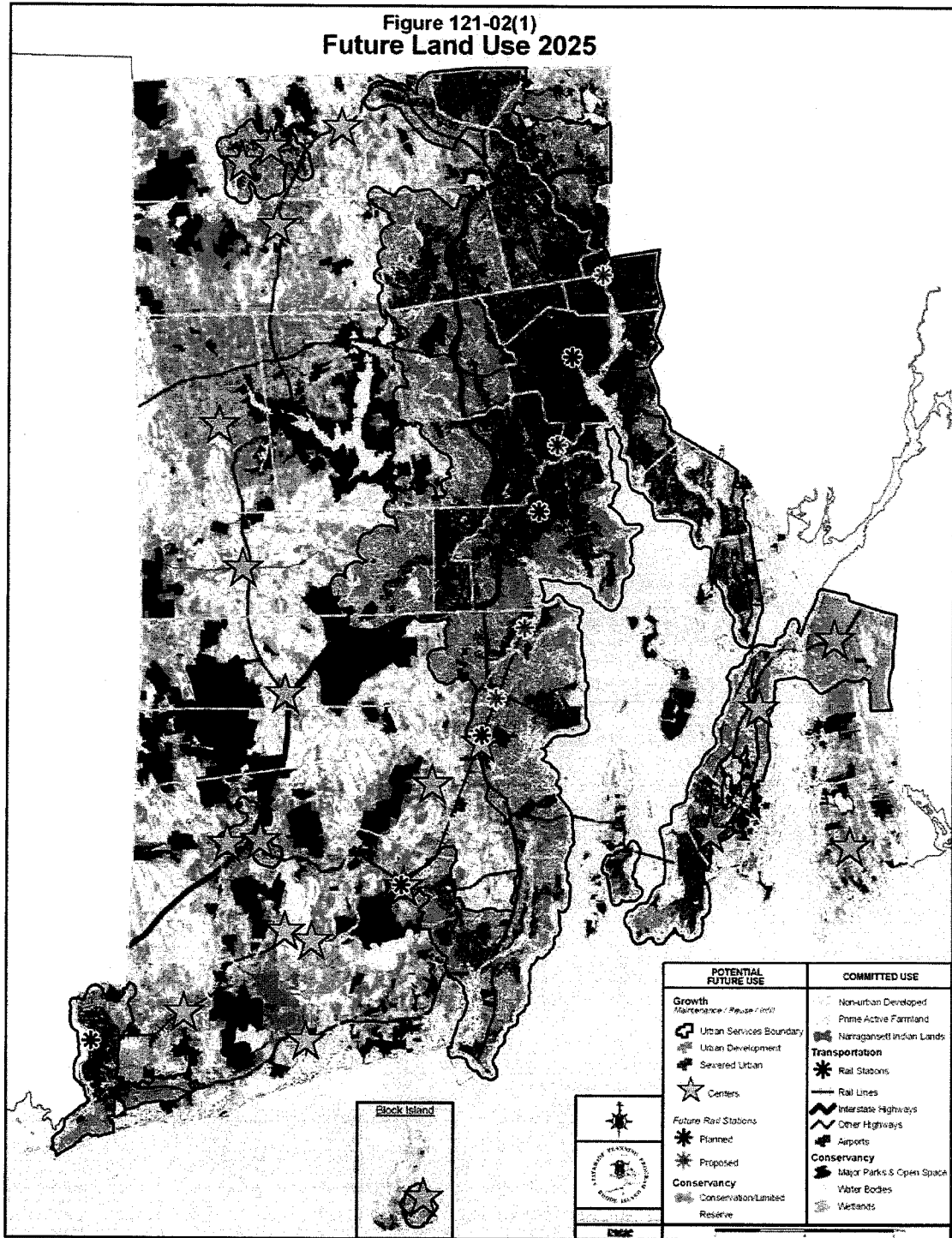


Figure 121-02(1)  
**Future Land Use 2025**



### *Urban Services Boundary*

As noted previously, a major new concept of this edition of the *State Land Use Policies and Plan* is delineation of an Urban Services Boundary on the Future Land Use Plan Map. The intent of showing an urban services boundary is to denote a significant demarcation in urban pattern – the future boundary of areas that should be more urban in character versus those that should retain a more rural character. In other words, the “urban/rural” systems approach. It provides an indication for planning purposes of areas where a higher level of public services exists or is anticipated to be available to accommodate more intensive development. Conversely, public services in areas outside the Urban Services Boundary are anticipated to be more limited, and planned development intensities should accordingly be lower. Furthermore, land outside the Urban Services Boundary may be best suited for reservation as conservation areas and productive rural resource lands.

The Urban Services Boundary may be considered a general bound of the areas within which public services supporting urban development presently exist, or are likely to be provided, through 2025. Within this urban services area, most land is served by public water service and many areas have (or will have) public sewer service available as well. Public transit service is generally available, with high-density corridors providing frequent headways. These fully serviced areas should be regarded as a scarce resource, that absent significant constraints, should be developed (or redeveloped) at higher intensities and densities so as to optimize the significant public infrastructure investment.

Note: Several watersheds and other sensitive resource areas that presently have public water service have been excluded from the Urban Services Boundary, indicating that protection of the resources involved must be a principle concern limiting future development intensity potential.

### Growth Areas

Growth Areas are areas intended to accommodate the State’s anticipated growth needs through 2025. They include both (currently) developed areas that are suited for maintenance, infill, and reuse, as well as (currently) undeveloped areas that are suited for new development. Growth Areas fall into two categories: 1) areas within the urban services boundary, shown as two map categories – Urban Development and Sewered Urban Development; and 2) centers, *shown illustratively on the map*, both inside and outside the urban services boundary.

### *Urban Development and Sewered Urban Development*

Areas within the Urban Services Boundary found to have potential to accommodate development are designated as these two categories. The categories include land on which development is already in place and may include underutilized lands (such as abandoned or derelict commercial and industrial sites). Such developed land presents opportunities for meeting the State’s growth needs through maintenance, infill, and reuse.

The categories also include undeveloped land whose location and characteristics make it suitable for development.

The Sewered Urban Development category is depicted on the map to show the limited areas within the Urban Services Boundary that have public sewer service available. These fully serviced areas should be regarded as a scarce resource, that absent significant constraints, should be developed [or redeveloped] at higher intensities and densities so as to optimize the significant public infrastructure investment.

Priorities for developed lands in the urban categories are maintenance and enhancement of productive uses and re-use of underutilized areas to accommodate growth at intensities that efficiently utilize available services.

Typical uses in these categories include residential of varying types and generally of medium (1-2 dwelling units per acre) to high (5+ dwelling units per acre) densities (with many areas at substantially higher densities exceeding 20 units per acre, see Figure 121-03(1) for examples), along with substantial commercial, industrial, mixed, and institutional uses, and supporting infrastructure (transportation, utilities, parks, and recreation areas).

Uncommitted land within the Urban Development and Sewered Urban Development categories is generally capable of accommodating various intensities of urban-type development. Some undeveloped areas have few resource constraints and have, or are likely to be provided with, urban-level services including public water, transit, and in some locations sewer service, by 2025. In these high capability/serviced areas, the priority is development with intensities and residential densities that mirror existing urban developed lands and enable efficient provision and utilization of public services including transit.

Other areas of uncommitted land may have some resource constraints, but have, or are likely to be provided with, some urban-level services, especially public water service, by 2025. These areas are generally capable of accommodating a medium level of urban development. They would generally include residential uses at average densities of 1 to 5 dwelling units per acre (with some areas of higher density), including single-family dwellings (attached and detached), garden apartments and similar multi-family complexes. They may include areas of mixed residential, commercial, and low-impact industrial uses, as well as office/industrial areas and supporting institutional uses and infrastructure. Areas with just public water service and few development constraints are capable of moderate intensity development with residential densities of between 1 and 5 dwelling units per acre.

Other undeveloped areas within the Urban Development category have site and/or resource constraints, or limited services. Such areas are more appropriate for lesser development intensity. Residential uses in such areas will tend to be at the lower end of the density range – an average density of under one dwelling unit per acre, and significant areas would be expected to be reserved as open land (farmland, forests, wetlands).

Conservation/open space-style development and similar techniques should be relied upon to limit development intensities and impacts and to conserve land within portions of the urban services area having development constraints and/or limited services. Small commercial or mixed-use areas to service local needs, and isolated, low-impact industrial uses and supporting infrastructure would also be encompassed.

Although undeveloped land within the Urban Services Boundary was generally found to be suited for various intensities of development, it is important to also note that some areas have significant resource values or are locally important sites such as greenway corridors or scenic viewsheds. Such areas are appropriate for conservation via public or private land protection efforts.

### *Centers*

Centers are compact developed areas containing a defined central core that accommodate community and regional needs for residential and economic functions. Centers are intended to provide optimum utilization of land and services, and offer a higher density diverse housing stock, commercial, industrial, office, cultural, and governmental uses. Density will vary greatly between centers, however, they will share the common characteristic of compact development (see Figure 121-03(2)) for some local examples). Centers characteristically are developed with a human scale of blocks, streets, and open spaces, offering easy walking and access to transit where available. In suburban areas, centers should be distinguished from surrounding development by a more cohesive development form and closer proximity between residential and non-residential uses. In rural areas, centers should be surrounded by natural areas, farmland, or open space, and may have a commercial area in the core for neighborhood-scale goods and services. Note: Centers depicted on the Future Land Use 2025 map are illustrative of *potential* new centers that may be established. Existing centers are generally not shown and other new centers may be proposed through local initiative.

### *Future Rail Stations*

New rail stations can and should provide an impetus for new centers or other transit-oriented development. Several new passenger rail stations have been conceptually proposed or planned for through 2025 however, it is important to note that not all may be realized.

### Conservancy Areas

Conservancy Areas include lands that are most suitable for conservation uses, and lands outside the Urban Service Boundary that are not needed to accommodate the State's growth needs. In these categories, it is recommended that growth and development not be encouraged or supported.

### *Conservation / Limited Development*

This category includes uncommitted land that possesses significant resource values requiring protection. These areas are best suited for resource protection, sustainable resource production, and associated low intensity/low-impact uses compatible with protection of resource values. Transfer of development rights, conservation-design subdivisions, and similar land management techniques should be relied upon to limit intensities of use, emphasize compact development, minimize resource impacts, and to conserve open land within these areas. Residential densities should average no more than 0.25 dwelling units per acre, with substantial areas of protected land and/or working lands (agriculture/silviculture) included. Development within these areas must adhere to stringent standards for water management and best impact avoidance practices.

### *Reserve*

This category includes uncommitted open land that would be not required to accommodate the State's development needs through 2025. While these areas are generally capable of supporting varying types and intensities of development, public development assistance must be carefully balanced with the objectives of retaining the State's rural working landscapes (agriculture/silviculture), protecting resource values, and providing a reserve of land for future use, beyond 2025. Transfer of development rights, conservation-design subdivisions, and similar land management techniques should be relied upon to limit intensities of use, emphasize compact development, minimize resource impacts, and to conserve open land within these areas.

### Committed Use Areas

The future map also shows areas that are presently committed to a particular land use or intensity level. In most cases, these uses are recommended to continue in their present status.

### *Non-Urban Developed*

This category includes developed land that is outside of the Urban Services Boundary. These areas generally lack public water or sewer service, and are not anticipated to have such services by 2025. Uses include residential, generally at medium to low (<1 dwelling unit per acre) densities, as well as some areas of commercial, industrial, mixed use, and associated supporting land uses (institutional, utilities, park facilities, etc.) Maintenance of these uses in productive use via enhancement and limited expansion is anticipated.

### *Prime Farmland*

This category includes active prime (identified as Prime Farmland Soils by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service) farmland as a committed use. Active prime farmland should be maintained in agricultural production or as a strategic food supply reserve for the future.

### *Narragansett Indian Tribal Lands*

This category is comprised of land subject to the 1979 Land Claim Settlement Agreement between the Narragansett Indian Tribe and the State of Rhode Island. This category is shown for illustrative purposes and a future use potential is not described for these lands by this Land Use Plan. However, pursuant to the Settlement Agreement and subsequent State legislation, use of these lands is to be subject to a Land Use Plan for the Land Claim Settlement Area accepted by the Tribe and the Town of Charlestown, and no less than 75 percent of the lands subject to the Agreement are to be retained in conservation uses.

### *Transportation Infrastructure*

The map also indicates major existing transportation infrastructure, including State airports, major highways, and active rail lines and existing stations, which are expected to be maintained and enhanced.

### *Major Parks & Open Space*

This category includes lands held by federal, State, and local governments, and private non-profit conservation organizations for public recreation or conservation uses. Land in this category may or may not be permanently protected. Note: not all park and open space lands are shown due to scale and data limitations.

### Summary

The area within the Urban Services Boundary, along with potential Centers outside of the Boundary, are identified as the optimum areas for accommodating the bulk of the State's development needs through 2025. They are areas where growth, be it new development or reuse, infill, and re-development of existing committed urban land at more intensive levels, should generally be encouraged by State and local policies and investment programs. They are areas where the most change is anticipated in the future. Other areas also include lands that were shown through the geographic analysis as being more suited for conservation uses, and lands outside the Urban Service Boundary that are not needed over the next twenty years to accommodate the State's growth needs. In these categories, it is recommended that growth and development not be encouraged or supported.

While the plan's analysis is based on 1995 land use data, examination of 2003 – 2004 aerial photography confirms that there remains sufficient undeveloped land within the urban services boundary to accommodate the State's land use needs within the time horizon of this plan. Moreover, this approach is validated by analysis of recent large-scale commercial, industrial, and residential investment activity within the State that has located almost exclusively within the proposed boundary.