic every year in April. Dispatch answers emergency and non-emergency calls 24/7 and sends police officers and fire fighters to respond. The town also recently added a K-9 unit.

[10] RIRRC. (2021). Annual Municipal Data Survey. Coventry.
[11] RIRRC. (2021). Recycling Diversion Plan. Coventry.

The Detective Division investigates major criminal offenses including homicide, sexual assault, robbery, computer crimes, narcotics, and other felony crimes. They also maintain the sex offender registry, conduct background checks, and prosecute all cases for the Police Department.

The Administrative Division stores all public records and manages records requests, is responsible for training, and manages department IT needs, facility needs and maintenance, recruitment and hiring, payroll, budget preparation, and grant and budget management.

The Police Department has 57 officers and 17 civilian staff, some of whom work part time. The Patrol Division is the largest division which when fully staffed, with 36 officers. As of the writing of this report, the Patrol Division had four vacancies. According to the 2019 Town of Coventry Performance Audit, the Patrol Division needs 25 officers to maintain a 60% proactive level, but it is recommended to maintain 30 patrol officers, as well as six sergeants and three lieutenants, as a buffer given challenges hiring and retaining staff. The Police Department has seven detectives, and five public safety dispatchers. Training of Police Department staff is provided by the Department, usually during over-time hours.

At only four years old, the Police Department headquarters is in excellent condition. The facility was recently outfitted with new equipment to operate a dispatch center. The Police Department vehicle fleet includes sixty-one patrol cars, and one boat for water rescues. The Department gets two-three new vehicles each year. As previously mentioned, the Animal Shelter at 1670 Flat River Road is in poor condition with serious wood rot to the structure and insufficient seating areas.

The Police Department call volume decreased to 19,000 calls in 2021 likely due to Covid-19, lower than the 28,000 calls received in 2017. Most calls received are related to general complaints, domestic issues, larcenies, opioids, and overdoses. According to the Police Chief, the number of opioid calls has been increasing and officers deploy Narcan when needed. Additionally, police have seen an uptick in cases involving Fentanyl, a synthetic and extremely strong opioid. Behavior associated with opioid use and abuse creates safety concerns for users, public safety officers, and members of the public.

The Coventry Police Department is increasing its engagement with the community to improve public relationships, and may be required to upgrade to bodycams in the next few years.

7.2.6 Fire & Emergency Response

Coventry's four fire districts: Central, Hopkins Hill, Western Coventry, and Coventry (Anthony), respond to town fire and emergency incidents. There are six active fire stations among the four districts – Central Coventry and Western Coventry District have two stations each, and Hopkins Hill and Anthony District have one station each. Map 7.7 Services and Facilities shows the stations.

- Coventry (Anthony) Fire District at 571 Washington Street
- Central Coventry Fire Station (Tiogue) at 240 Arnold Road
- Central Coventry Fire Station 7 at 2847 Flat River Road
- Hopkins Hill Fire Department at One Bestwick Trail
- Western Coventry Summit Station at 1110 Victory Highway
- Western Coventry Greene Station at 2 Hopkins Hollow Road

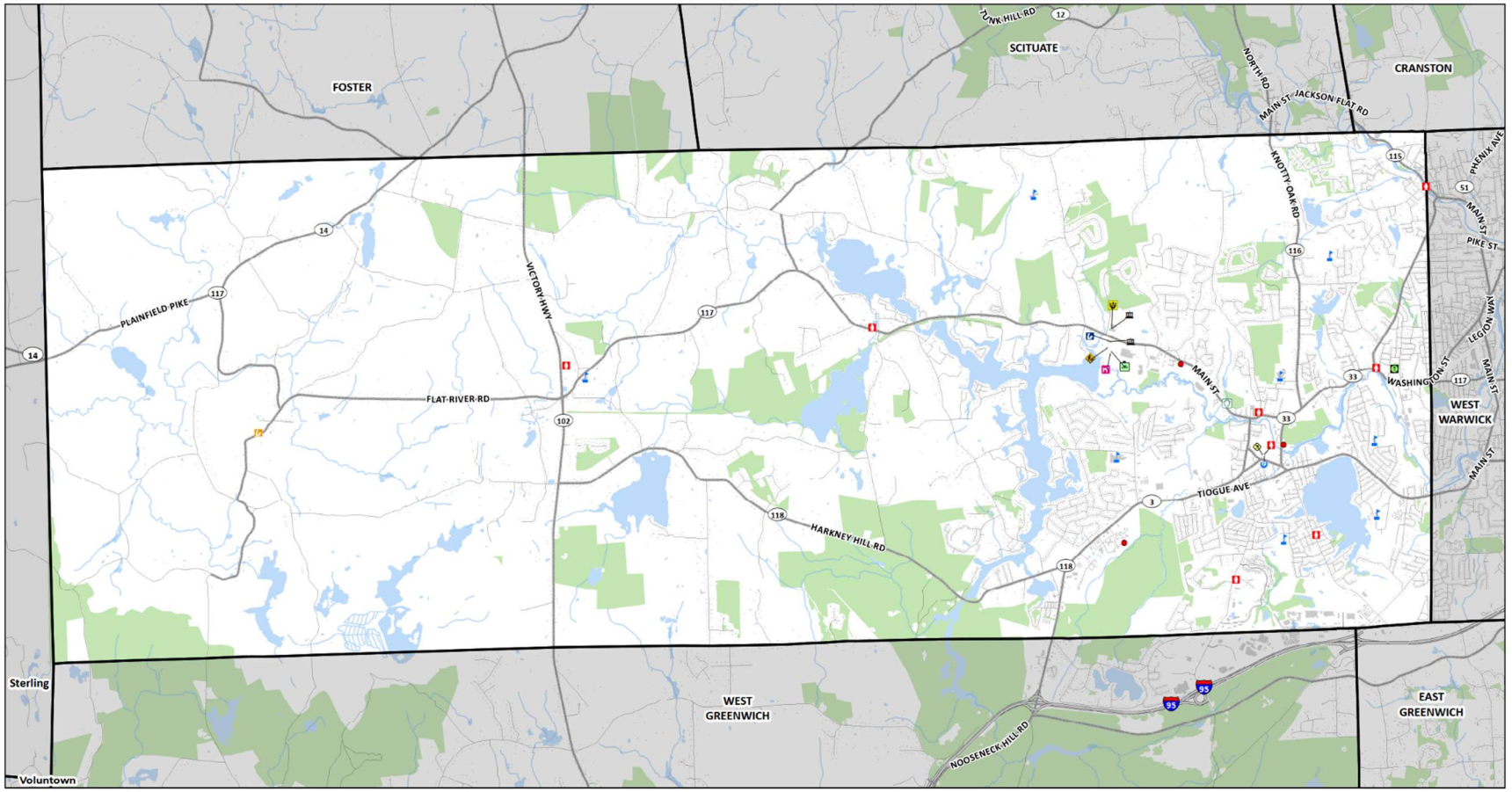
The Western Coventry Fire District has a Fire Chief, the Anthony District has a Fire Chief, and Central and Hopkins Hill both fall under one Fire Chief. Dispatch for the Fire Department is located at the Police Station at 50 Wood Street, operated by four dispatchers staffed fully to the Fire Department. As of April 2022, the Central Coventry Fire District has 30 full-time firefighters, Hopkins Hill and Anthony both have 10 full-time firefighters, and Western Coventry has two full-time fire fighters and 15-17 per diem fire fighters, and is in the process of hiring a third full-time firefighter. As of September 2022, Western Coventry funded a

fifth fire fighter as proposed by the Fire District Board of Director's[12], according to a comprehensive plan steering committee member.

In 2021, the Fire Department responded to around 6,400 calls across all four districts. According to data from the Central Coventry Fire District, the largest fire district in Coventry, most calls are categorized as Rescue and Emergency Medical Service Incidents, including motor vehicle crashes and EMS calls. Fire calls accounted for around 3% of calls and hazardous conditions without a fire accounted for roughly 4% of calls.[13]

[12] Western Coventry Fire District. (2022). *Board of Director's Annual Report.* Retrieved from http://wcfd.net/files/137133470.pdf

[13] Town of Coventry. (2021). Central Coventry Incident Type Report Summary. Coventry RI.



Map 7.7 Services and Facilities

Each fire district manages their own fleet of emergency vehicles. Anthony has one engine, one ladder, one rescue, and one special service unit. Central Coventry has two engines, two rescues, a reserve engine, a reserve rescue, and a marine boat. Hopkins Hill has an engine ladder combination, an engine, a brush unit, a small marine unit, and a decontamination unit. Western Coventry District has a pumper, a rescue, two tankers, an all-service vehicle, and an off-road brush fire truck. Coventry has five ambulances total. The fleets of vehicles are kept in good condition with a portion of the budget dedicated to maintenance and new vehicles procured when needed. Typically, a Ladder truck lasts 25 years, an engine lasts 15 years, and a boat lasts 5-7 years.

Both Western Coventry stations are in good condition and Summit Station is just nine years old. Hopkins Hill Station is also in good condition. Both of the Central Fire District stations and Anthony Fire District station are in need of repair. For example, the boiler at Station 7 needs replacement and Anthony Station recently had a sewer issue. Recently, the dispatch center at the Police Department was upgraded with all new equipment and computer aided dispatching hardware.

Thanks to the distribution of Fire Districts, firefighting crews can respond quickly to emergencies across Coventry. The only impact to response times is the physical size of the town. According to fire officials, response times have not decreased in the past few years, but the distance travelled got longer after the closures of Harris Fire District Station at 701 Main Street and the Washington Fire Company at 2 Station Street eight years ago. Fire stations support each other on calls across town.

Figure 3 shows fire stations in Coventry.

7.2.7 PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The Town of Coventry has seven public schools including five elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The Coventry Public School administration offices are located at 1675 Flat River Road in a building shared with the Coventry Town Hall Annex, and the school maintenance department operates out of the former Oak Haven Elementary School building at 46 Pettine Street. Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School and Coventry High School serve the most students, while Washington Oak School is the largest elementary school, serving a third of all students in town from preschool to Grade 5. Full-day and half day pre-kindergarten for students turning 5 years old is offered at the Washington Oak elementary school. Map 7.7 shows schools in Coventry.

The school maintenance staff includes two master electricians, one master plumber, one HVACC Technician, one carpenter, two laborers, seven head custodians, and 28 custodians. School operations are overseen by the Assistant Superintendent, who manages the Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, the Special Education Director, and the Early Childhood Director. The Superintendent manages the Assistant Superintendent and the school administration staff, including finance, human resources, IT, and student management systems[14].

Table 7.6 Public Schools (2019) shows the public schools in Coventry including 2019 enrollment, the year built, and the gross square feet

[14] Matrix Consulting Group. (2022). *Performance Audit Final Report.* Coventry, RI.

Table 7.6 Public Schools (2019)

School	Grades	Total Students Enrolled	Year Built	Gross Square Feet
Hopkins Hill School	Preschool to Grade 5	353	1962	37,220 sf
Washington Oak School	Preschool to Grade 5	664	2002	68,000 sf
Blackrock School	Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 5	318	1978	40,130 sf
Western Coventry School	Kindergarten to Grade 5	344	1948	42,200 sf
Tiogue School	Kindergarten to Grade 5	330	1971	42,200 sf
Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School	Grade 6 to Grade 8	1,061	1958	160,455 sf
Coventry High School	Grade 9 to Grade 12	1,454	1975	298,890 sf

Source: RI Department of Education, 2019, Jacobs 2016

7.2.7.1 Enrollment & Projections by Grade

Coventry Public School enrollment has declined 9% over the past ten years as shown in Table 7.7 Enrollment 2011-2021 and enrollment is projected to remain relatively steady with a decline of around 2% over the next ten years, shown in Table 7.8 Enrollment Projections 2020-2031. According to the Superintendent, the schools have seen an increase in homeschooling during the Covid-19 pandemic. At Coventry High School, average class sizes are at 20 students per class, with an efficiency rate of 72%, assuming a classroom capacity of 28 students per class. Efficiency rate indicates the percent of total classroom capacity used. An efficiency rate of 80% is recommended to balance the need to use resources efficiently and to not overcrowd classrooms.[15] The school is considering cutting courses with low enrollment to achieve a higher efficiency rate.

Table 7.7 Enrollment 2011-2021

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Pre-K	115	114	121	112	136	113	125	137	131	160
K	270	314	279	292	256	309	317	321	283	291
1	330	336	341	316	314	307	324	310	336	284
2	363	354	353	340	314	316	329	326	308	329
3	347	373	360	352	354	335	330	324	329	313
4	389	368	383	356	360	361	338	342	341	343
5	394	399	365	372	359	375	363	337	354	341
6	397	382	401	364	373	364	374	373	342	368
7	359	395	379	400	372	370	372	374	387	348
8	411	369	395	386	398	372	376	388	381	376
9	443	430	374	397	396	387	374	394	372	395
10	437	435	432	371	384	384	383	350	394	367
11	416	429	400	397	348	380	374	380	374	382
12	439	405	409	399	386	340	367	367	410	382
Total	5,110	5,103	4,992	4,854	4,750	4,713	4,746	4,723	4,742	4,679

[15] Matrix Consulting Group. (2022). Performance Audit Final Report. Coventry, RI.

Table 7.8 Enrollment Projections 2020-2031

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031
Birth year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Births	306	307	308	285	304 (prov.)	302 (est.)	301 (est.)	300 (est.)	298 (est.)	301 (est.)	301 (est.)
Pre-K	160	161	162	163	164	165	166	167	168	168	170
K	291	319	320	296	316	314	313	312	310	313	313
1	284	298	327	328	303	34	322	321	320	318	321
2	329	284	298	327	328	303	324	322	321	320	318
3	313	330	285	299	328	329	304	325	323	322	321
4	343	327	344	397	312	342	343	317	339	337	336
5	341	347	331	348	300	315	346	347	320	343	341
6	368	350	356	340	358	308	324	355	356	329	352
7	348	375	356	363	346	365	314	330	362	363	335
8	376	355	383	363	370	353	372	320	337	369	370
9	395	381	360	389	368	375	358	377	325	342	374
10	367	385	371	351	379	358	365	349	367	317	333
11	382	374	393	378	358	387	365	372	356	374	323
12	382	392	384	404	388	368	398	375	382	366	384
Total	4,679	4,678	4,670	4,646	4,618	4,606	4,614	4,589	4,586	4,582	4,591

Source: New England School Development Council 2021[16] [17]

7.2.7.2 FACILITIES

The school facilities are described by town residents and staff as "worn" with the newest school facility, Washington Oak School, built in 2002. A 2016 Facility Condition Assessment report analyzed conditions across all Coventry School properties.[18] School building deficiencies included cafeterias and media centers not meeting the RI standard for size, lack of ADA accessible facilities, presence of lead paint, outdated multimedia and technology equipment, heating and ventilation issues, and poor acoustics.

The middle school specifically has the follow deficiencies:

- The cafeteria and library/media center do not meet the Rhode Island size requirement
- No competition track
- Campus network technology does not meet standards,
- Leaks and drainage issues
- Food preparation area is far from the cafeteria
- Lighting is in poor condition

[16] New England School Development Council. (2021). Coventry Public Schools 2020-2021 Enrollment Projection Report. Coventry, RI.

[17] This data came from The Town of Coventry, not the Department of Education

[18] Jacobs. (2016). Facility Condition Assessment. Coventry, RI: Town of Coventry.

And the following needs:

- Replacement windows
- Updated plumbing fixtures
- Upgraded security cameras and a PA system

The 2016 Assessment proposed a three-story academic addition at the middle school to address some of these deficiencies and needs. The addition would include new classroom space, a small group collaboration space, a renovated media center and cafeteria, new athletic fields, and an expanded bus loop. A school bond referendum was proposed to fund $89 million of improvements based on the 2016 report, but the Town Council voted 3-2 against the referendum in December 2021, so town residents did not have the chance to vote on pursuing the bond initiative[19].

In 2022, The Rhode Island Department of Education required the town spend $2,370,000 on maintenance of its school facilities.[20] A comparison of Coventry school board spending and the State of Rhode Island Minimum Maintenance Expenditure Targets suggests that the town is not meeting the threshold that would allow it to apply for additional funding for capital expenditures.

7.2.8 PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The Town of Coventry operates two public libraries. The Coventry Main Library is located at 1672 Flat River Road and shares the building with the Town Hall. The Greene Library is a satellite location of the Coventry Main Library, located at 179 Hopkins Hollow Rd in Western Coventry. The Greene Library building is owned by the Greene Public Library Corporation but library functions are provided by town staff. Map 7.7 Services and Facilities shows the libraries in Coventry.

The Main Library is open 9 AM to 5 PM daily with extended hours on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday to 8 PM. On Sundays, the library is open from 12 PM to 4 PM. The Greene Library has fewer hours and is open Tuesday and Thursday in the afternoon and Wednesday and Saturday in the morning. The library system is open a combined 61 hours per week which meets the minimum state standard of 60 hours for a municipality with a population of 20,000 to 49,999.

The library system runs programming for adults including book discussion groups, yoga, knitting and crocheting, crafts groups, and a writing group, as well as programming for kids and teens including a family story time, book club and virtual escape room. The Main Library building and the Greene Library both provide free public Wi-Fi in the building and in the parking lot. In recent years, the library system has secured a grant for a Book Mobile Program, increased virtual programming, and added a part time outreach librarian position and a full-time young adult/ children's position.

The total library space between the two libraries is 13,200 square feet, which is lower than towns with a comparable population.[21] For example, West Warwick has a 30,000 square foot library for a population of around 29,000. The library system has 7 full time employees, 21 part-time employees, and 2 custodians shared with Town Hall[22]. The Main Library facility, owned by the town, was originally built to be just a library, but since the building was constructed, Town Hall has taken up half of the library building. The shared space means town staff and library staff compete for rooms.

[19] Jacobs. (2016). Facility Condition Assessment. Coventry, RI: Town of Coventry
[20] Rhode Island Department of Education. (2022). FY 2022 Maintenance Expenditures Targets.
[21] RI Office of Library and Information Systems. (2020). *Public Library Annual Survey FY 2020.* Retrieved from https://olis.ecms.ri.gov/library-services/data-statistics/public-libraries/public-library-annual-survey-fy-2020-data
[22] Coventry Public Library. (2021). *Strategic Plan 2021-2026.* Coventry, RI.

7.2.9 Community or Senior Centers

7.2.9.1 Coventry Recreation Community Center & Teen Center

The Coventry Parks & Recreation Department offers programming both within the Recreation Community Center at 1277 Main Street, at the Teen Center and gym within the Town Hall Annex at 1675 Flat River Road, and on the fields behind the Community Center building. Programs include adult fitness programs such as Zumba, circuit training and HIIT, as well as youth and young adult programs like afterschool STEAM programs, kids' clubs, and youth fitness programs, a summer program and camps over school vacation weeks.

Recreation space at the Community Center is in high demand. Town departments and other community groups compete to rent out the space for their individual programs resulting in a building that is teeming with activity morning to night, 7 days a week and year-round. The need for indoor community space is so high in Coventry that the demand is not tempered by the building's short comings such as a lack accessible entrances and a poorly functioning air conditioning system. Many Coventry residents and program operators have expressed desire for more indoor space to host community events and a fitness center, but the Community Center is too small to host sort of program. The Teen Center was moved out of the Community Center and into the Town Hall Annex building a few years ago to provide a dedicated room for young adults ages 13 and older. The room is open to young adults for no charge when staffed, typically during afterschool hours. The Teen Center and gym section of the Town Hall Annex are staffed and maintained by Parks and Recreation, while the rest of the building is maintained by the Department of Public Works. The Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan describes outdoor recreational resources and other Department of Parks and Recreation operations.

7.2.9.2 Coventry Senior and Resource Center & Food Bank

The Coventry Senior and Resource Center and Town Food Bank are operated by the Department of Human Services (DHS). DHS does the following:

- maintains a community garden
- operates the food bank
- serves meals on wheels
- operates a meal site
- provides senior transportation
- supports residents in applications to federal and state assistance programs
- works with residents dealing with mental health, substance abuse, or family issues
- partners with Project Friends to provide programming for adults with developmental disabilities
- provides programming for all ages, with a focus on seniors

Programs provided by DHS vary, but include nutrition, health and wellness programs like yoga and tai chi for students, nutrition and horticultural therapy for seniors, and classes for seniors taking care of grandchildren. All food from the community garden goes to the food bank. DHS social workers support Coventry residents of all ages. Much of the programming is grant-funded through the Rhode Island Office of Healthy Aging.

The Senior and Resource Center is in the 50 Wood Street complex, the newest building in town shared with the Police Department, and the Food Bank is located at 191 MacArthur Boulevard in a building owned by Comprehensive Community Action Inc. The Senior and Resource Center has nine full time staff, including three social workers, a social work assistant who manages the Food Bank, a program assistant, a bookkeeper, a custodian, and a receptionist. The Senior and Resource Center also has a strong volunteer

component. Project Friends, an independent non-profit organization, operates out of the Senior Center with two full time and nine part time staff. There are twenty-five adults with disabilities in the Project Friends program. The program has had trouble with staffing during the pandemic labor shortage. Across Coventry and the entire region, demand for senior transportation and programming is increasing as the elderly population increases.

Map 7.7 Services and Facilities shows the Senior & Resource Center, Food Bank, Teen Center, and Recreation Community Center.

7.2.10 TOWN HALL

Coventry Town Hall, shown in Map 7.7 Services and Facilities**,** is located at 1672 Flat River Road in the building shared with the Coventry Main Library. The building hosts town office, along with the municipal court and probate court. Town offices are also located at The Town Hall Annex at 1675 Flat River Road. The Town Hall Offices and the Main Library share meeting and programming rooms in the building at 1672 Flat River Road. Both the Town Hall Offices and the Library rely on the rooms for programming and frequently compete for the shared spaces. The competition for space inconveniences both the Town Hall and Library operations. The building is in fair to good condition, with no major issues.

7.2.11 ACTIVE TOWN BUILDINGS

The Town of Coventry's municipal operations are conducted out of the buildings described in Table 7.9. Along with the actively used town buildings, the town also owns several vacant buildings, including the Old Town Hall and Police Station building, Former Teen Center, the Historic Read Schoolhouse, and Old Summit Library, and a variety of buildings used exclusively for storage, including a building at Provident Place Park. Town buildings' energy amenities, including solar panels and electric vehicle charging stations are further described in the Energy Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. The town does not currently have a complete asset database of municipally owned buildings.

Table 7.9 Town buildings Currently Integral to Provision of Town Services

Building	Address
Department of Public Works Building	1668 Flat River Road
Animal Shelter	1668 Flat River Road
Public Library and Town Hall	1670 & 1672 Flat River Road
Town Hall Annex and Coventry Public Schools Admin	1675 Flat River Road
Coventry Police Department and Senior and Resource Center building	50 Wood Street
Coventry Recreation Community Center	1277 Main Street
Old Oak Haven Elementary School Maintenance Facility	46 Pettine Street
Schools	Various

7.3 NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

7.3.1 WATER SUPPLY

GROUNDWATER QUALITY PROTECTION

The Town has primary custodial responsibility and ability to control land use within the groundwater aquifer recharge areas through implementation of Zoning and Planning Regulations. The Town and KCWA should work together to protect the quality of potable water for its residents and customers from contamination by the effects of urbanization and future land use.

The Rhode Island Wellhead Protection Program (WHP) was created to provide recommendations for protection of public potable water wells from potential contamination sources. The WHP provides proposed protection areas throughout the state including Coventry for the critical areas around public wells where water moves toward and reaches a public well.

While the KCWA has acquired land surrounding the public drinking water wells present within Coventry, protection of the Spring Lake Well and Mishnock Wellfield could be enhanced through the implementation of a Watershed Protection Overlay District that includes comprehensive protective zoning restrictions. Similarly, Watershed Protections may also be considered for areas in Coventry that supply potable water via private groundwater wells. The goal of implementing Watershed and Groundwater Protection Overlay Districts, in conjunction with updated Zoning and Planning Regulations, would be to restrict certain land uses and impose specific development standards within groundwater recharge areas.

Through mapping the Watershed and Groundwater Protection Overlay Districts, the Town will also have the opportunity to identify and manage point and non-point sources of contamination in groundwater aquifers, such as:

- Individual Sewage Disposal Systems (ISDSs)
- Known failure of Underground Storage Tanks (UST) as recorded by the RIDEM
- Documented spills of hazardous materials, and/or waste on State and local highways, or at commercial, institutional, or residential sites
- Dumping of septic effluent and hazardous waste from waste haulers
- Former landfill sites
- De-icing sand or salt storage areas
- Commercial construction sites
- Groundwater contamination through inadvertent or unauthorized disposal of commercial or institutional hazardous materials
- Nutrient loading associated with large waterfowl populations
- Commercial repair facilities
- Automotive repair facilities
- Commercial and industrial development

Following a comprehensive review of potential sources of contamination to the groundwater in Coventry, the Town would benefit from the preparation of a Watershed Management Plan outlining specific actions needed to prevent degradation of the water supply and mitigate existing contamination of the water supply.

7.3.1.1 WATER SUPPLY CAPACITY PROTECTION

As the population of Coventry increases, water usage will continue to increase. And, while the KCWA attests that there is sufficient capacity to provide water to its service area, water usage and drought frequency increases (due to climate change) may strain the water supply. While limits on water usage are imposed by both the State and KCWA, the Town understands the need to use water efficiently and effectively to protect and sustain the water supply. The Town believes that additional measures could be taken to protect the water supply during water emergencies and will support the KCWA in developing an updated Demand/Drought Management Policy that incorporates current strategies in drought management, should the KCWA plan to update this Policy.

Coventry sees an opportunity to educate its residents on potable water usage and to develop a plan for water management and conservation in times of emergencies and shortages. In addition, Planning Regulations could be updated to:

- Require or encourage the use of conservation plumbing fixture and "WaterSense" appliances for larger developments. These fixtures are offered at a discounted price by Rhode Island Energy[23], if the purchaser is a Rhode Island Energy residential gas or electric customer.
- Restrict sizes of landscapes that require irrigation, the amount of water used for irrigation, and times for operating irrigation systems. Applicants could also be required to estimate water use demand for specific developments.
- Condition approvals to specify that new plantings should occur in only the spring and fall.

7.3.2 WASTEWATER

In 1982, the town contracted to use 25% of the West Warwick Wastewater Treatment Plant, but currently only uses 10-20% of the capacity. While the town does not use the full capacity, the town is still billed by West Warwick, not only for their actual flow, but also for their proportion of debt service on facility upgrades.[24]

In the past, the town did not increase sewer rates commensurate with payment of debt on past sewer upgrades. Sewer assessments were set at $3,500 per unit in 1997, $2,300 in 2003, $6,600 in 2004 and $12,900 in 2009. In 2017, the fee, or assessment, to connect to the new sewer lines on Arnold Road and Hazard Street were set at upwards of $20,000 per unit, with 20-year interest bearing financing available. The range of assessment costs extended higher than $30,000 for people on roads with ledge, requiring more costly construction techniques. The recent price increase responds to large debt payments and lack of financial sustainability of the previous funding mechanism set too low to cover costs. This has presented challenges to homeowners required to connect to the sewer system. Homeowners have noted that the town did not provide sufficient notice to residents about the forthcoming assessments, inhibiting their ability to plan for the expense[25]. Sewer use rates have been described by some residents as extremely complex with some users charged differently than others. This has bred distrust in the sewer use fee calculation methodology and billing system, according to one Coventry Town Councilor.

[23] https://rienergymarketplace.com/Water-Fixtures/

[24] RI Office of the Auditor General. (2019). *Town of Coventry - Sewer Program - Limited Review Report.* Providence, RI.

[25] Gravelle, K. (2021, April 1). Coventry Town Council to talk future of sewers. *The Kent County Daily Times*. Retrieved from https://www.ricentral.com/kent_county_daily_times/coventry-town-council-to-talk-future-of-sewers/article_f22650c6-92e1-11eb-8f4a-f38f7ec335aa.htm

The Sewer Enterprise Fund currently does not generate enough cash flow to meet all sewer costs, so the General Fund ends up providing cash flow advances that are not repaid. In 2018, this amounted to $2.7 million. The town is wrestling with how to fund future expansions and service so as not to burden current residents required to hook up to the sewer. The sewer use rates and assessments should meet the sewer program's long term debt obligations and cover costs of current and future operations, without placing an unfair burden on new connectors.

A long history of deferred maintenance has added to funding problems. According to the 2022 Performance Audit Final Report, rather than conduct the appropriate routine maintenance, the town reactively contracts with a private consultant to make repairs when there is an issue. This has led to a lack of organizational accountability over the repairs and confusion over the role of town departments in the maintenance of the sewers. The town engineer role in charge of reviewing sewer plans has up until recently been staffed by a part-time consultant, and with little capacity to do preventative planning. Recently, the town has hired a full-time town engineer. The recent town audit recommended DPW add a Sewer Maintenance Division and develop a preventative maintenance plan for the sewer system. [26]

Finally, the lack of sewer around many of Coventry's water bodies has led to water quality issues in the watershed. Businesses that want to operate in town have either had to build their own sewer lines or spend money on their own costly on-site waste treatment systems. This discourages commercial and residential development in town. Successful expansion of the town sewer system could have major benefits for economic development and natural resource protection, if existing financial and maintenance issues are resolved. The town also has the opportunity to seek grants to assist low to moderate income homeowners with failing septic systems. The town has also recently begun work on a Wastewater Facility Plan to guide future town actions related to the sewer due to be complete in 2023. A preliminary evaluation conducted as part of the Wastewater Facility Plan to prioritize planning areas for sewer highlighted the area between Route 3 (Nooseneck Hill Road) and Coventry High School as the top priority planning area, followed by the primarily residential area north of Tiogue Lake and south of the Anthony district, based on environmental impact, affordability, onsite wastewater treatment system problem areas and site suitability for continued use of onsite wastewater treatment systems. [27]

[26] Matrix Consulting Group. (2022). Performance Audit Final Report. Coventry, RI.

[27] Fuss & O'Neil. (November 22, 2022). Technical Memorandum, Town of Coventry Matrix Evaluation of Planning Areas. Coventry, RI.

7.3.3 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

7.3.3.1 MUNICIPAL STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

The Coventry DPW continues to maintain and improve Town-owned Stormwater System to address capacity concerns and water quality requirements. To efficiently program stormwater-related capital improvements, the Town should update and field-verify their GIS database of the Stormwater System, including locating Town-owned drywells. Once completed, the Town would benefit from preparing an updated SWMPP outlining specific goals, training, and actions proposed by the DPW to ensure the SWMPP reflects the current conditions of the System and maintenance being performed in Town.

As the Town progresses with future roadway infrastructure improvements, the Town should consider implementing and developing plans to install and maintain additional BMPs, especially in Wellhead Protection Areas and in watersheds that may be or are impaired by stormwater. As the Town considers stormwater design alternatives in Wellhead Protection Areas, the distances to water supply wells and potential for stormwater infiltration to impact the aquifer should be considered. The Town would also benefit from designing new drainage infrastructure using predicted rainfall volumes (such as NOAA 14+) to incorporate climate change and resiliency planning within the Town's stormwater infrastructure.

While the Town continues to improve its drainage infrastructure, additional staffing within the DPW and Engineering Department will be required to incorporate additional green infrastructure and other BMPs into the Town's SWMPP. Additional funding will also be needed in the DPW and Engineering Department's annual budget to improve BMP maintenance and fund continued education on innovative stormwater management solutions. To fund improvements to the stormwater infrastructure, dedicated stormwater staff, and staff training, the Town of Coventry will explore seeking grant opportunities, increasing filing fees for developers, and implementing a stormwater utility.

According to the survey completed as part of Coventry's 2018 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, there are many roadways and areas in Town that are impacted by stormwater, either from flooding or from excess flow resulting in erosion. The DPW and Engineering Department could consider modernizing their method of tracking flooding and stormwater-related complaints from residents and other stakeholders using GIS mapping. By implementing a GIS-based system, the Town would be able to track and monitor Projects that have been completed to mitigate stormwater impacts.

7.3.3.2 DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS AND REVIEW

There are many opportunities to protect Coventry's water and natural resources from impacts associated with stormwater runoff from new developments. The Town's Stormwater Ordinances and Regulations are outdated, therefore, updating these documents to encourage further use of LIDs in stormwater design could significantly reduce future development's contribution to increasing stormwater runoff. The implementation of LIDs Town-wide could include drainage swale or rain garden construction, which provide not only stormwater recharge, but can also provide pollinator habitat. Another LID option includes collecting clean stormwater runoff from roofs and pedestrian walkways in cisterns, as they can improve access to water in areas without fire hydrants. While cisterns may not be an applicable form of stormwater management for all development types, their incorporation into designs will aid in fighting house fires, as well as brush and/or forest fires that may increase in frequency and intensity as a result of climate change.

In addition, there is an opportunity to improve project review through standardizing the use of the Technical Review Committee. Specific review thresholds and requirements could be developed to ensure that all Town Departments' interests are considered within these thresholds and requirements. For example, Technical Review Committee thresholds could include subdivisions over a specific number of

units, projects with internal roadway exceeding a certain length, projects proposing over an acre of clearing, projects proposing over a quarter acre of impervious area, etc. This Committee could also include members of Town Boards and Commissions, such as the Conservation Commission. Stormwater-specific submission requirements could include specific analyses such as an evaluation of LID measures (such the use of cisterns, rain gardens, or infiltration basins), soil evaluation logs for stormwater BMP design, etc.

Due to the challenges associated with post-construction inspections of sub-surface BMPs, the Town could consider requiring installation of these BMPs be witnessed by the Town Engineer or their representative to confirm compliance. This requirement could be reflected in the Ordinance, Regulations, or in Conditions of Approval for a given development.

Finally, the Stormwater Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations could be updated to ensure that the maintenance responsibilities, schedule, budget, and method of funding are detailed during the design review process. Through updating these Regulations, developers will be required to provide up-front maintenance details, allowing the Town to more easily identify concerns with developers suggested maintenance protocols and enforce maintenance requirements.

7.3.4 Solid Waste Management

The Town of Coventry has invested in creative ways of diverting solid waste and promoting recycling in town, but still has room to grow to achieve the State of Rhode Island goals of 35% recycling rate and 50% diversion rate. The town has an opportunity to increase diversion of organic matter from the solid waste stream by investing in a municipal compost site, which the Department of Public Works has in the planning process. The town can continue to collaborate with the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Center and other Rhode Island towns to determine best practices in waste diversion. The Department of Public Works also has a strong social media presence and can continue to use this platform to encourage and educate the public on solid waste programs and processes.

As new housing units have been built in town, there has been additional pressure on solid waste collection, but the capacity of the DPW staff has not increased to meet the need. The DPW projects they will need to add two more drivers and two new trucks over the next five years to accommodate new housing growth.

7.3.5 Senior and Resource Center

While the Senior and Resource Center building is new, the Department of Human Services projects that over the next 20 years, the demand for the space will continue to increase as the population in Coventry ages. The Human Services Department has additionally had trouble maintaining sufficient staffing for the Project Friends Program and is constantly in search of funding to support transportation and programming.

7.3.6 Recreation Community Center

The Coventry Community Center is not large enough for the indoor play the Department of Parks and Recreation would like to provide, is not fully accessible to people with disabilities, and has deficient cooling capabilities. The afterschool programs provided by the Department are frequently on a wait list, but they cannot increase capacity due to limited facility space. The Teen Center and gym in the Town Hall Annex are in good condition. The Department of Parks and Recreation hopes to expand options for teens through introducing programs requiring a participation fee at the center.

The Department of Parks and Recreation is burdened by a lack of other affordable children's programs in town. The Westwood YMCA Facility has historically been a solely outdoor facility in Western Coventry,

but the organization is hoping to upgrade to a year-round facility in the future, which could ease some of the pressure on the Coventry Department of Parks and Recreation.

7.3.7 PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The library system is meeting the minimum hours requirement for Rhode Island Public Libraries but is not meeting the requirement for adequate space to provide programming with just 13,000 square feet of library space for over 35,000 residents. The Coventry library system struggles with limited space for programming as they share meeting spaces in their building with the Town Hall. The libraries have also had high staff turnover due to low salaries and part-time positions.

7.3.8 PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Town school facilities are outdated and in need of major repairs and renovations, particularly the Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School facility. The town has not met state maintenance requirements, limiting the town's eligibility for state grants. Prior opportunities to fund school upgrades have not been approved by town council due to the high cost of improvements and financing required. The town could receive state grants for capital improvements by meeting maintenance requirements, and by working towards compromise between the schools, the taxpayers, and the town council. The town can consider different cost options for school facility upgrades to address some town councilors' desire to limit debt undertaken, but cooperation and communication between the town council and the school board is necessary for implementing mutually accepted solutions.

7.3.9 FIRE

The Central Coventry Fire District, the largest fire district in town, is facing large funding gaps caused in part by a state legislative increase in overtime pay and reduction in insurance payments during the COVID-19 pandemic.[28] The 2019 State of Rhode Island Firefighter Law requires districts pay overtime for any hours worked over 42 hours. District states the Firefighter Law costs an extra $70,000 each year. Along with this increase in cost, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Central Coventry Fire District brought in roughly $850,000 less in revenue than previous years because fewer people were going to the hospital. The District relies on insurance company reimbursements from emergency medical calls for much of its operational funding. [29] In September 2022, Coventry residents voted against a 3.95% tax increase aimed at resolving the fire district's financial problems.[30]

Other problems the town faces include unreliable staffing with per diem workers at the Western Coventry Fire District, building maintenance issues at the Anthony and Central Coventry Fire District stations, and increased risk of brush fire as climate change impacts increase (further described in the Natural Hazards and Climate Change section of the plan). Western Coventry Fire District recently funded a fifth full time fire fighter. Residents during the Comprehensive Plan public engagement process in 2022 have voiced support for the consolidation of the four town fire districts. The Town Council recently authorized a RFQ for a study of fire protection options that should provide information to make an informed decision on what the town should do relative to fire protection.

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[28] Hummel. (2022, April 1). Central Coventry Fire District says it'll cease operations by June without cash from state. The Providence Journal. Retrieved from https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/local/2022/04/01/rhode-island-central-coventry-fire-district-seeks-3-million-arpa-funds-to-avert-june-shutdown/7230334001/l

[29] Hummel, J. (2022, May 10). Yahoo News. Taxpayers reject giving extra money for strapped Central Coventry Fire District. Retrieved from https://news.yahoo.com/taxpayers-reject-giving-extra-money-181042931.html

[30] Hummel, J. (2022, May 10). Yahoo News. *Taxpayers reject giving extra money for strapped Central Coventry Fire District*. Retrieved from https://news.yahoo.com/taxpayers-reject-giving-extra-money-181042931.html

7.3.10 POLICE

While the Police Department has dedicated full-time staff and is able to adequately serve the community, the Department has had recruitment and retainment challenges in recent years and has voiced the need for a traffic division to deal with vehicle enforcement. The Department does not have a boat capable of water rescue and the animal shelter in town needs significant repairs. The Department conducts all training during over-time hours which limits the Department's capacity to offer professional development opportunities to staff. In upcoming years, the town will likely need to plan for legislatively required body worn cameras. While the main police building is in great condition, the Animal Control building needs significant repairs. The Police Department has identified opportunities for greater public connection and integration of the police force through community programming, hosting open meetings, developing the PD website as a trusted source of community information, partnering with other departments, and improving staff training.[31]

7.3.11 TOWN BUILDINGS AND ASSETS

The town maintains both active and vacant buildings in town. The town does not currently have a building inventory with information about the function, condition, and maintenance responsibility of each town building. If collected, asset data could be used by the Town to understand how best to utilize town owned buildings, either by selling them or repurposing them. The town released a request for proposals for a facilities master plan at the end of 2022 to assess the condition of town-owned facilities which will result in short-, mid-, and long-term recommendations for design, construction, redevelopment, and remodeling of the current town buildings and facilities.

7.4 GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

A complete list of goals, policies, and actions regarding the economic development of Coventry, Rhode Island can be found in Volume 1 of the 2026 Coventry Comprehensive Plan.

[31] Heise, F. J. (2021). *Coventry Police Department Strategic Plan, 2021.* Coventry, RI.

8.0 Energy & Renewable Energy

8.1 Introduction

Coventry's versatile energy profile has existed since the outset of industry in the Town, with the development of small mill villages that still define the Town's development patterns today. The mills generated hydropower from the abundant water resources flowing through Coventry and powered a booming local textile industry. Steam powered engines allowed for the movement of goods and people along newly built railroad connections, fueling economic and population growth in the mill centers through innovative energy production.[1] Nearly a century after the industrial revolution, the Town began to once again diversify its energy profile, this time turning to renewables like solar and wind to meet the 21st century demands of sustainability and economic growth.

Coventry took early active steps to encourage renewable energy development in Town, approving major wind turbine development projects in the early 2010s. These first-wave large-scale renewable energy projects were met with mixed reception from property abutters who experienced negative impacts from the installments without reaping the benefits of lower energy costs. Learning from these experiences, the Town adopted Wind Energy Facilities Zoning Regulations in Article 20 in 2015, with the intent of attracting renewable energy production that is compatible with the surrounding human and natural environment and that provides economic and environmental benefits for the local community. The existence of the turbines, creation of wind and solar-related energy zoning protocols, and access to better funding resources for renewable energy through State and federal resources means that Coventry can capitalize on its forward-thinking energy mindset now more than ever.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe Coventry's existing energy profile and evaluate various conventional and alternative energy sources that can help the town achieve the goal of meeting future energy needs in an efficient and environmentally sustainable manner.

8.2 Relation to Other Sections

8.2.1 Natural Resources

Coventry's forests, waterways, and wildlife areas are the pride and joy of many residents. These and other natural resources may be threatened by new energy production if not properly managed by local regulations. Conversely, widespread transition to the use of renewable energy sources is required in order to save the planet from the most harmful impacts of climate change. This chapter focuses on how energy production can protect natural resources in Coventry.

8.2.2 Services and Facilities

Energy plays a key role in the function of municipal, school, residential, commercial, and industrial facilities. Whether through coal, oil, natural gas, or renewable sources, all Town functions use energy from an array of sources. Some specific services and facilities using or converting to renewable energy include the upgrading of streetlamps in eastern Coventry to LED, and the solar arrays supplying power to the Hopkins Hill Fire Department building and Town Hall Annex building.

[1] Historic and Architectural Resources of Coventry, Rhode Island: A Preliminary Report. Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, 1978.

8.2.3 Natural Hazards and Climate change

Energy and renewable energy sources have a direct correlation with climate change and natural hazard events. Maintaining reliability and operability of the power grid through variable weather and climactic events is fundamental to local and regional disaster preparedness. On the other hand, moving energy production away from fossil-fuel towards clean and renewable sources is the singular most important action a government can take in the world-wide battle against global warming. Rhode Island's Energy 2035 Plan and Resilient Rhody Plan outline the State's goals for addressing climate change and using renewable energy resources to decrease carbon footprint, and these documents should be a guide to Coventry as it sets goals for energy use, reduction, and production.

8.2.4 Transportation

Transportation accounts for more than 30% of the energy used in Rhode Island. The Coventry DPW, four fire departments, school department, and police department all maintain vehicle fleets that rely largely on gas, propane, and diesel. Moving towards electrification of these fleets can help the town meet state goals of emissions reductions, while also saving the town on fuel costs and improving local air quality. Furthermore, increasing local access to RIPTA buses and other public transit options in Town could reduce local emissions from single occupancy vehicles and contribute to a cleaner energy profile.

8.3 Existing Conditions

Electric and natural gas power in town is provided by Rhode Island Energy, formerly known as National Grid and Narragansett Electric Company, which is now the main electricity provider and only natural gas provider in Rhode Island. Private residences may also rely on heat pumps, propane, or oil for heating in the winter and woodfire stoves in the more rural areas of town.[2]

8.3.1 Municipal Buildings and Initiatives

The Town of Coventry has acted on several initiatives across departments to examine the sources of energy for municipal programming and facilities. The most successful was an energy audit for school and municipal buildings, performed in 2011, that made recommendations regarding energy efficiency in school facilities. The audit made recommendations to update facilities' lighting systems, weather stripping, insulation, heating and ventilation systems, and suggestions to improve efficiency and energy costs of municipal buildings.[3] The school-specific improvement portions of the project would have reportedly cost around $2.5 million a year for 18 years, pending bond approval, and would save the Town $200,000 in energy savings annually.[4] Ultimately, the recommendations were not implemented due to budget concerns at the time, and though there was a 2017 proposal for a new municipal energy audit, it was never completed.[5]

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[2] Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources, https://energy.ri.gov/heating-cooling/fossil-fuels/learn-about-natural-gas
Note: Author requested information from RI Energy on the split of what percentage of residents rely on these various sources for electricity, but did not receive a response.

[3] Energy Savings To Pay For Building Upgrades | Coventry, RI Patch, 2012

[4] Waterman, Russell. School Committee: Votes for Resolution on State Pension Reform. https://patch.com/rhode-island/coventry/school-committee-votes-for-resolution-on-state-pension-reform

[5] Town Council Meeting, 2017 https://coventryri.civicweb.net/document/8705/

Future energy audits are in the initial planning stages for Coventry with communication between Town officials and the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER) beginning to take shape in 2022. The town has made incremental energy efficiency upgrades over time, like converting lighting in all municipal buildings to light-emitting diodes (LED) and adding solar arrays to the Town Hall Annex building that houses some Town offices. However, the Town has not completed a comprehensive energy efficiency overhaul of municipal or school buildings or operations since the 2011 audit.[6]

8.3.2 Solar

Coventry's special regulations on Solar Power Generators were most recently amended in 2017 and identify three different sizes of ground-mounted solar panel arrays: major, medium, and minor. While roof-mounted solar installations are structurally mounted to pre-built roofs as panels or solar shingles, ground-mounted installations are mounted directly on the ground, and therefore take up more land than roof-mounted installations. The definitions for major, medium, and minor installations are defined directly in Article XXI of the Zoning Code of Coventry. Major ground-mounted solar arrays are designed primarily to generate and sell electricity to a utility company for resale to consumers and occupy an area of 40,000 square feet or more. Medium ground-mounted installations occupy an area of more than 1,750 square feet but less than 40,000 square feet. Minor ground-mounted solar installations are most often meant to supply power to the property they are on and cover 1,750 square feet or less.[7]

Coventry has pursued several successful solar infrastructure projects for municipal facilities and on superfund site land. These projects ranged from major ground solar installations to roof-mounted installations.

8.3.2.1 Roof-Mounted Installations

Figure 8.1 - Hopkins Hill Fire District Roof-Mounted Solar Array, Google Maps Streetview, 2019

Hopkins Hill Fire District added solar panels to the top of their fire station building through a Renewable Energy Services of New England, Inc (RESNE) net metering program.[8] Net-metering incentives are used for renewable energy production, and deliver the excess energy produced by renewable sources like solar or wind power back into the power grid. Owners of the renewable energy generators, in this case solar panels, receive credits or compensation for the energy fed back into the grid to reduce their monthly energy bills.[9] When interviewed for this Comprehensive Plan, the Hopkins Hill Fire Chief noted the success of the project, and its benefits in lowering the building operation energy costs for the district.

[6] Conversation with Rhode Island Energy, 2022.
[7] Coventry Zoning Code, Article XXI Special Regulations - Solar Power Generators, § 255-2110 Definitions. [Amended 7-24-2017 by Ord. No. 03-17-315]
[8] Conversation with Hopkins Hill Fire Chief.
[9] Net Metering. Solar Energy Industries Association, https://www.seia.org/initiatives/net-metering

The Town Hall Annex municipal building acquired a roof-mounted solar array in 2012 from Solect Energy.[10] The project was partially grant funded by the Rhode Island Department of Economic Development through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).[11] The installation is owned by Solect and energy for the building is provided at a discounted rate through net metering, while any excess electricity generated by the array is sent back into to the power grid.

8.3.2.2 Ground-Mounted Installations

Figure 8.2 - Lewis Farm Road Solar Array, Google Maps, 2019

There are two major ground-mounted solar installations in Western Coventry. The first is located on Lewis Farm Road. This solar farm has a contentious history for residents who value the rural open space in Western Coventry and is similar to several other proposed projects that were not completed in town because of violation of DEM code on wetlands or because of pushback from residents. The second array is the three-megawatt major ground-mounted solar installation off Flat River Road. Much of the concern regarding new ground-mounted solar development in the area stems from the necessity to clear away forested land to develop the projects. Because of this, future projects should be sited on already cleared land, such as brownfields or closed landfills, to meet energy goals while protecting natural resources and open space.

Figure 8.3 - Arnold Road Landfill site for Solar Farm, Google Maps Streetview, 2019

As of 2022, a ground-mounted 5-megawatt solar installation is anticipated at the former Arnold Road landfill, which is a designated Superfund Site. The former landfill was capped because of the ground contamination and the project proposal includes 10,000 modules of solar panels that will not interfere with the capping material. The project would provide income for the town through a lease agreement with the solar developer and through net-metering credits through RI Energy.[12]

8.3.3 Wind

Western Coventry is a desirable location for wind development because of the amount of open space and the relatively low development density resulting in fewer physical obstacles to disrupt wind flow.[13] Coventry is home to 10 wind turbines, eight of which are grouped on Piggy Lane and two of which are located off Flat River Road in the Greene village of Western Coventry. Each turbine is 414 feet tall and

[10] Town Solar Power Complex Could Be Operational Within Four Months | Coventry, RI Patch
[11] Town Of Coventry, RI - Solect Energy
[12] Town of Coventry Arnold Road Solar Project Forum August 7, 2021
[13] Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, https://windexchange.energy.gov/small-community-wind-handbook#resource

produces 1.5 megawatts of electricity.[14] Many local proponents of these early wind projects (brought online in 2016 and 2017 after several years of deliberation and construction from 2014 onwards) believed their implementation would benefit Town energy production.

The turbines are currently privately owned and operated with no interaction with the Town of Coventry other than the initial zoning approval and subsequent discussions of opposition from residents. The Narragansett Bay Commission and Town of Warwick each own and operate three turbines and receive net-metering credits from the energy produced. The rest of the turbines belong to the Renewable Energy Growth Program (REG) through Rhode Island Energy.[15]

Figure 8.4 - Turbine off Piggy Lane, BETA Group Inc.

Neighbors have raised the issue of shadow flicker and background noise because of the proximity of the construction to residential properties. Greene residents conveyed that the location and existence of the turbines is not in line with the Town's previous 2000 Comprehensive Plan, which heralded the value of natural land conservation to preserve the "rural character" of Coventry. Neighbor complaints suggested that construction of the turbines worked against this value because they require rural land (including forest) to be cleared for operation. The 2000 Plan set objectives that prioritized rural land conservation through encouraging revisions to zoning ordinances, reviewing rural development standards, and protecting natural resources. This 2023 plan update maintains many of these objectives, but encourages continued pursuit of expanding renewable energy production to reduce long-term municipal and private energy costs, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, support sustainable growth, and build resilience to future instability in the energy grid.

8.3.4 Zoning Standards

The issue of developing wind power ordinances was brought to Town Council shortly after the initial approval of the turbine installation on Piggy Lane in 2015. In December of that year, the Town adopted the Special Regulations for Wind Energy Facilities as part of the Town Zoning Code. It requires permits for all wind facility development, outlines sound level decibel restrictions, and protects historic properties from designated fall zones of turbines.[16] Wind development in western Coventry is still feasible because of the amount of open space in the area. However, the ordinance considerably slows the development process through stricter siting standards, turbine impact analysis, and requirements for public hearings with the addition of the Planning Commission's review during the Zoning Board's review process.

The Town Council amended the Town's Zoning Bylaws in in July of 2017 to reflect the attitudes towards solar panel installation in town, and several ground-mounted solar installation proposals have been denied in the subsequent years. The amendments in Article XXI, §255-2110 Definitions and §255-2140 Ground-Mounted Solar Installations responded to public concern over the number and size of ground-

[14] Renewable energy brings questions in Rhode Island. Frank Carini, The Westerly Sun, 2019. https://www.thewesterlysun.com/news/westerly/renewable-energy-brings-questions-in-rhode-island/article_26d2c030-229a-11e9-ae7a-77385797b3d0.html

[15] Green Development, Coventry Wind. https://green-ri.com/project/coventry-wind-combined/

[16] Coventry Zoning Code, Article XX Special Regulations for Wind Energy Facilities

mounted solar installations that had been popping up around town. The amendment changed the wording in the Zoning Code to tighten restrictions on solar development, requiring approval from building officials for roof-mounted arrays, proof of a decommissioning plan and financial surety, and a 15% lot coverage cap for ground-mounted arrays.[17]

Not all the proposed amendments in 2017 were approved – proposals to limit the construction of solar arrays in certain zoning districts was denied by the Town Council. Minor and medium ground-mounted solar installation developments (1,750 square feet or less and 1,750 square feet but less than 40,000 square feet respectively) are allowed in all zoning districts with the proper approval process, while major ground-mounted installations (40,000 square feet or more) must seek a special permit through the Planning Commission.[18] While these restrictions made it more difficult for solar developers to receive expedited permits, they increased the opportunity for public feedback and for developers to address public concern.

8.3.5 Other Town Energy Projects

8.3.5.1 Streetlamps

The three Eastern Coventry fire departments have completed or are in the process of converting streetlamps in Town to solid-state lighting (SSL LED) lamps. Hopkins Hill Fire District used the PRISM Streetlights initiative program, Anthony Fire District's lights have been completely upgraded, and Central Coventry Fire District is in the process of converting all streetlamps while working through financial challenges. PRISM Streetlights Inc. is a former program of the Washington County Regional Planning Council that helped pass the Municipal Streetlights Investment Act in RI. The Act allows municipalities to own and maintain their own streetlamps instead of leasing the lights from other sources. The PRISM program provides the delivery of updated LED streetlight systems for a fee of $1.00 per streetlight and collaboration in a three-year maintenance program after which the associated Fire Department takes over maintenance of the assets, which is significantly less of a burden than maintaining traditional lamps. SSL LED streetlamps have longer run lives, are brighter than non-LED lamps, and cost less to run.[19] Western Coventry has no streetlamps, so the Western Coventry Fire District does not manage or maintain any streetlights.

8.3.5.2 Electric Vehicle Charging

Coventry has one public electric vehicle charging station located outside of the Library and Town Hall Building just off the Washington Secondary Trail. There are several public parking areas that could host electric vehicle charging stations in Coventry to support electric vehicle ownership. Rhode Island Energy has incentive programs to help with the affordability of short-term charging stations for commercial properties or municipal lots, as well as the existence State funding to develop new stations in town. After an application and site assessment process, RI Energy can fully fund the installation of charging stations and the connection to the electric grid. After installation, maintenance and electricity costs are up to the owner of the port and can be supported through the drivers using the station.[20]

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[17] Coventry Zoning Code, Article XXI Special Regulations - Solar Power Generators [Amended 7-24-2017 by Ord. No. 03-17-315]

[18] Town Council Meeting July 24, 2017, https://coventryri.civicweb.net/document/6731/

[19] Municipal Streetlights Investment Act Presentation, 2015. https://www.rileague.org/DocumentCenter/View/239/2015-S3-PDF?bidId=

[20] Electric Transportation and Charging Programs Program Brochure and conversation with Rhode Island Energy, 2022.

There are currently no electric vehicles in Coventry's municipal vehicle inventory. Better access to electric charging appliances could help to encourage the municipal purchase of electric vehicles in the future.

8.4 NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

8.4.1 NEEDS

Coventry's current energy profile is like that of the State as a whole, with some renewable energy projects completed or in the works but an outsized reliance on natural gas and external sources for electricity. The governor of Rhode Island signed legislation in 2022 to increase the state's Renewable Energy Standards, with the goal for the State to offset electricity demand by renewable energy production by 2033. This accelerated plan to bring renewable energy to Rhode Island is impetus for Coventry to realign itself with the State's goals for clean energy alongside other Rhode Island municipalities. To align with state goals, Coventry will need to define the steps it will take to use and develop renewables in town. An up-to-date energy audit will be the first step in understanding where the town is today in meeting those goals, and what needs to be done in the next 5, 10, and 20 years.

The Town should prioritize educating residents and business owners about incentives and other programs supporting roof-mounted solar installations, and encourage other private renewable energy opportunities, potentially by facilitating public private partnerships. Establishing a formal municipal connection with statewide energy credit programs such as the Efficient Buildings Fund (EBF) for municipal energy efficiency and the Property Tax Exemption for Renewable energy for residential and manufacturing renewable infrastructure,[21] could help to increase the feasibility of renewable projects for Coventry residents and businesses. By promoting individual residents' agency to use renewables for their homes and backing municipal projects for clean energy, Coventry can advance its transition to a cleaner energy future. Coventry's shift to a stronger renewable energy portfolio must begin with educating residents about the incentive programs and credit opportunities for small-scale renewables.

Locally, the Coventry Planning Department's section within the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan notes that an overhaul of zoning ordinance is necessary to fix discrepancies, make ordinances easier to review, and rewrite checklists and guidelines according to updated standards.[22] This crucial overhaul could demystify the development review processes for wind and solar energy projects and incentivize options for private residential and small-scale solar installations or small-scale turbine projects. Updates to the regulations will also better align changes that occurred in solar and wind development as renewable energy technology improved to become more feasible for developed residential and commercial areas instead of on large swaths of open land. Since the writing and amendments of the initial regulations, solar powered cars and the extreme decrease in the cost of solar technology have changed the market for renewable energy solutions, and more widely acceptable wind developments have begun powering homes across the United States.[23]

8.4.2 OPPORTUNITIES

Energy 2035, a State plan guiding the transition towards renewable and cost-effective energy solutions for municipalities, commercial properties, and residents, includes several strategies that Coventry needs

[21] Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources Programs & Incentives, https://energy.ri.gov/resources/programs-incentives
[22] Department of Planning and Development Strategic Planning Retreat, 2021
[23] Wind Energy Technologies Office, History of U.S. Wind Energy. https://www.energy.gov/eere/wind/history-us-wind-energy

to consider as implementable actions. Some of these actions include improvements to vehicle efficiency and miles traveled, expanding renewable energy procurement, community electricity aggregation, and modernizing the grid.[24] There has never been a better time to galvanize the movement towards renewable energy as residents and businesses are feeling the increasing economic impact of rising energy prices and the impacts of greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel-based energy sources are wreaking havoc on our natural and built environments. The RI and federal governments offer many incentives for the transformation from fossil fuel-based heat and power to renewable energy. Programs like the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) RI program provide financing for energy efficient building upgrades for commercial and industrial buildings, while federal Renewable Energy Tax Credits can be applied to residential renewable systems installed through 2023.

Coventry has under-utilized open space and building roof tops that have the potential to accommodate solar installations. Future renewable projects would benefit homeowners and businesses by decreasing their electricity bills and aligning with State Planning goals if the projects utilize virtual net-metering so that excess energy produced can be funneled to different locations in town. While Coventry currently uses regular net metering, virtual net-metering allows for energy produced at a renewable installation location to be funneled to different sites, addresses or bills, creating a more community-based energy system.[25] RI Energy's Community Remote Net Metering Pilot could provide opportunity for Coventry residents to take initiative on power alternatives that could allocate energy produced by renewables to be divided amongst eligible accounts to save on monthly bills.[26]

Similarly, there is opportunity for the development of more small-scale wind, which is defined in Coventry's Special Regulations for Wind Energy Facilities as "…no more than 36 feet tall and that generates no more than 100 kw of electricity and where said electricity is used exclusively for the power needs of the individual applicant."[27] Residents of Coventry can take advantage of the State's Renewable Energy Growth Program (REG) to get an incentive from RI Energy for credits for renewable power generation.[28] After the need for education about these developments is met, Coventry residents will have more opportunities to make individual energy decisions.

The town must update its baseline energy use audit for school and other municipal facilities to effectively prioritize renewable energy investments that meet State goals and improve local facilities. An ongoing interdepartmental monitoring of municipal energy would also give a chance for departments to collaborate on ways to improve energy efficiency in town facilities. The Town's leadership on this front will be key in motivating local support for renewable energy development and energy efficiency projects. Modernizing Coventry's municipal, recreation, and school facilities would set the example for a town-wide movement to share in the State's renewable energy goals.

[24] Energy 2035: Rhode Island State Energy Plan, Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources and the Division of Planning, 2015.

[25] Net Metering and Virtual Net Metering Overview, State of Rhode Island, Office of Energy Resources https://energy.ri.gov/renewable-energy/wind/net-metering

[26] Rhode Island Energy, Net Metering in Rhode Island, https://ngus.force.com/RI/s/article/Net-Metering-in-Rhode-Island

[27] Coventry Zoning Code, Article XX Special Regulations – Wind Energy Facilities

[28] Renewable Energy Growth Program (REG) Program, State of Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources https://energy.ri.gov/renewable-energy/wind/renewable-energy-growth-program-reg-program

8.5 Goals, Policies, and Actions

A complete list of goals, policies, and actions regarding the economic development of Coventry, Rhode Island can be found in Volume 1 of the 2026 Coventry Comprehensive Plan.

9.0 TRANSPORTATION

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The Transportation Chapter describes the existing transportation system in the Town of Coventry and how it connects with the regional transportation network. This Chapter also identifies transportation-related issues, opportunities, and challenges raised by Town officials and residents that the Master Plan will address. This Chapter begins with an introduction followed by an inventory of the existing transportation conditions. The following elements are summarized in this Chapter:

- Transportation Vision and Goals
- Inventory of Existing Facilities
- Roadway Safety
- Travel Demand
- Travel Characteristics
- Projects
- Needs and Opportunities
- Policies and Actions

The local transportation system should provide safe and efficient mobility for all transportation modes and connections to regional facilities. Residents, businesses, students, visitors, and emergency services are impacted by the availability and quality of the transportation system. The successful maintenance and enhancement of that system can attract and respond to new development. Broadly speaking, the transportation system impacts town resources, community character, and quality of life of new and existing residents. The goals, policies, and actions for transportation in Coventry hold to the statewide vision for a "multimodal transportation network that connects people, places and goods in a safe and resilient manner by providing effective and affordable transportation choices that are supportive of healthy communities, provide access to jobs and services, and promote a sustainable and competitive Rhode Island economy."[1]

9.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

9.2.1 INVENTORY OF EXISTING FACILITIES

9.2.1.1 ROADWAYS

The U.S. federal government classifies roads hierarchically by road function. Interstates are the highest roadway classification providing high mobility for people driving, limited access to nearby properties, and no access or mobility for people walking or biking. Local roadways are the lowest roadway classification providing low levels of mobility for people driving, high levels of vehicle access, and increased opportunity for mobility for people walking and biking. Table 9.1 shows the total length of each classification of roadway and Map 9.1 Roadway Transportation Network illustrates the classification of roads in Coventry.

[1] Moving Forward RI 2040, Rhode Island's Long Range Transportation Plan, State Guide Plan Element 611, Report Number 123, adopted December 2020.

Table 9.1 Classification of Roadways in Coventry

Roadway Class	Miles	% of Miles
Interstate	0	0%
Arterial	40.10	15.47%
Collector	24.35	9.39%
Local	194.82	75.14%
Total	259.26	100%

Source: E-911 Road Centerline 2021

Interstates

Coventry does not have an interstate highway within the town limits. The nearest interstate to Coventry is Interstate 95 running along the southeast border of the town through East Greenwich and West Greenwich. The closest access points to Interstate 95 from Coventry are off Route 3, Hopkins Hill Road, and the New London Turnpike.

Arterials

The principal arterial roadways in Coventry include Route 117 (Flat River Road / Washington Street / Main Street) in central and eastern Coventry, Route 102 (Victory Highway), Route 3 (Nooseneck Hill Road / Tiogue Avenue), Route 33 (Sandy Bottom Road), and Route 116 (Knotty Oak Road). The minor arterials in town are Fairview Avenue, South Main Street, Hopkins Hill Road, Arnold Road, New London Turnpike, Route 118 (Harkney Hill Road), Flat River Road, and Route 14 (Plainfield Pike). Much of the non-residential development in Coventry is accessible along the arterial roadways.

- **Route 117** (also known as Flat River Road, Washington Street, and Main Street) is an east-west route that runs from Route 14 (Plainfield Pike) in Coventry to Route 1A in Cranston. The route provides access between eastern and western Coventry, as well as to neighboring communities of West Warwick, Warwick, and Cranston. On the eastern side of town, Route 117 provides access to the Coventry Public Library, Dave's Fresh Marketplace complex, the Town Hall Annex, and a variety of other commercial establishments. In the center of town, Western Coventry Elementary is on Route 117 near the Route 102 rotary. In the central and western side of town, Route 117 is predominantly characterized by residential uses. The road is generally one lane in each direction.

Source: Google Streetview

- **Route 102** (also known as Victory Highway) runs north-south through the center west side of Coventry. Route 102, sometimes referred to as Scenic Route 102, runs from northern Rhode Island in North Smithfield, through Burrilville, Glocester, Scituate, Coventry, West Greenwich and Exeter (where it holds National Scenic Byway designation) before ending in Wickford village in North Kingstown. In Coventry, the road provides access to the Audubon Maxwell Mays Wildlife Refuge, the Audubon George Parker Woodland Wildlife Refuge, a church, an RV resort, a farm, and some private residences. The road is generally one lane in each direction.
- **Route 3 (**also known as Tiogue Avenue or Nooseneck Hill Road) provides a local alternative to Interstate 95. The route runs from Downtown Westerly from the south to Interstate 95 in West Warwick, passing through Hopkinton, Richmond, Exeter and West Greenwich. Route 3 runs through the southeastern part of Coventry and the central commercial area. Route 3 in Coventry is characterized by commercial uses with frequent driveways and parking lots. The route is generally two lanes in each direction west of the intersection with Arnold Road and Route 33 (Sandy Bottom Road). To the east of the intersection, the road is generally one lane in each direction and has more residential development.
- **Route 116** (also known as Knotty Oak Road) runs from Route 117 in the east of Coventry to Route 114 in Cumberland, Rhode Island. Route 116 serves the northeastern side of Coventry and is characterized by residential suburban development, along with some commercial uses. The road is typically one lane in each direction.

Collector Roads

Collector roads move traffic from local streets to arterials. Hill Farm Road, Town Farm Road, Station Street, Old Main Street, Calvintown Road, Gervais Street, Blackrock Road, Boston Street, Hill Street, Pilgrim Ave, Johnson Boulevard, Reservoir Road, Reed Ave, Pulaski Street, and Hunters Crossing Drive act as collector roads in Coventry.

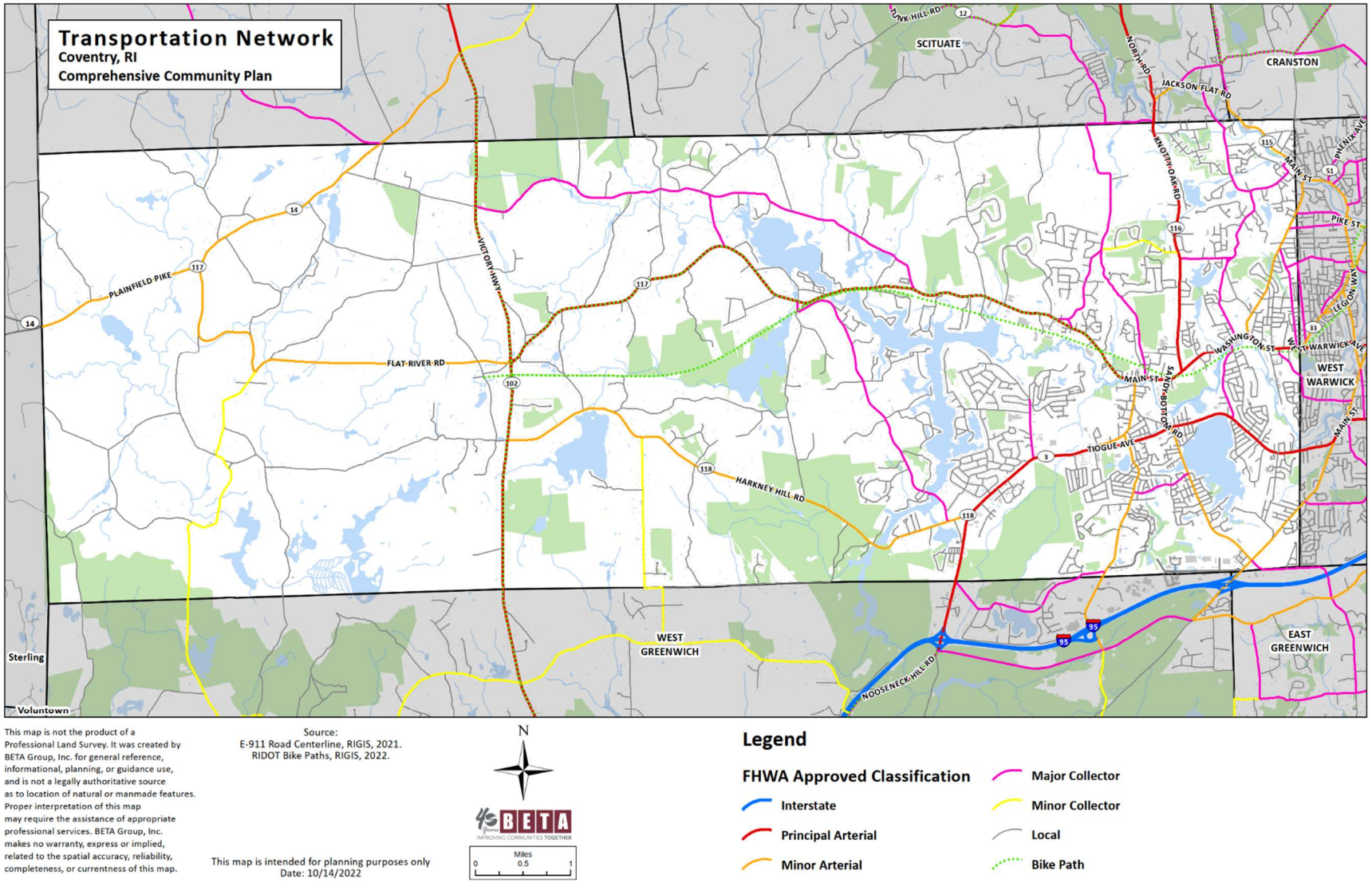
Local Roadways

Local roadways provide the highest access to adjacent properties. Approximately 75% of all roadways in Coventry fall under this classification. Local roadways in Coventry are characterized by predominantly residential development with lower vehicle volumes and speeds.

Roadway Jurisdiction in Coventry

In Coventry, around 60% of arterials and collectors are under state jurisdiction, including Route 3, Route 14, Route 33, Route 102, Route 115, Route 116, Route 117, Route 118, Old Flat River Road, Hill Farm Road, and Hopkins Hollow Road.

Map 9.1 shows Coventry's roadways by roadway classification.



Map 9.1 Roadway Transportation Network

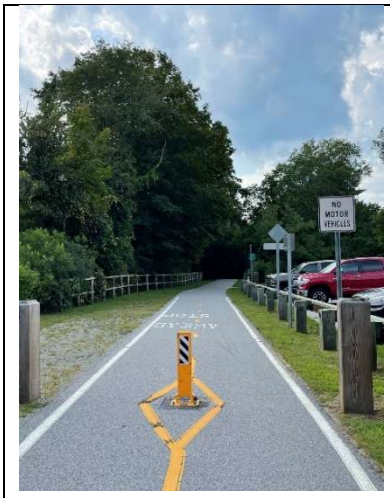
9.2.1.2 Bicycle Facilities

Off Road Trails

The Washington Secondary Trail, a part of the East Coast Greenway, is a paved 19-mile-long bike path running from Coventry to Cranston, utilizing the abandoned rail corridor once served by the Providence, Hartford, & Fishkill Railroad. The bikeway was built in phases starting in 1997. Coventry's trail sections, also known as the Coventry Greenway and the Trestle Trail, were built in four phases. The first two sections of the Coventry Greenway running from Station Street to Town Farm Road opened in the late 1990s. The Coventry Greenway segment from Station Street to Whitford Street was built in 2010 and the Trestle Trail East, running from Town Farm Road to Log Bridge Road opened in 2014.[2]

The Washington Secondary Trail serves as a recreational resource, offering residents the opportunity to run, walk, and bike. To many Coventry residents, this recreational trail is the heart of the community. The trail currently extends all the way to the Connecticut border on the western end of Coventry but is unpaved past Log Bridge Road. The trail runs along Route 117 for much of its route, providing bike access to many destinations along the route including the Coventry Public Library, Merrill Woods, restaurants, supermarkets, industrial buildings, and stores. The Coventry Public Library and DPW has a trail extension that connects the trail to the building.

The trail is accessible from nearby neighborhoods and there is free trail-side parking provided on Pilgrim Avenue, Log Bridge Road, Hill Farm Road, Pinehaven Road, Ayoho Road, Route 117 near Brookside Lane, and at Station Street.



Washington Secondary Trail

Map 9.1 shows a map of Coventry, including the Washington Secondary Trail.

On-Street Bicycle Lanes

Coventry has an on-street striped bike lane on Hopkins Hill Road and an on-street bike lane on Arnold Road. There is statewide bicycle route signage on Route 117 and Route 102 through Coventry.[3] While neither Route 102 or Route 117 have marked bicycle lanes, both have wide shoulders along much of the roadway that can accommodate bicycles. Town staff also note Coventry has many unmarked low traffic roads that are very comfortable for people to bike.

[2] Rhode Island Department of Transportation. n.d. Washington Secondary Bike Path. Accessed February 3, 2022. https://www.dot.ri.gov/travel/bikeri/washington.php.

[3] Rhode Island Department of Transportation. 2020. "State of Rhode Island Statewide Bicycle System." Providence.

9.2.1.3 Pedestrian Facilities

Sidewalks

The Town of Coventry's sidewalk system is concentrated in the eastern, denser, side of town. Route 3 has sidewalks running through much of the Tiogue Commercial District; Reservoir Road has sidewalks to Coventry High School; Route 116 has sidewalks from Route 117 until Gervais Street; Route 117 has sidewalks from West Warwick to Read School House Road; Hopkins Hill Road has sidewalks from Mishnock Road to South Main Street; and Arnold Road has sidewalks from Route 117 to East Greenwich.

However, sidewalks in town are not always continuous. For example, Route 33 (Sandy Bottom Road) in the center of town does not have sidewalks, and the sidewalks on Route 3 end just west of South Main Street before serving active businesses and bus stops. According to the existing subdivision regulation in Article XIII B-7, developers are required to install sidewalks in R-20 zoning districts, in all residential cluster developments, or multi-family developments, within a mile of a school, and within reasonable proximity to churches, shopping areas, playgrounds or in areas with high vehicular traffic volumes, but this only applies to public roadways. The Town notes that cul de sac residential developments often are built without sidewalks or alternative pedestrian connections. Western Coventry's roads have fewer sidewalks and many residents and developers feel they are unnecessary given the rural nature of western Coventry. In eastern Coventry, residents note poor sidewalk condition and improper snow removal as challenges for people walking. As of the writing of this report, the Town is undergoing a process of inventorying the location and condition of sidewalk facilities.

Off Road Trails

As described in the Bicycle Facilities section, the Washington Secondary Trail serves both people walking and biking and connects east to west across town. The Phenix Harris Riverwalk in the northeast side of town along the Pawtuxet River connects to the Harris Mill Lofts and the businesses nearby. The trail functions both as a wooded recreational walk and a connection between the Harris Mill Lofts and the Phenix Square commercial area in West Warwick.

9.2.1.4 Parking

The Town of Coventry owns more than 30 parking lots throughout town, mostly associated with public buildings and recreational areas, and all offer free parking. The Town has historically operated paid parking at the Briar Point Beach Area, however, the funding cuts to the Department Parks and Recreation have meant officially closing the beach. Currently, parking is free, but swimming is at your own risk. Most municipal, commercial, and dense residential parking is provided through surface parking lots. Most homes have private driveways. Bicycle parking is sparse throughout town, however there is a bike rack at the public library. There is no time-limited parking. The town has one electric vehicle charging station located by the town library and one electric vehicle charging station at the Stop and Shop on Tiogue Ave.

9.2.1.5 Roadway Maintenance

The Roads and Bridges Division of the Department of Public Works is responsible for maintenance and repair of around 228 miles of town-owned roadways, including approximately 18 miles of unpaved roads. The Division has 21 Full Time Employees. According to a town performance audit conducted by Matrix Consulting Group in 2022, the Department exceeded the recommended number of miles, 15-20 miles, per maintenance worker. The DPW reports that they have not had funding allocated to pavement

replacement or crack filling since 2016 when the last of a $10.6 million infrastructure bond was spent. [4] The Department is currently undergoing a pavement inventory.

9.2.1.6 PUBLIC TRANSIT

Local Bus Service:

Route 13, operated by The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA), runs from Coventry's Woodland Manor to the Community College of Rhode Island's Warwick Campus via the Rhode Island Mall and West Warwick. In the Town of Coventry, Route 13 has bus stops along portions of Route 3 (Tiogue Avenue and Nooseneck Hill Road), South Main Street, and Route 117 (Main Street / Washington Street). On weekdays, Route 13 runs hourly service from around 5 AM to 7 PM. On Saturdays, Route 13 runs service roughly every hour and a half from around 5:30 AM to 8:30 PM. On Sundays and holidays, Route 13 runs roughly every hour and a half from around 7AM to 7 PM. The service costs $2 per trip, $6 for a day pass, and $70 for a monthly pass. Qualifying low-income seniors and riders with disabilities can receive a free bus pass valid for two years. Seniors and riders with disabilities who are not qualified low-income can ride for half price during off-peak hours.

Flex Van Service

RIPTA offers flex van service to a portion of eastern Coventry, serving destinations such as the Lofts at Anthony Mill and Riverview Healthcare Community. The 242 Flex Service does not have scheduled stops, but rather is available by reservation and provides service only within the 242 flex zone in eastern Coventry and parts of West Warwick and Warwick. Reservations are first come first serve and must be made 24 hours in advance. Flex van service costs the same as fixed route bus service.

See Map 9.2 for Public Transit in Rhode Island.

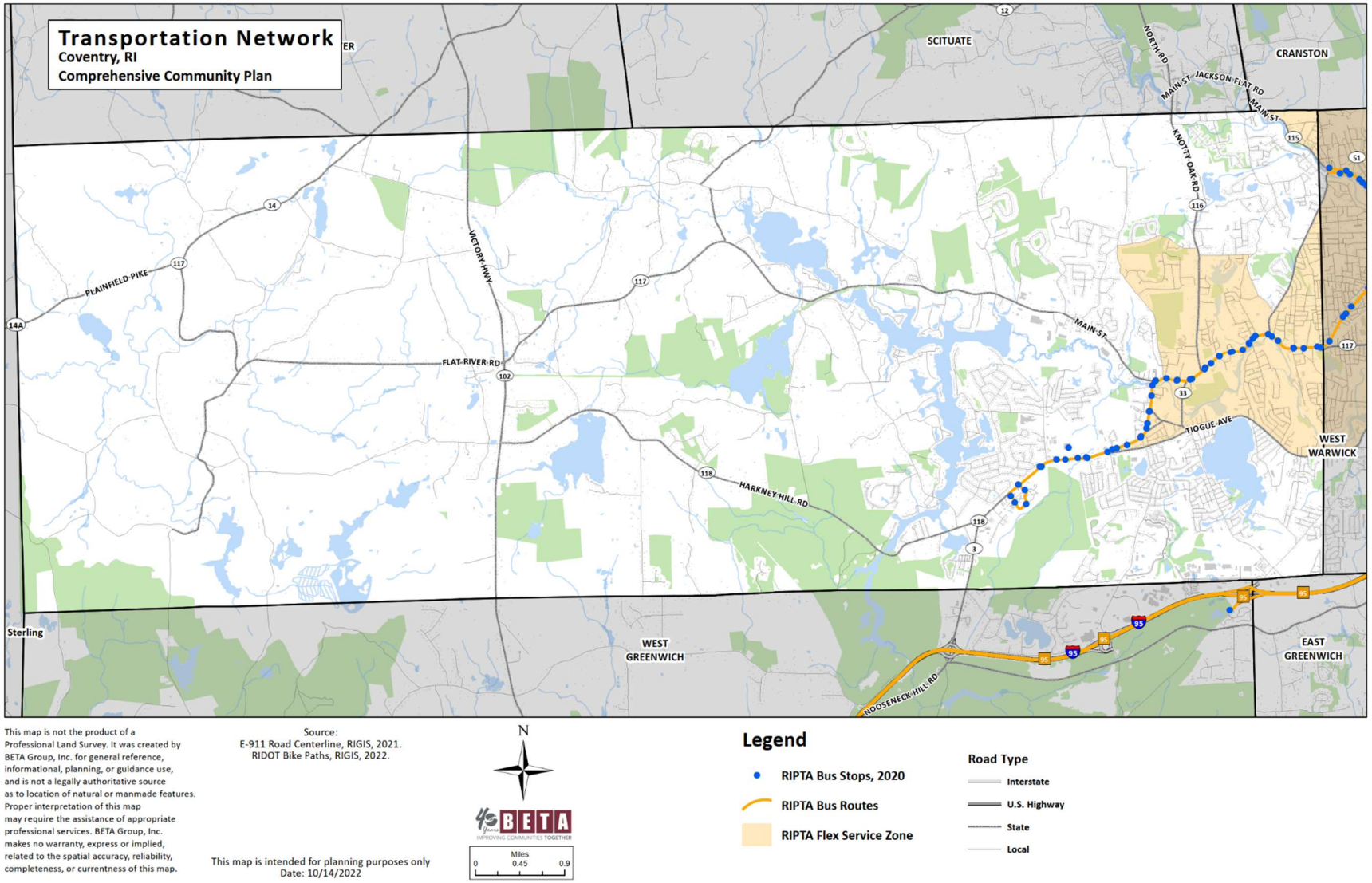
RIde Program for People with Disabilities

The RIde program is RIPTA's paratransit service provided under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) offering shared rides in accessible vehicles to riders with disabilities who cannot use fixed route service. The service operates within a ¾ mile buffer from fixed route bus service, and all trips must start or end within the buffer. The service operates during the same hours as the fixed route bus service. As Route 13 is the only fixed route bus service in Coventry, the RIde program is available in Coventry within a ¾ mile buffer of the Route 13 corridor. Riders can schedule single trips on or up to the day before the trip. Riders can book recurring trips by calling once, and the RIde will continue to come at the routine time. RIPTA gives a 20-minute long pick up window in which a rider can expect the van to arrive. The RIde costs $4 per ride.

Senior Center Shuttle

The Coventry Senior and Resource Center operates a shuttle to improve access for seniors and people with disabilities to nutrition, health, and wellness activities. The van operates five days per week and trips are scheduled by phone reservation. The senior center also provides a shopping run van that goes to Walmart two times per week for groceries, prescriptions, and household needs. The cost for this service is $3.00 per ride. The shuttle is fully funded through grants.

[4] Matrix Consulting Group. (2022). *Performance Audit Final Report.* Coventry, RI.



Map 9.2 Public Transportation

School Buses

Around 60% of students in Coventry Public Schools are bused. This service is privately owned and operated through a contract with the town.

9.2.1.7 FREIGHT

The major freight route adjacent to Coventry is Interstate 95 running along the southeastern side of town up to Providence and Boston, however freight moves on any of the arterials in town. The Fire Department notes that freight vehicles going to the West Greenwich Truck stop will travel on Route 102. Coventry does not have any ports, large warehouses, or rail freight.

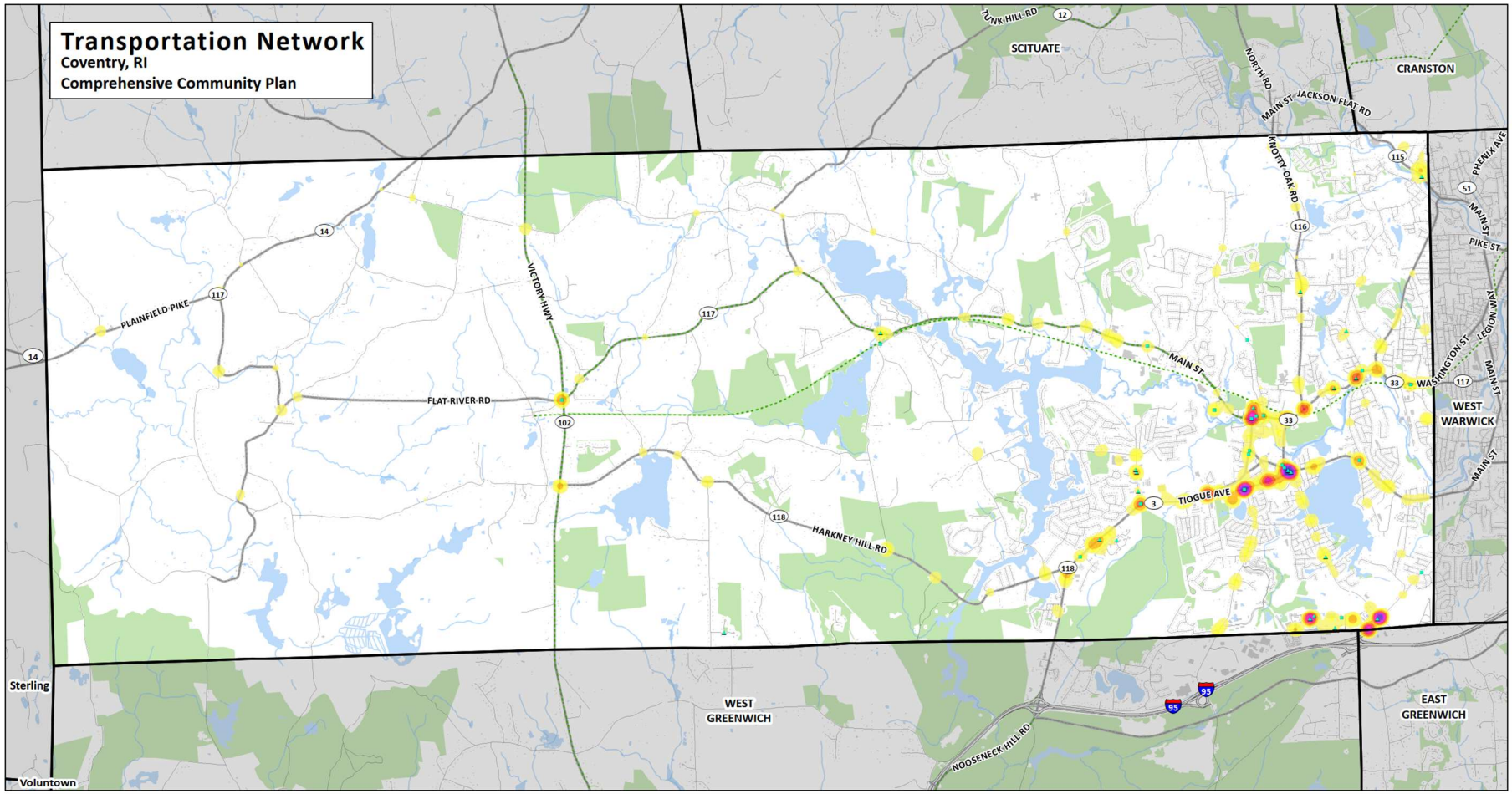
9.2.1.8 WATER TRANSPORT

People in Coventry can boat for pleasure and to access properties along Coventry's water bodies. For example, on Johnson's Pond, many residents have boat docks and motorboats are permitted. Boating is predominantly seen as a recreational opportunity for residents, however there are currently no public or private commercial recreation boating operators in Coventry.

9.2.2 ROADWAY SAFETY

Roadway crashes between 2017 and 2021 were concentrated in the eastern side of town along Route 3, Route 117, the New London Turnpike near I-95, and the Centre of New England. The highest crash area was the Route 33 and Route 3 intersection with 221 total reported crashes and 30 injury crashes. This is 25% more crashes than the second highest crash intersection in town at Hopkins Hill Road and Route 3. The intersection of South Main Street and Route 117, the intersection of Route 117 and Route 33, the intersection of Arnold Road and the New London Turnpike, the intersection of Flat River Road and Victory Highway, the curve at Flat River Road near Phillips Hill Road, and the intersection of Flat River Road and Plainfield Pike were other high crash areas. There was a concentration of bike and pedestrian crashes near Coventry High School, near Dave's Fresh Marketplace on Route 117, near Route 3 and Route 33, in the Centre of New England, and where the bike trail crosses Route 117. In this time frame, there were eight fatal crashes, of which one involved a person walking on Arnold Road at West Shore Drive. Map 9.3 shows roadway crashes in Coventry between 2017 and 2021 from the Coventry Police Department.

Route 3 and Route 33, a high crash intersection for both vehicle only crashes and crashes involving non-motorists, Source: Google Streetview



This map is not the product of a Professional Land Survey. It was created by BETA Group, Inc. for general reference, informational, planning, or guidance use, and is not a legally authoritative source as to location of natural or manmade features. Proper interpretation of this map may require the assistance of appropriate professional services. BETA Group, Inc. makes no warranty, express or implied, related to the spatial accuracy, reliability, completeness, or currentness of this map.

Source:
E-911 Road Centerline, RIGIS, 2021.
RIDOT Bike Paths, RIGIS, 2022.
Town of Coventry Police Department Crash Data, 2017-2021.

This map is intended for planning purposes only
Date: 8/12/2022

N

Miles
0 0.5 1

Legend

Crash Data Heatmap
High
Low
*Heatmap based on frequency of crashes

Pedestrian Involved
Bicycle Involved
Bike Path

All Roads
Interstate
U.S. Highway
State
Street
Railroad

Map 9.3 Roadway Crashes

9.2.3 Travel Demand

9.2.3.1 Major Trip Generators

Major trip generators in Coventry include Coventry High School, The Centre of New England on the border between Coventry and West Greenwich, and the business district along Route 3, Route 117, Route 33 and South Main Street.

9.2.3.2 Vehicle Volumes

According to Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) estimated average daily traffic (AADT), the highest volume roadways in Coventry are the New London Turnpike, Route 33 (Sandy Bottom Road), and Route 117 (Washington Street). Table 9.2 shows traffic volumes for roads with RIDOT counts.

Table 9.2 Traffic Volumes for State-Owned Roads in Coventry

Roadway	Location	AADT
Route 14 (Plainfield Pike) west of 117 interchange	Between Route 117 and Gibson Hill Road	2,253
Route 102 (Victory Highway)	Between Route 118 and Route 117	5,729
New London Turnpike	Between Tiffany Road and I-95	15,300
Hill Street	Howard Avenue and Mumford Street	1,317
Route 117 (Washington Street)	Read Ave to Quidneck Street	10,000
Route 33 (Sandy Bottom Road)	Route 117 to Route 3	13,500
Route 3	Hopkins Hill Road to South Main Street	12,500
Route 115 (Main Street)	Potter Street to Harris Street	3,000

Source: Rhode Island Department of Transportation Counts from Permanent and Short-Term Count Locations 2016

9.2.3.3 Bike and Pedestrian Volumes

The Town does not collect pedestrian and bike volumes. However, the Washington Secondary Trail is the most used pedestrian and bike amenity in town. Other areas with pedestrian and bike activity include near Coventry High School, along Route 3 near the commercial area, and near Dave's Fresh Market on Route 117.

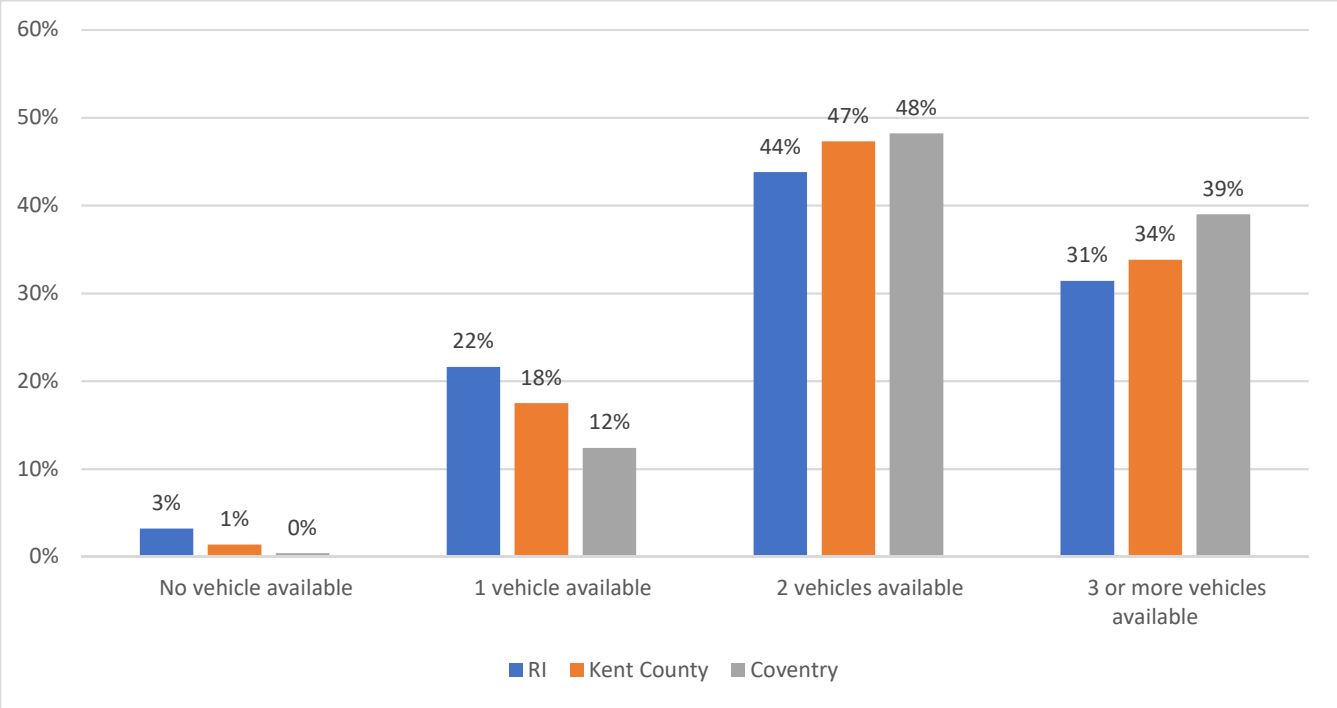
9.2.4 Travel Characteristics

9.2.4.1 Vehicle Ownership

The U.S. Census estimates that all Coventry households have access to at least one vehicle, whereas statewide estimates indicate that three percent of Rhode Islanders and one percent of Kent County residents have no vehicle access. An estimated 12 percent of households in Coventry have access to one vehicle, and 87 percent have access to two or more vehicles, which is greater than the estimated

percentage of households in the state (75 percent) and the county (81 percent) with access to two or more vehicles. Figure 9.1 shows the estimated number of vehicles available per household for the Town of Coventry, Kent County, and the State of Rhode Island based on the U.S. Census American Community Survey 2015-2019 Estimate.

Figure 9.1 Vehicles Available by Household

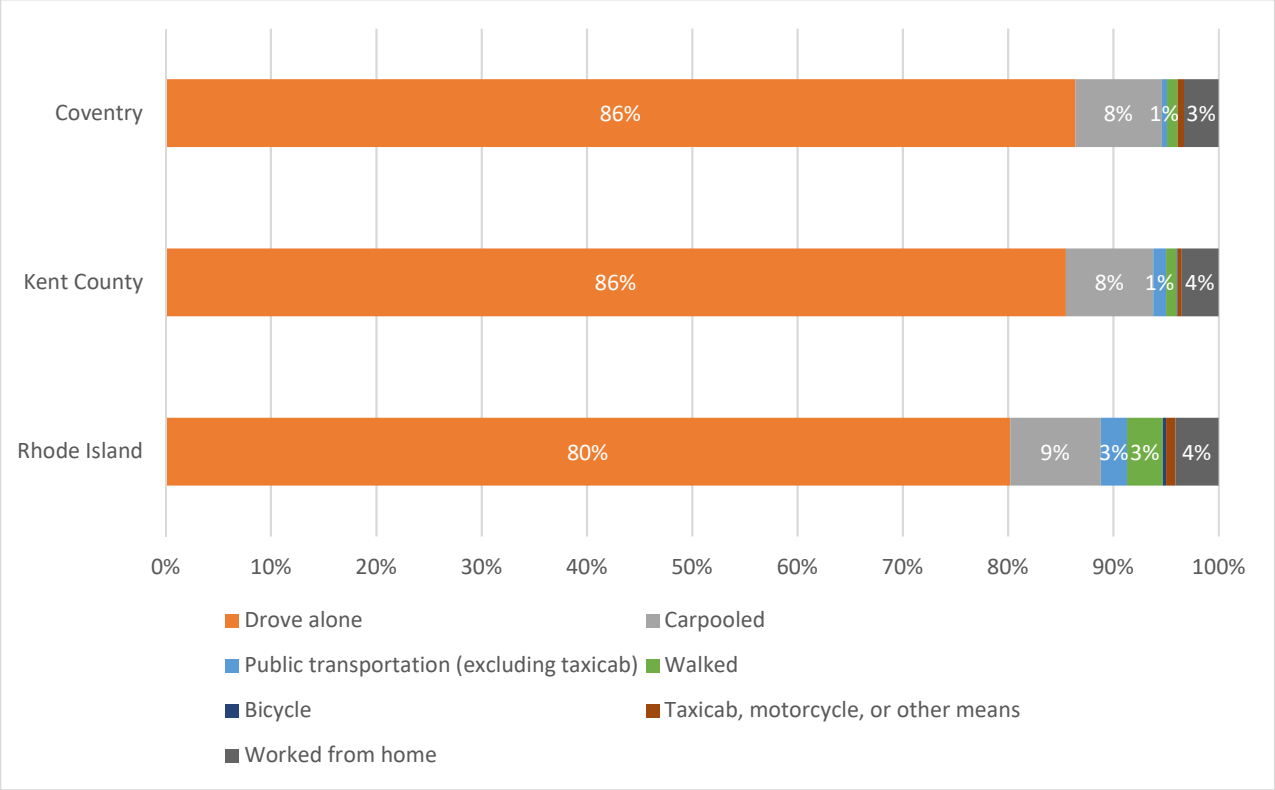


Source: American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2015-2019

9.2.4.2 Mode Share

In 2019**,** an estimated 86 percent of Coventry residents drove alone to get to work, 8 percent carpooled, and 1 percent used public transportation. Just 1 percent walked, 1 percent took a taxi, motorcycle, bicycle or other means, and 3 percent worked from home. As shown in the figure below, the estimated percentage (86 percent) of residents driving alone to work was higher than the State of Rhode Island (80 percent) and comparable to Kent County (also 86 percent). The number of residents walking to work and taking public transit to work was slightly lower than the State of Rhode Island, but comparable to Kent County. It is important to note, during the pandemic, the work from home share has likely increased significantly. Figure 9.2 shows the modes of transportation to work for residents in Coventry, Kent County, and the State of Rhode Island in 2019, the most recent year for which this data was collected.

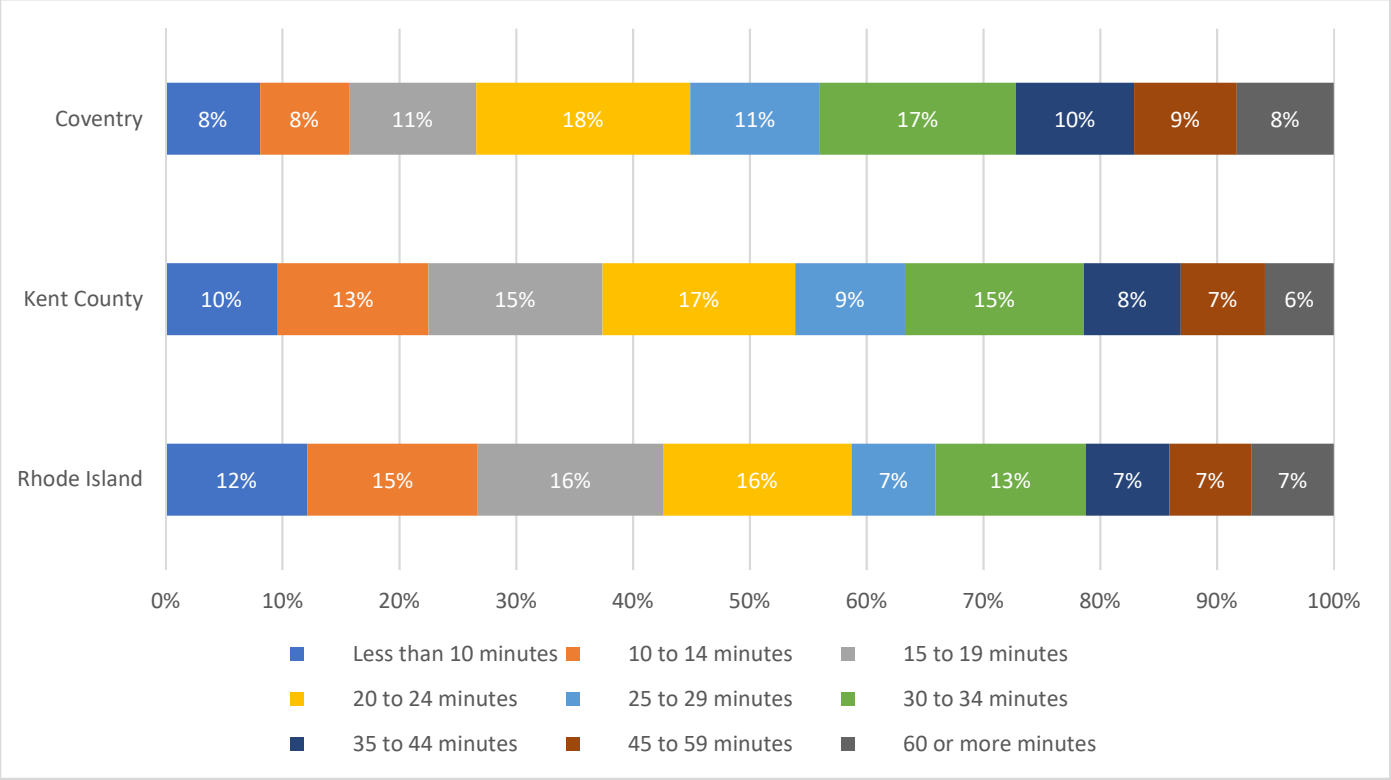
Figure 9.2 Commute Mode to Work



Source: American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2015-2019

Approximately 56 percent of Coventry residents had an average commute of less than 30 minutes, 36 percent had a commute of 30-60 minutes, and 8 percent had a commute of an hour or more. A lower percentage of Coventry residents had a commute of less than 30 minutes (56 percent) than both the state (66 percent) and the county (64 percent) The mean travel time to work for Coventry residents was 29 minutes, which was longer than the Kent County average of 26 minutes and the Rhode Island average of 25 minutes. With the rise of remote working options during the Covid-19 pandemic, Coventry workers who previously had commutes longer than the Rhode Island average have benefitted from working from home and may desire increased hybrid work options in the future. Figure 9.3 shows the reported travel times to work for Coventry residents in 2019.

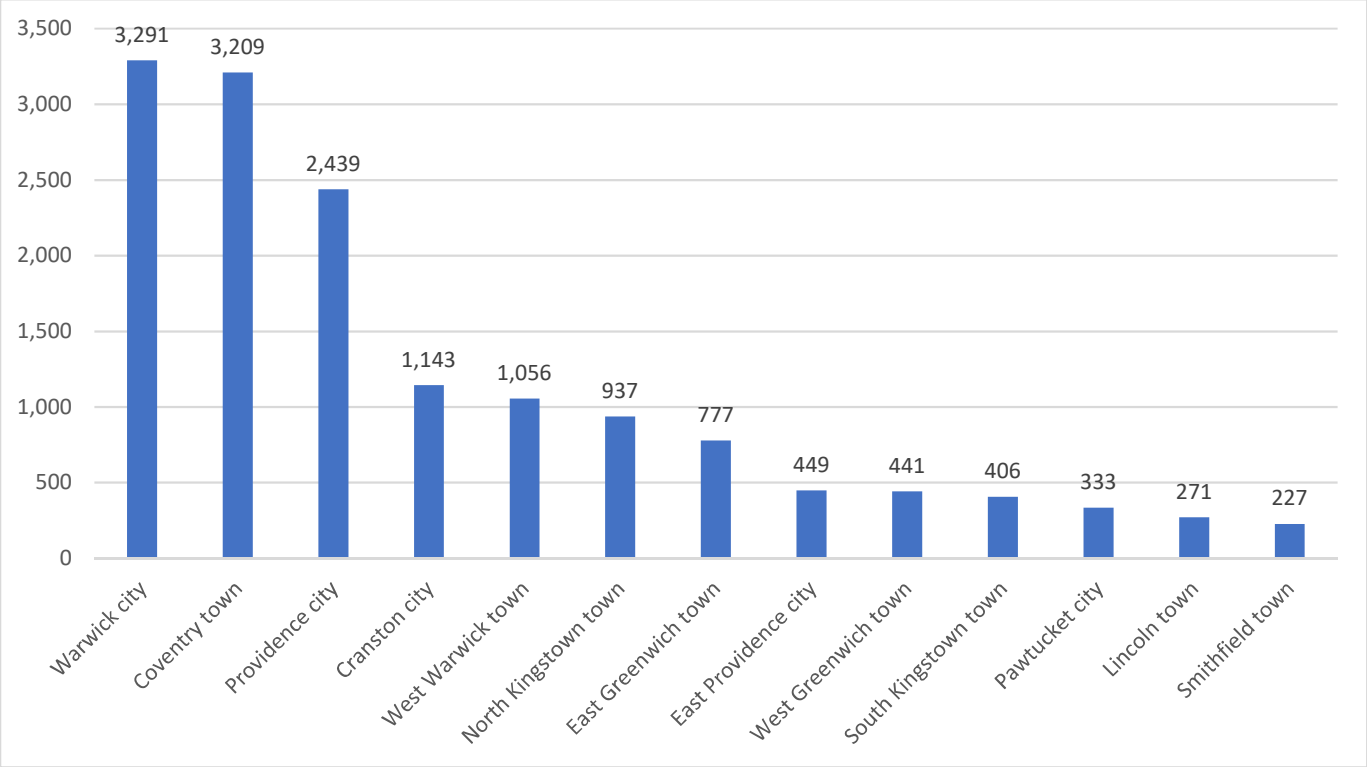
Figure 9.3 Commute Time to Work



Source: American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2015-2019

Figure 9.4 shows the most popular work destinations for Coventry residents based on the most recent data on commuting flows available from the U.S. Census American Community Survey 2011-2015 Five Year Estimate. As shown in the figure below, an estimated 3,209 Coventry residents (approximately 18% of workers) work in Coventry. An estimated total of 3,291 residents (18% of workers) are employed in Warwick, and an estimated 2,439 workers are employed in Providence (14% of workers). Many Coventry residents also work within other Rhode Island communities such as Cranston (6% of workers) and West Warwick (6% of workers).

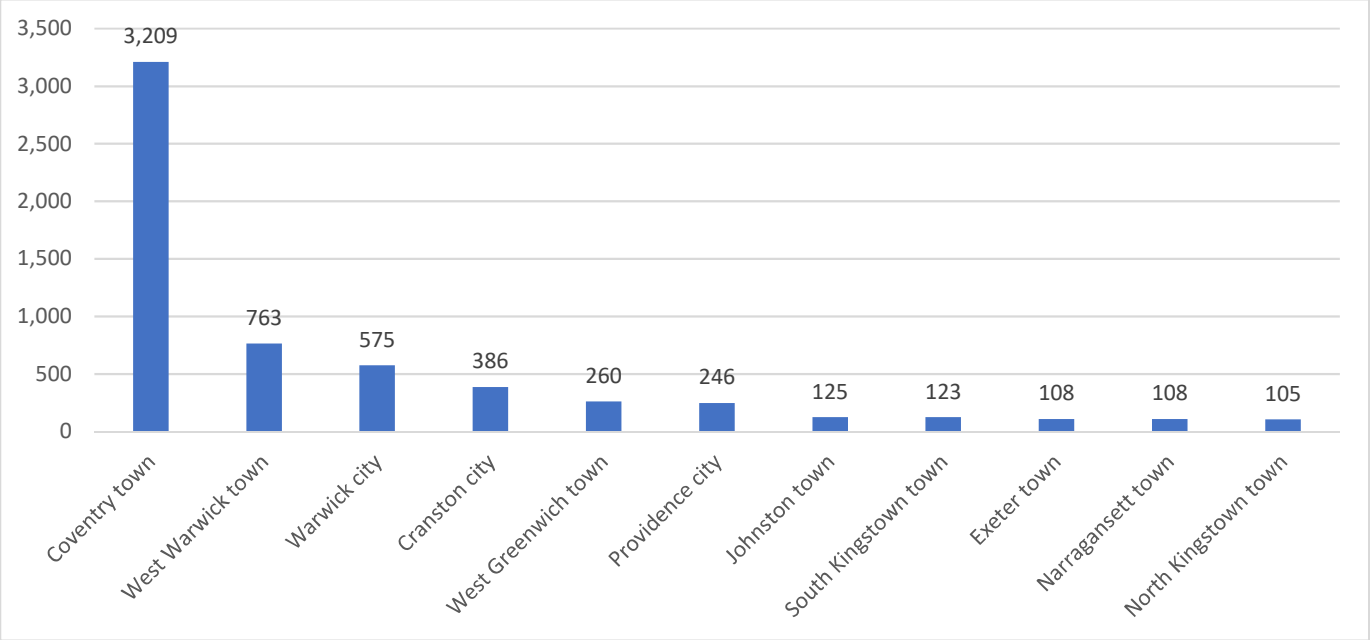
Figure 9.4 Workplace Location of Coventry Workers



Source: American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2011-2015

Figure 9.5 shows the major residence locations for people working in Coventry based on the U.S. Census American Community Survey 2011-2015 Five Year Estimate. Approximately 3,209 people who work in Coventry also live in Coventry (44%). An estimated total of 763 West Warwick residents (10 percent) work in Coventry. Higher numbers of people who work in Coventry also come from Warwick, Cranston, West Greenwich, Johnston, South Kingstown, Exeter, Narragansett, and North Kingstown.

Figure 9.5 Residence Location of Coventry Workers



Source: American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2011-2015

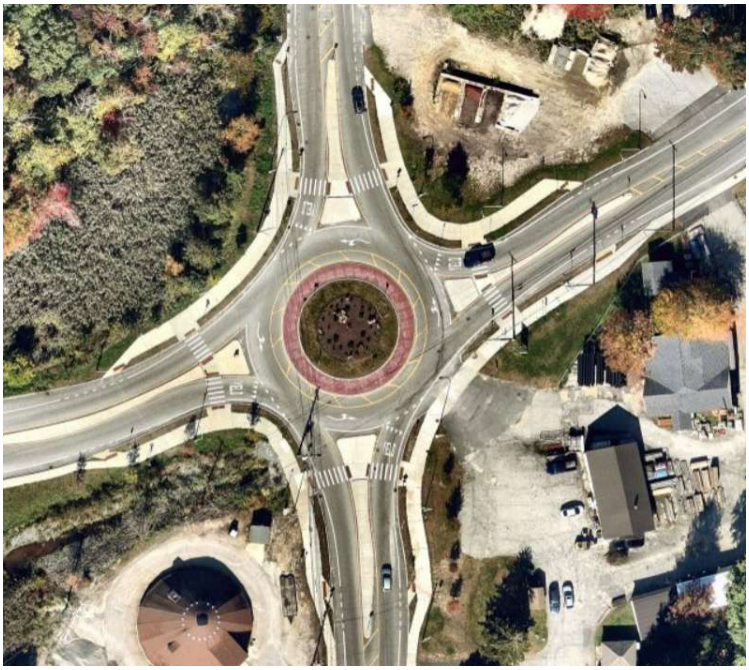
9.2.5 PROJECTS

9.2.5.1 RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS

Arnold Road Reconstruction. The Town recently reconstructed Arnold Road adding high visibility crossings, bike lanes and new concrete sidewalks.

Source: Google Streetview

Route 102 and Route 117 Roundabout. The State recently reconstructed the high crash intersection of Victory Highway Route 102 and Route 117 adding a roundabout, sidewalks and visible crossings.



Source: Nearmap 2021

9.2.5.2 Upcoming Projects

Sidewalk and Pavement Management. The Town is in the process of finalizing a Sidewalk and Pavement management report with an inventory of sidewalk and pavement condition, to assist in routine road maintenance and road and sidewalk reconstruction.

Transit to the Centre of New England. RIPTA is proposing a new route to the Centre of New England from the Community College of Rhode Island Campus in Warwick that would run with 90-minute headways.

Route 13 interline with Route 29. RIPTA is proposing that Route 13 from Coventry connect, or interline, with Route 29 at CCRI before heading to the Conmicut area in Warwick, which would mean people riding Route 13 could stay on the bus all the way without transferring.[5]

242 Flex On-Demand Zone. RIPTA is in the process of procuring a technology solution to power an on-demand zone in the 242 Flex zone and hopes to pilot it in the near-term.

Sandy Bottom Road Streetscape Improvements. In the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for 2027, this project will add sidewalks and curbing on both sides of Sandy Bottom Road (Route 33), provide landscaped areas, benches, and lighting for pedestrians, a bike path, and repave the roadway.

Bridge Replacements RIDOT is planning six bridge replacements from 2022 to 2026 in Coventry, including Bucks Horn Brook Bridge, two stone arch bridges carrying Route 115, Cahoone Road Bridge, a bridge carrying Harkney Hill Road, and a bridge carrying Sandy Bottom Road.

Reconstruction of Old Flat River Road is planned for 2031 in the STIP.

[5]RIPTA. 2022. "MOVING TRANSIT FORWARD IN WEST BAY, PAWTUCKET AND NEWPORT." https://www.ripta.com/movingtransitforward/.

Route 117, Centerville and Legris Ave resurfacing and sidewalk improvements Planned in the STIP for 2026-2029, the project will include resurfacing, limited sidewalk replaced and handicapped ramp installation between Route 33 and Quaker Lane.

Route 117 and Flat River Road. Limited wheelchair ramp improvements are planned for 2031 in the STIP.

Trestle Trail Extension. RIDOT is in the process of designing and paving the 4.9-mile western stretch of the Trestle Trail extending to the Connecticut Border. The project is programmed into the STIP for 2024-2028.[6]

9.3 NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

9.3.1 NEEDS

The most prominent circulation issues in Coventry are at the Centre of New England, on Tiogue Avenue between Jefferson Drive and Arnold Road, at Tiogue Elementary School, and north-south through town. The Centre of New England has just one egress, due to a secondary access road that was planned but never completed. When any disruption occurs on this access road (in 2022, there was a natural gas leak) people within the mall cannot depart the area. Tiogue Elementary School has just a single egress onto East Shore Drive which causes significant backups during pick up and drop off times. The area lacks any pedestrian infrastructure, and the road configuration where East Shore Drive splits onto the Tiogue Elementary Access Road is confusing for motorists. On Tiogue Avenue between Jefferson Drive and Arnold Road, residents have expressed difficulty entering and exiting the businesses along the corridor, despite the center turn lane. General north-south traffic flow through town, as described in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, is still considered an issue by some town residents.

While parts of eastern Coventry have sidewalks on both sides of the street, there are gaps in the sidewalk network. For example, Route 3 (Tiogue Avenue / Nooseneck Hill Road) lacks sidewalks near commercial land uses and transit stops starting just west of South Main Street. One town resident voiced that he rides his electric wheelchair in the breakdown lane on the road to access his destinations. The Town's recent initiative to complete a sidewalk inventory will help the Town to identify and fill important network gaps. The town does not have a master plan to guide implementation of bicycle and pedestrian connectivity projects. New developments are not required to build sidewalks or pedestrian network amenities as part of all new developments. For example, sidewalks are not required on private roads or in RR3 zoned areas. The Town also does not have a payment-in-lieu option, where developers who are required to build a sidewalk in a development that does not need them, can pay into a fund for sidewalk improvements elsewhere.

Between 2017 and 2021, eight vehicle crashes on Coventry roads resulted in fatal injury, and one involved a person walking on Arnold Road. High crash areas in Coventry are concentrated in the east side of town, but crashes occur across town at specific locations. The highest crash location is at the intersection of Route 3 and Route 33 (Sandy Bottom Road). A fatal vehicle crash occurred at this intersection in 2019. Reservoir Road leading to Coventry High School had a concentration of bike and pedestrian crashes during this period.

Coventry's roads, bridges, and trails offer Coventry residents with some transportation options, but for the most part, Coventry is a car-dependent community. RIPTA and the senior center note that the lack of density, particularly in the western side of town, make provision of shared vehicles or mass transit

[6] RI Division of Statewide Planning. 2021. "State Transportation Improvement Program 2022-2031."

impractical. The senior center also notes that they expect an increased demand for the senior shuttle in the future due to an aging population, requiring additional vehicles to serve demand and required replacement of existing vehicles.

Maintenance backlogs and funding constraints present a challenge for the Town. Residents note that several of Coventry's roadways, particularly back roads like Breezy Lake Drive, suffer from poor condition, but the town struggles to keep up with preventative maintenance. There is a significant need for the town to establish fund accounts and budget funds to address priority infrastructure needs for roadways, sidewalks, and bridges/culverts.

The Town owns over thirty parking lots offering free parking. Lack of town oversight over parking areas can result in improper parking lot uses and lost opportunity for revenue generation through parking. For example, the private school bus operator parks their privately-owned school buses behind the 50 Wood Street town complex for free, when the Town could require the operator pay to store their vehicles on town property.

Many roads in Coventry, as well as parts of the Washington Secondary Trail, are under state jurisdiction. This creates a challenge when the Town wants to upgrade roadway amenities like crosswalks, because the process for coordinating the addition of these amenities with RIDOT is not streamlined and can be administratively taxing and time consuming.

Finally, the transportation needs for the Town of Coventry work in conjunction with Rhode Island's statewide transportation network. The future of transportation in the Town of Coventry needs to recognize its interconnectedness to the state and to the unified vision, goals, policies, and actions and vision adopted statewide to support healthy communities through safe and effective multimodal transportation options[7].

9.3.2 Opportunities

The Town's recently completed pavement and sidewalk condition report and inventory will allow the Town to better plan routine road maintenance and road reconstruction. The report will also give the Town the opportunity to identify major gaps more easily in the bike and pedestrian transportation network.

Public survey respondents overwhelmingly want to see more biking and walkability improvements in commercial corridors, and connecting homes, businesses, parks and schools. The presence of the well-used Washington Secondary Trail in town offers an opportunity to encourage residents to bike and walk as a means of transportation. The Town can improve pedestrian and bike connections to the trail from neighborhoods, parks, and commercial areas and add bike parking nearby. The Town currently does not have a walkable commercial area, where people go to walk around and browse shops. This lends to a lack of town identity. There is an opportunity to improve the connections to the Washington Secondary Trail, add walkability amenities, and enhance the environment through placemaking in Coventry's existing Tiogue Avenue and Route 117 commercial corridors.

RIPTA hopes to one day increase Route 13 headways to every 30 minutes, as stated in their long-range transit master plan, Transit Forward 2040[8]. The Town can work with RIPTA to connect existing dense residential areas and commercial areas to the Route 13 transit corridor and plan new dense and affordable housing near transit to encourage ridership warranting improved frequencies. Transit already serves Route 3 and the adjacent businesses. Recent transit improvements including new service to the Centre of

[7] Moving Forward RI 2040, Rhode Island's Long Range Transportation Plan, State Guide Plan Element 611, Report Number 123, adopted December 2020.
[8] RIPTA. 2020. "Transit Forward RI 2040: Rhode Island Transit Master Plan."

New England and the Route 13 interline with Route 29 also have the potential to improve Coventry residents' access to destinations using transit.

Finally, the federal government is making new funding available for local road safety plans, and the Town could take advantage of this funding to improve safety on Coventry roadways. Town Senior Center transportation services are fully grant funded, and there is an opportunity to use CDBG funding in the future to continue to pay for upgrades to their fleet of vehicles and operators. CDBG funds also present an opportunity for advancing needed pedestrian infrastructure projects. As the transition to electric vehicles occurs, the town may be able to seek funding through state and federal funding source for electric vehicle charging stations.

9.4 Goals, Policies, and Actions

A complete list of goals, policies, and actions regarding the economic development of Coventry, Rhode Island can be found in Volume 1 of the 2026 Coventry Comprehensive Plan.

10.0 NATURAL HAZARDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Examining natural hazards and climate change reveals the nature of unpredictability in long-term planning. Coventry, like all municipalities in Rhode Island, is required to update its Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) every five years as mandated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in order to remain eligible for a number of pre-disaster funding opportunities. Coventry's latest revision of this plan is from 2024. The Hazard Mitigation Plan catalogues the natural hazards that pose the greatest risk to Coventry, and where the Town is most vulnerable to impacts from such events. It also keeps track of the Town's mitigation capabilities - the departments, plans, policies, regulations, and operations currently in place to reduce risks – and the Town's critical facilities that house important emergency response or operations services, and that shelter vulnerable populations. All Hazard Mitigation Plans culminate in the development of a mitigation action list. These actions, tailored to the Town's risk, capabilities, and hazard event history, help to guide the relevant agencies in actions that can prevent large-scale damage in the case of a hazard event and support the town in pursuing funding opportunities.

The Hazard Mitigation Plan is the master document for natural hazards and climate change for the Town, but the unpredictability of natural hazards and evolution of climate change paired with the long-term goals of a comprehensive plan make this section a vital extension of the periodically updated HMP.

This chapter aligns with, and updates, where needed, the 2024 Coventry HMP to discuss the natural hazards of concern for Coventry, note high-risk areas and vulnerabilities in town, investigate the greatest impacts hazard events could cause, and develop goals that incorporate climate change risks into town-wide mitigation actions.

10.2 CLIMATE CHANGE

Coventry's Comprehensive Plan should act as a reference for 20 years of future growth, development, and change in the town. In the wake of an already shifting climate, the next 20 years will mark new and greater impacts of climate change in Coventry and around the world. **Climate change will exacerbate the vulnerabilities and risks associated with natural hazards, so time spent today on hazard mitigation and climate adaptation measures can significantly reduce the cost of post- disaster recovery in the future.**

The most recent State of Rhode Island State Hazard Mitigation Plan Update was completed in 2024 and lays out guidance for state hazard event preparedness and response. Statewide mitigation actions are reviewed quarterly to ensure the actions recommended to protect communities and state assets are on the path to completion and are still relevant. Like local plans, the State HMP also discusses climate change alongside another State plan released in 2018. "Resilient Rhody: An Actionable Vision for Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change in Rhode Island" was released by the Governor's office of Rhode Island to address climate change, sustainability, and mitigation statewide. It identifies the tools, resources, organizations, and plans that support Rhode Island communities in preparing for climate resilience in a State that is "already experiencing climate change, and the impacts are placing communities, coastlines, forests and aging, vulnerable infrastructure at risk." The report identifies six manifestations of climate change that are impacting the State: sea level rise, warming air temperatures, warming water

temperatures, increased storm frequency and intensity, changing biodiversity, and increased precipitation and inland flooding.[1]

Coventry's large land area and high number of water bodies put the Town more at risk for certain natural hazard events and climate change impacts over others. Coventry should focus on dam maintenance and safety and on the increased severity and frequency of severe storms that may cause flooding. Aligning the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan with State HMP and Resilient Rhody goals will increase opportunities for partnership and funding support. The town must also leverage local leadership, communication systems, and infrastructure to mitigate the impacts of climate change and natural hazard events to protect the safety, property, and quality of life for Coventry residents in the next 20 years.

10.3 Relation to Other Sections

10.3.1 Historic & Cultural Resources

Natural Hazards and climate change can have a severe impact on the natural and cultural ecosystems of a place. The same severe weather events that can damage or destroy local habitats can also damage or destroy historic structures that were not built to withstand increasing wind speeds or flood levels. Mitigating impacts of natural hazards can help to protect Coventry's historic resources while also supporting the natural resources that defines much of the western portion of the town.

10.3.2 Natural Resources & Open Space

Many of the natural hazards discussed within this chapter directly impact the properties and structures within Coventry and can be mitigated using the preexisting natural resources at the Town's disposal. Work like improving stormwater infrastructure and protecting natural spaces in Coventry are discussed in the Natural Resources and Open Space Chapter of this plan.

10.3.3 Services and Facilities

The Town's hazard response capabilities come directly from the Town's services and facilities, from the emergency response functions of the Fire and Police Departments to the Town's designated emergency shelter and the DPW processes and projects. Stormwater infrastructure and practices are also an aspect of the services and facilities section that directly relates to several of the hazard events discussed in this chapter including flooding and dam failure.

10.3.4 Energy & Renewable Energy

Coventry's electric grid is often impacted by natural hazards, especially in the more rural areas of the Town. Similarly, the efforts to incorporate more renewable energy sources, like solar and wind energy and more electric car charging stations, means that the Town is taking steps to diversify its energy profile and become more carbon neutral, reducing local contribution to the global warming crisis while building resilience to the impacts of climate change.

10.3.5 Transportation

Maintaining the safety and operation of the town's roadway network is of the highest priority to emergency managers and other officials involved in disaster mitigation, response, and recovery. A well-maintained road network with proper stormwater management is more resilient to rain, snow, and flood events, and providing a transportation system that serves the needs of all ages, incomes, and physical ability increases all individual's abilities to better prepare for and withstand the impacts of future natural

[1] Resilient Rhody: An Actionable Vision for Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change in Rhode Island, 2018.

hazard events. Transportation routes, modes, and maintenance systems can all help to improve community resilience with clear and safe routes that can be protected from flooding or downed trees.

10.4 Key Hazard Ranking – Existing Conditions

The 2018 Coventry HMP lists the natural hazards of concern to the community based on the frequency and probability of future occurrence, potential damage extent, and potential impacts. Below is a list of the risk rankings for each natural hazard identified in the 2018 HMP.

Table 10.1 Hazard Risk Ranking from 2018 Hazard Mitigation Plan

Natural Hazard	Risk Ranking
High Winds	Medium/High
Dam Failure	Varies, High
Flooding (Riverine)	Medium
Hurricane	Medium
Nor'easter	Medium
Ice Storm	Medium
Snowstorm	Medium/Low
Flooding (Street)	Low
Hail	Low
Lightning	Low
Brushfire	Low
Drought	Low
Extreme Heat and Cold	Low
Tornadoes	Low
Earthquake	Low

Source: 2018 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, Town of Coventry, RI.

This risk ranking provides a framework for decision making on local efforts to mitigate the impacts of natural hazards, with more careful consideration and time dedicated to the hazards ranked as High, Medium/High, or Medium by the Town. Though some of these hazards are ranked lower on the scale of frequency and impact in Coventry, they still have a possibility of causing significant consequences. Descriptions of each of these natural hazards and how they have the potential to impact the town are provided in the sections below.

10.4.1 High Winds

High winds ranked highest on the list of Coventry's hazards of concern. Extreme wind could occur as part of high gale winds, thunderstorms, tropical storms, or Nor'easters.

Coventry is particularly susceptible to damage from high winds because of its size and rural makeup. Downed trees, damaged structures and interrupted utilities can all result from high wind, and almost all recent recorded damage events in Coventry involve high wind. Because of the more remote nature of western Coventry, customers in that part of town who lose electricity during high wind events may experience longer outage durations, increasing that population's vulnerability to secondary impacts such as extreme temperatures and blocked roads.[2]

[2] NOAA http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/stormevents

10.4.2 Dam Failure

Common practice among federal and state dam safety offices is to classify a dam according to the potential impact a dam failure (breach) or mis-operation (unscheduled release) would have on upstream and/or downstream areas or at locations remote from the dam. Coventry has 61 dams, 6 of which are classified by the RI Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) as High Hazard dams and 6 of which are Significant Hazard dams. High Hazard dams have the greatest potential to cause loss of human life if misoperation or failure were to occur.[3] Map 10.1 Dam Hazard Classification in Coventry, RI shows all of the dams in Coventry, as well as those outside the boundaries of town that could have an impact on Coventry if they were to fail. High Hazard and Significant Hazard dams must be inspected by RIDEM more often than Low Hazard Dams to better understand the dams' conditions. Dam condition is ranked on a scale: Good, Fair, Poor, Unsafe or May Be Unsafe depending on factors like deterioration, vegetation growth, or maintenance requirements. In 2021, seven of the High Hazard or Significant Hazard dams were considered unsafe by RIDEM standards.[4]

Table 10.2 Dam Hazard Classification in Coventry, RI

Dam Name	River/Stream	Hazard
Flat River Reservoir/Johnson's Pond	Pawtuxet River - South Branch	High
Coventry Reservoir/Stump Pond	Quidnick Brook	High
Tiogue Lake	Tiogue River	High
Black Rock Reservoir	Black Rock Brook	High
Pearce Pond	Black Rock Brook	High
Arnold Pond	Roaring Brook	High
Mill Pond	Pawtuxet River - South Branch	Significant
Quidnick Reservoir	Quidnick Brook	Significant
Upper Pond	Northrup Brook	Significant
Middle Pond	Northrup Brook	Significant
Hopkins Farm Pond	Pawtuxet River - South Branch	Significant
Centre of New England #1	Tiogue Lake - Tributary	Significant

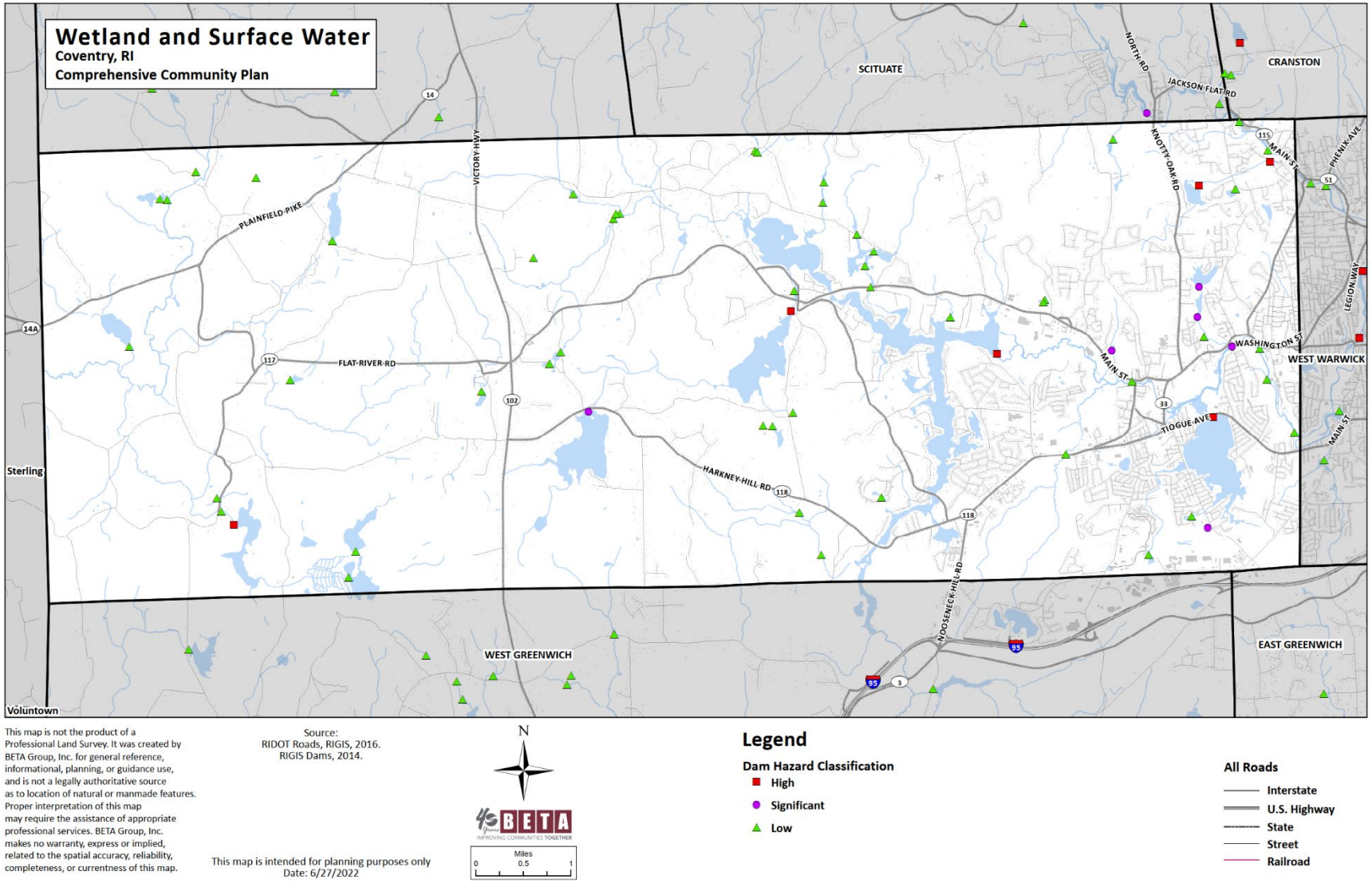
Source: 2020 Dam Safety Annual Report, RIDEM., *Wording taken from Unsafe Dams with Known Owners Chart in 2021 Sam Safety Annual Report, RIDEM.

Dams have been a cause for concern for the Town for some time, and one of the 2018 HMP actions was to "Inventory the operating systems of the dams. Most have antique gates that may not effectively open if necessary."[5] Several High and Significant Hazard dams are privately owned, making outreach to private owners especially important to educate dam owners about measures they can take to improve safety and risk reduction for downstream areas that would be impacted in the case of a dam breach or failure such as lowering water levels when a significant rain event is forecasted. Outreach should also focus on connecting dam owners to programs that can offer technical resources and financial support to implement safety measures.

[3] 2020 Dam Safety Annual Report, RIDEM.
[4] 2021 Dam Safety Annual Report, RIDEM.
[5] 2018 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Town of Coventry, Rhode Island

Significant Hazard and High Hazard dams are required by RIDEM to submit Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) that describe actions specific to each dam to prevent damage and loss of life in the case of an emergency. The EAP must be approved by RIEMA and RIDEM. Currently, none of the dams in Coventry are listed in RIDEM's list of 68 approved EAPs.[6]

[6] Emergency Action Plans, 2021 Dam Safety Annual Report, RIDEM.



Map 10.1 Dam Hazard Classification in Coventry, RI

10.4.3 Flooding (Riverine & Urban)

Flooding is the most regularly occurring natural hazard in the United States,[7] and instances of flooding will continue to rise due to increased frequency of high intensity precipitation events resulting from climate change. Street flooding is relatively common in Coventry. Riverine flooding is less frequent but still likely to occur due to the significant amount of land in the town that abuts the Pawtuxet River, its tributaries, and the numerous lakes and ponds scattered across the town.

In March 2010, much of the State of Rhode Island, including Coventry, experienced riverine and urban flooding after a severe rainfall event that amounted to roughly $27 million in damage, statewide.[8] Though the town has experienced some flooding since then, none of the events have matched the severity and extent of damage of the 2010 event, which was deemed a 250-year flood event. The 2010 floods prompted mitigation work to be done on Flat River Reservoir dam, which had sustained visible damage to the dam's structure. The Town utilized FEMA Public Assistance funding to contract with RT Group, Inc. for repairs.[9]

The Laurel Avenue Bridge which provides one of Coventry's three vital crossings over the Pawtuxet River also sustained damage during the 2010 floods and required emergency repairs. The town partnered with RIDOT and Cardi Corporation/CME Associates to tear down and rebuild the structure, renaming it the General Nathanael Greene Memorial Bridge for the reopening in 2012.[10] RIDOT built a new concrete base at the edge of the falls in the neighboring Mill Pond Dam, and re-drilled deeper bridge piles below the riverbed. Downstream of the bridge are the historic Anthony Mill buildings. The retaining walls and riverbank beneath the buildings were eroded from the 2010 event and were repaired and stabilized with a cable anchoring system, concrete fill, and rip rap. This project, adjacent to the bridge project, was completed with financial resources from the U.S. Department of Agriculture – National Resources Conservation Service alongside the Town of Coventry, State of Rhode Island, Fuss and O'Neill, and Cardi Corporation.[11]

Map 10.2 shows the FEMA Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs) in Coventry – floodplains that would be inundated in the event of a 1% (A or AE, 100-year flood) and 0.2% (X, 500-year flood) storm. 100-year floodplains occur in both eastern and western Coventry, while most of the 500-year floodplains are in eastern Coventry. All areas within the SFHA are considered to be at risk of future flooding, and the risk increases when critical facilities, structures, or utilities are located within the SFHA. High or significant risk dams or vulnerable populations within the SFHA are particularly at risk in Coventry.

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) offers flood insurance at a risk-adjusted rate for any property owners within NFIP-participating communities. Property owners who receive federally backed financing for their properties, and whose properties fall within the 100-year FEMA flood zone, are required by law to carry flood insurance. As of 2022, there are 137 NFIP policies in place in Coventry with a total of $40,764,700 of insurance in force. There are 6 residential properties designated as Repetitive Loss

[7] Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA), https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/disaster-types
[8] HMP Update
[9] RT Engineering, Inc. https://rtg-eng.com/projects/dam-safety-projects/flat-river-reservoir-repair-projects
[10] CHA Consulting, Inc., Emergency Replacement of Laurel Avenue Bridge, https://chacompanies.com/projects/emergency-replacement-of-laurel-avenue-bridge/
[11] Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program Success Story, Laurel Avenue Project - Coventry, Rhode Island, U.S. Department of Agriculture – National Resources Conservation Service.

Properties. A Repetitive Loss Property is an insurable building, either residential or non-residential, for which two or more claims of more than $1,000 were paid out by the NFIP within a 10-year period.[12]

[12] RIEMA NFIP Staff Communication, 2016

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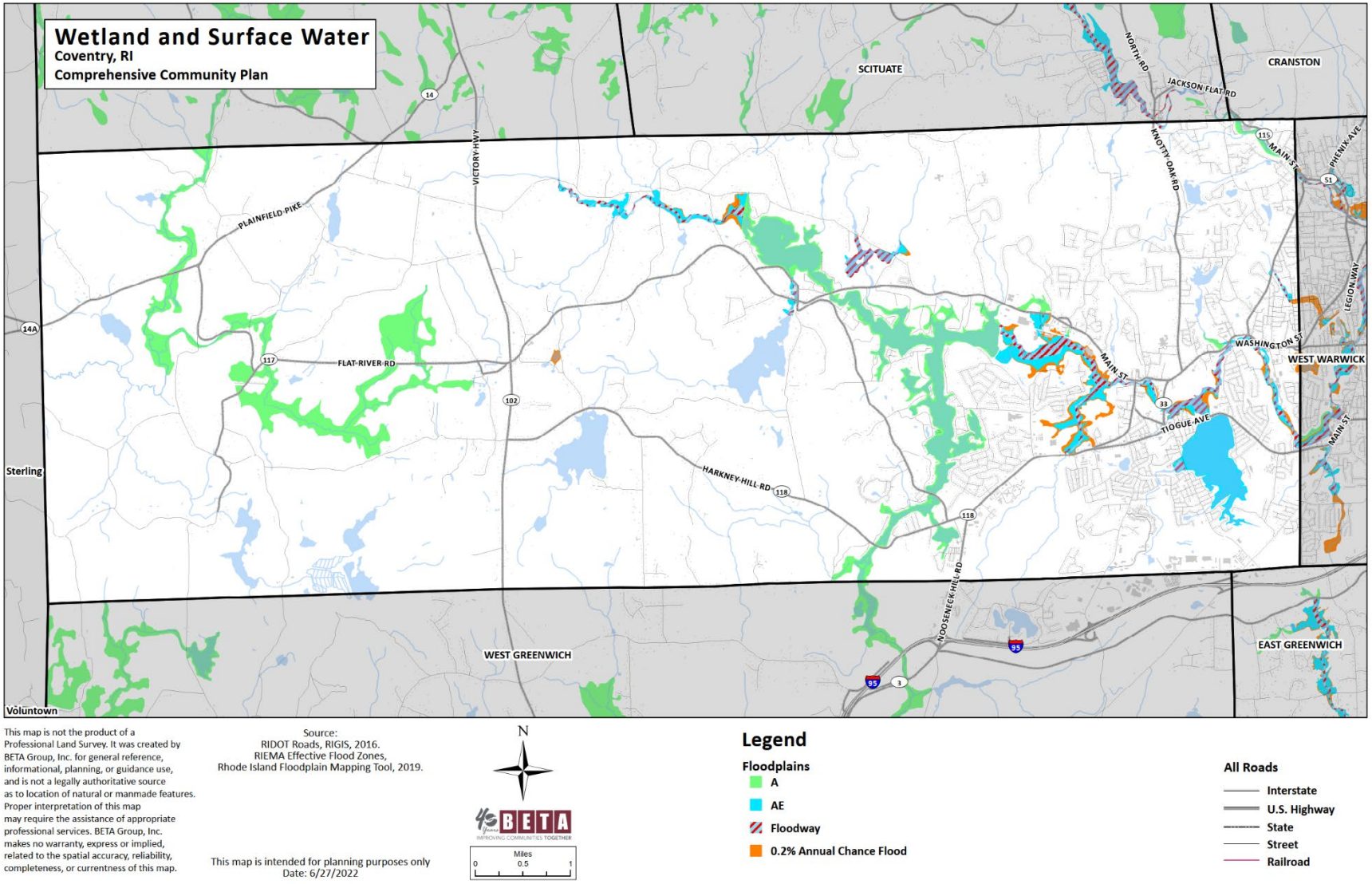

Map 10.2 Wetland and Surface Water – Floodplains in Coventry, RI

10.4.4 Hurricane

Hurricanes, also called tropical cyclones, are low pressure systems classified on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale to rate their damage potential. Once a storm's maximum wind speed reaches 74 miles per hour it is classified as a hurricane and ranked from weak to devastating on the scale.[13] The hurricane season in New England lasts from June to November, often with several hurricane-level storms per season. Not all storms reach Coventry at hurricane level, often downgrading to a tropical storm as they proceed over land. Hurricanes may cause damage from high wind or flooding and should be treated seriously even if the level of storm is downgraded.

In Coventry, hurricanes often cause downed trees and power lines as well as isolated instances of flooding. Coventry has experienced several notable hurricanes that have also impacted the rest of the State, including the Great Hurricane of 1938, Hurricane Carol in 1954, Hurricane Bob in 1991, Hurricane Irene in 2011, and Hurricane Sandy in 2012. The most recent hurricane turned tropical storm event to impact Coventry was Tropical Storm Henri in 2021, which caused several downed trees and lines in town.

Based on the frequency of past hurricane events and the projections for increased frequency and intensity of storm events in the coming years due to climate change, hurricanes and tropical storms are highly likely to occur in Coventry and are likely to cause greater damage. Because of well-documented weather patterns and predictive forecast models, Coventry officials and property owners can prepare for hurricanes through emergency communication systems, flood-protection measures, and storm preparation to mitigate damages.

10.4.5 Nor'easter

Nor'easters are east coast and mid-Atlantic weather phenomena that bring heavy precipitation as rain or snow and strong winds. The typical season for nor'easters is September to April and these storms can cause significant damage without proper preparation.[14]

Coventry has experienced multiple nor'easters since the 2018 HMP with the most common damage being downed trees causing power outages. A nor'easter in November of 2018 consisted of strong winds and around seven inches of snow in Kent County, while an early February 2021 event brought around six inches of snow and heavy winds causing power outages and prompting parking bans in Coventry.[15] Meanwhile, an October 2021 nor'easter caused 96,800 power outages in RI. Prior to 2018, Coventry endured strong nor'easter events in early 2015 with the rest of New England, with many residents in Rhode Island and Massachusetts experiencing power outages. With climate change impacting the severity of storms, Coventry is likely to experience more frequent and stronger storms like the 2015 nor'easter in the future.

10.4.6 Ice Storm

Ice storms are precipitation events where water freezes on impact with cold air in the form of freezing rain, snow, and sleet. Common consequences from an ice storm include frozen and broken pipes, dangerous road conditions, and fallen trees or collapsed roofs due to excess weight.

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[13] National Ocean Service, https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/hurricane.html
[14] National Weather Service
[15] WPRI, StormBeat: Cleanup underway; slushy roadways making for slippery travel, https://www.wpri.com/weather/pinpoint-weather-alerts/stormbeat-february-1-2-winter-storm/

In 2018, Coventry experienced two ice-related winter storms that resulted in downed trees and several vehicle accidents due to road icing.[16] It is critical to ensure that the roofs of Coventry's historic buildings can endure heavy snow and ice loads in preparation for future events and that dead or diseased trees are removed from wires and structures to reduce the risk of losing power and of structural damage.

10.4.7 Snowstorm

Snowstorm events in Rhode Island are less severe than in other areas of New England, but Coventry still occasionally experiences the impacts of heavy snow and winter weather events. Winter snowstorms can cause roof and tree collapse, dangerous and isolating urban and rural road conditions, and loss of power.

Coventry experienced multiple snowstorm events in the years since the 2018 HMP, most of which included damage to trees, power outages, and dangerous road conditions. March 2018 snow event brought 14 to 16 inches of snow in western Kent County and brought a tree down on a house on Pin Oak Court in town. A March 2019 event brought 7 to 12 inches of snow in Kent County and a December 2020 snowstorm ended with a recorded 12 inches of snow in Coventry with wind gusts up to 45 MPH. February 2021 brought two back-to-back snowstorms that dropped around seven to nine inches each in western Kent County.[17]

10.4.8 Hail

Hail events are caused from freezing precipitation in cumulonimbus clouds that generate ice pellets from the size of a pea to as large as a grapefruit. Hailstorms can cause crop and property damage at larger diameters. Coventry does not historically experience large damaging hail events, though smaller events are more common and may cause cosmetic damage to cars and harm vegetation.[18]

10.4.9 Lightning & Thunderstorms

Thunderstorms, common in New England summers, are caused by moist conditions of unstable air being lifted into cold air, causing a thunderstorm cell to form. All thunderstorms contain lightning, but lightning can also occur outside of thunderstorm conditions.[19]

Well-kept sheltered areas are the safest places in thunderstorm conditions since lightning strikes can be extremely dangerous to structures and people. Lightning strikes can cause fires, harm utility poles, trees, turbines, and solar panels. Though there have been no recorded deaths in Coventry due to lightning or thunderstorms in the past 50 years, the conditions have caused house fires and injuries.[20]

10.4.10 Brushfire

Brushfires are smaller versions of wildfires, both of which rely on the right combination of wind, dryness, fuels, and topography to spread. Caused naturally or by human interference through misuse of fire, brushfires can threaten structures, human lives, livestock, and crops.[21] Because of the rural nature of western Coventry, the area is more susceptible to brushfire than the more developed eastern part of the

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[16] National Climatic Data Center, NOAA http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/stormevents
[17] Ibid.
[18] National Weather Service, https://www.weather.gov/jetstream/hail#:~:text=Hail%20is%20precipitation%20that%20is,deadly%20to%20livestock%20and%20people.
[19] NOAA National Severe Storms Laboratory, https://www.nssl.noaa.gov/education/svrwx101/thunderstorms/
[20] Coventry Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2018.
[21] National Fire Protection Association's "Brush, Grass and Forest Fires," https://www.nfpa.org/News-and-Research/Data-research-and-tools/Wildland-Urban-Interface/Brush-grass-and-forest-fires

town. A brushfire event in western Coventry could mean a loss of forested open space and could also devastate the agricultural enterprises operating in that part of town.

Increased drought periods in summer months due to climate change may raise the frequency of brushfire events in Coventry, and the quantity of dead trees due to insect damage has increased and the risk of a major fire since the 2018 risk ranking, but no damaging brushfire events have been recorded in the past several years.

10.4.11 Drought

Drought periods are defined by extended spans of time without the normal measure of precipitation. Drought is defined by four categories of impacts: meteorological, agricultural, hydrological, and socioeconomic. The four levels determine how much an impact the dry period causes, and droughts are then ranked by severity from an incipient dry spell to exceptional drought.[22]

The most recent drought event periods were recorded statewide in 2012 and in 2016. Rhode Island will experience more extreme weather events such as droughts in the coming decades a as result of climate change.

10.4.12 Extreme Heat and Cold

Extreme heat and extreme cold events often occur in the same instance as drought events or ice storms but can occur outside of those specific hazard events. Extreme cold can cause life-threatening conditions like hypothermia and frostbite, while also damaging structures with frozen pipes or icy road conditions. Extreme heat can also cause dangerous conditions including heat stroke or heat exhaustion and can lead to meltdowns of power infrastructure.

As global temperatures rise and winter events become more severe, both extreme heat and extreme cold will occur more frequently in Coventry, making the operation of local emergency shelters, including warming and cooling stations, critical to protect vulnerable populations like seniors and children.

10.4.13 Tornadoes

Tornadoes are not a common occurrence in Coventry nor New England, but the potential for tornadoes still exists. A tornado is a windstorm with a twisting funnel shaped cloud that can cause extreme structural damage and is life threatening. The damaging tornadoes that hit Rhode Island in 2008 and 2012 did not impact Coventry. However, the same utility structures, trees, and houses of older construction in town that are vulnerable to other high-wind events are also vulnerable to tornadoes.

10.4.14 Earthquake

Damaging earthquakes are also an uncommon event in Coventry, though seismic activity does occur in the area. Measured on the Richter Scale, magnitude 10 earthquakes are the most devastating while 0 are the least devastating.

No major earthquakes have originated in Coventry or the surrounding area, but the individuals in the town have reported feeling the aftershocks of several earthquakes over the years – though none caused local damage.

[22] U.S. Drought Monitor.

10.5 High Priority Impacts – Existing Conditions

10.5.1 Critical Facilities and Vulnerable Populations

Coventry's 2024 HMP update has a full list of the town's critical facilities, including the designated emergency shelter, dams, group homes, assisted living facilities, hazardous material sites, recreation facilities, and communication facilities. The Town's size compared to other municipalities in Rhode Island plays a key role in the need for mitigation efforts, as facilities may be farther apart and more difficult to manage and access than in other RI municipalities.

The negative impacts of natural hazards can occur for populations or infrastructure, both of which should be prevented from occurring. Populations considered to be particularly vulnerable to natural hazards include residents of group homes and assisted living facilities, and elderly individuals living alone. The Eastern and Central Coventry Fire Departments set a goal in the 2018 HMP Update to create Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) for all group home and assisted living facilities – this action was deemed a high-priority task and was completed. The Department also helped to develop EAPs for the hazardous material business facilities in town, including Boston Scientific, Suburban Propane, Rhodes Technologies, BioSci, and Pasteryak Asphalt. The EAPs created for businesses focused on protecting the hazardous materials inside from contaminating the rest of Coventry.

Coventry's 2018 HMP risk assessment utilized a HAZUS-MH model to estimate the possible damage that could be caused by the identified hazards of concern, and which areas in town are most at risk for damage. The analysis found that 106 parcels with buildings in the SFHA are at risk for flood damage based on FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM). At the time, 93% of Coventry's buildings were classified as residential use, and much of the recent development in town has also been residential. With such a large proportion of the Town's building stock in residential structures, a hazard event could diminish the Town's overall revenue, much of which stems from property taxes. Coventry also has one of the largest number of mobile homes in the state (around 723 structures out of the 1,049 in Kent County)[23]. Mobile homes are particularly at risk in flooding and storm events compared to other forms of housing stock because of their construction.

A significant proportion of Coventry's building stock may be at risk in a natural hazard scenario. About 1/5 of Coventry's population lives in houses 70 years old or older. Older structures are more vulnerable to high winds and snow loading on rooftops because of older construction methods and wear over time. People living in those structures are also at an increased risk of extreme heat and cold events, as many older houses are not equipped with sufficient heating and cooling systems. As climate change impacts the frequency and severity of some events, the vulnerability of these structures and their residents will increase if mitigation measures are not implemented.

10.5.2 Areas at Risk of Flooding

There are several areas with repeated flooding instances noted in the 2018 HMP Update and by citizens through public engagement. The area most often mentioned is at West Lake Drive and Johnson Boulevard between Hopkins Hill and Tiogue Lake. The town is currently implementing a project through a RIDEM grant to improve stormwater drainage in the area. The grant is funding recovery actions from the 2010 floods around Johnson's Boulevard and York Drive area, just east and downslope of West Lake Drive, so improvements could help mitigate West Lake Drive flood problem as well. Though some downstream tributary and catch basin clearing has occurred since the 2010 event, Coventry DPW will have to keep up

[23] Housing Units in Structure, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2016-2020).

with maintenance and complete selected culvert replacements in order to mitigate future damages from occurring in this area.

The Services and Facilities chapter of this Comprehensive Plan includes a more in-depth look at Coventry's stormwater infrastructure facilities and operations, specifically an area around the Nathanael Greene Homestead that experiences flooding due to drainage issues there.

The 2018 HMP contained a list of other areas prone to flooding, listed in Table 10.3 below. At the time of writing this plan Town Officials and stakeholders confirmed that this list is unchanged and added the areas at discussed above at West Lake Drive and Johnson Boulevard and at the Nathanael Greene Homestead, which have been added to the original table in Table 10.3. Many of these areas were impacted by the 2010 floods, and continued to flood, though to a lesser extent in the flooding events that occurred over the next several years.

Table 10.3 Coventry Areas Prone to Flooding (Coventry Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2018)

Flood Prone Areas
Areas east of Lewis Farm Road
Areas east of Station Street
Several roads that have a history of flooding: • Flat River Rd. (Rt. 117), especially at house 1668 • Sandy Bottom Road • Maple Valley Road • Industrial Drive • Osprey Drive • Hammet Road • Kingfisher Road • LaForge Drive at its intersection with Gervais Street • Franklin Road • Isle of Capri Road • Main Street where it crosses Trestle Bridge • Arnold Road • Laurel Avenue at the Washington Street intersection • Tiogue Avenue between Hopkins Hill Road and West Lake Drive and the West Lake Drive intersection • Walker Lane • Knotty Oak Road (Rt. 116)
Taft Street, Greene Street, and the Pembroke Neighborhood (Neighborhoods around the Nathaniel Greene Homestead)
Flooding or dam failure could have a significant negative impact on two private chemical facilities (Boston Scientific and Rhodes Technologies), and Pasteryak Asphalt at 75 Airport Road which border the Pawtuxet River
Centre of New England (residential and commercial development)
Warwick and West Warwick Wastewater Regional Treatment Facilities, permitted to treat tertiary waste
1,075 mobile homes in the town (Now estimated 1,071)

*Numbers updated for 2022

10.5.3 High Risk Dams

There are a total of 61 dams across Coventry, some privately owned, and some publicly owned. The 12 dams that are classified as High or Significant Hazard pose a threat to the surrounding area, especially in the case of increased precipitation and freeze thaw events due to climate change. Expanded particles of soil or water within cement or earthen dams or on nearby embankments can become more unstable as they freeze and thaw, specifically in areas with steep slopes.[24] Slope failure causing damage to dams is also a threat beyond dam failure from breach or over-capacity. Many of the hazardous dams are in the more developed eastern part of town where a dam failure could cause catastrophic damage to homes, utilities, and businesses. Even the few Significant or High hazard ranked dams in western Coventry could cause significant damage to homes and natural resources, which is why RIDEM has ranked them as such. Though these dams pose a risk to residents and the town, not much has been done in recent years to protect and maintain dams that have been deemed as unsafe.

The 2018 HMP mitigation strategy included an action for Coventry DPW to inventory the operating systems of all dams in town since most have antique gates that may not effectively open if necessary. This accounting will provide a useful baseline from which the town can conduct property owner education, the town has little control over mitigating risk from dam failure on private property. The owners of the Tiogue Lake dam recently replaced the antique gates of the structure, but it is still ranked as a high hazard dam because of its proximity to homes and businesses. Keeping constant contact with private dam owners to ensure maintenance and repairs are completed is key to reducing the risk of dam failures.[25]

Hazard events that may cause dam failure, such as hurricanes, thunderstorms, and other precipitation events, will increase in intensity as climate change continues to impact global weather patterns, so ensuring that all dam owners are conducting routine maintenance and taking preparedness measures such as conducting annual gate operation testing is crucial. RI General Laws § 46-19-9 requires that the owners of High or Significant hazard dams produce and update an Emergency Action Report (EAP) for each High or Significant Hazard facility. Communication between the Town, RIDEM, and private dam owners is extremely important to ensure any structural or operating issues are identified and addressed in advance of a severe weather event.

See Map 10.1 in the Hazard profile on Dam Failure for a map of dam locations and hazard ratings in Coventry.

10.5.4 Other Risks

Power outages are considered to be a secondary risk to a number of the hazards of concern in Coventry. Residents of western Coventry are at a greater risk, not only because of the vast amount of forest abutting the rural roadways of western Coventry that increase the risk of a downed tree impacting a powerline, but also because it can take Rhode Island Energy's emergency crews longer to access the area to make repairs. To solve the problem of downed trees Coventry DPW works with RIDOT and RI Energy to cycle through removal of trees and tree debris over four-year periods. RI Energy removes the trees and DPW clears away the remaining debris. The vastness of Coventry means that many tree issues cannot be addressed before large events, even with routine monitoring and removal work.[26]

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[24] Knutsson, Roger, Peter Viklander and Sven Knutsson, Stability considerations for thickened tailings due to freezing and thawing, Luleå University of Technology, 2016.

[25] State of Rhode Island Dam Safety Annual Program Report, RIDEM 2021. http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/benviron/compinsp/pdf/damrpt21.pdf

[26] Conversation with RI Energy

10.6 Needs and Opportunities

10.6.1 Needs

As Coventry continues to experience the changing impacts of natural hazards due to climate change, more infrastructure updates and maintenance will become critical to mitigating future hazards. The section on High Priority impacts of natural hazards identified some of Coventry's most pressing needs to address before hazard events occur. Areas of repeat flooding should be reexamined to mitigate flooding impacts as precipitation levels continue to increase. Similarly, significant and high-risk dams and older buildings need consistent examination and maintenance to ensure their strength and durability for the possibility of more severe storms and flooding.

The Town Hall and Library building serves as a cooling and warming center during natural hazard events, but is currently limited in functionality without a backup generator. All Town phone and computer systems are also routed through the Town Hall building, so without backup generator power the Town's communication and computer access could be hindered during a natural hazard event. DPW currently uses a 70-year-old generator which is unable to power their entire facility, this limits the DPW's Vehicle Maintenance Facility from performing needed repairs to Town vehicles that could benefit maintenance operations and response times during natural hazard events. New and updated generators could help the Town's continuity of operations during a natural hazard event and make the Town better prepared to support shelter services during outages.

Mentioned in the Services and Facilities section, Coventry could benefit from a stormwater review process overhaul and update to the ordinances and regulations for stormwater projects, alongside an updated GIS inventory of stormwater facilities. Updated guidance for stormwater reviews could enhance the ability of new developments in Coventry to withstand heavier precipitation events. An updated GIS inventory would help in the routine maintenance of stormwater systems because of increased ease of locating infrastructure and tracking maintenance dates and actions.

In relation to water, Coventry's fire districts manage the fire hydrants in town and rent them from the Kent County Water Authority (KCWA). The Western Coventry Fire Department currently has no hydrants because of the rural nature of the area and the Central Coventry Fire District is also lacking in hydrant access compared to the eastern portions of the town. Both departments have a need for water supply on the western end of town – in the form of cisterns or hydrants, so that they can respond faster in a fire emergency. Since western Coventry is forested, the possibility of brush fires occurring is much higher than on the eastern end of town, making accessible water supply a critical measure in containing possible brushfire events.

Around town, developing a plan for the backlog of dam, bridge, and road maintenance, as mentioned in the Services and Facilities chapter, could better prepare town infrastructure in case of a natural hazard event. Mitigation for dam failure should include more communication between the town and private dam owners to ensure the proper upkeep of private dams. The plan could also include a tree inventory for the Town. Dead and diseased trees were mentioned multiple times in the 2018 HMP process as dangerous in severe storm situations, and though tree trimming occurs with the help of RI Energy, a more thorough tracking system may help to identify diseased or dead trees before they impact power lines during severe storm events.

10.6.2 Opportunities

Coventry's HMP was updated in 2024, and the actions within identify important touchstones to increasing the town's resilience to climate change and natural hazard events. Keeping the HMP up to date in the

future creates a reliable resource for the Town to have at its disposal to follow for guidance regarding natural hazards. The update of this document is reliant on the activity of the Coventry Emergency Management Agency (CEMA). CEMA is comprised of members of Town Government, Department heads from all Town agencies, and Police and Fire personnel. Their mission is to prepare and respond to all hazards the Town may face, including the natural hazards described in this chapter. CEMA is an active organization in Town, and the multidisciplinary and consistent approach to emergency mitigation is a strength that can be used to spread knowledge, accelerate plans, and enhance communication between the government, emergency personnel, and townspeople.

The recent inventory of historic buildings and houses in Coventry will offer opportunities to begin efforts to protect the historic homes and buildings in town. The inventory creates opportunity to bring flood and other storm-proofing methods to buildings that may not have previously been prepared for natural hazard events. The next revision of the HMP should use the inventory to recommend new projects to target protecting historic infrastructure from natural hazard event damage – like the damage caused in the area of the historic Anthony Mill buildings by the 2010 flood events.

The Town's Capital Improvement Plan contained a proposal for several years from DPW for the creation of a "Debris Management Area" in town. This area would allow Coventry to better manage storm debris. The proposal also includes the potential creation of two observation towers to keep track of quantities of storm debris to better apply for FEMA grants during a natural hazard scenario.

Coventry has a history of actively pursuing grants and funding through state and federal sources in the wake of hazard events like storm clean-ups, flood response, and dam maintenance. The goal to hire a grant writer for the Town will help in applying that same proactiveness to secure funds into mitigation efforts could reduce the town's disaster recovery costs and better prepare Coventry for more severe or frequent hazard events in the future.

Coventry was selected in the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank's (RIIB) Municipal Resilience Program (MRP) for the 2023 cohort. The MRP uses a Community Resilience Building (CRB) process to identify the hazards and challenges facing a community in the face of climate change and helps the municipality develop potential actions and solutions to address those issues. The program focuses on incorporating public input into the planning and mitigation process, and results in eligibility for a number of MRP related grants to implement solutions from the CRB process. Coventry's goal in approaching the CRB is to institutionalize the MRP results into relevant plans and Town processes and to pursue future funding for MRP projects. This provides an opportunity for Coventry to refocus their climate resilience goals and address challenges in the community. The RIIB includes a portfolio of examples including dam repair and removal, road elevation, hardening or elevation of pump stations, green stormwater infrastructure, and more.

10.7 Goals, Policies, & Actions

A complete list of goals, policies, and actions regarding the economic development of Coventry, Rhode Island can be found in Volume 1 of the 2026 Coventry Comprehensive Plan.