



Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Plan

May 2026



Developed by GZA in coordination with the
Coventry Redevelopment Agency



JOHNSON'S POND
Redevelopment Project



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Redevelopment Agency

Chris Schuler, Vice Chair

Vincent J. Pilla, Jr.

George R. Poli

Britney Boyer

Nathan Chatterley

With Special Thanks to:

Robert Brennan, Former Chair

Harold Larson, Former Chair

Consultant Team

GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc.

188 Valley Street Suite 300

Providence, RI 02909

United States

Kevin Williams, AICP, PP, Associate Principal

Chad Cox, P.E., Senior Principal

James Heineman, PP, Senior Consultant

Sarah Sklar, AICP, LEED GA, ENV SP, WEDG, Project Manger

Rosemarie Fusco PhD, AICP, WEDG, Senior Planner

Lindsay Woodson, AICP, WEDG, Senior Planner

Megan Ellwell, Assistant Project Manager

Anja Duffy, PLA, WEDG, Landscape Architect

Jeff Taylor, WEDG, CPSI, Landscape Designer

With Contributions from:

Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

Pawtuxet River Authority

Town of Coventry Town Council

Town of Coventry Planning & Development

Johnson's Pond Civic Association

Stephen Angell, Former RDA Counsel



01

Introduction

With the transition of Johnson's Pond into public ownership for the first time in its history, a comprehensive and proactive management approach is now required for the Pond to ensure its long term stewardship and benefit to the community.

This Redevelopment Plan has been prepared to ensure that Johnson's Pond functions as a stable, well-managed public asset that delivers long-lasting benefits for Coventry residents. This Plan serves as a comprehensive framework that provides a clear, legally supported roadmap for future improvements, land conservation, regulatory updates, project identification, costs and funding needs.

Purpose

The Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Plan fulfills the purposes of Chapters 31 through 33 of Title 45 of the Rhode Island General Laws (R.I.G.L.) by addressing conditions that impair public health, safety, welfare, and environmental quality. Addressing these conditions will ensure long-term stability and public enjoyment of Johnson's Pond. This Plan establishes a coordinated, transparent, and community-informed framework to guide investment, long-term maintenance, and improvement efforts that promote orderly growth, protect and restore natural and ecological resources, enhance public safety and recreational access, support infrastructure stewardship, and protect Town quality of life. Through these actions, the Plan advances the statutory intent of the Redevelopment Act by

improving conditions within the designated area while serving the broader public interest of the Town of Coventry.

Pursuant to the Rhode Island Redevelopment Act of 1956 (§ 45-31 et seq.), a redevelopment agency may exercise its authority only within areas formally designated as blighted and substandard. Under R.I.G.L. §45-31-8, a "blighted area" is defined as an area in which conditions exist that are detrimental to public health, safety, morals, or welfare and which impair the sound growth of the community. Such conditions may include, but are not limited to, unsafe or inadequate facilities, environmental degradation, impaired access or functional use of land, and conditions that substantially hinder the beneficial use, enjoyment, or value of property.

These conditions, whether caused by physical deterioration, functional obsolescence, or long-term disinvestment provide the statutory basis for designation of a redevelopment area and the preparation of a redevelopment plan pursuant to R.I.G.L. §45-31 through 45-33. The identification of blight is not a characterization of individual properties or owners, but it represents a legally required finding that certain area wide conditions warrant coordinated public action to remediate deficiencies, restore functionality, and advance a defined public benefit.

Consistent with R.I.G.L. §45-32-8, this Redevelopment Plan contains the following:

1. A description of the boundaries and location of the project area;
2. A description of the existing blighted and substandard conditions in the project area;
3. A plan describing proposed land uses in the project area;
4. Proposed standards of population densities, land coverage, and building intensities;
5. A description of proposed changes in streets and utilities;
6. A description of proposed changes in zoning or exceptions, variances, or modifications;
7. A general statement showing that the proposed redevelopment plan conforms to the master or general community plan;
8. A statement showing the lands in the project area to be acquired and buildings or structures to be demolished and removed;
9. A general statement of proposed conditions, covenants, and other restrictions controlling the disposal and future use of land and buildings in the project area;
10. A general statement of the extent of relocation resulting from the proposed redevelopment of the area and the proposed method for rehousing of displaced persons;
11. A statement of the estimated cost of carrying out the redevelopment plan, and a description of the method of financing the proposed redevelopment project; and
12. A general statement showing how the purposes of chapters 31 — 33 of this title would be attained by redevelopment.

Collectively, these elements provide the legal, planning and policy framework necessary to guide the Town's stewardship of Johnson's Pond. Through this Redevelopment Plan, Coventry establishes a clear and coordinated path forward that

balances environmental protection, public access, infrastructure responsibility and community quality of life. This Plan sets the foundation for informed decision-making, strategic investment and sustained public benefit as Johnson's Pond enters a new era of public ownership and management.

History

Johnson's Pond, also known as Flat River Reservoir, has played a defining role in the development of the surrounding community. The artificial reservoir was created in 1878 by damming the South Branch of the Pawtuxet River to provide reliable water power for downstream textile mills and manufacturers that were major economic drivers in Rhode Island during the late 19th century.¹

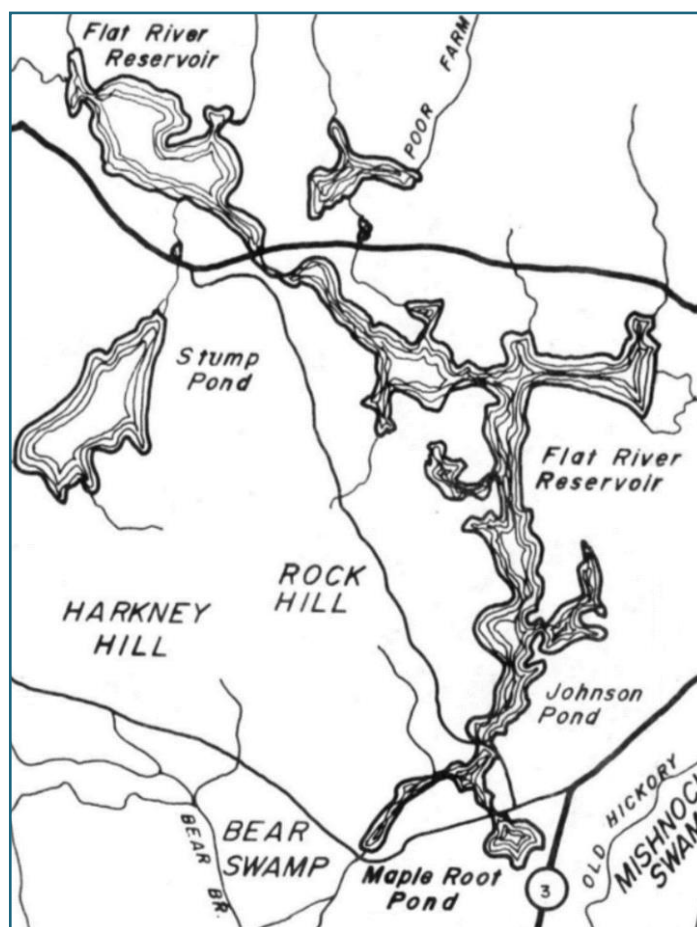


Image. Map of Coventry RI made in 1978 showing the Flat River Reservoir from the Wood Estates Residents Association's Old Wood Family Farm Site Report.

¹ Wood Estates Residents Association. The Old Wood Family Farm Site. The Woods Point Peninsula at the Flat River Reservoir Coventry, Rhode Island. 2020. Available at: <https://woodestates.org/WordPress/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/The-Point-Report.pdf>

The reservoir was constructed and managed by the Quidnick Reservoir Company (Quidnick), an association formed to regulate river flows for industrial use. Johnson's Pond was named after the Johnson family that owned a large section of land at the southern end of the reservoir. As the mill economy declined, the Pond's function gradually shifted from industrial waterpower to a recreational resource with seasonal cottages along the shoreline while the Dam became central to maintaining recreational water levels. This transition expanded recreational use of the Pond including boating, fishing, swimming, and reshaped the community from an industrial-focused area into a community-oriented neighborhood. By the mid 20th century (between the 1940s and 1960s), shoreline development began shifting toward a year round residential community, as seasonal cottages were upgraded or replaced and infrastructure (such as roadway access and expansion of utilities) improved. Quidnick continued to own and maintain the Pond through this transition.

Since 1974, the Town and Quidnick entered into a series of agreements governing the repair and maintenance of the Dam, as well as the maintenance of specific delineated water levels in the Pond between May through September each year to maximize the Pond's recreational use.² In 2009, the Town and Quidnick entered into a final agreement where the Town would lease the Pond and a vacant 80-acre parcel of land for public recreational use including boating, fishing, and swimming through March 2024. Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) determined that the streamflow and water level requirements should correspond to the Dam and Pond's historic water releases and levels, which are specified in the 2009 lease agreement.³ These agreements were intended to support public recreational use of the Pond while leaving ownership of the Dam and water rights with Quidnick.

In March 2020, Soscia Holdings, LLC (Soscia) acquired the Pond and its Dam, including the spillway system and associated hydraulic infrastructure. Quidnick assigned its rights and interests in the lease with the Town to Soscia. Following this transfer, disputes arose among the Town, community members, RIDEM, and Soscia regarding Dam maintenance responsibilities and water level management. These responsibilities also included regulated dam responsibilities governing high-hazard dams in Rhode Island.⁴ Some of these disputes resulted in multiple legal actions (including state and federal court proceedings), addressing dam operations, water level management, and compliance with applicable dam safety regulations. Soscia's conduct and actions resulted in RIDEM deeming the Dam "unsafe" and issuing a Cease and Desist and a subsequent Immediate Compliance Order to Soscia in April 2024.⁵

In June 2024, shortly after the lease expiration, the Town acquired Johnson's Pond and its Dam through condemnation to protect public safety, environmental resources, and continued recreational access (see **Attachment A** for additional history and legal context).

Pond Size

According to a report prepared by the Wood Estates Residents Association, Johnson's Pond has 17 acres of shoreline and a surface area of 659 acres (at normal levels). Johnson's Pond Civic Association (JPCA) documents and reports also identify the Pond as having an approximate surface area of 659 acres. United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and RIDEM data and documents identify the Pond as having a surface area of approximately 647 acres. The variation in reported surface area reflects differences in assumed water elevations, shoreline delineation practices, and the use of different mapping methodologies by each entity such as ground surveys, seasonal measurements, regulatory datasets, and/or

² See Town of Coventry Resolution 2024-37

³ See 2009 Lease Agreement between Quidnick Reservoir Company and Town of Coventry available at: <https://ecori.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Quidnick-lease.pdf>

⁴ See Rhode Island Department of State Rules and Regulations for Dam Safety (250-RICR-130-05-1), available at: <https://rules.sos.ri.gov/regulations/part/250-130-05-1>

⁵ Available at: <https://dem.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur861/files/2024-05/soscia424.pdf>



geospatial analysis of aerial imagery. For the purposes of this Redevelopment Plan, the EPA and RIDEM reported surface area of approximately 647 acres is used to ensure consistency with publicly accepted, regulatory-endorsed baseline conditions.⁶

While the exact acreage of the Pond differs across sources, this does not hinder the redevelopment process. Exact acreage is important primarily for final design, permitting and detailed engineering calculations. A redevelopment plan focuses on higher level considerations such as land use concepts, access, regulatory pathways, environmental issues, community impacts, and potential redevelopment scenarios. The recommendations section of this plan identifies where exact acreage of the Pond and the surrounding land is necessary.

Redevelopment Process

Guided by the Coventry Redevelopment Agency (RDA), the Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Plan was prepared through a formal redevelopment process. The process was initiated in response to long-standing operational, environmental, and public safety concerns associated with the Johnson's Pond Dam and reservoir system, as well as the Town's determination to implement a coordinated redevelopment framework to address these conditions in a comprehensive, transparent and legally compliant manner.

Establishment of Redevelopment Authority

In 2024, the RDA was reactivated by Town Council in connection with the Town's acquisition of Johnson's Pond to implement a formal redevelopment process.⁷ Town Council authorized the RDA to serve as the redevelopment authority for Johnson's Pond by formally transferring redevelopment rights for the Pond to the Agency, consistent with state law and for the purpose of creating a public benefit for Town residents. The RDA was charged with overseeing the preparation of a Redevelopment Plan, coordinating with Town departments and state agencies, and ensuring that the process satisfied all statutory requirements.

Project Initiation, Kickoff and Early Coordination

To support the creation of a Redevelopment Plan, the RDA retained a multidisciplinary consultant team to provide technical analyses, mapping, public outreach and document preparation, while policy direction and decision-making authority remained with the Town. The redevelopment process formally began with a project initiation meeting with the consultant team, Town Council and the RDA on April 3, 2025, followed by several coordination meetings between the RDA and the consultant team. These early meetings confirmed the scope of work, clarified roles and responsibilities, established the project schedule, and reviewed the statutory requirements governing redevelopment plans under Rhode Island General Laws. Initial coordination also included discussions regarding interagency collaboration, regulatory context, and the need for alignment with Town planning documents and state requirements.

Establishment of the Redevelopment Study Area Boundary

Early phases of the project focused on establishing a defensible and rational redevelopment boundary. This work included site reconnaissance, compilation of geographic, environmental, and infrastructure data, and evaluation of the functional relationships among the Johnson's Pond Dam, the reservoir, surrounding neighborhoods, access corridors, and hydrologically connected waterbodies. Using this information, a draft study area boundary was developed to capture areas experiencing direct or indirect impacts related to Pond operations, environmental conditions, and public access. The draft boundary was reviewed and refined through public input at the first public workshop, prior to finalization.

Community Engagement and Public Participation

Community engagement was conducted as an integral and ongoing component of the redevelopment process. A public-facing project website was launched to provide accessible information, including

⁶ State and federally published data are considered the most reliable source of information for this project.

⁷ See Town of Coventry Resolution No. 2024-98.

background materials, maps, meeting notices, and opportunities for written public comments.

The RDA and consultant team conducted two public workshops to present the draft redevelopment area boundary, share findings related to existing conditions, and solicit feedback on community priorities, concerns, and desired outcomes. Feedback received through these engagement activities directly shaped revisions to the draft study area boundary, refined project goals and objectives, and identified potential redevelopment strategies.

First Public Workshop

The RDA and consultant team hosted the first public meeting on September 25, 2025, at Coventry High School. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the consultant team to the community, provide background on the project and redevelopment process, solicit input on the draft redevelopment study area boundary and establish a vision statement of how the community wishes to use Johnson's Pond over the next 10 to 20 years (see **Attachment B** for the First Public Meeting Summary).

The meeting began with a presentation by the consultant team followed by two small breakout group discussions and a large group discussion. The High School's auditorium and two classrooms were used for the presentation and breakout rooms at the first public

meeting. During the breakout sessions, participants discussed current and future concerns. Reoccurring themes throughout this discussion included:

- boat traffic, safety and overcrowding
- navigational challenges
- ecological degradation, invasive species and water quality issues
- impacts on quality of life
- limited transparency and governance
- budget limitations for future improvements
- lack of enforcement and regulations

Participants also discussed future conditions and opportunities which included:

- supporting a boat ramp at the Dam property
- low-impact/passive recreational opportunities (fishing, walkways, viewing points)
- expanding recreation at Zeke's bridge
- habitat and water quality improvements
- invasive species management
- improvements to stormwater systems
- tree protection
- established enforcement and new boating regulations

Some participants engaged in a visioning exercise where they were asked to share positive and



Images. Breakout rooms and presentation at the first public workshop.

aspirational words and/or phrases that they would like to see in a vision for Johnson's Pond over the next 10 to 20 years:

- Ecology
- Safety
- Enforcement
- Serenity/calm
- Signage
- Preservation
- Balance
- Regulations
- Town Beach
- Know Constraints
- Community Programming
- Inclusion of citizens
- Celebrate

During this meeting, the community was also asked to review and provide feedback on the draft redevelopment study area boundary. In response, community members indicated that the boundary should be expanded to include Stump Pond and Maple Root Pond, as well as the overall watershed for future water quality improvements.

SAVE THE DATE



**JOHNSON'S POND**
Redevelopment Project

Town of Coventry Redevelopment Agency First Community Workshop

Please join us for the first community workshop to discuss the draft study area, as well as vision and goals for the project.

Where:
Coventry High School
40 Reservoir Road, Coventry, RI

When:
September 25th
6 pm to 9 pm

[View Other Events](#)

Town of Coventry, 1670 Flat River Road, Coventry, RI 02816 (401) 821-6400

Visit our social accounts  

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This email was created with Vix. [Discover More](#)



Images. Speaker presentation at and outreach flyer for the first public workshop.

Second Public Workshop

The RDA and consultant team hosted the second public workshop on March 11th, 2026, at the Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School. The purpose of this meeting was to gather input from the community on the conceptual designs for Francis Sherman Park and the Dam property, as well as explore opportunities for long-range public recreational access to the Pond that would enhance community benefits for Town residents (see Second Public Meeting Summary in **Attachment C**). The Middle School's auditorium was used to conduct a Town Hall style meeting where the consultant team presented the Redevelopment Plan framework, community feedback collected to date, conceptual designs with cost estimates, and the results of a land use analysis that identified potential long range opportunities for public waterfront access. Community members had multiple opportunities to provide input through polling questions interspersed throughout the presentation, as well as verbal feedback mid presentation and at its conclusion.

Overall, the community responded positively to both concept designs for the Dam Property and Francis Sherman Park. Polling results showed that nearly 40% of participants felt the Francis Sherman Park concept best reflected their vision for Johnson's Pond, while approximately 18% preferred the Dam Property concept. An additional 29% indicated that both concept designs equally aligned with their

vision for the Pond. Participants identified invasive species removal, accessible trails and docks for small non-motorized boats as priority improvements at Francis Sherman Park while environmental protection/restoration, shoreline access and park amenities (such as picnic areas and open space) were viewed as the highest investment priorities at the Dam Property.

When asked about preferred levels of park activity for future recreational access, participants ranked mostly quiet/natural areas (passive recreation) as their top preference, followed by a balanced mix of passive and active areas, and then flexible space that can adapt to different activity levels over time. Participants indicated that they would like to see the following additional amenities at future recreational areas: bathrooms, trash management, signage, additional fishing opportunities, a small concert venue, a playground, swimming areas, environmental protection, non-motorized boat access, fee and permit structures, safety regulations and enforcement. Several participants indicated a preference for limiting access to the Pond to abutting homeowners or residents of Coventry.

Stakeholder Meetings, Surveys and Project Website Comments

Small stakeholder meetings were also conducted with the Town representatives (including as the Planning Director, Town Manager and Director of the Department of Public Works), a member of the State



Images. Presentation boards and speaker during the second public workshop.



Legislature, RIDEM, Pawtuxet River Authority and the JPCA President. The consultant team also submitted an information needs memorandum to various Town Departments through the Town Manager requesting details on existing safety and enforcement, funding, Pond navigation, infrastructure roadway access and environmental concerns. Responses were received from the Police Department, Parks and Recreation Department and the Tax Assessor.

Since its launch in July 2025, the public has been given the opportunity to submit written comments through the project website. Two surveys were also developed to gather feedback from JPCA and WERA members ahead of the first public meeting. Survey links were directly emailed to JPCA and WERA members on August 25, 2025. Additionally, a Town-wide survey was added to the project website on March 17, 2025, following the second public meeting.

Comprehensive Plan

At the outset of the redevelopment process, the Coventry Community Comprehensive Plan (dated 2023) was in draft form and undergoing updates. This provided the consultant team and the RDA an opportunity to include additional information on the Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Boundary and existing substandard conditions as required by R.I.G.L. §45-32-3 and §45-32-8(7). The consultant team and RDA submitted requested comprehensive plan revisions to the Coventry Department of Planning and Development on January 13, 2026.

Ongoing Coordination

Beginning October 21, 2025 (following the first public meeting), the consultant team, the RDA Chair and the RDA Vice Chair conducted bi-weekly check-in meetings to advance the planning process and the Redevelopment Plan. RDA Counsel attended relevant bi-weekly check-in meetings to discuss legal matters associated with the redevelopment process. Throughout the redevelopment process, the RDA coordinated with Town departments and relevant state agencies to ensure consistency with applicable plans, policies, and regulatory programs, including those

related to water quality, dam safety, environmental protection and public access.

Ongoing coordination with Town Departments and relevant state agencies (such as RIDEM and the Rhode Island Department of Transportation) will be necessary to implement the recommendations of this Plan. Future coordination will also be needed to ensure dam safety compliance and management, proper reservoir operations (water levels, flow and flood resilience), public health protection, stormwater management, ecological management, public access and recreational improvements and operations, appropriate safety and enforcement, and ongoing engagement with the community.

Public Hearings and Local Adoption

Once finalized, the RDA submits this Redevelopment Plan to the Town Council for review. In accordance with Rhode Island General Laws, the redevelopment process includes a formal public hearing by the Town Council prior to adoption. This hearing is noticed and provides opportunities for the public to comment on the content of the Redevelopment Plan. The Town Council and RDA will consider public input received at this hearing and incorporate revisions into the Redevelopment Plan, as appropriate. Following the public hearing (and any revisions), the Town Council may adopt the Redevelopment Plan by resolution or ordinance.

State Review and Approval

After adoption by the Town Council, the Redevelopment Plan is transmitted to the Rhode Island Department of Administration for review and approval in accordance with the Urban Renewal Act and related provisions of state law. State review ensures that the Redevelopment Plan meets statutory requirements, serves a valid public purpose, and has been adopted through a lawful, transparent, and inclusive process. Upon approval by the Department of Administration, the Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Plan becomes the official guiding document for coordinated public actions and future implementation within the Redevelopment Study Area Boundary.



02

Redevelopment Study Area Boundary

The Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Study Area Boundary (Redevelopment Boundary) is in the Town of Coventry, Rhode Island, and includes Johnson's Pond (also known as the Flat River Reservoir), the Johnson's Pond Dam and spillway, and surrounding lands that are directly influenced by the physical, operational, environmental and access-related conditions of the reservoir system.

For purposes of this Redevelopment Plan, the "inclusion of these lands" refers to their designation within the Redevelopment Boundary to support coordinated planning, management, and implementation activities and does not, by itself, constitute acquisition, transfer of ownership, or a change in existing property rights. The designation of these lands is consistent with the authority granted to municipalities and redevelopment agencies under Rhode Island General Laws, which recognize redevelopment activities undertaken to eliminate conditions detrimental to the public health, safety, morals, and welfare as valid public uses and purposes.

As depicted on the Redevelopment Boundary maps (see [Figure 1](#) through [Figure 3](#)), the boundary encompasses not only properties abutting the shoreline of the pond, but additional established residential neighborhoods and homeowner association communities, town- and state-owned lands, and key local and arterial roadways that provide direct and indirect access to the Pond and associated public amenities. The boundary follows Town Farm Road, Maple Valley Road, Flat River Road and Ledge Road to the north,

As a result of public input during the first public workshop and RDA review, the Redevelopment Boundary was expanded to include Coventry Reservoir/Stump Pond, Maple Root Pond, and the commercial areas on the north side of Flat River Road. The southwestern portion of the boundary has also been expanded to follow the Flat River Reservoir sub-watershed boundary within the Rhode Island HUC12 watershed.

The Redevelopment Boundary was intentionally delineated to follow recognizable and fixed features, including parcel lines, public rights-of-way, waterways and roadway corridors, and includes paper streets and access easements that may support long-term maintenance, public safety, or future public improvements.

The Redevelopment Boundary is designed to support coordinated planning and implementation consistent with Rhode Island General Law and reflects the functional, hydrologic, and operational interrelationship of these areas and their collective influence on reservoir management, environmental conditions, and public use, while designating an area of sufficient size and scope to effectively carry out public improvements and address interrelated conditions.



Legend

— Redevelopment Study Area Boundary

Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Plan

0 1,500 3,000 6,000 Feet

Figure 1. Redevelopment Study Area Boundary



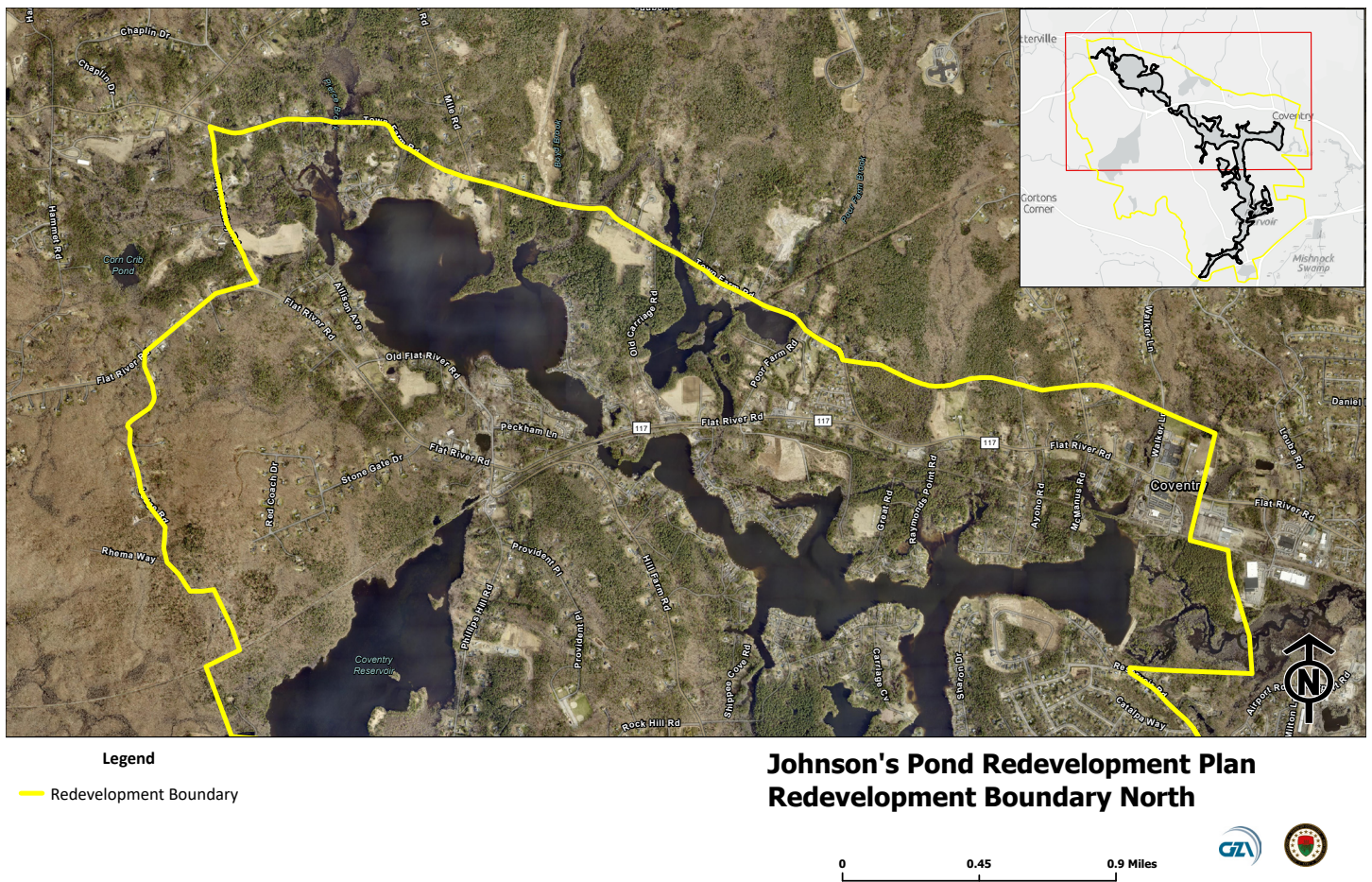
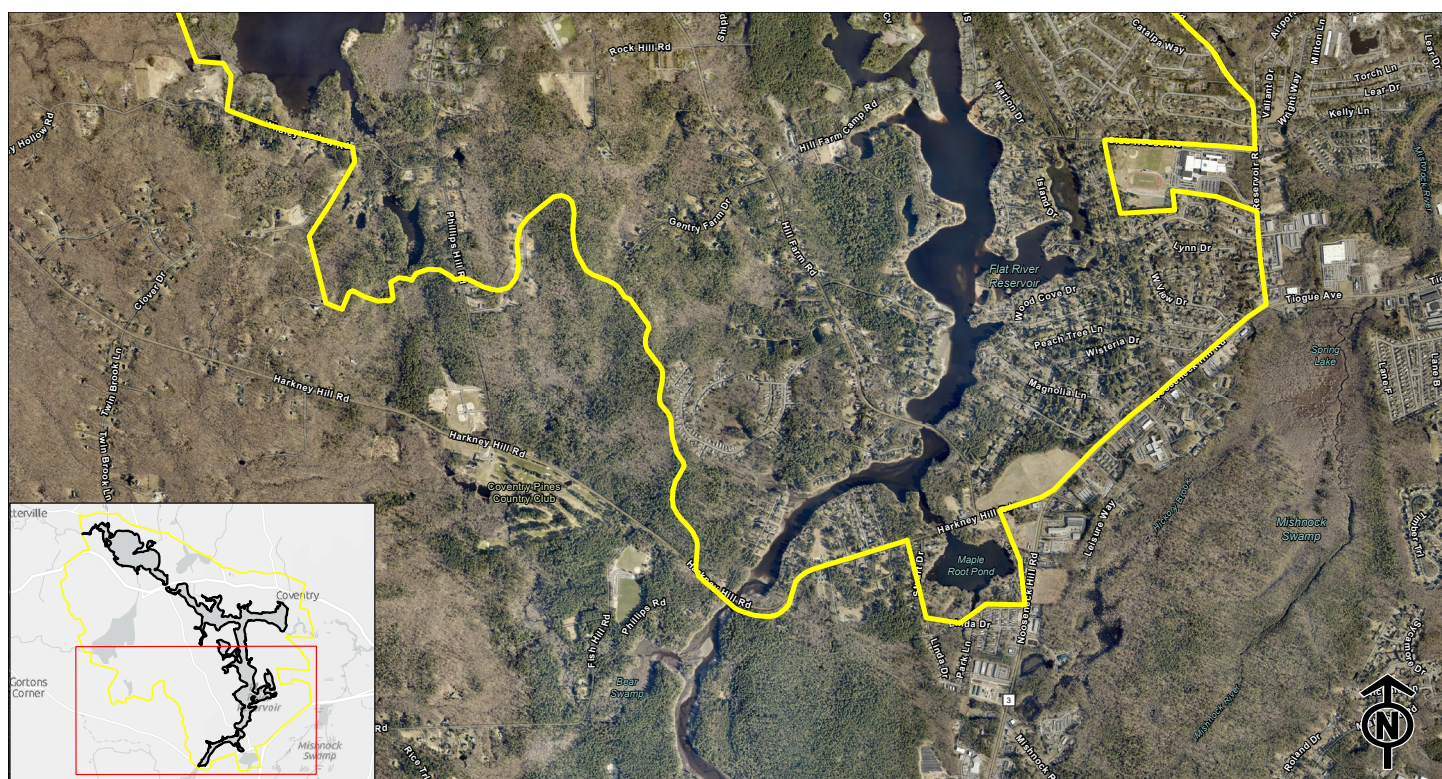


Figure 2. Redevelopment Study Area Boundary North.





Legend

— Redevelopment Boundary

**Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Plan
Redevelopment Boundary South**

0 0.45 0.9 Miles

Figure 3. Redevelopment Study Area Boundary South.





03

Vision and Goals

A core objective of this Redevelopment Plan was to define a shared vision and goals that reflect the community's priorities and aspirations for Johnson's Pond over the next 10 to 20 years. The vision and near-, medium-, and long-term goals below were developed based on community feedback gathered throughout the redevelopment process. These goals not only reflect shared community priorities but are also intended to balance access, environmental stewardship, and the operational and management responsibilities for recreational improvements.

A Vision for Johnson's Pond

Johnson's Pond is a cherished asset to Coventry, offering a harmonious blend of ecology, serenity, and recreational opportunities that enhance the quality of life for all residents. Through thoughtful preservation, clear regulations, and consistent enforcement, the

Pond will remain a safe and welcoming environment for raising a family, fostering a strong sense of community, and promoting inclusion of all residents.

The community envisions a space that prioritizes safety, calm, and balance, supported by appropriate signage and guided by known constraints to protect its natural beauty. The Pond will celebrate its role as a centerpiece of Coventry through community programming, a vibrant town beach, and opportunities for enjoyment that respect both the environment and the needs of residents.

By maintaining this balance between preservation and recreation, Johnson's Pond will continue to serve as a sustainable, family-friendly destination that reflects the values of our community today and for generations to come.





Goals for Johnson's Pond

Near-Term

- Develop and enforce boating safety regulations, including speed limits, age limits, licensing requirements, and horsepower and wake restrictions
- Increase police/DEM patrol presence, especially weekends and holidays
- Conduct comprehensive evaluations (such as ecological assessments, site surveys, etc.) and initiate permitting to advance concept designs for the Dam Property and Francis Sherman Park
- Address invasive species (e.g., hydrilla), algal blooms and aquatic habitat decline
- Preserve and enhance tree canopy and native vegetation along shoreline
- Work with the JPCA to continue targeted treatments of invasive species at key locations at the Pond
- Improve signage for narrow passages, hazards and no wake zones
- Ensure transparent communication about decisions, regulations, enforcement, and project timelines
- Conduct a stormwater infrastructure assessment of outfalls and drainage systems discharging to the Pond to identify needed improvements
- Assess shoreline erosion conditions along the waterfront to identify vulnerable areas and inform future stabilization and protection efforts

Medium-Term

- Prioritize and implement improvements to deficient stormwater management systems contributing to water quality impacts
- Add facilities that support passive recreation (fishing piers, kayak launches, small picnic areas, walking paths)
- Evaluate the carrying capacity of the Pond to understand current use levels and establish appropriate future boating limits

- Develop a sustainable management model to handle stewardship, finances, enforcement, and maintenance
- Design and implement ADA accessible routes and amenities
- Provide additional viewing, shoreline access and nature observation points that are safe and maintained
- Require permits, stickers, or residency verification for motorized launching
- Create fee structures for non residents or motorized use to support maintenance, enforcement, and improvements
- Evaluate feasibility of restricting or phasing in motorized access with strong enforcement
- Ensure recreational facilities are adequately supported by waste management infrastructure and restroom amenities
- Implement boat wash stations to prevent invasive species

Long-Term

- Develop a comprehensive, long-range watershed plan for Johnson's Pond that prioritizes stormwater management improvements and maintenance, nutrient and sediment reduction, monitoring and adaptive management strategies and climate resilience.
- Operate a fully integrated system of fees, permits, enforcement programs, and communication tools.
- Implement long-term regulatory frameworks for motorized access based on monitoring, safety data, and public input.
- Deliver fully built-out, sustainable public access sites that balance recreation with environmental protection.
- Ensure all access areas meet ADA standards
- Secure sustainable, long-term funding for future recreational and public access maintenance needs
- Maintain an established patrol program with coordinated DEM/Town oversight



04

Blighted and Substandard Conditions

Under Rhode Island law 45-31-8, blight is characterized by conditions within an area that are harmful to public health, safety, morals, or welfare and that impede the sound growth and development of a community. Based on a comprehensive review of documented site conditions, regulatory records, and publicly available environmental and land use data, it has been determined that Johnson's Pond is currently impaired by conditions that satisfy the definitions of arrested blighted area and deteriorated blighted area under R.I.G.L. § 45-31-8(2) and (6), respectively.

Existing conditions within the project area exhibit a range of environmental, infrastructural, and functional deficiencies that collectively constitute blighted and substandard conditions as contemplated under the Rhode Island Redevelopment Act. These conditions stem in part from the previous deterioration and operational constraints of the Johnson's Pond Dam under private ownership, which necessitated historic and repeated drawdowns of the reservoir to manage public safety risks. These actions resulted in adverse impacts to shoreline stability, aquatic habitat and vegetation, water quality, recreational usability, and the value of surrounding properties. Below is a discussion of the various documented and ongoing conditions that qualify the Redevelopment Boundary as a "blighted and substandard area" pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws.

A detailed blight assessment is provided in **Attachment D**. These factors collectively impair the sound growth, safety, and welfare of the community and warrant coordinated redevelopment planning.

Environmental Contamination (Impaired Waterbody)

Johnson's Pond has been classified as an impaired waterbody under the Federal Clean Water Act since 2012, and is listed as a Category 5 waterbody due to mercury in fish tissue requiring development of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). The Pond also has a documented history of cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) blooms since 2021, including multiple RIDEM advisories, with a severe bloom in 2022 and two advisories in 2025 (see Water Quality Report in **Attachment E**). These advisories restricted contact recreation and presented potential health risks to residents, visitors and pets, particularly during periods of peak use from mid-summer to early fall.

Invasive aquatic species have also been a reoccurring issue at Johnson's Pond, which degrade water quality by displacing native vegetation, increasing turbidity, and altering natural nutrient cycles. Aging or poorly maintained septic systems, as well as the use of lawn fertilizers in residential areas have introduced excess nitrogen and phosphorus into surface runoff, fueling algal growth and worsening water quality conditions in Johnson's Pond.

Collectively, these impairments pose risks to public health, ecological function, and recreational use. These recurring conditions demonstrate unsanitary and unsafe environmental conditions, directly affecting designated recreational uses and public health, and constitute deterioration under R.I.G.L. § 45-31-8(6).



Deterioration and Unsafe Conditions of Critical Infrastructure

The dam and spillway system constitute critical shared infrastructure serving the reservoir and the downstream community. Regulatory review by RIDEM determined that, under prior private ownership, the dam no longer met safety standards due to a compromised spillway, loss of stone, vortex conditions, and advancing structural deterioration, resulting in the issuance of an Immediate Compliance Order in 2024. These conditions represented: dilapidation and deterioration; unsafe conditions of physical construction; and obsolescence of a critical public safety structure.

Although the conditions of the dam and spillway infrastructure identified by RIDEM in the Immediate Compliance Order were addressed by the Town and GZA in late 2024 through interim repairs left the dam in fair condition, the conditions under private ownership previously constituted deteriorated blight directly satisfying R.I.G.L. § 45-31-8(6)(i) and (iv) and posed a threat to public safety and welfare including downstream flooding risk and loss of reservoir control. As a high-hazard dam, there are several long-term maintenance and improvements that must be coordinated to ensure the dam is in a state of good repair.

Impediments to Public Access and Recreation

In addition, areas within the Redevelopment Boundary have limited formalized public access points, aging or informal access infrastructure, erosion-prone shorelines, and fragmented ownership and management responsibilities. Together, these conditions contribute to the underutilization of public assets and inconsistent maintenance across the site.

Although Johnson's Pond historically functioned as a recreational resource, unsafe dam conditions, fluctuating water levels, water quality advisories and unmanaged shoreline conditions have rendered recreation unreliable and, at times, unsafe. The deterioration has resulted in: loss of consistent boating and swimming opportunities; impaired fish consumption; diminished public enjoyment of open space; and erosion of the Pond's function as a community recreational asset. An area that once provided recreation but can no longer do so safely due

to neglect and environmental degradation constitutes "inadequate provision for recreation facilities" under R.I.G.L. § 45-31-8(6)(ii).

Diversity of Ownership

Johnson's Pond is characterized by a highly fragmented pattern of ownership, with numerous individually owned residential parcels along much of the shoreline, while the dam and reservoir function as shared infrastructure influencing water levels, environmental conditions and the overall usability of the Pond. This pattern significantly constrains the extent of publicly owned land and limits opportunities for general public access to the water and shoreline. The presence of multiple private property owners complicates the assembly and coordination of land necessary to support enhanced recreational amenities, trail connections, and access points.

As a result, fragmented ownership creates substantial barriers to comprehensive planning, financing, and implementation of improvements at both the watershed and facility scale, reinforcing substandard access conditions for the broader community. As a result, the actions set forth below are unduly costly or otherwise impracticable for private enterprise to achieve independently, consistent with the finding under R.I.G.L. § 45-31-8(2), which expressly identifies diversity of ownership as a contributing blight factor: coordinated shoreline management; nutrient and stormwater controls; invasive species management; public access planning; and long-term dam maintenance.

Need for a Redevelopment Plan

The blighted conditions identified cannot be effectively addressed through ordinary private market mechanisms. Their remediation requires a coordinated, area-wide approach that includes centralized environmental management, coordinated dam safety and reservoir operations, watershed-scale water quality strategies, and planned improvements to public access and recreational facilities.

The Redevelopment Plan establishes a comprehensive, transparent, and accountable framework to address these interrelated challenges, eliminate blight, restore environmental functionality, protect public health and safety, and reposition Johnson's Pond as a sustainable and valuable community resource.



05

Existing Conditions

Demographics

Data from the United States Census Bureau's American Community Survey provides a clear indication of key demographics for the areas surrounding Johnson's Pond. The Redevelopment Boundary encompasses Census Tracts 207.03, 207.02 and 206.02, in the Town of Coventry, Kent County, Rhode Island. Census Tract 207.02 mostly covers land to the west of the Redevelopment Boundary (the full north-south extent of the Town boundary), Census Tract 207.03 covers the east-central portions of the Redevelopment Boundary (the full north-south extent of the Town boundary), and Census Tract 206.02 covers entirely east of the Redevelopment Boundary beginning at South Branch of the Pawtuxet River (south of Washington Secondary Trail Bike Path extending to Laurel Ave/Anthony Mill). Estimates documented below capture values for areas beyond this formalized Redevelopment Boundary but still offer instructive details for the greater area.

At a high-level, the Town of Coventry (62.3 square miles) is a predominantly residential community of approximately 36,000 residents, characterized by stable population growth, high homeownership, and comparatively strong socioeconomic indicators. Coventry's population is slightly older than the state average, with a higher median age and a similar share of residents under 18, reflecting a mix of long-term residents and families. Median household income exceeds the state average, while the poverty rate is notably lower, indicating relatively strong economic stability. Broader demographic and housing

characteristics further contextualize these economic conditions, as summarized below:

- Coventry has a higher rate of owner-occupied housing and lower population density than Rhode Island overall, reinforcing its suburban and semi-rural character.
- The Town's housing values are slightly below the state median, contributing to relative affordability.
- Educational attainment is strong, with a higher percentage of residents holding a high school diploma, though bachelor's degree attainment is slightly below the state average.

A closer examination of the Redevelopment Boundary by census tract shows that the data generally aligns with the demographic patterns described above, with minor variations. To understand the Census analysis, using the full north-south Town boundary extent, the Redevelopment Boundary is bifurcated down the middle of the Pond beginning at Pierce Brook, Matteson Road to the West and Mile Rd to the East, going south to Harkney Hill Road and Nooseneck Hill Road as the southwest bound.

According to 2024 U.S. Census Bureau data, approximately 0.52% of housing units in the Town are classified as vacant for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. This represents a decline from 2020, when an estimated 1.65% of housing units fell into this category, indicating a post pandemic decrease in seasonal/recreational occupancy. Analysis of the census tracts reveals a clear east-west division in character and

**TABLE 1.** Demographics by State, Town, and Census Tracts Encompassing the Redevelopment Boundary

2023 American Community Survey (ACS), 5-year estimates, unless otherwise noted		U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Coventry town, Kent County, Rhode Island		Census Tract 207.02, Kent, RI - Profile data - Census Reporter	Census Tract 207.03, Kent, RI - Profile data - Census Reporter	Census Tract 206.02, Kent, RI - Profile data - Census Reporter
		State of Rhode Island	Town of Coventry Land: 59.5 sq-mi/ Water: 2.8 sq-mi	207.02 (west) 16.9 sq-mi	207.03 (central) 9 sq-mi	206.02 (east) 2.5 sq-mi
Population	Population (V2024)	1,112,308	36,081	5,067	6,742	3,409
	Population per sq mi	1,061.4	604.2	299.4	747.0	1,357.1
	Population change (Apr 2020-Jul 2024)	1.4%	1.1%	Not Available in Data		
	Households	436,902	14,503	1,872	2,383	1,540
Age	Under 18	18.5%	18.6%	17%	25%	16%
	Over 65	19.7%	18.6%	20%	18%	19%
	Median Age	41.0	--	48.7	44.2	46.3
Housing	Housing Units (V2024)	488,030	--	1,904	2,752	1,670
	Unit Type: Single Family	Not Available in Data		90%	83%	61%
	Vacancy	Not Available in Data		2%	13%	8%
	Owner-Occupied Rate	63.3%	80.8%	94%	91%	79%
	Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing	\$368,800	\$323,100	\$409,600	\$427,000	\$225,500
Economic	Median Income	\$86,372	\$99,177	\$132,533	\$119,375	\$79,000
	Poverty Rate	12.2%	7.9%	6.8%	4%	11%

zoning within the Redevelopment Boundary. Moving across the study area, the prevalence of single-family housing declines and owner-occupancy rates decrease. The central tract exhibits the highest vacancy rate, which is likely influenced by the large proportion of land occupied by the Pond and surrounding natural areas. This tract also has a notably lower median household income and lower median value of owner-occupied homes compared to the other two tracts, as well as the highest poverty rate among the three. Finally, population density increases from west to east across the Redevelopment Boundary, indicating a transition toward more urbanized land use.

Land Use (Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program, 2025)

Land use/land cover data from the Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning's 2025 Future Land Use Map was reviewed for the Redevelopment Boundary. This data is a policy based land use framework to guide future conservation and development across Rhode Island. The data identifies areas appropriate for varying intensities of development and conservation, directing growth to locations with existing or planned infrastructure while protecting environmentally sensitive and rural areas, and serves as a generalized guide rather than parcel level zoning.

Using Flat River Road as a dividing feature across the Redevelopment Boundary, land use in the western Tract (including Zeke's Bridge and state-owned property in the southern Redevelopment Boundary) is predominantly "Reserve" and "Major Parks and Open Space". Trestle Trail is identified as "Major Parks and Open Space". The waterfront to the north of Flat River Road is characterized as "Conservation" and "Non-Urban Developed" lands, with scattered lands categorized as "Urban Development". There are also small pockets of "Prime Farmland" designated throughout the Redevelopment Boundary. The farthest southwestern extent of Tract 206.02 is categorized as "Sewered Urban Developed" lands.

Land Use

Town GIS land use reflects locally defined land use classifications, closely aligning with zoning classifications and local policy intent. Based on review of the Town's GIS land use data provided in May 2025, the Redevelopment Boundary consists mostly of farm/forest/open space and residential (including vacant and improved) land uses (see [Figure 4](#)). There are also areas of publicly owned (state-owned, municipal) land throughout the Redevelopment Boundary including Stump Pond, the Town Hall/Department of Public Works/Library property and Zeke's Bridge.

There are a few areas of commercial (along Flat River Road) and industrial (Old Flat River Road) land uses scattered throughout the Redevelopment Boundary. Trestle Trail/Washington Secondary Trail Bike Path (Bike Path) bifurcates the entire Redevelopment Boundary from east to west.

Zoning

There are seven main zoning designations within the Redevelopment Boundary, noted below:

- **VRC** – Village Rural Commercial
- **Greenway** (Trestle Trail/Bike Path)
- **GB1** – General Business 1 Acre
- **I1** – Industrial
- **RR3** – Rural-Residential 3 Acre (predominant)
- **RR2** – Rural-Residential 2 Acre (predominant)
- **R20** – Residential 20,000
- **SPD** – Special Planning Overlay District

Residential zoning is the most prevalent designation within the Redevelopment Boundary. Aside from the residential zoning districts, there are areas in the VRC, I1 and GB 1 zoning districts.

There are two areas zoned VRC in the Redevelopment Boundary: one at Poor Farm Road and the other at the intersection of Flat River Road and Old Flat River Road, both of which are along the Trestle Trail/the Bike Path.

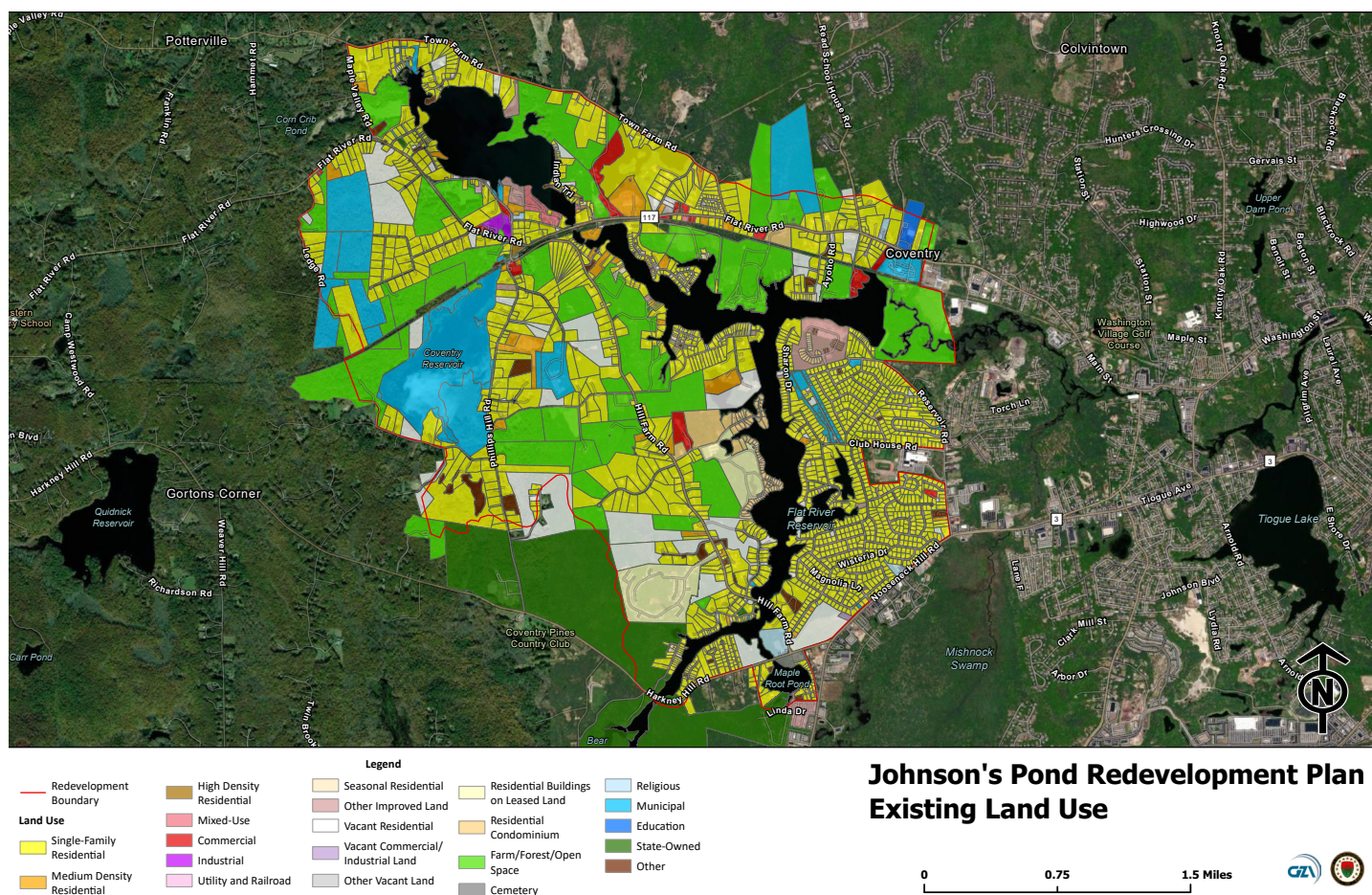


Figure 4. Existing Land Use.

There are also two small areas within the I1 zoning district—one east of the intersection of Flat River Road and Old Flat River Road (adjacent to the VRC zoning district) and properties on the south side of Flat River Road in the eastern Redevelopment Boundary (including the Dam Property).

There is also a large vacant residential property near Maple Root Pond in the southern portion of the Redevelopment Boundary that is zoned GB1 and in the Special Planning Overlay District.

Ownership

Historically, Johnson's Pond and its Dam were privately owned. As discussed in [Chapter 1](#) of this Redevelopment Plan, the Dam and associated flowage rights were originally developed and controlled by the Quidnick Reservoir Company beginning in the mid 19th

century. These interests remained in private ownership when they were transferred to Soscia Holdings, LLC in 2020. Following condemnation proceedings, the Town of Coventry became the title vested owner of Johnson's Pond, the Dam, and associated structures in June 2024.

Most parcels within the Redevelopment Boundary abutting the Pond are privately owned (see [Figure 5](#) and [Figure 6](#)). A large cluster of parcels at the southernmost extent of the Redevelopment Boundary, near Zeke's Bridge, is owned by the State of Rhode Island. Few parcels abutting the Pond, including the Town Hall/Department of Public Works/Library property, the Dam Property, Francis Sherman Park and a property on Vine Street, are owned by the Town. There are also a few large open space parcels near the Pond that are privately owned and managed by

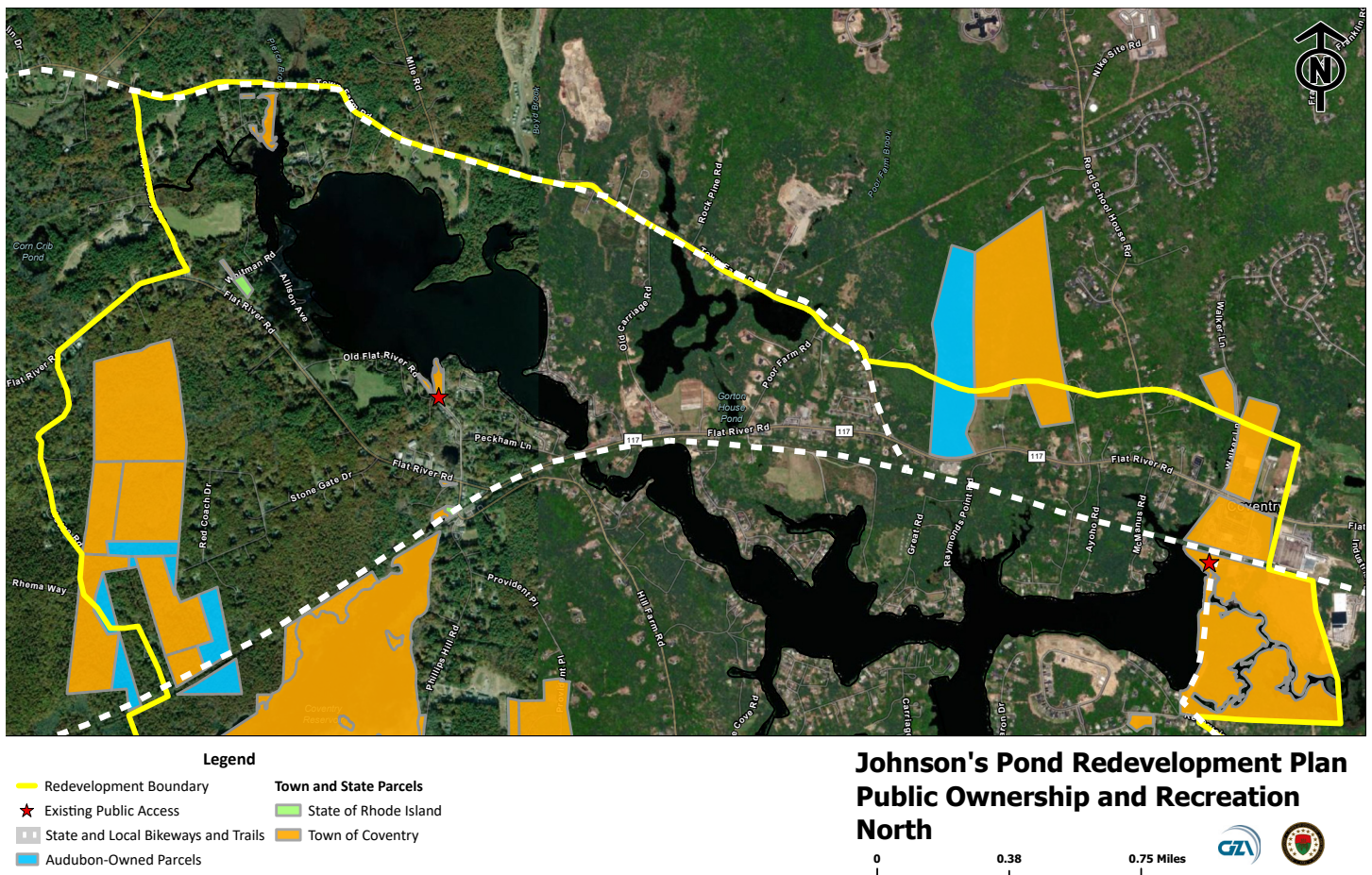
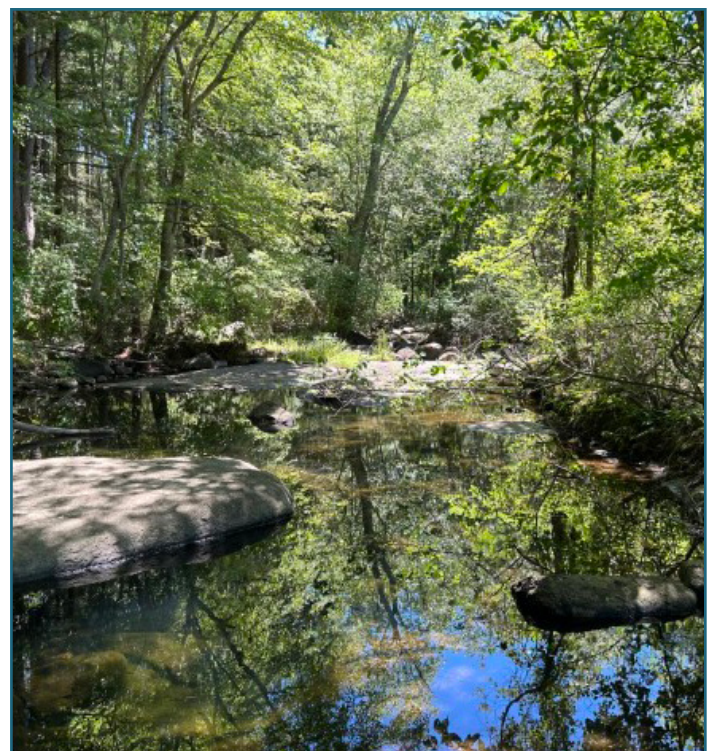


Figure 5. Public Ownership and Recreation North.

homeowners' associations. These areas were typically established through subdivision or land development approvals (such as cluster or conservation subdivisions) or as a conditional approval to protect environmentally constrained land along the Pond.

Beyond the area immediately adjacent to the Pond, the Redevelopment Boundary is largely comprised of privately owned land. There are some Town-owned properties including Stump Pond, a cluster of parcels in the northwestern portion of the Redevelopment Boundary, the Town Hall Annex property at 1675 Flat River Road, and a large parcel north of Flat River Road (1670 Flat River Road). There are also a few parcels that are owned and protected by the Audubon Society of Rhode Island in the northwestern portion of the Redevelopment Boundary (classified as municipal land use), as well as one parcel on Flat River Road (classified as farm/forest/open space), east of Town Farm Road.



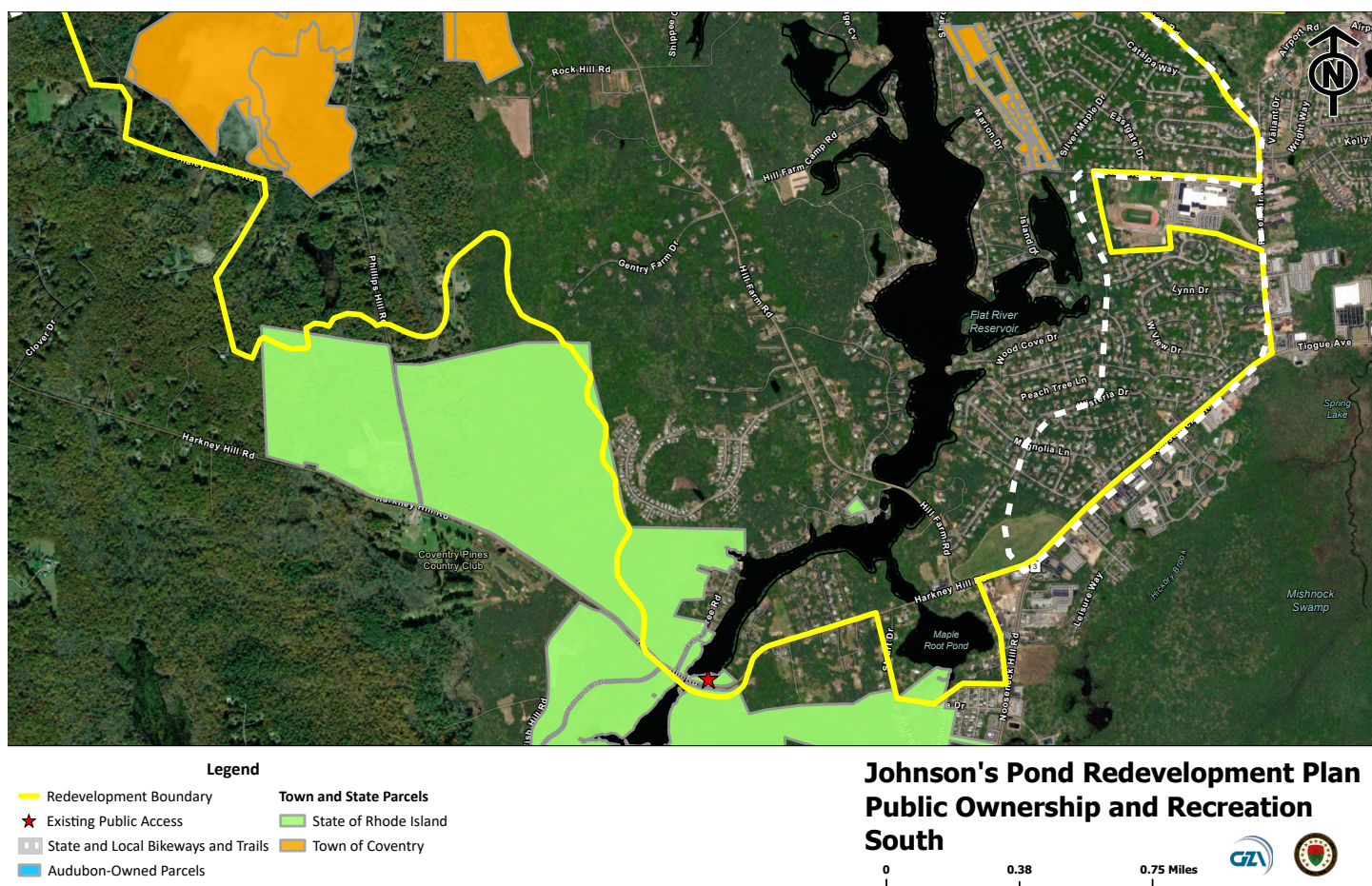


Figure 6. Public Ownership and Recreation South.

Natural Resources

Johnson's Pond is the dominant natural feature within the Redevelopment Boundary and represents a significant freshwater resource in the Town. As a managed reservoir, the Pond plays an important role in local hydrology, water storage, and downstream flow regulation, while also contributing to the scenic and ecological character of the surrounding area. Flat River and associated tributaries extend both upstream and downstream of the Pond, forming connected aquatic and riparian systems that contribute to habitat diversity and water quality functions. These interconnected waters support fish and wildlife resources while also influencing flood storage and drainage patterns throughout the Redevelopment Boundary.

Freshwater wetlands are present along portions of the Johnson's Pond shoreline and within low lying areas of the Redevelopment Boundary. These wetlands provide important ecosystem services, including flood attenuation, stormwater runoff filtration, groundwater recharge, shoreline stabilization, and habitat for wetland dependent species.

The shoreline environment varies across the study area and includes a combination of natural, vegetated edges and more altered conditions associated with residential use and historic recreational infrastructure. Vegetated shoreline areas support native plant communities and provide wildlife habitat, while also contributing to erosion control and visual buffering between upland land uses and the Pond.

Johnson's Pond supports a range of aquatic habitats but has experienced periodic water quality challenges, including documented occurrences of cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) blooms. Aquatic vegetation (including both native and invasive species) is present within the Pond. RIDEM and University of Rhode Island's Watershed Watch program actively monitor the Pond while the JCPA conducts targeted invasive species treatment (see **Attachment E**). These vegetation communities influence habitat quality, recreational usability, and overall reservoir function and are an important component of existing natural resource conditions.

Significant portions of the Redevelopment Boundary are characterized by forested and wooded uplands, often containing important ecological communities including emergent marsh, forested swamp, oak forest and pitch pine woodland barrens (see [Figure 7](#)). These areas form part of a larger network of contiguous forest land in western Coventry and contribute to the ecological integrity of Johnson's Pond by providing habitat connectivity, carbon storage, buffer areas to limit nutrient and sediment run-off, and opportunities for passive recreation.

Johnson's Pond lies within Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) areas as illustrated in [Figure 7](#), reflecting the Pond's function as both a reservoir and a flood influenced waterbody. FEMA FIRMs depict the Pond, along with adjacent shorelines and riverine corridors, as being located within the 1% annual-chance floodplain (100-year floodplain). These areas are generally classified as Zone A or Zone AE, indicating a high risk of riverine flooding within the reservoir system. Surrounding upland areas within the Redevelopment Boundary are in the 0.2% annual chance floodplain (500-year floodplain), identified as Zone X on FEMA FIRMs. While flood insurance is not federally required in Zone X areas, FEMA mapping identifies these areas as having potential exposure during extreme storm events.

The Redevelopment Boundary also includes lands designated as "State Conservation Lands", "Local Conservation Lands" and "Natural Heritage Areas" (see

[Figure 7](#)). State Conservation Lands are protected by the State of Rhode Island through fee title ownership, conservation easements, or deed restrictions and include resources such as wildlife management areas, drinking water supply watersheds, state parks, beaches, bike paths, fishing access areas, and state funded local parks and recreation facilities. Local Conservation Lands consist of properties permanently protected from future development through conservation restrictions or deed limitations held or enforced by land trusts or other recognized land protection organizations outside of state ownership. Natural Heritage Areas identify locations that support state listed rare, threatened, or endangered plant and animal species and serve as a planning tool to inform conservation and land use decision making.

Public Access and Recreation

The Pond functions as both an impoundment of the Flat River and a regional recreational waterbody, supporting boating, fishing, and passive shoreline activities. Public access to Johnson's Pond currently exists at three locations: at the Town property at 1670 Flat River Road/Dam Property, at Francis Sherman Park and at Zeke's Bridge (see [Figure 5](#) and [Figure 6](#)). While the Town owns and manages the land at the Dam Property and Francis Sherman Park, public access at Zeke's Bridge is owned and maintained by RIDEM.

At the Town property, there is a parking area (no fee required) and a paved walking path across from Town Hall/ Town Library building that leads to the Bike Path and then the waterfront. At the entrance to the paved walking path, there are trash receptacles, signage and a dog waste station. After crossing the Bike Path, there is a large, wooded area that leads down to the waterfront with some picnic tables.

Francis Sherman Park, a 2.1-acre property with access from Old Flat River Road, currently offers limited formal amenities including a gravel parking area (no fee required) and unimproved trails to the shoreline. The park does not include a formal canoe or kayak launch and currently functions primarily as a scenic area for passive recreation.

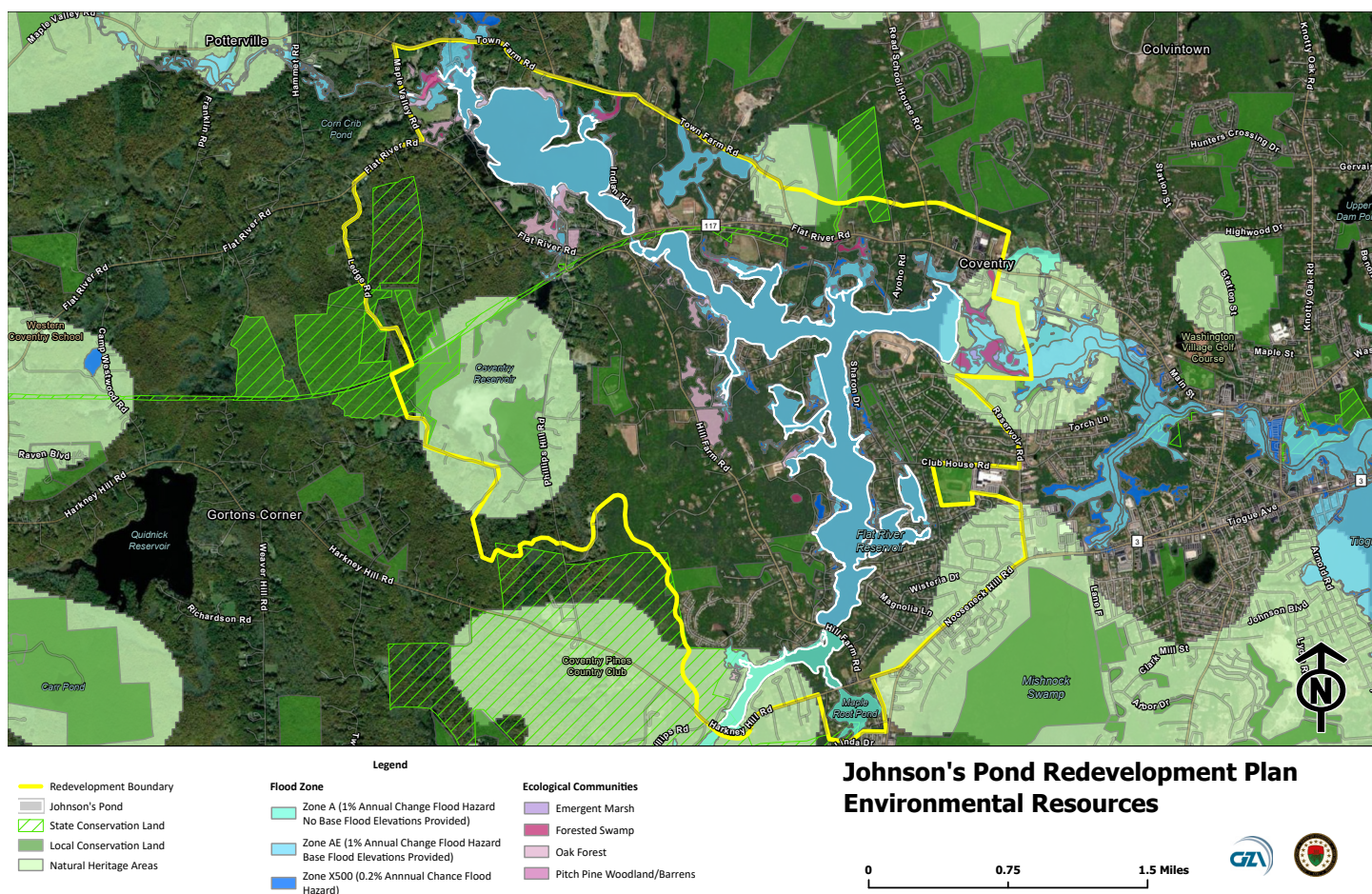


Figure 7. Environmental Resources.

Zeke's Bridge is a small boat launch site and popular fishing location that is maintained by RIDEM. Access to the site's gravel parking area is available from Harkney Hill Road where parking is currently free. Aside from a concrete boat ramp, the site provides an information kiosk.

The Bike Path (Washington Secondary Rail Trail) is Rhode Island's longest paved rail trail, extending approximately 19 miles from Cranston to western Coventry. Within Coventry, the Bike Path includes the Coventry Greenway and Trestle Trail. This multi-use path is maintained by Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) and accommodates non-motorized recreational activities such as walking, bicycling, running and limited equestrian use. Formal access and parking is provided at Pine Haven Road and Hill Farm Road in the Redevelopment Boundary. There are also several informal access points to the

Bike Path at road crossings. While the Bike Path crosses Johnson's Pond in two locations, direct public access to the waterfront is not provided from this path.

There are also two privately owned campgrounds that offer seasonal access to Johnson's Pond: Ayoho Campground on McManus Road and Waters Edge Campground immediately east of Francis Sherman Park.

The Coventry Department of Parks and Recreation is responsible for providing and managing public recreational programming within the Town. While most programs occur outside of the Redevelopment Boundary, the department hosts a free summer concert series at the Town Hall Annex property.

Infrastructure

Dams

Johnson's Pond Dam

The Pond is impounded by the Johnson's Pond Dam, a long standing water control structure located on the South Branch of the Pawtuxet River. The primary purpose of the Dam is to impound and maintain water levels within the Pond while regulating downstream flows under both normal and storm conditions.

The Dam also plays a critical role in flood control, water level management, and protection of downstream properties and infrastructure. Operation of the Dam directly influences seasonal water elevations and the usability of the Pond for recreational activities. The Dam is classified by the RIDEM as a High Hazard Dam, as failure or mis-operation could result in probable loss of life and significant damage to downstream homes, roads, and utilities. This classification is based on downstream development and risk exposure rather than the Dam's likelihood of failure.

As a High Hazard facility, the Johnson's Pond Dam is subject to strict inspection (at minimum every two years), permitting, and operational requirements under Rhode Island's dam safety regulations. RIDEM serves as the state dam safety authority and oversees dam operation, maintenance, inspections, and compliance. Any modifications to water levels, structural components, or operating procedures require state approval.

There are also several small dams located along some of the Pond's tributaries in the Redevelopment Boundary that are classified by the RIDEM as Low Hazard⁸:

- Dupont near Whitehead Road
- Groton Pond at Route 117
- Hall Lower Dam at Hall Pond
- Hall Central Dam at Hall Pond
- Town Farm Road at Hall Pond

Stump Pond Dam

The Coventry Reservoir/Quidnick Reservoir Dam, which impounds Stump Pond, is located on Quidnick Brook, south of Flat River Road. Built around 1875, this dam currently impounds water for recreational purposes (such as fishing, boating and passive uses) and is classified by the RIDEM as a High Hazard dam due to the potential for downstream impacts in the event of failure.

Transportation Corridors

The Redevelopment Boundary is served by several primary transportation corridors, including local streets and a shared use trail. Key connections include the following corridors:

North-South Corridors

- Town Farm Road
- Flat River Road (Route 117)
- Old Flat River Road
- Hill Farm Road
- Phillips Hill Road

West-East Corridors

- Flat River Road (Route 117)
- Harkney Hill Road (Route 118)
- Nooseneck Hill Road (Route 3)
- Washington Secondary Trail/Trestle Trail

Together, these corridors form the primary framework for vehicle, pedestrian, and recreational access within the Redevelopment Boundary.

Stormwater

The Town of Coventry operates under a Rhode Island Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (RIPDES) Phase II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) General Permit. The permit is required because portions of the Town are located within the 2010 Urbanized Area (UA) as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Town is

⁸ Low hazard dams are classified as structures whose failure or mis-operation will not likely result in loss of human life or cause major economic loss. Low hazard dams require inspection every five years.

required to maintain an illicit discharge detection and elimination (IDDE) ordinance and manage stormwater quality to meet environmental regulations. Stormwater management is governed by Chapter 206 of the Town of Coventry Code. RIDOT also operates an MS4 system within Coventry, often acting in conjunction with municipal efforts. Coventry's Department of Public Works (DPW) manages and maintains the community's stormwater system, encompassing 2,517 catch basins, 11 structural Best Management Practices (BMP's), and 14 outfalls.⁹

Wastewater

Much of the Redevelopment Boundary relies on private on site wastewater treatment systems (i.e., septic systems); however, limited sewer service is provided in portions of the eastern area of the Boundary and is managed by the Coventry Sewer Authority. According to the Town's 2024 Hazard Mitigation Plan, 97% of residents in Coventry rely on private septic systems while the remaining 3% of the population is served by the West Warwick Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility.

Flood events and soil saturation from these have caused the failure of many septic systems and cesspools, increasing the potential for localized groundwater contamination. Sewer service is very limited throughout the Town and is generally confined to areas along Route 117, Route 3, Hopkins Hill Road, Route 33, New London Turnpike, and portions of the Center of New England. The Woodland Manor, Sandy Bottom Road, and Flat River Road pump stations collectively serve approximately 611 sewer customers within the Town. Planning efforts related to sewer expansion and wastewater treatment facilities have been ongoing since the early 2000s.

Potable Water Supply

The eastern and southern portions of the Redevelopment Boundary are connected to public water supply provided by the Kent County Water Authority (KCWA). KCWA obtains water from a combination of treated surface water purchased from the Providence Water Supply Board and groundwater wells and distributes potable throughout its service area. The western and northern portions of the Redevelopment Boundary that are not served by public water infrastructure rely on private individual wells for potable water supply.



⁹ Fairweather Science, LLC. Town of Coventry, Rhode Island 2024 Hazard Mitigation and Floodplain Management Plan Update. Adopted by the Town Council: September 24, 2024. Dates Active: December 5, 2024 - December 4, 2029. Available at: <https://coventryri.gov/sites/coventryri.gov/files/attachments/Town%20of%20Coventry%20Rhode%20Island%202024%20Hazard%20Mitigation%20and%20Floodplain%20Mana....pdf>



06

Recommendations

Dam Property and Francis Sherman Park Concept Designs

Consistent with a series of Town Council legislative actions establishing the policy and legal framework for redevelopment of Johnson's Pond to serve as a public benefit, concept designs were prepared for the two most viable town-owned properties within the Redevelopment Boundary. As required by town ordinances and resolutions, the Dam Property and Francis Sherman Park concept designs provide parking areas, boat launches and recreational facilities to expand public access in the Redevelopment Boundary.

Desktop assessments were completed for each site to evaluate potential constraints, identify key limitations and determine where additional analysis may be required, as further discussed below. These concept designs are preliminary and subject to further feasibility analyses, site specific field assessments, detailed surveying, and completion of all required local, state, and federal permitting.

Dam Property

The desktop assessment identified the following constraints and additional studies:

- Space is limited for motorized boat ramp turnarounds and/or trailer parking; further study required for feasibility of property (such as a satellite lot by the DPW and trail crossing to the Dam Property)
- Studies will be required for necessary regulatory permitting, wetland delineation and assessment of natural communities due to possible sensitive habitat for plant and animal species
- Close proximity to dam spillway will require assessment of public safety risks, visual and/or physical barricades to limit boating or swimming in the area
- Evaluation of limitations on vessel size, weight and type for use of future boat launch
- Access from the Bike Path would need to be assessed (such as proper terrain, geotechnical considerations and environmental and water impact considerations)
- Access may be limited to north side of river channel without bridge installations to connect interior pond property and southern portion of site
- Public access will require assessment of safety risks to the public. Access to the Dam may be limited in order to minimize erosion and compromise to the dam.

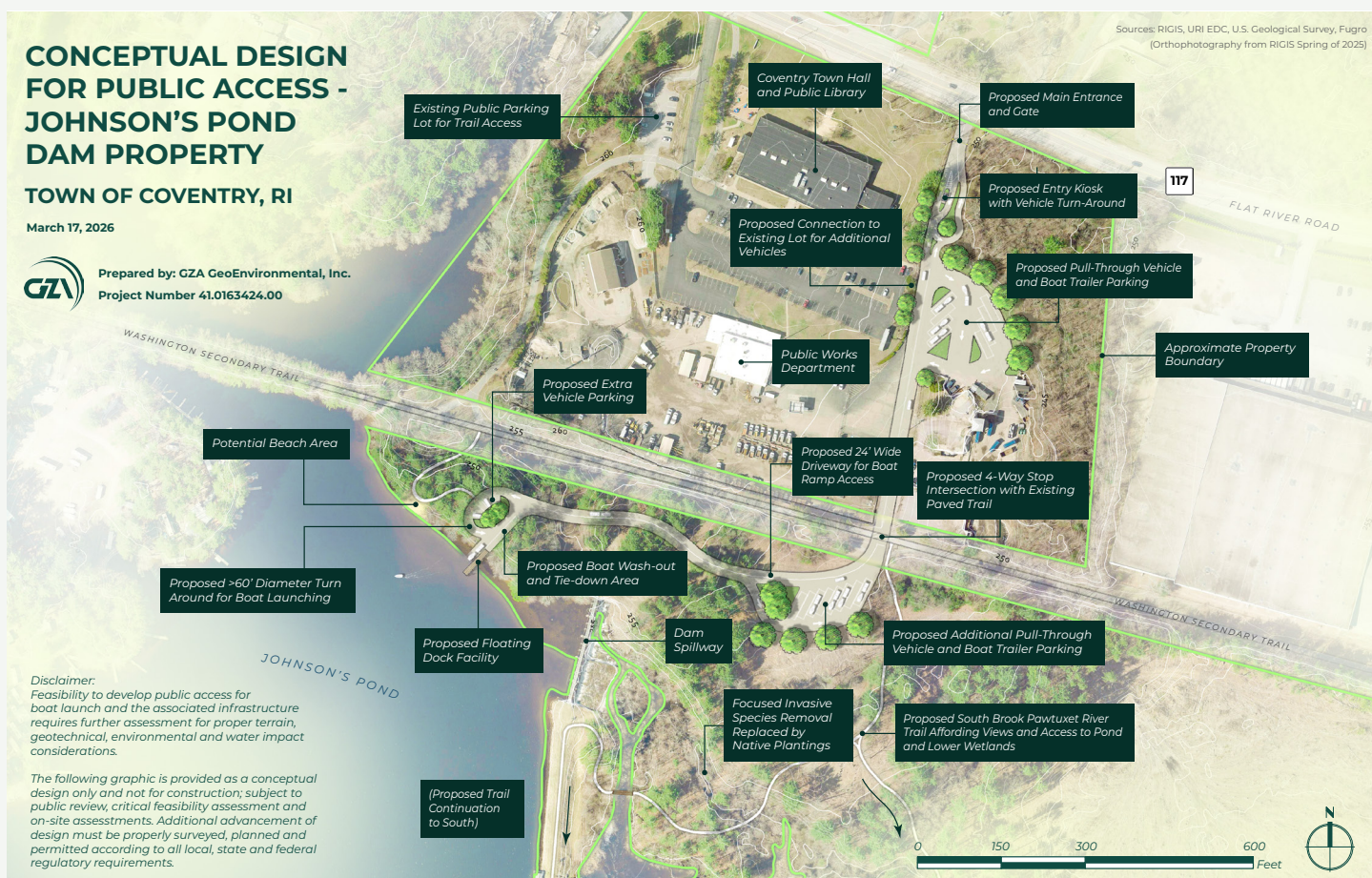


Figure 8. Dam Property Concept Design.

Based on these constraints, the consultant team created a concept design for the Dam Property with the following components (see [Figure 8](#)):

- Main entrance and gate at Flat River Road with entry kiosk and vehicle turnaround
- Pull through vehicle and boat trailer parking at two locations
- Four-way stop intersection at Bike Path crossing
- Trails and viewing areas throughout internal portion of Dam Property (near and at South Brook Pawtuxet River) and south of the spillway
- Floating dock
- 60-foot diameter turnaround for boat launching
- Boat washing station with tie-down area
- Invasive species removal replaced by native plantings
- Beach area



A cost estimate was prepared for the Dam Property conceptual design which amounted to approximately \$4.1 million (2026 dollars) inclusive of a 50% contingency, surveying, permitting, design and engineering costs.

A cost estimate was prepared for the Dam Property conceptual design, as detailed in **Table 2** below. This estimate amounted to approximately \$4.1 million (2026 dollars) inclusive of a 50% contingency, surveying, permitting, design and engineering costs. Attachment F includes a detailed cost breakdown.

Additional amenities should be contemplated for the Dam Property in the future including permanent restroom facilities, clear wayfinding signage throughout the property to guide visitors to the waterfront as well as additional passive amenities at the waterfront such as cleared pervious paths, benches and picnic tables.

Francis Sherman Park

The desktop assessment identified the following constraints and additional studies:

- Park property is infeasible for turnaround and parking required for a motorized boat ramp
- No roadside shoulder/space available for U-turn with vehicle and trailer
- Canoe/kayak launch from existing parking lot to shoreline would require trail improvements, puncheon and/or elevated boardwalk due to low-lying conditions
- Shallow nature of existing shoreline may require extended dock facility to hand launch or retrieve watercraft without grounding
- Further study needed along west side of park for potential picnic and/or observation area
- Studies will be required for necessary regulatory permitting, wetland delineation and assessment of natural communities due to possible sensitive habitat for plant and animal species

TABLE 2. Dam Property Cost Estimate (in accordance with Conceptual Design)

Description	Total
Mobilization/Demobilization/Engineering Layout	\$150,000
Site Preparation and Demolition	\$150,000
Earthwork	\$200,000
Utilities	\$225,000
Site Improvements	\$1,500,000
Subtotal	\$2,225,000
Design & Construction Contingency (50%)	\$1,112,500
Survey	\$30,000
Permitting	\$150,000
Design & Engineering	\$500,625
Total	\$4,018,125
Total Estimate (2026 Dollars)	\$4,100,000



Figure 9. Francis Sherman Park Concept Design.

Based on these constraints, the consultant team created a concept design for Francis Sherman Park with the following components (see [Figure 9](#)):

- Picnic overlook
- Parking lot expansion with accessible vehicle spaces
- Display case/park information board at parking lot
- Invasive species removal replaced by native plantings
- Accessible trails
- Improved trail linkages to the shoreline
- Boardwalk/elevated trail approaching shoreline to minimize environmental impact and maintenance
- Dock for hand launching small, non-motorized boats.



A cost estimate was prepared for the Francis Sherman Park conceptual design, as detailed in **Table 3** below. This estimate amounted to approximately \$1.5 million (2026 dollars) inclusive of a 50% contingency, surveying, permitting, design and engineering costs. **Attachment F** includes a detailed cost breakdown.

Additional amenities should be contemplated for Francis Sherman Park in the future including restroom facilities, clear wayfinding signage throughout the property to guide visitors to the waterfront and an access gate that can be secured during non-operational hours.



TABLE 3. Sherman Park Cost Estimate (in accordance with Conceptual Design)

Description	Total
Mobilization/Demobilization/Engineering Layout	\$60,000
Site Preparation and Demolition	\$50,000
Earthwork	\$50,000
Site Improvements	\$600,000
Subtotal	\$760,000
Design & Construction Contingency (50%)	\$380,000
Survey	\$20,000
Permitting	\$150,000
Design & Engineering	\$171,000
Total	\$1,481,000
Total Estimate (2026 Dollars)	\$1,500,000

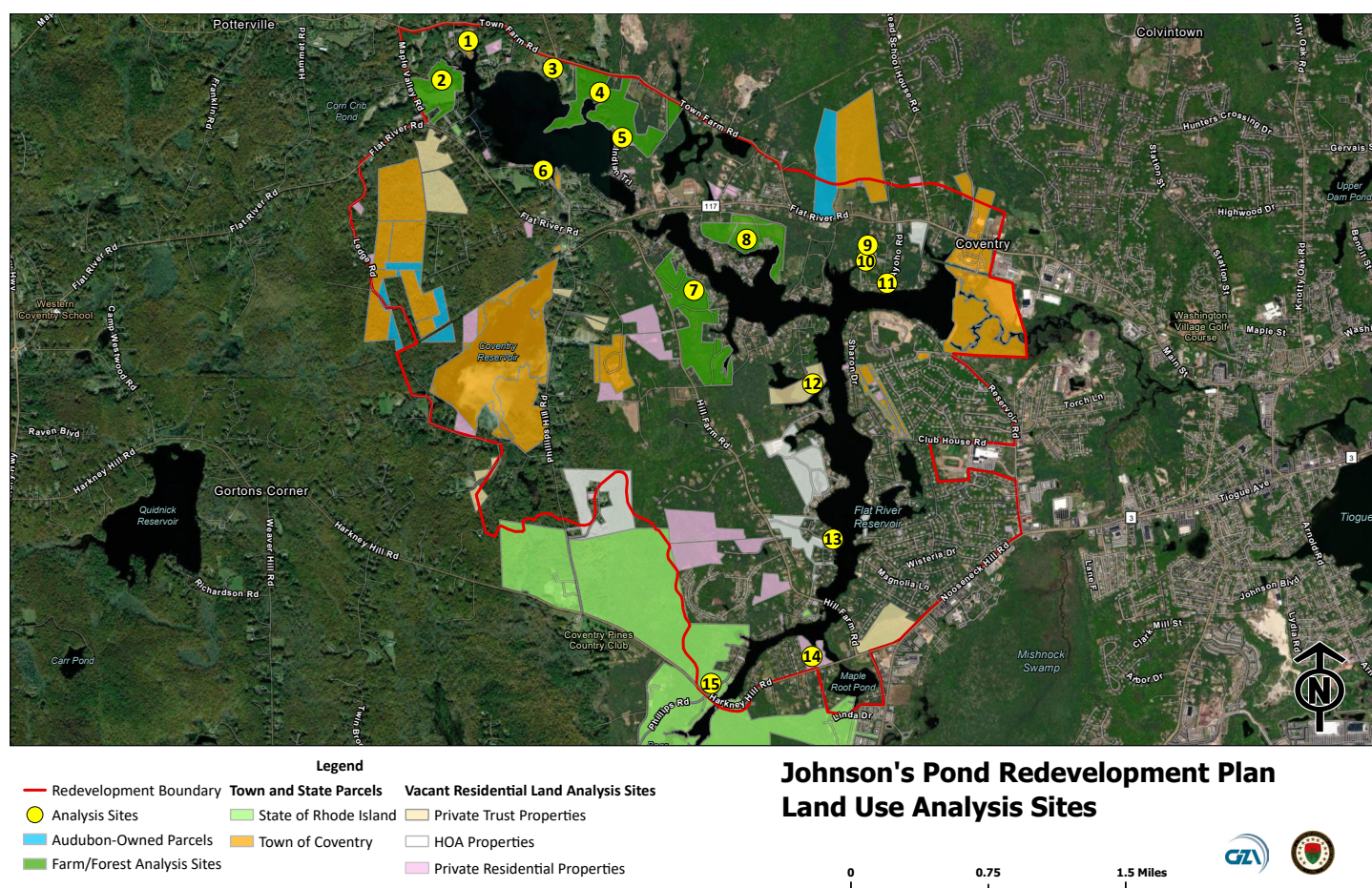


Figure 10. Land Use Analysis Sites.

Potential Long-Range Recreational Access

A comprehensive desktop Land Use Analysis was conducted to assist the Town and RDA in proactively identifying feasible future access enhancement opportunities in the Redevelopment Boundary (see full Land Use Analysis in **Attachment G**). This review identified existing conditions and relative constraints to inform future planning discussions. Inclusion of a parcel in this analysis does not constitute a recommendation for acquisition, condemnation, or any action affecting private property rights.

As part of this effort, a geographic inventory was developed to identify potential locations with direct access to Johnson's Pond and Maple Root Pond. Given that the majority of land abutting Johnson's Pond is

privately owned, with few publicly owned properties, the Land Use Analysis focused on parcels categorized by the state property tax classification codes as vacant, farm/forest, municipal and state to identify potential opportunities. After determining which sites provided access to Johnson's Pond, each site was mapped using Town GIS datasets, and a quantitative constraints analysis was conducted to evaluate their feasibility for public recreational use.

A total of 15 sites were identified through this analysis, which have been evaluated using a weighted, category-based constraints framework (see [Figure 10](#)). Sites were assessed across six major categories that reflect existing conditions: ownership and regulatory conditions, physical characteristics, access, community compatibility, environmental constraints, and climate resilience.

The analysis highlighted a broad range of feasibility across the sites, driven by the diverse physical and environmental characteristics surrounding Johnson’s Pond. Several parcels presented strong potential for long-range public access improvements due to access from convenient road access, manageable environmental constraints, and surrounding compatible land uses.

Other locations presented significant challenges including steep and varied topography, sensitive ecological resources, or substantial portions of land within the 100-year floodplain which may limit near-term feasibility or require extensive coordination and mitigation to support future public access. Each site was scored based on its potential to support future recreational access to Johnson’s Pond and then placed into one of three tiers: fewer constraints, moderate constraints, or significant constraints.

The analysis underscored the presence of considerable physical, environmental and access-related constraints along Johnson’s Pond. This evaluation approach provided a transparent process to identify the sites that are most feasible for future study.

The Land Use Analysis provided a clear, data-driven foundation for understanding where future recreational

access to Johnson’s Pond may be most feasible. By evaluating physical, environmental, access, and community considerations across all identified sites, the analysis highlighted a wide range of opportunities and challenges along the Pond.

These findings are intended to support the RDA in initiating informed, collaborative discussions about long-term access planning and in exploring potential voluntary partnerships, easements, or willing-seller opportunities. This offers a starting point for future planning efforts and helps guide the Redevelopment Plan toward community-supported decisions about potential public recreational access along Johnson’s Pond.

Parameters for Potential Long-Range Recreational Access

To support the long-term enhancement of public recreational assets along Johnson’s Pond, the Town should establish clear parameters to guide future potential voluntary partnerships, easements, or willing-seller arrangements. Establishing these parameters in advance improves transparency and supports strategic use of grants, bonding, or conservation funding when these opportunities arise.

TABLE 4. Land Use Analysis Sites Categorized by Level of Constraint

Fewer Constraints	Moderate Constraints	Significant Constraints
North of Francis Sherman, Site #6	Carriage Cove Ct, Site #12	Pinehaven Road, Site #8
	State Land by Zeke’s Bridge, Site #15	Hill Farm Road, Site #7
Harkney Hill Road, Site #14	Town Farm Road, Site #4	125 Whitehead Road, Site #10
	Northrup Plat Road, CS #13	Maple Valley Road, Site #2
Town Farm Road and Mile Road, Site #3	Northern Indian Trail, Site #5	Vine Street, Site #1
	0 Whitehead Road, Site #11	115 Whitehead Road, Site #9



Recommended criteria include:

- Minimum parcel size: Parcels should be at least 1.5 acres to ensure sufficient space for meaningful public use, buffering, and infrastructure without over-intensification.
- Direct water access: Parcels must have direct frontage or legal access to Johnson's Pond or Stump Pond to advance water-oriented recreation and stewardship goals.
- Vacancy duration: Priority should be given to parcels that have remained vacant or underutilized for a minimum number of consecutive years, to reduce displacement risk and acquisition conflicts.
- Utility readiness: Parcels should have, or be capable of reasonably obtaining, adequate utility connections (water, sewer or approved on-site systems, and electricity) to support public facilities and long-term maintenance.
- Roadway access: Parcels must have direct and permanent access to an adjoining roadway and should not be landlocked, to support safe and efficient ingress and egress.
- Contamination: Parcels must be properly remediated before purchase if previously contaminated to eliminate any potential legal liability and long-term public health risks.
- Clear and marketable title: Only parcels with clear and marketable title, free of unresolved liens, encumbrances, easements of concern, or ownership disputes should be pursued.
- Easements and water rights: Parcels should not have any recorded easements or water rights affecting public use that cannot be resolved before purchase.
- Permeable surfaces and open space: At least 75% of a parcel must contain pervious surfaces/open space (i.e., limited impervious surface coverage) to avoid excess demolition costs.

Near-Term, Medium-Term & Long-Term Recommendations

The following recommendations provide a structured and actionable framework to guide public access recreational opportunities within the Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Boundary. They are designed to balance immediate opportunities with long-term planning considerations, ensuring that public investments are strategic and aligned with community goals.

Recreational investments within the Redevelopment Boundary are intentionally organized in a phased implementation structure based on Town and community priorities. This approach allows the Town to advance early, low-cost improvements that establish public presence, accessibility, and safety, while reserving more complex, infrastructure-intensive, or revenue-generating facilities for later phases once site capacity, water quality conditions and long-term operational demands are better understood.

To support clarity and implementation, recommendations are grouped into near-term (0–5 years), medium-term (5–10 years), and long-term (10+ years) time horizons. This sequencing framework helps prioritize actions, align improvements with future funding and regulatory requirements, and provide flexibility to adapt to site conditions, community needs and environmental constraints.

Together, these recommendations establish a clear path for incremental improvements that enhance public access, deliver early community benefits, and support the community's long-term vision for Johnson's Pond.

Near-Term Actions (0–5 years)

These recommendations focus on establishing safe, visible, and equitable access to the water and shoreline. These improvements prioritize non-motorized recreation such as kayaking, passive amenities such as trails and nature viewing areas, and modest parking upgrades that can be implemented incrementally and are well suited for state and federal recreation, conservation, and water quality grant programs. Near-term actions are expected to focus on planning, coordination, maintenance, and targeted environmental or access improvements, while mid- and long-term initiatives remain aspirational and subject to refinement through future planning cycles.



Governance and Reservoir Operations

- Establish a management entity/structure (Town department heads, RDA, or dedicated commission), with decision rights for water level operations, public access, contracting, and enforcement.
- Define operating policies (such as seasonal water levels, drought/flood operations, emergency drawdown triggers, advisory response protocols) in coordinate with the management entity/structure.
- Ensure consistent agency coordination with entities such as RIDEM Dam Safety, RIDEM Office of Water Resources, RIDOH Cyanobacteria Monitoring Program, RIDEM Fish and Wildlife, Coventry Emergency Management Agency, Police/Fire/Rescue.
- Implement a registration and permit program for personal watercraft (i.e., motorized boats) to support ongoing maintenance, enforcement, and improvements. The program should include an annual permit for residents (administered by the Coventry Department of Parks and Recreation in a manner similar to Tiogue Lake), and a daily launch permit for visitors using motorized boats at public access and recreational areas.
- Adopt a seasonal reservoir operations plan that balances dam safety and structural limits,

downstream flow needs, recreation expectations, and ecological considerations (e.g., wetlands, fish spawning windows).

- Create a high-water (flood) and low-water (drought) operations protocols including defined triggers, response actions, and communication procedure.



Dam Safety Compliance and Management

- Maintain a dam safety compliance calendar including key dates and timeframes for inspections, monitoring, reporting, and any required filings.
- Update the Johnson's Pond Dam Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and all notification lists to ensure they reflect current conditions, responsibilities, and emergency management procedures. This effort should verify emergency triggers, response actions, and communication protocols while ensuring all contact information is accurate and current.
- Create a Johnson's Pond Dam Operation and Maintenance Manual containing items such as routine inspection checklist, vegetation management, debris control, outlet/spillway operation, winter protocols.
- Conduct periodic tabletop exercises with relevant dam safety and emergency management representatives to test roles, responsibilities and decision-making processes, ensuring all systems and procedures function effectively in the event of a dam incident.
- Procure on-call engineering support to provide timely, specialized technical expertise for Johnson's Pond Dam inspections, storm response, and capital design needs. This on-call will allow the Town to rapidly engage qualified professionals to conduct routine and post-storm inspections, assess observed deficiencies or emergency conditions, support Dam Emergency Action Plan (EAP) implementation, and assist with reporting and coordination with state dam safety officials.



Recreational Safety, Signage and Education

- Implement defined hours of operation for public recreational areas and provide clear public notice of these regulations. Recommended hours are from dawn to dusk (typically defined as 6:00 am to sunset).
- Establish and codify in the Town Code a speed limit of no more than 25 miles per hour with exceptions for federal, state and local law enforcers or rescue agencies. Ensure proper signage is posted at visible locations throughout the Pond.
- Establish and codify in the Town Code a no wake zone (less than 5 mph) within 175 feet of the shore, swimmers, divers, fishers or moored vehicles. Ensure proper signage is posted at visible locations throughout the Pond.
- Establish and codify fines for speeding in accordance with R.I.G.L. § 46-22-9.5(a). Ensure consistent penalties for repeat violations to strengthen compliance and deter ongoing harmful activities. This includes establishing clear penalty schedules and escalation protocols for repeat or chronic offenders.
- Establish and codify size and horsepower limitations on personal watercrafts to restrict the use of larger, higher-powered boats on the Pond.
- Install a recreational kiosk at Town facilities (such as Town Hall, the Town Hall Annex) identifying all existing recreational trails, access and amenities throughout the Town with paper maps for distribution.
- Create a dedicated website (possibly through the Coventry Department of Parks and Recreation) for information on Johnson's Pond (including facilities, water quality updates, maintenance and education).
- Prepare a coordinated safety and police monitoring plan for all existing and future recreational facilities at Johnson's Pond. This strategy should include regular police patrols during peak and off-

peak usage hours, with increased presence during evenings, weekends, and special events.

- Undertake a comprehensive review of all road ends within the Redevelopment Boundary to clearly identify ownership, legal status, and historic public rights. This effort should include a title review, site-specific survey verification, and mapping of each road end to determine which are municipally owned, subject to public easements, or privately held. Where road ends are determined to be publicly owned or legally accessible, the Town should take appropriate steps to remove illegal obstructions and encroachments, in accordance with due process and applicable local and state law. Removal efforts should be prioritized based on public benefit, safety, and environmental considerations, and should include clear communication with adjacent property owners to minimize conflict and ensure transparency.

The Town should then evaluate which legally accessible road ends are suitable for limited public access to Johnson's Pond. Selection criteria should consider physical constraints, existing neighborhood context, parking availability, environmental sensitivity, and potential impacts on adjacent residences. Public access improvements should be modest in scale, such as pedestrian only access points, signage, or small viewing areas, designed to preserve privacy, manage noise, and avoid creating nuisance conditions for nearby homeowners.

- Implement near-term safety upgrades at recreational access points and facilities around the Pond to improve public safety and accessibility. Priority improvements may include repairing or installing guardrails and railings, adding or upgrading channel and hazard delineation buoys, addressing ramp surface conditions and structural deficiencies, and improving signage and visibility. Where feasible, incorporate ADA accessibility considerations, such as compliant ramps, handrails, boarding areas and accessible pathways, to improve safe access for users of all

abilities. These upgrades should be prioritized at high-use locations and areas with documented safety concerns.

- Integrate Pond-related risks into Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Fire/Rescue planning to improve preparedness and responder safety. This includes protocols and training for ice rescue and cold-water response, drowning and water-related medical emergencies, and responder health risks associated with cyanobacteria blooms, along with near-term actions such as updating response plans and standard operating procedures, identifying suitable emergency access points, ensuring appropriate equipment is available, and coordinating with public health agencies on bloom advisories and exposure precautions.



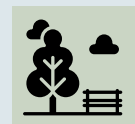
Ecology and Water Quality

- Develop an Invasive Species and Environmental Management Plan for Johnson's Pond that improves water quality, reduces the risk of harmful algal blooms, and manages invasive aquatic vegetation. The plan should be developed in coordination with appropriate state agencies (e.g., RIDEM, RIDOH) and local stewards (e.g., the Pawtuxet River Authority and the Johnson's Pond Civic Association) and include a water quality monitoring program that defines sampling locations, frequency and key parameters.
- Conduct a comprehensive inventory of municipal stormwater infrastructure and prioritize opportunities for retrofit and improvement, including catch basin and outfall maintenance, green infrastructure, infiltration practices, and treatment systems.
- Prepare a comprehensive Lake Management Study to identify priority management challenges and define implementable actions for the long-term protection, restoration, and sustainable use of Johnson's Pond. Building on existing water quality analyses, the study should evaluate nutrient sources, sediment accumulation, aquatic vegetation and invasive species, shoreline stability, hydrology, and operational constraints related to dam and water level management. The effort should assess how recreational use, habitat objectives, water quality goals, and water level management can be better coordinated through policy adjustments, operational changes, capital improvements, and long-term maintenance strategies.
- Provide interim support to the JPCA for ongoing water quality monitoring and targeted management actions while the Lake Management Study is being developed.
- Adopt and maintain sustained fertilizer use controls within the Johnson's Pond watershed to reduce nutrient runoff and support long-term water quality improvement. Controls should include standards or restrictions on fertilizer application, with particular emphasis on limiting phosphorus inputs, and be supported by a combination of regulatory measures, public education, and ongoing enforcement. Long-term fertilizer management should be coordinated with broader watershed, stormwater, and shoreline protection strategies to ensure lasting effectiveness.
- Establish and maintain a clear, near-term cyanobacteria response and recovery program to protect public health and ensure consistent communication during advisory events. This program should include coordinated monitoring with RIDEM and RIDOH, standardized Town communication templates, a defined signage deployment strategy for boat ramps and common access points, and protocols for pet exposure warnings and incident response. In addition, adopt a standing procedure for lifting advisories that outline criteria for reopening, removal of signage, and timely public notification once conditions are deemed safe.
- Identify and prioritize erosion and sediment source areas, including shoreline hotspots, inflow locations, and stormwater outfalls.



Recreation and Public Access

- Raise Hill Pond Road bridge and provide a motorized boat launch at Zeke's Bridge as an alternative to the boat launch at the Dam Property (if determined infeasible).
- Establish partnerships with recreational nonprofits (such as Keep Kids Fishing) to introduce and sustain recreational programming at the Pond.



Infrastructure, Utilities and Public Amenities

- Install prefabricated, modular or custom pay stations/kiosks at recreational facilities with dedicated parking areas.
- Prepare and implement waste management plans for all existing and future recreational areas along the Pond to ensure proper trash collection, maintenance, and long-term management. Plans should define responsibilities, service frequency, infrastructure needs, and funding mechanisms to prevent debris accumulation and associated water quality impacts.
- Implement a targeted septic system upgrade and management program in areas not proposed for sewerage to reduce nutrient loading, protect groundwater and surface water quality and support long-term watershed health. The program should prioritize inspection, maintenance, and replacement of aging or failing systems; promote advanced or nitrogen-reducing onsite treatment technologies where appropriate; and be supported by homeowner education, technical assistance, and pursuit of state and federal funding opportunities.
- Review and assess local ordinances and policies governing buffer protections and erosion and sediment controls to ensure they effectively reduce nutrient loading and sediment transport to the Pond. The review should identify opportunities to strengthen standards, close regulatory gaps, improve compliance, and align local requirements with best management practices and state agency guidance.



Funding

- Create and maintain a multi-category budget to support coordinated, transparent, and sustainable management of the Pond, Dam, and associated facilities over the long term. The budget should clearly distinguish between core program areas to ensure that routine operations, capital needs, environmental protection, public access and enforcement are adequately funded and balanced. Budget categories should include, but not be limited to:
 - Dam safety operations, maintenance, and inspections
 - Dam capital repairs and improvements
 - Pond ecology/water quality program
 - Public access and recreational facilities
 - Enforcement and operations
- Evaluate and establish a parking fee structure for recreational facilities with dedicated parking areas. The fee program should include reduced rates and/or resident parking permits for Coventry residents to support equitable access while helping offset maintenance and operational costs.
- Proactively pursue water quality improvement grants to support stormwater controls, shoreline stabilization, non-point source pollution reduction, water quality monitoring, continuous invasive weed treatments and long-term management of Johnson's Pond. Aligning recreational investments with water quality objectives will strengthen eligibility for state and federal funding, provide a technical foundation for future capital improvements, and reinforce the Town's long-term stewardship and operational responsibilities.
- Procure appropriate insurance coverage and adopt formal risk management protocols to reduce financial exposure and protect public assets and users. This should include coverage and procedures related to contractor activities, public events, recreational facilities, and emergency response operations. Risk management protocols should define safety requirements, liability responsibilities, incident reporting, and coordination among departments and partners.

Medium-Term Actions (5–10 years)

These recommendations build on initial access improvements by strengthening trail connectivity, supporting multi-generational use, and introduce more structured recreational facilities. These actions are intended to respond to demonstrated community demand and evolving use patterns, and are implemented where site constraints, environmental conditions, and neighborhood context support increased activity. Collectively, these investments represent a transition from foundational access and safety improvements toward higher-quality, destination-oriented amenities that enhance recreational diversity and user experience.



Governance and Reservoir Operations

- Maintain a durable governance model to support the long-term management, operation, and maintenance of Johnson's Pond and associated infrastructure. This model should include budgets, asset management plans, annual reporting, and transparency.
- Integrate watershed hydrology and climate adaptation considerations (e.g., design storm criteria, sedimentation trends, drought frequency) into reservoir operations, maintenance regimes, and management decisions.



Dam Safety Compliance and Management

- Maintain instrumentation/monitoring (as warranted) such as staff gauge, seepage observation points, settlement markers.
- Formalize post-storm inspection triggers by establishing clear, documented criteria that require inspections of the Dam, spillway, and related infrastructure following significant rainfall or storm events. These criteria should be tied to measurable thresholds (such as rainfall totals, reservoir water levels, or observed overtopping

or erosion) and should clearly define who is responsible for conducting inspections, the timeframe for completion, and required reporting procedures.



Recreational Safety, Signage and Education

- Establish a dedicated Johnson's Pond enforcement unit within the Coventry Police Department, in coordination RIDEM. In addition to monitoring on-water activities, the unit should provide boating safety education and guidance on boat registration requirements.
- Publish a transparent annual report (such as a "State of the Pond" report) outlining water levels, safety improvements, harmful algal bloom occurrences, capital and programmatic investments, and upcoming priorities. The report should summarize trends over time, highlight progress toward management goals, and clearly identify remaining challenges.



Ecology and Water Quality

- Establish and maintain a performance dashboard to track key water quality and management outcomes, including bloom days, Secchi depth, nuisance vegetation extent, shoreline stabilization acreage, and septic compliance outreach.
- Develop a TMDL-based strategy to address mercury impairment in Johnson's Pond, with the objective of reducing mercury concentrations in fish tissue to levels that meet applicable state and federal water quality standards and support safe fish consumption.
- Coordinate fish consumption messaging to reflect mercury impairment status and reinforce existing RIDEM/RIDOH guidance rather than creating parallel recommendations.
- Restore and enhance vegetated shoreline and riparian buffers along Johnson's Pond

to reduce nutrient and sediment runoff, stabilize eroding shorelines, improve habitat, and strengthen the Pond's overall ecological resilience. Buffer restoration efforts should prioritize native vegetation, target erosion-prone and highly disturbed shoreline segments, and be coordinated with adjacent landowners, stormwater improvements, and long-term water quality management objectives.



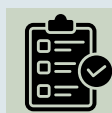
Recreation

- Prepare a Recreational Carry Capacity Analysis to determine future boating limitations, appropriate thresholds for visitation, parking demand, and programmed events as recreational public access is expanded throughout the Redevelopment Boundary.
- Work with state representatives to determine the feasibility of improving the state-owned land off Harkney Hill Road/Pine Tree Road (by Zeke's Bridge) with recreational amenities and public Pond access.
- Plan, design, and permit new or enhanced public access points around the Pond to improve safe, equitable, and environmentally sensitive recreational use over the long term. This may include upgrades or additions such as boat ramps, small docks, carry-in (hand-launch) watercraft access, modest parking areas, trail connections, and designated viewpoints.

Planning efforts should evaluate site suitability based on environmental constraints, shoreline conditions, user demand, safety, and potential water quality impacts. Designs should emphasize low-impact construction, durability, and compatibility with surrounding natural and community resources, and incorporate ADA accessibility where feasible.

Long-Term Actions (10+ years)

These recommendations include more intensive or operationally complex uses, such as marinas, docks, boat rentals, or food service, that require demonstrated demand, confirmed carrying capacity, and clear governance and maintenance frameworks. These elements are intentionally deferred as part of a long term planning strategy to allow the Town sufficient time to assess cumulative impacts on the environment, transportation systems, public safety, and Town services before proceeding with permanent facilities.



Governance and Reservoir Operations

- Maintain land easements/rights-of-way/access agreements, as needed, for long-term access and shoreline management at future locations.
- Create standing, on-call contracts for key professional and operational services including engineering, environmental and water quality monitoring, invasive species management, and facilities maintenance to ensure timely response to routine needs and unexpected issues. These contracts should establish clear scopes of work, unit pricing, and response time expectations to streamline procurement and reduce delays. Standing contracts will improve continuity, cost control, and readiness while supporting consistent implementation of monitoring, maintenance, and regulatory requirements over the long term.



Dam Safety Compliance and Management

- Plan for the full life-cycle replacement of the Dam and related infrastructure while incorporating projected changes in climate and hydrology. This should include evaluating existing structures for age, condition, and remaining service life; anticipating increased storm intensity, precipitation, and runoff volumes; and assessing spillway and outlet capacity to safely manage larger and more frequent storm events. Future capital improvements should prioritize resilience, regulatory compliance, and

risk reduction, including upgrades to spillways, embankments, and drainage systems as needed to address evolving flood and safety conditions

- Formalize mutual aid and incident command agreements for dam-related emergencies to ensure clear roles, coordination, and rapid response across jurisdictions and agencies. These agreements should define incident command structure, communication protocols, resource sharing, and decision-making authority for events such as dam failures or malfunctions, emergency drawdowns, public health advisories, and access closures.



Recreational Safety, Signage and Education

- Maintain a long-term stewardship partnership program that engages residents, volunteers, and local organizations in protecting and improving Pond health. This program can include volunteer-based water quality and visual monitoring, coordinated shoreline planting and restoration efforts using native vegetation, and ongoing education and outreach to promote lake-friendly behaviors. A lake-friendly yard certification program can further encourage property owners to reduce nutrient runoff, limit shoreline disturbance, and adopt best management practices.



Ecology and Water Quality

- Implement and periodically update a coordinated, watershed-based management program for Johnson's Pond based on the findings of the Lake Management Study, integrating capital investments, operational practices, regulatory policies, and maintenance strategies. Long-term implementation should prioritize water quality improvement, shoreline and habitat protection, adaptive dam and water level management, and safe, sustainable recreational use, while establishing a framework for ongoing monitoring, performance evaluation, and grant-supported reinvestment to ensure the Pond's continued function as a public and environmental resource

- Pursue strategic acquisition or conservation of priority properties around the Pond as they become available to preserve open space, protect shoreline and upland habitats, and limit future overdevelopment. Priority should be given to parcels classified under the state property tax code as farm/forest, open space and vacant land, particularly those with direct shoreline frontage, hydrologic connectivity and/or ecological value. Acquisition tools may include fee-simple purchase, conservation easements, right-of-first-refusal agreements, or partnerships with land trusts and state agencies. Proactively preserving these properties will help maintain water quality, protect wildlife habitat, preserve community character, and support long-term resilience of the Pond and surrounding watershed.



Recreation

- Pursue voluntary partnerships, conservation easements, or willing-seller acquisitions for priority properties with direct Pond frontage to expand and enhance public recreational opportunities
- Explore purchase or long-term lease of the state-owned property near Zeke's Bridge to support feasible recreational amenities and expanded public access to the Pond, in coordination with appropriate state agencies.
- Identify and evaluate a suitable location for a marina or managed docking facility that accommodates boating demand while minimizing environmental, operational, and neighborhood impacts. Site selection should consider water depth, shoreline conditions, access and parking capacity, compatibility with dam and water level operations, environmental sensitivity, and proximity to existing public access points. Any marina development should be designed and phased in accordance with water quality objectives, shoreline stabilization needs, and permitting requirements, and incorporate best management practices for stormwater control, waste handling, and long-term maintenance to ensure safe, efficient, and environmentally responsible operation.

- Provide ongoing facility operations and maintenance for recreational infrastructure around the Pond to ensure safe, reliable, and sustainable public use over time. This includes routine operation and upkeep of restrooms (where provided), regular inspection and maintenance of ramps, docks, and access features, seasonal winterization and spring reopening activities, and debris and sediment management at launch areas. Long-term operations planning should define staffing responsibilities, maintenance schedules, funding sources, and coordination among municipal departments or partners to ensure consistency and accountability. Where sediment accumulation impairs safe or functional access, periodic dredging of launch areas may be evaluated and undertaken, subject to permitting and environmental considerations.



Infrastructure, Utilities and Public Amenities

- Update and modernize stormwater management infrastructure throughout the Johnson's Pond watershed to reduce nutrient and sediment loading, improve water quality, and protect shoreline stability. Improvements should prioritize the retrofitting of existing outfalls and drainage systems with green infrastructure and best management practices such as bioretention, vegetated swales, infiltration systems, and shoreline treatment measures. Stormwater upgrades should be coordinated with roadway improvements, public access enhancements, and shoreline stabilization projects, and informed by the Lake Management Study to ensure effective long-term performance, maintenance feasibility, and resilience to changing precipitation patterns.
- Support sewer expansion to the areas adjacent to Johnson's Pond as identified in the 2023 Wastewater Facility Plan.
- Deliver a long-term program of capital stormwater retrofits to reduce pollutant loading, manage runoff volumes, and improve water quality throughout the watershed. This program should

prioritize retrofits at high-impact locations including municipally owned properties, roadway drainage systems, and large private parcels using green and gray infrastructure approaches such as bioretention, infiltration practices, permeable pavement, and stormwater treatment upgrades. Implementation should leverage public-private partnerships to expand project reach and share costs, including voluntary retrofits on private properties, coordination with other projects, and incentive-based participation.

- Maintain adequate enforcement capacity to address illicit discharges, failing or noncompliant wastewater and septic systems, and unauthorized shoreline disturbance that contribute to water quality degradation. This includes sustaining trained staff, clear inspection and investigation protocols, and coordination among local departments and state agencies to identify, document, and respond to violations. Enforcement efforts should be supported by routine screening, complaint response, and follow-up inspections, as well as clear escalation pathways for corrective actions and penalties where necessary.



Funding

- Maintain and implement a 10–20-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for the Pond, Dam, and related infrastructure, supported by an integrated monitoring, inspection, and funding strategy. The CIP should incorporate settlement markers and formal post-storm inspection triggers to support early identification of structural or operational issues and ensure consistent, timely evaluations. The CIP should identify priority projects, timelines, cost estimates and dependencies to guide long-term investment in the Dam, spillway, outlet works, water quality improvements, public access, and supporting infrastructure. A diversified funding stack such as state and federal grants, capital bonds, special districts (where appropriate) and user fees (where feasible) will improve fiscal resilience while supporting proactive decision-making, regulatory compliance, public safety, and sustainable asset management.

Consistency with the Rhode Island Redevelopment Act

The recommendations set forth in this Redevelopment Plan have been developed to conform with the requirements and intent of the Rhode Island Redevelopment Act and to advance clear public purposes consistent with municipal authority under the Act. Collectively, they are designed to address physical, environmental, and functional conditions that limit public use and long-term viability within the Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Boundary, while promoting coordinated, orderly, and beneficial redevelopment over time.

Presented here is a discussion of the Redevelopment Plan's consistency with the applicable requirements of R.I.G.L. §45-32.8 that have not been addressed in previous sections.

- **§45-32-8 (3) Proposed land uses in the project area:** The Redevelopment Plan does not propose changes to existing land use designations within the project area. Existing land uses, including residential neighborhoods, public open space, recreational lands, water resources, and municipal or quasi-municipal facilities, are expected to remain as currently designated. The intent of the Plan is not to alter land use patterns, but rather to improve the condition, function, stewardship, and public benefit of existing uses, particularly those associated with the pond, dam, shoreline, and publicly accessible lands. Any future improvements contemplated under the Plan are intended to be consistent with current land use classifications and compatible with established neighborhood character and community expectations.
- **§45-32-8 (4) Population densities, land coverage, and building intensities:** At this time, the Redevelopment Plan does not propose changes to population density standards or building intensity regulations within the Redevelopment Boundary. If the concept designs for Francis Sherman Park and the Dam Property are advanced and implemented, land cover across both sites is expected to shift modestly from primarily natural or minimally developed conditions to a mix of natural and improved surfaces. Improvements such as expanded parking areas, access drives, ramps, docks, trails, and small gathering areas would likely increase areas of impervious or semi-impervious cover, while some existing vegetation may be cleared or selectively managed.
- **§45-32-8 (5) Proposed changes in streets and utilities:** Based on the Francis Sherman Park and Dam Property concept designs, implementation of the proposed improvements will require targeted changes to streets and utilities to safely support new public access, circulation, and amenities. At Francis Sherman Park, modest roadway and parking improvements along Old Flat River Road, including parking lot expansion, accessible spaces, and improved site access, may require drainage upgrades, pavement rehabilitation, and coordination with existing utilities to support

At the same time, the concepts include native plantings, invasive species removal, and low-impact features intended to offset disturbances and protect ecological function. Exact changes in land cover cannot be quantified at this time and will be refined during detailed design, surveying, and environmental review as part of future project phases. All existing zoning provisions governing density, lot coverage, height, and intensity of development remain in effect. This Plan acknowledges that maintaining current development standards is appropriate given the primarily residential and environmental context of the area. Should future implementation actions identify a need to evaluate these standards in support of specific public purposes, such considerations would occur through a separate planning and regulatory process, including appropriate public review and municipal approvals.

increased use. At the Dam Property, more substantial street-related improvements are anticipated, such as construction of a widened driveway for boat ramp access, new pull-through trailer parking, vehicle turn-arounds, and a gated entrance, all of which may necessitate utility adjustments, stormwater management enhancements, lighting, and pavement markings.

Across both sites, utility needs may include provisions for lighting, signage, kiosks, potential water access for boat wash-down areas, and communications infrastructure, with all improvements designed to minimize environmental impacts and coordinated through detailed engineering, permitting, and agency review as the concepts advance toward implementation.

- o The Redevelopment Plan does not propose any additional modifications to existing streets, road alignments, or public utility systems at this time. Existing transportation infrastructure and utility services are expected to continue operating in their current configuration. Any future improvements would be subject to further study, design, funding, and regulatory review.

- **§45-32-8 (6) Proposed changes in zoning, exceptions, or variances:** No amendments to zoning classifications, overlay districts, dimensional standards, or use regulations are proposed at this time. However, if boat liveries (small, non-motorized boat rentals) are contemplated for the Dam Property, Francis Sherman Park or future recreational property



that is not within the VRC zoning district, zoning changes, exceptions or variances may be required.

Additional zoning changes, exceptions or variances at existing or future recreational properties may also be required for the following:

- Tennis courts and/or general athletic fields for properties not within the General Business (GB), Business Park (BP) or I1 zoning districts
- Camps and campgrounds in all zoning districts

Any future regulatory changes that may be considered to support public improvements or environmental objectives would be pursued through established municipal processes and in accordance with Rhode Island law.

- **§45-32-8 (7) Conformity with the general community plan:** The Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Plan conforms with and advances the goals, policies, and implementation actions of the Town of Coventry Community Comprehensive Plan, which was in draft form during the initiation

of the redevelopment process. The concurrent timing of the redevelopment planning effort and the comprehensive plan update enabled the RDA and consultant team to formally integrate conditions within the Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Boundary into the Comprehensive Plan. The requested comprehensive plan revisions submitted to the Coventry Department of Planning and Development on January 13, 2026, highlighted Johnson's Pond as a significant Town-owned natural resource with documented substandard environmental conditions. The recommendations included in the requested comprehensive plan revisions establish policy direction and implementation actions that remediate environmental impairments, improve public safety, expand equitable recreational access, and support restoration of Johnson's Pond as a publicly accessible natural and recreational asset.

- **§45-32-8 (8) Land acquisition and demolition and removal of buildings or structures:** The Redevelopment Plan does not identify specific



parcels for acquisition, nor does it propose the demolition or removal of buildings or structures within the project area at this time. The Plan is focused primarily on planning, coordination, and potential improvements on lands already owned by the Town of Coventry or otherwise available for public use or management. Any future consideration of land acquisition or demolition would require separate authorization by the appropriate municipal bodies, identification of funding sources, and compliance with applicable legal and procedural requirements.

- **§45-32-8 (9) Proposed conditions, covenants, and other restrictions controlling the disposal and future use of land and buildings:** No disposal of publicly owned land is proposed at this time. Future use restrictions and conservation covenants will be applied consistent with the public purposes of this Plan.
- **§45-32-8(10) Statement regarding relocation resulting from the proposed redevelopment of the area and the proposed method for rehousing of displaced persons:** Implementation of the Redevelopment Plan does not anticipate or propose the relocation of residents, businesses, or other occupants within the Redevelopment Boundary. Therefore, no displacement is expected as a result of this Plan and no relocation assistance, rehousing plans, or displacement mitigation measures are required or contemplated.
- **§ 45-32-8(11) Estimated cost of carrying out the redevelopment plan, and a description of the method of financing the proposed redevelopment project:** This is discussed in Sections 7 and 8 of this Redevelopment Plan.
- **§ 45-32-8(12) A general statement showing how the purposes of chapters 31 — 33 of this title would be attained by redevelopment:** See discussion in Section 8 of this Redevelopment Plan.





07

Potential Grant Funding Sources

Implementation of the Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Plan will likely require a combination of local investment and external funding support. Several existing grant programs align closely with the Plan's recreational, environmental, and conservation priorities and offer opportunities to advance public access improvements, ecological enhancements, and long term stewardship initiatives. These potential funding sources are described below.

State of Rhode Island Programs

- **Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM)** administers multiple grant programs applicable to park and open space improvements, including Outdoor Recreation Grants, Local Open Space Matching Grants, Recreational Trails Program funding, urban and community forestry grants, and watershed and habitat restoration programs. These grants are particularly well aligned with phased park improvements, trail development, shoreline restoration, and ecological enhancements.
- **Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank (RIIB):** the Infrastructure Bank provides low-interest loans and, in some cases, principal-forgiveness financing for stormwater management, dam safety, water quality, and resilience projects. While primarily an infrastructure financing entity, its programs can support park-related improvements where stormwater treatment, flood mitigation, or water quality enhancement are integral components of recreational land redevelopment.

Federal and Regional Programs

- **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF):** administered through the National Park Service and implemented in Rhode Island by RIDEM, LWCF provides matching grants for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation land and facilities. LWCF is particularly applicable to park upgrades, trail systems, recreational amenities, and long-term public access improvements.
- **Southeast New England Program (SNEP)** funding supports projects that enhance watershed health, ecological resilience, and community access to natural resources. Planning, design, and implementation grants can help advance nature-based solutions, shoreline restoration, and environmentally focused recreational improvements associated with Johnson's Pond.
- **Water Resources Development Act (WRDA):** federal funding authorized through WRDA, often implemented in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, may support feasibility studies, ecosystem restoration, and flood risk management projects where regional or watershed-scale benefits can be demonstrated. While typically longer-term, WRDA alignment can strengthen the Town's case for significant resilience and environmental investments.

- U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs such as Conservation Innovation Grants and related watershed and habitat initiatives may support conservation practices, water quality improvements, and innovative restoration approaches on publicly owned lands, particularly where ecological and recreational benefits overlap.
- U.S. Department of Transportation provides funding to states for the maintenance, restoration, and construction of transportation infrastructure, including programs that support trails and recreational facilities, such as the Recreational Trails Program.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency supports resilience and infrastructure improvements by funding projects that reduce disaster risk, including dam safety upgrades and repairs, through hazard mitigation and resilience programs.

Philanthropic and Non-Governmental Support

Champlin Foundations have a long history of supporting capital improvements, land acquisition, and facility investments for public and nonprofit projects throughout Rhode Island. Philanthropic funding can play an important role in supporting park amenities, accessibility improvements, and community-focused recreational infrastructure that may not be fully covered by public grants.

Specific Potential Programs

These programs may be pursued individually or in combination as part of a phased implementation strategy, subject to eligibility, availability, and Town Council authorization. Selection of funding sources will be matched to project type, scale, and timing. Pursuing these grant opportunities would require additional investigation into specific requirements, potentially including a pre-application meeting.



TABLE 5. Applicable Grant Program Summaries

Program	Administering Agency	Eligible Project Types	Typical Funding Mechanism	Match / Notes	Relevance to Johnson's Pond
Narragansett Bay & Watersheds Restoration Fund (BWRF)	RIDEM	Stormwater retrofits, green infrastructure, riparian buffers, aquatic habitat restoration, nonpoint source pollution control	Competitive grant	Local match typically required; funded through state Green Bonds	Highly applicable for water quality, shoreline, and park-adjacent restoration projects
Outdoor Recreation Grants	RIDEM	Acquisition, development, and renovation of outdoor recreational lands and facilities	Competitive grant	Requires local match; funded through state Green Space Grant Program	Highly applicable for recreational improvements throughout the Redevelopment Boundary
Nonpoint Source Implementation Grants (Section 319)	RIDEM	Runoff reduction, watershed restoration, water quality improvements in impaired waters	Grant	Projects must address nonpoint source pollution; often tied to watershed priorities	Supports stormwater and watershed-based improvements linked to recreation
Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)	Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank / RIDEM	Stormwater management, green infrastructure, water quality and resilience infrastructure	Low-interest loan (with potential principal forgiveness)	Requires placement on Project Priority List; financing agreement required	Appropriate for infrastructure components supporting park and water quality improvements
Wastewater Treatment Facility Resilience Funding	Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank / RIDEM	Flood protection, climate resilience improvements to wastewater and related systems	Grant combined with CWSRF financing	Grant percentage varies by project size and scope	May apply where wastewater or conveyance infrastructure affects pond water quality
Southeast New England Program (SNEP) Grants	Southeast New England Program	Watershed restoration, nature-based solutions, water quality and habitat improvements	Grant (planning/implementation)	Emphasis on multi-benefit, community-oriented projects	Well aligned with ecological restoration and public access improvements
USDA NRCS Conservation Programs (e.g., NWQI, EQIP)	U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	Conservation practices improving water quality and habitat	Cost-share / technical assistance	Typically applies within priority watersheds; landowner coordination required	Potential supplemental funding where watershed-scale benefits are demonstrated



Table 3 continued

Program	Administering Agency	Eligible Project Types	Typical Funding Mechanism	Match / Notes	Relevance to Johnson's Pond
EPA BEACH Act (Monitoring Support)	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (via RIDOH)	Water quality monitoring and public health protection	Grant	Focused on monitoring and notification rather than capital improvements	Supports data and monitoring related to recreational water use
Recreational Trails Program	U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration	Development and maintenance of recreational trails and trail-related projects	Grant	The federal share of the grant is limited to up to eighty (80) percent of total (eligible) project costs; at least twenty (20) percent of the project cost must be contributed by the grantee or other qualifying sources	Provides funding for new trails, improvement or restoration of existing trails, and development of trail-side and trailhead facilities and trail linkages
Rehabilitation of High Hazard Potential Dams (HHPD)	FEMA	Dam is located in a state or territory with an approved dam safety program; is classified as high hazard potential; has an approved or approvable Emergency Action Plan (EAP); is within a jurisdiction that has a FEMA approved hazard mitigation plan addressing dam risk; and does not meet minimum dam safety standards, posing an unacceptable risk to public safety.	Grant	Town must participate in NFIP and have a FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plan that addresses dam risks	Rehabilitation of eligible high hazard potential dams
Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)	FEMA	Safety and risk reduction for dams, flood mitigation, stormwater infrastructure improvements and climate resilience	Grant	75% federal / 25% non-federal cost match	BRIC funds improvements to existing dam structures to increase safety and reduce risk, supports projects that create detention basins to manage the risks posed by dams during rain events



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Implementation

Implementation of the Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Plan is structured to support incremental, adaptable advancement of recreational, environmental, public access and infrastructure improvements over time. Given the range of improvements contemplated, the variety of eligible funding sources, and the evolving nature of site conditions, a flexible funding framework that aligns project timing and scope with available resources, regulatory requirements, and community priorities. This approach supports the timely implementation of public access and recreational projects while preserving flexibility to adapt project sequencing and funding strategies as conditions and opportunities evolve.

This chapter presents the estimated capital costs for improvements identified in this Plan, a phased public/private financing stacking strategy, and generalized annual operation and maintenance (O&M) cost estimates for the ongoing management of Johnson's Pond, the Dam, and associated public amenities.

All cost estimates are presented in 2026 dollars and include a 50% contingency factor for capital projects to account for uncertainties associated with preliminary-level planning estimates. Actual costs will be refined during detailed design, engineering, and permitting phases. This financing framework is intended to provide policy guidance and fiscal planning parameters; all funding and financing actions remain subject to Town Council approval, voter authorization where required, and compliance with applicable state and federal law.

Permitting and Regulatory Coordination

Implementation of the recommendations in this Redevelopment Plan will require coordination with multiple local and state regulatory agencies. Certain improvements located within mapped flood hazard areas may also require compliance with FEMA floodplain management regulations. The type and extent of permitting will depend on the specific activity, location, and potential environmental impacts.

At the state level, RIDEM will serve as the primary regulatory authority for projects affecting wetlands, water quality, dam infrastructure, and aquatic resources. Activities such as shoreline stabilization, dock or launch construction, trail development within regulated areas, and stormwater improvements will typically require a RIDEM Freshwater Wetlands Permit. Projects involving in-water work, dredging, or discharge to surface waters may also require State Water Quality Certification from RIDEM.

Dam-related improvements, including structural rehabilitation or modifications to water level management, will require RIDEM Dam Safety review and approval, as well as updates to operational and emergency management documentation as necessary. Similarly, aquatic vegetation management and cyanobacteria response actions must be conducted in accordance with RIDEM and RIDOH requirements to ensure protection of public health and ecological resources.



Stormwater and watershed improvements will be subject to RIPDES requirements, as well as local stormwater management regulations. Land disturbance associated with recreational or infrastructure improvements may trigger construction stormwater permits and additional environmental review.

At the local level, projects will require site plan approval, zoning compliance, and building permits, as applicable. Improvements within flood hazard areas will also require floodplain development permits to ensure compliance with FEMA standards. Work within state roadway rights-of-way will require permits from RIDOT.

Certain activities, including organized events, boating management, and the establishment of designated swimming areas, will require ongoing coordination with RIDEM, RIDOH, and municipal authorities for permitting, public safety, and enforcement. Adoption of local ordinances may be necessary to implement boating restrictions, manage use areas, and support long-term operations.

Given the range of regulatory requirements, the Town should pursue early coordination with permitting agencies during project design to confirm applicable approvals, identify constraints, and streamline implementation. Where feasible, projects should be phased or bundled to improve permitting efficiency and align with funding opportunities.

A preliminary list of potential permitting requirements based on the recommendations presented in this Redevelopment Plan are as follows:

Swimming

- Casual swimming does not require a RIDEM permit.
- Designated swimming areas require RIDOH review, water quality monitoring, cyanobacteria response protocols, and safety signage.
- If swimming areas involve physical improvements (e.g., docks, platforms, grading, sand placement), a RIDEM Freshwater Wetlands Permit may be required.

- Ongoing compliance with RIDEM water quality standards may be required where swimming beaches are formally designated.

Boat Launches

- RIDEM Freshwater Wetlands Permit required for shoreline disturbance, ramps, docks, or floats.
- Local site plan approval and dam owner authorization may be required.
- RIDEM Water Quality Certification required for projects affecting waters of the state.
- RIDEM Dam Safety review may be required if launch construction affects water levels or dam operations.

Boating

- No individual permit required for general use.
- Subject to state boating laws, registration, and Town-adopted restrictions (horsepower limits, no-wake zones, exclusion areas).
- Installation of moorings, buoys, or navigational markers may require RIDEM authorization.
- Enforcement of restrictions may require adoption of local ordinances and coordination with RIDEM Division of Law Enforcement.

Organized Events

- RIDEM special activity permit required for fishing tournaments or organized boating events.
- Municipal event permits and insurance certificates required.
- Events involving temporary structures, amplified sound, or shoreline use may require additional municipal approvals and coordination with RIDEM for environmental protection compliance.
- Events on or near the water may require safety plans consistent with Rhode Island boating regulations.

Shoreline Trails and Access Improvements

- RIDEM Freshwater Wetlands Permit required for clearing, boardwalks, overlooks, or stabilization work.
- RIDEM Water Quality Certification may be required for projects affecting surface waters.
- Local floodplain development permits required if located within FEMA flood zones.

Dam and Water Level Management

- RIDEM Dam Safety Permit required for any structural modification, repair, or operational change.
- Updates to Emergency Action Plans (EAP) may be required.
- Changes to water levels may require RIDEM approval and environmental review.
- Water Quality Certification required if work impacts waters or involves dredging/fill.

Aquatic Vegetation and Algae Management

- RIDEM permit required for herbicide application or chemical treatment.
- RIDEM approval required for mechanical harvesting or modification of aquatic vegetation.
- Activities must comply with state water quality standards and ecological protections.

Dredging and Sediment Management

- RIDEM Freshwater Wetlands Permit required.
- RIDEM Water Quality Certification required.
- Sediment testing and disposal approvals may be required depending on material characteristics.

Stormwater and Watershed Improvements

- RIDEM RIPDES Construction General Permit required for disturbance of one or more acres.
- Local stormwater management approval required.
- Projects affecting outfalls or discharges may require additional RIPDES review.
- Work within wetlands or waters triggers RIDEM permitting.

Parks, Open Space, and Recreational Facilities

- Local land development/site plan approval required.
- Building permits required for structures (restrooms, pavilions, etc.).
- RIDEM Freshwater Wetlands Permit required if located within regulated areas.
- Floodplain development permits required, where applicable.
- RIDEM Natural Heritage Review required if sensitive habitat is present.

Roadway and Access Improvements

- RIDOT Physical Alteration Permit required for work within state rights-of-way.
- Traffic or access changes may require RIDOT review.
- Local site plan and stormwater approvals required.

Utilities and Wastewater

- RIDEM permits required for septic (on-site wastewater treatment systems) installation or modification.
- RIDEM approval required for sewer extensions.
- Coordination with local water and sewer providers required.

Public Access Management and Use Restrictions

To support enhanced public access while protecting public safety, water quality, and critical infrastructure, a series of use restrictions are recommended for Johnson's Pond.

As a managed reservoir with an active dam and documented water quality concerns, unrestricted recreation presents potential risks to both users and the Pond. The following best-practice management restrictions are intended to balance recreational opportunities with clearly defined controls on where and how activities may occur, while minimizing user conflicts, protecting sensitive environments, maintaining dam safety, and reducing exposure to water quality risks such as harmful algal blooms and turbidity.

These measures also provide a framework for enforceable local regulations and ongoing coordination with state agencies, including RIDEM and RIDOH. Implementation of these restrictions should be accompanied by clear signage, physical delineation (e.g., buoys), and public education to ensure safe and sustainable use of Johnson's Pond.

- Designated use zones (swimming, paddlecraft, motorized boating, and restricted dam areas) to reduce user conflicts and improve safety.

- Prohibited swimming zones near the dam, spillway, and outlet structures, delineated by buoy lines, safety barriers, and warning signage.
 - Additional safety restrictions prohibiting swimming in proximity to the dam due to variable water quality, turbidity, and hydraulic conditions associated with dam operations including spillway discharge and drawdown activities.
 - No-access buffer zones surrounding dam infrastructure, including spillways, intake/outlet structures, and maintenance areas.
 - Seasonal and daylight-only access restrictions to limit nighttime use and reduce safety risks.
 - Shoreline use limitations, including restricting swimming to designated areas and prohibiting swimming beyond established buffers (e.g., within 50 feet of shoreline, except in designated swim zones).
 - Prohibition or limitation of gas-powered motors to reduce water quality impacts, noise, and user conflicts, with preference for electric motors or non-motorized watercraft.
 - Use of buoy lines, floating barriers, and signage to clearly delineate swimming areas, boating corridors, and restricted zones.
 - Temporary closures or restricted access during harmful algal bloom advisories, cyanobacteria events, or other water quality impairments.
 - Prohibition on diving, jumping, or climbing on dam structures, spillways, or appurtenant infrastructure.
 - Restrictions on anchoring, mooring, or loitering within designated navigation channels or near dam and spillway structures.
 - Pet and wildlife management measures (e.g., leash requirements, restrictions in designated swimming areas) to protect water quality and public health.
 - Carry-in/carry-out and anti-littering requirements to minimize debris and protect water resources.
- Ultimately, the Town will determine and refine the appropriate combination of use restrictions as recreation and public access are expanded based on site conditions, public safety considerations and ongoing coordination with state regulatory agencies.



TABLE 6. Estimated Capital Cost Summary

Project / Program Category	Near-Term (0–5 yr)	Medium-Term (5–10 yr)	Long-Term (10+ yr)	Total
Concept Design Capital Projects				
Dam Property Improvements	\$4,100,000	—	—	\$4,100,000
Francis Sherman Park Improvements	\$1,500,000	—	—	\$1,500,000
Program-Level Improvements (Planning Estimates)				
Dam Safety & Capital Repairs	\$2,200,000	\$2,800,000	\$1,000,000	\$6,000,000
Stormwater Retrofits & Green Infrastructure	\$250,000	\$1,000,000	\$2,500,000	\$3,750,000
Water Quality & Ecological Restoration	\$350,000	\$750,000	\$1,500,000	\$2,600,000
Future Recreational Access Improvements	—	\$750,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,750,000
Safety, Signage & Wayfinding	\$150,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$350,000
Land Conservation / Acquisition (Willing Seller)	—	\$500,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,500,000
TOTAL ESTIMATED CAPITAL COSTS	\$8,550,000	\$5,900,000	\$10,100,000	\$24,550,000

Note: Concept design estimates include surveying, permitting, design, engineering, and a 50% contingency. Program-level estimates are order-of-magnitude and will be refined during implementation.

Estimated Capital Costs

Table 6 consolidates estimated capital costs by project phase and category. The Dam Property and Francis Sherman Park estimates are based on concept-level designs prepared by the consultant team. Near-term, medium-term, and long-term program costs represent order-of-magnitude planning estimates for the broader categories of improvements identified in Chapter 6 of the Redevelopment Plan.

Finance Stacking Plan

Implementation of the Redevelopment Plan will require a diversified, multi-source financing strategy that layers public grants, low-interest

loan programs, dedicated revenue streams, and municipal financing authority. No single funding mechanism is sufficient to support the full scope of improvements; accordingly, the Town should pursue a blended approach that matches funding sources to eligible project types and phases.

The following financing stacking plan identifies the primary funding sources available under Rhode Island and federal law, organized by financing tier. The plan is structured to maximize grant funding (which does not require repayment), supplement with low-interest state financing, generate dedicated local revenues through user fees and district assessments, and reserve general obligation capacity for priority infrastructure investments.



Tier 1

State and Federal Grant Funding (Non-Repayable)

Grant funding should serve as the primary financing tier for capital projects, particularly for recreation, conservation, water quality, and ecological improvements. The following programs are well-aligned with Johnson's Pond project elements:

- **RIDEM Outdoor Recreation Grants and Local Open Space Matching Grants:** applicable to park improvements at the Dam Property and Francis Sherman Park, trail development, dock and boat launch construction, ADA accessibility improvements, and shoreline access enhancements.
- **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF):** federal matching grants (typically 50%) for acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation facilities. Strongly aligned with both concept designs.
- **Recreational Trails Program (RTP):** federal funding for trail construction, maintenance, and trailhead facilities including connections to the Washington Secondary Trail.
- **Southeast New England Program (SNEP) Grants:** planning and implementation grants for watershed restoration, nature-based solutions, and water quality improvement projects.
- **EPA Section 319 Nonpoint Source Grants:** eligible for stormwater retrofits, watershed restoration, and nutrient reduction projects targeting Johnson's Pond's impaired waterbody listing.
- **Narragansett Bay and Watersheds Restoration Fund (BWRP):** state Green Bond-funded grants for stormwater retrofits, green infrastructure, riparian buffers, and aquatic habitat restoration.
- **USDA NRCS Conservation Programs (NWQI, EQIP):** cost-share and technical assistance for conservation practices with watershed-scale water quality benefits.
- **Champlin Foundation and Other Philanthropic Sources:** capital funding for park amenities, accessibility improvements, and community-serving infrastructure.

Grant funding should cover approximately 40–60% of near-term capital costs and 30–50% of medium- and long-term capital costs, depending on program availability and match requirements.

T1

Tier 2

State Low-Interest Financing (Below-Market Loans)

Where grant funding is insufficient or unavailable for infrastructure-intensive components, the Town should leverage below-market-rate loan programs administered by the RIIB:

- **Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF):** provides loans at rates subsidized 33% below market for up to 20-year terms. Eligible for stormwater management, dam safety, water quality infrastructure, green infrastructure, and climate resilience projects. Principal forgiveness may be available for qualifying projects under IJA supplemental funding.
- **Facility Plan Loan Program (FPLP):** up to \$150,000 in financing for facility planning studies (e.g., Lake Management Study, stormwater assessments) at below-market rates with up to 3-year terms.

RIIB financing should support approximately 20–35% of dam safety, stormwater, and water quality infrastructure costs, particularly for projects not fully fundable through grants.

T2

Tier 3

Johnson's Pond Dam Management District

Pursuant to R.I.G.L. §45-62 (Dam Management Districts), the Town Council is authorized to establish by ordinance a Dam Management District to fund dam repairs, maintenance, management, and/or removal. This mechanism is directly applicable to Johnson's Pond.

A Johnson's Pond Dam Management District would:

- Establish defined boundaries encompassing properties that benefit from or are affected by the Dam and reservoir system (potentially coterminous with or a subset of the Redevelopment Boundary).

- Authorize annual assessments on properties within the district to fund dam safety inspections, routine maintenance, capital repairs, emergency action plan implementation, and on-call engineering services.
- Provide a dedicated, transparent revenue stream separate from the Town's general fund, ensuring that dam-related costs are borne equitably by the benefiting community.

T3 Based on approximately 6,000 parcels within or proximate to the Redevelopment Boundary at an average annual assessment of \$75–\$150 per parcel, the district could generate approximately \$450,000–\$900,000 annually.

This revenue stream would primarily support Tier A (Dam Safety) and Tier B (Pond Management) operation and maintenance costs described in **Table 8** and could also support debt service on RIIB dam safety loans.

Tier 4 Tax Increment Financing District (TIF)

Under R.I.G.L. §45-33.2 (Municipal Tax Increment Financing Act), the Town may establish a Tax Increment District within the Redevelopment Boundary to capture incremental property tax revenues generated by increased assessed values resulting from public improvements. TIF revenues may be used to finance project costs including public infrastructure, recreation facilities, environmental improvements and related capital investments.

A TIF district would be most effective over the medium- to long-term as public improvements within the Redevelopment Boundary enhance property values. TIF revenues could support debt service on revenue bonds issued for larger capital projects such as future recreational access facilities, stormwater infrastructure, or marina development.

TIF districts in Rhode Island may have a term of up to 40 years and may issue bonds secured by the pledged tax increment revenues.

A TIF should be evaluated as a supplementary financing tool for medium- and long-term capital projects, particularly those that are expected to generate measurable increases in property values within the district. **T4**

Tier 5 Municipal Bonding Authority

Pursuant to R.I.G.L. §45-12-1 et seq., the Town of Coventry is authorized to issue General Obligation (GO) bonds and revenue bonds for public purposes, including parks, recreation facilities, dam safety, and public infrastructure, subject to voter approval where required.

Bonding should be reserved for high-priority, large-scale capital investments that cannot be fully funded through grants, state financing, or dedicated revenues:

- GO Bonds: appropriate for major capital projects such as dam rehabilitation, park construction, and public infrastructure that serve the general welfare of Coventry residents. GO bonds carry the Town's full faith and credit and typically achieve the lowest borrowing rates.
- Revenue Bonds: may be secured by dedicated revenue streams (user fees, permit revenues, TIF revenues, or district assessments) and do not require voter approval. Suitable for self-supporting recreational facilities or infrastructure that generates identifiable revenue.

Bonding should be limited to no more than 15–25% of total capital costs and reserved for projects where other financing sources are insufficient or timing constraints require immediate capital access. **T5**



Tier 6

Dedicated User Fee and Permit Revenue

This Redevelopment Plan recommends establishing a registration and permit program for motorized watercraft, parking fees, and daily launch permits. These revenues provide a self-sustaining funding stream for ongoing operations while also supporting debt service and capital reinvestment:

- Annual Resident Boat Permit: \$50–\$100/vessel (estimated 400–600 registered vessels = \$20,000–\$60,000/year).
- Daily Non-Resident Launch Permit: \$15–\$25/launch (estimated 1,500–3,000 launches/season = \$22,500–\$75,000/year).
- Seasonal Parking Permits (Resident): \$25–\$50/vehicle (estimated 300–500 permits = \$7,500–\$25,000/year).
- Daily Parking Fees (Non-Resident): \$10–\$15/vehicle (estimated 2,000–4,000 visits/season = \$20,000–\$60,000/year).

- Campground/Concession License Fees: \$2,500–\$5,000/year per operator.

Estimated Total Annual Fee Revenue: \$75,000–\$230,000 at initial capacity, increasing as facilities are expanded and usage grows.

T6

Summary

Table 7 summarizes the financing sources anticipated for each phase of the project.

TABLE 7. Financing Stacking Plan by Phase and Source

Source	Near-Term	% of Phase	Med-Term	% of Phase	Long-Term	% of Phase
Grants (State/Federal)	\$3,425,000	50%	\$1,840,000	40%	\$3,630,000	30%
RIIB / CWSRF Loans	\$1,370,000	20%	\$1,150,000	25%	\$2,420,000	20%
Dam Management District	\$685,000	10%	\$690,000	15%	\$1,815,000	15%
TIF Revenue	—	—	\$460,000	10%	\$2,420,000	20%
GO / Revenue Bonds	\$1,028,000	15%	\$460,000	10%	\$1,815,000	15%
User Fees / Permits	\$342,000	5%	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	\$6,850,000	100%	\$4,600,000	100%	\$12,100,000	100%

TABLE 8. Estimated Annual Operation and Maintenance Costs

O&M Category	Low Estimate	High Estimate	Primary Funding
Tier A: Dam Safety & Reservoir Operations			
Biennial dam inspection (annualized)	\$15,000	\$25,000	DMD / General
Routine dam maintenance (vegetation, debris, seepage monitoring)	\$30,000	\$60,000	DMD
On-call engineering support (dam safety)	\$25,000	\$50,000	DMD
EAP updates, tabletop exercises, compliance reporting	\$10,000	\$20,000	DMD / General
Water level management and gate operations	\$10,000	\$20,000	DMD
Subtotal – Dam Safety	\$90,000	\$175,000	
Tier B: Pond Ecology & Water Quality Management			
Water quality monitoring program (sampling, lab analysis)	\$25,000	\$50,000	Grants / DMD
Invasive species management (hydrilla, cyanobacteria)	\$40,000	\$80,000	Grants / DMD
Shoreline stabilization and buffer maintenance	\$15,000	\$30,000	Grants / DMD
Stormwater system maintenance (catch basins, outfalls, BMPs)	\$20,000	\$40,000	General / Grants
Subtotal – Ecology & Water Quality	\$100,000	\$200,000	
Tier C: Public Safety & Enforcement			
Dedicated marine patrol / enforcement unit (seasonal)	\$80,000	\$150,000	User Fees / General
Patrol boat operation, fuel, maintenance	\$15,000	\$25,000	User Fees
Buoy and signage maintenance	\$5,000	\$10,000	User Fees
Insurance, risk management, legal	\$20,000	\$40,000	General
Subtotal – Public Safety	\$120,000	\$225,000	
Tier D: Recreational Facilities & Amenities			
Park maintenance (trails, docks, ramps, landscaping)	\$40,000	\$80,000	User Fees / General
Restroom facilities operation and maintenance	\$15,000	\$30,000	User Fees
Waste management and trash collection	\$10,000	\$20,000	User Fees / General
Boat wash station operation	\$5,000	\$10,000	User Fees
Seasonal staffing (gate attendants, kiosks, permits)	\$30,000	\$60,000	User Fees
Website, communications, annual reporting	\$10,000	\$15,000	General / DMD
Subtotal – Recreation & Amenities	\$110,000	\$215,000	
TOTAL ESTIMATED ANNUAL O&M	\$420,000	\$815,000	

DMD = Dam Management District; General = Town General Fund; User Fees = Permit, parking, and launch fee revenues.



Estimated Annual Operation and Maintenance Costs

Successful long-term stewardship of Johnson’s Pond requires sustained annual investment in dam safety, water quality management, public safety, recreational facility operations, and administrative coordination. The following estimates represent generalized annual costs organized into four tiers. These costs will evolve as facilities are constructed and programs mature.

Revenue and Cost Sustainability Analysis

At full build-out, the combined annual revenue from the Dam Management District and user fees/permits is projected as follows:

Annual Revenue Source	Low Estimate	High Estimate
Dam Management District Assessments	\$450,000	\$900,000
User Fees and Permits	\$75,000	\$230,000
Total Dedicated Revenue	\$525,000	\$1,130,000
Total Estimated Annual O&M	\$420,000	\$815,000
Surplus / (Deficit)	\$105,000	\$315,000

TABLE 9. Revenue and Cost Sustainability

A combination of Dam Management District assessments and user fee revenues can fully sustain annual operation and maintenance costs while generating a modest surplus for capital reinvestment, debt service on RIIB loans, or reserve fund contributions. The surplus provides a buffer against cost increases, unexpected maintenance needs, and years with reduced fee revenue due to weather or water quality advisories.

If the Town elects to adopt a more conservative initial assessment level, a modest General Fund contribution of approximately \$50,000–\$150,000 annually may be necessary in the near term until fee revenue ramps up and the Dam Management District is fully operational.

Funding Implementation and Authorization

At this stage, the Redevelopment Plan identifies anticipated costs at a programmatic level rather than providing detailed estimates for specific projects (aside from the Dam Property and Francis Sherman Park concept designs). As priorities are refined and projects move toward implementation, the Town should develop more detailed cost estimates and project-specific financing strategies.

Funding is anticipated to rely on a blended approach that may include municipal appropriations, state and federal grants, partnerships, philanthropic contributions, and other eligible mechanisms, as appropriate.

Pursuit of any funding or financing mechanism shall be subject to Town Council approval, voter authorization where required by law, compliance with applicable state and federal statutes, and satisfaction of all program-specific requirements, including matching funds, long-term maintenance obligations, and public use restrictions. This framework is intended to provide policy guidance and flexibility, enabling the Town to advance redevelopment incrementally while maintaining fiscal responsibility and statutory compliance.

All funding and financing actions shall be undertaken in accordance with applicable provisions of the Rhode Island General Laws, including but not limited to R.I.G.L. §45-12-1 et seq. (municipal debt and bonding authority), R.I.G.L. §45-15-1 et seq. (municipal appropriations), R.I.G.L. §45-33.2 (Tax Increment Financing), R.I.G.L. §45-62 (Dam Management Districts), and applicable federal funding requirements.

Implementation Roadmap and Sequencing Strategy

To support effective execution of the Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Plan, a high-level implementation roadmap has been developed to guide the Town of Coventry in translating recommendations into coordinated actions. The roadmap is intentionally structured as a concise, action-oriented framework that identifies what the Town should prioritize across governance, project delivery, funding, environmental stewardship, and long-term operations. It is designed to support near-term decision-making while remaining flexible, allowing the Town Council to refine and expand specific actions over time based on evolving priorities, funding opportunities, and institutional capacity.

The roadmap is organized into five interrelated phases that collectively establish governance, deliver capital improvements, secure funding, and sustain long-term management of the Pond. While presented as a high-level framework, the roadmap is intended to guide

the Town's actions while remaining flexible, allowing for refinement and expansion through subsequent planning, design, and budgeting efforts. These phases are not strictly linear and are expected to operate on overlapping timelines, with governance, funding, and environmental programs initiated early and continuing alongside park development and ongoing operations. As implementation progresses, the Town may adjust the scope, timing, and sequencing of actions within each phase to align with project readiness, regulatory requirements, funding opportunities, and evolving priorities.

- **Phase 1:** Foundation should focus on adoption of the Redevelopment Plan, establishment of a formal governance structure, and immediate compliance obligations associated with dam ownership and safety. This phase should include designation of a management entity, development of operational policies, coordination with state agencies, and codification of key recreational and safety ordinances.





- **Phase 2:** Park Project Implementation should advance concept-level recommendations for the Dam Property and Francis Sherman Park through a standardized five-stage process: pre-design studies, schematic design, permitting, final design and bidding, and construction. These projects should proceed in parallel but follow a consistent sequence to ensure that site conditions, permitting requirements, and funding commitments are addressed prior to construction.
- **Phase 3:** Funding Strategy should outline a sequenced “funding stack” that combines grants, state financing, local revenue tools, and bond financing to support capital and operational costs. Key actions should include establishing a grant pipeline, creating a Dam Management District, evaluating tax increment financing, authorizing bonding, and implementing user fee and permit programs.
- **Phase 4:** Environmental Monitoring and Stewardship should establish the programs necessary to support expanded public use while protecting water quality and ecological health. This should include water quality monitoring, cyanobacteria response protocols, invasive species management, stormwater improvements, and development of a comprehensive Lake Management Study to guide long-term watershed strategies.
- **Phase 5:** Ongoing Governance, Maintenance, and Oversight should transition the Town from project implementation to long-term management. This phase should include routine dam safety compliance, facility operations and maintenance, enforcement and marine patrol, continued environmental monitoring, and periodic updates to capital and operational plans to ensure long-term sustainability.

Together, these phases provide an adaptable framework for implementation, ensuring that investments in Johnson’s Pond are coordinated, financially sustainable, and supported by appropriate governance and environmental safeguards over time.

Consistency with the Rhode Island Redevelopment Act

The Redevelopment Act of 1956 (R.I.G.L. §§45-31 through 45-33) establishes that blighted and substandard areas constitute serious and growing menace to the health, safety, morals, and welfare of the communities in which they exist, and that such conditions require coordinated public action when private enterprise alone cannot remedy them. The Johnson’s Pond Redevelopment Plan attains the purposes of Chapters 31 through 33 through the following means:

- **Elimination of Blighted and Substandard Conditions (§45-31-2; §45-31-8(14)).** The statutory definition of “redevelopment” is the elimination and prevention of the spread of blighted and substandard areas. As documented in Chapter 4 and **Attachment D** of this Plan, the Johnson’s Pond Redevelopment Boundary contains conditions that satisfy the definitions of deteriorated blight and arrested blight under R.I.G.L. §45-31-8(2) and (6), including environmental contamination of an impaired waterbody, deterioration of critical dam infrastructure deemed unsafe by RIDEM, impediments to public access and recreation, and diversity of ownership that prevents coordinated improvement. This Plan directly addresses each of these conditions through a structured program of dam safety compliance and capital repair, water quality restoration and invasive species management, stormwater infrastructure improvements, and phased public access and recreational facility development. Once implemented, these actions will eliminate the conditions that constitute blight within the Redevelopment Boundary and prevent their recurrence through sustained management, monitoring and enforcement programs.
- **Protection of Public Health, Safety, and Welfare (§45-31-2; §45-31-3).** The General Assembly has found that blighted and substandard areas are injurious to the public health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants of the communities in which

they exist. The Johnson's Pond Dam was deemed unsafe by RIDEM and subjected to an Immediate Compliance Order in 2024 due to a compromised spillway, structural deterioration, and risk of failure. These conditions, if left unaddressed, could have resulted in loss of life and significant damage to downstream properties and infrastructure. The Pond's designation as a Category 5 impaired waterbody under the Clean Water Act and recurring cyanobacteria advisories restricting recreational contact and invasive species proliferation further threaten public health and diminish the welfare of the surrounding community. This Plan addresses these threats through near-term actions including dam safety compliance programs, emergency action plan updates, on-call engineering support, cyanobacteria response protocols, and coordinated water quality monitoring. Medium- and long-term actions including dam capital rehabilitation, watershed-based stormwater management and a comprehensive Lake Management Study will ensure that public health and safety protections are sustained over the life of the Plan.

- **Promotion of Sound Growth and Community Benefit (§45-31-7).** The Redevelopment Act authorizes redevelopment activities to promote the sound growth of communities and to advance the general welfare of their inhabitants. This Plan promotes sound growth by transitioning Johnson's Pond from a historically private asset with inconsistent management into a well-managed public resource that delivers lasting community benefits. The concept designs for the Dam Property and Francis Sherman Park, the phased recreational access framework, the governance and enforcement recommendations and the long-term funding strategy collectively establish a coordinated path toward sustainable public stewardship. By implementing boating safety regulations, ADA-accessible recreational facilities, trail connections to the Bike Path, and community programming, the Plan enhances the quality of life for Coventry residents while protecting and restoring the ecological and scenic character of the Pond. These improvements align with the

community's expressed vision for Johnson's Pond as a safe, family-friendly destination that balances preservation and recreation.

- **Addressing Obstacles to Private Redevelopment (§45-31-4; §45-31-8(2)).** The General Assembly has found that blighted and substandard conditions are frequently beyond remedy through the ordinary operations of private enterprise acting alone, particularly where diversity of ownership, the need for area-wide coordination, or the scale of required investment makes private action unduly costly or impracticable. These conditions are present within the Redevelopment Boundary. The Pond is surrounded by numerous individually owned residential parcels, while the Dam and Pond function as shared infrastructure influencing water levels, environmental conditions and property values across the entire area. Coordinated shoreline management, watershed-scale nutrient and stormwater controls, invasive species treatment, public access planning, and long-term dam maintenance cannot be achieved through individual private action. This Plan establishes a coordinated, area-wide framework including a recommended Dam Management District pursuant to R.I.G.L. §45-62, multi-source capital financing, and sustained governance and enforcement programs that overcomes these obstacles and enables improvements that would otherwise be infeasible for private enterprise to undertake independently.
- **Coordinated Application of Regulatory Controls and Redevelopment Measures (§45-31-5).** The General Assembly has recognized that certain blighted areas may be susceptible to rehabilitation and improvement through the coordinated application of regulatory controls together with redevelopment measures, short of total or extensive clearance. The Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Plan is expressly designed to apply this approach. Rather than proposing large-scale acquisition, displacement, or demolition, the Plan relies on a combination of regulatory actions (including boating safety regulations, speed limits, no-wake

zones, fertilizer controls, erosion and sediment standards, and shoreline buffer protections), capital investments (dam repairs, stormwater retrofits, park improvements, and public access facilities), and management programs (water quality monitoring, invasive species treatment, enforcement, and community engagement) to address blighted conditions incrementally and sustainably. This approach preserves existing land uses, respects private property rights, and advances redevelopment objectives through targeted, phased improvements consistent with community priorities and available funding.

- **Public Use and Public Purpose (§45-31-6; §45-32-1).** The Redevelopment Act declares it to be the policy of the State of Rhode Island to assist in the redevelopment of blighted and substandard areas, and that redevelopment activities undertaken to eliminate conditions detrimental to the public health, safety, morals, and welfare constitute valid public uses and purposes. The Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Plan serves a clear and defined public purpose: the long-term stewardship, environmental protection, and public recreational use of a 647-acre reservoir and its surrounding lands that have been brought into public ownership for the first time in the Pond's history. Every recommendation in this Plan (from dam safety compliance and water quality restoration to public access improvements and enforcement programs) is directed toward delivering sustained public benefit for the residents of Coventry and advancing the statutory objectives of the Redevelopment Act.

Through the collective implementation of these actions, the Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Plan fulfills the purposes of Chapters 31 through 33 of Title 45 by eliminating documented blighted and substandard conditions, protecting public health and safety, promoting the sound growth of the community, overcoming obstacles that prevent coordinated action, and establishing a transparent, community-informed, and legally compliant framework for the long-term public stewardship of Johnson's Pond.



Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Plan

Attachments

Attachment A - Memorandum on Johnson's Pond History, Context, and Future Governance Responsibilities

Attachment B - First Public Meeting Summary

Attachment C - Second Public meeting Summary

Attachment D - Blight Finding Assessment

Attachment E - Johnson's Pond Water Quality Report

Attachment F - Dam Property and Francis Sherman Park Concept Designs (11x17) and Detailed Cost Estimates

Attachment G - Johnson's Pond Land Use Analysis



Attachment A

Attachment B

Attachment C

Attachment D

Attachment E

Attachment F

Attachment G

Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Plan

Attachment A

Memorandum on Johnson's Pond History, Context, and Future Governance Responsibilities





Attachment A

Attachment B

Attachment C

Attachment D

Attachment E

Attachment F

Attachment G

Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Plan

Attachment B

First Public Meeting Summary



May 2026



Attachment A

Attachment B

Attachment C

Attachment D

Attachment E

Attachment F

Attachment G

Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Plan

Attachment C

Second Public Meeting Summary



May 2026



Attachment A

Attachment B

Attachment C

Attachment D

Attachment E

Attachment F

Attachment G

Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Plan

Attachment D

Blight Finding Assessment



May 2026



Attachment A

Attachment B

Attachment C

Attachment D

Attachment E

Attachment F

Attachment G

Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Plan

Attachment E

Johnson's Pond Water Quality Report





Attachment A

Attachment B

Attachment C

Attachment D

Attachment E

Attachment F

Attachment G

Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Plan

Attachment F

Dam Property and Francis Sherman Park Concept
Designs and Detailed Cost Estimates



May 2026



Attachment A

Attachment B

Attachment C

Attachment D

Attachment E

Attachment F

Attachment G

Johnson's Pond Redevelopment Plan

Attachment G

Johnson's Pond Land Use Analysis



May 2026