

Community Facilities and Services

Sections of this chapter have been taken directly from the 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development.

Community facilities and services involve a broad range of functions that serve the general or specific needs of the public and are considered to be the responsibility of a town or public agency. The town's ability to provide community services in an efficient manner is critical to the quality of life in a town. A balance must be struck, however, between the provision of adequate and needed services and the tax burden required to support them. This chapter covers those facilities provided by Watertown, such as schools, town-owned buildings, police and fire services, and utilities. Public parks and recreation are discussed in Chapter 7.

Public Safety

Police Department

As of FY 2016, there were 38 sworn officers in the Watertown Police Department, which is organized into two bureaus, the Administrative Bureau and the Field Operations Bureau. The department is comprised of the Chief of Police, the Deputy Chief of Police, five lieutenants, six sergeants, four detectives, and 21 patrol officers. The department also includes nonsworn support staff for records and dispatch needs, including six full-time and four part-time dispatchers. While Watertown's population has increased by roughly 1,200 people between 2000 and 2010, the police force has grown by only two additional sworn police officers. However, as indicated by police statistics, the department appears to be generally effective in protecting the community.

The town also has an Animal Control Division, which is comprised of two full-time animal control officers. The police station is located on French Street, and the Animal Control Division's dog pound is located on Old Baird Road. Built in 1980, the police station is adequate to meet the operational needs of the department.

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Fire Protection

Fire protection is provided by a 97-person Volunteer Fire Department under the supervision of a Chief and Deputy Chief. Currently, the Fire Chief also serves as the full-time Fire Marshal. Department expenses are underwritten by Watertown. The department operates from two stations equipped with state-of-the-art equipment, including eight engines, two ladder trucks, and one heavy-duty rescue vehicle. Training drills are conducted throughout the year, and over 60% of the department has advanced training in areas such as hazardous materials. The department has three emergency vehicles for first-response use and medical treatment during emergencies. Ambulance service is provided by private carriers.

The primary fire station on Main Street underwent renovations in the mid 2000s, adding approximately 23,000 square feet of space for four bays, training facilities, and storage. The second fire facility is a substation on Buckingham Street in Oakville. To help improve response time in the northern part of town, a future consideration might include the addition of another two-bay substation. The fire department has identified a possible location for such on Litchfield Road.

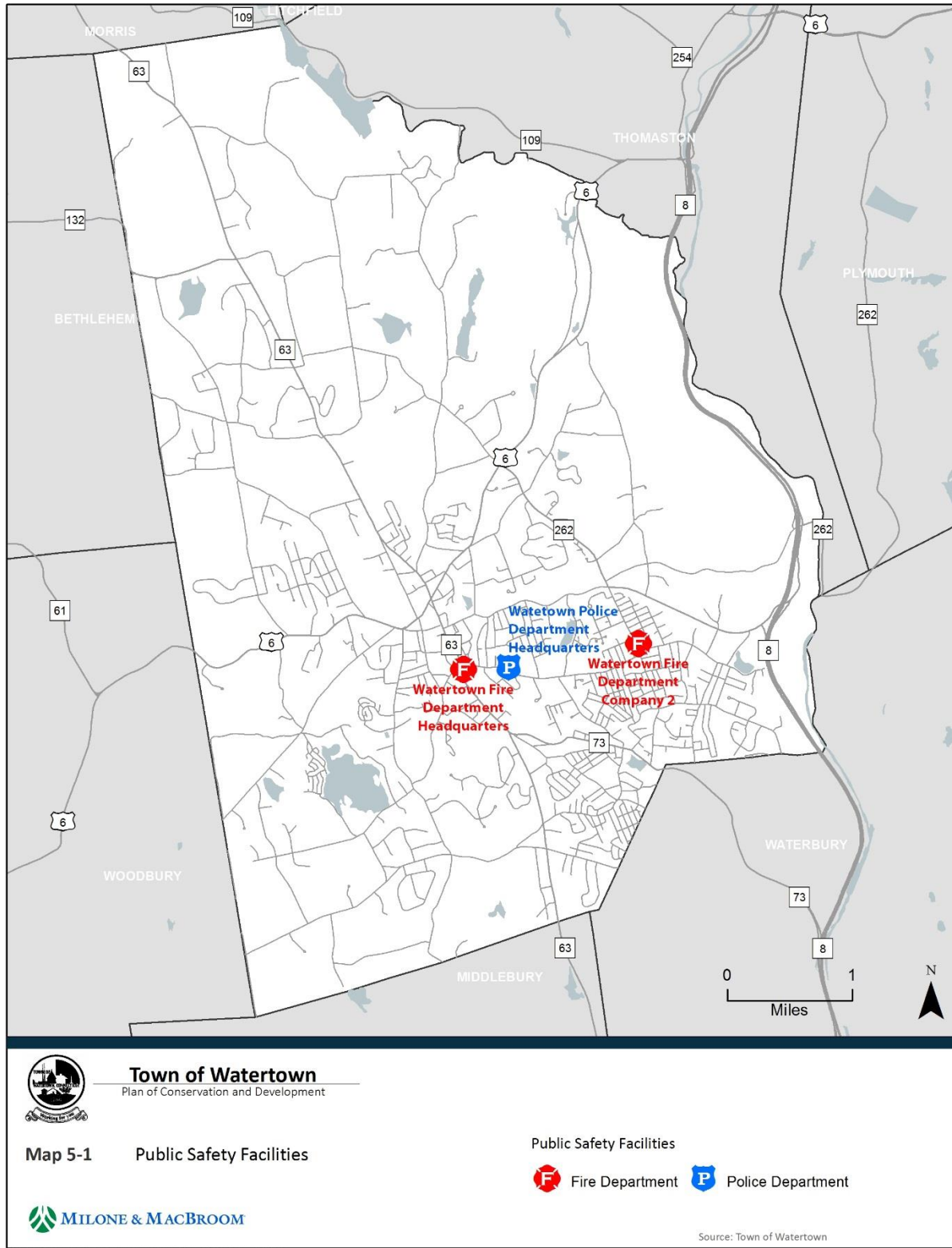


The Watertown Fire Department's main fire station was renovated in the mid 2000s, adding additional vehicle bays, training facilities, and storage areas.



The Watertown Police Department Headquarters was built in 1980 and meets the operational needs of the department.

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Municipal Services

Town Offices

As of 2017, Town of Watertown employees are located in three separate buildings: Town Hall (37 Deforest Drive), Town Hall Annex (424 Main Street), and the Watertown Municipal Center (61 Echo Lake Road). The Watertown Municipal Center is located in the old Heminway Park School building. In 2016, Watertown residents authorized nearly \$12 million in bond funds to renovate the Watertown Municipal Center. The renovations are currently being designed. Once the Municipal Center project is complete, all town departments will be housed there and the Town Hall and Town Hall Annex buildings vacated. No formal decision has been made as to what will happen to Town Hall and Town Hall Annex buildings once they are vacated. The town should conduct a comprehensive facilities plan in coordination with the other town departments and the Board of Education to assess potential reuse of both buildings. Future reuse of the buildings should take into consideration their historic character as both structures contribute to the Watertown Center National Historic District.



Once the Watertown Municipal Center renovations are completed, all town employees will vacate the Town Hall (left) and Town Hall Annex (right) buildings. The town should conduct a comprehensive facilities study to determine whether these buildings should be repurposed for another community use or sold. Special consideration should be given to the historic character of both buildings.

Library

Watertown is served by the Watertown Public Library, which has two separate facilities run by the Watertown Library Association, a nonprofit organization. The association has served the community since 1865 when it was incorporated by a special act of the State Legislature. The Watertown Library is located at 470 Main Street. In 1968, the Watertown Library Association merged with the Oakville Library Association, and a second branch was opened on Davis Street in Oakville. A major renovation of the Oakville Library was completed in June 2002.

The library collection holds over 78,194 books and serials as well as nonprint items including videos, CDs and audio books, and electronic reference resources. The library's web-based integrated system combines Main and Branch data and functions. The library offers 24/7 off-site access to all of its electronic databases. The Main Street library has 12 public access work stations, and the Oakville Library has three.

The association is governed by a board of 11 trustees; 10 are elected by the membership, and one is appointed by the Town Council. The association is supported primarily by a town grant, which constitutes approximately 90% of its operating budget and is supplemented by income from the association's endowment, state aid, contributions, membership dues, and special fundraising events. Funds for building and capital improvements have been raised by the association.

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Senior Center

The Senior Center is located at 311 Falls Avenue in the Oakville section of Watertown. The center provides services and programs for residents age 55 years old and over and persons with disabilities under age 55. The center currently has one full-time and one part-time employee. Membership has grown dramatically over the last few years. As of 2017, there are over 700 registered members of the Senior Center, up from 199 members in 2010. However, residents do not need to be registered to access services or programs. As discussed in Chapter 1, Watertown has seen its population age 65 years old and over increase by 16.2% between 2000 and 2010, and this trend is projected to continue over the next decade as baby boomers age into retirement. This growth will exacerbate existing facility deficiencies. Existing facility deficiencies include the following:



The Watertown Senior Center has seen membership grow dramatically over the last decade.

- Small building limits opportunities to expand programming or hire more staff.
- Center is unable to run simultaneous programming due to lack of space.
- Not enough general parking spaces and handicap parking spaces
- Small site limits ability to expand the building and parking area.
- The property is located within a 100-year flood zone.
- Inability to provide recreational activities, particularly for younger seniors. Town only has gymnasiums or auditoriums at public schools, and these facilities are not available for senior use during the school day.
- Disconnected from other town social services and operations
- The location of the site is perceived as "out of the way." Perceptions of the neighborhood surrounding the center make it difficult to recruit new members.
- The Senior Center is the town's backup emergency shelter, but it lacks backup power supply and washing facilities.

The long-range goal is to build a new, joint senior and community center facility on the Veterans' Park site. In the near term, the town should conduct a needs assessment and facility study for the Senior Center in conjunction with other town facilities such as Town Hall and the Town Hall Annex.

Public Works

The Public Works Garage is located at 91 Burton Street in Oakville. The garage is located on a 3-acre parcel in the middle of a residential neighborhood. The 3-acre parcel on which the existing facility is located limits the department's ability to be efficient. Several facility deficiencies exist, including the following:

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- There is space at the facility to store enough salt for only one snowstorm. Once dispensed, trucks have to move portions of the 2,400 cubic yards of salt stored at the transfer station to the highway garage for the next storm.
- Because the building does not provide interior space for all of its physical resources, some vehicles are stored outside of the building, resulting in increased mobilization time for plowing and decreased life expectancy of machinery.
- The number and size of mechanic and parking bays require unnecessary maneuvering. There is not enough interior space to house the plow trucks and repair on vehicles.
- Expanded interior space will also provide the department with meeting rooms, training facilities, and rooms for overnight accommodation for drivers to rest during storms.

The town should consider relocating the existing facility to an area with more compatible land uses. A new facility would provide the department with adequate space to perform its operations in compliance with DEEP regulations. An ideal facility would be situated on a 5- to 10-acre site, with opportunity for expansion and with access to major town roads to facilitate operations. If a new location for a Public Works facility is found, the existing facility could be reused by the Watertown Public Schools maintenance department, which currently operates out of a small facility adjacent to Deland Field.

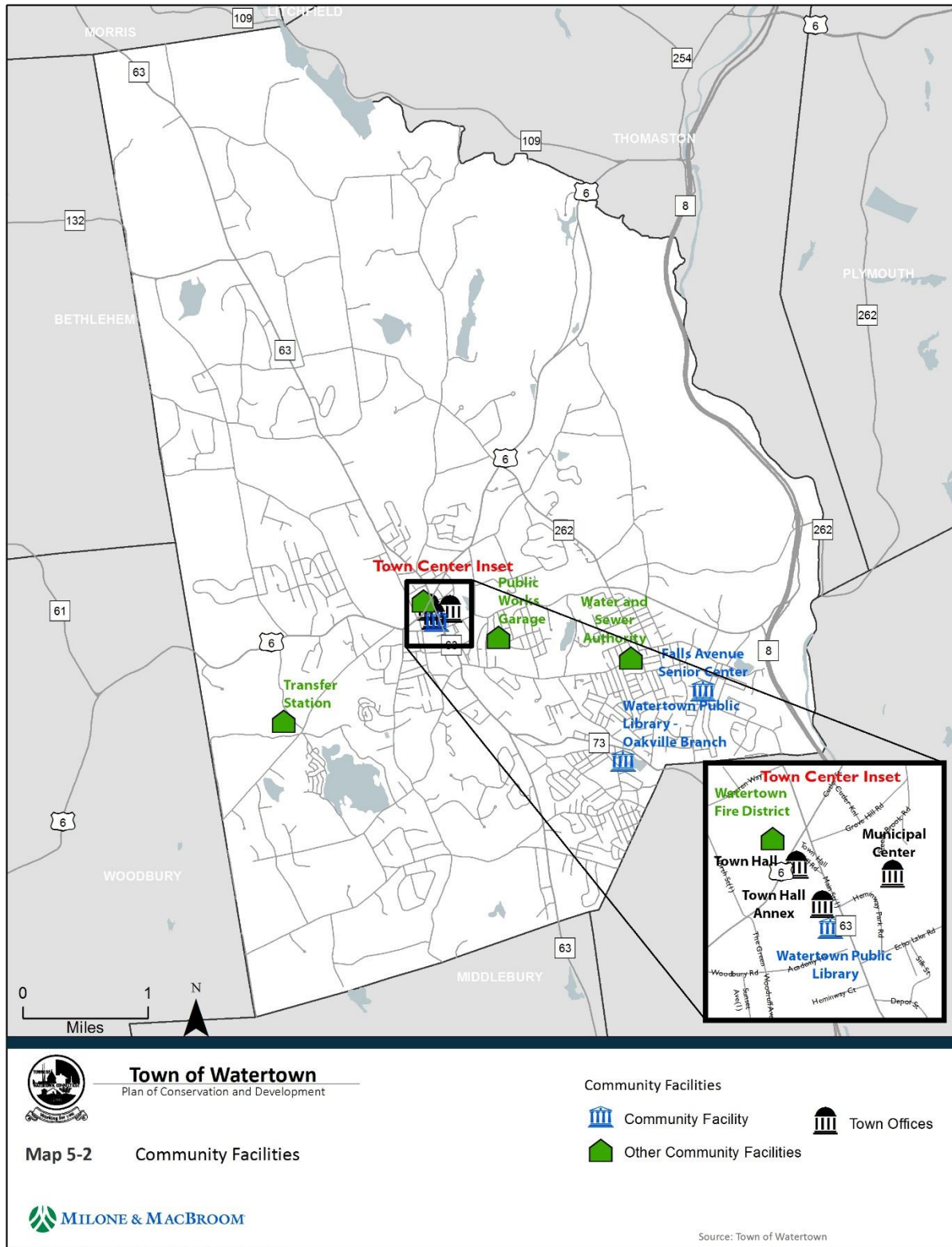
Waste Management

The town has a contract with the Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority (MIRA) for the disposal of solid waste. MIRA operates a regional transfer station on Echo Lake Road and sends solid waste and recyclables to its main facility in Hartford. Residential, commercial, and industrial waste and recyclables are picked up by private trash haulers. Residents and nonprofit organizations may dispose of waste and recyclables at the Watertown Transfer Station on Old Baird Road on the site of the former town landfill. The existing transfer station is outdated and needs to be upgraded. The town should continue to monitor environmental conditions of the transfer station and landfill site and pursue funding for environmental remediation if issues are found.

The Town of Watertown participates in statewide product stewardship initiatives and accepts paint, electronics, and mattresses initiatives at the transfer station at no cost to residents. Product stewardship initiatives require that product manufacturers assume the cost and disposal of their products. The NVCOG operates regional Household Hazardous Waste collections, which are open to residents of Watertown and nine other NVCOG communities. The town should continue to participate in statewide product stewardship initiatives and regional hazardous waste collections.

Debris management during extreme weather events remains a challenge for Watertown. While tree debris has been historically stored at the landfill, there is no longer enough space to hold and process the debris. The town should conduct a tree/vegetation storage plan that identifies storage sites during extreme weather events.

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Education

Watertown Public Schools

The Watertown Public School system operates five schools. All students begin at John Trumbull Primary School, which serves pre-kindergarten through grade 2. John Trumbull Primary School switched to full-day kindergarten for the 2016-2017 school year. Students then matriculate up to either Judson or Polk Elementary School for grades 3 through 5. Students in the upper grades attend Swift Middle School for grades 6 through 8 and Watertown High School for grades 9 through 12. The Board of Education also leases office space at 10 DeForest Street and has a small maintenance facility adjacent to Deland Field.

Over the last 10 years, Watertown Public Schools has invested \$118 million renovating and expanding its four oldest facilities: Judson Elementary School, Polk Elementary School, Watertown High School, and Swift Middle School. As part of its long-range efforts to modernize school facilities, three schools were decommissioned. Griffin School and Baldwin School closed in 2000 after the new John Trumbull Primary School was completed. Griffin School in Oakville was sold to a private developer and was demolished and redeveloped into a CVS Pharmacy. Baldwin School on North Street was sold to Taft School in 2014. Heminway Park School closed in 2008, and its students moved into the expanded Swift Middle School. Heminway Park School is currently being renovated into a consolidated municipal center. Recent investments in school buildings combined with declining enrollments over the last decade indicate that Watertown Public Schools has adequate facilities to meet the needs of its students over the next 10 years.

Watertown's public school enrollment trends reflect the cyclical demographic trends of Connecticut and the nation as a whole. School enrollments in Connecticut peaked in 1970 when the baby boom generation, who were born between 1946 and 1964, fully entered the school system. Beginning in the mid 1960s, births began to decline, leading to shrinking school enrollments from 1980 through the mid 1990s. By early 1980s, the baby boom generation was having children, leading to an "echo" boom that was felt at the elementary school level in the late 1980s through the 1990s. Watertown's most recent enrollment peak was in the early and mid 2000s and reflects the "echo" boom fully matriculating into the school system. From 2001-2002 to 2007-2008, Watertown's enrollment averaged 3,538 total students.

Primary school (PK-2) enrollment peaked in 2001-2002, elementary school (3-5) enrollment peaked in 2003-2004, middle school (6-8) enrollment followed, peaking in 2006-07, and high school (9-12) enrollment peaked in 2010-2011. However, enrollment has declined significantly ever since. By 2000, a

Table 5-1. Watertown Public Schools Facilities

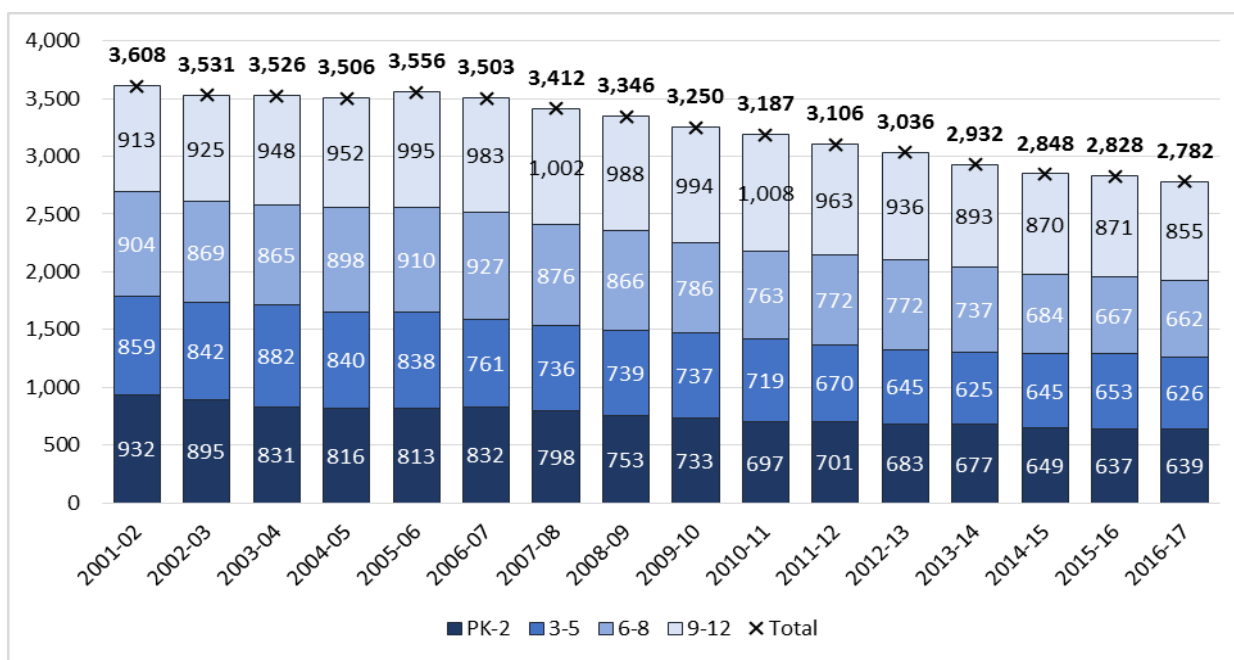
School	Grades	Year Built	Most Recent Renovation	Enrollment (10/1/2016)	Building Size (Square Feet)
Watertown High School	9-12	1961	2010	839	180,100
Swift Middle School	6-8	1970	2008	660	152,700
Judson Elementary School	3-5	1969	2010	298	72,300
Polk Elementary School	3-5	1989	2010	325	60,700
John Trumbull Primary School	PK-2	2000	-	639	140,700

Source: Town of Watertown

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much smaller generation (those born between 1965 and 1980) aged into their child bearing years, leading to a decline in overall births. The drop in births was exacerbated by the poor economic conditions and the housing market downturn of the late 2000s. As of the 2016-2017 school year, Watertown's enrollment was 2,782 students, a decline of 22.9% since its 2001-2002 peak. Primary school enrollment has declined the fastest (31.7%). However, over the last 3 school years, primary school enrollment has stabilized at around 640 students. High school enrollment has declined the least at 15.2%. However, it is still experiencing year-over-year declines. Over the next decade, Watertown's school enrollment trends will be impacted by births as well as the housing market. If births begin to increase, Watertown will likely see an increase in primary school enrollment 5 years later. Similarly, improving housing market conditions could lead to an increasing number of families with young children moving to Watertown.

Figure 5-1. Watertown Public School Enrollment



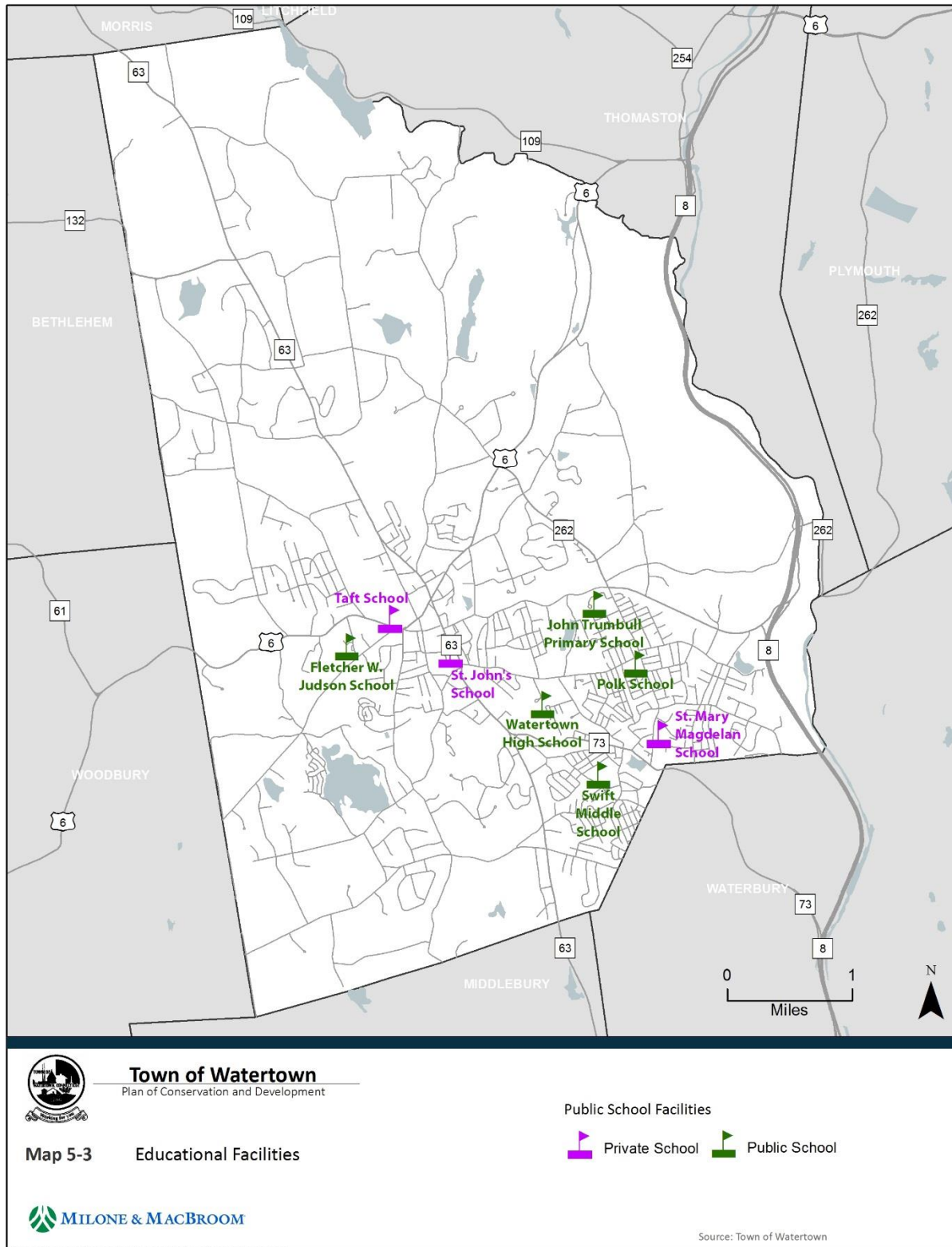
Other Public Schools

Watertown residents may also attend regional interdistrict magnet schools operated by Waterbury Public Schools. Maloney and Rotella Magnet Schools serve students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. The Waterbury Arts Magnet School serves middle- and high-school students, and high-school age students are eligible to attend W.F. Kaynor Technical High in Waterbury. Kaynor Tech is part of the Connecticut Technical High School System and is operated by the State of Connecticut Department of Education.

Private Schools

There are several private and parochial schools in Watertown. St. John School in Watertown and St. Mary Magdalen in Oakville both serve students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. Taft School, a private boarding school, serves nearly 600 students in grades 9 through 12. A majority of students live on campus. Taft School has significant land-holdings in Watertown Center including instructional buildings, a golf course, residences, and athletic facilities.

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Utilities

Utility services such as water and sanitary sewer are one of the drivers of Watertown's current and future land use patterns. Commercial uses are all concentrated in areas with water and sanitary sewer infrastructure. Similarly, Watertown's economic growth over the next 10 years is likely limited to areas with infrastructure already in place. Similarly, higher density housing can only be built in areas that have utilities to support that level of density. Areas without utilities rely on well and septic systems and should be reserved for passive and low-intensity uses. Understanding existing utilities, recent projects, and planned upgrades is crucial to developing the Future Land Use Plan. Water and sewer services in Watertown are provided by two entities. The Watertown Fire District provides services to Watertown Center while the Town of Watertown Water and Sewer Authority provides services to Oakville and other areas outside of the Fire District.

Water

The Watertown Water and Sewer Authority provides water service to approximately 4,120 customers. The town has two water tanks and three water pumping stations. Upgrades to the system include interconnection of the former north and south high services zones and water purchase agreements with the Watertown Fire District for water in the west central section of town. The system has remained adequate. Water is purchased from the City of Waterbury; consumption is currently 0.9 million gallons per day. Under terms of a contract with Waterbury, Watertown is able to purchase up to 3 million gallons per day. Water is delivered to portions of the central part of town by the Watertown Fire District, which has a daily well capacity of 1 million gallons of water and uses approximately 650,000 gallons per day. The rest of the town gets water from private wells.

In compliance with Public Act 89-305, the Water and Sewer Authority and the Watertown Fire District have implemented conservation programs. The programs are intended to educate the public on water conservation, to determine adequate water specifications for new developments, and to design plans that will reduce water consumption for residential and commercial customers.

Over the last 10 years, the following water expansion projects were completed:

- A new 12-inch water main was installed along Echo Lake Road connecting to the new CTtransit bus maintenance facility on Frost Bridge Road.
- Middlebury section of Straits Turnpike
- Ledge Road, DiNunzio Road, and Sylvan Lake Road (funding approved)

Sanitary Sewer

Town sewage disposal in the Oakville section of town is provided by the Watertown Water and Sewer Authority, which provides service to 4,250 customers. Approximately 2.2 million gallons per day are transported through town-owned mains to City of Waterbury treatment facilities. Watertown has an agreement with the City of Waterbury for treatment of up to 3 million gallons per day (mgd) at the Waterbury Sewage Treatment Plant. In addition, the Watertown Fire District generates about 0.7 mgd of sewage, which was also treated at the Waterbury Sewage Treatment Plant. Private septic systems serve the rest of the town.

Over the last 10 years, sanitary sewer service was extended to the following areas:

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- A new 6-inch sanitary sewer force main was installed along Route 262 connecting to the new CTtransit bus maintenance facility on Frost Bridge Road.
- Gorham Street
- Jordan Avenue
- Middlebury section of Straits Turnpike
- Bunker Hill Road (proposed senior housing development)
- Concord Drive Phase I (funding approved)

The Water and Sewer Authority has identified several areas with known septic issues that should be prioritized for sewer expansion over the next decade:

- Lake Winnemaug Estates
- Concord Drive Phase II (funding not yet approved)
- Barnes Road
- Old Colony Road area
- Old Farms Road and Highmeadow area

PLACEHOLDER FOR SEWER SERVICE AREA MAP

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Stormwater

The Department of Public Works maintains the town's stormwater infrastructure. This includes 41 stormwater detention basins and over 4,200 catch basins. Over the last decade, the Department of Public Works has incorporated low-impact development (LID) techniques such as bioswales and vegetated islands into projects. These techniques were recommended through the Connecticut DEEP Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4). However, these projects often come with maintenance challenges. Vegetated islands are difficult to plow in the winter due to tight radii and vegetation. Similarly, residents often complain about open swales on their property. In 2016, the DEEP issued a revised MS4 General Permit, which has more stringent requirements for programs such as street sweeping, leaf management, catch basin cleaning, and public outreach. Compliance with the new MS4 regulations remains a challenge for communities across the state as most do not have the resources to fully implement the new MS4 requirements.

Community Organizations

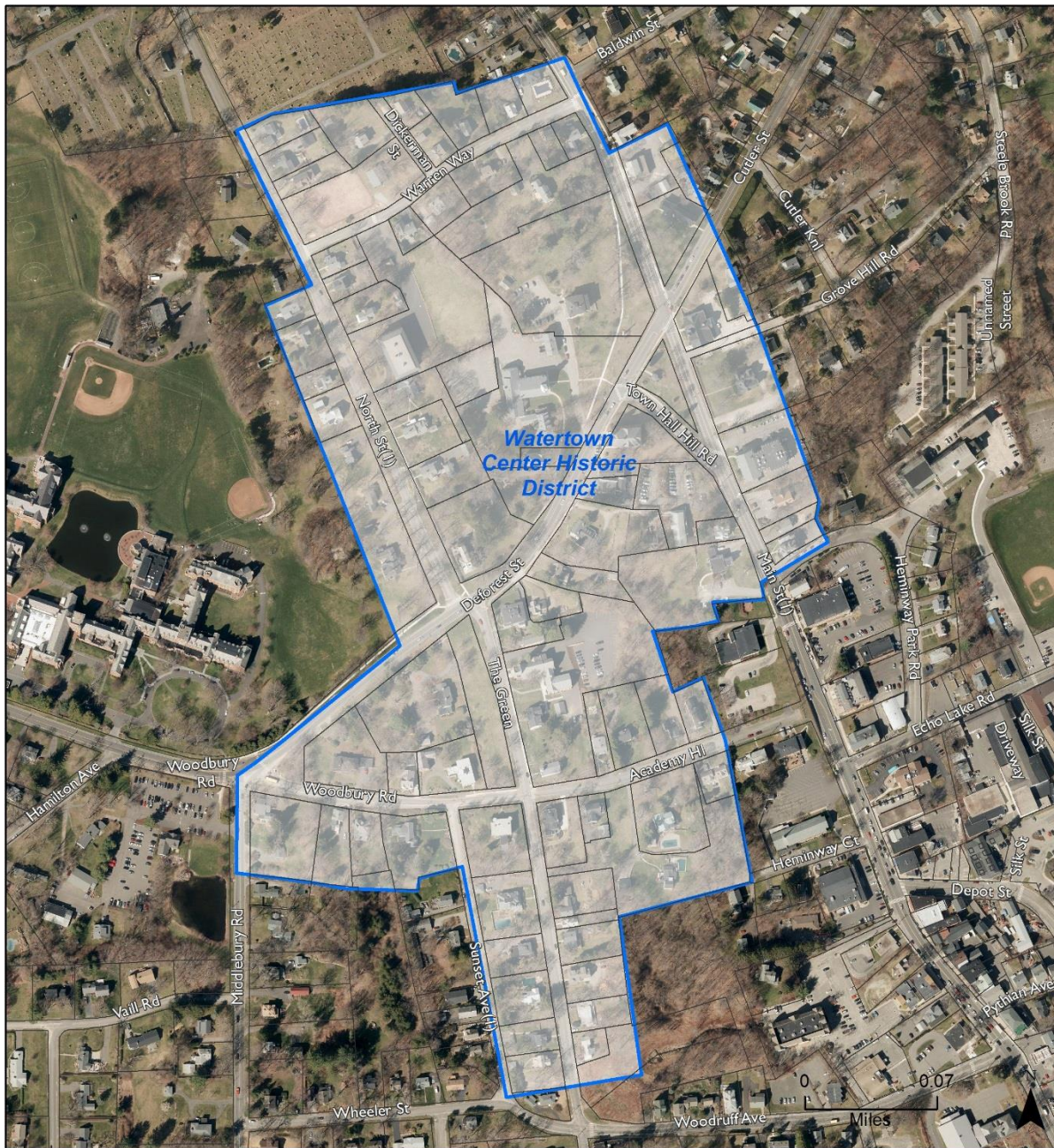
Watertown Historic Society

Organized in 1945, the Watertown Historic Society is an organization focused on collecting and preserving local history. Historical Society members research various aspects of Watertown including schools, industries, and families to trace the progression of the town since it was first settled as Wooster-Westbury and later as Watertown. Collected documents and artifacts, including manuscripts, books, and genealogies, are housed at the Historical Society Museum located on Deforest Street. In addition to the artifacts and documents, there are also rotating exhibits. The museum is maintained by volunteers and is open to the public on Wednesdays, one Sunday a month, and by appointment.

Historic District

The Watertown Center Historic District was established and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2001. The Historic District is located roughly along Woodbury and Academy Hill Roads, the Green, and North and Deforest Streets. Properties located within the district exhibit architectural/engineering and historic significance and are largely of the Greek Revival and Federal styles. A complete list of all properties in the Historic District, including photographs of each property, is found in the Report of the Historic District Study Committee, 1996.

As established by state statute, any demolition or architectural alteration to the exteriors of properties within the district that would be visible from a public street must be approved by the Historic District Commission. Commission members, appointed by the Town Council, determine whether proposed changes are appropriate to the character of the district. In general, the commission is concerned with scale, quality of design, harmony of buildings, and streetscape.



Town of Watertown
Plan of Conservation and Development

Map 5-5 Watertown Center National Historic District

 National Historic District Boundaries

 **MILONE & MACBROOM**

Source: NVCOG

This map is intended for planning purposes only. Delineations may not be exact.