

K. Circulation

Introduction

The North Smithfield circulation system has evolved over the past 300 years to serve the needs of local residents and a larger regional population in Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

Initially, the regional system provided stagecoach links between Providence and Worcester and other important Massachusetts destinations. Great Road (Route 146A), Douglas Pike (Route 7) and Providence Pike (Route 5) all relate to historic north-south through-traffic movements.

Within Rhode Island, Route 146 is a limited access roadway between Providence and Worcester, except for a one and one-half mile non-limited access section in North Smithfield between the Route 146A cutoff and the Route 99 interchange in Lincoln immediately to the south of the Town line. Route 146 provides a facility which accommodates a large share of interstate traffic.

East-west traffic circulation in North Smithfield generally radiates from the urban concentration in Woonsocket. For many years, until the advent of highway shopping centers, downtown Woonsocket was the commercial and retail hub of North Smithfield. Main Street, School Street, St. Paul Street, Pound Hill Road, Sayles Hill Road and Greenville Road are the principal east-west roadways. Although Victory Highway (Route 102) serves east-west flows in North Smithfield, it is also a north-south road passing through the more rural sections of northern Rhode Island.

In the past, the Town was served by several trolley and railroad lines; now only one remains. A freight-only spur line of the Providence and Worcester Railroad extends from the main line in Woonsocket and terminates at Providence Pike.

Lacking a downtown area, North Smithfield does not have numerous off-street parking problems. Pursuant to the Town's Zoning Ordinance, off-street parking is provided by individual property owners. However, as a result of increased residential development, there are many more cars on the street and a greater need for sidewalks and traffic calming measures.

The RIPTA 54 bus passes through the eastern part of town and links Woonsocket with Providence. This bus stops in Park Square, Walmart and Route 146 just beyond the Sayles Hill Road intersection. There is also a new 59X bus that starts at the Slatersville Plaza and links North Smithfield with Providence. In addition, a RIPTA flex bus offers semi-custom transportation in a loop route to and from Burrillville.

The Circulation Element addresses the need to improve and add to the present transportation system and to serve well the needs of local residents and business and the overall circulation system of Rhode Island. Land development should be managed and standards developed for

roads, sidewalks and transit facilities so as to preserve the beauty and ‘sense of place’ in North Smithfield for future generations. Determining where employment and housing sites should be located depends in part on levels of service, access, and mobility. These concepts play a major role in linking travel and land development with road improvements and other transportation options. The goals and policies outlined in the Circulation Element must be consistent with the State’s Transportation 2035, as amended. The Town’s transportation network is shown on Map XX in Appendix B.¹

Completed Goals

The Town of North Smithfield completed the following former goals from the previous version of the Comprehensive Plan:

1. Provided facilities to encourage the use of the transit system.
 - a) Increased public transportation opportunities.
 - b) Worked with RIDOT and/or RIPTA in developing local park-n-ride facilities for transit users and car poolers.
2. Facilitated freight railroad service to manufacturing areas.
3. Continued MU2 zoning allowing manufacturing uses which may require shipments in and out by railroad.
4. Town residents voted on November 4, 2014 to approve a \$2.5 million bond for repair and rehabilitation of the town roads infrastructure.
5. RIDOT has established the Route 146/Sayles Hill Road interchange on the TIP and will begin discussions regarding feasible alternatives in the future.

Unexpected Options

Good planning makes it possible to recognize unexpected options. RIDOT had plans for widening the Slatersville Stone Arch Bridge, but the pier design would have partly concealed the 1855 stonework and taken two years to construct. The Town recommended a pre-stressed, post-tensioned option that would cut construction time in half, save hundreds of thousands of dollars in bridge construction costs, and better fit the needs of the National Park.

RIDOT is using some of the savings to provide additional pedestrian amenities in Slatersville. The wider bridge will have pedestrian walkways on both sides with connecting sidewalks.

Work in Progress

The Town of North Smithfield is currently:

1. Seeking RIDOT Enhancement funds to conduct highway beautification projects, increase pedestrian access, village revitalization and intermodal transportation projects. The RIPTA 59X bus began making stops at Slatersville Plaza on January 18, 2014.
2. Enforcing Zoning Ordinance regulations applying to visibility at intersections, and encouraging residents to trim shrubs and trees nearest them within the Town rights-of-way.
3. Working with RIDOT on the proposed widening of the Slatersville Stone Arch Bridge and ensuring that the historic character of the bridge is maintained. Bridge work is scheduled to be completed in 2016.
4. Amending Subdivision and Land Development Regulations to include provisions for traffic calming measures such as reduced curve radii, reduced roadway width, street tree plantings, etc.
5. Enforcing the limit on development that would overburden the street system and improve roads to handle development.
 - a) Carefully evaluating traffic impacts and stipulating mitigation measures as part of development plan review for major development projects.
 - b) Limiting curb cuts.
6. Increasing opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle access particularly to village areas, near public facilities, and in densely settled neighborhoods.
 - a) The Planning Board should require all development proposals to include a pedestrian access component.

Goals, Policies and Actions

Goals

K 1. Provide fast, safe, efficient and convenient transportation that promotes conservation and environmental stewardship.

K 2. Encourage preservation of rural character in the Town of North Smithfield. .

K 3. Encourage and support the use of the Complete Streets concepts in the planning and redevelopment of transportation related infrastructure improvements within the Town of North Smithfield.

Policies

K 1. Continue improvement of street system through selective roadway alignments, widenings and intersection improvements.

K 2 Eliminate traffic congestion on the non-limited access section of Route 146.

K 3. Promote traffic safety on new and existing roadways.

K 4. Rehabilitate town roads according to \$2.5 million bond.

K 5. Revise Subdivision and Land Development Regulations standards as they apply to local street widths

K 6. Encourage preservation of rural character on country roads

K 7. Allow for the safe use of roads by pedestrians, bicyclists, transit and automobiles

Actions:

K 1.
Use combinations of local, State and Federal funds to make intersection improvements and undertake a pavement management program.
K 2.
Develop, prioritize and implement a Sidewalk Plan.
K 3.
Develop and implement a road improvement program that includes assessment and prioritization of Town road projects.
K 4.
Encourage the development and implementation of access management plans to minimize access points to existing roadways in order to increase capacity and reduce delays, with special attention given to Industrial Drive and 146A through Park Square.
K 5.
Participate in discussions with RIDOT regarding feasible alternatives in the future.
K 6.
Improve safety at West Acres interchange on Rte. 146 (south to north U-turn).
K 7.
Implement a lane striping program as a speed control measure on existing roadways and include a striping provision in the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations
K 8.
Exercise repair strategy as described in Pavement Management Study for North Smithfield written and submitted by Joe Casali Engineering, Inc.
K 9.
Devise work plan for repair of the top 30 roads most in need of repair.
K 10.
Change the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations including the change from 30 foot paved width of minor residential streets to 26 feet. Where the Planning Board

finds that topography, soils and other factors allow natural swale drainage and no curbing, twenty-two (22) feet may be allowed for cul-de-sacs serving no more than four (4) residential dwellings
K 11.
Create and adopt of a Mapped Street Ordinance and an Official Town Map
K 12.
Adopt and implement a Scenic Roads Inventory and develop a Scenic Road Ordinance.
K 13.
Devise work plan to make scenic roads more usable.
K 14.
Design new right of ways to accommodate all forms of transportation.
K 15.
Encourage more physical activity and a healthier lifestyle by building more sidewalks and bike lanes to encourage residents to be active.

Roads and Traffic

Complete Streets

In 1971 the concept of Complete Streets was developed; a policy requiring that all new or rebuilt roads must accommodate bicycles and pedestrians.² Complete streets enable the safe travel of pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders. It is the responsibility of the town engineer or planner to design right of ways to accommodate all forms of travel. In 2012, North Smithfield passed a resolution supporting and encouraging the use of the Complete Streets concepts in the planning and redevelopment of transportation related infrastructure improvements in the Town and in the State.³

Roads

Except for Route 146 (the North Smithfield Expressway) and sections of Route 146A between Park Square and Route 146, virtually the entire street system in North Smithfield is comprised of two-lane roadways of varying pavement widths. Although improved over the years, most of the local streets, other than in subdivided areas, were laid out to serve the needs of those who used a horse and buggy.

The Rhode Island Division of Planning, in cooperation with Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT), has developed a functional classification system for roadways according to their actual or expected use. Essentially there are three major classes as follows:

- **Arterials** - Includes Interstates, other freeways and expressways

² Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Complete_streets

³ Source: <http://sos.ri.gov/documents/publicinfo/omdocs/minutes/4540/2012/25430.pdf>

These highways emphasize a high level of mobility for through movement. They provide the highest level of mobility, at the highest speed, for long, uninterrupted travel. Arterials generally have higher design standards than other highways, often with multiple lanes and some degree of access control.

- **Collectors**

These highways provide a lower level of mobility but a larger level of property access than arterials. They are designed for travel at lower speeds and for shorter distances. Collectors typically are two-lane highways that gather and distribute traffic to and from the arterial system and the local system.

- **Local Streets**

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

The 2014 Highway Functional Classifications for North Smithfield are shown on Map K-1 and are listed in Table K-1.

Table K-1. Rhode Island Highway Functional Classification (North Smithfield)⁴

Name	Functional Classification	Urban/Rural	NHS	Federal Aid	Miles
Off ramp Pound Hill Rd*	Principal Arterial-Other Freeways & Expressways	Urban	Yes	Yes	0.48
Off ramp RI-104*	Principal Arterial-Other Freeways & Expressways	Urban	Yes	Yes	0.66
Off ramp RI-146A	Principal Arterial-Other Freeways & Expressways	Urban	Yes	Yes	0.19
Off ramp School St	Principal Arterial-Other Freeways & Expressways	Urban	Yes	Yes	0.21
On ramp RI-146 N	Principal Arterial-Other Freeways & Expressways	Urban	Yes	Yes	0.77
On ramp RI-146 S*	Principal Arterial-Other Freeways & Expressways	Urban	Yes	Yes	0.70
State highway 146 N	Principal Arterial-Other Freeways & Expressways	Urban	Yes	Yes	6.82
Douglas Pike	Principal Arterial Other	Urban	Yes	Yes	3.06
Douglas Tpke	Principal Arterial Other	Urban	Yes	Yes	0.12
Eddie Dowling Hwy	Principal Arterial Other	Urban	Yes	Yes	1.17
Old Louisquisset Pike	Principal Arterial Other	Urban	Yes	Yes	0.09
Park Ave	Principal Arterial Other	Urban	Yes	Yes	0.03

⁴ State of RI Highway Functional Classification 2014

Name	Functional Classification	Urban/Rural	NHS	Federal Aid	Miles
Victory Hwy	Principal Arterial Other	Urban	Yes	Yes	3.01
Central Street	Minor Arterial	Urban	No	Yes	0.38
Farnum Pike	Minor Arterial	Urban	No	Yes	0.24
Great Road	Minor Arterial	Urban	No	Yes	1.60
Greenville Road	Minor Arterial	Urban	No	Yes	3.99
Main Street	Minor Arterial	Urban	No	Yes	0.07
Manville Road	Minor Arterial	Urban	No	Yes	0.05
North Main Street	Minor Arterial	Urban	No	Yes	0.70
Old River Road	Minor Arterial	Urban	No		0.10
Providence Pike	Minor Arterial	Urban	No	Yes	4.54
Providence Street	Minor Arterial	Urban	No	Yes	0.02
Quaker Highway	Minor Arterial	Urban	No	Yes	0.52
Railroad Street	Minor Arterial	Urban	No	Yes	0.24
South Main Street	Minor Arterial	Urban	No	Yes	0.08
Saint Paul Street	Minor Arterial	Urban	No	Yes	1.36
Sayles Hill Road	Minor Arterial	Urban	No	Yes	0.37
Smithfield Road	Minor Arterial	Urban	No	Yes	1.02
Victory Highway	Minor Arterial	Urban	No	Yes	0.09
				Yes	
Canal Street	Major Collector	Urban	No	Yes	0.44
Follett Street	Major Collector	Urban	No	Yes	0.75
George Lee Road	Major Collector	Urban	No	Yes	0.09
Green Street	Major Collector	Urban	No	Yes	0.58
Industrial Drive	Major Collector	Urban	No	Yes	1.13
Iron Mine Hill Road	Major Collector	Urban	No	Yes	2.75
Main Street	Major Collector	Urban	No	Yes	1.04
Mendon Road	Major Collector	Urban	No	Yes	1.26
Pound Hill Road	Major Collector	Urban	No	Yes	3.88
Sayles Hill Road	Major Collector	Urban	No	Yes	0.22
School Street	Major Collector	Urban	No	Yes	1.28
Victory Highway	Major Collector	Urban	No	Yes	0.03
Woonsocket Hill Road	Major Collector	Urban	No	Yes	0.08

*contains 2 geographically separate roads

Road Repair

The Town of North Smithfield, through its Department of Public Works, has a continuing 5-year program for the repair and resurfacing of the local street system. Where necessary, crowns will be added to the streets to facilitate drainage.

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

Traffic

Generators

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

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

Volumes and Projections

The Department of Transportation compiles an annual 24 hour average daily traffic (AADT) for the major streets and highways throughout the State. In Table K-2, a few AADT values are listed for North Smithfield.

Table K-2. Local AADT values from 2005⁵

Roadway	AADT
Rte. 146 between Lincoln and Rte. 146A	31,000
Rte. 146A between Rte. 146 and Park Square	18,400
Victory Hwy from Rte. 146 to Burrilville	14,300

The traffic counts are generally lower than those recorded in the 1992 Comprehensive Plan because Route 99 was constructed after the previous Plan was adopted. The Town does not have current traffic projections other than what it receives as part of local development applications which are on file in the Planning Department.

Traffic Collisions

The North Smithfield Police Department has identified the following intersections as being prone to accidents: Douglas Pike at the northerly and southerly points where Route 5 joins the roadway at an angle; Victory Highway at North Main and Main Streets; Route 146 at Sayles Hill Road; Route 146A at the Landmark Medical Center light, South Main Street (Woonsocket), Lapre Road, Mendon Road, St. Paul Street, and Great Road/East Harkness Road. A review of a 1961 traffic study for North Smithfield showed Victory Highway and Route 146A were then, as now, the most accident-prone streets in the community.

Because of the rolling terrain, there are a number of intersections with poor sight distances. This is most apparent along Route 146A, but also is evident in other parts of Town. At many points vegetation blocks views as a car approaches an arterial or collector roadway from a local street.

Due to the lack of sidewalks and the narrow pavement widths in outlying neighborhoods, many areas in Town are not conducive to safe bicycling or walking, especially by children. As a consequence, many families must operate their own taxi system to get their children to non-school activities.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The four-year TIP is a biennial document developed by the Transportation Advisory Committee in cooperation with the RIDOT and the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority and adopted by the State Planning Council. It provides federal transportation dollars to individual projects and programs that are implemented primarily by the RIDOT and RIPTA. The projects are evaluated based on mobility benefits, cost-effectiveness, economic development impact, environmental impact, degree of support to local and state plans and safety, security and technology. Local municipalities participate in the process as it relates to state and federally aided projects

⁵ <http://www.edc.uri.edu/rigis/data/data.aspx?ISO=transportation>

impacting the community. The North Smithfield projects included in the 2013-2016 TIP program are in Table K-3.

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Table K-3. Projects Included in RI 2013 -2016 State Transportation Improvement Program⁶

Project	TIP Program	Estimated Funding (in millions)	Recommendation
2013 State Traffic Commission C-3 3 North Main St. at Mechanic St.	State Traffic Commission (STC)		TS - Recommended
Blackstone River Bicycle Facility Segment 8B - Truman Dr. to MA S/L	Bike/Pedestrian Program		BP - Recommended S&D
Branch River Bridge #108 Bridge Replacement Bridge and Immediate Approaches	Bridge Program	\$1.00	BR - Recommended
Central Street Bridge #449 Rehabilitation 50' on each side of bridge	Bridge Program	\$1.00	BR - Recommended
Hazard Elimination - North (C-3) St. Paul at Great Rd.	Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)		TS - Recommended
Route 104 Rt. 7 to Rt. 5	Pavement Management Program	\$0.80	PM - Recommended
FUT Route 146 Freeway Guide Signs Route 146	Signing		TS - Recommended
Rt. 146 at Sayles Hill Road Sayles Hill Road at Rt. 146	Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)		S&D - Recommended
Slatersville Stone Arch Bridge #273 Route 5 over Branch River	Bridge Program	\$4.00	BR - Recommended
Union Village RR Bridge #107 Over P&W RR Tracks	Bridge Program	\$1.50	BR - Recommended

**BP=Bicycle/Pedestrian Program BR=Bridge Improvement Program
PM= Pavement Management Program S&D=Study and Development Program
TS=Traffic/Safety Program**

Public Transportation

RIPTA'S Bus Route 54 between Woonsocket and Providence, is one of the intercity transit options serving North Smithfield. The routing from Providence follows Route 146 north to Route

⁶ <http://www.planning.ri.gov/statewideplanning/transportation/tip.php>

146A and then turns into Woonsocket at Park Avenue. The trip from Woonsocket south reenters North Smithfield at Providence Street (Route 104) and then follows Route 146A and 146 to Lincoln and Providence.

As part of the RIDOT “Beat Traffic, Try Transit” campaign, two Park-N-Ride lots were added in North Smithfield at Slatersville Plaza and Branch Village beginning in January of 2014. Bus Route 59x travels from Slatersville to the Providence with three outbound buses in the morning and three inbound buses in the evening making it convenient for commuters to park and ride from North Smithfield to Providence for work. In the 2014 North Smithfield Survey, only 4.5% of respondents answered affirmatively that they used RIPTA services. Fifty four percent agreed that RIPTA bus services to urban centers in North Smithfield should be improved.

At some time during the next twenty years, the United States and the individual states will have to face realities and formulate an energy policy which reduces the number of single-occupancy car trips to major business centers such as downtown Providence. Given the spread-out nature of communities such as North Smithfield, it will continue to be necessary for commuters to converge at one point where there can be a transfer to a car pool or express bus service. RIDOT has developed park-n-ride facilities serving transit riders, car poolers and van poolers in other sections of the Providence metropolitan area.

This plan suggests several possible locations, subject to further investigation, for pooled parking facilities in North Smithfield as follows: utilization of space under the power lines near the School Street/Route 146A intersection and the southwest quadrant of the Pound Hill Road/Route 146 interchange in an area designated for Light Industrial/Research & Development in the Land Use Plan. Both sites are adjacent to State Highways. Coordination of possible locations should be done through the Planning Division of RIDOT.

The North Smithfield Mini Bus Service Inc. was a non-profit organization which ~~is~~ **was** 100 percent financed by the Town. It provided on-call, free bus service to senior citizens and the handicapped. This bus service was deactivated in 2013 due to retirement of the Director. Flex Service schedule 282 operating out of Pascoag and Slatersville replaced the Mini Bus Service. Residents can call and reserve a ride to and from a destination or can pick up the FlexVan at a regularly scheduled FlexStop in Pascoag at Zambarano, Sayles Avenue or Walmart in North Smithfield. There is a fee for this service and it runs Monday through Friday.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks are found on residential streets in many parts of Town, but there are many areas, particularly along collector and minor arterial streets completely lacking in any sidewalks. In the Union Village area, for example, it is common to see many walkers on Route 146A where there are no sidewalks. Undoubtedly, there are other popular walking streets which would benefit from the installation of sidewalks.

It is recommended that a Sidewalks Plan be developed, prioritized and implemented as part of the annual Capital Improvements Program. Nationwide, walking is the country's most popular recreational activity and one with health benefits for all age groups. This would be a joint effort of the Planning Division and the Department of Public Works, possibly with the advice of a specially appointed committee.

Under the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, a sidewalk is required on at least one side of the street in all subdivisions; where there are safety concerns, the Planning Board may require them on both sides. As part of its review of commercial and industrial area site plans, the Planning Board may require the installation of sidewalks where pedestrian traffic may be generated. Based on the 2014 Community Survey, 66% of respondents felt new sidewalks or sidewalk repair was important. Sixty-six percent also agreed that it is a high priority to plan and develop bikeways and walking trail systems connecting neighborhoods to schools and other activity centers.

The Slatersville Stone Arch Bridge project includes the construction of sidewalks along Main Street in front of the commercial buildings. The improved bridge will have two 13-foot-wide road lanes with protected sidewalks on both sides, adding 15 feet of width to the historic bridge without obstructing the historic arches. There will be a sidewalk from the bridge to the library and an ADA-compliant ramp on the opposite side of the road with a stone wall constructed of rocks meeting the criteria of the Historic District Commission.

Pedestrian Trails and Bicycle Paths

Pedestrians and bicycles are important components in the discussion of circulation. The rural aspect of North Smithfield lends itself to more walking trails and bike paths to link villages. Sidewalks are more prominently used in urban transportation design and are used sparingly in towns like North Smithfield because of the sprawling nature of the community. Pedestrian trails and bicycle paths are discussed in more detail within the Open Space and Recreation Element of this Comprehensive Plan.

Railroads

The Providence and Worcester Railroad (P&W) provides railroad service to the Town of North Smithfield. P&W's main line crosses the Town in two places as follows: in the eastern corner of Town between Manville Road and the Blackstone River; and in the Waterford area parallel to Canal Street. Because of the constraints of slope and adjacent canal or river, the main line cannot be accessed for rail service.

Manufacturing, industrial and distributor firms along the north side of North Smithfield Industrial Drive and at the Branch River Industrial Park have access to P&W's Slatersville Secondary track which extends from P&W's main line in Woonsocket and terminates at

Providence Pike. Freight service only is available six days a week on an "as needed" basis. State Guide Plan Element 661, *Rhode Island Rail Plan* (December 2013), proposes the continuation and rehabilitation of the spur track.

The Land Use Element of this Comprehensive Plan continues and to a limited extent expands the Manufacturing use area adjoining the tracks. Industries requiring bulk shipments or deliveries by rail would be an allowed use.

If abandonment of the line is considered by P&W at any future date, the right-of-way should be maintained with the Town of North Smithfield. It would provide a desirable route for a bikeway extending from the Blackstone River Bikeway to the Branch River Park and Slatersville. Such a proposal would support RIDOT's statewide rails-to-trails plan.

Although RIDOT also is investigating the use of rail lines for commuter rail transit, it does not appear there would be the density of development in North Smithfield to justify use of the spur line for commuter transit purposes.

Mapped Streets

North Smithfield has had a continuing problem dealing with several streets which are in known private ownership. Additionally, there are many older streets where the title is not clear due to the absence of deeds. These issues surface when building permits or subdivision applications are filed on "private streets" or unimproved streets not meeting local standards.

As far back as 1971, the Planning and Development Division of the Rhode Island Department of Community Affairs in a *Mapped Street Ordinance Study - North Smithfield, RI* recommended that the Town adopt a Mapped Street Ordinance and an Official Map. The Official Map would identify all streets in the Town. Subsequent to its adoption, no building permit, except in rare cases, could be issued until a street on the Official Map had been improved to the Planning Board's standards.

The Mapped Streets Ordinance would also establish a procedure for making additions to the Official Map. Establishing an ordinance and map and determining public ownership, private ownership and the process by which the town will accept street dedications or acquire privately owned roads is a complex process. Although the current Subdivision and Land Development Regulations allow the Planning Board to authorize offsite improvements and only allow the creation of new lots with access to public streets, an update of the 1971 inventory of streets and Town Council determination of public and private streets would greatly facilitate the dialogue between the Zoning and Planning Boards and the development community.

The adoption of a Mapped Streets Ordinance and an Official Map is recommended.

Scenic Roads

On the State level, a 1985 act established the Scenic Highway Board and authorizes RIDOT or any town council to apply to the Board for designation of a road as a scenic highway. Eight roads were designated as scenic roads in the Rhode Island Scenic Roadways Program, none of them in North Smithfield. The Scenic Roadways Board also generated a list of roadways that possess scenic characteristics. This list includes the following in North Smithfield:

- Main Street, including alongside the Reservoirs in the Slatersville area
- Railroad Street
- Green Street
- School Street
- Grange Road
- Providence Pike

Although their identification in the list does not automatically qualify them for Scenic Roadway designation, it will certainly help facilitate the designation process. Old Smithfield Road and the limited access sections of Route 146, particularly in the vicinity of Woonsocket Hill, may also be appropriate for designation as scenic roads.

As noted in the Natural Resource and Conservation element, there are several areas in North Smithfield which are listed or nominated for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Additionally, Union Village is also a local historic district where the North Smithfield Historic District Commission administers historic area zoning controls on the exterior appearance of structures in the district.

Currently, scenic and historical resources in North Smithfield other than structures are afforded some protection if state or federally funded projects impact a designated historic district. A good example is the historic Slatersville Stone Arch Bridge over the Branch River, which is located within the Slatersville Historic District.

Section 10 of the North Smithfield Zoning Ordinance is dedicated to Conservation Developments. One of the purposes of this section is to conserve and create scenic views, to protect views along scenic roadways, and, where appropriate, to preserve the rural character of the Town. In the Land Development and Subdivision Regulation checklists, the applicant, when doing a cultural inventory is asked if there are scenic road corridors or state-designated scenic areas affected by the plan. The Planning Department should be aware of development changing scenic assets of the Town and this will be considered by the Planning Board.

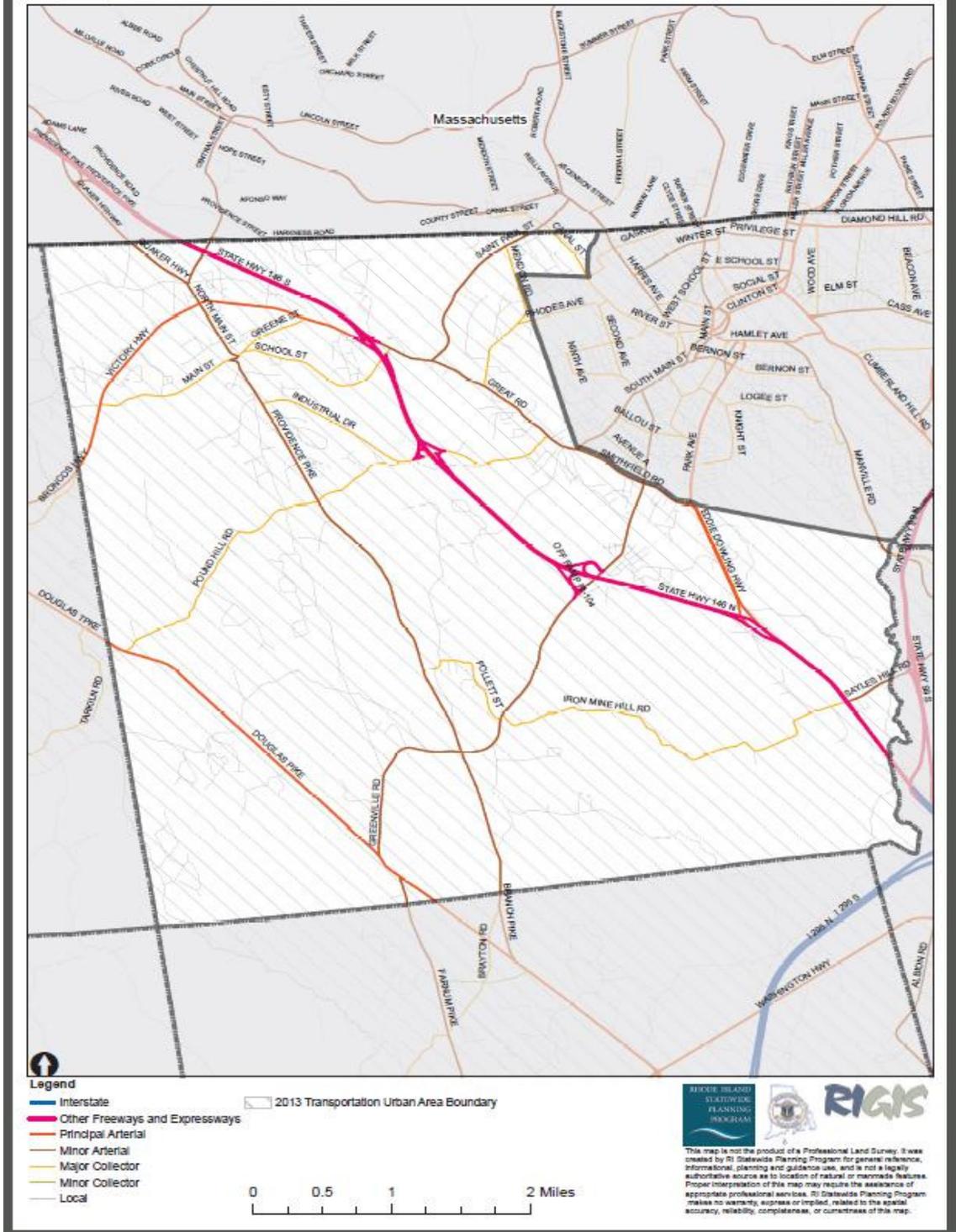
Many changes in the scenic character of areas outside of the few designated historic areas may come about as the result of changes within the public right-of-way where trees or old walls are

removed for street improvements or new subdivision streets. Gradually, if there is no reason to do otherwise, the soft rural edges are demolished to the scenic detriment of the community.

The recommended solution is for the Town to prepare and adopt a Scenic Roads Inventory which would require any public or private agency to obtain special review by a designated local Scenic Road Board (or an existing town board) before modifying a street in a way which would alter its scenic characteristics. Obviously, there must be a careful balancing of traffic safety and scenic conservation concerns. Although the Scenic Road Board's function would be advisory, it would provide a basis for considering alternatives protecting the Town's heritage.

One of the strong recommendations of the Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan for the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor is the preservation of the country roads which, along with the more densely developed mill villages, give the region its unique character.

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Map K-1. State of Rhode Island Highway Functional Classification 2014