



Introduction to the Services and Facilities Element

One of the major functions of local government is providing services to maintain road, utility and building infrastructure. However, this is also one of the most costly budget areas because of the high costs for construction, operation and maintenance, and personnel. Consequently, high quality and efficient service delivery is a key goal. The City must also program the expansion of infrastructure and services to support future land uses and development that meet community goals.

Overall, the City has provided adequate services to its older neighborhoods. However, expansion of services in Western Cranston continues to be a source of concern as the need to accommodate existing and anticipated growth will require additional services and facilities.

Key Challenges

Ongoing city-wide facilities issues include:

- Improving safety on roads and sidewalks;
- Upgrading the public sewage system and improving water quality;
- Controlling the extensions of public and sewer services for new development;
- Providing maintenance for and improving City buildings including schools, fire stations, library, police and City Hall ;

- Planning for new library and emergency response facilities; and,
- Improving energy efficiency and lowering the costs of operating public buildings.

The challenge is to find solution to these issues with cost effective and efficient strategies.

Key Strategies

This Comprehensive Plan identifies the following key strategies relating to services and facilities:

Control expansion of utilities

The expansion of the public and private utility systems should be restricted. Additional development can occur without major extensions of new utility lines.

Create Ongoing Capital Programs

Pavement maintenance, energy conservation and street signage are programs that should be continuously funded; and,

Administration and Management

A rigorous set of criteria for capital planning is needed to identify the priorities for capital improvement projects. Special utility and maintenance funds could be established as the means to earmark budgets for City facilities.



Part I. Summary and Accomplishments of the 1992 Plan

Introduction

This section of the Services and Facilities element summarizes the issues and accomplishments of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan.

At that time, the citywide focus was on the mandated upgrading of the sewage treatment plant. In Western Cranston, which was being developed, the focus was on extending sewer and water utilities and the pressures for additional growth if such services were extended.

Services

Sewer

In 1992, the City was evaluating upgrading sewage treatment and maintaining water quality in the Pawtuxet River, as mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). At that time, sewers serviced the developed portion of the City east of Interstate 295 (I-295) and a new industrial area near the Johnston line west of I-295 and north of Scituate Avenue. Since then, the sewage treatment plant has been upgraded and a discharge program has been implemented to maintain sufficient flow in the Pawtuxet River, reducing pollution concentrations. Sewer lines have not been constructed in western Cranston, except one completed through a special exchange agreement with the Florida Light & Power (RISE Return Line) in the town of Johnston.

In 1992, sewer service was already provided to 90% of the City's, existing population. As a result, the 1992 Plan recommended a stricter approach to prohibit sewer extension in Western Cranston (with the exception of a new village center) and if sewers were needed for health reasons, not to permit any increase in allowed density.

Water

In 1992, the public water lines in Western Cranston had not yet been taken over by the Providence Water Supply Board. Approximately two-

thirds of the City land area was serviced with public water. The City had an ad hoc policy of allowing half-acre residential development when public water was extended to previously undeveloped areas, largely in Western Cranston. As a result of this policy, roadways and other public facilities were strained by increased development and valuable open space was lost. Just as with sewers, the extension of water lines was also a cause for allowing an increase in density for new developments. Limits on future service areas were recommended as a means to better manage expansion of the water system.

Low-density zoning was implemented to preserve groundwater in Western Cranston. Other policies recommended following the State's Scituate Reservoir Watershed Management Plan by revising regulations and by offering water conservation incentives, including graduated rates based on how much was used during on-peak and off-peak times.

Regional Utilities

Since 1992, the water and sewer utilities have been taken over by private and regional authorities (discussed below). The major regional utility issue at the time of the 1992 Plan was the proposed extension of the Scituate Reservoir Service Area to include the East Bay communities. The City opposed the proposed Cross Bay pipeline, which would have expanded the service area. This was because of EPA's requirement that the City discharge nine million gallons a day (MGD) of treated effluent flow to the Pawtuxet River. If the river flows were reduced for additional water supply, the City would be required to increase the level of treatment of the discharge. In addition, the City feared that the water supply from the Scituate Reservoir would be inadequate to service future growth in the City. However, the Cross Bay pipeline project was constructed and new development continues within the City along with guarantees of minimum flows into the Pawtuxet River to improve water quality in that river.

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Facilities

Western Cranston was a major focus of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan, not only for public utility services but also for other facilities to support the expanding population. A village center was proposed for Western Cranston and is more fully discussed in the Land Use Element. However, the Services and Facilities Element noted that Fire Protection and Library facilities were likely needed in Western Cranston, and that city-wide increases in school children expected to peak in 1995-96, would require reorganization or construction of new classrooms.

Other than schools, fire and libraries, the issues identified in the 1992 Plan included the need for increased record storage, and alternatives for solid waste disposal.

Schools

The City schools were experiencing growth that called either for restructuring class sizes, particularly in the elementary grades, or constructing a new school. The 1992 Plan recommended that if a new school were constructed, its location should reinforce the idea of a village center in western Cranston. A new elementary school, Orchard Farms, has been constructed next to the proposed village center at the intersection of Pippin Orchard Road and Scituate Avenue.

In addition, the 1992 Plan called for better maintenance of the existing schools to preserve the public's investment in these buildings. Either a new fund, or shifting responsibility to another City department, was recommended.

Fire

The concern for emergency response in western Cranston resulted in the recommendation to convert Station #5 from a volunteer to full-time manned station and to consider further changes in the City's fire companies and facilities. Since then, the volunteer stations have ceased operation and two of the four stations have been sold. The volunteer station on Hope Road is currently maintained as a museum.

Libraries

The 1992 Plan referenced a 1987 study that suggested a branch library was needed in western Cranston. The 1992 Plan noted that the facility could be funded with impact fee contributions and could support

the village center concept. To date, a branch library has not been constructed in western Cranston although a site for its construction was acquired along Scituate Avenue in the 1990's.



Former Volunteer Fire Station on Hope Road Now a Firefighter Museum

Changes to the Plan since 1992

The Cranston City Council approved and implemented the following changes to the Services and Facilities Element of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan:

- Decreased the restrictions on public water supply extension.
- Noted both the changes in regional water supply operations and the resulting changes in local impacts on permitted levels of wastewater discharge to the Pawtuxet River.
- Added a new subsection on "Emergency Operations" to address changes in the emergency services resulting from changes in facilities.

1992 Plan Actions and Accomplishments

Table 6-1 summarizes the Services and Facilities Actions from the 1992 Comprehensive Plan and identifies those that have been accomplished.

Table 6-1 Accomplishments of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan

Action	1992 Actions	Accomplishments and Changes
Sewage Collection, Treatment and Disposal		
SF-1	Proceed with design, funding and construction of the advanced sewage treatment facility immediately following a decision regarding the shared treatment facility options.	Completed. The City has a 30-year contract (1997-2027) with a private firm, <i>Veolia Water</i> , to maintain and operate the sewage treatment plant. The City owns the sewer lines.
SF-2	Negotiate with Providence Water Supply Board for an acceptable solution to the issue of adequate flows in the Pawtuxet River.	An agreement was reached.
SF-3	Establish a five-year annual sewage pumping station replacement program.	This is now the responsibility of Veolia Water.
SF-4	Design and Construct a sewage collection system to serve priority areas in western Cranston.	This was partially done through construction of FLPE (RISE Return Line) gas-fired generating plant in Johnston. Sewers can service the Pippin Orchard Road area only by permit from the City and only in certain locations because of the pipe size, topography, and line pressure constraints.
SF-5	Construct a limited sewer line to the area of the village center at the intersection of Pippin Orchard Road and Scituate Avenue. Sizing of the service should accommodate projections of flow from the proposed village at buildout.	A pressurized sewer return line was built running down Pippin Orchard Road and then over to the wastewater treatment plant (RISE Return Line).
Water Supply and Quality		
SF-6	Adopt water conservation measures for residential and industrial users to discourage waste and efficient use of the Scituate Reservoir water supply.	This action was not completed.
Safety Services		
SF-10	Evaluate the need for a new municipal fire station in the southwestern part of the City. Consider conversion of station #5 (Oaklawn Volunteer on Hope Road) to a full-time manned station.	This action was not completed.
Library Facilities		
SF-11	Identify alternative site for new Western Cranston branch library in conjunction with the proposal for a village community center.	This action was not completed.
Municipal Records Facilities		
SF-13	Identify existing facilities which could be utilized for records storage.	This action was not completed.
SF-14	Attempt to consolidate municipal offices and services in the vicinity of City Hall, and provide appropriate space for growth.	This action was not completed.



Part II. Current Conditions and Issues

Introduction

The key issues remaining from the 1992 Plan are protecting the water supply, the western-branch library, and fire facilities. Continuing issues that were not specified as goals in the 1992 Plan are facility maintenance funding and upkeep. New conditions have arisen from the fact that the water and sewer systems have been taken over by new entities. Providence Water Supply Board has assumed the water supply delivery in the western part of Cranston. *Veolia Water* is now managing the sewage treatment plant for the City. Other issues becoming more important to the City are better road maintenance and controlling illegal connections to the public sewers. In addition, recent performance reviews and audits by others have suggested different approaches to City management of schools and fire services.

Current Conditions

The following discussion summarizes current conditions for municipal services and facilities. It is important to note that although the water and significant portions of the sewer facilities are now being managed by other entities, the City's Department of Public Works (DPW) is still responsible for maintaining the City's infrastructure.

The mission of the DPW is to maintain and improve roadways, City buildings (except for schools), vehicle fleets, portions of the sanitary sewer network, stormwater drainage structures and other public assets through responsible fiscal measures and priority-based programming. The goal is to provide sound infrastructure and a clean, safe environment. The DPW is organized into five divisions – Highway, Traffic, Sewer, Engineering and Fleet Maintenance, each under the direction of a manager. Street Lighting is the responsibility

of National Grid. The Fire Department's Signal Alarm Division maintains traffic signals.

Sewage Collection, Treatment and Disposal

The sewage collection, treatment, and disposal systems are considered adequate for the developed portions of the City. Sewage collection service areas remain largely the same as in 1992 with most of the developed portions of the City being served. Service areas include the entire city east of I-295 and a small portion west of I-295 between Plainfield Pike on the north and Scituate Avenue on the south. Sewage is not collected in the public system in most of western Cranston, where onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS) are used instead.

Sewage flows largely by gravity to the sewage treatment plant, which has been upgraded since 1992. The plant discharges into the Pawtuxet River, as do two other treatment plants located in other municipalities. The City has a 30-year contract (1997-2027) with *Veolia Water* to maintain and operate the sewage treatment plant. The plant has excess capacity of approximately 4 million gallons a day (MGD). While actual flow is approximately 12 MGD, some components of the plant reportedly could support a capacity of 20 MGD.

Despite this excess capacity at the sewage treatment plant, illegal tie-ins that discharge to the stormwater runoff system remain an enforcement issue that must be addressed. The City owns and has the responsibility to maintain the sewer lines, and so must find an approach to find and eliminate these connections.

Treated effluent from the sewage treatment plant is discharged into the Pawtuxet River, which flows into the upper reaches of Narragansett Bay (Providence River). The U.S. EPA had mandated

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a 'flow augmentation' program to increase in-stream flow and water quality in the Pawtuxet River. An agreement was reached with Providence Water Supply Board to maintain acceptable flows within the river.

Maintaining sufficient water flow in the Pawtuxet River, to meet the EPA's water standard requirements from stormwater runoff remains the most critical sewage system issue. A discharge of properly-treated effluent from the sewage treatment plant into the river dilutes, and therefore helps reduce, existing pollutant concentrations in the river.

Western Cranston's Sewer Line

A pressurized sewer line was built between the FLPE plant in Johnston and the sewage treatment plant in Cranston. Through an agreement, Cranston supplies effluent from its treatment plant for the Johnston gas-fired power plant. FLPE uses the water for cooling purposes and returns the used water directly to the Cranston treatment plant for further treatment and then discharge. The return sewer line runs through western Cranston, part of the way down Pippin Orchard Road. Connections are by City permit authorized by the Department of Public Works and only in certain locations.

Future development in western Cranston will require individual in-ground septic treatment systems unless the projects can tap into the pressurized sewer line, but the City's policy is not to extend sewer service to the remainder of western Cranston.

Potential Non-Sewered Parcels at Buildout

The number of potential parcels without sewers when the City is built out indicates the number of on-site wastewater treatment systems, or the related potential demand to provide the same number of new sewer line connections.

The Assessor's records show there are over 32,000 parcels in Cranston with 5,503 parcels without buildings and 26,497 parcels with buildings. Of those 26,497 developed parcels, 22,241 records are on the "Sewer Roll", meaning that 4,256 parcels with buildings are not connected to sewers. The Sewer Roll also shows 417 parcels, where sewer lines exist but are not connected to the sewer system.

Adding the buildout estimate for western Cranston in the area west of I-295 southbound and west of the Alpine Estates subdivision, which projects a 45 percent increase in individual septic systems, equals the total potential parcels without sewer and so with on-site septic systems:

4,256	Built parcels without sewer
+1,894	Potential additional parcels in western Cranston
6,150	Total potential parcels without sewer

Connecting these 6,150 parcels to the City sewage lines would increase existing connections by over 25 percent to the sewage treatment plant, which as previously noted has excess capacity. However, on-site sewage treatment and disposal has proven to be a reliable method of protecting the public health and reducing public costs for centralized system operation and maintenance. Unless certain community goals are achieved, such as providing benefits to the adjacent neighborhood or the City adding all of these connections is not recommended. Map 6.1 depicts the existing sanitary sewer service areas for the City.

Water Supply

The Providence Water Supply Board manages Cranston's water supply as part of a much broader water system. The Scituate Reservoir is the water source for this system. The Providence Water Supply Board distributes water to approximately 60 percent of the state's population, including all of Cranston except for a small area serviced by the Kent County Water Authority and those homes in western Cranston served by individual wells. Per R.I.G.L. 46-15.3-5.1 (Public Drinking Water Supply System Protection), the executive summary of the water system management plans for both Providence Water Supply Board and Kent County Water Authority are incorporated into this plan by reference. (See attached Appendix B and Appendix C.)

The public water lines in Cranston distribute water over an area larger than the sewer service. The only area not currently served is the most western portion of Cranston. The homes and properties in that area are served by individual wells.

Water lines and connections continue to be added in western Cranston as new projects are developed with investments from private developers to support their projects. However, there is a

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continued need to conserve the water supply in Scituate Reservoir. Consequently extension of water lines in western Cranston is not a recommended policy unless, as with sewers, certain community goals are achieved such as providing for conservation development. Map 6.2 depicts the existing water supply system (Providence Water Supply Board, Kent County Water Authority) for the City.

Educational Facilities

Cranston Public Schools educate about 11,000 students in 24 schools. As of November 2004, there were:

- 3,640 students in two high schools
- 2,707 students in three middle schools
- 4,764 students in 18 elementary schools

The most recent school construction project was the Orchard Farm Elementary School, which followed the School Department's adherence to the neighborhood elementary school model and serves neighborhoods in western Cranston.

School enrollment is expected to decrease over the next several years. According to the Performance Audit of the City schools (September 2004), school enrollment peaked in 2002 at 11,269, and is expected to decrease to 10,894 by 2008. Projections from the Planning Department also show a decrease in enrollment to 10,909 in 2008. These projections are also supported by a continuing decrease in residential building permits in the City over the ten years between 1993 and 2003. These changes are equivalent to a little over a three percent decrease in enrollment by 2008 from the 2002 peak.

This suggests that there will be no short-term demand for a new school building program. However, improvement, possible expansion, maintenance and operation of the schools will continue to require attention and budgeted funds.

Fire Protection

Fire Department services include both fire emergency and emergency medical (EMS) calls together with inspections and licensing. The importance of the EMS function is identified by the fact that 72% of the over 13,000 calls made by the Fire Department in 2004 were for medical emergencies.

In 1992, the Comprehensive Plan called for converting the former Oaklawn Volunteer Station on Hope Road to a full-time manned station, and to monitor growth in western Cranston. In 1995 the City closed down all four remaining volunteer stations and went all "full-time" with six stations:

- Station One: Edgewood on Park Avenue
- Station Two: Auburn HQ on Pontiac Avenue
- Station Three: Knightsville on Cranston Street
- Station Four: Garden City on Sockanosset Cross Road
- Station Five: Oaklawn on Oaklawn Avenue
- Station Six: Comstock on Scituate Avenue

Additional information and analysis of Fire Department facilities has recently been made available in the Performance Audit of the Police and Fire Departments issued January 2004.

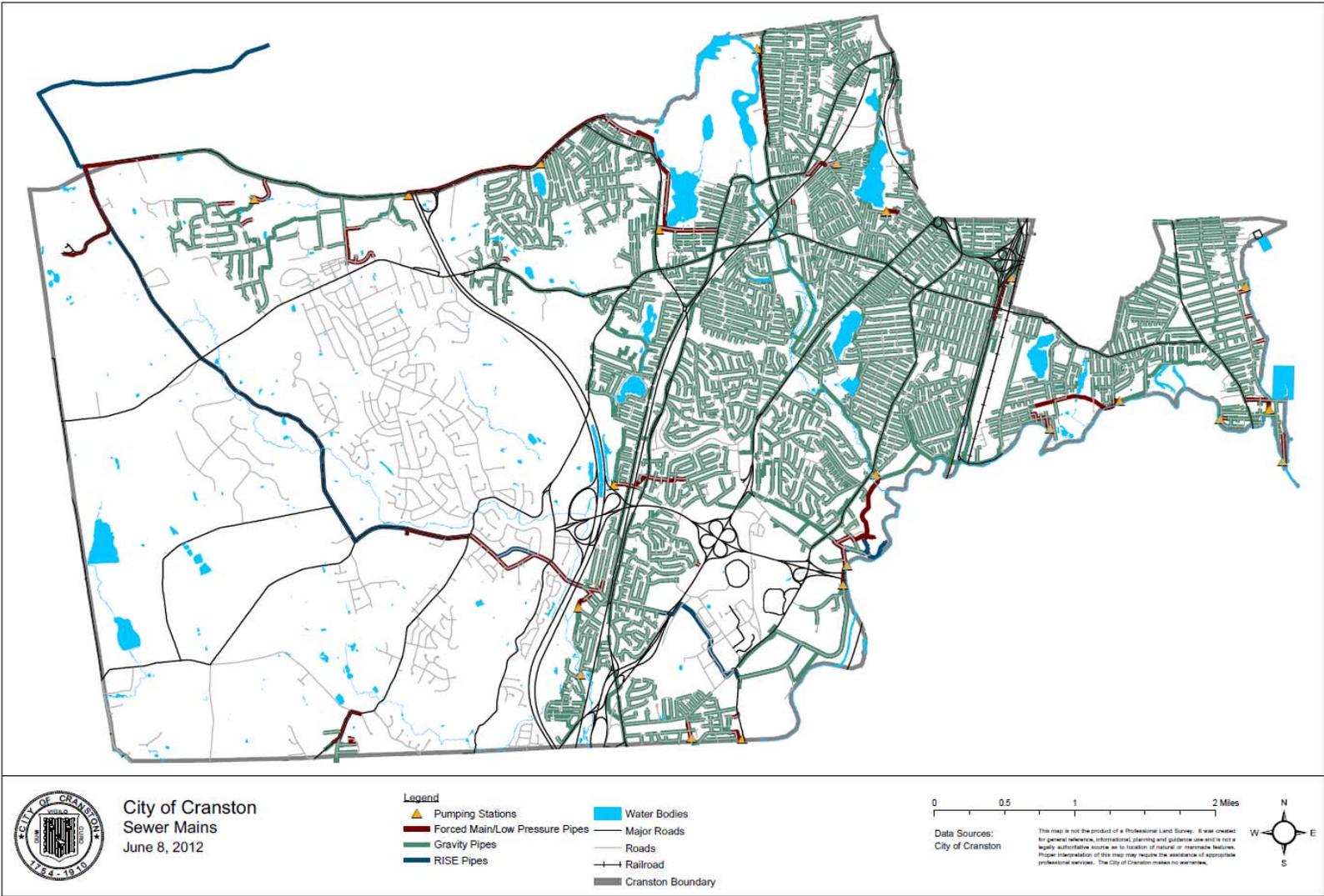
Police

The City has constructed a new Police Station on part of the Narragansett Brewery site on Cranston Street. The former Police Station has been vacated and is available for other municipal uses or can be sold for private development.

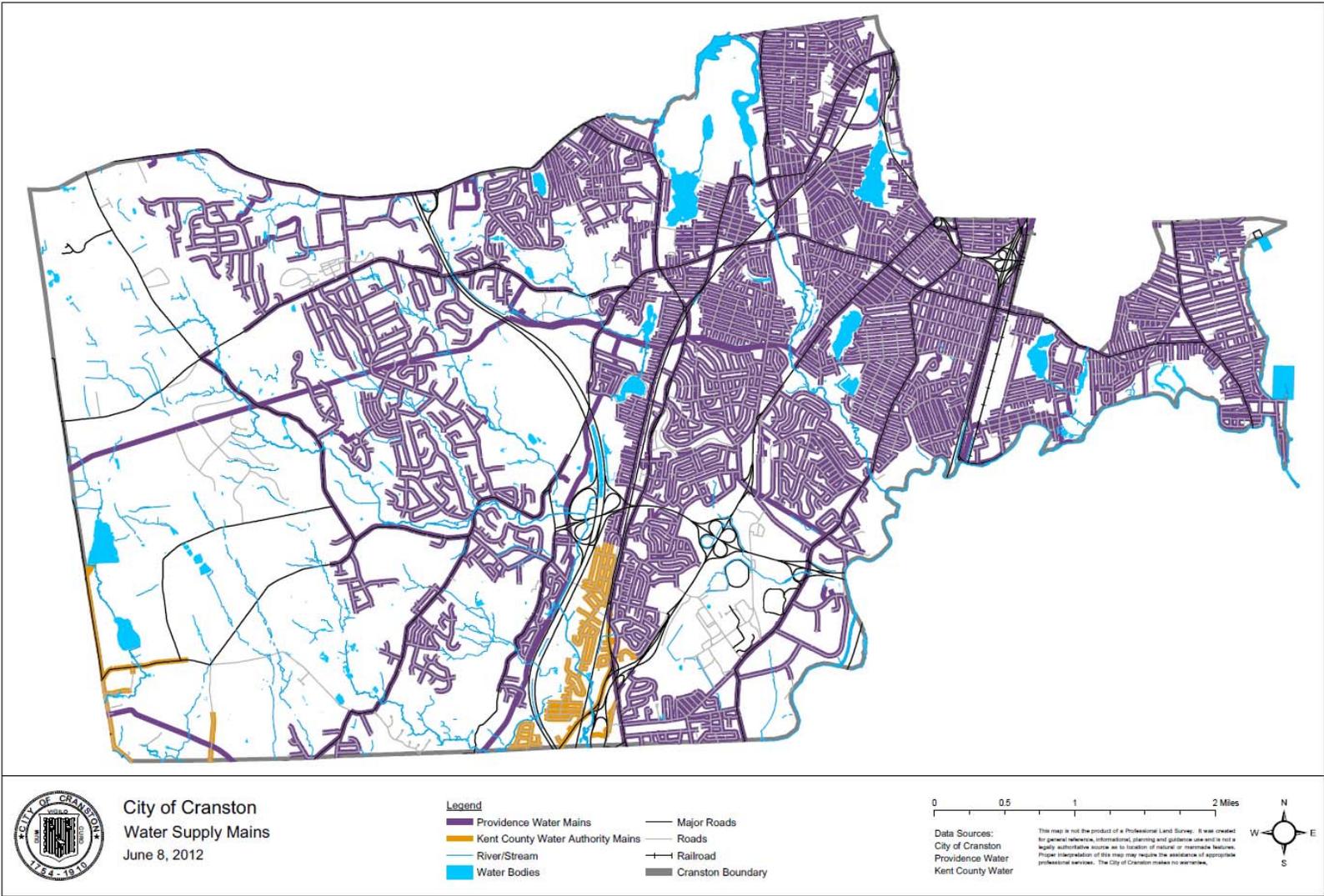
Library Facilities

The Library Department has two projects that are proposed in the near-term. The first is the Arlington branch library. Currently the City library system includes the Arlington Reading Room. However, the Arlington branch library is proposed as a gift from Cranston Printworks of a building and vacant land. Using federal grant funds and other sources, the existing, historic structure would be possibly relocated and renovated to serve as the branch library facility. Discussions continue with the City, Library and the Print Works.

The other project for a new branch library in western Cranston was listed in the 1992 Plan. A parcel of land on Scituate Avenue was acquired with impact fee funds and is still available for the library. However, as described in the Land Use Element, the location of this branch facility in the proposed Village Center could provide other benefits. The Library Department remains open to this option, particularly if the concept helps advance the construction of the branch.



Map 6-1 City Sewer System



Map 6-2 City Water Supply Mains

Municipal Records Facilities

City Hall, similar to other historic buildings of its era, did not program in sufficient space to meet record storage needs. A centralized site that accommodates record storage should be created.

Solid Waste Disposal

The City's Public Works Department is responsible for the following collection programs: rubbish and recycling (paper, plastics, glass, metal), yard waste, and household appliances. Rubbish and recycling items are picked up by a contractor and disposed of at the State operated Resource Recovery Corporation in Johnston, RI. Through this Department's efforts the City has been working to meet the State's mandated goal of 35% recycling. In an effort to further increase the City's recycling rate, the City has enforced a "no mining policy on recyclables and the City has enacted a recycling program called "No Bins-No Barrels" which required all residents to place recycling bins at the curb with their household rubbish to ensure pickup. This program dramatically increased the recycling bin rate to 23% FY 10/11

Municipal Facilities in the Western Cranston Village Center

The 1992 Plan proposed a Western Cranston Village Center at the intersection of Scituate and Pippin Orchard Roads. Two of the corners of this intersection have been developed with a church and a garden store/nursery which leaves an opportunity to add other complementary uses that support the Village Center concept. City facilities, such as the branch library would support the concept of the Village Center by adding civic activities. Consequently, the placement of these facilities within the Village Center is recommended.

Road Improvement Plans and Maintenance Funds

Due to a lack of capital investment over the past several years, many of the city's roads need resurfacing according to the DPW. An inventory needs to be made to identify the condition of City roads and establish criteria to assign priorities for improvements. This plan could then become the basis for City funding.



Cranston School Administration Building (Briggs Building)

Over the past several years, road maintenance funds have come from annual budget allocations, but they have been limited.. Maintenance of various roadway median areas is aided by the "Adopt a Spot" program, which has identified 80 sites of which approximately 50 are under contract with different private companies.

Many traffic regulatory signs are faded, vandalized, or no longer meet highway standards. Rolfe Square merchants are apparently maintaining some of the public signs within their business district. This could be used as a model for other areas. Otherwise, public funds should be set aside yearly for sign maintenance.

Building Upgrades and Maintenance

Many city-owned buildings are not in compliance with current fire code according to the DPW. An inventory must identify the condition of the City buildings and establish criteria to assign priorities for action.

This highlights a larger issue regarding building maintenance. Common problems with municipal buildings stem from minimal budgets that address short-term problems, but not long-term maintenance issues. Based on review of other municipal budgets nationwide, it is recommended that the City budgets \$0.96/sq.ft. per building space or 5% to 6% of net operating revenues for capital asset maintenance. However, local maintenance funds have actually been reduced in recent years.



Part III. Plan Strategies and Actions

Focusing the Programs

Services and facilities are “budget-intensive” requiring a commitment to long-term, significant public funding. Consequently, creating a focus for the investments in the capital program and for continued services in the annual budgets will help to lead decisions on how facilities and services should be delivered within the City.

There are three principles that will help provide this focus:

- The primary purpose of the City services should be to protect and improve the public health and safety;
- With health and safety secure, the City must strive to improve the quality of life through education, social services, and civic activities;

Consistent maintenance and continuous upgrading of City properties and buildings is needed to protect those investments and maintain their long-term service to the community.

Using these precepts, improvements, new services and improved facilities can be prioritized through the Capital Improvement Program and other financing mechanisms. Capital improvement requests are submitted to the Planning Department, which annually prepares the Citywide Capital Improvement Program. Following are the specific actions recommended with these principles in mind.

Actions for Services and Facilities

Street Maintenance and Management

Accessibility on streets throughout the City is dependent on DPW maintenance. The DPW needs a consistent cash flow to implement a pavement management program. In the recent past, the City’s ability to bond was severely hindered due to its financial condition. Cranston

now has some catching up to do. Key actions to maintain safe and efficient travel include:

- A repaving and crack-sealing program to improve the safety of City streets. Sidewalk repairs also need to be addressed. Tree roots create cracked and uneven sidewalks when they are not trimmed;
- Adequate funds must be allocated each year to plow City roadways. Municipalities throughout the State must compete with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) and each other to contract with the pool of private plow operators;
- DPW crews sweep streets once a year in late spring to remove accumulated winter sand and debris. This practice should continue;
- Traffic, parking and other street signs need to be replaced through a detailed inventory and replacement program. This will require staff and money to identify the sign locations and replace them;
- The signage program could also be used as an opportunity to create citywide sign design standards. A consistent signage standard, such as the one which was used for the bicycle loop, would help create a sense of place for residents and visitors;
- Where the budget allows, the popular homeowner-City matching payment program for tree planting should be funded on a regular basis.

Establish a Capital Sewer Fund.

Sewer funding has been inadequate to pay for needed extensions and repairs because of other funding priorities. The existing sewer fees can only be used for maintenance and operating expenses because the amount is insufficient for major capital projects, such as extending sewer lines.

- A separate capital sewer fund is needed to assure maintenance and funding for sewers.
- Assign a sewer impact fee for new homes to fund future sewer projects.

Locate and Disconnect Illegal Sewer Connections

Stormwater flows are the main infiltration and inflow issues in the sewer system. The DPW is aware of the significant number of illegal tie-ins of stormwater drainage from private properties to the City's sewerage system. It is believed that some residents have connected their roof drains to the sewer system. These flows add to the volume of effluent at the City's sewage treatment plant. Although there is excess capacity at the plant, the additional flows add to the public costs for treatment.

The City and/or Veolia Water needs to test for these connections to confirm they exist, and disconnect them where they do exist. The City needs to be able to inventory and inspect properties and disconnect illegal stormwater connections to the sewer. The City needs to determine the most appropriate procedure to implement such a program due to the legal issues involved with public access to private properties.

Nutrient Reduction and Water Flow in the Pawtuxet River

The EPA has ordered nutrient reductions in the Pawtuxet River to improve water quality. The plan is to reroute polluted river water into one of the spare sewage tanks for treatment and discharge back into the River. The Pawtuxet River Watershed District and the State Revolving Fund would pay for this treatment. The State portion would be repaid at 2.2 percent interest. A six-million-dollar project at the sewage treatment plant to reduce discharges of nitrogen and ammonia to the Pawtuxet River is scheduled for construction in the near future. When complete, nitrogen discharges from the facility should drop by more than 40 percent.

- This project should be advanced to significantly improve the river's water quality and reduce the City's environmental liabilities.
- As water quality improves, the City should take steps to improve public access to and recreation on the river.

Actions for Building Improvements

Building Maintenance

The fact that many city-owned buildings had fire code violations is indicative of the City's failure to adequately maintain public buildings to meet current building standards. The funding to address these and other building conditions as well as to provide for general maintenance is needed consistently across budget years. Ensure the building maintenance budget line items receive appropriate and consistent funding.

Energy Conservation

Many City buildings' heating and lighting systems are outdated. Some lighting upgrades are being paid for by National Grid as an incentive to conserve energy by using more efficient lighting systems/fixtures. Heating and cooling requirements for all public buildings create large energy demands that the City must fund.

- Improve energy efficiency to reduce long-term energy costs, and improve the quality of the office work environment.

Emergency Fire Service

While not densely populated, the southwestern area of the City has the longest emergency response time from the existing City fire stations.

- As western Cranston continues to grow and change, the City should continue to evaluate the need for expanded fire station service in the southwestern part of the City.

Libraries

As of January 2005, approximately \$300,000 had been raised for the new library branch in western Cranston, currently proposed for a site on Scituate Avenue. However, the building plans have not yet been finalized. Within the Village Center concept, combining the branch library with other activities could create a self-sustaining center.

The City is working with the Cranston Print Works to convert the former church that the Print Works owns on Cranston Street, to become the future Arlington Branch Library. This project will require the renovation and possible movement of the historic structure.

- A branch library in the Village Center alternative should be considered as the concept as the Village Center evolves.

City Hall/ School Complex

Proposed improvements to City Hall and the adjoining High School and School Administration buildings include better storage facilities, energy-efficiency, and a new library for the school, along with new, flexible classroom space to meet educational programming needs and appropriate facility size.

Actions for Western Cranston

Individual, on-site septic systems and drinking water wells are regulated by the RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and the RI Department of Health, respectively, and not the City. However, the City has responsibilities to protect ground and surface water quality.

There are three major utility lines that service sections of western Cranston:

- A water service line built by the Providence Water Supply Board;
- The “clean” delivery sewer line to Johnston; and,
- The 11-mile sewer returns line between the power plant (Florida Power & Light) at the Johnston Resource Recovery Station and the Cranston Sewage Treatment Plant, which could take local sewage flows under certain conditions.

Water Service

Further expansion of the water supply system in western Cranston is problematic where elevations are over 400 feet because there is a need for additional pumping stations. In addition, the adjacent Kent County Water District does not want to extend water lines into western Cranston. However, the Providence Water Supply Board does provide the water service to the northern portion of western Cranston.

Sewer Service

The City allows connections to the RISE return sewer line under a permit application with specific design requirements as authorized by the Director of the City’s DPW. There is excess capacity in the line, but the line is pressurized due to the topography, which substantially increases connection costs. Pressurized service lines are more expensive than gravity flow lines due to the need to provide pumping facilities. Currently, there is no public money specifically targeted for this area, but private developers have asked for permission to connect to these utilities at their own cost.

Water and Sewer Service Policy

The City needs a clear policy regarding sewer and water utility expansion in western Cranston. This policy should cover both public investments as well as private development.

- Create a policy for private development in western Cranston to allow connections to the sewer service (RISE return line), only if the proposed development is conservation design subdivision or promotes the creation of a compact village center as identified within this plan.
- Maintain the fee system for water connections to fund upgrades to the existing system as required by the contract that transferred the Cranston water supply system to the Providence Water Supply Board. ,

Ordinance to Establish a Septic System District

A Septic System Management District in western Cranston could be created to better manage the long-term public health and protect natural resources without extending sewers and waterlines. Under this district, owners of individual septic systems would pay a fee to the City. The City would use the revenue to contract with a private company to monitor and inspect individual septic systems to ensure that they are properly maintained by the owner, and to provide homeowners with recommendations on how to maintain their septic systems. This would decrease the number of septic system failures from lack of proper maintenance by owners. This is of particular importance due to the substantial number of septic systems that are both existing and anticipated in western Cranston. The City has a preliminary report that recommended a review and monitoring system

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for septic tanks. However, the City currently does not have the resources to staff such an effort.

- Consider establishing a Septic System District in western Cranston in which owners of individual septic systems would pay a fee to the City for septic system management.

Actions for the Capital Improvement Program

The City’s Planning Department recommends how revenues and other collected fees should be spent in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). There is significant coordination between the Planning Department and the other city departments during the CIP process. However, the process could be facilitated with the establishment of criteria and guidelines for all public facilities. The City could identify its critical needs and priorities regarding capital projects and then ensure the funding is programmed to support high priority projects.

A particular issue is that facility maintenance funds are traditionally low in comparison to the need for maintenance because of other City priorities. As an example, maintenance under the DPW used to be

funded at about \$500,000 a year during the 1980s and 1990s. Now their maintenance items are funded at about a third of that level and it shows. As a result, there is significant “deferred maintenance” on public facilities and more emphasis on new facilities. This imbalance should be addressed.

- The City should develop a rigorous set of criteria for Capital Improvement Program planning. These criteria will be used to evaluate the priority of funding a particular project against other requests. The City departments could then use these criteria when they make their capital program requests.
- The City should establish two funds to maintain the existing sewer and water system and to maintain a number of other City facilities such as streets, sidewalks and signs. The first fund is the Sewer Fund that is described above. The second fund is a General Maintenance Fund financed by bonds and tied to the City’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Table 6-2 Summary of the Proposed Actions and Responsibilities for this Plan

	Action	Responsibility
Services and Facilities		
SF-1	Create a Pavement Maintenance Plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program a regular series of improvements to the street system. 	DPW
SF-2	Establish a signage program to replace street signs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a consistent design standard that defines the community and individual neighborhoods where the signs are erected. 	DPW
SF-3	Establish and maintain a Capital Sewer Fund.	City Council Planning Department DPW
SF-4	Determine steps to resolve illegal connections to sewerage system.	DPW
SF-5	Advance nutrient reduction for the wastewater treatment plant discharge to the Pawtuxet River <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set the goals to improve conditions and flows within the river. <i>Related Action: SF-5, NR-22</i>	City Council DPW Viola Water

6. SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Building Improvements		
SF-6	Adopt energy conservation standards for City facilities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a long-term program to reduce energy costs for the City. <i>Related Action:</i> NR-3	DPW Building Maintenance
SF-7	Continue to evaluate the need for a new municipal fire station in the southwestern part of the City. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate in accordance with the growth of Western Cranston. 	Planning Department Fire Department
SF-8	Promote the construction of library facilities. The Western Cranston branch library	Planning Department Library Department
SF-9	Coordinate City Hall, High School, and School Administration building projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide design and construction oversight for greater efficiency in use of existing space. 	Planning Department School Department
Western Cranston		
SF-10	Allow sewer and water tie-ins to the existing sewer and water lines in western Cranston where properties abut said lines.	City Council Planning Commission Planning Department DPW
SF-11	Establish a Septic System District. <i>Related Action:</i> NR-7	City Council Planning Department DPW
SF-12	Explore the alternative of siting the new western Cranston branch library within the Village Center concept. <i>Related Action:</i> LU-11	Planning Department Library Department
Capital Improvement Program		
SF-13	Develop criteria for priority ranking of capital facilities as part of the City's Capital Improvement Program.	City Council Planning Commission Planning Department DPW
SF-14	Establish and maintain a Facilities Maintenance Fund. Set aside funds for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roadway pavement repairs and upgrades; • Sidewalks; • Street trees; • Signs; • Snow plowing; • Energy efficiency in public buildings. 	City Council Planning Department DPW
SF-15	Continue to identify existing facilities, which could be used for records storage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If no such space is available, construct additional vault space to meet records storage requirements. 	City Clerk DPW
SF-16	Continue to seek consolidation of municipal offices and services in the vicinity of City Hall. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide room for future expansion. 	Mayor City Council

6. SERVICES AND FACILITIES

SF-17	Establish a program to reevaluate the fiscal impact fees on an regular basis	City Council Planning Commission Planning Department. Building Inspector
Water Supply		
SF-18	Adopt water conservation measures for residential and industrial users to discourage waste and encourage efficient use of the Scituate Reservoir water supply.	City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Conservation Commission
SF-19	Minimize the need for residential irrigation through the development of conservation subdivisions.	Planning Commission Planning Department.
SF-20	Work with the Providence Water Supply Board and the Kent County Water Authority to promote water conservation and to take appropriate actions during periods of drought.	Planning Department DPW
Solid Waste Disposal		
SF-21	Achieve, through the recycling program, a 50 percent reduction in volume of the disposable solid waste stream to reduce the overall cost of solid waste disposal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue municipal curbside collection of residential solid waste and require commercial and industrial solid waste to be handled privately. • Continue to enforce no bin no pickup policy. • Investigate the feasibility of establishing a municipal compost facility. 	DPW