



II. LAND USE

New Shoreham 2016 Draft Comprehensive Plan

VISION

The Town of New Shoreham will ensure that Block Island remains a desirable place to live by promoting sound growth and quality development which preserves and protects the natural environment, rural landscapes, cultural sites, and scenic beaches. Block Island's balance of land uses will support local sustainability and the economic needs of its residents.

LAND USE

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

“Land Use 2025”, State Guide Plan Element 121, available at http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/guide_plan/landuse2025.pdf

Overview

Land use planning is necessary to provide for the protection, appropriate development, use and management of our land and natural resources. Land is a precious and limited resource, particularly on Block Island, and thoughtful consideration must be given to its use. This element presents a description of Block Island’s current land use regulations, demographic trends, and includes a build out analysis.

The Land Use Element and Future Land Use Map is a culmination of the goals and policies discussed in previous chapters of this Comprehensive Plan. Recommended future land uses, as illustrated through the Future Land Use Plan, were determined based upon the island’s historic development pattern, the natural characteristics of the land, the transportation network, the availability of services and facilities, and the need to protect water quality, environmental quality, and the scenic quality of the Block Island.

Demographics

Block Island’s historical population trends are aligned with its economic activities. From its beginnings as a (non-native) settlement in the late 1700’s and early 1800’s when the year round residents numbered between 600 and 700 people, who subsisted mainly on farming, it grew to a bustling island supporting anywhere from 1,000 to 1,300 throughout the mid to late 1800’s and well into the twentieth century, when the economy shifted to resort activity and fishing. During and following the Great Depression and the Hurricane of 1938, which forced the fishing fleet back to the mainland, the population began dropping significantly, a trend that continued after World War II. By 1960, only 486 people were counted, the lowest recorded Census for the island. After remaining stable for a few decades, the population began climbing, reaching over a thousand people again by 2000. This recent growth is a function of the island’s desirability as a retirement and second home community, an offshoot of its tremendous popularity as a vacation location. The US Census counts for the island from 1910 to 2010 are contained in Table LU-1.

Year	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Population	1,314	1,038	1,029	848	732	486	489	620	836	1,010	1,051

The RI Statewide Planning Program generates population projections for all cities and towns based on historic trends. These figures are then adjusted to fit the results of a model for the entire state. Shown in Table LU-2 are two sets of figures for Block Island, both the “official” adjusted population for inclusion in the statewide totals of population projections, and the slightly higher “unadjusted” projections. In both cases, the assumption is that Block Island will continue to grow in population due to its desirability as a year-round community, or in many cases, as the primary (voting) location for people who have more than one residence.

Year	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
<i>Official population estimate</i>	1,093	1,135	1,189	1,239	1,283	1,319
<i>Projected rate of population change</i>	4.00%	3.90%	4.70%	4.20%	3.60%	2.80%
<i>Unadjusted population estimate*</i>	1,116	1,169	1,223	1,279	1,336	1,394

**Unlike the official, adjusted projections, these projections do not total to the statewide projection and do not take individual components of demographic change or age/sex cohorts into account.*

A break-down by age of island residents as counted in both the 2000 and the 2010 Census is shown in Table LU-3. These figures indicate that there is a shift underway of older and retired persons replacing the very young, as well as the possible out-migration of young and young-middle aged workers.

Age	2000	2010
Under 5	63	36
5-19	137	133
20-34	163	126
35-54	353	330
55-74	230	329
75+	64	97
TOTAL	1,010	1,051

Seasonal Changes

The population of Block Island cannot be accurately evaluated without an accounting of its dramatic seasonal variation, when part-time residents, visitors and vacationers descend on the island for the summer months. It is estimated that the number of people staying on the island, including seasonal residents, renters, guests in hotels, inns and guest houses, and those staying on boats, is over 10,000 on a summer overnight. This figure does not include the day trippers who arrive and leave on the ferries, which is estimated at 15,000 on a typical Saturday or Sunday.

Temporary residents are not counted in the Census, and the seasonal nature of most of the housing stock contributes to the lack of available and affordable year-round housing on the island (see Housing chapter). Aside from skewing the housing market, this influx represents the island’s major economic activities (see Economic Development chapter), while influencing the demand for services (see Community Services and Facilities chapter).

LAND USE

Existing Land Use and Pattern

Block Island has 6,076 acres within its land boundaries, excluding the Great Salt Pond and connecting coastal ponds. See Map LU I *Existing Land Use* for an illustration of existing land use as categorized by RIGIS, the State's Geographic Information System.

The existing land use pattern of Block Island can be categorized as having three distinct areas:

- **Village:** A compact mixed-use area, serviced by both public water and sewer, it includes the “downtown” associated with Old Harbor and the area between and around Old and New Harbors. Uses include retail and other businesses, tourism facilities, restaurants, accommodations including major hotels and inns, utilities and government, as well as residential. Year-round apartments and rooms for seasonal staff over stores are desirable future uses to provide a viable mixed-use area.
- **Transition:** A “buffer” zone which consists primarily of single family homes, but also includes some low-impact service establishments and smaller inns and B&B's. This area is partially serviced with town water. It has a lower density than the village, but is still compactly arranged.
- **Countryside:** The remainder of the island, dominated by openness, interspersed with low-density residential uses, and with compatible economic activities including agriculture, home occupations and B&B's. Of necessity, certain public facilities, including the airport, transfer station and the water treatment plant, are located in this area. However, the outstanding characteristic of this portion of the island is the extensive preserved open space and scenic values, which are critically important to the tourism-based economy, and the overall quality of life.

Current Zoning

The Town zoning designations reinforce this general land use pattern described above, with commercial and mixed use districts confined to the village and harbor areas, a medium density residential district surrounding the village, and a uniform requirement for 120,000 square foot lots outside of that area (low density residential). As described, the village is made up of the areas zoned Old Harbor Commercial, New Harbor Commercial, Service Commercial, and Mixed Use. The transition comprises areas zoned Residential C, Mixed Use and Residential B. The countryside comprises the land zoned RA. See below for descriptions of zoning districts. Zoning districts and the historic district overlay are shown in *Map LU2 Zoning*.

Residential

The large majority of the island's land area is within the *Residential A (RA) Zone*. The RA Zone comprises primarily rural land mostly remote from the village center and much of which is served by narrow lanes. It is intended that new development be integrated into the existing pattern of fields, walls, ponds and wetlands. A minimum of 120,000 square feet developable land area is required for newly created lots. *Permitted uses include: single family dwellings, accessory residential structures or apartments, accessory uses / home occupations, community residences, family day care homes, farming, rental rooms, and WECS. Additionally, a number of uses are allowed with a special use permit including but not limited to: governmental facilities, recreational facilities, affordable housing, waterfront uses, and stables.*

The *Residential B (RB) Zone* comprises land less remote from the village center than land zoned RA. It is intended to serve as a transition between the higher density of the village area and the low density of the countryside. A minimum of 60,000 square feet of developable lot area is required to create new lots within the RB zoning district. Uses permitted in the Residential B zone are the same as the Residential A zoning district.

The *Residential C (RC) Zone* comprises predominantly residential areas which include a significant component of hotels and inns. The minimum required lot area with sewer is 20,000 square feet and 40,000 square feet without sewer. In addition to the uses permitted in RA and RB zones, RC allows inns and hotels by special use permit.

The *Residential C / Mixed Use Zone (RC/M)* is predominately residential with a significant component of hotels and inns. It is intended that the zone provide for variety of residential uses and retail/residential mixed uses. The same lot size requirements as RC the two mixed use districts RCM , is intended primarily for residential uses, while the RC Mixed and the Mixed Zones emphasize commercial uses as part of the commercial and residential mix. In addition to the uses permitted in the RA, RB, and RC zones, RC/M allowed by special use permit commercial/residential mixed use and light assembly.

The *Mixed Use Zone (M)*, generally located between the two harbors, serves as a transition between the year-round and seasonal residential areas and the mixed residential area. It is intended that the area include a mix of residential dwellings with specially approved retail and service uses. The minimum required lot area with sewer is 20,000 square feet and 40,000 square feet without sewer. Some additional uses allowed in this zoning district include commercial fishing, waterfront uses, and bike rental.

Commercial

The three commercial zones, Old Harbor Commercial (OHC), New Harbor Commercial (NHC) and Service Commercial (SC) are based on their village locations. Uses permitted by right in all three commercial districts include, but are not limited to: retail, restaurants, single family residential, and accessory apartments.

Other

The Planned Development is a district allowing mixed uses, but focusing on affordable housing. It is allowed as a map amendment in specific zoning districts, approved by the Town Council following review of a site development plan.

The Public Education, Public Utility and Medical Center Zones are applied to the school property, the town owned transfer station site, and the medical center property, respectively.

Overlay Districts

The Coastal Zone, not specifically mapped, is based on the location of coastal features such as bluffs, dunes or wetlands and includes the land area within 100 feet of that coastal feature or mean high water. It is subject to change following erosion or movement of coastal bluffs and dunes. It is a highly restrictive zone.

Also indicated on the map is the Historic District, an overlay district which governs development activities within Block Island's historic district. It generally corresponds to the zoning districts between and including the two harbors, including the RC and RC/Mixed Zones.

Future Build-Out Analysis

The following section is an assessment of the future residential development capacity of Block Island under current zoning regulations. This build-out analysis includes an assessment by zoning district of both undeveloped and underdeveloped parcels and estimates maximum subdivision potential. The analysis includes a summary table, chart, and map.

General Methodology

A spatial analysis was conducted on all 2,200+ parcels within the Town of New Shoreham.

GIS Data Layers Utilized

PARCEL BOUNDARIES
 ADDRESSES - FIRE NUMBER POINT LAYER / E-911 POINT LAYER
 ZONING DISTRICTS
 CONSERVED LANDS
 WETLANDS
 OPEN WATER
 ROADS & RIGHT OF WAYS
 PUBLIC PROPERTIES - TOWN-OWNED LANDS / AIRPORT PARCELS

The first goal of the analysis was to identify all undeveloped parcels with development potential.

Utilizing the island wide parcel dataset, parcels with assigned fire numbers and those in the State's E-911 system were removed from this part of the analysis (making the assumption that properties with assigned addresses are developed). The following categories of parcels were also removed from the analysis since they have restricted or limited development potential:

- *Public properties*
- *Conserved properties*
- *Private roads, driveways, ROWs*
- *Encumbered by natural constraints (ie open water or wetlands)*

This resulted in a total parcel subset of 285 undeveloped and unrestricted lots.

Total Estimated Number of Undeveloped and Unrestricted Lots Island Wide: 285

An estimated total number of undeveloped and unrestricted lots was then determined for each zoning district (see below). A subdivision yield analysis was conducted on those parcels with large enough lot

size for potential future subdivisions. Combining the two figures provided a total estimated number of undeveloped and unrestricted lots factoring in maximum subdivision potential based upon current zoning regulations.

The second part of the analysis involved underdeveloped parcels with future subdivision potential. This analysis followed a very similar methodology as described above, however, already developed parcels (those with fire numbers/ addresses) were not eliminated and those parcels (285) that were included in the first part of the analysis (described above) were removed. This analysis provided an estimated number of developed properties with the potential for additional residential development based upon large lot size.

Undeveloped and Unrestricted Parcels by Zoning District

Residential A Zone (RA)

Within the RA zone there are **197** undeveloped and unrestricted lots. For all newly created lots, 120,000 square feet of developable area is required. 17 of the 197 lots are greater than 240,000 square feet in area. 5 of these lots are a majority protected open space with what appears to be the potential for one building lot. The 14 remaining parcels larger than 240,000 square feet have a potential total yield of 36 lots. Therefore, there is an estimated **219** (197-14+36) total potential undeveloped and unrestricted lots within the RA zone when factoring in subdivision potential.

Residential B Zone (RB)

There are a total of **54** undeveloped and unrestricted lots within the RB Zone. For all newly created lots, 60,000 square feet of developable area is required. 8 lots of the 54 are larger than 120,000 square feet and therefore have the potential to be subdivided in the future. A subdivision yield analysis estimated those 8 lots have the potential to be subdivided into 19 lots. Therefore, there is an estimated **65** (54-8+19) total potential undeveloped and unrestricted lots within the RB zone when factoring in subdivision potential.

Residential C Zone (RC)

There are 5 undeveloped and unrestricted lots within the RC zone. 1 of the 5 lots is greater than 40,000 square feet and therefore has the potential for a two-lot subdivision if connected to sewer. Therefore, there is an estimated **6** (5-1+2) total potential undeveloped and unrestricted lots within the RC zone when factoring in subdivision potential.

Residential C / Mixed-Use Zone (RCM)

There are 5 undeveloped and unrestricted lots within the RCM zoning district. 1 lot is greater than 80,000 square feet and has to potential to be subdivided into a maximum of 4 lots if connected to sewer. Therefore, there is an estimated **8** (5-1+4) total potential undeveloped and unrestricted lots within the RCM zone when factoring in subdivision potential.

Mixed Use Zone

There are 15 undeveloped and unrestricted lots within the mixed use zone. 3 of these 15 lots are greater than 40,000 square feet in area and have the potential to become up to 10 individual lots if subdivided. Therefore, there is an estimated 22 (15-3+10) total potential undeveloped and unrestricted lots within the Mixed Use zone when factoring in subdivision potential. Note: this assumes all lots are on sewer in order to be permitted 20,000 square feet in lot area.

COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Although not part of this residential build out analysis, it was determined that there are an estimated 9 undeveloped and potentially developable lots located within the Town's commercial zoning districts.

Underdeveloped and Unrestricted Parcels by Zoning District

The following analysis involves currently developed parcels with future subdivision potential due to lot sizes beyond current zoning regulations.

Residential A Zone (RA)

All parcels greater than 240,000 square feet were selected within the RA zone. Undeveloped and unrestricted parcels (covered in analysis above) were removed from the analysis. Parcels with more than 2 assigned fire numbers if under 360,000 square feet in area and parcels with a substantial amount of protected open space and an assigned fire number were also removed from the subset. Those parcels with natural barriers to development as well as town-owned and airport parcels were also removed from the analysis.

The results indicate that there are an estimated 54 lots larger than 240,000 square feet with an estimated subdivision yield of 153 total parcels within the RA zone. Subtracting out the already developed house lots from the yield (54) provides an estimated 99 potential additional buildable lots from the existing 54 underdeveloped and unrestricted lots within the RA district.

Residential B Zone (RB)

Following a similar methodology as described above, it was determined that there are an estimated 24 underdeveloped and unrestricted lots greater than 120,000 square feet in area within the RB zoning district. 15 of these lots have between 120,000 and 179,999 square feet in lot area. However, 2 of these 15 lots have 2 assigned fire numbers and therefore, less potential for future subdivision. Therefore, 13 lots within the RA district could be subdivided in two-lots each, adding **13** additional building lots. There are 4 developed lots between 180,000 and 239,999 square feet in area with the potential for future subdivision. However, two of those lots have significant wetlands present. Therefore, it is estimated that these 4 lots may have a subdivision yield potential of **6** additional lots. Two developed lots have the maximum potential of 4 building lots each, and therefore, **6** additional buildable lots. Two developed lots have the maximum potential of 5-lot subdivisions and therefore, adding **8** potentially developable lots. The final underdeveloped lot of the 24 within the RB zone has the maximum potential of 7 total lots and therefore could add **6** additional developable lots. In summary, underdeveloped and unrestricted lots within the RB zoning district could add an estimated 39 buildable lots if subdivided under current zoning regulations.

Residential C Zone (RC)

There are a total of 8 underdeveloped and unrestricted lots within the RC Zone. Three of those lots have the maximum potential of adding one additional lot each. Three other lots have the maximum potential of adding 2 buildable lots each. One lot has a maximum potential of adding 3 additional buildable lots and the final lot has the maximum potential of adding 6 additional buildable lots. In summary, within the RC Zone, underdeveloped and unrestricted lots have the potential to add an estimated 18 additional buildable lots if subdivided under current zoning regulations.

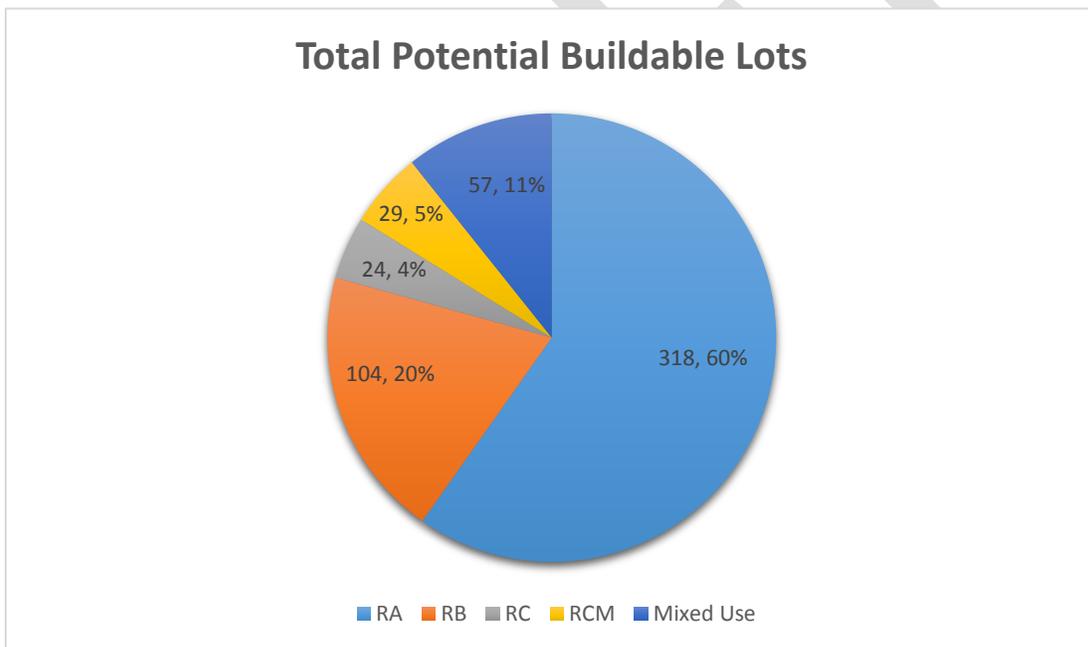
Residential C / Mixed Use Zone (RCM)

There are six potentially underdeveloped and unrestricted lots within the RCM zone. 2 of the 6 lots have the potential to add one additional buildable lot each. The 4 other underdeveloped and unrestricted lots have a maximum potential to add 19 additional buildable lots. Therefore, in total, an estimated 21 additional buildable lots could be created from the underdeveloped and unrestricted lots within the RCM zone. Note: this assumes all lots are on sewer in order to be permitted the 20,000 square foot lot area.

Mixed Use Zone

Utilizing aerial photography, substantially developed lots within the Mixed Use Zone were eliminated from the underdeveloped and unrestricted built out analysis. Developed lots with approximately 40,000 square feet without access to sewer were also eliminated. Results of the analysis indicate that there is an estimated 8 potentially underdeveloped lots within the Mixed Use Zone with future subdivision potential. 4 of the 8 lots have the maximum potential to add one buildable lot each. 2 lots has the potential to add two additional buildable lots each and the remaining two largest lots have a combined maximum subdivision potential of 27. In summary, an estimated 35 buildable lots could be created from the underdeveloped and unrestricted lots within the Mixed Use Zone under current zoning regulations. Note: this assumes all lots are on sewer in order to be permitted the 20,000 square foot lot area.

Block Island Buildout Analysis Summary Table				
Zoning District	Undeveloped / Unrestricted Parcels (A)	Undeveloped / Unrestricted Parcels plus subdivision yield (B)	Subdivision yield from Underdeveloped / Unrestricted (C)	Total Potential Buildable Lots (B+C)
RA	197	219	99	318
RB	54	65	39	104
RC	5	6	18	24
RCM	5	8	21	29
Mixed Use	15	22	35	57
Total	276	320	212	532



Total Future Population Estimated at Build-Out: 1,389

Average household size on Block Island is 2.07 according to American Community Survey, 2013. Therefore, if 532 single family homes are constructed on Block Island, the Town could expect an additional population of 1,101. However, if the current ratio of seasonal housing units continues in the future (69.3%), this figure would equate to an estimated additional 338 year-round residents.

New Shoreham Seasonal Housing Units		
Total # 2010 Housing Units	Total # 2010 Seasonal Housing Units	2010 Seasonal Housing Units, as % of Total Housing Units
1,808	1253	69.3%
<i>2010 US Census</i>		

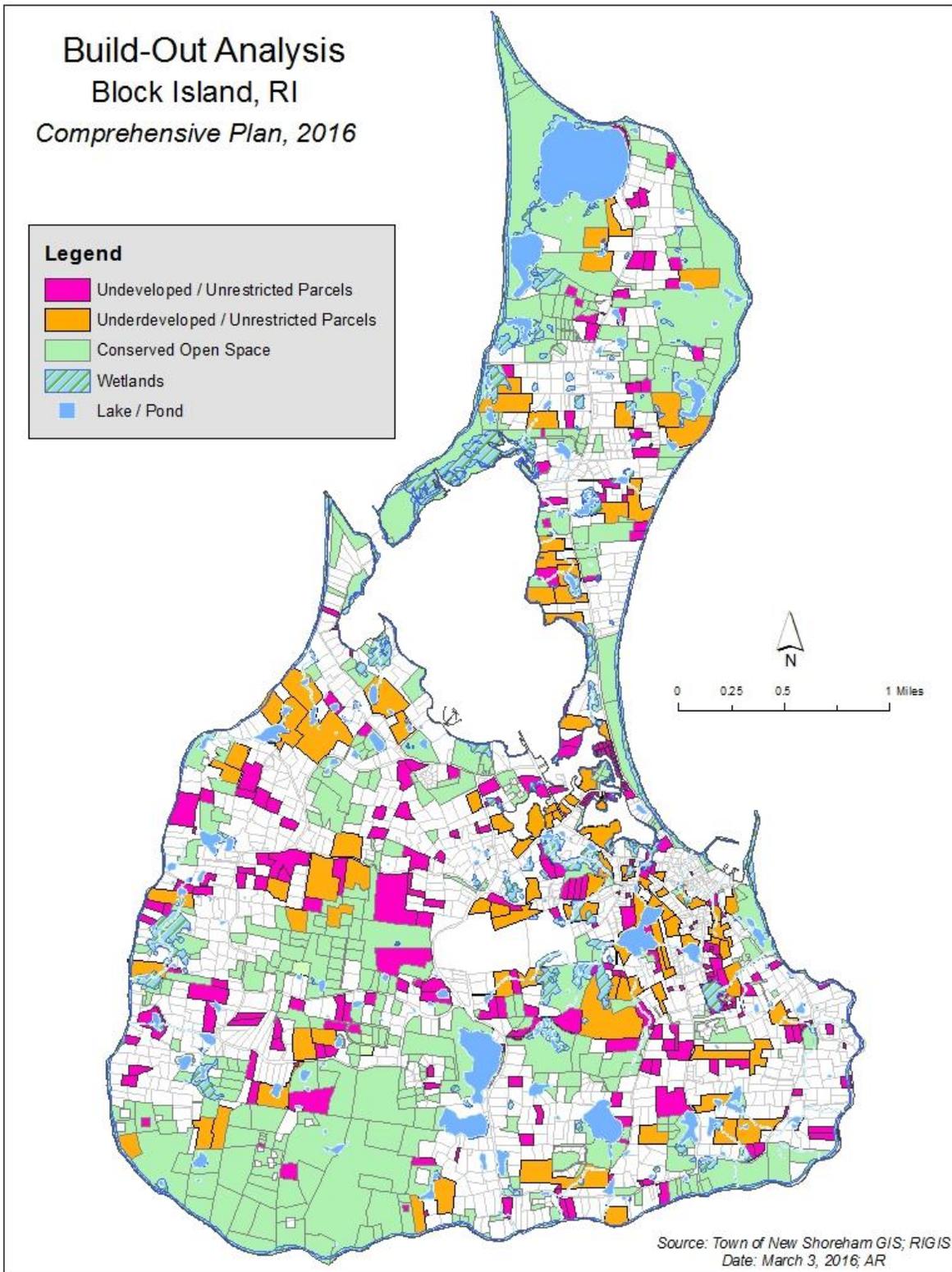
Current year-round population for New Shoreham, according to US Census 2010, is 1,051. Therefore, the **total future year-round population estimated at build-out is 1,389.**

Year by which Residential Build-Out is Anticipated: 2069

Based on building permit data, the average annual number of new single family dwellings on Block Island between the years 2006 and 2015 was ten (note: this figure does not include replacement dwellings which are tear down and rebuilds on same lot). Therefore, **it is estimated that build-out could occur in 53 years, which would be the year 2069.**

Maintaining Affordable Housing Ratio

In order to meet affordable housing needs on the island and maintain the town's 10% low-and-moderate income housing percentage, mechanisms and must be in place to ensure that as new development / build-out occurs, affordable housing units are also being developed.



THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Map LU3 Future Land Use is the visual depiction of the community's desires for types, patterns, and intensities of development. It is a policy statement directing municipal decision-makers as to what types of land uses are desired in each area and setting a vision for the municipality's future growth over the next 20-years. The Future Land Use Map serves as the underpinning for local zoning regulations that legally regulate development in the community.

This Comprehensive Plan update includes a comprehensive update to New Shoreham's Future Land Use Map. The current Future Land Use Map included only three broad categories: village, transition, and countryside. The updated Future Land Use Map includes the categories described below, meets current State requirements and is consistent with CRMC Water Type Classifications. **There are no identified inconsistencies between the Future Land Use Map and the Zoning Map.**

A Description of Future Land Use Designations

The following sections describe the future land use designations as illustrated on Map LU3 Future Land Use including general uses that are desired within each designation and the average density or range of residential densities that are to be permitted.

Low Density Residential

The majority of the lands on Block Island are categorized as *low density residential*. Scenic landscapes of rural fields, narrow lanes, stonewalls, ponds, and coastal views provide the setting for shingled cottages and farmhouses. New residential development in the low density residential designation should blend into this scenic landscape and be accommodated on lots of a minimum of 120,000 square feet.

Medium Low Density Residential

The *medium low density residential* designation comprises rural land less remote from the village center than land designated as low density residential. Residential development within this designation should also be accessed from narrow lanes and be integrated into the rural landscape of fields, stonewalls, ponds and wetlands. Density within the median low density residential designation should be a minimum of 60,000 square foot lots.

Medium Density Residential

The *medium density residential* designation should comprise mostly residential land uses ranging in density from 20,000 square feet to 40,000 square feet depending upon the availability of public water and sewer.

State Comprehensive Plan requirements recommend those areas identified as “Sewered Urban Development” on Figure 121-02(1) of the State’s Land Use 2025 Plan must have a minimum of 5 dwelling units per acre. However, New Shoreham does not feel that density is appropriate for Block Island given the location and importance of drinking water resources, concern to maintain high water quality of the Great Salt Pond, and the desire to preserve the rural character of the island. Current regulations permit a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet if connected to sewer in the higher density zones, double the density (40,000 square feet minimum lot size) if not connected to the public sewer system. The Town does not have a desire to change the current zoning to permit higher densities by right in those zones.

Mixed Use

The *mixed use* designation should include a combination of residential dwellings and appropriate retail and service uses. New residential development within the mixed use designation should range from 20,000 to 40,000 square feet minimum lot size depending upon services available and natural resources present.

Commercial

The *commercial* designation is located adjacent to Old Harbor and New Harbor and therefore land uses should support marine-related activities. Within the village and lands connecting the two harbors permitted land uses should accommodate the service and utility needs of the island. New residential development within the commercial designation should occur on 20,000 square foot lots.

Public

The *public* land use category includes land holdings of local, state, and federal governments or their agencies. The purpose of this category is to recognize the extent and locations of public land holdings and how they interact with adjacent land uses.

Recreation

Publicly held land for recreation purposes including parks, ballfields (Heinz Field) and beaches have been designated as *recreation* on the Future Land Use Map.

Conserved Open Space

Publicly and privately held lands for *conservation* are depicted in dark green on the Future Land Use Map.

Airport

New Shoreham is host to the Block Island State Airport which is owned and operated by the Rhode Island Airport Corporation (RIAC). The airport property covers an area of approximately 136 acres in the center of the island. All parcels owned by the airport have been designated as *Airport* on the Future Land Use Map.

In Rhode Island, municipalities are legally obligated to establish and enforce appropriate airport land use compatibility planning. In 2013, RIAC prepared the

“Rhode Island Airport Land Use Compatibility Guidebook,” to assist local officials with the tools to plan for and enforce land uses that are compatible with their local airports. In conjunction with the recommendations of RIAC’s Aviation Systems Plan, the Town should designate an Airport Hazard Area Overlay District. The purpose of the district is to regulate the types of land uses and the height of buildings and trees in the district to avoid creating airport hazards.

Special Areas & Policies

Harbors

THE FUTURE WELLBEING OF THE ISLAND DEPENDS ON THE WISE AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF ITS TWO HARBORS.

The marine and transportation activities associated with each harbor are somewhat different. Old Harbor is best suited to serve as the island’s principal transportation center with docks, parking and storage areas capable of supporting large capacity stern-loading ferries carrying passengers, vehicles and freight. Another area of the Old Harbor, the Inner Basin, is suited for a limited number of commercial fishing and sport fishing craft.

New Harbor in the Great Salt Pond is the third most popular yacht harbor in the northeast (after Newport and Marblehead, Massachusetts). New Harbor is a major economic asset not only for Block Island but for Rhode Island tourism generally. Uses can put stress on the pond’s water quality and ecosystem with its potential for pollution from boats. Protecting the water quality of the Great Salt Pond, a critical natural and economic resource (see Great Salt Pond chapter), is a major priority of the Town.

The intention of the Town has been and continues to be that New Harbor be committed to recreational boating and limited ferry use (passenger only), as well as to commercial fishing, shell-fishing and aquaculture uses, but not to other commercial activities such as ferries carrying vehicles and freight, or boat manufacture and major repair. It is also the intention of the Town to control the level of recreational boating capacity in the pond by limiting mooring and significant dock expansion.

Village

The town would like to encourage mixed-use development similar to traditional New England villages by grouping complementary land use activities. An objective of the Town is to combine uses in the village and surrounding areas in ways that create a built environment with better character, more social interaction and diversity in housing options. Mixed-use development in and around the village can also promote a reduction in auto dependence and infrastructure costs, and help to preserve remaining undeveloped land on the island.

As described in the Transportation element, there is considerable congestion in the downtown area in the summer. Over the years there have been various ideas for better managing this congestion of motor vehicles, mopeds, bicycles and pedestrians. Still needed are more detailed design plans for the village including an underground utility plan, a village parking plan and an overall circulation plan that includes safe

pedestrian access. This work could be spearheaded by the Old Harbor Task Force, a town committee that works on the physical issues of Old Harbor.

Land Conservation and Stewardship

The use of the island's limited land resources should be balanced so that a substantial share of the island's land, at least half of it, will remain permanently in conservation, open space or agricultural use. As of 2015, with 2,210 acres of deeded protected land and 597 acres of water bodies and wetlands, over 46% of the land on the island is permanently protected from development. Reaching a goal of protecting 50% of the land area on the island is consistent with land needs for housing and infrastructure, while ensuring that critical resources, including the island's drinking water supply and the areas of major habitat importance, are protected.

The principal land use goal of this plan, however, is that the actual amount of protected land on the island be not just a given percentage, but that it reflect the need to preserve its cultural heritage as well as protect all of its critical natural resources. A more complete description of the protected lands and the agencies and organizations involved is contained in the Recreation and Conserved Areas chapter.

As the island closes in on, or even exceeds, the 50% protected land goal, maintaining all of the open space and conservation land to the highest standards is the longer term land use goal. The following activities undertaken by a number of island groups, including the Block Island Conservancy, the Block Island Land Trust and the island office of The Nature Conservancy, are critical in the coming years, and for the foreseeable future:

1. MONITORING EASEMENT AREAS SO THAT RESTRICTIONS ARE UPHELD
2. ENSURING THAT MANAGEMENT PLANS ARE FOLLOWED
3. PROTECTING AREAS FROM ENCROACHMENT OR ILLICIT ACTIVITIES (DUMPING, VEGETATION AND SOIL REMOVAL)
4. MANAGING SPECIES AND HABITAT AREAS INCLUDING INVASIVES
5. KEEPING TRAILS CLEARED AND MARKED
6. MAINTAINING FIELDS AND STONE WALLS

New Development and the Protection of Community Character

It is the town's goal to maintain and strengthen the unique character, long-term livability and appeal of Block Island. In order to achieve this goal, the town should protect and promote high quality and appropriate design and construction of all land development projects and subdivisions.

Block Island is sure to see more residential development in the future. The island has done much to lessen the impact on the landscape of new very large and out of scale houses by enacting limits on overall footprint, height and massing. However, it does not regulate design outside of the Historic Overlay District. A design

booklet for new residential development to complement the zoning ordinance amendments enacted in 2008 that control size and massing of new residential structures would guide new homeowners and builders in the design and construction of houses that fit the island's traditional style.

The regulations in place for Conservation-style subdivisions (Flexible Design) also advances the goal of protection of community character. Conservation Development is a site planning technique which bases the layout of building lots and structures on the natural characteristics of the land and reduces lot sizes so that the remaining land can be used for recreation, open space and/or the preservation of environmentally, historically, and culturally sensitive features and/or structures. Conservation-style subdivisions, if designed property, can achieve the goal of buffering new development from intrusion upon Block Island's scenic vistas. There is a desire to review the current flexible design regulations, however, this subdivision option should conceptually remain and be encouraged for all new subdivisions proposed on Block Island.

Sea Level Rise

The impact of sea level rise and storm surges (see Natural Hazards & Climate Change chapter) must also be accounted for in future land use decisions. As stated in the Block Island Harbors Sea Level Rise Adaptation Study, completed in August 2013:

As a result of the dramatic impacts depicted by the sea level rise maps, the Town should evaluate its land use and building regulations to consider future development and redevelopment in the most critically impacted inundation areas.

Goals, Policies & Implementation Actions

GOAL LUI: Achieve a balanced and harmonious development pattern that preserves Block Island’s environmental and aesthetic quality and promotes economic vitality and overall livability

<u>POLICY</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>RESPONSIBLE PARTY</u>	<u>TIMEFRAME</u>
LUI.A. Maintain existing land use pattern consisting of village, transition and countryside	<p>LUI.A.1. Review and amend the zoning ordinance and the subdivision regulations as needed to ensure compatibility with the desired land use pattern</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Higher density development should be restricted to the compact village and transition areas that have access to public water and sewer 2. Require residential development in the countryside to occur in a density and manner that is sensitive to, and complimentary of, the island’s traditional landscape 	Planning Board; Town Council	Short-term
LUI.B. Direct growth to appropriate areas	LUI.B.1. Evaluate results of build out analysis and make adjustments in policy and regulations as desired to meet the goals identified in this Comp Plan	Planning Board	Short-term
LUI.C. Ensure that municipal land use regulations are consistent with the goals and policies set forth within this comprehensive plan	LUI.C.1. Identify amendments necessary to local subdivision regulations to ensure development occurs in a manner consistent with the goals of this Comp Plan	Planning Board	Short-term
	LUI.C.2. Review Flexible Subdivision Design (conservation-style) to ensure regulations will result in desired development and open space set aside outcomes	Planning Board; Town Council	Short-term

	LUI.C.3. Undertake a review of the Planned Development Regulations, with amendments to extend its application to all of the commercial and mixed use districts and to focus on creative mixed-use development as well as affordable housing	Planning Board; Town Council	Medium-term
LUI.D. Ensure that a significant amount of land is designated and zoned for commercial activity to support residents' needs for services and economic opportunity	LUI.D.1. Undertake a review of all mixed use and commercial zones with possible amendments to their definitions, allowed uses, dimensional requirements and district boundaries	Planning Board; Town Council	Short-term
LUI.E. Ensure harbors and their related infrastructure and land-side support areas are reserved for uses that rely on such coastal access, such as fishing, aquaculture, marine industry and transportation			
LU1.F. Support Block Island State Airport as a critical transportation facility by protecting navigable airspace around it	Amend zoning ordinance to be consistent with applicable state and federal requirements pertaining to airport hazards	Planning Board; Town Council	Short-term
LU1.G. Promote a walkable and thriving mixed-use village district	LUI.G.1. Prepare and implement a Village Design Plan that promotes the historic and walkable qualities of this dense mixed-use center	Planning; Planning Board; Historic District Commission; Old Harbor Task Force	Medium-term
	LUI.G.2. Review regulations for parking and pedestrian access in both the zoning and subdivision regulations, and consider amendments to allow flexibility in parking requirements and to strengthen provisions for sidewalks and pathways as part of new development in the village and transitional areas	Planning; Planning Board; Historic District Commission; Old Harbor Task Force	Medium-term

GOAL LU2: Protect and enhance the natural scenic beauty and heritage of our coastal community

POLICY	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMEFRAME
LU2.A. Promote design excellence and historic preservation	LU2.A.1. Codify strong historic district design regulations	Historic District Commission; Town Council	Medium-term
	LU2.A.2. Develop a photo design booklet to guide in the construction and siting of new development island-wide and encourage architecture consistent with the island's traditional style	Planning; Planning Board; Historic District Commission	Medium-term
LU2.B. Protect culturally important resources either through land acquisition, easement or appropriate design when development occurs nearby			
LU2.C. Maintain an active public open space acquisition program and support partner organizations in their open space acquisition efforts	LU2.C.1. Identify scenic and/or ecologically significant lands that have yet to be protected	BILT	Medium-term
	LU2.C.2. Establish a criteria for prioritizing the acquisition of conservation land	BILT; Town Council; Planning Board	Medium-term

Timeframes: Short-term (1-3 years); Medium-term (4-6 years); Long-term (7-10 years)