

WARREN, RHODE ISLAND

American Rescue Plan *Planning for Recovery*



Kate Michaud, AICP

October 2021

Funding Expectations

Already Received:

Municipal Funds	\$550,085
County Funds	\$1,020,891

Expected in 2022:

Municipal Funds	\$550,085
County Funds	\$1,020,891

TOTAL **\$3,141,808**

- ❖ Must be committed between March 3, 2021 and December 31, 2024
- ❖ Cannot supplant funds that have already been budgeted
- ❖ Schools will receive separate funds through the RI Department of Education.

DETERMINING ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

IDENTIFY COVID-19 RELATED IMPACTS

Utilize existing data sets to identify vulnerable populations and negative effects on businesses

Certain census tracts (QCT's) allow for some assumptions to be made



IDENTIFY POTENTIAL PROJECTS TO ADDRESS THOSE IMPACTS

Projects must directly address the impact.

Projects must be eligible under the US Department of Treasury Regulations



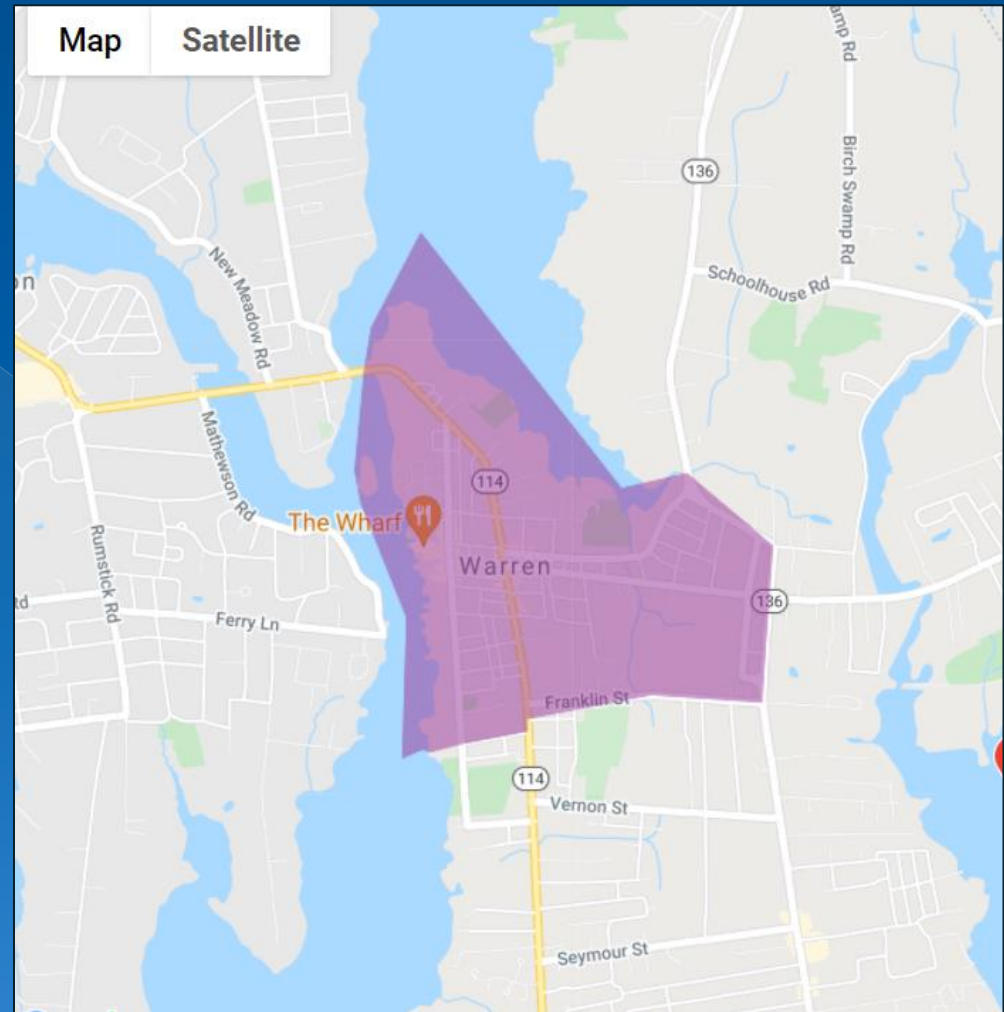
PROVE THAT THE PROJECT HAS HAD A POSITIVE EFFECT

Reporting will be required.

Failure to utilize funds correctly will require repayment.

QUALIFIED CENSUS TRACT

Qualified Census Tracts are those in which **50% or more of the households are income eligible** and the **population of all census tracts that satisfy this criterion does not exceed 20% of the total population of the respective area.**



The Role of the Public

Public input is required, not optional!

Determining a spending plan is a public and transparent process.



First step = Public Preference Survey

Public was asked to rank preferences and was given space for free comment. Multiple projects can be undertaken.

#10 (Lowest priority)

ADDRESS TRANSPORTATION ISSUES FOR EMPLOYERS

Problem: Local employers have identified transportation as a significant problem for their workforces. Public transportation and carpooling opportunities have been negatively impacted by COVID, worsening the existing problem.

Goal: Improve transportation opportunities for workers

Objective: Perform a study to identify needs and options for the employers and employees in Warren.

Est. Budget: \$5,000 - \$10,000

Est. Time: 6 months

#9

ASSISTANCE WITH DATA ANALYTICS

Problem: Warren needs to measure the impact of COVID-19 on the Town, including town revenues, business impacts and impacts on residents. Much of the currently available data is scattered and difficult to access.

Goal: Analyze data to provide useful information and communicate that information in an accessible and understandable way to inform decision making.

Objectives: Perform an analysis of current conditions
Track compliance with ARPA Regulations
Establish performance metrics

Est. Budget: \$5,000 - \$25,000

Est. Time: Begin immediately

#8

COMMUNICATE ARPA PLANS TO THE COMMUNITY

Problem: We are required to solicit public input during the planning phase and to inform the public at all phases of planning and implementation.

Goal: To inform the public/stakeholders regarding project plans and implementation and solicit feedback on progress.

Objectives: Utilize surveys, newspapers and internet-based media to solicit input and to provide ongoing updates. Multi-lingual supports may be required.

Est. Budget: To be determined
Est. Time: Currently in progress

#7

IMPROVE/PRESERVE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Problem: Lack of affordable housing is a pressing issue made worse by the pandemic due to increased costs and decreased supply.

Goal: Provide seed funding to the already established Affordable Housing Trust Fund and operationalize the Trust to improve affordable housing opportunities in Warren.

Objectives: Provide seed funding to the Trust Fund
Recruit qualified Trustees
Determine eligibility criteria and implementation strategy

Est. Budget: To be determined

Est. Time: Target is to fund 5 projects in 2 years.

#6

ASSIST HEALTH EQUITY ZONE (HEZ)

- Problem:** COVID has brought increased attention to structural health disparities among people living in Warren.
- Goal:** Expand community outreach through targeted efforts to identify and address social determinates of health within Warren and to assist residents to connect with services and resources to help them live healthier lives.
- Objectives:** Support Community Health Workers in outreach efforts
Identify needs and build community collaboratives
Increase access to behavioral health, healthy food and workforce development services
- Est. Budget:** To be determined / EBCAP is backbone agency
- Est. Time:** Ongoing

#5

IMPROVE BROADBAND ACCESS

- Problem:** COVID necessitated virtual access to vital resources, including education, employment and health care. Existing connectivity is less than adequate and/or is unaffordable for many residents and business owners.
- Goal:** Provide support for further analysis of broadband needs and connectivity option.
Prepare for the potential future availability of funds.
- Objectives:** Increase broadband access to underserved areas of Warren.
- Est. Budget:** \$100,000
- Est. Time:** To be determined

#4

SUPPORT NEW FIRE/RESCUE STATION PLANS

- Problem:** COVID placed new requirements on fire and rescue, including the need to provide testing & vaccination clinics as well as the need for modern training facilities and a modern emergency command & operations center.
- Goal:** Complete the feasibility study, engineering design and cost estimates to be “shovel ready” once construction financing is available.
- Objectives:** Finalize location, design, engineering & architecture
Prepare detailed cost estimates
- Est. Budget:** \$100,000 - \$150,000
- Est. Time:** 12-18 months

#3

REPLACE LOST TOWN REVENUES

Problem: Under the ARPA regulations, municipalities may recoup lost revenues attributed to COVID. Municipalities can assume a 4.1% growth rate as a baseline to determine losses.

Goal: Follow the US Department of Treasury rules to determine the amount of ARPA funding that can be used to compensate for lost revenue.

Objectives: Determine the eligible amount
Determine how much should be used

Est. Budget: up to \$800,000 +/- per year

Est. Time: upon approval by the Town Council

#2

STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

- Problem:** Businesses with the Qualified Census Tract (QCT) have experienced hardship due to the COVID pandemic, which could hinder the ability to perform aesthetic property improvements.
- Goal:** Improve the attractiveness and usability of distressed properties in the eligible area to promote the area's visual appeal and economic vitality.
- Objectives:** Create an application and evaluation criteria
Assist qualified properties with façade improvements
- Est. Budget:** **\$250,000 (10+/- properties)**
- Est. Time:** **Immediate**
Historical review may be necessary.

#1 (Highest Priority)

IMPROVE FOOD SECURITY FOR CHILDREN

- Problem:** The number of families in RI experiencing food insecurity has increased from 1 in 8 to 1 in 4. School children who depended on school lunch programs were particularly impacted when schools were closed. Hope & Main worked with BWRSD & Chartwells to distribute meals, and also launched “Nourish Our Neighbors”.
- Goal:** Expand ability to provide healthy, locally prepared meals to those in need.
- Objectives:** Increase the ability to provide meals, increase community awareness and connect the emergency supplemental food system to the local food economy.
- Est. Budget:** **To be determined – include additional freezer capacity.**
- Est. Time:** **To be determined**

NEXT STEPS

- **APPROVE IMMEDIATE EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS TO IMPROVE AUDIO VISUAL EQUIPMENT IN TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS**
- **ADOPT / AMEND THE PRIORITY LIST**
- **DIRECT THE PROJECT TEAM TO CONTINUE DEVELOPING PROPOSED SCOPE AND BUDGET FIGURES THROUGH DIRECT STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**
- **RETURN TO THE TOWN COUNCIL WITH FULLY DEVELOPED PROPOSALS FOR REVIEW & APPROVAL**

Thank You!

Kate Michaud, AICP



kmichaud@townofwarren-ri.gov

