

An aerial photograph of Warren, Rhode Island, showing a street scene with a prominent red brick church with a green dome. The church is the central focus, with a tall steeple. The street below has a white bus and several cars. The background shows a hillside with trees in autumn colors. The text "Town of Warren, Rhode Island Comprehensive Plan" is overlaid in a large, bold, black serif font across the middle of the image.

**Town of Warren, Rhode Island
Comprehensive Plan**



TOWN OF WARREN, RI COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**Originally completed
1991**

**Approved by the Warren Planning Board
And
Warren Town Council
Spring 1992**

Adopted

Rita Galinelli, Town Clerk

**Presented To
Rhode Island Statewide Planning
For Final Approval
As Amended Through July 2003**

WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Warren Comprehensive Plan is the culmination of field work, discussions with town committees and individuals, and review of past reports and plans. It is the synthesis of critical ideas formulated by the consultants based on the ideas, observations and aspirations of the Planning Board and townspeople. The plan has been prepared in accordance with Chapter 45-22.2 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and land use Regulation Act.

This document identifies and examines Warren's planning needs as it charts its future over the next several years, establishing a framework for more specific actions. The format reflects State-mandated categories and criteria, while the focus is on Warren's potentials, problems and challenges for the future. The contents of this plan are subject to periodic amendments.

PLAN COMPONENTS

The Warren Comprehensive Plan is broken down into Elements, each containing a descriptive Inventory and Analysis of conditions and needs, and then proceeds to set Policies accompanied by recommendation Actions. At the end of each Element is an Implementation Schedule. The plan elements are as follows:

Natural and Cultural Resources

This element describes the ways man and nature have shaped Warren and analyzes how balance can be sustained between nature, history and contemporary needs. Issues of town character and image are emphasized.

Land Use

This element analyzes the distribution of land uses and focuses on the special mixed-use character of Warren. It suggests more refined land use techniques to address special development needs and growth management this once industrial town shifts to other dominate uses.

Recreation, Conservation and Open Space

This element provides an overview of the diverse public and private open space holdings and recreational facilities that provide active and passive recreation opportunities for Warren's residents. It stresses the need to more effectively reveal the farmlands and scenic identify of Warren. This Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plan (1990) and its amendment (1995) serve as the Inventory and Analysis of this element and is the basis of its policies and actions.

Circulation

This element discusses highway and local traffic conditions and problems, bike paths and specific locations where improvements are needed.

Services and Facilities

This element inventories and analyzes the services and facilities provided by the Town and other agencies. It prescribes general capital improvements which will be needed over the next several year and discusses the functions and needs of local government.

Economic Development

This element examines the physical and employment characteristics of a changing economy, which is primarily tied to regional patterns but encourages local initiatives, capitalizing on special development opportunities and the town's historic fabric.

Housing

This element inventories the diverse types of housing found in Warren. It stresses the provision of affordable housing and suggests strategies for sustaining a diverse housing stock.

Implementation Program

Each of the elements listed above contains a section describing the implementation of policies and actions. Boards, commissions, agencies and private groups are targeted to carry out individual actions. Priority or relative immediacy of compliance with the plan's policies is roughly indicated by the order in which they appear in each element and has been given a time frame of completion, ranging from the present time to twenty (20) years. The Warren Comprehensive Plan authorizes the creation of a town-wide Capital Improvement Plan that emphasizes the priorities and spirit of the Comprehensive Plan. In accordance with Rhode Island General Law, changes to zoning and other ordinances that are necessary to achieve the goals policies and actions herein must be implemented with 18 months of approval of this plan by the State.

Plan Formulation and Citizen Participation

The Warren Comprehensive Plan process was initiated by a town administered public opinion poll in 1990. Upon review of the survey a series of events, including the formation of comprehensive plan committees, and the hiring of consultants led to the first draft of the Warren Comprehensive Plan. This plan, adopted by the Town Council in 1991, was forwarded to the State for review and acceptance. Because of deficiencies identified by the State, the plan was returned to the town for further review and amendments. The revision process was propelled by the hiring of a new consultant firm, and the hiring of a permanent Town Planner. In 2004 the final revisions were forwarded to the State of Rhode Island Office of Statewide Planning for review and approval.

The Public Opinion Survey

The survey was distributed to a cross-section of Warren residents through a variety of local organizations, including several churches and schools. The 143 respondents were well distributed across all age groups, interest groups and neighborhoods. Features that respondents found most attractive about Warren were its "small town character," "historic character," and "family or personal

ties.” Receiving most negative ratings were “shopping opportunities, the tax rate and the schools.

Given the choices to promote, limit, and stay the same, respondents strongly promoted the following: historic restoration; public transportation; recreational facilities; open space acquisition. Residential development in general, and development of Touisset in particular, registered strong “limit” ratings. Commercial and industrial activity received moderate “promote” ratings.

Activities and services considered particularly important by respondents were child care and a teen center. Senior day care, and boat ramp/town pier, a town cultural center and the bike path were seen as important as well. The survey showed support for added taxation that would benefit schools, and to a lesser extent, infrastructure and recreational facilities.

Responses to other survey questions bear out the following composite: parking conditions are seen as poor to adequate; townspeople view Warren as a residential town; growth controls are favored with strong support for stringent environmental controls, open space requirements, and limits on building permits; the water supply is seen as having problems, specifically regarding drinking water taste and management of the watershed; and strong support is given for expansion of the school curriculum to include more education in natural resources, history , job opportunities and government.

Comprehensive Plan Committees

In order to further involve residents of warren in the Comprehensive Plan process, committees were organized by the Planning Board to address each of the Plan Elements. These committees were open to the public and consisted of interested citizens, civic officials and Planning Board members. Each committee initiated inventory and discussion relevant to its element.

Consultants

In August 1990, Everett Associates, Inc. was contracted to prepare the Warren Comprehensive Plan. Their initial efforts consisted mainly of meeting with the Planning Board and committees, and fieldwork pertinent to understanding and analyzing physical and cultural aspects of the Town.

A preamble report was prepared early in the plan process, and building on this report Plan Elements were prepared, subject to numerous additions and modifications. In the course of addressing each element, relevant and interested department heads, organizations and individuals were interviewed and their input recorded. Throughout the process the planning board acted as the town’s procedural contact with the consultants, meeting with them on a regular basis. These meetings were open to the public.

Upon completion, the Warren Comprehensive Plan was approved by the Planning Board and forwarded to the Town Council for adoption. After adoption in 1991, the Comprehensive Plan was presented to the State for review. Initial review revealed deficiencies.

The plan was returned to the Town of review and amendment. At that time, the Planning Board contracted with consultant Brenda Dilman, who was charged with addressing the State's concern and making all pertinent amendments to satisfy the State. In 2002 the Town hired a full-time Town Planner who became responsible for the remaining necessary revisions. In 2004 the plan received approval by the State and was re-adopted by the Town Council.

Future Uses Related to the Comprehensive Plan

The value of a comprehensive plan lies in the broad parameters set forth. This provides a workable context for specific implementation. Chief among necessary actions resulting from this plan are the review and revision of the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations. It is hoped that the Town will also undertake special development initiatives to encourage reinvestment within a framework that places a premium on preserving and enhancing Warren's heritage.

Adoption and State Approval

Several steps are required for full adoption and approval of the Comprehensive Plan. First, a public hearing was held by the Planning Board, at which the Comprehensive Plan was presented and comments heard. Subsequently, the Planning Board approved the plan. Likewise, a public hearing was held prior to Town Council approval. Finally, State approval, administered by the Statewide Planning Division of the Rhode Island Department of Administration, follows review. This review is conducted to insure compliance with provisions of Rhode Island General Laws and regulatory documents from all state agencies.

Acknowledgements

This plan has been prepared in direct response to the authorization of the Warren Planning Board, several members of which participated in committees at the start of the plan process and in draft and final reviews of the submitted material. Planning Board members involved in the development of the Warren Comprehensive Plan include:

| | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Jane MacDougall | Davison Bolster |
| John Piepowski | John Hanley |
| Jeffrey Francis | Andre Asselin |
| Barbara Blossom | |
| William Hanley | |
| Orlando Vitullo | |
| George Tavares | |
| Marguerite Flaco | |
| John Hagan | |
| Byron Kee | |
| Robin Aguiar | |

WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Plan has been prepared under the administration of the Town Council. The following former and present Town Councilors participated in the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan:

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Walter Felag, Jr. | Christopher Stanley |
| Catherine King Avila | Joseph DePasquale |
| Mattie Castigliero | Louis Rego |
| William Estrella, Jr. | James McCanna |
| Frank J. Alfano | |

Townpeople who have served on the Comprehensive Plan Committees have provided special insights into Warren's conditions and problems. The committees and their members included:

| | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| HOUSING | CIRCULATION |
| Jeffrey Francis, Chair | Orlando Vitullo, Chair |
| Clifford Sampson | Daniel McConaghy |
| Jan Malik | Fidele Incollingo |
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NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

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SERVICES & FACILITIES

Robert Tormey, Chair
Eileen Socha
John Massed
Daniel McConaghy
Fidele Gregory Incollingo

Town officials and department heads who were important to the initial plan development and subsequent revisions include:

William Hanley, Building Official
Michelle Maher, Town Planner
John Massed, Director of Public Works
Michael Abbruzzi, Town Manager
Thomas Gordon, Police Chief
Al Galinelli, Fire Chief

WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

September 2001

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I. INTRODUCTION

Analysis of the natural and cultural characteristics of Warren leads to awareness of how the water has shaped the land and set very specific limits and boundaries for the Town's growth in the past and in the future. The settlement pattern initially set urban uses well apart from rural or agrarian ones. Over the decades and centuries, however, this distinct separateness blurred as differing land uses merged or were overlaid by new development patterns. Warren is very vulnerable to change. In order to direct its own future it must be willing to implement land protection and economic development strategies that retain working farms, open space and historic resources, while aggressively reshaping those parts of the Town and related uses that need improvement.

The Natural and Cultural Resources Element of the Comprehensive Plan includes an inventory of the Town's significant natural, cultural and historic resources; a discussion of their importance, ways in which they are threatened and policies and strategies for their protection. These policies are created with an understanding that growth will continue and that growth management and resource protection are necessary to ensure both the economic and environmental health of Warren. A healthy economy requires a healthy ecology.

This element forms the environmental base of the comprehensive plan and is closely related to the Open Space and Recreation and the Land Use elements of the plan.

A. OVERALL GOALS

To offer residents of Warren a high quality of life through the preservation and best use of natural, historic and cultural resources.

To maintain and reinforce Warren's small town character, emphasizing its natural setting and maritime, agricultural and industrial history as manifested in the continuing presence of wharves and harbors; extensive farmland; concentrations of historic houses; historic street patterns; and historic mills and mill-related buildings.

II. INVENTORY AND DISCUSSION

A. NATURAL CONDITIONS

This section, using maps and associated discussion, summarizes Warren's natural environment including its geography, geology, ground and surface waters, water quality, soils, agricultural land, wetlands and coastal resources. The benefits and constraints of these resources as they relate to community development are also discussed.

Geography

The geography and natural systems of Warren are well defined and have strongly influenced settlement patterns. Though small in area, Warren has approximately 16 miles of coastline along the Palmer, Warren and Kickemuit rivers, and Narragansett and Mount Hope bays. The Kickemuit River has had a major influence on settlement and land use and separates several

sections of the Town from each other. Like many communities on Narragansett Bay, Warren is made up of landforms that extend southward into the Bay.

Warren's topography ranges from sea level to approximately 90 feet. This is typical of the drowned valley characteristics of the Narragansett Bay region. The bay and rivers have sculpted a land area of low ridges generally running north to south, separated by open water or lowlands that are characterized by high water tables and wetlands, generally unsuitable for development. Although erosion control is always an important consideration, steep slopes do not present a major development constraint. Slopes greater than eight percent characterize approximately 135 acres, 3.7 percent of Warren's soils. Substantial acreage however is constrained by the lack of slope. This together with overall low elevation leaves them vulnerable to periodic flooding and persistently poor drainage.

Bedrock and Surficial Geology

Bedrock and surficial geology describes the skeletal framework of the land and affects the distribution of soil types, surface hydrology and the location and amount of groundwater. Figure 1 depicts Warren's geology. Warren is part of the 102 square mile Narragansett Basin, composed of coal age (Pennsylvania Period) sedimentary rocks including conglomerate, sandstone, shale, and coal. Warren has a few bedrock outcrops mostly located to the east of Metacom Avenue and between Metacom Avenue and Main Street. Visible bedrock is evidence of the powerful scouring effect of the glaciers. Bedrock types include Scituate granite gneiss (sgf) Hope Valley alaskite (hva) and mafic dikes and sills. Mafic is a dark color igneous rock rich in magnesium and iron. Dikes and sills are rocks, which when in the molten condition, filled in either fissures (dike) or between layers (sill) of older rocks.

Surficial deposits are sandwiched between the bedrock and the soils and consist either of till or outwash. Till is an unsorted mixture of boulders cobble, gravel and sand deposited directly by glacial ice and is often characterized by an impermeable or restrictive layer. Outwash is a well-sorted deposit carried by glacial melt water. Groundwater is generally more abundant in outwash than in till. Other deposits not of glacial origin include those deposits by waves, rivers or wind.

Warren is in the Narragansett Till Plains, which make up the area immediately around Narragansett Bay. This area is covered by glacial till composed of sedimentary rock, shale, sandstone, conglomerate, and, in a few places, coal. The till is generally compacted to a color ranging from dark gray to olive and is finer in texture than till derived from granite. Most of the landforms have been smoothed by glacial action. Till deposits in Warren (1,666 acres) are primarily located, to the west of Market Street north of School House Road, in a band along Birchswamp Road and Metacom Avenue and throughout much of the eastern portion of the town. (Figure 1). Outwash deposits (2,279 acres) are located in the vicinity of Touisset Point and throughout much of the western portion of the Town.

Soils

The RI Soil Survey provides comprehensive soil mapping and classification. It describes the physical and chemical characteristics of particular soils and assigns soils to a hydrological group. It also discusses the constraints and benefits of each soil type relative to such things as

construction, septic system functioning, natural resource and agricultural management. Figure 2 depicts those soils that are either highly permeable (1,158 acres) or highly erodible (1,000 acres), and those soils that are characterized by restrictive layers (1,450) and severely high watertables (1,781). Many soils are in more than one of these categories. It is interesting to note that the restrictive soils correspond with the till deposits depicted in Figure 1.

The majority of Warren's soils (66%) present severe constraints for onsite sewage treatment systems. These soils are either slowly permeable or have high watertables or both and generally run in bands from the north to the south. In addition another 620 acres (17%) are characterized by excessive permeability. Excessively permeable soils include those soils with percolation rates of 5 minutes per inch or faster. These outwash soils have sandy or gravelly sub soils and due to the rapid percolation may inadequately treat septic system effluent. This is particularly true of nitrates, which in excess cause eutrophication of estuarine waters and present a health threat to drinking water. Septic systems in these soils may require special design in order to prevent groundwater contamination and reduce nitrates.

Warren would benefit from an onsite wastewater management plan (OWMP) given that soils with severe septic system constraints and those with excessive permeability comprise 83% of the Town's soils. Once approved by RIDEM, an OWMP would enable residents of Warren to access 4% loan funds for septic system repairs. In highly developed areas, sewer systems are sometimes necessary because the density of development or immediate soil conditions preclude use of individual septic systems. Sewers have been necessary west of the Kickemuit, south of Belcher Cove and out along developed roads to the north. The remaining land continues in agricultural use. Extension of sewers into the western portion of Warren would facilitate suburban sprawl and is contrary to the comprehensive plan objectives of preserving Warren's environment and its agricultural and rural components.

Seventeen percent (630 acres) of soils are classified as urban. These soils vary in character and are located in the more built-up sections of Town. In addition to the urban soils ten acres have been classified as "du" (dump) and another 70 acres as beach.

Agricultural Soils

Much of Warren consists of prime and secondary farmland soils (Figure 3). Some of this productive land has been built upon, especially in the more urban western portion of the Town. Extensive areas still register on the Soil Conservation Services (SCS) Important Farmlands map. These lands are primarily in the Touisset Point area, but a band down the center of the western area and extending into Bristol and out to the Kickemuit River is also designated as important farmland. Developed intensively, this area is effectively non-productive. Most of the agricultural land is located in the western portion of Warren and along the reservoir. Farms and nurseries in the Touisset area correspond with the soil designations.

There are currently about 795 acres of farmland in Warren, which represents 20% of Warren's total area. About half the land is pasture and about half is cropland. Of this amount 202 acres are protected from development but the remainder is not. Figure 10 of the Land Use Element demonstrates that most of the potentially developable land in Warren is agricultural. In fact

farmland accounts for 594 acres (61%) of Warren's 978 acres of developable land.¹

Since 1980 about 400 acres have been developed, representing a loss of 33 percent. At this alarming rate, there will be no farmland in Warren by the year 2030. Preserving these farms is key to retaining Warren's rural character and its ties to its agrarian past. In addition, keeping land in active agriculture instead of houses has a positive impact on the Town's tax base. Areas with prime farmland soils should be retained either as active farms or land banked for resumed farming when the need arises.

In addition to purchasing developing rights, farming should be encouraged through tax incentives and farm-friendly zoning regulations. Residential development that occurs in agricultural areas should be designed to protect as much agricultural land as possible. As an alternative to conventional subdivisions small-scale developments or family compounds with reduced road standards, flexible zoning and a decrease in allowable density should be required.² In addition to this element, the land use and economic development elements of the comprehensive plan emphasize the importance of preserving Warren's working farms.

Freshwater and Coastal Wetlands

Nature has set very definite limits to the types of development that can occur in Warren. In addition to flooding, the proximity of water presents coastal constraints governed by law and monitored by the CRMC, the Army Corps of Engineers and other regulatory agencies. Extensive inland water bodies and wetlands have related constraints and are protected to some degree by the RI Wetlands Act. The Town, however, should consider the cumulative impact of small changes on wetlands in the review of development proposals.

Figure 4 depicts Warren's sub-watersheds, wetlands, and flood zones. The five principal drainage areas are the Kickemuit River, Mount Hope Bay, Narragansett Bay, Palmer River and Warren River. When developing water quality protection strategies, the characteristics of the basin and the receiving waters should be taken into account.

According to the RIGIS database Warren has 954.01 acres of wetlands.³ Of these 622.11 acres are freshwater and under the jurisdiction of RIDEM and the remaining 331.9 are coastal and under the jurisdiction of CRMC. Forested swamp and salt marsh are the two most prevalent wetland types. Table 1 depicts a more detailed classification of Warren's wetland acreage.

The town has many freshwater resources including wetlands, ponds, streams and the Kickemuit reservoir. Forty acres of Warren's wetlands are classified as either lakes or ponds and 257 acres as salt marsh. Much of the remaining acres are deciduous forested or shrub wetlands that often follow streams running north to south. Some of these stream systems, particularly in agricultural areas support emergent wetlands (marshes).

¹ For additional information concerning the buildout analysis see Land Use Element.

² For sample design guidelines see a) *Rural Design Manual*, 1998. Newport Collaborative Architects, for RIDEM. b) *Town of South Kingstown, Residential Design Manual*, 1999. Dodson Associates, and Bobrowski, Mark and Teitz Andrew, July 2001. c) *South Kingstown Planning Assistance Guide*, August 2001. (South County Design Manual and Model Land Use Ordinances,) www.state.ri.us/dem/programs/bpoladm/suswshed/sctpap.htm

³ RI Geographic Information System. Wetlands 1988 data set

TABLE 1 Wetland Acreage, Warren RI

| Wetland Type | Jurisdiction | #of Parcels | Acre |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------|
| Forested deciduous (forested swamp) | RIDEM | 76 | 371 |
| Scrub shrub (shrub swamp) | RIDEM | 55 | 108.04 |
| Emergent marsh/meadow | RIDEM | 59 | 72.14 |
| Lacustrine open water (lake) | RIDEM | 1 | 31.03 |
| Palustrine open water (ponds) | RIDEM | 22 | 8.99 |
| Estuarine emergent (salt marsh) | CRMC | 27 | 257.28 |
| Riverine tidal open water | CRMC | 170 | 50.99 |
| Marine/estuarine unconsolidated shore | CRMC | 12 | 19.29 |
| Estuarine open water | CRMC | 5 | 4.34 |
| | | | |
| TOTAL | | 427 | 954.01 |

There are three large wetland systems of statewide importance: the wetlands north of the reservoir, preserved as Green Acres; east of Long Lane along the Massachusetts border; and behind the Hugh Cole Recreation Park. These wetlands provide important habitats for flora and fauna, erosion and flood controls, pollution buffers and scenic resources. The location of wetlands within the more built-up sections of Town helps to explain why so many sub-neighborhoods are separated from adjacent development and why certain lands are not built upon. In some cases, wetlands have been so encroached upon that their natural condition is severely compromised. In extreme cases, such as in the center of Town between Child Street and the Bristol line, encroachment has all but obliterated original wetland conditions.

Warren is blessed with a good harbor and many saltwater wetlands. Hundreds of acres of salt marshes lie along the Warren, Palmer and Kickemuit rivers; they are among the state's most valuable coastal features. In addition to their scenic value, they are productive nursery areas for fish and shellfish, provide habitat for important flora and fauna, and serve as nutrient traps and buffers against storms and floods.

The Warren River has approximately 2.5 miles of saltwater coastline featuring a half-mile stretch of natural and manmade beaches and almost a mile of wetlands around Hanley's Point and Little Island. It abuts the downtown Waterfront Historic District, where stone wharves dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth century are still used today. Besides its obvious historic and scenic significance, the waterfront concentrates pollution from commercial and industrial sources, potentially making it easier to monitor and control. Little Island serves as a permanent wildlife refuge, pollution buffer and scenic resource in this busy harbor.

The Palmer River has roughly four miles of coastline, made up entirely of saltwater wetlands. RIDEM has designated 760 acres of these wetlands as top priority for protection and has classified the area SA, the highest environmental quality rating. CRMC has similarly categorized the area Type 1 (conservation area). Figure 5 depicts coastal water quality and CRMC use designations. In addition to providing scenic beauty, both the Palmer and the Kickemuit Rivers provide valuable fish, plant and wildlife habitats; offer year-round active and passive recreation; help control flooding, erosion and pollution; and accommodate fin and shell fishing.

Along the Kickemuit River there are approximately five miles of saltwater coastline, of which about 80% is wetland and 20% natural beach. The most outstanding feature is Chace Cove, which was the summer camp of Massasoit and the Wampanoags. Over 60 acres around the cove have been donated to the Rhode Island Audubon Society for permanent protection. This river is rated SA by the DEM and Type 2 (low intensity use) by the CRMC. The upper Kickemuit River and the Kickemuit Reservoir have approximately 3 miles of freshwater shoreline, along which 50% is pasture, 30% forest and 20% residential. The reservoir's watershed extends well inland, particularly on the eastern/southeastern side. Features along the banks of the upper river and the reservoir include five working farms, Warren's oldest cemetery, several historic homes, numerous archaeological sites, and Green Acres Heritage Park.

About one and a half miles of the Warren coastline along Touisset Point is natural beach abutting Mount Hope Bay. The area offers good swimming and fishing opportunities. Behind the beach are bluffs 30 feet high with spectacular views. Unfortunately, the bluffs are eroding at the rate of 2 to 5 feet per decade, posing a threat to the homes built here. Along Hanley's Point there is a stretch of natural beach about a half-mile long that faces Narragansett Bay. On the inland side of the beach is a 60-acre wetland of state importance. A DEM right-of-way extending from the bike path to the shore provides scenic views of the historic harbor, wetlands and the bay.

Warren's coastal water quality standards, developed by DEM in accordance with the federal Clean Water Act and state laws, "provide water quality for the protection and propagation of fish, shellfish and wildlife, and for recreation in and on the water; take into consideration their use and value as public water supplies; and take into consideration their use for aquaculture, industrial and other purposes including navigation." ⁴

The table below summarizes the State's coastal water quality designations. The entire Kickemuit River is classified as SA along with the Palmer River. The Warren River is classified as SB and SC with a mixture of CRMC use designations that range from conservation (1) to commercial and recreational harbors (5).

TABLE 2 Saltwater Water Quality Designations

| SA | SB | SC |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Bathing and contact recreation ❖ Shellfishing for human consumption ❖ Fish and wildlife habitat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Shellfishing for human consumption after depuration ❖ Bathing and other primary contact recreation ❖ Fish and wildlife habitat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Boating and other secondary contact recreation ❖ Fish and wildlife habitat ❖ Good aesthetic value |

Water Quality and TMDL Plans⁵

Warren should work in concert with all other towns fronting the Bay to improve overall water quality. This can be accomplished by eliminating remaining point sources of pollution and the

⁴ Harbor Management Plan, Town of Warren, 1990 page 10

⁵ Section on TMDL's adapted from RIDEM's TMDL website www.state.ri.us/dem/programs/benviron/water/quality/rest/index.htm

installing adequate storm sewers to eliminate periodic discharges into the Bay. The Town must monitor pollution and recreational activity in accordance with state water quality classifications. Local benefits include improved fin and shell fishing, increased swimming opportunities, and greater attractiveness to potential tourists and business opportunities.

More insidious perhaps are sources of nonpoint pollution. These include such things as septic system effluent and stormwater runoff, which can contain everything from pet wastes and fertilizers to petroleum products. The implementation of an onsite wastewater management district and the use of structural and non-structural best management practices (BMP's) for buffer enhancement and runoff improvement should be implemented.

A total maximum daily load (TMDL) is a term that refers to a detailed plan to restore water quality to a waterbody that does not meet State water quality standards and is listed as an impaired water on the State's 303(d) list of impaired waters. States must take into account seasonal variations and must include a margin of safety to account for uncertainty in the modeling and monitoring process. A TMDL reflects the total pollutant loading of the impairing substance a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards. TMDL Plans are currently being developed for the Palmer River for pathogens and nutrients and ~~for~~ for the Kickemuit Reservoir for nutrients and bacteria.

Palmer River TMDL

The estuarine waters of the Palmer River lie in Rhode Island, but 90% of its watershed lies in Massachusetts. The Palmer River fecal coliform sources are from areas in Massachusetts and from two streams that flow into Belcher Cove. The sources in Massachusetts have been linked to agricultural operations, which are improving their management practices with the help of the Massachusetts Division of Food and Agriculture. The sources in the streams flowing into Belcher Cove are varied and include dog waste, storm water runoff, wildlife and agricultural operations. Measures are being put in place to reduce the fecal coliform sources in Belcher Cove. More detail can be found in the Palmer River fecal coliform TMDL.

The Palmer River also has high levels of nutrients loads, which affect reduce water quality by increasing algal growth and reducing dissolved oxygen levels, a condition referred to as hypoxia. The Palmer River is listed on the state's 303d List of Impaired Waters for nutrients and hypoxia. Nutrients increase the growth of phytoplankton and macroalgae which shade beneficial submerged aquatic vegetation. The excess growth of these organisms causes an increased use of oxygen during the night and early morning hours when the plants respire. Oxygen in the water column is also depleted when these organisms decay and the nutrients are then released back into the water column. This kind of decreased water quality condition is called eutrophication, and results in a decrease in the population size and diversity of animals and plants including eelgrass in the area. Eelgrass, a submerged aquatic plant, provides an excellent nursery ground for fish and shellfish. The Palmer River was once filled with eelgrass, but over the past century, the eelgrass in the Palmer River has disappeared completely.

Kickemuit TMDL

RIDEM is currently in the process of preparing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plan for the Kickemuit, which serves as a drinking water supply for the Bristol County Water Authority.

EPA has provided extensive staff resources as well as \$50,000 in consultant services to monitor and model water quality in the watershed. Since most of the watershed lies in Massachusetts, RIDEM, is also involving state and local officials in Massachusetts in this restoration effort.

Implementing TMDLs

After EPA and the State have approved a TMDL, the town should examine its zoning and subdivision regulations and investigate other means such as public education and onsite wastewater management to help meet the standards of the plans. Non-point source controls may be established by implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) through voluntary or mandatory programs for enforcement, technical and financial assistance, training and education, and demonstration projects. RIDEM evaluates the effectiveness of TMDLs using the following strategies; monitoring pollutant loadings, tracking implementation and effectiveness of controls, Assess water quality trends in the waterbody, and reevaluate TMDL for attainment of water quality standards.

Water Supply

Surface Water (Kickemuit Reservoir)

Figure 6 depicts the boundaries and classification of Warren's ground and surface water resources. In addition to water from the Scituate Reservoir transported through the cross bay pipeline, water is supplied by the Bristol County Water Authority (BCWA), which acquired the utility from the Bristol County Water Company in 1986. Locally, water is drawn from four reservoirs, the Kickemuit in Warren and three others in Swansea and Rehoboth. The Kickemuit Reservoir and nearby land is also an important local wildlife area.

The watershed of the Kickemuit Reservoir, including its acreage in adjacent communities, totals 3,310 acres. The Town adopted a watershed protection overlay district as part of its 1997 zoning amendments. The overlay district prohibits certain harmful uses within the watershed, establishes development standards for new subdivisions and requires site plan review for most uses within the watershed.

Even with the construction of the cross bay pipeline, the Kickemuit Reservoir must continue to meet current and future water supply needs. Furthermore, and more specific to this Element, the scenic natural habitat, open space, and recreational potential of the reservoir and its watershed should be protected and retained as a major inland facility for passive uses including fishing, picnicking, hiking and nature study. However, top priority use of the reservoir should be as a water supply.

Groundwater

Groundwater is water that lies beneath the surface of the ground and saturates the soil. This flowing water is usually located a predictable distance below the surface but has seasonal highs and lows. Although there are no significant aquifers in Warren, groundwater will continue to be an important water supply source outside of the water service area. In addition to the surface water reservoirs, water supply also comes from two wells in Barrington.

Most of the town's groundwater is classified as GA. The recharge area for the well at Touisset Point is classified as GAA. In addition there is a large area of degraded water quality (GB) in the

center of Town and several smaller areas of GA non-attainment. In order to preserve Warren's groundwater for future use protection measures such as the adoption of an onsite wastewater management plan should be implemented.

Flood Zones

Figure 4 depicts in a general sense the 100 year flood zone and the wave velocity zones in Warren. The Federal Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) on which this figure is based is the legal document for determining flood zone location and may be viewed at town hall. Flooding is primarily limited to tidal surges caused by hurricanes. As a hurricane travels in its usual north to northeast direction, the counterclockwise wind circulation around the low-pressure center results in strong winds from all directions. Thus a hurricane passing near the Narragansett Bay area can create tidal surges along any shoreline where there is sufficient "fetch" length.

Located in the upper part of Narragansett Bay, Warren experiences high surge elevations due to the funneling effect the Bay has on severe cyclone storms passing by the area. Flooding from such surges occurred during the 1938 hurricane and again during Hurricane Carol in 1954. The 1938 hurricane, which was comparable to a 100-year flood, generated flood elevations of approximately 14 feet in Warren. Elevations from Hurricane Carol were about 13 feet. Locally, the effects of both storms were extensive, damaging properties along the Warren and Kickemuit rivers, Mount Hope Bay and Belcher Cove, as well as contaminating the Kickemuit Reservoir when water from the Kickemuit River poured over the Child Street Dam.

Zoning regulations and building codes for special flood hazard areas (A, V and V-30 Zones) conform to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) development standards. Many communities have developed hazard mitigation plans to address the impact of natural disasters such as flooding.

Vegetation and Forest Resources

Figure 7 depicts upland wooded and shrub areas by cover type and notes rare species areas. Figure 1 of the Landuse Element, depicts landuse and land cover in greater detail. Most of the remaining undeveloped land in Warren is wetland (900+- acres), farmland (795 acres), forested areas (406 acres) and brushland 30 acres. Eighty percent of the upland forests are deciduous, 2 percent are coniferous and 18 percent are mixed.⁶ A greenway corridor extends from Palmer River to Touisset Point. Figure 10 of the Land Use Element depicts potentially developable land by cover type.

Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species

Warren has a number of ecologically significant natural communities and is home to several rare species (Figure 7). The Palmer River in particular provides critical habitat for rare species. The salt marsh along its shores is recognized as a high quality wetland, providing habitat for several rare species. Wetlands along northern parts of the river support the Northern Diamond Back Terrapin, osprey and several uncommon plants. A small area of critical habitat is also located in Touisset Point in the vicinity of Chase Cove. Other significant habitats in Warren include the power line/pipeline right-of-way, where species depend on open habitat and regular mowing and

⁶ A forest with greater than 80% deciduous trees is considered deciduous, greater than 80 percent coniferous is classified as coniferous. Fifty to eighty percent deciduous or coniferous is classified as mixed.

the wooded upland to the west of the right-of-way. Threats to these habitats include improper maintenance of right-of-ways, the spread of phragmites along the pipeline, dumping of household waste in the adjacent woodland, and potential development of the upland border of the marsh.

Air Quality

Warren's air quality is affected by the quality of air throughout the region. Clean, dry, high quality air arrives with fronts from Canada but must compete with moist air from the south and west that is often polluted by the New York/Washington D.C. urban corridor and the industrial Midwest. It is this air that has been recognized as the primary cause of acid rain affecting lakes and trees in the northeast, as well as posing a threat to pregnant women and persons with respiratory problems.

Sources of high-level air pollution in Warren are few but nonetheless threaten residents' health. One source is the buildup of carbon monoxide fumes from dense automobile traffic statewide that can create unhealthy conditions. In addition, local industries are known to emit noxious fumes.

In accordance with guidelines provided by the RIDEM Division of Forest Environment, the Town should consider implementation of development requirements pertaining to vegetation and lot coverage. In addition to improving the appearance and traffic circulation of development, these guidelines can help cleanse the air and mitigate the "heat island effect. While Warren and its residents can have little effect on regional air quality, local industry can be monitored for emissions violations.

Hazardous Materials

The Town should maintain specific plans for addressing the issue of hazardous materials in the workplace and on its roads. Ideally this should be embodied in a local Hazardous Materials Plan. The Town's emergency management operations include provisions for hazardous materials mitigation (see also Services and Facilities Element, Emergency Management).

B. HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Historic Development Sequence

As in many small, older towns, residents of Warren tend to maintain an affinity for the past. Figure 8 Cultural and Historic Resources identifies scenic areas, candidates for National Historic Register, Historic District, historic sites and archeological sites. The historic resources of Warren are documented in the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission's (RIHPC) survey Warren, RI. Statewide Preservation Survey B-W-1 and this plan ~~incorporates~~ *recognizes* that document ~~by reference~~ *as an inventory*. The presence of water is the primary reason Warren was initially chosen as an appropriate settlement site. Water edges contain and isolate sectors of Town and separate coastal, harbor-related lands from those defined by the Kickemuit and the land north of Belcher Cove.

Like most towns, Warren has grown in definable spurts. These include the following: Native American settlement along the coast and rivers; early European settlement of farms and the

initial village; mercantile development and prosperity based on foreign sea trade; industrial-based growth and construction of worker housing; and, lastly, the current period of transition from industry.

Each past period established a pattern that reflected the dominant uses and conventions of development common to that time. The relatively impermanent Native American settlements (at least in contrast to more recent building practices) persist only as archaeological sites. Early settlement, fishing, boat building and mercantile trade established the street pattern within the Water Street/Main Street area from the Palmer River south. This period also contributed the small lot and house common to the seventeenth century and early eighteenth century. The outlying area was developed as farms, a pattern that is still evident today.

With the introduction of the mill and other forms of industry, the economic order changed. The need for an extensive work force resulted in a different scale and form of development that was no longer, oriented towards the water. This type of development was still concentrated primarily in the southwestern part of Town but expanded towards the east. Large industrial and civic buildings and worker housing characterize this period.

Industry dominated Warren's identity until the gradual reduction of industrial activity in recent decades and the introduction of several experiments in economic diversification--primarily manifested along Market Street and Metacom Avenue. This period of transition persists with no clear new order emerging. The effects of the many new industrial, commercial and service uses have blurred the identity of the main routes into and through Town. Suburban housing has in-filled the southwestern sector of Town.

Remnants of earlier periods, however, still have a positive influence on Town character. The old railroad tracks have become a well-designed and popular bike path. The street pattern in the older sections of Town persists, as do many of the farms--at least their fields and some of their buildings. The past provides an historical context that must be respected and should serve as a major determinant in the future development of Warren.

Historic Resources

Besides many significant historic buildings covering a wide range of periods and styles, Warren has a National Register Historic District, two other historic districts, historic and archaeological sites, and a rich, albeit fragmented, historic context. Of the three districts described below, only the waterfront historic area is currently an official historic district. In 1975, the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission recommended the other two areas as well.

Warren Waterfront Historic District

The largest and most important historic area in Warren is bounded on the north and east by the old Providence Railroad, on the south by Bridge Street and on the west by the Warren River. Designated in 1974, almost half a square mile of this area is a National Register Historic District. Over 300 documented historic buildings dating as far back as the mid-eighteenth century are located within this district. Books, studies and documents show that this area has been recognized as historically important for over 150 years. Besides the large number and variety of individual historic buildings, the eighteenth century layout of the streets and wharves and the

ongoing vitality of the waterfront add to the cohesiveness and importance of this district.

Kickemuit River Crossing/Windmill Hill Historic District

This historic area is noteworthy more for historic events and sites than for historic structures. The area is bounded on the north and east by the Massachusetts border, on the south by the old Fall River Railroad and on the west by Birch Swamp Road. Along the Massachusetts border are Margaret's Cave and King's Rock, site of the Wampanoag Nation's grinding mill. The oldest house in Warren, built by Levi Haile in 1682, still stands nearby. To the south along the Kickemuit River was the location of a "sweat," a hut where Wampanoags came to cleanse body and soul. Many significant events involving early white settlers and the Wampanoags took place in this area--including Massasoit's 1653 sale to Hugh Cole and others of the first tract of the land later incorporated as the town of Sowams. Warren's first houses were built here but were destroyed during the war in 1675. Warren's oldest cemetery, dating from 1690, lies along the Kickemuit. The district also contains Windmill Hill and the Ice Pond, just north of the reservoir. With the exception of Green Acres Heritage Park and the cemetery, this important historic area has no protection or programs for preservation.

Touisset Neck Historic District

This rural area extends from the old Fall River Railroad south to Mount Hope Bay, bounded on the east by the Massachusetts border and on the west by the Kickemuit River. With the exception of two summer colonies started in the early 1900s, Touisset has remained largely unchanged for over 300 years. The area contains several large historic farms and houses dating from the 1700s. At one time the Mason family owned all of southern Touisset; the 1720 Captain John Mason House and the Mason family cemetery survive to this day. The largest farm still in operation is Manchester's Farm, once known as "Gardener's Ideal Farm," comprising over 330 acres. The railroad that extended through the area in the 1860s increased the prosperity of the farming community, enabling farmers to sell produce and dairy products directly to Providence and Fall River markets. Today, development pressures and the lack of protective measures threaten the district's preservation.

Historic Buildings

A complete list of documented historic buildings can be found in the Warren, Rhode Island Statewide Preservation Report. The RIHPC survey of Warren identifies several individual properties as possibly eligible for listing on the National Register. In addition the Town has conducted an inventory of its housing stock by date of construction.

Archeological Resources

Warren has significant archeological resources, including Burr's Hill (between Main and Water Streets) which was a major Wampanoag burial ground from the 1500's to the 1700's. Although long thought to have been removed, parts of the cemetery may remain in the Town Park. The presence of the cemetery indicates that a sizable Wampanoag village may have existed nearby. The RIHPC survey includes an overview of local archeology. Using this information, the Town should give special attention to known and potential archeological sites.

Natural Resource and Historic Preservation Organizations

In addition to the Town-appointed Conservation Commission, the independent Warren Land

Conservation Trust (WLCT) is active in local land conservation. The specific function of the Land Trust is to preserve woodland, farmland, wetlands and other naturally and culturally significant land through the transfer of development rights, easements and outright purchase. The Trust also helps others preserve land and offers opinions on wetland issues.

Two historic preservation organizations are active in Warren. The Warren Preservation Society is active primarily in identifying, researching and designating historic structures with plaques. The Massasoit Historic Association runs the Maxwell House museum, a restored colonial house in the heart of the historic Water Street area. Independent historic preservation efforts in recent years have focused on attempts to establish some form of historic zoning in the downtown area, specifically on and around Water Street.

Town Character

An understanding of what constitutes a town's character enables the town to decide which components to retain, protect and/or accentuate, and which to remove or change. To most people, town character is vague and hard to define. Its complexity keeps decision-makers from focusing on what makes their town what it is. However, the exercise of defining what constitutes a particular town is well worth the effort, for it then becomes the basis for tailoring planning decisions to meet the unique profile of a community

Warren is a small town with a heritage tied to its water-related history and harbor and its rural atmosphere, represented by the remaining farms and related open spaces. Physically, the character of Warren can be isolated into two main areas that are hinged together where Belcher Cove nearly connects with the Kickemuit River. To the south is the built-up sector that straddles a central spine of wetlands and adjacent cemeteries. This area's western edge is the waterfront backed up by the historic area and Main Street. To the ~~west~~ *east* is a rural/suburban area dominated by large open spaces, many of which are fronted by housing or strip commercial uses. This more rural area is noted for the remaining farms and the largely undeveloped character of Touisset. In all cases, water is nearby but seldom dominates one's sense of place. Warren's magnificent water edges and scenic views are obscured, not easily visible from the roads and are often overlooked.

Warren's development history has resulted in side-by-side industries and residences with extensive road-related commercial and service uses. A layering of predominant uses moves inland from the Warren River: waterfront, historic district, Main Street, mills, and related housing. From the Kickemuit River side, the land ranges from residential uses to strip commercial.

Scenic Potential

A complex landform and the strong presence of water give Warren much potential for scenic beauty. However, many of the Town's potentially most attractive vistas have been closed off over time by billboards or large buildings such as the American-Tourister complex on the Warren River. Perception of a place based on observations made from main roads may be very inaccurate. Thus Warren may be perceived as less attractive in comparison with its neighbors.

Nonetheless, pleasing views remain to and from the water, across farmland and along river

edges. The bicycle path, which is used for fishing, walking and jogging as well as bicycle riding, has opened up vistas and heightened awareness of open water and wetlands previously all but hidden from public view. Many opportunities remain for increased awareness of the water and vistas of coves, rivers, the harbor, and the Bay. This is particularly true along the greenway in eastern Warren and along the historic waterfront.

Warren has, to a great extent, hidden its natural amenities behind a facade of buildings and land uses which deny consistent awareness of coastal and inland water edges or even historic structures. The Town should take active steps to reveal its natural and cultural character more successfully. It can do this by removing billboards, establishing more recreational corridors, and improving access to conservation lands. The Town's image can also be improved by cleaning up degraded areas and working with developers to insure that the public good is served through sensitive development. The visual character of Route 136 all the way into Town, however, could be improved. This can be accomplished in part by a street tree-planting program and by coordinated volunteer establishment of a twenty-five foot buffer between establishments and the road.

Management and enhancement of the Town's Street tree resources should be enhanced through participation in programs such as America the Beautiful, The Small Business Administration (SBA) tree planing grant, the Forest Stewardship Program (FSP) and the Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP). These three federally funded programs address the tree and forest resources of urban, suburban and rural areas. America the Beautiful and the SBA grant, administered through RIDEM Division of Forest Resources, provide cost-share funding for tree planting, care and forest improvement. The FSP and the SIP are part of the Forestry Title of the federal Farm Bill of 1990 and serve to implement the rural component of the America the Beautiful Program

Downtown Revitalization Plan/Waterfront Study

Main Street in Warren, like Main Streets all over the country, has declined from its former prominence as the commercial, municipal and cultural center of Town. Unable to compete with nearby shopping malls, Main Street and the surrounding downtown area has suffered from failing businesses and the physical deterioration of individual buildings and the overall streetscape. The Town recognized that restoring the vitality of the downtown Warren would have a positive impact on both economic development and historic preservation. The Town of Warren Downtown Revitalization Plan, completed in 1999 provides a vision for the future and a holistic approach to the revitalization of downtown Warren.⁷ In addition the Warren Waterfront Study completed in 2001 provides future direction for the protection and enhancement of the waterfront portion of the downtown.⁸ These plans will assist the Town in making decisions that effect the long-term viability of the downtown and in maximizing public funds.

Downtown Warren contributes significantly to the character of the Town. The basis for Main Street revitalization is renewed investment by owners and store managers so that the street has a cohesive and vigorous image. This transformation must be manifest in the types and diversity of stores found on the street, coordinated store hours and shared promotion. Parking, usually seen as the "villain," is only part of the problem and often can be dealt with by pooling public and

⁷ Barbara Sokoloff Associates, April 1999. Town of Warren Downtown Revitalization Plan. Providence, RI.

⁸ Urban Design Group, 2001. Warren Waterfront Study.

private lots, installing better signs identifying the system as open to all shoppers, and employing attractive, well lit landscaping. These factors are as important as facade improvement and improved store window displays. (See the Economic Development Element.)

Empty or partially used mill buildings and the specter of additional unused mill buildings calls for planning to find alternative uses for the buildings and/or sites. Again, these plans should set clear natural and cultural standards for future uses. Two especially critical sites must be monitored and contingency plans put in place for their use: the central core between Child and Franklin streets and the north end of the Water Street waterfront. A wait-and-see policy will lead to incremental, piecemeal solutions, whereas careful planning can result in clear benefits to the image, character and tax base of Warren. (See the Economic Development Element.)

Nunes Farm, which includes the Levi Haile House (c. 1682), was one of Warren's most historic properties. Construction of the planned unit development, however, has destroyed much of the site's potential to establish a renewed identity for this part of Town.

Right-of-ways/Waterfront Access

Warren's extensive waterfront along rivers and bays gives right-of-ways special significance. Public access helps realize the scenic and recreational potential of the Town's water resources and, in so doing improves townspeople's quality of life. There are numerous ROWs including some that are state-designated (CRMC), others that are Town-developed and maintained, streets that dead-end at the water, and traditional but unrecognized ROWs. In addition, potential ROWs have been cited in the Harbor Management Plan for the Town of Warren (1989) and other Town reports as worth pursuing. Currently, there is ambiguity as to the status of some "recognized" ROWs due to poor marking, insufficient maintenance and irregular use patterns.

Right of way to the water is a time-honored topic in coastal Rhode Island. The crux of the issue is the question of who has access to what land at the water's edge. The legal aspects of right-of-ways can be confusing and problematic; it is the intent of this Element to promote public access to the shore that will enhance Warren's key scenic features and recreational opportunities. Highlighting the coastline will increase the likelihood of attracting successful water-related businesses and other industry to the Town. The best way to address the need for more public access may be through public-private joint ventures that combine small holdings into more useful amenities such as waterfront walkways. Confirming, marking and enforcing existing right-of-ways must be an ongoing effort.

Town Image

Warren knows its heritage but consistently undersells itself. Overall, the Town reads as an old seaside town that has lost its original purpose and subsequently allowed change to fragment and tarnish its image. Many positive features remain in place, but less appealing uses and images separate these elements. The tattered, fragmented character of parts of the Town needs but a little work to present an improved image. The problem is largely a collective lack of awareness that must be replaced by a new sense of pride of place. This pride can be regained by working more aggressively to retain the Town's history as manifested in prominent older buildings and outlying farmlands so integral to the history and quality of life in Warren. In addition, small-scale infill development should be carefully designed so that it helps knit together the varied

patterns of land use *throughout the commercial areas of Warren*. Implementation of the Downtown Revitalization Plan *would* demonstrate a positive, proactive attitude towards making Warren a better, more appealing place to live.

In addition to benefiting local quality of life, capitalizing on town image can reap rewards by attracting businesses and tourism. In "selling" itself, Warren must be careful to retain its true character; attracting regional visitors is most likely to be successful if the Town highlights its own unique coastal character.

III. POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Policy 1: Preserve, protect and acquire open space for the purpose of preserving and enhancing the natural, historic and visual resources of the Town.

Action 1.1 Develop a Warren open space protection plan that prioritizes key parcels, and details protection measures [Warren Land Conservation Trust, Planning Board, Conservation Commission Town Council]

Action 1.2 Support the Warren Land Conservation Trust in the acquisition of environmentally and culturally significant properties. [Town Council, Planning Board, Conservation Commission]

Action 1.3 Enlarge the conservation zone around Belcher Cove and establish wildlife areas on the Palmer and Kickemuit rivers. [Town Council, Conservation Commission, Warren Land Conservation Trust]

Action 1.4 Establish a system of trails to improve pedestrian movement through and awareness of conservation lands (The trail system in Barrington can serve as a model). [Town Council, Conservation Commission, Warren Land Conservation Trust]

Action 1.5 Erect platforms to attract nesting ospreys and further promote awareness of Belcher Cove and other conservation areas. [Town Council, Conservation Commission, Warren Land Conservation Trust]

Action 1.6 Channel of open space funds for acquisition of conservation land. [Town Council, Warren Land Conservation Trust, Conservation Commission]

Action 1.7 Refer to the RI Natural Heritage Program as an advisory agency in identifying and protecting wildlife habitat and rare, threatened or endangered flora and fauna. Incorporate this procedure into development review. [Conservation Commission, Warren Land Conservation Trust, Town Council, Heritage Program]

Action 1.8 Protect farmland and other valuable rural and natural resources by adopting protection measures such as rural development guidelines. ~~samples of which are available through RIDEM~~ [Planning Board, Town Council]

Policy 2: Preserve, protect and open up scenic views and overlooks including those to and from the waterfront, of and across farmland, to the Kickemuit River, and of historic resources.

Action 2.1 Establish "scenic" zones and viewsheds in which billboards are eliminated and landscaping requirements are more defined. [Town Council, Warren Land Conservation Trust, Planning Board]

Policy 3: Promote the preservation of historic and culturally significant buildings and sites. [Massasoit Historic Association, Planning Board, Town Council Warren Preservation Society, for all actions]

Action 3.1 Set up a revolving fund to be used in the rehabilitation of historic buildings, particularly those in the downtown area.

Action 3.2 Extend the existing downtown historic district to include additional historic structures and street patterns, extending the northern and southeastern boundaries.

Action 3.3 Consider the establishment of additional historic districts (per Inventory descriptions).

Action 3.4 Establish historic zoning in the Water Street/downtown area, regulating site plans and demolition and including design review.

Action 3.5 Establish an Historic District Commission whose responsibilities balance historic retention in designated areas with promotion of new development, affordable housing, and mixed use of older buildings.

Action 3.6 Restore the Levi Haile House (c. 1682) on the former Nunes Farm site, the oldest house in Warren, and establish it as a museum.

Action 3.7 Add to the State and National Registers all those properties including historic districts and well as individual properties that may be eligible for listing. [Above parties plus RIHPC]

Action 3.8 Recognizing the significance of archeological sites such as Burr's Hill; conduct a town wide assessment of such sites and plan for their protection.

Policy 4: Promote the revitalization and rehabilitation of the downtown area.

Action 4.1 Adopt the Town of Warren Downtown Revitalization Plan as part of Comprehensive Plan.

Action 4.2 Implement the Downtown Revitalization Plan [Warren Preservation Society, Planning Board]

Action 4.3 Update the sign ordinance and enforce it more effectively. [Planning Board,

Town Council, Building and Zoning Inspectors]

Policy 5: Foster the Town's maritime identity by promoting water-related uses in the Water Street area.

Action 5.1 Promote waterfront zoning that encourages water-related commercial uses in the Water Street area. [Chamber of Commerce, Planning Board, Town Council]

Action 5.2 Plan and establish a waterfront park system, building upon the concept plan in the 1976 Townscape Study. [Planning Board, Warren Preservation Society, Massasoit Historic Association, design consultants]

Policy 6: Promote the use of unused and naturally and culturally insignificant areas in the siting of industrial and commercial uses so as to have minimal impact on natural and cultural resources.

Action 6.1 Support potential use of the area bounded by Child and Franklin streets on the north and south and Arlington and Railroad avenues on the east and west as an industrial/service commercial park, emphasizing preservation of more naturally and scenically significant land. [Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Warren Land Conservation Trust]

Policy 7: Maintain and improve public access to shorelines and conservation areas and investigate linking such amenities to the Town center and to residential neighborhoods

Action 7.1 Identify, mark, enforce, and maintain established right-of-ways for pedestrian and other access to the water. [Conservation Commission, Warren Land Conservation Trust, Town Council]

Policy 8: Maintain, restore and protect groundwater quality and the water quality in Warren's rivers and reservoir for fish and wildlife habitat and for recreation and water supply purposes.

Action 8.1 Regularly update the Harbor Management Plan. [Planning Board, Warren Harbor Management Commission]

Action 8.2 Monitor industrial pollution of the Warren, Kickemuit and Palmer rivers. [Town Council, Conservation Commission]

Action 8.3 Examine the zoning and subdivision regulations and investigate other means such as public education and onsite wastewater management to help meet the standards of the TMDL Plan for the Kickemuit and Palmer Rivers.

Action 8.4 Initiate a town-wide program for the management of onsite wastewater treatment systems.

Policy 9: Preserve and protect the Kickemuit Reservoir and its watershed and tributaries for continuing use as a public drinking water supply and as a natural and scenic resource.

Action 9.1 Maintain input to the BCWA to retain and preserve the Kickemuit Reservoir and the rest of system as the primary or backup water supply. [Town Council, Conservation Commission]

Action 9.2 Protect the watershed through rezoning, performance and development standards, purchase of development rights, and/or outright purchase. [Warren Land Conservation Trust, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Town Council.]

Action 9.3 Work with neighboring Towns in protecting the watershed. [Warren Land Conservation Trust, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Town Council.]

Policy 10: Plan and implement roadside improvements that incorporate comprehensive street tree- planting and retention of stone walls.

Action 10.1 Develop a street tree-planting program for the downtown commercial area and subsequently for each residential neighborhood. [Conservation Commission, Warren DPW, Town Council]

Action 10.2 Enact an ordinance for the protection of historic stone walls, hedgerows and other rural remnants to help retain town character in more rural areas. [Warren Preservation Society, Warren Land Conservation Trust, *Planning Board*, Town Council]

Policy 11: Provide historic, environmental and cultural education opportunities to the public.

Action 11.1 Establish an environmental education center. [Conservation Commission, Warren Land Conservation Trust, Town Council]

Action 11.2 Expand school curriculum to include more emphasis on local history and the local natural environment. [School Department, Conservation Commission, Warren Preservation Society, Massasoit Historic Association]

Policy 12: Oversee vigilant enforcement of environmental laws, codes and regulations.

Action 12.1 Implement an educational program for the Warren Police Department that promotes and clarifies local environmental protection. [Conservation Commission, Police Department, RI DEM, RI CRMC]

Action 12.2 Charge the Conservation Commission with a "watchdog" function regarding environmental violations; such a monitoring role should be carried out in close cooperation with Town building and zoning inspectors. [Conservation Commission, Building and Zoning Inspectors, Town Council]

Policy 13: Promote environmentally and historically sensitive site planning and landscaping throughout Warren.

Action 13.1 Modify zoning and subdivision regulations to protect environmentally and historically important sites through buffering, landscaping and siting requirements. [Planning Board, Town Council]

Action 13.2 Adopt creative land development techniques such as flexible zoning that enable development, while preserving a site's salient features and the rural and working farm landscapes of Warren. [Planning Board, Town Council]

Action 13.3 Establish a buffer between businesses and the road along Route 136 into Town. [Planning Board, Chamber of Commerce, Town Council]

Action 13.4 Evaluate the potential enactment of some form of site plan review that includes an archeological component; the RIHPC can provide provides a model ordinance
[Planning Board, Town Council, RIHPC, Warren Preservation Society.]

Policy 14: Protect groundwater resources and public and private wells for current and future use.

Action 14.1 Conduct an inventory of threats to groundwater quality town wide and in particular within wellhead protection areas (WHPA'S). Prepare a local wellhead protection plan in accordance with the RI Wellhead Protection Program (WHP) Program. ~~Refer to RIDEM's summary of the WHP Program.~~ [Conservation Commission, Town Council]

Policy 15: Recognize that when properly designed, sited, installed and maintained, ISDS provide a cost-effective and environmentally sound alternative to sewers particularly in those portions of Town that are noted for their rural character.

Action 15.1 Establish an onsite wastewater management district or other means to ensure the inspection and proper maintenance of ISDS. [Conservation Commission, Town Council]

Action 15.2 Complete an onsite wastewater management plan that will enable the residents of the Town to qualify for low interest loans for the repair and replacement of failed and sub-standard ISDS. [Conservation Commission, Town Council]

Policy 16: Establish and maintain measures to control sediment and erosion
[Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Town Council and Conservation Districts for actions below]

Action 16.1 Adopt and implement an up-to-date Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance using the RI Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Handbook as guidance in so doing.

Action 16.2 Include maintenance requirements as a condition of permit approvals and establish routine inspection and enforcement procedures.

WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Action 16.3 Consider participation in Regional Compliance Inspection Programs; Staff of Conservation District will assist towns in implementing the above requirements by reviewing site plans and performing site inspections. Town officials would maintain enforcement authority. It is proposed that a portion of building permit fees could be passed to the Conservation Districts to finance site review and inspection services.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

| | ASAP | 5 yrs | 20 yrs | Responsible Parties |
|--|------|-------|--------|-------------------------|
| Policy 1: Preserve, protect and acquire open space | * | | | PB, TC, WLCT, CC |
| <i>Action 1.1</i> Develop Open Space protection plan | * | | | PB, TC, WLCT, CC |
| <i>Action 1.2</i> Support WLCT | * | * | * | PB, TC, CC |
| <i>Action 1.3</i> Enlarge conservation zones | * | | | WLCT, CC, PB, TC |
| <i>Action 1.4</i> Establish trail system | | | | CC, WLCT, TC |
| <i>Action 1.5</i> Erect nesting platforms | * | | | CC, WLCT |
| <i>Action 1.6</i> Land and easement acquisition | * | * | | WLCT, TC |
| <i>Action 1.7</i> Consult with RI Natural Heritage Program | * | * | * | PB, CC, WLCT |
| <i>Action 1.8</i> Protect farmland and other rural and natural resources; adopt rural development guidelines | * | | | PB, TC |
| Policy 2: Preserve and enhance scenic views | * | | | PB, TC |
| <i>Action 2.1</i> Establish scenic zones and viewsheds | * | * | | PB, TC, WLCT |
| Policy 3: Preserve historic buildings and sites | * | * | * | WPS, TC, MHA, PB |
| <i>Action 3.1</i> Revolving Fund | * | | | WPS, TC, MHA, PB |
| <i>Action 3.2</i> Extend downtown historic district | | * | | WPS, TC, MHA, PB |
| <i>Action 3.3</i> Create additional historic districts | | * | | WPS, TC, MHA, PB |
| <i>Action 3.4</i> Historic Zoning Water Street/ downtown | * | | | WPS, TC, MHA, PB |
| <i>Action 3.5</i> Establish Historic District Commission | | | | WPS, TC, MHA, PB |
| <i>Action 3.6</i> Restore Levi Hale House | | * | | WPS, TC, MHA, PB |
| <i>Action 3.7</i> Add to state and national historic registers | | * | | WPS, TC, MHA, PB, RIHPC |
| <i>Action 3.8</i> Archeological site assessment | | * | | WPS, TC, MHA, PB |
| Policy 4: Promote revitalization of downtown | * | * | | |

WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

| | ASAP | 5 yrs | 20 yrs | Responsible Parties |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>Action 4.1</i> Adopt Downtown revitalization Plan and Waterfront Study as part of Comp Plan | * | | | TC, PB |
| <i>Action 4.2</i> Implement both plans | * | * | | TC, PB, WPS Main St Coordinator |
| <i>Action 4.3</i> Update and enforce sign ordinance | | * | | ZB, Building Official |
| Policy 5: Foster maritime identity by promoting water related use | | * | | TC, PB Chamber, Main St. Coordinator |
| <i>Action 5.1</i> Promote waterfront zoning | * | * | | TC, PB, Chamber |
| <i>Action 5.2</i> Waterfront Park system | * | * | | PB, TC, design consultant, MHA, WPS |
| Policy 6: Locate industrial and commercial areas to minimize impact on natural and cultural resources | * | | | PB, CC, WLCT |
| <i>Action 6.1</i> Area between Child and Franklin and Arlington and Railroad | | * | | PB, CC, WLCT |
| Policy 7: Maintain and improve public access to shore | * | * | | CC, WLCT, TC |
| <i>Action 7.1</i> ID, Mark, enforce and maintain right-of-ways | * | * | * | CC, WLCT, TC |
| Policy 8: Maintain, restore and protect ground and surface water quality | * | * | | |
| <i>Action 8.1</i> Regularly update Harbor Mgt. Plan | | * | | Harbor Mgt. Commission, PB |
| <i>Action 8.2</i> Monitor industrial Pollution | * | | | CC,TC |
| <i>Action 8.3</i> Examine a variety of means to help meet TMDL's for the Kickemuit and Palmer Rivers | * | | | PB, CC, TC |
| <i>Action 8.4</i> Initiate a town-wide program for the management of onsite wastewater treatment systems | | * | | CC,TC |
| Policy 9: Preserve Kickemuit River and watershed | * | | | TC, PB, WLCT, CC, BCWA |
| <i>Action 9.1</i> Influence BCWA to continue to maintain Kickemuit as primary or backup water supply | * | * | * | BCWA, TC, CC |
| <i>Action 9.2</i> Protect watershed through rezoning, easements, purchase, development standards, etc | * | * | | PB, TC, CC, WLCT |
| <i>Action 9.3</i> Work with neighboring towns for watershed protection | * | * | * | PB, TC, CC, WLCT |
| Policy 10: Roadside Improvements | | * | | TC, CC, DPW |
| <i>Action 10.1</i> Street Tree Planting Program | * | | | CC, TC, DPW |
| <i>Action 10.2</i> Ordinance to protect walls, and rural character. | | * | | TC, PB, |
| Policy 11: Provide historic, environmental and cultural education opportunities to public | | * | | |
| <i>Action 11.1</i> Establish environmental education center | | * | | TC,CC |
| <i>Action 11.2</i> School programs, local environment and history | | * | | CC, MHA, WPA, school district |

WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

| | ASAP | 5 yrs | 20 yrs | Responsible Parties |
|---|------|-------|--------|--|
| Policy 12: Enforce environmental laws | * | * | | |
| <i>Action 12.1</i> Program for local law enforcement | | * | | CC, Police Department, RIDEM, RICRMC |
| <i>Action 12.2</i> Conservation Commission as “watchdog” | | | | CC, Building Official, TC |
| Policy 13: Promote Sensitive Site Planning | * | | | |
| <i>Action 13.1</i> Modify zoning and subdivision regs | * | | | PB, TC |
| <i>Action 13.2</i> Adopt creative land development techniques such as flexible zoning | * | * | | PB,TC |
| <i>Action 13.3</i> Establish landscape buffer in commercial portion of 136 | | * | | PB,TC |
| <i>Action 13.4</i> Site plan review with archeological component | * | | | PB,TC |
| Policy 14: Protect groundwater resources including public and private wells. | * | * | | CC, PB, TC |
| <i>Action 14.1</i> Develop WHP program | * | | | CC,TC |
| Policy 15: Septic System Management | * | * | | CC,TC |
| <i>Action 15.1</i> Establish onsite wastewater management district | | * | | CC,TC |
| <i>Action 15.2</i> Onsite wastewater management plan, to qualify for repair loans | | | | CC,TC |
| Policy 16: Erosion and sediment control | | * | | PB,CC, TC, appropriate conservation district |
| <i>Action 16.1</i> Adopt and Implement Soil and Erosion Control | * | * | | PB,CC, TC, appropriate conservation district |
| <i>Action 16.2</i> Maintenance Requirements | * | | | PB,CC, TC, appropriate conservation district |
| <i>Action 16.3</i> Participate in Regional Compliance Inspection Programs | * | * | | PB,CC, TC, appropriate conservation district |

Supplemental Data – Possible Hazardous Materials

| FACILITY | LOCATION | FUMES |
|----------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Tillotson-Pearson | Market Street | Polyester Resin |
| Anchorage-Dyer | Miller Street | Polyester Resin |
| American Tourister | Main Street | Polyvinyl Chloride |
| Blount Seafood | Water Street | Rotting Clam Shells |
| Wastewater Treatment | Water Street | Raw Sewage |

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WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
LAND USE ELEMENT

June 2003

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Land Use Element is central to the Comprehensive Plan because it directly affects all other Elements. In this section, the character of the town is described, existing land use inventoried and a future land use plan developed. A variety of profile areas have been delineated in order to provide an overview of the diverse nature of the community.

Current development and zoning are analyzed with respect to impacts on physical land characteristics, housing costs and availability, the tax base, services and utilities, transportation, economic development and town character. Growth management is discussed, a build-out analysis conducted and guidelines developed for the allocation of land between the various zoning categories. The resulting land use plan takes into account demographics and regional conditions and is accompanied by policies and recommended actions for its implementation.

The principal goal of the land use element is:

Goal: To manage land use to support both the short-range and long-range goals and policies of all elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Such management shall be in the best interests of town character and the health, welfare and quality of life of Warren residents.

Warren is considered by residents to be a small town, with its heritage tied to its harbor and water-related history. There is also an important rural component to the town exemplified in its remaining farms and open spaces. It has a land area of approximately six square miles (not including the Kickemuit Reservoir) a 1990 population of 11,385 (1836.3 persons per square mile) and an estimated July 1997 population of 11,822.¹ To a large extent, the presence of rivers, wetlands and harbors has dictated where development has been possible and what land uses practical.

The town's initial settlers were attracted to the area due to the value of the sheltered harbor. The configuration of surface waters limited growth and forced development to extend southward until it met Bristol, and eastward where land provided a link to Massachusetts communities. Remaining land was either too wet to develop or better used for agriculture. Soils, wetlands and high watertables have subsequently limited modern subdivisions. Excessive development pressure along the two north-south corridors has resulted in intensive linear commercial and mixed-use development. Active agriculture, particularly in eastern portions of the Town, is still a significant component of the landscape. Productive agriculture, together with the Town's other open space, enhances town character and helps to keep municipal and school expenditures from escalating.

II. PHYSIOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION

¹ This is a rough population estimate based only on the total number of additional residential units constructed since 1990 (177 through June of 1997) multiplied by the 1990 figure of 2.47 persons per household. Total numbers of births and deaths from April 1990 through June of 1997 were not available from the Town, nor was any data on vacancy rates.

An understanding of what constitutes a town's character enables the municipality to decide which components of this composite they wish to protect and which components they wish to change or remove. To most people, town character is vague and hard to define. Defining what is unique and important about one's town, however, is well worth the effort that an assessment of this nature requires. It becomes the foundation for planning decisions that will implement conservation, growth management and economic development objectives. In order to define town character, a physiographic analysis of the Town was completed. This analysis looked at how the physical features of Warren have affected its settlement and development patterns. This analysis was then used to develop eleven profile areas within the Town.

Physically, the character of Warren can be isolated into two main areas (Figure 1 Existing Land Use). The first area, located to the south of Belcher Cove and Kickemuit Road and west of the Kickemuit River is essentially developed, except for a central area of wetlands and adjacent cemeteries. The second area, located north and east of Belcher Cove, is an area which contains large open spaces many of which, however, are fronted by housing or strip commercial uses. The waterfront along the Warren River forms the western edge of area 1. The Waterfront Historic District contains a mixture of residential and commercial development and is located along the northern portion of this area. To the south, medium high residential development is characteristic of the neighborhoods while strip development is prevalent along Metacom Avenue. A mixture of industrial uses is located between Child Street and the railroad right-of-way. Warren's land use is more complex within the built-up portions of the western section of Town. Warren's development history has resulted in side-by-side industries and residences with extensive road-related commercial and service uses. Vestiges of the once-dominant mill life of the Town remain. A layering of predominant uses moves inland from the Warren River: waterfront, historic district, Main Street, mills, and related housing. From the Kickemuit River side, the land ranges from residential uses to strip commercial. In the middle, all of these land uses meet, intermingle and are made more complex by several industries.

The second principal area is located east of Belcher Cove and the Kickemuit River. In contrast to the first area, farmland and the largely undeveloped nature of Touisset characterize this more rural portion of town. There is, however, a large industrial/commercial development located along the northern portion of Market Street and a sizeable area of medium density residential development on the eastern end of Child Street.

Circulation acts as both stimulant and depressant to the image and character of the town. Life in Warren is characterized by hustle-bustle but also by ragged edges and congestion. All of these characteristics are present along its principal roads.

A. CONTAINMENT

Containment is a term used to describe the physiographic conditions that have defined the pattern and concentration of development. Factors affecting containment include steep slopes, waterbodies, highly erodible land, bedrock outcrops, wetlands, etc. In Warren's case, containment is primarily dictated by the sculpted water edges and by the more subtle limits imposed by wetlands. A containment analysis establishes the following areas:

*The Historic Center*² (Warren's Waterfront Historic District), the first area, retains the harbor as its western edge. To the south, coastal wetland at one time more clearly demarcated this area than is obvious today. Historically, the inland boundary that extends from Belcher Cove south along the cemeteries was also more clearly defined.

The ridge north of Belcher Cove and related high lands on either side of Market Street compose the second area. The area is defined by the coastal edge of the Palmer River and associated wetlands as well as similar edge conditions along the upper Kickemuit River (now Kickemuit Reservoir).

North and south of eastern Child Street is defined by wetlands located southeast of the Kickemuit Reservoir, wetlands associated with the Kickemuit River and extensive wetlands south of Child Street along the state line and the coast.

Touisset Point is a long ridge of contained land defined by the coast and wetlands in the Chase Cove area. Soil and groundwater conditions further restrict settlement potential.

Laurel Park is the last contained area and was once was separate from the rest of built-up Warren. Due to the development of Metacom Avenue and residential in filling of the last several decades, this area now merges with downtown Warren.

Widespread residential growth and the privatization of the coast have blurred the boundaries of these once separate areas.

B. DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

There are essentially four development patterns in Warren: rural, suburban, town center and strip commercial.

The rural pattern dominates in two areas, Touisset Point and the northern part of town, with the exception of the commercial and industrial corridor of Market Street. The ideal and actual images for the rural pattern, however, are not in sync. Although there is widespread interest in retaining the rural character as embodied Warren's farms and open spaces, development continues to erode the Town's rural nature.

Town wide some 40 percent of the land is classified as prime agricultural soils. Efforts to preserve farmland through state programs and the local land trust have given only marginal control to the incremental transformation of these areas. Rural character is very important to

² Warren has two other areas of historic significance; Kickemuit River Crossing/Windmill Hill Historic District and Touisset Neck Historic District. Of these three districts only the waterfront historic area is currently an official historic district. The Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission in 1975 initially recommended the other two. Protection and enhancement of Warren's historic resources is vital to maintaining town character. The Natural and Cultural Resource Section of the Comprehensive Plan contains additional information on Warren's historic resources.

Warren's identity and must be protected through appropriate zoning and land planning techniques. Agreements such as Warren's local Farm, Forest and Open Space Protection Plan agreed to by the farmers and the Town in 1997 and the \$1,000,000 for open space protection approved in a local referendum are important first steps in preserving the Town's remaining rural areas. The referendum, which passed by a two-to-one margin, indicates the importance of open space preservation to the residents of Warren and their willingness to implement the open space initiatives of the comprehensive plan.

The suburban pattern is an extension and acceleration of what began as small town residential growth. It is the most consistent pattern and includes older residences as well as modern subdivisions. It is most prevalent in large areas on both sides of Metacom Avenue and throughout the Town in variously sized pockets extending back from roads. There is an obvious conflict where this pattern encroaches into agricultural and rural areas. Residential development and the preservation of rural character, however, are not mutually exclusive. Techniques such as cluster development and flexible zoning, when used in conjunction with rural site design criteria, allows sustainable residential growth to occur while still preserving the beauty of these important areas.

The town center is a complex pattern consisting of three layers: the waterfront, Water Street and Main Street. It also encompasses the built fabric of the immediately adjacent streets. It consists of a historic small town pattern overlaid in part by more recent amenities and modifications. It is an area of surprising juxtapositions and details but also one with many missing pieces and the calluses of neglect and under-recognized worth. Warren's downtown is one of the municipality's defining attributes, a diamond in the rough. Economic development and the preservation of the historic character are integral components to any development or redevelopment of the town center.

The strip pattern is primarily found along Metacom Avenue and in a commercial/industrial area along Child and Market Streets. Strip development has resulted in urban congestion and detracts from a tangible heritage and a sense of place. It is the most negative development patterns in Warren. Vacant or under-used land and ragged edge conditions also characterize Warren's strip development. The presence of vacant and under used land, however, could be positive in terms of visual and traffic related improvements for future development and commercial upgrades.

Large industrial buildings also play an important part in the overall character of Warren. They do so as exceptions to the above patterns and should, depending on the circumstances, be seen either as landmarks or eyesores.

C. PROFILE AREAS

In previous comprehensive plans, Warren was divided into four planning areas for the purpose of assessing demographic and service needs. These areas did not, however, describe Warren's more complex natural and cultural land use patterns. The above information on containment, land use and development patterns was used to delineate eleven profile areas (Figure 2). These districts help one to understand the diversity of Warren and to better address the specific needs of different neighborhoods. Defining factors such as natural and man-made edge conditions and differences in

land uses and building types were used to delineate profile areas. Figures 3 and 4 contain sketches of some of these profile areas.

1. Market Street (*Road-related uses: Town line to Kickemuit Road*)

This profile area is a linear stretch that includes all of the road-related commercial, industrial, service, open space, and residential uses within approximately 200 feet of Market Street and those roads (mostly dead ends) which stem from it. The area has a disjointed character due to the alternating pattern of housing, farms, larger scale roadside businesses, service uses, and vacant land. Development in this profile area appears to be the result of opportunistic land use changes unchecked by performance standards.

2. Belcher Cove (*Bike path around Belcher Cove to town line*)

This profile area includes all of the coastal land surrounding Belcher Cove and related undeveloped or marginally used lands. The area is very scenic as viewed from the water but is essentially hidden from view when looking towards the water. This area is most often viewed from a distance and the best views are from Barrington. The East Bay Bike Path has increased the public's awareness of this area. Three main issues must be addressed in future plans: the natural vulnerability of the edge, the possibility of adjacent development between the coast and Market Street, and the high conservation potential.

3. Upper Kickemuit River (*Rural/agricultural lands: Poverty Corner-west and north to town line*) Profile area 3 contains a substantial portion of agricultural land, some of which is still actively farmed. Residential development extends back from Market Street and along parts of School House Road and adjacent roads. This profile area is centered on the Kickemuit River, a major scenic feature that complements the agricultural land. Preservation and enhancement of rural and scenic character is an objective of this profile area.

4. Child Street East (*Kickemuit River east to town line*)

This neighborhood primarily consists of housing subdivisions built during the last few decades. The majority of these, to the north of Child Street, are on subdivision roads that extend back some distance. Busy Child Street retains a number of older residences with some newer multi-unit structures at the intersection of Long Lane. Most of the area has been developed in pieces. The lack of cohesion here is the result of incremental development and unclear planning objectives.

5. Child Street West (*Kickemuit River west to bike path and edge of Belcher's Cove wetlands*)

This is a much older, built-up neighborhood centered on the mixed use/commercial development along Child Street and the Carol Cable mill complex. Blocks and lots are small and the streets narrow, with buildings close to the road, especially where Child Street (Route 103) intersects the convergence of Kickemuit, Arlington and Metacom (Route 136). The area has a compact appearance, occasionally interrupted by vacant land, parking lots and industry-related uses.

6. Town Core (*Waterfront, Water Street and Upper Main Street, Warren River Bridge to Franklin Street, bike path and edge of Belcher Cove wetlands*) This profile area contains three critical components of the town: Main Street, the historic district on and around Water Street, and the

waterfront. They have been combined into one area due to their proximity and linked histories. Main Street in Warren is an example of the classic American commercial and civic main street that saw the passing of its heyday several decades ago. In Warren, however, it still serves as the center of town life. Water Street and adjoining blocks comprise an historic maritime core with an ongoing commercial life (antiques, crafts, restaurants, and water-related businesses) and a large stock of Early American and Victorian buildings.

Although largely obscured by the American Tourist complex and other buildings, especially at its northern end, the waterfront has retained its commercial life. The southern end of this area contains boat yards, boat building, the Warren Town Beach, Burr Hill Park, the sewage treatment plant and dead-end residential streets and rights-of-ways with varying degrees of accessibility. Overall, it is a complex area of three parallel linear sections: the waterfront, the historic district and Main Street.

7. Lower Main Street & West (*Main Street to Warren River: Franklin Street to Bristol line*)

This is a small neighborhood, exhibiting the same "condo" land use pattern found along the adjacent shore in Bristol. These attached residential units are set apart from the rest of Warren by unified landscaping and well built stone walls left by earlier settlement patterns. Together these help to define an exclusive, preserve-like atmosphere.

8. Metacom Avenue (*Strip development, Kickemuit Road to Bristol line*)

This linear area is engulfed by the franchise and related commercial activity of the Metacom strip that extends well into Bristol. Unlimited curb cuts, excessive signage, little or no landscaping and heavy traffic all set this area apart from abutting residential neighborhoods.

9. West of Metacom (*Residential area west of Metacom Avenue*)

To the west of the Metacom strip is an extensive small town suburban neighborhood built over the last several decades. The streets between adjacent subdivisions seldom connect with each other. At first glance, the area appears to be made up entirely of post-World War II housing, but older houses are located throughout the area, especially adjacent to Main Street.

10. East of Metacom (*Residential area east of Metacom Avenue*)

This area, similar to profile area 9, consists of suburban, residential developments on a rough grid of streets that meander as they reach the slope descending to the Kickemuit River. Again, the residences are predominantly post-World War II with older structures scattered throughout.

11. Touisset (*Touisset Neck south of Child Street area developments*)

This is the largest and least densely developed area. It is mainly composed of farms and nurseries with scattered, recently built, individual "suburban" houses and two enclaves of former summer houses, most of which are now used year-round. Touisset is the largest unsewered part of town and has the greatest natural constraints to development. The central issue here is the balance between the rural and agricultural landscape and development pressure. There is strong interest in preserving active agriculture, but land planning techniques need to be established to ensure that residential development does not relentlessly establish a new suburban pattern.

III. EXISTING LAND USE

A. INTRODUCTION

Warren's current land use is a complex configuration of patterns with a wide variety of uses within very constricted areas. These patterns are exemplified in the Existing Land Use Map (Figure 1). Many spot zones are present and are the result of incremental decisions rendered over time in response to small-scale actions. It is difficult to assess the extent to which piecemeal land use and zoning is a product of the physical configuration of the town and its historic evolution and how much is due to opportunistic development. In the past, there was no plan directing the distribution of land uses, but rather a reactive process of acknowledging inevitable change.

The complexity of Warren's land use pattern generally precludes assignment of single uses to neatly defined areas. However, there are exceptions: sectors that are nearly all residential should remain so, and areas now dominated by farms and large lot housing should be recognized as farm conservation areas. On the other hand, transitional areas with many disparate uses and a great deal of vacant land should be given focused land use objectives in order to develop a cohesive mixed use policy.

Portions of the Town have radically changed in recent years and the new development patterns established do not make a positive contribution to overall character. Chief among these is the increased service/industrial use of Market Street and the commercial development of the "strip" along Metacom Avenue. Certain older uses--predominately industrial--are in the process of change and that the outcome of this change is unclear. The Town will have to make some hard decisions to refocus the uses of industrial and strip commercial areas. Automobile circulation pressures will continue to exacerbate the image and character of these areas.

Warren's fragmentary and diverse land use patterns, along with its relatively intact rural areas, create its special identity. Achievable land use objectives must be defined that recognize and protect those qualities that make Warren unique.

B. LAND USE AND ZONING MAPS

There are three maps related to land use and zoning: Existing Land Use (Figure 1), Existing Zoning (Figure 6) and the Future Land Use Plan (Figure 7). The designated land use categories and assigned densities of the Existing Land Use Map are based on mapped data from the Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS) and the associated statewide classification system. Under this system residential densities are categorized as follows:

| | |
|------------|--------------|
| Low | >2acres |
| Medium-low | 1 to 2 acres |

| | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Medium density | 1/4 to 1 acre |
| Medium-high | 1/8 to 1/4 acre |
| High | <1/8 acre |

Although this classification system is consistent and represents a statewide average, individual communities differ as to how they interpret what constitutes high density and low density residential development within their own Town. Generally, this interpretation is based on the nature of existing development. In the more rural towns, for example, low-density residential zoning might be 5 acres and high density might be 1/2 acre. Conversely, in a more urban community, low density might be 1/2 acre. In order to retain a consistent and statewide coverage of existing land use, these differences in interpretation are not reflected in the existing land use map. The Existing Zoning Map, however, does reflect local interpretation of the residential densities by assigning densities and specific district boundaries to the more generalized Future Land Use Plan.

The Future Land Use Plan (Figure 7) is based on concepts presented in Warren's original 1991 Draft Comprehensive Plan (specifically the Proposed Landuse /Zoning Map) as subsequently modified by the Planning Board and Zoning Revisions Committee during the Phase II Zoning revision process (1996-1997). It depicts a future vision or land use plan for Warren. The Existing Zoning Map (Figure 6) assigns densities to the concepts and designations of the Future Land Use map. The changes made to Warren's zoning in 1997 were based on the Future Land Use Plan and differ substantially from previous zoning. All future zone changes must also be consistent with Warren's Future Land Use Plan.

C. SUMMARY OF LAND USES

Development in Warren, once centered in the downtown area with farms scattered inland and on the Touisset peninsular, has become more spread out over time. The Main Street area is still the center of municipal life but has become less defined and vigorous as a commercial area.

Despite Warren's complex intermingling of land uses, a few generalized land use patterns can be defined (Figure 1). Chief among these is the dominance of farmland and open space in the eastern portion of the Town. This is in contrast to the developed nature of Warren south of Belcher Cove and Kickemuit Road. In some eastern areas, notably in the subdivisions along Child Street, suburban development has blurred the contrast between open farmland and the dense downtown. In other areas residential use exists but either blends into mixed-use edges, or does not occupy sufficient area to establish itself as a dominant use.

Table 1 summarizes land use acreage in Warren. This is followed by a brief description of the major land use types within Warren; residential, commercial, industrial, mixed use, municipal/institutional, transportation, open space and undeveloped land.

1. Residential

Approximately 30.75 percent of the land in Warren is residential and dominated by single family residences. Table 2 depicts the relative percentages of the various residential densities throughout

Warren. About 654 acres or 53.5 percent of the total 1222 acres of residential development are categorized as medium high density (between 4 and 7.9 dwelling units per acre). Most of the remainder is either high density (> than 8 units per acre) or medium density (1 to 3.9 units per acre). Approximately 6.82 percent of the residential development is characterized as low and medium low density and generally occurs in the outlying areas.

Table 1, Land Use Acreage in Warren, 1997
Source: (RIGIS, 1988 as updated by Town 1997).

| CATEGORY | ACRES | PERCENT |
|---|-----------------|----------------|
| Low Density Residential (> 2 ac.) | 39.62 | 1.00 |
| Med. Low Density Residential (1 to 2 ac.) | 43.68 | 1.10 |
| Med. Density Residential (1-1/4 ac.) | 271.93 | 6.84 |
| Med. High Density Residential (1/4 to 1/8 ac.) | 653.69 | 16.45 |
| High Density Residential (<1/8 ac.) | 212.8 | 5.36 |
| Commercial | 133.04 | 3.35 |
| Industrial | 134.34 | 3.38 |
| Transportation/Utilities | 46.34 | 1.17 |
| Institutional | 74.14 | 1.87 |
| Farmland | 795.1 | 20.01 |
| Brushland, Forest | 418.06 | 10.52 |
| Recreation | 199.81 | 5.03 |
| Wetlands | 847.46 | 21.33 |
| Ponds | 58.01 | 1.46 |
| Other | 45.17 | 1.14 |
| TOTAL | 3,973.19 | 100.00 |

Table 2, Residential Acreage Summary, 1997
Source: (RIGIS, 1988 as updated by Town 1997).

| CATEGORY | ACRES | PERCENT |
|---------------------------------------|----------|---------|
| Low Density (>2 ac.) | 39.62 | 3.24 |
| Medium Low Density (1 to 2 ac.) | 43.68 | 3.58 |
| Medium Density (1 to 1/4 ac.) | 271.93 | 22.26 |
| Medium High Density ((1/4 to 1/8 ac.) | 653.69 | 53.51 |
| High Density (<1/8 ac.) | 212.8 | 17.42 |
| TOTAL | 1,221.72 | 100.00 |

Warren's housing stock consists of historic houses in town, farm houses, mill housing, two and three level duplexes and triplexes, tract or suburban developments, elderly housing, condominiums and most recently, owner-occupied multi-unit complexes. Most of the housing types typically associated with early town building, the rise of the Industrial Revolution and post-industrial housing can be found in Warren. These housing types are distributed as follows:

Farm Houses

Older Single Family (late 19th and 20th centuries)

Historic Urban Town Houses

Mill Housing (Two and Three Level duplexes or triplexes Predominantly in Profile Areas 5 and 6)

Tract or Suburban Type Houses (Predominantly in Profile Areas 2, 3, 4, 9, and 10)

Condominiums (Profile areas 5 and 7)

The Housing Element contains further information on each of these housing types.

2. Commercial

Commercial development comprises 3.35 percent of the land in Warren and can be divided into the following four categories.

(a) *Traditional Main Street retail stores extending roughly from North Water to Franklin Street.*

This is the traditional main street found in most small towns. Like so many others, Warren's Main Street shows signs of neglect and the need for focused revitalization efforts.

(b) *Highway-related commercial development found on Market and Child streets (Child Street from the Bike Path east; most of Market Street).* These strips have different characteristics: Child is an older mix of automobile services, some residences, mills, and miscellaneous services; Market

Street is a newer version with larger, more spread out facilities catering to automobiles and boating and providing various services.

(c) *Strip commercial uses on Metacom Avenue from Franklin Street south, dominated by fast food businesses, supermarkets and gas stations.* Metacom is the modern strip of franchise fast food businesses, gas stations, super markets, and other typical strip businesses--all serviced by many curb cuts. Small enterprises and the absence of large shopping malls characterize this area. Because of its linear location and design this relatively minor land use (in terms of total acres) disproportionately dominates one's image of Warren.

(d) *Other Commercial Land Uses (Corner of Child Street and Metacom Avenue; Warren Harbor).* This is an older neighborhood commercial area marked by diminishing convenience shop and restaurant activity. Other isolated commercial activities include waterfront services and restaurants along Water Street and in the harbor area.

3. Industrial

Formerly more dominant, industrial activity now comprises only about two percent of Warren's land. There are essentially three types of industrial activity in Warren: mill and related multilevel manufacturing, newer single-story service uses, assembly plants and marine activities.

(a) *Mill Industry (Isolated sites found in the center of the town).* Three locations can be identified: The American Tourist complex along the Warren River; several buildings between Child and Franklin streets in the center of Warren, and the former Carol Cable. These facilities are vestiges of a passing way of life and present the opportunity for creative re-use options.

(b) *Twentieth Century Industry (Two sites: one in the center of Warren, and another on the east side of Market Street)* The Lloyd Manufacturing plant is a large, one-story structure along the old railroad tracks north of the cemeteries. Boats and other fiberglass products are manufactured at the TPI facility on upper Market Street.

(c) *Marine Industries (Southern end of Water Street)*

This area is dominated by water-related uses including a boat yard and Blount Seafood plant north of the new sewage treatment plant. The southern end of the harbor also contains smaller marinas and marine services.

4. Mixed Use

A large part of Warren consists of mixed land uses where stores, homes, industries, services, and farms are found adjacent to each other or even on the same property or in the same building. This mixed-use pattern contributes vitality and diversity and, at the same time, confusion and fragmentation. Diversity comes in the form of many auxiliary or more affordable residential units that are located above stores or in other mixed-used situations. Confusion is caused by the ambiguous delineation of one land use area from another and it is sometimes difficult to determine any dominant land use.

5. Municipal and Institutional

These land uses consist of public and semi-public facilities, schools, religious institutions, nursing homes and health facilities, and social clubs. About 1.17 percent of Warren's land is occupied by these uses. (See the Services and Facilities Element for more in-depth information.)

(a) *Public facilities: (Primary facilities are the Town Hall, East Bay Government Center, Public Works facilities on Birch Swamp Road, Bristol County Water Facility and the Warren Wastewater Treatment Facility on Water Street).* These basic Town functions are located separately from each other with little land set aside for possible expansion. Bristol County Water Authority is a public utility owned by Warren, Bristol and Barrington.

(b) *Schools: (the complex located off of Asylum Road plus other school sites).* The primary complex includes Kickemuit Middle School, Warren High School and the Hugh Cole School. The land appears adequate to accommodate a larger complex. The other public schools are located at individual sites; some of them are functionally obsolete or will be soon. Our Lady of Fatima is the largest private educational institution in Warren.

(c) *Semi-public facilities: (George Hail Free Library)* These functions complement public facilities and provide necessary services. The library contributes to municipal life in the center of town.

(d) *Religious institutions: (several religious buildings are located within the Historic District and along Child Street and Main Street).* Two historic churches, the Warren Baptist Church and the First Methodist Church, are located at the core of the original village. Other churches are located along Main Street and Child Street. Our Lady of Fatima School is located off Market Street. Three main cemeteries hold prominent positions: South Burial Grounds, Greenwood Cemetery and the oldest cemetery in Warren which is located on the Kickemuit along Serpentine Road,

(e) *Nursing homes and health facilities: (Nursing homes are located on either side of the Kickemuit and on Metacom Avenue and Main Street).* These moderately scaled facilities are located in or on the edges of residential neighborhoods.

(f) *Social clubs:* Several clubs are scattered throughout the built-up sections of town. They include the German-American Club, Italian-American Club and American Legion.

6. Transportation Land Uses

The transportation systems serving Warren are limited to the street/highway system and the recently introduced bike path. Once served by train, Warren has had no passenger service since the 1938 hurricane. (For additional information see the Circulation Element.)

(a) *Street and Highway System:* Warren has two significant traffic problem areas: the double bottlenecks of north-south traffic at the Warren River Bridge and at Child Street and the

unsystematic nature of local streets which are usually not laid out as part of a grid nor well interconnected.

(b) *Bike Path*: The East Bay Bike Path runs through Warren along the old north-south railroad line. This new path is very well used. The potential for another route exists on the old east-west railroad right-of-way and is currently being studied by RIDOT.

7. Open Space, Conservation & Recreation

Warren has recreational and other open space facilities as well as several conservation sites and protected lands. The total land area of recreational facilities and open space properties is in excess of 660 acres (approximately 16 percent of the land in Warren), not including the two-mile long bike path or the 44 acres of surface water at the Kickemuit Reservoir. According to the land use map active recreation facilities account for 199.81 acres. For a detailed inventory refer to the *Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plan* (1995) which also serves as the Recreation, Conservation & Open Space Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Active recreation plays an important role in Warren and makes up about 5 percent of the land use. This category includes private fields, playlots and other facilities open to the public. A complete list can be found in the Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plan.

8. Potentially Developable Land

A good deal of Warren's land use is not assigned to one of the above categories. This undeveloped land, excluding wetlands and beaches, is--or once was--predominantly farm-related. There are approximately 974.48 acres of potentially developable land in Warren. Of this 593.84 acres (60.7 percent) is farmland 331.17 acres (33.8 percent) is forest/brushland, and 5.5 percent has been classified as other. Additional information relating to developable land in Warren as it relates to zoning, and potential growth is located in Section V of the Land Use Element "Future Land Use".

IV. LAND USE MANAGEMENT

A. INTRODUCTION

The town must critically evaluate each new development pattern before allowing it to be imposed on the Town. Warren is too small and already too diverse to assimilate extensive large-scale industrial, commercial or other developments. Large modern residential developments can also pose problems and should not be imposed on existing patterns without careful evaluation before permitting.

In keeping with the RI Comprehensive Planning Act, it is the intention of this Plan, that the Town assumes a more responsible and progressive role in charting its future. Development objectives for a variety of land use types within Warren are presented in this section.

B. OPPORTUNITIES

Warren's approach to land use has been permissive, allowing mixed uses and very fragmented zoning districts. It has become increasingly difficult to reverse this trend simply because of the fine grain of different land uses and the precedents set. A more cohesive pattern of land use cannot be realized simply by overlaying a new zoning map and land use interpretation on the existing pattern--at least not in the built-up sections of town. Significant opportunities for enhancement, however, exist in the following areas:

Farmland: Implement appropriate zoning and innovative land planning techniques designed to ensure sustainable residential development and farmland and open space protection - New procedures (farm conservation measures, cluster developments, flexible zoning, rural development standards, etc) should be developed. Future housing and associated infrastructure should be developed so as to minimize its impact on the physical and visual character of farms, fields, vistas and open space.

Main Street: Refurbish and coordinate the management of Main Street to capture the potential of its historic character while increasing its economic vitality - This would include coordinated promotion and beautification, additional street tree planting, and facade improvements. Key buildings such as the Tavares Building, and upper floor residential conversions in commercial buildings provide unique opportunities for a revitalizing the downtown. Appointment of a Main Street manager would facilitate coordinated marketing, renovation and promotion. (For additional detail, see the Economic Development Element and the *Town of Warren Downtown Revitalization Plan*, Barbara Sokoloff and Associates, April 1999.)

Housing Types: Determine the types of housing felt to be appropriate for Warren and establish well-crafted performance standards for all innovative housing including control over the number of units per development - Consideration should be given to density-based housing layouts as substitutes for simple one house per fixed minimum area lots.

Lot Maintenance: Encourage the individual maintenance of private residential, commercial and industrial lots. Monitor enforcement of codes.

North Market Street: This area is critical to establishing the image of Warren as approached from the north along Route 136. The existing PUD detracts from the visual quality of the area. Scenic enhancement of the area, however, is possible if attention is given to visual character when developing the remaining vacant land.

The Levi Haile House (c. 1682), is one of Warren's most historic properties and its location suggests that there is much to be gained by its retention and restoration. The site may present opportunities for a farmers' market, picnic area and Visitor's Center.

Attention should be paid to improving the visual character of Route 136 all the way into Town. This can be accomplished in part by a program for the planting of street trees and by the

coordinated volunteer establishment of a landscaped buffer between establishments and the road. A landscape architect or garden designer could be hired to develop a handful of prototype commercial buffers. Grant funding could be sought for the renewal effort and existing parking requirements reviewed by the zoning board in order to determine if they are excessive in some instances.

C. ANALYSIS

1. Contrasting Character Between East and West Parts of Town:

The marked contrast between open land visually dominated by farms and farm fields in the eastern portion of Town, and the downtown and small town residential character of the west is an asset worth retaining through appropriate land use controls. The current trend is for these farms to either be encroached upon or eliminated by residential development that is by nature "suburban." These new houses increasingly mask views of farms and obscure awareness of the farm history and character of the land. The different density and pattern of use in this area is an asset that Warren could easily lose or severely compromise. Edges should be recognized and defined as part of the Town's planning strategy. Growth and privatization of the coast should not be allowed to further blur these distinctions.

2. Main Street: Main Street in Warren, like Main Streets all over the country, has declined from its former prominence as the commercial, municipal and cultural center of town. Unable to compete with shopping malls and strip development, Main Street has suffered from failing businesses and the physical deterioration of individual buildings and the overall streetscape. Attempts to revitalize Main Street through the use of brick paving and tree planting and more extensive plans called for in the 1976 *Warren Townscape Project* have been incomplete at best. A more aggressive, economic-based effort is needed. (See also Economic Development Element.)

Main Street could play a vital role in the restoration of town character. There are several buildings within the central Main Street stretch of five blocks which, if restored, could spark renewed interest in the street and a change in perceptions and aspirations. The Tavares Building is a prominent building that could serve as a catalyst. In its present state, Main Street is generally not actively observed and experienced. It is used in only a limited way, and does not even begin to live up to its physical and commercial potential.

The basis for Main Street revitalization is renewed investment by owners and store managers so that the street has a cohesive and vigorous image. This must be manifest in the types and diversity of stores found on the street, coordinated store hours and shared promotion. Parking, usually seen as the "villain," is only part of the problem and often can be dealt with by pooling public and private lots, installing better signs, identifying the system as open to all shoppers, and using attractive, well lit landscaping. These factors are as important as facade improvement and improved store window displays. (See the Economic Development Element.)

3. Residential Land Use: Over the last several decades Warren has welcomed new suburban housing as a logical use of its land and a means by which many townspeople and others from the region could improve the quality and size of their homes. This trend involved the use of existing

roads and available land. The resulting pattern has in-filled a large portion of the more easily built sections of town. Considerably less building has occurred where large land holdings and/or farmland have been more resistant to development.

The town has allowed market forces to renew some of the historic fabric in the downtown core and has passively encouraged historic retention and refurbishment of older houses. A smaller portion of the housing stock has remained in marginal condition. Over the next decade, Warren will probably experience an increase in the restoration of historic houses. This will reduce the number of inexpensive units and put more pressure on the Town to find alternative ways of housing its traditional population. This will continue to be expressed in the need for housing which is affordable by the sons and daughters of present day working and middle class residents.

Regional economic and growth patterns impact development in Warren. Economics no longer work within the confines of the individual town. Due to its proximity to Providence, location along the coast and relatively low cost of housing, Warren will continue to be attractive as a place to live. These trends will impact the traditional working class population in terms of housing costs and availability.

Any attempt to slow Warren's integration into the regional market and retain some of its local character must involve aggressive establishment of planning strategies that allow accessory units, conversion of older non-residential structures and density approaches to the development of open areas. The Town must actively focus its policies pertaining to older residential structures, especially those of little or no historic significance. These buildings must be actively brought into code compliance, and targeted to lower income families. Issues to be addressed include exterior maintenance and occupancy standards, based on the number of units and individuals per structure. A more detailed inventory and analysis of residential land use as it relates to housing opportunities is presented in the Housing Element of this plan.

The Town should work to connect roads in suburban areas so that there are additional means of access and egress within isolated subdivisions. While the existing pattern is often conditioned by natural constraints, there has also been complacency in allowing dead-end streets and unconnected subdivisions to proliferate. These streets increase service needs and costs and diminish fire and safety access.

4. Commercial Land Use: Just as the deterioration of Main Street has had a negative impact on Warren's town character, so has the proliferation of strip commercial uses, particularly along Metacom Avenue and Child Street. As strip commercial uses spread, town character is blurred. Furthermore, commercial vitality is greater when business activity is clustered or limited to more compact areas. Commercial activity that strings out along roads leading away from town, often signals diminished economic vitality. When land costs and spatial demands are low, commercial uses along the highway or road into town tend to sprawl, curb cuts are ill defined, and traffic problems created.

For the most part, commercial development has been at a relatively small scale, poorly positioned to compete with larger, regionally based shopping centers. The result can be seen in the rather

depressed state of Main Street and the marginal nature of business on Child Street and portions of Market Street. Similar economic instability may occur on Metacom Avenue simply because of the small size of parcels along this strip.

Warren exhibits all the symptoms of over-extension and low intensity commercial life and can certainly benefit from a reduction in the overall linear area allotted to commercial uses. Too much linear street frontage in commercial use spreads intermittent economic life out over too great a distance. In short, it pays to collect commercial activity at specified nodes--the principal commercial blocks of Main Street, neighborhood crossings and other designated locations.

The primary area in need of recommitment and reinvestment is the four-block core area of Main Street. Renewed investment and coordinated management in Main Street could change the present economic stagnation into a vibrant center, reminiscent of downtown Warren a hundred years ago. Such an undertaking must be carefully approached to balance historic imagery with contemporary procedures, coordinated public and private parking, and needed commercial services. One of the keys to the success of a renewed Main Street is to restrict its length and to actively protect and refurbish historic structures over a much larger area.

The Town must clearly define the objectives of areas that may be subject to commercial development in the decades to come. A new commercial center can be realized only after careful consideration of location, integration with other civic needs and potential impacts on existing commercial strips. Attempts to change existing land zoned commercial to other uses will be difficult, as will any attempt to reduce the total current frontage allowed under commercial zoning. There are two locations where new service commercial activity could be advantageously positioned.

The first location is in the town core alongside the bike path behind Main and Child streets. This site, could be the catalyst for improved circulation, presenting more efficient rerouting possibilities for Rt. 114 while providing direct service streets to the new development (also usable by townspeople). Commercial activity in this area would also complement a renewed Main Street. Design proposals would have to take into account the small size of the area. A conceptual design for what this area might look like is presented in Figure 5.

The second area, located along a portion of Metacom could be approached as a renewal project. This site calls landscape guidelines and for innovative repackaging of current commercial land to achieve a more centralized facility. Impact on adjacent residential areas should be buffered.

5. Industrial Land Use: Much of Warren's economic success earlier in this century was tied to the presence of several mills and factories. Local industry has sharply declined and can no longer be counted on to provide a sizeable portion of either the tax base of the Town or the income base of its residents. As long as the remaining active facilities stay in operation, there will be work, taxes and positive expectations. On the other hand, with each closing or reduction in activity there is the need to plan for alternative uses and the passing of a way of life. The town must confront this reality by seeking new employment sources and by finding other uses for older industrial buildings.

Industry is scattered through much of the north-south axis of Town. Several large buildings that dwarf all other buildings around them dominate its presence. Newer facilities are generally isolated from the older nineteenth century mills. Clear siting and performance standards must be set for manufacturing, warehousing, service, and other related activities. These standards must consider the natural constraints of the land and the impact on adjacent land uses.

Empty or partially used mill buildings and the specter of additional unused mill buildings calls for planning to find alternative uses for the buildings and/or sites. Again, these plans should set clear performance standards. Development planning should occur for two critical sites; the central core between Child and Franklin streets and the north end of the Water Street waterfront. A wait and see policy will lead to incremental, piecemeal solutions, whereas careful planning can result in clear benefits to the image, character and tax base of Warren. (See the Economic Development Element.)

The PUD located at the northern portion of Market Street contains a variety of manufacturing and light assembly uses. This area, however, has been developed so as to be incompatible with adjacent land uses.

6. Mixed Use: A significant portion of Warren contains a persistent mixture of land uses resulting from the close proximity of residential development to industrial, commercial or other non-residential uses. This mix of uses has both positive and negative attributes. To a positive end, it contributes to a unique local vitality, especially in areas where buildings are close to each other. On the negative side, the extensive, intermittent nature of much of the commercial activities and the dominant position of old industry disrupts physical and visual cohesion of the landscape. This gives extensive portions of the town a bedraggled appearance.

In certain neighborhoods, such as the northern portions of Main and Metacom Streets and portions of Water Street, the combination of a residence and business in an existing two story structure makes a positive contribution to economic vitality, affordable housing and neighborhood character. The Town must determine strategies that differentiate mixed-use character that contributes to local vitality from that which results in confusing patterns and visual clutter.

7. Municipal and Institutional Land Use: The Town should aggregate its land holdings into critically located parcels of sufficient size to meet current and projected facility and recreation needs. Small towns often underestimate their need for land for new municipal facilities. Warren, due to its small size and extensive development, must take a long view of land needs to avoid extraordinary future land costs. This type of facilities planning could occur as part of a capital improvement plan.

8. Transportation Land Use: Warren is centrally located along north-south routes between Newport and Bristol to the south and Providence and Fall River to the north and east. Existing highways do only a marginal job of routing this traffic through Warren. Any major transportation improvements are likely to be detrimental to local traffic and the normal scale and pace of life. There are no easy solutions to area traffic problems. Therefore, the Town must persistently

monitor proposed traffic improvements to make sure that regional objectives are not met at the expense of local quality of life. The upgrading of School House Road and Metacom Avenue are two active DOT projects.

Two traffic problem areas will eventually need attention: the one-way loop at the northern end of Metacom Avenue (136) as it crosses Child Street (103), and the intersections of Market and Child streets with Main Street. In the first case, the existing configuration does not meet transportation standards for state highways and poses a bottleneck for traffic moving along this north-south corridor. In the second case, the two east-west roads meet Main with but one short block between them, thus having an impact on Main Street pedestrians and again posing a bottleneck to local and through traffic. (See the Circulation Element for additional detail.)

9. Open Space/Conservation: The Town has been blessed with many outstanding natural features, many of which are directly or indirectly protected from development: Directly, in that some have been set aside as dedicated conservation land; indirectly in that freshwater and coastal wetland laws provide minimum protection. In addition Warren's zoning ordinance requires that ISDS be set back 150 from the edge of wetlands. Structures on unsewered lots must be set back 100 feet from the edge of waterbodies and wetlands (Section 32-89 of the Warren Zoning Ordinance).

Five objectives can be isolated to further safeguard these assets. First, greater care should be taken in maintaining the character and natural quality of the edges of conserved sites, wetlands and open space. There are persistent examples of minor (and in some cases major) dumping at the ends of dead-end roads and elsewhere that encroaches on the edges of open spaces. Second, where there are views and/or access to the water, efforts should be made to acquire scenic easements or fee simple purchases. Warren has extremely scenic, but visually obscured water edges. Third, rural development guidelines should be developed to ensure that future residential development does not convert these areas to suburban housing tracts. Fourth, the Town should identify, acquire or otherwise protect key parcels that can buffer farmland, conservation sites, scenic vistas, and historic features. Fifth, since the Kickemuit River is a recreational and natural resource asset to the community, the Town should preserve and restore it as an SA waterbody. To this end Warren should manage development in the Kickemuit River watershed, by implementing appropriate best management practices and restricting and/or prohibiting activities that would jeopardize the rivers SA designation.

D. LAND USE CONTROLS

1. Introduction

The comprehensive plan, zoning regulations and subdivision regulations are the principal land use tools that a Town can use to foster economic development and provide adequate housing, while preserving historic, scenic and natural resources within its borders. Other techniques such as enterprise zones and affordable housing plans are supported by these regulations. When properly crafted and fairly implemented, they will enable the town to plan for, rather than react, to future development.

Planning objectives must be precisely defined and should state exactly what procedures and regulations must be developed. If the Town continues to react to development proposals and spot zone changes, it will be able to affect future land use only by guarded acceptance of proposals, delay tactics or litigation.

2. Existing Zoning

Warren recently amended its zoning and subdivision regulations so that they would be in conformance with state enabling legislation and the Warren Comprehensive Plan. Existing zoning adopted in 1997, (Figure 6) is based upon the land use categories and special districts delineated on the Future Land Use Plan. It differs substantially from the Town's previous zoning. Phase I of the zoning revisions completed in December 1994 brought Warren's Zoning ordinance into conformance with the RI Zoning Enabling Act. These changes primarily addressed the procedural, technical and legal requirements of the Zoning Enabling Act. Phase II zoning revisions, completed in October 1997, were designed to bring Warren's zoning into conformance with its comprehensive plan.

Prior to 1997, the regulations were based on ensuring an orderly process of development, but contained few strategies to protect the Town's unique features. Phase II amendments were intended to help implement the objectives of the Warren Comprehensive Plan, in particular the Future Land Use Plan, (Figure 7) and contain significant changes from the previous zoning. The principal changes include:

- a. Redrafting of the zoning map to delineate new districts and changes in zoning designations, including: 1) Village Business District to replace General Business (town center and area near the Child Street and Metacom Avenue intersection), 2) a business district to replace Limited Business (Child Street, Metacom Avenue and Market Street commercial areas) 3) the addition of a Special District for the American Tourist site, 4) a Conservation District to replace Recreational Conservation and to include other protected natural areas, 5) the addition of a Farm Conservation District for protected agricultural areas, 6) and the addition of two overlay districts, a Residential Village Overlay District for the compactly developed areas of Touisset and a Kickemuit Reservoir Watershed Protection Overlay District.
- b. Additions and changes to the zoning district use regulations, to identify uses in new districts and amend uses within existing districts.
- c. Additions and changes to the zoning district dimensional regulations to provide for the calculation of allowable density, identify dimensional standards for the Residential Village Overlay District and amend dimensional regulations within the non-residential zoning districts.
- d. Rewriting of the cluster development regulations.
- e. Addition of several definitions.

- f. Prohibition of certain uses, requirement for site plan review and the addition of site and design standards within the watershed of the Kickemuit Reservoir.
- g. Elimination of the PUD district for future development.

In addition to these changes better methods for monitoring construction and increasing general code enforcement have been implemented.

Prior to being changed, district boundaries were carefully analyzed given existing land use, the vision of the future land use plan and the location of undeveloped land. New districts were created where the 1994 zoning categories, failed to meet the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. The new Village Business District is designed to foster smaller scale business where the uses are in character and scale with the mixed-use and historic areas of town. The objective of the Special District is to encourage mixed-use development of the area and provide oversight through the site plan review process. The Residential Village Overlay District modifies the dimensional requirements on non-conforming lots of record within the overlay district in order to provide more reasonable setback and lot coverage requirements.

The existing zoning districts are summarized below:

1. *R40 Residence District:* This district contains areas of the town that are partially or fully developed at an approximate density of one (1) dwelling unit per acre, and areas for which this density is considered appropriate.
2. *R20 Residence District:* This district contains areas of the town that are partially or fully developed at an approximate density of two (2) dwelling units per acre, and areas for which this density is considered appropriate.
3. *R15 Residence District:* This district contains areas of the town that are partially or fully developed at an approximate density of three (3) dwelling units per acre, and areas for which this density is considered appropriate.
4. *R10 Residence District:* This district contains areas of the town that are partially or fully developed at an approximate density of four (4) dwelling units per acre, and areas for which this density is considered appropriate.
5. *R6 Residence District:* This district contains areas of the town that are fully developed at the highest density, an approximate density of seven (7) dwelling units per acre.
6. *Residential Village District:* This is an overlay district applied to certain areas of compact residential development in the Touisset area of Warren, for which modified dimensional regulations are applied to substandard lots of record (see Section 32-77.1).

7. *Village Business*: This district includes the central business area off Main Street as well as the business area off Child Street and Metacom Avenue. Permitted business uses are in character and scale with the mixed-use areas of town, and have less traffic impact and parking demand than more intensive business uses.
8. *Business*: This district includes all other commercial areas that are not in the Village Business District, and which are suitable for more intensive business uses, including those areas along major thoroughfares where businesses rely on easy vehicular access.
9. *Waterfront District*: This district includes that mixed-use area along and adjoining the Warren River for which water dependent uses are encouraged.
10. *Special District (American Tourister)*: This district includes that area of developed waterfront along the Warren River which consists of property now or formerly held by the American Tourist Company. Comprehensive development involving mixed uses is encouraged, and site plan review of development proposals is required, according to the procedures contained in Section 32-61.
11. *Manufacturing District*: This district includes land in Warren currently used for manufacturing and related uses, and areas which are considered suitable for future development of manufacturing uses.
12. *Planned Unit Development*: This district contains that area of Warren rezoned by the Town Council pursuant to Article XXI of this ordinance, in effect prior to amendments dated December 1997.
13. *Farm Conservation District*: This district includes certain agricultural lands in Warren that are permanently protected against development, and are either currently or were previously in active agricultural use.
14. *Conservation District*: This district includes areas of protected coastal land and open space which are in public ownership, or owned by a private organization, for the purpose of maintaining it in its natural condition and/or protecting a plant or animal habitat area.
15. *Kickemuit Reservoir Watershed Overlay Protection District*: This is an overlay district applied to that area in Warren which comprises the watershed of the Kickemuit Reservoir, for which certain uses otherwise permitted in the underlying districts are prohibited, and for which site plan review is required.

Table 3 reflects the acreage assigned to each zoning category depicted in Figure 6. As previously mentioned the Existing Zoning Map assigned specific zoning categories to Future Land Use Plan. Generally speaking the R-40 zone includes the rural residential, the medium-low density residential and the residential village designations from the Future Land Use Plan. The R-20 zone

corresponds with medium density, R-15 with medium-high density and R-10 and R-6 with high-density residential. The recreation, conservation and open space designation on the Future Land Use Plan was mapped as the conservation district in the 1997 Zoning. Similarly, protected farmland was called the farm conservation district. Similar comparisons can be drawn between the special planning district, business districts, waterfront and industrial/manufacturing. Boundary modifications between the Future Land Use Plan and the Existing Zoning Map were based on inspection of the individual plat and lot maps. This may result in some acreage differences between Table 3 and 4.

Table 3, Warren Existing Zoning, October, 1997

| ZONE | ACRES | PERCENT TOTAL |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| (VB) Village Business | 71.31 | 1.80 |
| (B) Business | 136.43 | 3.45 |
| (M) Manufacturing | 143.77 | 3.64 |
| (SD) Special District | 16.57 | .42 |
| (W) Waterfront | 28.64 | .72 |
| (PUD) Planned Unit Development | 51.62 | 1.31 |
| (R-6) Residential 6,000 SF | 194.99 | 4.93 |
| (R-10) Residential 10,000 SF | 1002.94 | 25.37 |
| (R-15) Residential 15,000 SF | 49.48 | 1.25 |
| (R-20) Residential 20,000 SF | 180.43 | 4.56 |
| (R-40) Residential 40,000 SF | 1,474.74 | 37.31 |
| (C) Conservation | 390.04 | 9.87 |
| (C) Farm Conservation | 212.11 | 5.37 |
| (W) Waterfront | 28.64 | .72 |
| TOTAL | 3,995.54 | 100.00 |

3. Growth Management, Zoning and Other Land Planning Techniques

Warren is in a period of transition from a small industrial town with nautical and agrarian roots to a town with historical character but an increasingly suburban pattern of development. To date, these two identities are in conflict with each other. Those who strive to retain the historic village and nautical identity are distressed by the development of the outlying areas with suburban tracts.

On the other hand, many see the hand of progress in the newer developments and are not particularly troubled by the loss of historic structures or farmland. It is important to realize that with the implementation of techniques such as a good cluster ordinance, rural development guidelines and commercial site plan review, development can proceed while still preserving the historic and natural fabric of the community. If Warren does not assume a pro-active approach to ensure that future development preserves town character, short-term market forces will prevail. This is likely to proliferate the continued encroachment of suburban tract housing and strip commercial development.

In order for growth management to work towns must set definitive goals within the broad guidelines laid out by the State. These goals must be realistic and include management procedures that will channel growth to those areas for which it is best suited. This must include consideration of the Future Land Use Plan, environmental constraints and the continued ability of the Town to provide services. Warren must actively incorporate natural and cultural standards for development into its ordinances. Such objectives should also include historic protection and rural development guidelines. When incorporated into future regulations, these standards will help to achieve the stated objectives of this plan. Figure 8 depicts an example of potential rural development standards that might be implemented. RIDEM's Rural Design Manual would provide helpful guidance to the Town in establishing such standards and guidelines.³

Alternatively, Warren could elect to meet new standards only when dictated to do so by State law. In this case, the types of development which will be attracted to Warren will be those which subscribe to low standards and quicker, but in the long run more modest, economic returns. Such development will erode the historic and rural character of Warren and encourage extensive and arbitrary building. The Town must avoid the "low road" and design its growth management strategies to include performance standards designed to protect Warren's countryside and its cultural and natural resources. Innovative techniques such as establishing sustainable build-out densities and the development of effective cluster development regulations appropriate design standards must be pursued. Through growth management the Town must also strive to retain its diverse economic profile and its ability to service its entire population. Technical information needed to assess the long term fiscal and environmental impact of growth on Warren must also be obtained. Changes should define specific objectives, based upon the comprehensive plan that correspond to Warren's sense of its identity and future.

V. FUTURE LAND USE

A. INQUIRY

In many respects the underlying patterns of Warren have been set. The primary land use/zoning question is *how will the town adjust to new life styles and their concomitant land uses within the context of a mostly built-out landscape?* This can be broken down into the following questions:

Will the town prevail in the protection and retention of its remaining farmland or will it allow

³ RIDEM, 1998. Rural Design Manual:Scituate Reservoir Watershed Zoning Project-Part 2.

these lands to be converted to suburban housing?

Will Main Street be revived?

Will the town continue to provide sufficient recreational opportunities for its residents?

Will the town back up its awareness of the historic fabric by more comprehensive and sensitive protection of individual historic buildings and districts?

Will the town capitalize on its superb natural situation and consciously reveal its coastal attributes?

Will the Town direct development so as to preserve and restore the high quality of its waters?

Will the town slowly evolve from a mixed working and middle class town into a residential enclave inhabited primarily by newcomers who will increasingly demand a different program of services and amenities?

B. FUTURE LAND USE

In analyzing Warren's land use and zoning, certain concepts for improvement have been defined, enabling the town to prepare a framework for future land use designation, zoning categories and complementary performance standards. These land uses are depicted on the Future Land Use Map (Figure 7). This map is based on concepts presented in Warren's original 1991 draft Comprehensive Plan (specifically the Proposed Landuse /Zoning Map) as subsequently modified by the Planning Board and Zoning Revisions Committee during the Phase II Zoning revision process (1996-1997). It depicts a future vision or land use plan for Warren. Table 4 depicts the acreage for each of the proposed land use categories.

1. Discussion

Residential Zones: Subdivision regulations currently differentiate between major and minor subdivisions. Special regulations can be developed for minor subdivisions that provide for less restrictive development standards. Such small subdivisions are often called residential or family compounds and help to ensure affordable costs for starter homes. In the current economy, lot costs often determine the affordability of housing for first-time buyers. Properly designed, residential compounds also provide a tool for rural preservation. Larger subdivisions should be evaluated to determine projected capital costs to the Town and some form of impact fee assessment should be imposed.

The rural residential and the medium-low density residential categories represent areas where lower densities are desirable. The largest measure of protection is needed in those areas designated as rural residential. Preservation of the agricultural landscape in these areas is crucial to the implementation of the land use and economic development elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Within these areas two objectives should be coordinated: a) provide procedures,

dimensional requirements and rural design standards that would aid in preserving existing farm fields, farm complexes, nurseries, and other agrarian uses, and b) to allow compatible, residential development. Such development would be regulated by explicit performance requirements that address siting and other factors. The objective of this zone would be to encourage retention of a rural, agricultural and scenic pattern while still retaining the legal rights of the property owners. The site design and development criteria of this rural zone should increase value by offering a more marketable and attractive means of land development. The existing cluster ordinance has been rewritten so as to better achieve farmland and open space preservation objectives. Complementary site design and density standards to accomplish the above objectives are needed.

Specific categories as identified on the Future Land Use Plan are described below. Warren’s zoning amendments of 1997 accomplished many of the objectives of the Future Land Use Plan.

Table 4, Acreage of Future Land Use, Warren 1997

| CATEGORY | ACREAGE | PERCENT |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Rural Residential | 661.95 | 16.58 |
| Medium-Low Density Residential | 726.67 | 18.20 |
| Medium Density Residential | 180.43 | 4.52 |
| Medium High Density Residential | 49.48 | 1.24 |
| High Density Residential | 1188.67 | 29.77 |
| Residential Village | 111.85 | 2.8 |
| Planned Unit Development | 50.49 | 1.26 |
| General Business | 108.54 | 2.72 |
| Village Business | 111.85 | 2.8 |
| Industrial/Manufacturing | 166.49 | 4.17 |
| Special Planning Area | 16.57 | .42 |
| Waterfront | 28.64 | .72 |
| Protected Farmland | 203.8 | 5.10 |
| Recreation, Conservation, Open Space | 387.27 | 9.70 |
| TOTAL | 3992.7 | 100.00 |

Residential Village Overlay: This category recognizes those compactly settled areas of Town, such as Touisset Highlands and Touisset Point where the actual development is much more dense than the zoning district in which it is located. Dimensional requirements for buildings on non-conforming lots have been lessened and are based more on the spatial requirements of existing

residential patterns.

Mixed use and Non-Residential Zones in General: New categories and criteria are recommended for all mixed use and non-residential zones to more clearly articulate land use conditions and set more explicit standards for development allowed in these areas. Central to this strategy is the establishment of a site plan review ordinance that would direct the patterns of development within the different business zones and within the special district. The use table within the zoning ordinance should be periodically reviewed to ensure that it accommodates desired uses and prohibits undesired uses.

Village Business: There are two principle areas of village business (VB), one of which encompasses much of the downtown area. Performance criteria should define uses and dimensional requirements derived from the historic relationships already dominant in the area. Permitted uses within this zone should continue to be based on traditional categories but should have greater flexibility with regard to mixed uses, accessory residential units and small scale commercial activities. Special incentives should be considered to encourage investment in the reuse, restoration and/or refurbishment of older structures. The second area of VB is located on the north and south side of Child Street just east of Arlington Ave. Mixed-use residential (commercial use on first floor with a residence on second) should be a permitted use in VB areas.

Business: This category recognizes the character of Metacom Avenue. Regulations should set limits to expansion of the area while providing inducements for continued high intensity use. Performance standards should regulate curb cuts, parking, signs, landscaping and rebuilding. The intention should be to clearly encourage the economic vitality of this strip while improving overall appearance and safety by soliciting a plan for improvements in the area. A second area designated for future business use exists along Market Street. Development objectives in this area should recognize the special requirements of Market Street and establish standards for greater uniformity of development relative to the character of the road. As it continues to develop, this area should encourage moderately scaled, service-commercial and business uses that require secondary circulation, roadside buffers and overall consistency of development. The potential for a Market Street master plan with special design, landscape, siting and signage guidelines should be investigated.

Watershed Overlay Protection District: In 1997, Warren adopted the Kickemuit Reservoir Watershed Overlay District as part of its revised zoning ordinance. The Kickemuit Reservoir is an integral part of the drinking water supply system serving the Towns of Warren, Bristol and Barrington. The purpose of the district is to protect the potable surface water supply within the Town of Warren through the control, limitation or prevention of inappropriate development. Groundwater supplies in and around this area should be protected as well. Specifics regarding the overlay district are included in the Natural Resources Element.

2. Special Planning Districts

Reliance on devices such as zoning and subdivision ordinances will probably not be sufficient to rectify problems or initiate focused or targeted development. A Special Planning District is a tool

that enables the town to focus on particular geographic areas of town that has unique problems, attributes and resources. Once an area has been designated as a special planning district and special district plan can be developed. The plan, adopted as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan, provides for more complete assessment and goal development than possible within the broader context of the Comprehensive Plan. The reasons for establishing special districts will vary with each specific district and will be affected by factors such as the demographic, economic, historic, environmental and circulation features of the area. In some cases, for example, it may be necessary for the Town to become an advocate for specific improvements through public-private partnership arrangements. One method to achieve this objective would be the creation of Special Planning Districts (SPD's) to attract private investment for revitalization and development projects. SPD's could provide an opportunity for economic growth, new jobs, revitalization in specified areas and other objectives, such as preservation of rural character. Special districts may be appropriate in the heart of Warren, in some of its business areas or in outlying locations .

A Main Street SPD could combine the back of the block development (to include parking and even affordable housing) with restoration of Main Street historic buildings, institution of coordinated promotion and management, and financial assistance (a revolving fund) for individual owners. The under-used land behind Child and Main streets should also be considered for designation an SPD. Such a district could predetermine the mix of uses, the preferred circulation system, performance standards (curb cuts, street trees, parking lot layouts, etc.). Attention must be given to use and reuse of the existing industrial buildings. In addition, the potential for intensified use of the area between Child and Franklin streets should be addressed. Consideration should be given to new service roads and improvement of the degraded wetland. The American Tourister site is another appropriate location for the establishment of a Special Planning District.

In the outlying area a Special Planning District could establish combined recreational, agricultural, conservation, and site development standards, as a means of preserving rural Warren, while at the same time facilitating compatible residential development. Such a district would be appropriate in the area designated as rural residential on the Future Land Use Plan (Figure 7). Rural preservation tools such as sustainable density, rural development criteria and varying road standards would help to achieve land use goals for this district.

The Town should consider the development of Special Planning Districts in the above mentioned areas. Future development in these areas would be guided through the development of town-prepared master plans.

C. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

1. Introduction

The following study, conducted as part of the Phase 2 Zoning Revisions, analyzes the future development potential of the Town based upon the 1997 zoning. The Future Land Use/Zoning as shown in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, provided a vision for Warren and a starting point for the Zoning Revision Committee. Figures 6 and 7 Existing Zoning and Future Land Use, respectively, are a combination of the ideas presented in 1991, and the work of the Committee from 1995 to

1997. The Committee, composed of representatives of a variety of interests, boards and commissions was charged with bringing Warren's Zoning into conformance with its Comprehensive Plan.

The Future Land Use Map provides a guideline for future development, but contains no information on the specific densities of several of the proposed land use categories. Without this information it is impossible to predict expected densities at full build-out (development of the land to the maximum extent allowed under zoning).

Traditional zoning designed more for suburban communities does not adequately protect Warren's rural character or village centers. Whether conventional zoning or more progressive forms of zoning are implemented, zoning categories should be selected based on a clear understanding of what the regulations and resulting densities mean to the Town.⁴

2. Methods

A land use map based upon RIGIS 1988 data was prepared and updated to more accurately reflect 1997 conditions. A map of vacant, yet potentially developable land (PDL) was created from the land use map, by selecting developable land categories such as forest, brushland, agriculture and several miscellaneous categories grouped as other (urban vacant, transitional areas, mixed barren, etc.). Wetlands were not included in this coverage and protected farm, conservation and recreation lands were subsequently eliminated. Figure 9 depicts land, which for the purpose of this build-out analysis, was considered protected from development.

The final PDL coverage contains vacant, yet potentially developable land, grouped according to the following three categories; forest and brushland, agriculture, other (Figure 10).

The PDL coverage was then overlaid with the 1997 zoning, and a map of potentially developable land in each zoning category was developed (Figure 11). This map and information generated from it depicts how much land in any given zoning category is forest or brushland, agriculture, or other. ARC/INFO acreage calculations were then entered into a spreadsheet. A percentage allowance for roads was subtracted from the total acreage and the remaining amount divided by the minimum lot size for the principle use of the district. Ten or fifteen percentage allowance for roads was assigned depending on the overall size of the PDL parcels and the presence of existing roads.

3. Discussion

Table 5, presents the results of the build-out analysis under the existing zoning. It includes the total acreage and number of potential units at full build-out for each of zoning categories by the

⁴ There is not always a direct correlation between minimum lot size and overall density. For example, in a cluster development lot sizes may be reduced, thereby providing more useable open space, protection of the environment and the reduction of development costs. However, the density, based upon the maximum number of units, would remain the same.

three land cover types. With a total of 3100 +- acres of land in Warren (excluding wetlands) 975 acres or approximately one third of the Town is subject to future development. Of this 594 or 61 percent is classified as agriculture, 327 acres (34 percent) as forest or brushland and 53 acres (5 percent) as other. Table 6 summarizes the information contained in Table 5.

As can be seen from Table 6, future residential development accounts for over 94 percent of Warren's potential growth. Assuming all single-family homes the total number of projected additional units is 1212. The largest potential for growth is in the R-10 and R-40 zones. According to the Future Land Use Plan (Figure 7) approximately sixty-four percent of the R-40 zone is designated as Rural Residential. Decreasing the build-out density in these areas would help to achieve rural and environmental protection goals and reduce fiscal impact. The Town is currently evaluating potential development scenarios in these areas. Other methods of reducing the fiscal and natural resource impacts of development would be are the purchase of development rights and the initiation of rural development standards.

Table 6, Summary of Warren’s Potentially Developable Land Under Existing Zoning, 1997

| ZONE | PDL ACREAGE | UNITS | PERCENT OF PDL TOTAL |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| B | 33.32 | 87 | 3.42 |
| VB | .52 | 2 | 0.05 |
| M | 18.04 | 33 | 1.85 |
| PUD | 6.12 | 15 | .63 |
| R-6 | 3.72 | 24 | .38 |
| R-10 | 113.95 | 422 | 11.69 |
| R-15 | 17.29 | 43 | 1.77 |
| R-20 | 58.79 | 109 | 6.03 |
| R-40 | 722.81 | 614 | 74.18 |
| TOTAL | 974.56 | 1349 | 100.00 |
| RESIDENTIAL SUBTOTAL | 916.56 | 1212 | 94.05 |

To determine the estimated number of residential units at full build-out under existing zoning projected additional units must be added to existing figures. The 1990 US Census figures indicate that there were 4,786 housing units in Warren. Since that time an additional 177 have been

constructed bringing the total estimated 1997 units to 4,963.⁵ If projected single family residences are added to this figure there would be an estimated 6,175 residential units at build-out and an estimated population of 15,252. This does not, however, consider the impact of in-fill development or the construction of duplexes or multi-family units.

According to the 1990 census only 2,413 or 50.4 percent of the 4786 housing units in Warren were detached single-family homes. With the exception of the R-15 zone approximately half again as much land is required when constructing a duplex. Under the existing zoning duplexes are allowed with a special use permit in R-20, R-15, R-10 and R-6. Duplexes require 30,000 SF in R-20, 15,000 SF in R-15, 15,000 SF in R-10 and 8,000 SF in R-6. In keeping with the other zones, the minimum area requirement for duplexes in R-15 should be proportionately increased.

It is a well-documented fact that residential development escalates the costs of providing education and other government related services.⁶ By way of example, Warren's average, annual (1995) cost to educate a student was \$7,580,⁷ yet the average annual tax on a single-family residence for the same time period was \$2110. For a household with one child in the school system, this represents a deficit to the Town of \$5470. Decisions regarding future land use in the Town should consider development related costs and the ability of the Town to provide needed services such as water, sewer, police and fire protection, etc.

Non-Residential Development

The Special District (American Tourist) and the Waterfront zones did not depict any potentially developable land at the mapping scale used. This is not to say that re-development of the SD or reuse of buildings within the waterfront area would not increase the number of businesses or residences in Warren. In addition, the computer analysis underestimated the potentially developable land in the PUD⁸. Given that most businesses, however, have been combining lots, the number of projected units (17) is a reasonable estimate. The greatest potential for non-residential growth is in the business and manufacturing zones with an estimated unit increase of 58 and 46 respectively.

⁵Number of additional lots since 1990 is from personal Communication, Warren Zoning Officer, 1997. There is some discrepancy between the census' estimate for residential units and the tax assessor's information. For purposes of this study, the 1990 Census data was used for baseline documentation.

⁶ Kevin Kasowski, February 1993. As summarized in "The Costs of Sprawl Revisited" PAS Memo, American Planning Association, Washington D.C.

Thomas, Holly, 1991. *"The Economic Benefits of Land Conservation"*. Dutchess County Planning Department. Technical Memo distributed by the Southern New England Forest Consortium.

Southern New England Forest Consortium, Inc. (in progress). *"Cost of Community Services for Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island Towns"*.

⁷Roger Gaspar, Administrator 1997. Bristol Warren Regional School District.

⁸The Zoning Officer estimates that as of July 1997 there are 37 vacant industrial lots in the PUD ranging in size from 15,000 SF to 20,000 SF.

VI. LAND USE POLICIES AND ACTIONS (LAND USE PLAN)

TOWN CHARACTER:

Policy 1: Preserve town character as embodied by settlement patterns and historic buildings, natural assets including extensive wetlands and rivers, farmland, and other open space, while allowing for needed development.

Policy 2: Preserve the scale of the town as characterized by the size and massing of its buildings, pattern of contained developed areas separated by relatively open spaces, centralized downtown, municipal downtown and municipal area, and historic district.

Policy 3: Ensure the compatibility of contiguous land uses without sacrificing the diverse pattern of uses in the town.

Action 3.1: Strengthen enforcement of existing codes governing maintenance of landholdings; examine code for possible deficiencies and remedy them; encourage lot and neighborhood beautification. [Planning Board, Town Council]

Action 3.2: Rewrite the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Rules and Regulations to reflect the Comprehensive Plan; incorporate mechanisms for special planning districts; and implement watershed protection and buffering requirements. (Completed in 1997). Continue to review and amend town land use regulations as deemed necessary.

Action 3.3: Tighten the process of land use review and development permitting by instituting higher and more comprehensive standards and restricting special use permits, variances and zone changes. Zone changes, particularly those requesting a more intense use of the land than planned for in the comprehensive plan, must be shown to be unquestionably in conformance with all aspects of this plan. [Planning Board, Town Council]

Action 3.4: Provide adequate funding for professional support to Town Council and the various boards and commissions in order to accomplish the above policies and actions. [*Planning Board, Town Council]

Policy 4: Ensure the recreational and natural value of Warren's Rivers.

Action 4.1: Direct development in the areas surrounding the Kickemuit River and its tributaries in such a manner as to encourage the use of Best Management Practices and restrict any land use which would cause degradation of its high water quality.

Action 4.2: Develop buffer guidelines for Warren's Rivers and streams.

Action 4.3: Work with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Cooperative Extension, the Eastern Conservation District and other appropriate groups to provide

technical and financial assistance to farmers in the implementation of agricultural best management practices that are designed to protect ground and surface water quality.

TOWN IMAGE:

Policy 5: Increase and extend public access to and views of the water and harbor.

Action 5.1: Establish policy and act to acquire key water view and public access parcels. Provide funding and or grant/writing assistance to accomplish this action.[Conservation Commission, Town Council, Planning Board]

Action 5.2: Rewrite the subdivision regulations to require consideration of scenic views to and across the water and the Town's skyline as seen from the water.

Policy 6: Eliminate disturbed and under-used urban land areas by incorporating them into adjacent revitalized land uses. Where appropriate address improvement of these areas through the development of master plans for the special planning districts as specified in this element.

Policy 7: Encourage and enforce private maintenance of land holdings, including lawn maintenance and removal of trash, dormant automobiles and other potential eyesores.

Action 7.1: Enforce anti-dumping and all building code and zoning ordinances. (Building Inspector)

Policy 8: Provide procedures and incentives to revitalize commercial and service/industrial centers at specified locations in accordance with guidelines which will improve the town image.

Action 8.1: Act to eliminate billboards. [Town Council, Planning Board]

Action 8.2: Establish a site plan review procedure with specific landscape, design and performance standards for the building and upgrading of commercial and industrial sites.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USES:

Policy 9: Establish and update procedures that will ensure a diverse mix of housing and recreational opportunities for all economic levels in accordance with the planning objectives of each Profile Area. (See also Housing Element.)

Action 9.1: Revise zoning to include provisions for density adjustments which allow secondary units, apartments and duplexes in areas where utilities are readily available and environmental conditions will accommodate the additional units. (Completed in 1997).

Action 9.2: Encourage reuse of older buildings by conversion of suitable structures to multi-unit housing; such units should meet applicable codes and be serviced by necessary utilities. Investigate off-site parking for downtown units.

Action 9.3: Establish clear criteria for determining allowable residential densities based on the availability and affordability of utilities, emergency vehicle access, the prevailing development pattern of each area, and the environmental carrying capacity of the land, based on soil and groundwater conditions, flood hazard, impact on surface waters, depth to bedrock, etc.

[Planning Board for three above actions]

OTHER LAND USES:

Policy 10: To develop some cohesive land use patterns and reduce incompatibility of conflicting land uses, concentrate commercial uses and industrial uses and improve circulation to facilitate service access to these areas.

Policy 11: Improve the recreational and industrial uses of the waterfront while protecting and enhancing the image of the harbor.

POLICIES BY PROFILE AREA:

Profile Area 1

Policy 12: Clarify the distinction between commercial, service/industrial and residential land uses, and improve road edge conditions.

Action 12.1: Reestablish zoning boundaries, limit strip commercial uses and require setbacks and buffers. [Town Council, Planning Board]

Action 12.2: Monitor the development of the PUD at the northern edge of town that includes parts of Profile Areas 1 and 2. This district should retain open space while allowing development that meets specific standards--such as for setbacks and vegetative buffers. The historic integrity of structures and landscapes such as the Levi Haile House and associated buildings) should be preserved when incorporated into any development plans. In addition development should be well sited and provide access to the nearby coastline. [Town Council, Planning Board]

Policy 13: Establish and maintain a distinctive and attractive "gateway" into Warren from the north along Market Street.

Profile Area 2

Policy 14: Protect the fragile water's edge and wetlands and provide visual access to the water.

Profile Area 3

Policy 15: Support careful development that defines residential areas while retaining the open character of existing farms and fields.

Action 15.1: Develop performance standards for maintaining the environmental, agricultural and visual integrity of this area.

Policy 16: Protect the watershed.

Action 16.1: Require substantial buffers between active land uses and vulnerable watershed lands which are monitored. (Completed in 1997.)

Action 16.2: Establish watershed and aquifer protection districts. (Watershed Protection District adopted in 1997).

[Both of the above actions Conservation Commission, Bristol County Water Authority]

Profile Area 4

Policy 17: Clarify local circulation patterns and concentrate suburban-type development in this profile area in order to avoid sprawl into outlying areas.

Action 17.1: Require all future development to conform to a rational (connecting) secondary circulation pattern. [Town Council, Planning Board]

Profile Area 5

Policy 18: Define the character and use(s) of the area, considering potential industrial use of the large vacant area behind Main and Child streets.

Action 18.1: Develop a master plan for this profile area which clearly defines land uses, improves circulation and implements special development standards. Explore the possibility of locating an industrial park within this area, with realignment and connection of roads. [Town Council, Planning Board]

Profile Area 6

Policy 19: Revitalize Main Street, paying special attention to its small town, historic character.

Action 19.1: Establish a working association of Main Street business owners and concerned citizens to explore options for revitalization of Main Street; research national "Main Street" program(s).

Action 19.2: Devise a Main Street strategy which includes renewal of existing buildings,

conversion of upper floors to residential use, overall street management, and concentration of commercial land uses. Consider hiring a Main Street manager to coordinate promotion, renovation and marketing. (See also Economic Development Element.)

Policy 20: Rededicate and expand a preservation planning process for this mixed-land use historic area; consider establishment of a Historic District Commission. (See also Economic Development and Natural & Cultural Resources Elements' Policies and Actions.)

Policy 21: Investigate procedures that will simultaneously stimulate waterfront businesses, increase pedestrian access to the water and ensure retention of a nautical appearance.

Action 21.1: Institute and encourage use of tax credits in historic restoration and rehabilitation. [Town Council, Historic District Commission]
(See also the Natural & Cultural Resources and Economic Development elements.)

Profile Area 7

Policy 22: Retain this residential area as a wooded, waterside enclave.

Action 22.1: Retain tree, vegetation and wall buffers along Main Street and retain street trees within the area.

Action 22.2: Provide and maintain ROWs to the water.
[Conservation Commission, Planning Board & Town Council for two above Actions]

Profile Area 8

Policy 23: Encourage investment in and overall management of the area; Define the commercial extent of this area, determining its limits with respect to adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Action 23.1: Study the commercial land use within this area to set parameters for its growth and change and to regulate encroachment on abutting neighborhoods.
[Chamber of Commerce, Town Council, Planning Board]

Action 23.2: Solicit a development plan for this area that provides inducements for continued high intensity use. Performance standards should regulate curb cuts, parking, signs, landscaping and rebuilding. The intention should be to clearly encourage the economic vitality of this strip while improving overall appearance and safety by soliciting a plan for improvements in the area.

Profile Area 9

Policy 24: Protect the homogeneity of this neighborhood while improving its internal and through circulation.

Action 24.1: Examine the viability of connection of interior roads to promote circulation within the neighborhood [Warren DPW, Town Council, Planning Board]

Profile Area 10

Policy 25: Protect the character of this neighborhood while providing increased views of and access to the water.

Action 25.1: Maintain existing access and establish new ROWs to the water. [Conservation Commission, Town Council, Planning Board]

Action 25/2: Require adequate buffers between development and the water to maintain visual access and water quality. [Conservation Commission, Town Council, Planning Board]

Profile Area 11

Policy 26: Develop regulations that will retain farmland and limit residential construction in accordance with cultural and natural values associated with Touisset.

Policy 27: Protect wetland and coastal features and retain and define buffers for older water's edge enclaves: Touisset Highlands and Coggeshall.

Action 27.1: Establish Special Development District(s) with standards which limit and concentrate development, require setbacks and vegetative buffers, and protect farmland as well as farm buildings while allowing residential growth in accordance with specific performance standards. [Town Council, Planning Board]

Action 27.2: Ensure adequate public access to the water. [Town Council, Planning Board]

Action 27.3: Ensure that development is directed in such a manner as to protect the use of the Kickemuit River for shellfishing and recreational activities.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

| | ASAP | 5 yrs | 20 yrs | Responsible Parties |
|---|-------------|--------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| Policy 1: Preserve town character | * | | | PB, TC |
| Policy 2: Preserve town scale | * | * | | PB, TC |
| Policy 3: Promote compatibility of land uses | * | * | * | PB, TC |
| <i>Action 3.1</i> Enforce existing codes | * | | | PB, TC |

WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

| | | | | |
|---|-------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| Action 3.2 Rewrite Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Rules & Regulations | | * | | PB (on-going procedure) |
| Action 3.3 Establish land use standards | | * | | PB, TC |
| | ASAP | 5 yrs | 20 yrs | Responsible Parties |
| Action 3.4 Provide funding for professional support to boards and commissions to accomplish policies and actions. | * | | | PB, TC |
| Policy 4: Protect Warren’s rivers | * | | | |
| Action 4.1 Implement BMP’s and land use restrictions | | * | | TC,PB, PWD |
| Policy 5: Preserve public access and unobstructed views to water | | * | * | TC, CC |
| Action 5.1 Acquire water-view parcels | | * | * | TC |
| Action 5.2 Revisions to subdivision rules and regulations | * | * | | PB, TC, design consultant, MHA, WPS |
| Policy 6: | * | | | PB, CC, WLCT |
| Action 6.1 Area between Child and Franklin and Arlington and Railroad | | * | | PB, CC, WLCT |
| Policy 7: Encourage and enforce lawn maintenance and removal of trash, dormant automobiles | * | * | | Building Inspector |
| Action 7.1 Enforce anti-dumping and all building code and zoning ordinances. | * | * | * | Building Inspector |
| Policy 8: : Provide procedures and incentives to revitalize commercial and service/industrial centers | * | * | | [Town Council, Planning Board] |
| Action 8.1 Act to eliminate billboards. | | * | | Town Council, Planning Board |
| Action 8.2 : Establish a site plan review procedure | * | | | PB,TC |
| Policy 9: Establish and update procedures that will ensure a diverse mix of housing and recreational in accordance with the planning objectives of each Profile Area | * | * | * | |
| Action 9.1 Revise zoning to include provisions for density adjustments | * | * | | PB, TC, CC |
| Action 9.2 Encourage reuse of older buildings by conversion of suitable structures to multi-unit housing | * | * | * | PB, TC |
| Action 9.3 Establish clear criteria for determining allowable residential densities | | | | |
| Policy 10: Develop cohesive land use patterns reducing land use incompatibility concentrate commercial uses and industrial uses and improve circulation to facilitate service access to these areas. | | * | | Town Council, Planning Board |

WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

| | | | | |
|---|-------------|--------------|---------------|--|
| Policy 11: Improve recreational and industrial uses of the waterfront protecting and enhancing the image of the harbor. | | * | | Town Council, Planning Board, Harbor Commission |
| | ASAP | 5 yrs | 20 yrs | Responsible Parties |
| Policy 12: Clarify the distinction between commercial, service/industrial and residential land uses, and improve road edge conditions. | | * | | Planning Board, Town Council, Dept. Public Works |
| <i>Action 12.1</i> Reestablish zoning boundaries, limit strip commercial uses and require setbacks and buffers | * | | | Town Council, Planning Board |
| <i>Action 12.2</i> Monitor the development of the PUD retaining open space while allowing development that meets specific standards. | * | * | * | Town Council, Planning Board |
| Policy 13: Establish and maintain a distinctive and attractive "gateway" into Warren from the north along Market Street. | | * | | Town Council, Dept. of Public Works |
| Policy 14: Protect the fragile water's edge and wetlands and provide visual access to the water. | | * | | Conservation Commission, Town Council |
| Policy 15: Support development that defines residential areas while retaining the open character of existing farms and fields. | * | * | | Planning Board, Town Council |
| <i>Action 15.1</i> Develop performance standards for maintaining the environmental, agricultural and visual integrity of this area. | * | | | PB, TC |
| Policy 16: Protect the watershed. | * | | | CC, Bristol County Water Authority |
| <i>Action 16.1</i> Require substantial buffers between active land uses and vulnerable watershed lands. | * | | | CC, Bristol County Water Authority |
| <i>Action 16.2</i> Establish watershed and aquifer protection districts | | * | | CC, Bristol County Water Authority |
| Policy 17 Clarify local circulation patterns | * | * | * | Town Council, Planning Board |
| <i>Action 17.1</i> Require all future development to conform to a secondary circulation pattern | | * | * | Town Council, Planning Board |
| Policy 18 Define the character and use(s) of industrial area behind Main and Child streets. | * | | | Town Council, Planning Board |
| <i>Action 18.1</i> Develop a master plan for Profile 5 | | * | | Town Council, Planning Board |
| Policy 19 Revitalize Main Street | * | * | * | Economic Development Coordinator, Town |

WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

| | | | | Council |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|--|
| | ASAP | 5 yrs | 20 yrs | Responsible Parties |
| <i>Action 19.1</i> Establish a working association with Main Street business owners and concerned citizens | * | | | Main Street/Econ. Dev. Coordinator |
| <i>Action 19.2</i> Devise a Main Street strategy | * | * | | Town Council, Econ. Dev. Coordinator |
| Policy 20 Expand preservation planning for mixed-land use historic area | | * | * | Town Council, Planning Board |
| <i>Action 20.1</i> Establish Historic District Commission | * | | | Town Council |
| Policy 21 Investigate procedures to stimulate waterfront businesses, and increase pedestrian access to the water | | * | * | Historic District Commission, Tax Assessor |
| <i>Action 21.1</i> Institute tax credits in historic restoration and rehabilitation. | | * | | Town Council, Historic District Commission |
| Policy 22 Retain waterfront residential area as a wooded, waterside enclave. | * | * | * | Conservation Commission, Planning Board & Town Council |
| <i>Action 22.1</i> Retain tree, vegetation and wall buffers along Main Street and retain street trees within the area. CC, TC, PB | * | * | * | CC, TC, PB |
| <i>Action 22.2</i> Provide and maintain ROWs to the water. | * | * | * | CC, TC, PB |
| Policy 23 Encourage investment in waterfront area. | | | | Chamber of Commerce, Town Council |
| <i>Action 23.1</i> Study the commercial land use and regulate encroachment on abutting neighborhoods. | | * | | Chamber of Commerce, Town Council, Planning Board |
| <i>Action 23.2</i> Solicit a development of a plan for this area encouraging economic vitality while improving overall appearance and safety | | * | * | Town Council, Planning Board |
| Policy 24 Protect the homogeneity of waterfront neighborhood while improving circulation. | * | * | | Town Council, DPW |
| <i>Action 24.1</i> Examine the viability of connection of interior roads to promote circulation within the neighborhood | | * | | DPW, Town Council, Planning Board |
| Policy 25 Protect the character of this neighborhood while providing increased views of and access to the water. | * | * | | Conservation Commission, Town Council, Planning Board |
| <i>Action 25.1</i> Maintain existing access and establish new ROWs to the water. | * | | * | CC, TC, PB |
| <i>Action 25.2</i> Require adequate buffers between development and the water to maintain visual access and water quality. | | * | | CC, TC, PB |
| | ASAP | 5 yrs | 20 yrs | Responsible Parties |

WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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|--|--|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| Policy 26 Develop regulations that will retain farmland and limit residential construction in accordance with cultural and natural values associated with Touisset. | | * | * | Planning Board, Town Council, Conservation Commission |
| Policy 27 Protect wetland and coastal features in Touisset Highlands and Coggeshall. | | | | Town Council, Planning Board, Conservation Commission |
| <i>Action 27.1</i> Establish Development District(s) with standards which limit development, require setbacks and vegetative buffers, protect farmland and farm buildings | | | | Town Council, Planning Board |
| <i>Action 27.2</i> Ensure adequate public access to the water. Town Council, Planning Board. | | | | Town Council, Planning Board |
| <i>Action 27.3</i> Protect the use of the Kickemuit River for shellfishing and recreational activities. | | | | TC, PB, CC |

Comprehensive Plan Committee Reports, 1990.

Warren, Rhode Island Comprehensive Community Plan, Warren Planning Board, Rhode Island Development Council.1966.

Recreation, Conservation, and Open Space Plan, Recreation, Conservation, and Open Space Plan subcommittee of the Warren Conservation Commission, 1990.

WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ELEMENT

June 2003

| | | |
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| II. | TOWN OF WARREN Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plan | 2 |
| III. | IMPLEMENTATION PLAN | 3 |

Following RCOS

I. INTRODUCTION

The Warren Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plan (1990, 1995) provides an inventory of existing recreational facilities and natural resources and serve as the town's guide for acquiring and protecting said facilities and resources. The Comprehensive Plan acknowledges the Town of Warren Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plan (RCOS), which was approved by the State of Rhode Island in 1990 (and amended in 1995) as the basis for the Open Space and Recreation Element.

It is the State approved Town of Warren Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plan, included in and referenced by this Comprehensive Plan, which will serve to meet the State mandated criteria for the Open Space and Recreation Element of the Town of Warren's Comprehensive Plan.

For action items, inventory, policies, goals and initial implementation, please refer to the RCOS document, but other action items have been incorporated as part of this element's overall implementation schedule to address areas not covered by the RCOS and are denoted as such.

The detailed implementation plan included as part of this element follows the general needs as presented in the Comprehensive Plan approved by the Warren Town Council in 1991, and compliments the RCOS.

II. TOWN OF WARREN RECREATION, CONSERVATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN

The following document is the Town of Warren Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plan (RCOS), which was approved by the State of Rhode Island in 1990 (and amended in 1995). This plan is presented in its entirety to serve as the primary goals and objectives for the Town of Warren as it pertains to recreation, conservation and open space.

III. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Beyond the general endorsement of the RCOS Plan, the Warren Comprehensive Plan emphasizes increased visibility and awareness of natural edges and amenities in town. The Plan strives to strengthen some provisions of the earlier study. The implementation plan set forth in this Element is to be utilized in adjunct with the goals, policies and actions of the RCOS document included as the basis for this element. The policies set forth in this section parallel and are drawn directly from the Goals, Recommended Actions and Implementation of the RCOS Plan, as well as the Warren Comprehensive Plan approved by the Warren Town Council in 1991.

| Warren Comprehensive Plan - 1991 | ASAP | 5 yrs | 20 yrs | Responsible Parties |
|---|------|-------|--------|---|
| Policy 1 Preserve Warren’s landscapes and diverse natural systems <i>*see RCOS Goal I</i> | * | | | Town Council, Planning Board |
| <i>Action 1.1</i> Require open space dedication through town subdivision regulations. | | * | | Town Council, Planning Board |
| <i>Action 1.2</i> Make provisions for “payment in lieu of” or affordable housing allowances as alternative to open space dedication where applicable. | | * | * | Town Council, Planning Board |
| <i>Action 1.3</i> Amend zoning to include strict regulations pertaining to green space within commercial development. | * | | | Town Council, Planning Board |
| Policy 2 Connect recreation, conservation and open space areas through green-belt system. <i>*see RCOS Goal I, Action 2</i> | | | * | Town Council, Conservation Commission, Warren Land Conservation Trust |
| <i>Action 2.1</i> Provide neighborhood recreation and environmental education | * | | | TC, CC |
| <i>Action 2.2</i> Acquire lands through purchase or easement to provide pathways connecting preserved lands | * | * | * | TC, WLCT |
| Policy 3 Develop regulations and evaluation criteria for the protection of buffers, existing green space and recreational opportunities <i>*see RCOS Goal VI, IX, XI, XII</i> | * | | | Town Council, Planning Board, Conservation Commission |
| <i>Action 3.1</i> Revise Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinance to protect farmland, wetlands, environmental habitats | | * | | TC, PB |
| <i>Action 3.2</i> Work with neighboring towns to preserve natural areas | * | * | * | TC, CC, Warren Land Conservation Trust |
| Policy 4 Encourage innovative land development <i>*see RCOS Goal I, Action 5</i> | * | | | PB, CC |
| <i>Action 4.1</i> Adjust land use regulations to coordinate development with natural resource protection | | * | | Planning Board, Town Council |

WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

| Warren Comprehensive Plan – 1991 | ASAP | 5 yrs | 20 yrs | Responsible Parties |
|--|------|-------|--------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Action 4.2</i> Provide incentives through land use regulations that negotiate the protection of resources. | | * | | Town Council, Planning Board |
| Policy 5 Initiate tree planting program <i>*see RCOS Goal I, Action 6</i> | * | | | Town Council |
| <i>Action 5.1</i> Coordinate public and private efforts to replace dead and diseased trees | * | * | * | Town Council, Tree Commission |
| <i>Action 5.2</i> Plant new trees in key areas | | * | | Dept. Public Works, Tree Commission |
| <i>Action 5.2</i> Require the planting of trees in all residential and commercial developments. | * | | | Town Council, Planning Board |
| <i>Action 5.3</i> Form tree commission and create tree commissioner position | * | | | Town Council |
| Policy 6 Preserve and restore water quality, fresh and salt water areas <i>*see RCOS Goal 2</i> | * | * | * | TC, PB, CC, DPW |
| <i>Action 6.1</i> Regulate run-off, nonpoint source pollution and source specific pollution | * | * | | TC, PB, PWD |
| Policy 7 Regulate use of road salt and chemicals | * | | | DPW |
| Policy 8 Manage and protect floodplains <i>*see RCOS Goal XI</i> | * | | | Planning Board, DPW |
| <i>Action 8.1</i> Protect and enhance natural floodplain function to protect property | * | * | * | DPW, CC |
| <i>Action 8.2</i> Adopt standards that meet the National Flood Insurance Program | * | | | Town Council, Planning Board |
| <i>Action 8.3</i> Amend land use regulations to accommodate development under requirements of 100 year floodplain. | * | | | TC, PB |
| Policy 9 Protect wetlands <i>*see RCOS Goal IV</i> | * | * | * | TC, PB, CC |
| <i>Action 9.1</i> Regulate land uses that threaten and degrade wetlands | * | | | TC, PB |
| <i>Action 9.2</i> Establish regulations protecting upland buffers to wetlands | * | | | PB, TC, CC |
| <i>Action 9.3</i> Revise Zoning to protect wetland areas through development restrictions | | * | | PB, TC |
| Policy 10 Protect Kickemuit Reservoir, its watersheds and tributaries <i>*see RCOS Goal V</i> | * | * | * | TC, PB, CC |
| <i>Action 10.1</i> Encourage and publicize need for water conservation | * | * | | CC, Kickemuit River Council |
| <i>Action 10.2</i> Work with Bristol County Water Authority to implement water protection plan. | | * | | Town Council, BCWA |
| <i>Action 10.3</i> Encourage BCWA to continue upgrading maintenance system. | * | | | TC, CC |
| <i>Action 10.4</i> Coordinate with neighboring towns to protect watershed. | | * | | TC, CC, Kickemuit River Council |
| <i>Action 10.5</i> Institute run-off control measures through regulation. | * | | | TC, Planning Board |

WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

| Warren Comprehensive Plan – 1991 | ASAP | 5 yrs | 20 yrs | Responsible Parties |
|--|------|-------|--------|--|
| <i>Action 10.6</i> Create watershed protection district for Kickemuit Reservoir. | * | | | TC, PB |
| Policy 11 Preserve water views <i>*see RCOS Goal VI, Action 4</i> | * | | | TC, PB, CC |
| <i>Action 11.1</i> Protect scenic, rural and historic vistas as resources | | * | | CC, PB |
| <i>Action 11.2</i> Review zoning and subdivision regulations to include landscape inventories. | | * | | TC, PB |
| <i>Action 11.3</i> Amend land use regulations to encourage protections of waterfront | * | | | TC, PB |
| <i>Action 11.4</i> Implement development controls including size and height of buildings along water vistas | * | | | TC, PB |
| Policy 12 Protect coastal lands through acquisition/development rights. <i>*see RCOS Goal VII</i> | * | * | * | TC, CC, Warren Conservation Land Trust |
| <i>Action 12.1</i> Coordinate with private organizations to purchase rights of way to Kickemuit, Palmer and Warren Rivers. | | * | * | TC, CC, Warren Conservation Land Trust |
| <i>Action 12.2</i> Delineate all established rights-of-way to water and protect. | * | | | CC, PB, DPW |
| <i>Action 12.3</i> Require large-scale developments to provide water access | * | | | TC, PB |
| Policy 13 Encourage continued agricultural use of existing farmland. <i>*see RCOS Goal VIII</i> | * | * | * | CC, PB, TC |
| <i>Action 13.1</i> Promote existing farm and open space tax incentives. | * | * | * | Tax Assessor, TC, CC |
| <i>Action 13.2</i> Provide planning assistance to farmers involved in development right offers. | | * | | PB, TC |
| <i>Action 13.3</i> Initiate accessory uses that will enhance value of farm land to farmer. | | * | | PB, TC |
| Policy 14 Preserve, protect and enhance historic and cultural archaeological sites <i>*see RCOS Goal VI</i> | * | * | | WVHDC, CC |
| <i>Action 14.1</i> Amend land use regulations to encourage preservation of historic sites | | * | | TC, PB |
| <i>Action 14.2</i> Create inventory of historic sites and vistas. | | | * | WVHDC |
| <i>Action 14.3</i> Establish Historic District | * | | | TC, WVHDC |
| Policy 15 Identify and protect wildlife habitats <i>*see RCOS Goal X</i> | | * | | CC |
| <i>Action 15.1</i> Create inventory of existing habitats and species. | | * | | CC |
| <i>Action 15.2</i> Create regulations designed to protect areas of natural habitats. | * | * | | TC, PB, CC |
| <i>Action 15.3</i> Work to restore damaged habitat areas | | | * | TC, CC |

WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

| Warren Comprehensive Plan – 1991 | ASAP | 5 yrs | 20 yrs | Responsible Parties |
|---|------|-------|--------|--|
| Policy 16 Provide active and passive recreational areas for all town residents. <i>*see RCOS Goal XI</i> | * | * | * | TC |
| <i>Action 16.1</i> Upgrade existing outdoor recreational facilities. | | * | | TC, DPW |
| <i>Action 16.2</i> Develop community center for indoor recreation and cultural activities. | | | * | TC, Recreation Department, DPW |
| <i>Action 16.3</i> Acquire open space for recreational purposes. | | | * | TC, CC |
| <i>Action 16.4</i> Improve access to existing shoreline rights-of-ways. | | * | | TC, DPW |
| <i>Action 16.5</i> Enhance access to water ways | | | * | TC, DPW |
| <i>Action 16.6</i> Investigate expansion of bike path to other abandoned railways. | | * | | TC, PB, CC |
| Policy 17 Develop tools and procedures for conservation, preservation and development of natural resources. <i>*see RCOS Goal XII</i> | * | | | PB, CC |
| <i>Action 17.1</i> Coordinate review process of land development through all pertinent town boards and commissions. | * | | | TC, PB, CC, DPW, Recreation Department |

Refer to the RCOS for specific implementation programs

| Warren RCOS Plan – 1990, 1995 | ASAP | 5 Years | 20 Years | Responsible Parties |
|--|------|---------|----------|---|
| Goal I: Preserve Warren’s natural character, using open space <i>*see WCP 1991 Policies 1 & 2</i> | * | * | * | Conservation Comm, Planning Board, Town Council |
| <i>Action 1</i> Require new developments to dedicate opens space or pay fee in lieu of. | | * | | PB, TC |
| <i>Action 2</i> Create Greenbelt System | | | * | CC, TC |
| <i>Action 3</i> Reevaluate regulation as relate to open space and buffers | | * | | PB, TC |
| <i>Action 4</i> Work with neighboring towns to preserve natural areas. | * | | | CC, TC |
| <i>Action 5</i> Encourage creative land development. | * | | | PB, TC |
| <i>Action 6</i> Initiate tree planting program | * | * | * | Tree Commission <i>(on-going)</i> |
| Goal II: Preserve and restore water quality of fresh and salt water areas. <i>*see WCP 1991 Policy 6</i> | * | | | Kickemuit River Council, RIDEM, DPW, TC |
| <i>Action 1</i> Adopt and implement Harbor Management Plan | * | | | Harbor Management Commission, TC |
| <i>Action 2</i> Institute measures to control run-off pollution | * | | | PB, TC |
| <i>Action 3</i> Regulate the use of road salt and chemicals | * | | | Department of Public Works |
| Goal III: Manage Floodplains <i>*see WCP 1991 Policy 8</i> | * | * | * | DPW, PB, CC |
| <i>Action 1</i> Adopt and enforce development standards that exceed NFIP | | * | | PB, Building Official, TC |

WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

| Warren RCOS Plan – 1990, 1995 | ASAP | 5 Years | 20 Years | Responsible Parties |
|---|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Action 2</i> Adopt policy preventing extension of sewer, water & highways in floodplain areas | | * | | DPW, TC, PB |
| Goal IV: Protect natural function of wetlands <i>*see WCP 1991 Policy 9</i> | * | | | DPW, PB |
| <i>Action 1</i> Regulate land uses that threaten wetland areas | * | | | PB, ZBR, TC |
| <i>Action 2</i> Require upland wetland buffers | * | | | PB, TC |
| <i>Action 3</i> Revise zoning to exclude wetlands from density calculations | Complete | | | TC, PB |
| <i>Action 4</i> Extend tax incentives to property owners providing buffers around wetlands | * | | | TC, PB |
| Goal V: Protect Kickemuit Reservoir and its watershed <i>*see WCP 1991 Policy 10</i> | * | * | * | TC, CC, Various State Agencies |
| <i>Action 1</i> Modify state building/plumbing codes to require water-conserving amenities | | | * | State agencies, State Legislature |
| <i>Action 2</i> Encourage BCWA to create reward price structure for conservationists | | * | | BCWA, TC |
| <i>Action 3</i> Encourage BCWA to initiate effective maintenance procedures | * | | | BCWA, TC |
| <i>Action 4</i> Coordinate with neighboring communities to preserve Kickemuit Watershed | * | | | TC, CC |
| <i>Action 5</i> Institute measures to control run-off pollution | * | | | PB, DPW, TC, CC |
| <i>Action 6</i> Create Watershed Overlay District for Kickemuit Reservoir | Complete | | | PB, TC |
| Goal VI: Preserve scenic, rural , historic and marine vistas as important resources <i>*see WCP 1991 Policies 3, 11, 14</i> | * | | | TC, CC |
| <i>Action 1</i> Review zoning/ subdivision regs. to implement RI Landscape Inventory | | * | | PB, TC |
| <i>Action 2</i> Require protection of scenic vistas | * | * | | PB, TC |
| <i>Action 3</i> Create Scenic Road District | | | * | TC |
| <i>Action 4</i> Consider Narragansett Bay horizon as scenic vista and to protect through siting and height requirements | Complete | | | PB, TC |
| Goal VII: Preserve coastal land for open space/passive recreation. <i>*see WCP 1991 Policy 12</i> | * | * | * | Open Space Commission, TC |
| <i>Action 1</i> Preserve existing right-of-ways | * | | | TC |
| <i>Action 2</i> Require public access to all new and expanded marine facilities | | * | | TC, PB, ZBR |
| <i>Action 3</i> Require large-scale development to provide public waterfront access | | * | | PB, TC |
| <i>Action 4</i> Establish land acquisition fund to purchase flood sensitive areas | | | * | TC, Open Space Commission |
| Goal VIII: Encourage continued agricultural use of prime farmland <i>*see WCP 1991 Policy 13</i> | * | | | TC, PB, CC, Open Space Commission |

WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

| Warren RCOS Plan – 1990, 1995 | ASAP | 5 Years | 20 Years | Responsible Parties |
|---|-----------------|---------|----------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Action 1</i> Publicize tax incentives for farmland/open space | * | | | CC, Tax Assessor |
| <i>Action 2</i> Assist farm owners in applying for state purchase of development rights and incentive programs | | * | | CC, Tax Assessor |
| Goal IX: Preserve and rehabilitate historic, cultural and archaeological sites <i>*see WCP 1991 Policy 3</i> | | * | | WVHDC, CC, TC |
| <i>Action 1</i> Use zoning and subdivision regs to encourage preservation of sites | * | | | WVHDC, PB, TC |
| <i>Action 2</i> Work with local and state groups to inventory all important sites | | * | | WVHDC, Harbor Commission, TC, CC |
| <i>Action 3</i> Establish historic zone including the National Register District | Complete | | | TC |
| Goal X: Identify and protect wildlife habitat <i>*see WCP 1991 Policy 15</i> | | * | | CC |
| <i>Action 1</i> Collect wildlife habitation info | | * | | CC |
| <i>Action 2</i> Research methods to protect wildlife and habitats at risk | | * | | CC |
| Goal XI: Provide active and passive recreational opportunities <i>*see WCP 1991 Policies 3, 16</i> | * | * | * | TC, DPW, Open Space Commission |
| <i>Action 1</i> Complete Asylum Road Park | Complete | | | DPW, TC |
| <i>Action 2</i> Develop Community Center for Indoor Recreation | | * | | DPW, TC |
| <i>Action 3</i> Acquire recreation/open space areas in Touisset | | | * | TC, CC, Open Space Commission |
| <i>Action 4</i> Develop facility for band concerts | Complete | | | TC, DPW |
| <i>Action 5</i> Improve public access to shore through parking and boat launch facility | | | * | TC, Town Planner, Harbor Master |
| <i>Action 6</i> Improve/maintain railroad access (and bike path) for recreational uses such as fishing, biking, hiking, access to river | | | * | TC, RIDOT |
| <i>Action 7</i> Use land acquired by the Town for recreational purposes | | * | | TC, DPW |
| <i>Action 8</i> Expand Town Beach | | | * | TC, DPW |
| <i>Action 9</i> Commission Town-wide Recreational Needs Assessment | | * | | TC |
| Goal XII: Create development tools for conservation of natural resources <i>*see WCP 1991 Policies 3, 17</i> | * | | | PB, TC, CC |
| <i>Action 1</i> Coordinate decision-making between town boards | * | | | Town Boards and Department Heads |
| <i>Action 2</i> Coordinate review of development projects between town boards | * | | | PB, CC, DPW, Department Heads |
| <i>Action 3</i> Establish board to assist in the updating of Comprehensive Plan | | * | | TC |
| <i>Action 4</i> Commission Build-out Study to determine growth under current zoning | | * | | TC |

Circulation Element: Table of Contents

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WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
CIRCULATION

June 2003

I. INTRODUCTION

The Circulation Element inventories the town's circulation systems and analyzes their effectiveness and impact on economic development, town character and other aspects of life in Warren. The Policies and Actions that follow provide a framework for improving townwide circulation to support the needs of Warren residents and businesses. This Element addresses vehicular and pedestrian transportation systems, the bike path, intermodal transportation, parking, planned transportation improvements and dangerous intersections.

The principal goals of the circulation element are:

Goal: Improve and maintain circulation throughout Warren for all forms of transportation including automobile, pedestrian, and water taxi.

Goal: Ease congestion caused by regional traffic patterns.

Goal: Maintain and improve the quality of the circulation system, including public and private roads, sidewalks, the bike path, and related elements.

Goal: Provide ample parking while maintaining town character by avoiding the paving of large areas.

Goal: Develop an efficient intermodal circulation plan that incorporates a coherent parking scheme.

Goal: Promote economic development by providing easy access to and circulation through industrial and commercial sites and areas.

II. INVENTORY

A. REGIONAL CIRCULATION

Figure 1, Intersections with Frequent Accidents, depicts Warren's major roadways. Primary through-roads are routes 114 and 136, which run north-south and Route 103 (Child Street), which runs east-west. Routes 114 and 136 are heavily traveled, carrying traffic bound for Bristol and points south. Traffic on Rt. 114 as it becomes Main Street in Warren is particularly congested. "Miller and Baker Streets serve as secondary intermediate cross streets and access points to the waterfront area. North Main Street (RT-114), at the American Tourister complex, acts as the town's northern gateway to both Downtown Warren and the Waterfront. Similarly, Campbell Street at RT-114 functions as the southern gateway to both areas, with the Campbell Street / Water Street intersection serving as a secondary gateway to the Waterfront"¹

Problems contributing to that congestion include: entering local traffic; cars parked too close to

¹ Urban Design Group, 2001. Bristol RI, 2001. Taken from Element E Circulation Parking and Zoning of the *Warren Waterfront Study*.

the intersection of side streets and Main Street; pedestrians; stop lights in the center of town; and the bicycle path intersection.

B. ACCIDENT DATA

Figure 1, Intersections with Frequent Accidents, depicts Warren's roads and accident data from 1994 through 1996(2) for the thirteen of Warren's intersections where accidents occur most frequently. Metacom Road has more accidents than any other Road in Warren. The highest rate of accidents occurred at the intersection of Metacom and Libby with an average of 9.7 accidents per year and Metacom and Child with an average of 9.3 per year. Metacom and Seymour averaged 7 per year and Main and Vernon 6.3.

Other accidents not referenced to an intersection also occurred principally along Main, Market and Metacom. During this same three-year period there were a total of 685 accidents or an average of 228.3 per year. Approximately 75 to 80 percent of these accidents occurred at referenced intersections. Parking lot accidents ranged from about 8 to 20 per year.

C. IN-TOWN CIRCULATION AND PARKING²

“The colonial development of the area has resulted in a pattern of narrow but quaint streets, which, combined with a proliferation of narrow building lots, limits off-street parking for many residents. This has led to a system of one-way streets to allow for on-street parking. Consequently, due to the narrow streets, the neighborhood's existing street pattern is not conducive to the orderly movement of traffic throughout the neighborhood.

This network of narrow streets, often one way and many with T or offset intersections, inhibits heavy traffic use. Fortunately, this tends to discourage and limit the size of trucks servicing some of the larger businesses in the area, a godsend for area residents. This, with a tendency to park too close to intersections, compounds traffic problems, due to restricted turning radii at many of these intersections. Similarly, parking and off-loading on Water Street often impedes the orderly flow of traffic because of the narrow width of the existing travel lanes.

Water Street is an unstriped two-way street with on-street parking permitted on its west side. It is classified as a minor arterial street between North Main Street and Bridge Street. Many of the side streets along Water Street are one way. Caution and directional signs are minimal throughout the area, while pedestrian crosswalks and handicapped ramps appear to be non-existent. Due to the ongoing traffic bottleneck on Main Street, Water Street is regularly used as a short cut, particularly at rush hour. Recent figures furnished by the police department indicate that speeding continues to be a major problem along Water Street.

Parking continues to be an issue in the area, particularly on neighborhood side streets. It is estimated that there are approximately 50 parking spaces along Water Street. Many of the businesses along Water Street do provide off-street parking for their employees and customers. Overspill parking, however, does occur, causing problems for both residents and area businesses.

² Urban Design Group, 2001. Bristol RI, 2001. Taken from Element E Circulation Parking and Zoning of the *Warren Waterfront Study*.

Similarly, it is noted that additional public parking is required to meet demands not just in the Downtown area but also along Water Street. In addition to curbside parking and private lots in the Downtown, there are currently 3 public parking lots serving the Downtown area, namely:

- The Municipal Lot behind Town Hall 75 spaces ±
- The Municipal Lot at Railroad Avenue 60 spaces ±
- The RIPTA Park & Ride Lot at Franklin Street 85 spaces ±

On the Waterfront, there are some 75 curbside parking spaces on Water Street, as well as private parking areas servicing businesses such as the Wharf Tavern, Tav-Vinos and other properties. At the southern end of the project area there is a parking lot to service Burr's Hill Park and the Town Beach, as well as some curbside parking. This parking area which has about 72 spaces is somewhat removed from the commercial activities along Water Street and therefore has little impact in reducing the parking demand further up the street.

One of the major constraints inhibiting the orderly revitalization of the waterfront is the current circulation pattern in the Downtown and waterfront areas. In order for this to be addressed, the issue of traffic congestion on RT-114 / Main Street, particularly at rush hours, has to be solved. However, circulation and parking will remain a problem for the neighborhood, due to its colonial street patterns and narrow streets. Some relief could be found for these issues, should the traffic bottleneck on Main Street be worked out and additional public parking found for the area.”

The congestion along Main Street is exacerbated by the number of dead ends and one-way streets, and the absence of connector streets providing alternative routes. Initiated by the 1966 Comprehensive Plan, plans to lessen congestion by connecting dead-end streets in the center of town have not been implemented. Specific suggestions that if implemented would improve the overall appearance, circulation and safety of the downtown and waterfront areas are highlighted in Section III of this element.

Other congested areas include the busy strip commercial stretch of Metacom Avenue, the western portion of Child Street and the irregular traffic loop that marginally serves north and south traffic on Rt. 136 as it intersects with Child Street (Rt. 103). Improvements were recently made to Metacom Avenue south of Franklin Street. Planned improvements to School House Road were never made due to neighborhood concerns. If this project is resurrected in the future the upgrade should address protection of the Kickemuit watershed from potential runoff, the possibility of adding sidewalks to improve pedestrian safety and overall traffic speeds.

D. NEIGHBORHOOD CIRCULATION

Due in part to Warren's unique landform and settlement patterns, neighborhoods and sub-neighborhoods are formed mainly by localized road patterns, each with very limited connection to major roads or adjacent neighborhoods. The result of these patterns is an absence of secondary or tertiary routing options. This has even occurred in more recently developed sections, increasing the difficulty of finding alternative routes across the southern half of the town. Similar problems have negated the possibility of local alternative north-south roads. Added to these conditions are the physiographic bottleneck caused by the flanking rivers and the limited

crossings of the Kickemuit River. In general, these conditions severely limit circulation improvements short of drastic actions that would radically change Warren's character.

E. BICYCLE PATH

The East Bay Bicycle Path (Figure 2) is the first bicycle/pedestrian facility to be built under RIDOT's Bicycle Program. The 14-mile scenic path runs along the Providence River, Narragansett Bay and Bristol Harbor through East Providence, Barrington Warren and Bristol. The path is an undisputed success, used extensively for bicycling, walking, fishing and even commuting. The Waterfront Study recommends that spurs from the bike path be developed in order better to connect bike path traffic to the waterfront. Since its inception, the bike path's popularity has grown and a feasibility study of a bike path extension from Warren into Swansea along the old Fall River Railroad right-of-way was completed by RIDOT in 1999.

Despite its popularity, however, the bike path has raised concerns about public safety. On the path itself, conflicting uses by bicyclists (sometimes at high rates of speed) and pedestrians (some pushing strollers or walking with young children) poses a safety threat. In the interests of pedestrian safety, designers should evaluate the possibility of a narrower path parallel to the bike path that is exclusively for walkers. Where the path intersects streets, automobile traffic threatens crossing bicyclists and pedestrians. This conflict also slows automobile traffic through downtown. These critical crossing points are at Child Street and Main Street.

F. PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT

Generally, Warren is an accessible town where it is convenient and natural to walk. This is especially true in the town center and along streets in the Historic District. In December of 2001, Warren was awarded a \$1 million grant, which RIDOT will use to improve sidewalks in the downtown area. Sidewalks are not as prevalent in newer outlying tracts or suburban enclaves where walking is less clearly encouraged. The greatest pedestrian-vehicle conflict is experienced along Rt. 136 north of Child Street (Rt. 103) and along Rt. 103 east of the Town center. The bicycle path is very successful as a pedestrian walkway although, high-speed bicyclists sometimes pose a threat. Other pedestrian/ bicycle paths should be encouraged.

Recreation trails or greenways linking sectors of the Town are limited. Local roads serve this purpose in the less built-up sections. High local regard for conservation and recreation suggests that the Town might give more attention to a linkage system that could be combined with a greenway or buffer system. This would provide access to natural sites and recreational grounds while upgrading and protecting their edges.

An additional area of concern is the number, location and convenience of public access to the waterfront. Accessibility enhances local use of the rivers and Bay but is sometimes perceived as encouraging out-of-towners to use local streets, adding to congestion.

G. TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The RI Department of Administrations current Transportation Improvement Plan lists three

Warren projects.³ These include: The East Bay Bike Path extension to Swansea along the old Fall River Railroad, pavement management (crack sealing/microsurfacing) for Vernon Street from Route 114 to Route 136 and \$370,000 in enhancement funds for preliminary work associated with the Downtown revitalization of Main Street /Rt. 114. The East Bay Bike Path extension is scheduled for final design and construction and has been allocated \$ 2.25 million. The Town should continue to seek funding through RIDOT's enhancements program, their transportation and air quality and mitigation program and other funding categories for implementation of transportation-related improvements outlined in the Warren Waterfront Study and the Downtown Revitalization Plan.

H. RIPTA AND THE PARK AND RIDE

The RI Public Transportation Authority (RIPTA) buses currently provide a Warren to Providence Connection for commuters. The bus stops at Main and Joyce Street beginning at around 5 in the morning and continues every 20 to 30 minutes during rush hour. The drive to Kennedy Plaza in Providence takes approximately 25 minutes. The schedule is similar from Providence to Joyce Street during the afternoon. Frequent buses run all day long until about midnight. Weekend buses begin before 8:00 and run approximately every hour. Schedules can be obtained at www.ripta.com/schedules/. To facilitate rideshare and the use of public transportation, improvements should also be made to the park and ride at Franklin Street.

III. ANALYSIS

A. REGIONAL TRAFFIC CONDITIONS

Regional traffic patterns increase congestion on the roads entering and extending through Warren as well as on the secondary roads. Short of major new road construction, options are limited for improving traffic conditions. Small-scale improvements, however will help bring existing roads into compliance with DOT standards, alleviate traffic bottlenecks, dangerous conditions, and reduce travel time. A clear local review procedure should be developed to ensure that improvements meet both DOT standards and are consistent with the Town's priorities for neighborhood coherence and historic preservation. The Town should carefully review proposals for improvements to routes 114, 136 and 103 to ensure that proposed changes clearly improve local conditions and do not damage local settlement patterns or the town's scenic or historic character.

The following potential improvements and upgrades should be evaluated and considered:

- ❖ Couple portions of Child and Market to create a more efficient connector between Rt. 114 (Main Street) and Rt. 136.
- ❖ Reconfigure the existing merger of upper Metacom and Arlington on either side of Rt. 103 (Child Street) to reduce sharp curves.

³ RI Department of Administration, Division of Planning, October 2000. *State of RI Transportation Improvement Program, October 2000 through September 30, 2002; Moving RI into the New Millennium.* www.planning.state.ri.us

- ❖ Upgrade Rt. 136 from the Massachusetts line to Child Street widening some sections to four lanes. Alternately, evaluate a turning lane similar to that in Barrington and consider separating the commercial and industrial traffic with the potential use of the high tension right-of-way
- ❖ Make Child and Market Street one way from Main to Redmond. Provide improved connection between Child and Market.
- ❖ Maintain and enhance sidewalks and directional signage particularly in the downtown and waterfront area.

All of these potential improvements could result in substantial local impacts and require careful evaluation and local public review. A Water Street/Main Street one-way system is not desirable. One-way streets in this area would increase traffic speeds through a dense, predominantly residential neighborhood and would not benefit merchants on Main Street.

The Town should initiate and maintain input to DOT, through Statewide Planning and the TIP process, in order to influence current and future plans in the Town's best interest. Local concerns about regional traffic patterns can be addressed in part by simple actions such as posting signs along I-195 that mark Rt. 114 as a Scenic Route and Rt. 136 as the direct route to Warren and Bristol.

B. IN-TOWN TRAFFIC

Traffic congestion in Warren is the result of a high volume of regional traffic through town and a lack of alternate routes for in-town traffic. Local travelers are inconvenienced by dense through-traffic bound for Bristol and points south, as well as those travelling from Barrington and points north. Alternative local traffic routes would help make both local and regional travel easier by diverting through-traffic and lessening local volume.

As already stated, alternate secondary connectors from Main to Metacom and others running north-south were proposed as early as the 1966 Warren Comprehensive Plan. Although they can facilitate local traffic, some neighborhood residents perceive such connectors as unsafe and intrusive. Future consideration of secondary linkage should keep in mind the necessity to tie into area plans. An example of this is the potential for an office/service/industrial development in the area behind Main and Child streets, which in order to be successful would need clear feeder streets and reasonable parking. Potential manufacturing areas would need new and/or upgraded roads that would allow truck traffic without infringing upon residential areas.

Other steps that the Town could take to ease local congestion, include but are not limited to, additional painting to mark lanes with arrows, create dedicated turning lanes, and use traffic signals with arrows. These will ensure that traffic is not blocked by individual cars attempting to turn at busy intersections. Potential locations include Main/Water and Child/Metacom.

In the downtown and waterfront areas, the Town together with RIDOT should also investigate the feasibility and types of traffic calming devices suitable for Water Street. In addition they should work together to minimize the current traffic bottleneck on Main Street. Pedestrian crosswalks and handicapped ramps should be installed at key locations and a comprehensive directional signage system developed. To help ease congestion and neighborhood disturbance the Town together with affected businesses should work out specific times for truck traffic to service businesses along Water Street.

C. PARKING

A coordinated parking system must be developed that takes advantage of the existing but underused parking resources of the Town and local businesses. This entails improving signage for public parking; making parking for individual businesses available to patrons of other establishments (shared parking); improving lighting for all parking areas; landscape improvements. In addition parking could be improved by changing parking habits so that storeowners and employees do not monopolize prime parking spots and patrons recognize available parking that may not be right on Main Street. This entails the development of a coordinated parking program between the Town, commercial operators and property owners that could include:

- ❖ Public and private employees parking at the municipal lots on Sanders Street and Railroad Street and Franklin Street
- ❖ Public funding for enhancement to privately –owned lots
- ❖ Landscape improvements to Town Hall and Railroad Street Parking areas.
- ❖ Residential permit parking
- ❖ Stricter enforcement of no parking areas
- ❖ Better address off-street parking needs of new commercial and residential establishments
- ❖ Shared parking
- ❖ Investigate the need for resident sticker parking in the historic area
- ❖ Target potential properties in the area that might be appropriate for eventual development as off-street parking areas

D. VIEWS AND SCENIC ROADS

Warren’s main roads do not offer consistent views of the surrounding water. The general impression is that the town is less coastal than it actually is. Every opportunity should be taken to open up views to the water, to acquire the development rights to key parcels where buildings will further block sightlines to the water, and to even consider realignments that will position main roads to capture views of the water and other scenic attractions.

E. PEDESTRIANS, BIKEPATHS, AND GREENWAYS

The small town character of Warren suggests that sidewalks should be required in the built-up sections of town and that greenways or recreational trails are appropriate for linking. Spurs that link the bike path to the waterfront should be evaluated and designed. If a ferry terminal is constructed in the future this should also be linked to the East Bay Bike Path. Figure 3 depicts

the planned East Bay Bicycle Path extension along with adjacent schools, recreation sites, employment centers, etc. Links to these facilities should be incorporated into the construction and design of the extension. The Warren extension will run along the old Fall River rail and will connect the existing segment of the bike path to the town of Swansea, Massachusetts. At a regional level, the Warren extension will be connected to the East Coast Greenway, an evolving multi-use trail that may one day connect major cities from Maine to Florida.

Riverwalk: The concept of a riverwalk running the length of the harbor from the Narragansett Electric property to the Town Beach has been discussed by Town officials. The riverwalk would be a recreational trail that would span all the properties along the waterfront. The walkway could also serve as sculpture walk and form a spine for a revolving display of public art, similar in concept to Providence's Convergence Festival. Easement acquisition could be a complicated and lengthy process. Elements of the walkway, however, are already in place and could initially form a series looped spurs off Water Street. The phasing of its overall implementation should be a long-term goal of the Town.

F. STREETScape AND DESIGN STANDARDS

Streetscapes design initiatives would accomplish the following:

1. Open up and reinforce linkages to the water through the development of more defined pedestrian connections from Downtown to Water Street.
2. Introduce a series of secondary spur trails from the East Bay Bike Path, connecting to both Main Street and the Waterfront area. Bicyclists cause neither traffic, parking or pollution problems and are a relatively untapped source of potential revenue to area businesses.
3. Explore with RIPTA the introduction of amenities, including public rest rooms and a bike lock ups, to the Park and Ride facility at Franklin Street,
4. Initiate streetscape improvements along the proposed pedestrian and bike path corridors that incorporate landscaping, street furniture and a well-designed system of directional and interpretive signage.

The town would also benefit from more street furniture along key streets, especially Main, Water, and Child.

Street trees reinforce a sense of place and add value and status. Street tree planting should become an integral part of street improvement and maintenance. The Town might even initiate its own nursery and planting program that encompasses both downtown commercial streets and entire residential neighborhoods. The Downtown Revitalization Plan highlights several efforts by the Town's Department of Public Works and the Warren Preservation Society over the past few years.

G. OTHER FACTORS

Gateways: A town's circulation systems can have a great deal to do with the image of a town, affecting the quality of life, outsiders' perceptions, and economic development prospects. Besides the limitations posed by congestion on the major roads and limited direct access to

industrial sites, Warren's image is hurt by ambiguous "gateways" or entry points signifying that one has entered the Town. The Narragansett Electric site, with its high visibility and direct access off RT-114, would make an ideal location for a "gateway center" to Warren. It could house a visitor center, satellite parking and perhaps other municipal functions such as a town community center along with supporting rental space. The site would, however, require remediation due to contamination of its soil, a lengthy and costly procedure.⁴

Billboards: Currently, many billboards throughout Town obscure scenic views, including those to the water. The character of development on either side of Rt. 136 as one travels south into Warren severely detracts from the outsider's impression of the Town. A plan for improving the appearance of this northern gateway, through landscape screening, street trees and other measures should be developed.

Tourism: Tourism an element important in Warren's economic development of Warren is either positively or negatively affected by the Town's transportation system. The Warren Waterfront Study recommends that the feasibility of a ferry terminal in Warren be investigated as part of the Narragansett Bay Ferry System. Coupled with the bike path, RIPTA routes, existing roads and sidewalks and the proposed riverwalk, this terminal could provide another valuable link in an intermodal transportation system.

A well-designed coordinated system of wayfinding within the community that included general signage and other streetscape amenities such as interpretive displays and historic plaques are other transportation-related items that would improve tourism.

Main and Metacom: Main Street and Metacom Avenue are poorly defined, in disrepair in places, and lack continuity. General "Main Street" improvement is needed to recapture the potential of downtown. These strategies should include greater attention to parking, sign placement, size and character and general restoration of the fine historic structures in the downtown area. Specific improvements are discussed in more detail in the Warren Downtown Revitalization Plan and the Warren Waterfront Study. Improvement of the image of Metacom Avenue will be more difficult, requiring incremental reinvestment and rebuilding as stores expand, become obsolete or need construction improvements.

IV. POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Policy 1: Plan all circulation improvements in the best interests of pedestrian, bicycle and automobile safety.

Action 1.1 Periodically review highway circulation, congestion and impact of roads on adjacent land uses so as to have a Town-based position to compare with DOT plans. This action includes review and updating of street design and construction standards within the subdivision regulations. [Planning Board, Town Council]

Action 1.2 Examine the potential use of turning lights and arrows at major intersections. [Town Council, Warren Police Department, Warren Department of Public Works (WDPW), Warren Police Department (WPD),RIDOT]

Action 1.3 Improve bicycle path safety, particularly at street crossings, through use of better signage and other measures. [Town Council, DPW, WPD,RIDOT]

Action 1.4 Investigate potential of a turning lane on portions of Metacom, similar to that on County Road in Barrington [RIDOT, Town Council]

Policy 2: Maintain Market Street/Metacom Avenue (Rt. 136) and Main Street (Rt. 114) as the primary north-south arteries.

Action 2.1 Prepare master plans for the improvement of Market Street/Metacom Avenue (Rt. 136) and Main Street (Rt. 114) which cover possible improvements to the roads, curb cuts, road edge planting and improvements, sign control, and land use impacts. [Planning Board, Warren DPW/Highway Department, Town Council, RIDOT]

Action 2.2 Coordinate plans for Main Street, Metacom Avenue and Market Street with neighboring towns. [Town Council]

Policy 3: Provide alternate routes to Market Street/Metacom Avenue and Main Street for local and/or truck traffic.

Action 3.1 Study connection of dead-end streets in the center of town; connect where appropriate. [Planning Board, Warren DPW/Highway Dept., Town Council, RI DOT]

Policy 4: Provide and maintain sufficient, well-designed, well-marked and well-lit parking areas to meet residential, commercial and industrial needs.

Action 4.1 Initiate a coordinated public/private parking system to rationalize parking facilities in the Main Street area. [Chamber of Commerce, Planning Board, Town Council]

Action 4.2 Enhance parking lots in other areas of town with landscape and other improvements to improve overall design and aesthetics. [PB, TC Chamber]

Policy 5: Provide substantial pedestrian greenways that link neighborhoods to schools and to recreation and conservation sites.

Action 5.1 Develop the East Bay Bike Path Warren Extension so that it connects to schools and major recreation and conservation sites. Conduct an inventory and study of available and/or appropriate land for such a pedestrian system This could potentially include spurs off of the East Warren connector. [Planning Board, Recreation Board, Warren Land Conservation Trust]

Action 5.2 Investigate the development of spurs off of the East Bay bike path that would connect to the Waterfront.

Action 5.3 Encourage bicycle path use for local trips, emphasizing its proximity to Town services and businesses.

Action 5.4 Conduct feasibility study for the Riverwalk [PB, Conservation Commission, Town Council, RIDOT].

Policy 6: Encourage the coordinated development of intermodal transportation in Warren

Action 6.1 Conduct a feasibility study for the proposed ferry terminal; connect any terminal to bikepath. [RIDOT, TC]

Action 6.2 Improve Franklin Street Park and Ride. [RIDOT, RIPTA, Town Council]

Action 6.3 Implement associated parking improvements needed to support an intermodal transportation network. [Town Council, RIDOT]

Policy 7: Ensure convenient vehicular access to industrial and commercial zones in order to retain and attract business.

Action 7.1 Investigate the potential for secondary feeder roads to parallel both north-south and east-west highways; consider integration of special developments in conjunction with such linking roads. [Planning Board, Town Council, Warren DPW/Highway Dept., RI DOT]

Action 7.2 Evaluate upgrade options listed in Section III, Analysis, of this element. [Planning Board, Town Council, Warren DPW/Highway Dept., RI DOT]

Policy 8: Initiate and maintain input to DOT regarding all current and future plans effecting Warren.

Action 8.1 Establish a formal local procedure for review and input on RIDOT upgrade plans and other TIP items. [Planning Board, Town Council]

Action 8.2 Ensure pedestrian safety, low traffic speeds and protection of the watershed in any upgrade of School House Road. [Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Town Council]

Policy 9: Develop an efficient and coherent parking and intermodal circulation plan.[PB,TC] (See pages 11 and 12 of the Downtown Warren Revitalization Study.)

Policy 10: Provide for coordinated gateways into the downtown area.

Action 10.1 Further investigate the potential use of the Narragansett Electric site as a potential gateway into Warren. [Town Manager, Town Council]

Action 10.2 Through streetscape improvements, signage and buffering try and improve the appearance of Market Street as a Gateway into Warren from Swansea. [PB, Warren Public Works, area businesses]

Policy 11: Implement transportation-related improvements.

Action 11.1 Investigate and develop street calming measures on Water Street. [Town Council, RIDOT]

Action 11.2 Implement improved parking measures. [Planning Board, Town Council, RIDOT, Warren Public Works]

Action 11.3 Implement streetscape related improvements [Planning Board, Town Council, Warren Public Works]

V. IMPLEMENTATION

The Federal Highway Administration / RI Department of Transportation provides transportation improvement grants administered through the RIDOT. For example, the Transportation Improvement Program for street and intersection upgrading etc. is updated and prioritized annually. In addition TEA-21 grants for intermodal transportation projects such as such as bike trails, commuter parking and ferry systems etc are eligible under this program. For example, the proposed improvements to the RIPTA Park & Ride Lot on Franklin street, the suggested spur trails from the East Bay Bike Path to Water Street and the Downtown, the proposed Ferry Terminal, along with the Riverwalk are all eligible items under this program.

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

| | ASAP | 5 yrs | 20 yrs | Responsible Parties |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| Policy 1: Improvements in best interest of pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular safety. | * | * | | TC, WLCT, CC |
| <i>Action 1.1</i> Periodically review highway conditions and landuse impact <u>including street design and construction standards.</u> | * | * | * | PB, TC |
| <i>Action 1.2</i> Evaluate signaling and signage at intersections. | * | | | TC, WPD, WPWD, RIDOT |
| <i>Action 1.3</i> Improve bicycle safety | * | | | TC, WDPW, WPD, RIDOT |
| <i>Action 1.4</i> Turning lane Metacom | * | | | RIDOT, TC |
| Policy 2: Maintain Market/Metacom and Main as the primary north-south arteries. | * | * | * | TC, RIDOT |
| <i>Action 2.1</i> Prepare master plans for these roads | | * | | TC, RIDOT |
| <i>Action 2.2</i> Coordinate with adjacent towns. | * | * | | TC |
| Policy 3: Alternate routes for Market, Metacom and Main | * | * | | PB, WDPW,TC,RIDOT |
| <i>Action 3.1</i> Explore thru-street connections | | * | | PB, WDPW,TC,RIDOT |
| Policy 4: Sufficient and well-designed parking | * | | | PB, TC, Chamber |
| <i>Action 4.1</i> Coordinated public private parking | * | | | PB, TC, Chamber |
| Policy 5: Pedestrian greenways linking neighborhoods, schools, parks, etc | * | * | | PB, WLCT TC Rec Board, RIDOT |
| <i>Action 5.1</i> Warren bike path extension; connect to other sites | * | * | | PB, WLCT, RIDOT |
| <i>Action 5.2</i> Spurs from bike path to waterfront | * | * | | PB, RIDOT, TC |
| <i>Action 5.3</i> Encourage bike path for local trips | | | | Chamber, RIDOT |
| <i>Action 5.4</i> Feasibility study for Riverwalk | * | | | TC, RIDOT, chamber |
| Policy 6: Coordinate development of intermodal transportation | * | * | * | RIDOT,TC,PB |
| <i>Action 6.1</i> Ferry terminal feasibility study | * | | | TC,RIDOT |
| <i>Action 6.2</i> Improve Franklin St Park and Ride | * | | | RIPTA,RIDOT, TC |
| <i>Action 6.3</i> Associated parking improvements | | * | | TC, RIDOT |
| Policy 7: Convenient vehicular access to commercial and industrial areas | * | * | * | TC, PB,WDPW, RIDOT |
| <i>Action 7.1</i> Secondary feeder roads | | * | | TC, PB,WDPW, RIDOT |
| <i>Action 7.2</i> Evaluate upgrade options | | * | | TC, PB,WDPW, RIDOT |
| Policy 8: Input to RIDOT | * | * | * | TC, PB, CC |
| <i>Action 8.1</i> Establish formal procedure | * | | | TC |
| <i>Action 8.2</i> Ensure water quality, pedestrian safety low traffic speed in any upgrade of School House road | | * | * | TC |
| Policy 9: Develop an efficient and coherent downtown parking and intermodal circulation plan. | * | * | * | TC |
| Policy 10: Coordinated Gateways | | * | | TC,PB,RIDOT, Chamber |

| <i>continued</i> | ASAP | 5 yrs | 20 yrs | Responsible Parties |
|---|-------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Action 10.1</i> Investigate potential use of Narragansett Electric site as gateway | | * | | TC, TM |
| <i>Action 10.2</i> Streetscape improvements Market St | * | * | | TC,PB, area businesses |
| Policy 11: Transportation related improvements | * | * | * | PB,TC,RIDOT,TM, area businesses |
| <i>Action 11.1</i> Street calming measures | * | | | TC, RIDOT |
| <i>Action 11.2</i> Parking measures | | * | | PB,TC,WDPW,RIDOT |
| <i>Action 11.3</i> Streetscape improvements | | * | | PB,TC,WDPW,RIDOT |

Services and Facilities Element: Table of Contents

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WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
SERVICES AND FACILITIES ELEMENT

July 2003

I. INTRODUCTION

The Services and Facilities Element includes an inventory and discussion of the services and facilities provided by Warren and other community groups that help to ensure the public's health safety and welfare (Figure 1). The adequacy of the facilities and programs are discussed, as are plans for needed improvements. The overall goals of the element are listed below. More detailed policies and actions and a timetable for implementation are included at the end of this chapter.

A. OVERALL GOALS

- ◆ To provide residents with sufficient and high quality potable water.
- ◆ To provide state-of-the-art educational services and facilities.
- ◆ To ensure a high level of wastewater treatment through maintenance of facilities and careful management of growth.
- ◆ To ensure adequate electrical power needed to sustain current and future land use.
- ◆ To maintain a high level of public safety, including police, rescue and fire protection.
- ◆ To provide high quality services to senior citizens and special needs residents. Special needs residents include all physically and mentally disabled residents of Warren.
- ◆ To maintain high quality library service for all Warren residents.
- ◆ To provide efficient and accessible local administration and government.

II. INVENTORY AND DISCUSSION

A. PUBLIC WORKS

This subsection includes services provided by the Warren Department of Public Works such as solid waste handling and the maintenance of town roads and other town infrastructure. In addition it addresses Warren's public sewage and water systems.

Department of Public Works/Highway Department (DPW)

The Warren DPW, employs 18 people and is responsible for maintenance of Town roads, vehicles (with the exception of the fire fleet), drains, buildings, parks, and cemeteries. DPW also monitors solid waste pickup and deposit at the Town transfer station and litter control including weekly bulky waste pickup. State-mandated recycling and pavement management programs (with URI) have recently been undertaken.

Approximately 6,000 tons of are processed through the transfer station each year. This puts considerable wear and tear on the compactor. The State-sponsored recycling program accounts for approximately 15% of disposable trash. In addition, a compost heap has been established at the Town yard and an associated public education program encourages citizens to compost

leaves, grass clippings and other biodegradable substances. Besides reducing the amount of raw trash, recycling eases the burden on the compactor. Waste disposal will continue to be a serious issue throughout the State and region. To ease the burden on the local DPW and the transfer station as well as the Central Landfill in Johnston, Warren residents should try to reduce the amount of waste they produce and increase recycling. The transfer station is accessible from Birch Swamp Road and is also used by the Town of Barrington on a limited basis for a fee. There is some interest in providing new access directly from Market Street.

Toxic waste disposal is primarily handled at special statewide collection sites established by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM). Collection of waste oil is handled through the "igloo system" at the transfer station on Birch Swamp Road. DEM retains a contractor to empty the "igloo" (approx. 200 gallons) at no cost to the Town. Industry-generated toxic waste is disposed of outside of Warren and regulated by State and federal authorities.

DPW storage facilities located at the Town Yard on Birch Swamp Road have been expanded in the last ten years, but are still insufficient. The 5-year capital improvement plan for public facilities provides more specific details regarding future needs and expansion plans. The former site of the DPW on School Street (where Wujcick's Barn was) has been suggested as good location for a nature center. (See Recreation , Conservation and Open Space Element.)

Sewage Treatment

The Warren Wastewater Treatment Facility, located on Water Street, is a modern treatment facility, built in 1949 and upgraded and expanded in 1982. It serves an estimated 8,000 businesses and residents and provides secondary treatment of wastewater that is discharged into the Warren River. Under normal conditions, the treatment processes are expected to remove in excess of 90% of the incoming loads of suspended solids and 5-day BOD that deprives the water of oxygen, harming aquatic life. Warren's RIPDES permit allows for a maximum average monthly flow of 2.01mgd. This is often exceeded due to infiltration and inflow from an antiquated collection system. Correcting the inflow and infiltration (I&I) problems will free up needed capacity and improve plant operations.

Plant operations are managed by Woodward and Curran under contract to the Town. The basic flow diagram consists of an aerated grit chamber followed by six primary clarifiers, two aeration basins (mechanical aerators), two secondary clarifiers and two final contact chambers. Disinfection was recently converted from chlorine gas to liquid chlorine. Sodium bisulfate, a dechlor agent is also added at the outfall.

Despite the fact that infiltration often causes the treatment plant to exceed its 2.01 million gallons per day limit, the plant has consistently received excellent ratings from Save the Bay's periodic report on the performance of the State's sewage treatment plants¹. This rating is based on two or fewer months of non-compliance with BOD (biochemical oxygen demand) and TSS (total suspended solids) permits. Despite the excellent performance of the plant the collection system needs to be upgraded. The higher than normal flows have not yet impacted the plant's pollutant removal capacity, but treating infiltrated water is an inefficient use of tax dollars and

¹ Save the Bay, 1998. *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*. Providence, RI

community resources. The oldest sewer lines date from the 1860s. The collection system for the sewer areas includes 45 miles of gravity sewers and force mains, six pump stations and two ejector stations.

The Warren Wastewater Treatment Facility has operated very efficiently over the last several years and many improvements have been made to insure high-level treatment. A sewer system evaluation survey was recently completed, together with recommendations of I/I removal and associated costs.² The I&I reduction program is expected to last three to five years and the costs will exceed \$2 million. A plan has also been submitted to upgrade the plant's instruments and controls. However, under State regulations, municipal waste treatment facilities now require pretreatment

The plant is also capable of treating septage from septic systems. The plant can accept up to 20,000 gallons per day. Septage haulers are contracted by the town and unsewered properties are entitled to two septic system pump-outs per year at no cost to them. Existing facilities are capable of removing, treating and disposing of settleable and floating solids and of reducing suspended solids and dissolved organic material. Primary and waste-activated sludges are stabilized in the lime stabilization process, conditioned with chemicals, dewatered on vacuum filters, and hauled by truck to approved disposal sites. Currently, sludge is shipped in a liquid form (approximately 6% solids) to a privately-operated incinerator in Woonsocket. Warren also has a marine pump-out facility

Sewer Facility Boundaries and Extension Limits

Sewer extensions are expensive to the Town and all development is a burden on the wastewater treatment facility. In addition sewer extensions into more rural areas tend to suburbanize the countryside and facilitate increased density and associated environmental problems such as contaminated runoff. The treatment facility has a limited capacity. Along with the costs of schools, water and other services, the cost of sewer improvements must be a major factor in future development decisions.

In keeping with the Land Use, Natural Resource and Economic Development Elements, a core area for the extension of sewers and water has been established in order to insure that the rural character of eastern Warren (Touisset) is not jeopardized. Sewer extensions into the Touisset area, and all other areas zoned R-40, will not be permitted through the enactment of a Watershed Protection Overlay District Zone. By limiting future sewer improvements and new hook-ups/extensions to the areas of town that are more developed both commercially and residentially, the Town's rural areas will be protected from urban sprawl.

Touisset (Touisset Neck south of Child Street area developments)

This is the largest and least densely developed area. It is mainly composed of farms and nurseries with scattered, recently built, individual "suburban" houses and two enclaves of former summer houses, most of which are now used year-round. Touisset is the largest unsewered part of town and has the greatest natural constraints to development. The central issue here is the balance between the rural and agricultural landscape and development pressure. There is strong

² Kemiega, David Plant Manager Woodward and Curran. Personal communication 2001.

interest in preserving active agriculture. Because of the Town's desire to protect the rural and agricultural nature of this area, land planning techniques such as a watershed protection overlay district need to be established to ensure that residential development does not establish a new suburban pattern.

Septic Systems

Most of the town is sewerred, the notable exceptions being Touisset and northern Warren east of Market Street. As part of the Town's goals to preserve rural character individual sewage disposal systems (ISDS) will continue to be the principal means of wastewater treatment in these areas. A septic system inspection and maintenance program should be considered for unsewered portions of the Town. When properly designed, installed and maintained, septic systems can provide a cost-effective and viable alternative to sewers. Tourism dollars in the community, the viability of certain businesses, the value of homes and the less tangible, though no less real, high quality of life enjoyed by residents, are integrally connected to the preservation of the Town's water resources. An investment in septic system and land use management, and the use of advanced on-site wastewater treatment systems in critical resource areas, can help the Town preserve its priceless water resources and rural agrarian heritage.

Water Supply

The Bristol County Water Authority (BCWA) was organized in 1984 to acquire the Bristol County Water Company and address persistent problems associated with insufficient water pressure, unpleasant taste and water supply shortages during periods of dry weather. Formation of the BCWA followed several studies that examined the system's problems and offered possible solutions. Board members of the BCWA are appointed by the Bristol, Warren and Barrington town councils.

The Cross Bay pipeline completed in 1998 transports water from the Scituate Reservoir and provides BCWA customers with about one third of their water consumption. The remaining two thirds comes from four surface reservoirs and two wells. The Kickemuit Reservoir in Warren is the terminal reservoir into which the others flow and is the only one in the system located in Rhode Island. The Swansea, Anawan and Shad Factory reservoirs are located to the north in Swansea and Rehoboth. Together the reservoirs have a usable storage capacity of 356 million gallons and a safe yield of 3.3 million gallons per day. The wells are located off Nayatt Road in Barrington. Per capita water consumption rose is about 55 gallons per person per day.

BCWA has an ongoing program to replace transmission lines and to date has replaced about 70 miles. In addition a study has just been completed by the Maguire Group on how best to upgrade the Shad pipeline and the water treatment plant. Implementation of this program should begin within the next year.

Water conservation in Bristol County is the best in the State. Residential water consumption is about half the state average. Water saving toilets, faucets and shower heads are all employed in the conservation effort and the BCWA maintains an ongoing public education/conservation program which townspeople should take advantage of in continuing and furthering this effort. Warren residents have typically consumed far less water per capita than most cities and towns in

Rhode Island. This practice should continue and measures should be undertaken such as further use of water-conserving toilets, shower heads and faucets. The Town should take advantage of BCWA water conservation education materials.

Many of the issues that were initial stumbling blocks to the pipeline, such as the potential loss of local control over the county's water supply and continued maintenance of local infrastructure, in particular the shad pipeline and the antiquated treatment plant, have either been resolved or are in the process of being resolved.

In order to protect the local system as the primary water source, protection efforts for wellhead, reservoir and watershed management should continue. In the case of the Kickemuit Reservoir, this represents the preservation of an important scenic and natural resource for Warren as well.. (See also Land Use and Natural & Cultural Resources Elements.)

B. PUBLIC SAFETY

Police

The Warren Police Department has a full-time staff of 21 officers, including the Chief. Additional civilian staff consists of five communications dispatchers and an animal control officer. Five marked cars, three unmarked cars and a four-wheel drive vehicle make up the motorized patrol fleet. Generally, the Department is known for quick emergency response rates.

The headquarters in the East Bay Government Center (the refurbished Joyce Street School) are a vast improvement over the former Town Hall quarters, increasing the occupancy area by approximately 20,000 square feet. Included in these facilities are holding cells for adult and juvenile offenders. The communications console is over ten years old, however, and needs to be upgraded. These improvements, coupled with the department's previously existing good reputation for its response rate, indicate that the Warren Police Department will serve the town well for years to come.

Fire and Rescue

The volunteer Warren Fire Department consists of six stations. Participation is high, with some 250 members, and the Department is able to count on about 125 members in an emergency. Each Fire and Rescue Company has its own charter and operates under the jurisdiction of the Warren Fire Chief. The rescue company has some 30 members, about 80% of whom are certified Emergency Medical and Cardiac Technicians. Costly equipment must be regularly maintained and replaced.

The total of six pumpers can deliver 6000 gallons per minute (gpm) in fire fighting strength. Together with one aerial truck, three rescue vehicles and a special hazard unit, they make up the entire fleet. Following nationally recognized planning standards, Warren has adequate fire protection flow for a community of up to 40,000 people, well in excess of the population area served of approximately 11,385.

The combined force averages about 1600 rescue calls and 350 fire calls received per year (just over 5 calls a day). As evidenced over the past ten years, the frequency of calls increases as the population increases. In 1991 The Town has a mutual aid cooperation agreement with the neighboring towns of Barrington, Bristol and Swansea to provide support if needed.

While most of the town is easily accessible, fire service to Touisset becomes increasingly difficult as the population in that area grows, due to constraints posed by limited roads and water lines. Otherwise, the department provides a high level of service and should be able to do so for years to come. Adding to its cohesiveness and importance, the volunteer Fire Department serves a key social role in town.

Emergency Management

The Town's part-time Emergency Management Director coordinates large-scale emergency efforts with the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency. The Town maintains an Emergency Operations Plan (1991), which is available through the Town Clerk's office. This plan includes reference to hazardous materials; cleanup is administered locally by the Fire Chief. The center for emergency operations where local officials would convene, is at the Police Station. Kickemuit Middle School (formerly Warren High School) is the Town's primary emergency shelter.

Harbor Management

Harbor management in Warren has been comprehensively addressed in the (1990) *Harbor Management Plan for the Town of Warren* (HMP). The HMP 1) identifies the issues associated with the harbor area and waterways; 2) suggests goals, objectives and policies for guiding public and private use of land and water in the defined harbor area; 3) provides an accurate inventory of both coastal and water resources of the Town; and 4) sets forth an implementation program which specifies the strategies for achieving the desired patterns of use on and adjacent to the harbor. Within a harbor management plan, all major issues pertaining to land-side and waterside use, and the relationship among them, are addressed. Relevant technical information pertaining to water quality, navigational hazards, mooring inventory, Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Program (CRMP) water use designations, current use inventory and natural resource areas is collected and analyzed in developing goal and policy objectives. Public safety is a key area of the plan and the harbor master has a twenty -foot boat (with trailer) used to patrol the Palmer, Warren and Kickemuit rivers from May through September.

The Warren Harbor Management Planning Committee should be encouraged to remain active in monitoring harbor conditions and use and keeping the plan up to date.

C. PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Warren and Bristol share a fully regional school district. In the 2000-01 school year 61.8 % of the students attending district schools were from Bristol and 38.2% were from Warren. Regionalization has brought many improvements to Warren's aging school system of the 1990's. The Warren/Bristol public school system currently consists of the following nine schools housing the grades listed:

WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

| <u>School</u> | <u>Grade</u> | <u># Students</u> |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| Mt. Hope High School | 9-12 | 1,148 |
| Kickemuit Middle School | 6-8 | 904 |
| Colt Andrews | 4-5 | 238 |
| Mary V. Quirk | 4-5 | 216 |
| Guiteras School | K-5 | 307 |
| Hugh Cole | K-3 | 353 |
| Reynolds School | K-5 | 255 (arts magnet school) |
| Byfield School | K-3 | 168 |
| Rockwell School | K-3 | 199 |

In addition to these schools the district also has the Adult Learning center whose offices are located at 689 Main Street in Warren. The adult education program provides GED training, classes for developmentally delayed adults, English as a second language and continuing education classes such as cooking, yoga, dance, etc.

The district recently completed a strategic plan.³ Goal 5 of the plan addresses improvements to school facilities.” We will ensure that our facilities meet the needs of the 21st century curriculum and practices. The objectives relating to this goal are:

- ◆ Fund, support, extend the districts asset protection plan
- ◆ Establish a taskforce to create and implement a district facility plan
- ◆ Fund, support and extend the technical plan for the district.

Facilities are currently nearing capacity and a variety of alternatives are being discussed. Among the options is an addition to the Hugh Cole School in Warren or a potential new school in Bristol. Establishment of a district facility plan would help to plan for improvements and expansions in the coming years. The District’s Asset Protection Plan outlines maintenance needs for all of its buildings for a five-year period.

Education must be a priority if Warren is to keep pace with a changing world. The current per pupil annual cost to educate a student in the Bristol Warren School District (including state aid) is \$9,975. While the burden of schools on the taxpayer is considerable, it is not an excessive percentage of local taxes in comparison with other municipalities in the state. Nevertheless, residential development must be monitored to control the additional cost of new families with schoolchildren.

D. GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Local Government

Warren is governed by an elected, unpaid, five-member Town Council headed by a Council President. The Council appoints several boards and commissions including the Planning Board, Zoning Board and Conservation Commission.

³ The Bristol Warren School District’s website has information on the strategic plan as well as each of the school facilities. In addition information is also available on administration, the school committee, adult education, etc. www.bw.k12.ri.us/

The 1991 Comprehensive Plan recommended that a Town Manager be hired to oversee the day-to-day administration of the Town. A Town Manager was hired in the mid-nineties, but the Town has had difficulty in maintaining a suitable person in the position. A Town Manager, Town Clerk, a Town Treasurer and other support staff provide daily administration. Other employees include the Building Inspector, Tax Assessor, Town Solicitor, Housing Director, and part-time Welfare Director.

In addition to acting on the restructuring recommendations listed above, the Town should establish centralized locations for filing and storing important materials and holding Planning Board, Town Council and other board meetings. Town zoning and land use maps and documents should be secure and readily accessible to and viewable by the public.

The planning and Zoning Board and the Conservation Commission monitor development in accordance with their mandates. In addition these groups may from time to time undertake specific studies or projects. The Town has neither planning staff nor ongoing use of consultant advisors. Three appointed boards carry out their functions as follows:

The Planning Board consists of nine appointed members and is responsible for recommending overall planning approaches to the Town Council and reviewing individual development proposals as they are brought before the board for subdivision and other mandated reviews. Most Planning Board activity involves subdivision application review but the board also periodically initiates broader-based planning efforts by directing studies, assembling task forces and hiring consultants. Planning staff is needed to assist the Planning Board with its Comprehensive Planning efforts and review of development projects. This is particularly true in light of the requirements for Comprehensive Plan updates and the administrative requirements of the Subdivision enabling act.

The Council-appointed Zoning Board, which also functions as the Platting Board of Review, hears appeals from persons or corporations seeking relief from decisions made relative to the land use ordinances of the Town. This is done through quasi-judicial hearings and decisions reached by the board.

The Conservation Commission is also appointed and is charged with identifying and monitoring those areas considered ecologically sensitive to development. As such, the commission serves an advisory role to the Town Council and Planning Board. The 1990 *Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plan* was prepared by the Conservation Commission. It provides an inventory of recreation facilities, conservation lands, culturally significant properties, and environmentally critical areas, outlining goals and recommendations for each.

A common area of concern to the Planning Board and other Town boards is the lack of staff and adequate and consistent facilities for filing, displaying materials and conducting meetings.

Library

The George Hail Library is one of Warren's most significant cultural/educational assets. The Town should ensure the library's continued fiscal stability so that it can continue to develop

resources. Space limitations necessitate an additional facility in the long run. The George Hail Library is not a Town department but does rely on the Town for financial support. Other funding is provided by a grant-in-aid from the State of Rhode Island, administered through participation in the Rhode Island Interrelated Library Network. It is governed by a seven member Board of Trustees and an association of 35 members.

The Library was built in 1888. Centrally located on Main Street, it is one of Warren's most significant civic/institutional buildings. The expanding collection of books now exceeds 20,000 in number and services and programs are available for children and the visually impaired. Recently, services have expanded to include the lending of records, cameras, tapes, film, video cassettes, games, and puzzles. The library subscribes to over 70 periodicals as well as Providence, New York and Boston daily papers, the Wall Street Journal, and the Warren Times.

A renovation and restoration project was completed in 1980. This included installation of a new heating/air conditioning system and restoration of the first and second floors to the original Victorian design. Because of the growing resources future expansion of the facility will be required. Although future expansion plans are preliminary, fiscal attention should be paid to this future need. The library is a member of the Cooperating Libraries Automated Network (CLAN), the statewide library database. The staff of the George Hail Library consists of three full-time and three part-time members.

Recreation

Warren's Recreation Board, in cooperation with the School Department and private sponsors, offers a variety of recreational programs to residents of all ages. The board regularly evaluates existing recreational facilities and develops plans for future recreational development.

The summer playground program is the cornerstone of children's recreation. Supervised activities throughout town include arts and crafts, swimming, gymnastics, bicycle safety, and various games. Additional offerings include a lunch program, bowling, field trips, and special activities such as Beach Day and Warren-Bristol Field Day. Seasonal activities include soccer and basketball clinics for children 12 to 18 years old.

The Recreation Board's adult programs include men and women's softball leagues, line dancing, aerobics, and men's indoor and outdoor basketball leagues. The board also sponsors a softball tournament at the annual Quahog Festival and outdoor concerts at Burr's Hill Park.

Recreation Board programs are supported through fees and by Warren's Annual Budget. The budget covers expenditures for the Summer Recreation Director, Board Secretary, seventeen playground supervisors, umpires, equipment, transportation, and miscellaneous other costs. For a complete inventory of recreation facilities refer to the *Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plan*.

E. SOCIAL SERVICES

Senior Services

According to the 1990 census, Warren's over 65 population makes up 17.6% of the population, compared with a countywide percentage of 15.8. In addition to senior housing provided by the Warren Housing Authority at Kickemuit Village (see Housing Element), services provided to senior residents include bus service and federally-funded free meals at Kickemuit Village. The Warren Senior Center also provides a myriad of activities and services. Warren's substantial and growing senior population indicates the need for more comprehensive and accessible senior services. As the senior population rises, existing programs will need to be expanded. The town must take a greater share of the cost and responsibility needed to service the elderly, RSVP and other programs notwithstanding. Of particular concern is an expected increase in the number of residents requiring nursing homes and similar facilities.

Special Needs Services

There are four group homes in Warren housing approximately 22 persons. Three of the group homes are for the developmentally disabled, comprising 18 of the total residents. The remaining four persons are in a home for chronic and persistent mental illness. The East Mental Health Center serves as a regional mental health care facility.

The needs of the mentally and physically disabled should be carefully attended to and planned for. The Town should assess the quality of services provided to these segments of the population, and in anticipation of a slight increase in numbers plan for and meet future needs. Non discriminatory housing and recreational opportunities must be available to all levels of mental and physical ability. Other Plan elements notably Housing and Recreation, Conservation and Open Space should be consistent and cross-referenced with this element.

Public Assistance

Public housing assistance is discussed in the Housing Element. Additional assistance provided by the Town and an East Bay service network includes coordination of several modestly funded Federal and State programs and distribution of direct monetary assistance and surplus food. Town staff carrying out these responsibilities is limited to a part-time Public Welfare Director.

Direct aid programs to those below the poverty level include GPA, (general public assistance) assisting individuals; AFDC (aid to families with dependent children), and medical assistance. Key programs administered through the regional Self-Help Program include heating assistance, emergency aid to avoid utility shut-offs, supplemental food, rent, medical bills, and food purchases (food stamps). Other programs include weatherization, referrals for elderly and child abuse, RSVP, substance abuse, and mental health care. Cases involving the latter are serviced by the East Bay Mental Health Center in Barrington.

Generally, the level of welfare aid is very limited due to financial and program constraints. These programs persist because of continued but modest Federal funds and standing conformance requirements. There is little public awareness or political willingness to focus on these needs, the adequacy of the relief provided and the sufficiency of the staffing. Warren may well find itself with increasing demands to meet these diverse needs. It will be necessary for the Town to plan for these expected increases with no assurance that Federal and State funding will be provided even at current levels.

Future efforts to provide assistance will feature limited financial aid with provisions for more comprehensive training to enable those requiring welfare assistance to obtain employment without sudden loss of all benefits. This more realistic approach should enable more individuals and families to more systematically enter or return to a more mainstream economic status.

Overall, there is need for more public education as to welfare needs and those factors that cause people to fall below acceptable economic and social standards. The Town must also more actively seek financial aid for this area of need. (See also the Housing Element.)

AFDC Basic Monthly Standard:

| <u>Family Size</u> | <u>Monthly Standard</u> |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | \$330 |
| 2 | \$449 |
| 3 | \$552 |
| 4 | \$629 |
| 5 | \$705 |
| 6 | \$793 |
| 7 | \$872 |
| 8 | \$960 |

III. POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Policy 1: Ensure the adequacy and affordability of fire, sewage, water, electric, education, governance, and other services in the permitting of any and all development. [Planning Board, Town Council]

Policy 2: Maintain the existing BCWA system as the primary water supply source.

Action 2.1 Encourage the BCWA to upgrade the infrastructure of the local water system. [Town Council, BCWA]

Action 2.2 Protect the watershed in order to maintain the safety of the Kickemuit Reservoir as a drinking water source. Enforce implementation of the watershed protection district. (See also the Natural & Cultural Resources Element). [Conservation Commission, Town Council, Planning Board, Zoning Board]

Policy 3: Promote water conservation.

Action 3.1 Work with the BCWA to increase educational programs in the public schools and to disseminate information townwide. [Conservation Commission]

Action 3.2 Develop a water conservation plan for municipal buildings and grounds. [Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Town Council]

Policy 4: Expand existing school capacity and programs to support with the District's strategic plan, State standards and to serve the student population including those with special needs. [Town Council]

Action 4.1 Incorporate special needs and programs within the consolidated plan. [Bristol Warren School District]

Action 4.2 Support the regional district in the implementation of the Strategic Plan. [Town Council]

Policy 5: Maintain school facilities; Plan school facilities and sites for optimum and safe accessibility, relationship to the bike path, and proximity to cultural and municipal resources; continue to support regional efforts.

Action 5.1 Support the District's Asset Protection Plan. [Town Council]

Action 5.2 Support the District in the development of a Facilities Plan. [Town Council]

Policy 6: Ensure continued permit compliance at the Warren Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Action 6.1 Monitor sewage treatment by referring to RIDEM's records and Save the Bay's periodic report on the performance of sewage treatment plants in RI, *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*. [Warren Town Manager, Conservation Commission]

Action 6.2 Require semi-annual reports from the plant operators on plant performance relative to permit criteria. [Town Council, Town Manager, Conservation Commission]

Policy 7: Locate sewer extensions to avoid environmentally critical areas and maintain efficient sewage treatment. [Department of Public Works, Planning Board, Conservation Commission]

Policy 8: Restrict sewer extensions to the existing more densely developed portions of the town, in order to maintain rural character in the outlying areas, such as Touisset and east Warren.

Action 8.1 Develop Watershed Protection Overlay District Zoning Ordinance that eliminates sewer extension to designated areas with the intent to protect outlying areas from suburban sprawl. [Town Council, Planning Board, Conservation Commission]

Action 8.2 Require septic system inspection and maintenance in unsewered areas. Establish Wastewater Management Districts. [Warren Wastewater Treatment Facility, Planning Board, Town Council, Warren DPW]

Action 8.3 Enforce implementation of watershed protection district zoning, prohibiting sewer extensions to rural and agricultural areas of Warren, including Touisset and areas zoned R-40.(See also the Natural & Cultural Resources Element). [Conservation Commission, Town Council, Planning Board, Zoning Board]

Policy 9: Increase and maintain a high level of services for senior citizens and persons with special needs.

Policy 10: Ensure accessibility to all Town facilities by all physically and mentally handicapped persons in accordance with State and Federal Standards. In addition the Town should strive to go beyond these standards in serving the needs of seniors and residents with special needs with respect to additional facilities and services needed and/or requested by these segments of the population.

Action 10.1 Comply with all State and Federal accessibility standards and anticipate future needs and requirements. In so doing, maintain open communication between the Town and persons representing the handicapped population. [Town Council, Planning Board, Building Inspector]

Policy 11: Continue to provide necessary referral services for the mentally handicapped and their families to the East Bay Mental Health Center

Action 11.1 Consider hiring a full-time municipal staff member to administer referral

services or expand the role of the Public Welfare Director to a full-time position that includes these duties. [Town Council]

Policy 12: Maintain the George Hail Library and continue to expand and update its resources; plan for long-range library needs beyond the capacity of the George Hail Library. [Library and Town Council]

Policy 13: Provide sufficient administrative and other staff to increasingly improve the efficiency of local government and services for the betterment of the Town and to comply with applicable State laws.

Action 13.1 Study ways to increase the efficiency of Town government including the establishment of a Town Charter Commission to review and rewrite the charter, incorporating recommended restructuring of Town government. [Town Council]

Action 13.2 Review and rewrite job descriptions for Town staff. [Town Council]

Action 13.3 Evaluate the need for at least a part time planner to assist the Planning Board and Conservation in the implementation of their responsibilities. [Town Council, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Town Manager]

Policy 14: Maintain, plan for and where needed expand Town-owned facilities.

Action 14.1 Develop a comprehensive Capital Improvements Program (CIP) that includes projected facilities, equipment and service needs over a five year period. [Town Manager and Town Staff, Town Council, Planning Board]

Policy 15: Cooperate with neighboring communities in the provision of fire fighting, emergency, education, and other necessary public services.

Action 15.1 Coordinate the capital improvements program (CIP) and Town services with adjacent towns. [Town Council]

Policy 16: Coordinate new industrial and commercial development as well as housing starts and monitor the sufficiency of the power grid to meet increased demands.

V. FACILITIES IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

| | ASAP | 5 yrs | 20 yrs | Responsible Parties |
|--|------|-------|--------|---|
| Policy 1: Ensure the adequacy and affordability of services | * | | | PB, TC |
| Policy 2: Maintain BCWA system as the primary water supply source | * | | | BCWA |
| <i>Action 2.1</i> Upgrade infrastructure | * | | | BCWA, TC |
| <i>Action 2.2</i> Protect watershed | * | | | CC, PB, ZB, TC |
| Policy 3: Water Conservation | * | | | |
| <i>Action 3.1</i> Education programs in schools | | * | | CC, BCWA |
| <i>Action 3.2</i> Municipal water conservation plan | * | | | PB, CC, TC |
| Policy 4: Support the regional school district's Strategic Plan | * | * | | TC |
| <i>Action 4.1</i> Special Needs programs | * | | | BWSD |
| <i>Action 4.2</i> Support Strategic Plan | * | * | | TC |
| Policy 5: Maintain School Facilities | * | * | | BWSD |
| <i>Action 5.1</i> Support District's Asset Protection Plan | * | * | | TC |
| <i>Action 5.2</i> Support District in development of a Facilities Plan | | * | | TC |
| Policy 6: Ensure continued permit compliance at the Wastewater Treatment Plant | * | | | TC |
| <i>Action 6.1</i> Monitor plant performance | * | | | Town Manager CC, plant operators |
| <i>Action 6.2</i> Require semi-annual reports | * | | | Town Managers, TC plant operators, CC |
| Policy 7: Avoid environmentally critical areas when extending sewers | * | * | | CC, DPW |
| Policy 8: Restrict sewer extensions to existing, densely-developed portions of Town | * | | | |
| <i>Action 8.1</i> Watershed Protection Overlay District Zoning | * | | | TC, CC PB |
| <i>Action 8.2</i> Wastewater management district; septic system inspection and maintenance | | * | | Wastewater treatment Facility, TC, PB, CC Warren DPW |
| <i>Action 8.3</i> Enforce limits of sewer extension | * | | | TC, CC, PB, ZBR, Zoning Officer |
| Policy 9: Where necessary increase and then maintain a high level of services for seniors | * | * | | Senior Center, TC |
| Policy 10: Ensure accessibility for all Town facilities | * | | | |
| <i>Action 10.1</i> Comply will accessibility standards | * | | | TC, PB, Building Inspector |

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| | ASAP | 5 yrs | 20 yrs | Responsible Parties |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| Policy 11: Referral services to East Bay Mental Health Center | | | | |
| <i>Action 11.1</i> Consider hiring staff to administer referral services | | * | | TC |
| Policy 12: Maintain, plan for and expand library | * | * | | TC, Library |
| Policy 13: Address staffing needs in local government | * | | | TC, TM |
| <i>Action 13.1</i> Study efficiency of local government; town charter commission | * | | | TM, TC |
| <i>Action 13.2</i> Review and rewrite job descriptions for town staff | * | | | TC, TM |
| <i>Action 13.3</i> Evaluate need for part-time planner | * | | | PB,CC,TC,TM |
| Policy 14: Maintain, plan and where needed expand Town facilities | * | * | | |
| <i>Action 14.1</i> Develop and implement CIP | * | | | TM, Town Staff, PB,TC |
| Policy 15: Cooperate with neighboring towns in the provision of services | * | * | | TC |
| <i>Action 15.1</i> Coordinate CIP with adjacent towns | * | * | | TC |
| Policy 16: Monitor the availability of power to meet growth | | * | | Electric Company, PB |

APPENDIX

Town Building Inventory:

| Facility | Location | Status |
|---|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Town Hall | Main Street | in use |
| Wood Street Animal Shelter | Wood Street | in use |
| Liberty Street School | Liberty Street | closed |
| East Bay Government Center (former Joyce Street School) | Joyce Street | newly redone-poorly assigned |
| Mechanics Fire Station | Water Street | in use |
| Narragansett Fire Station | Vernon Street | in use |
| Baker Street Fire Station | Baker Street | now museum |
| Rough & Ready Fire Station | Metacom Ave. | in use |
| Touisset Fire Station | Touisset Road | in use |
| Rescue Station | Miller Street | in use |
| Transfer Station | Birch Swamp Rd. | in use |
| Highway Garage | Birch Swamp Rd. | in use |
| Highway Storage Building | Birch Swamp Rd. | in use |
| Burr's Hill Park Storage | Water St. | in use |
| Jamiel Park Storage | Wood Street | in use |
| VFW Building | Metacom Ave. | leased to VFW |
| Wastewater Treatment Plant | Water St. | in use |
| Kickemuit Middle School | Child Street | in use |

WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

| | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Child Street School | Child Street | for sale |
| Hugh Cole School | Hugh Cole Road | in use |
| Mary V. Quirk School | Main Street | in use/status unclear |
| Main Street School center | Main Street | Highschool technology |

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WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

June, 2003

WARREN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Economic Development Element inventories and analyzes employment statistics and trends; gives a breakdown of the tax base; assesses the status of industry and manufacturing; discusses the location and condition of retail commerce and recommends policies and actions.

Economic development planning in Warren has been haphazard at best. While there are many worthwhile economic development opportunities, there is no strategic plan that unites and the disparate and sometimes conflicting components around a common theme. The Warren Comprehensive plan continually recognizes the importance of Warren's natural resources and its nautical heritage in shaping the past, the present and the future. Economic development must realize that a healthy economy requires a healthy ecology. Local strategies can capitalize on the Town maintaining and enhancing its maritime and agrarian heritage, waterfront opportunities, natural resources and sense of place. Any tourism related economic development depends upon Warren being able to protect its character and market itself in this light. Economic development strategies must also be consistent with the goals of the Natural Resource and Land Use elements. To this end, the plan discusses economic and zoning incentives to encourage active agriculture.

In the regional context Warren's economy and that of the neighboring East Bay communities represent a single economic unit. This economic unit relies on a common tourism base, employment centers, commercial and industrial areas and transportation networks. Cooperative efforts that enhance this economic base such as the Mount Hope Enterprise Zone, the East Bay Economic Initiative, Bristol County Chamber of Commerce and the East Bay Chamber of Commerce can all help to revitalize Warren's economy.

A. OVERALL GOALS

To strengthen and maintain a healthy local economy characterized by diverse employment opportunities, low unemployment and a strong tax base.

Promote a sound local economy that draws upon and enhances the Town's unique natural and historic features.

II. INVENTORY AND DISCUSSION

A. ECONOMIC STATISTICS

According to the 2000 census data the population decreased by 0.2 percent between 1990 to 2000 (11,385 to 11,360). The median-selling price of a single family home in 1980 was \$57,000. By 1990 this price more than doubled, rising to \$124,937. During the last decade however it has remained relatively constant with the 1999 median selling price set at \$130,500.

Warren's unemployment rate rose sharply from a low of 3.1 percent in 1988 to a high of 11 percent in 1991. During the latter part of the 90's the figure continued to drop to a low of 3.7 percent in 1999. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics the unemployment rate for 2000 was 4.1 percent. It is interesting to note that although the Town's population and labor force

remained relatively level, there was substantial movement within the various employment categories. Most notably, employment within the manufacturing sector declined from a high of 2,434 in 1989, to a low of 1,212 in 1999 (-50.21%).

Warren's economic identity as a manufacturing town is largely a thing of the past, and, as industries leave for warmer, cheaper pastures, there is not a solid base of similar replacement industries. In order to cut the unemployment rate and keep pace with regional and national trends, Warren must stress its amenities for the siting of service and light industries as well as marine-related business. In order for such efforts to benefit local residents, the workforce must be equipped with necessary skills. Gone are the days when a basic high school education was preparation enough for available employment in local manufacturing industries. Today's job market often demands specialized skills, underscoring the importance of vocational, computer and other programs. Investment in an educational system that keeps pace with changing employment opportunities is investment in the town's economic development.

Table 1 shows the major employers in Warren and the number of persons employed in 1991 and in 2000.¹

Table 1 Warren's Major Employers

| Employer | # persons 1991 | # persons 2000 |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| American Tourister (P&M Industries) | 677 | 400 |
| Blount Marine | 125 | |
| Lloyd Manufacturing | 100 | |
| Tillotson Pearson (TPI) | 478 | 280 |
| Laidlaw Transit | 100 | 100 |
| RJ Manufacturing Co. | 450 | 320 |
| Ames Department Store | ** | 100 |
| Grace Barker Nursing Home | 100 | 100 |
| I. Shalom Co. Inc. | 175 | 100 |

In 1991 the listed companies listed above accounted for 2205 jobs, or 46 percent of all those privately employed in Warren. Currently, this number while still substantial represents percent of the privately employed workforce.

Tax generation in Warren reflects the diminishing role of industry in the local economy. Industry accounts for only roughly 5.5 % of the tax base and commercial development for 16%. The bulk of the tax burden falls on residential properties, which pay 66% of the tax. Motor vehicles account for 9% and utilities for 3 percent. It is a well-documented fact that residential

¹, Rhode Island Department of Economic Development, February 1991. *Rhode Island Business Firms with 100 or More Employees.*

Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, March 2000. *Rhode Island Business Firms with 100 or More Employees.* Personal Communication Lloyd Manufacturing, Blount Marine, American Tourister.

development escalates the costs of providing education and other government related services.² By way of example, Warren's average, annual (1995) cost to educate a student was \$7,580,³ yet the average annual tax on a single-family residence for the same time period was \$2110. For a household with one child in the school system, this represents a deficit to the Town of \$5470.

Table 2 lists the estimated median family income for Warren for the year 2000. AT \$51,560 it is roughly equivalent with the state's median.

| Location | Estimated Median Family Income (HUD) | | Maximum Affordable Monthly Housing Cost by % of Family AMI | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|---------|--|-------|---------|---------|
| | Annual | Monthly | 30% | 50% | 80% | 100% |
| Rhode Island | \$51,531 | \$4,294 | \$386 | \$644 | \$1,031 | \$1,288 |
| Warren | \$51,560 | \$4,497 | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

B. MANUFACTURING/INDUSTRY

For over a century, Warren has relied on manufacturing and related industry as its major source of local employment. While manufacturing is still the leading local employment category, the decline of the regional textile industry over the last half-century and the more recent departure of other manufacturing concerns has reduced the number of jobs. Labor-intensive manufacturing is clearly not the wave of the future. Despite the decline in manufacturing, it still accounts for about one third of the private sector employment in the Town. These industries although not as prominent as in the past carry on the legacy of shipbuilding and textile mills that shaped the town. In recent years, a number of firms have left Warren. Among the most recent and prominent of these departures are Carol Cable and Narrow Fabric. Despite the initial abandonment of these sites they have now been reoccupied by Display World and Warren Electric respectively.

With intensive, heavy industry quickly dying out as a major economic factor throughout the northeastern United States, Warren must try to attract light industry, high tech and service-related concerns. In doing so, the Town must clearly evaluate its potential in the context of the attractions of the entire region. Marine-related industry should be a priority. Perhaps the most important factor is for sites in Warren to be seen as competitive with similar or larger sites closer to routes 6 and I-195, and with other mill buildings in neighboring towns and cities.

² Kevin Kasowski, February 1993. As summarized in "The Costs of Sprawl Revisited" PAS Memo, American Planning Association, Washington D.C.

Thomas, Holly, 1991. "The Economic Benefits of Land Conservation". Dutchess County Planning Department. Technical Memo distributed by the Southern New England Forest Consortium.

Southern New England Forest Consortium, Inc. (in progress). "Cost of Community Services for Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island Towns".

³Roger Gaspar, Administrator 1997. Bristol Warren Regional School District.

Reuse of the Carol Cable site by Display world provides an example of how government and private industry can work together towards a common goal. The former Carol Cable facility is a 240,000 square foot building located on a 10.4- acre site on Metacom Avenue. The building was constructed in 1899 and was used as a textile mill until 1968. From 1968 until 1990, the site was used for the manufacture of wire and cable products. From 1990 until 1995, manufacturing operations ceased and the building was used as a warehouse. A stigma remained on the property due to the presence of the residual contamination. A prospective purchaser, Display World Inc. as a prospective purchaser proposed to relocate retail display manufacturing operations, with 125 employees and plans to expand to over 200, to the site from outside Rhode Island. This relocation was contingent on resolving the environmental issues in an expedited manner consistent with the proposed use of the property. State and Town staff, knowledgeable about Brownfield provisions and other issues related to site reuse will be better able to assist new businesses to reuse former manufacturing sites.

Warren must be prepared to address the issue of businesses closing down. Plans should be made for future use of land and/or buildings that have been or will be vacated. This process is never easy--the agonizing process of deciding on reuse or demolition options has been carried out all across post-industrial New England.

Each large industrial building should be measured and tested for conversion to housing/ mixed use and other non-heavy industrial uses. Auxiliary buildings and overall site use must also be assessed. There may be a great deal at stake in the ways these sites are restructured, possibly providing opportunities to reshape the waterfront, the town core and other large, important parcels. Concentration on the reuse of these older buildings and their sites should be given priority over development of new sites.

Almost any use in Warren's manufacturing zone requires a special use permit. This practice could be evaluated to see if there is another method to ensure compliance with performance standards and site design requirements. High worker's compensation costs in Rhode Island and limited vehicle access to potential sites has hindered the attraction of new industry--in an era marked generally by considerably less industry than before.

Central Industrial Concentration:

A large proportion of Warren's once prosperous manufacturing activities were clustered in the blocks behind Main and Child streets adjacent to the tracks. Most of the buildings survive but house far less activity than before. The large American Tourister complex sits on the edge of the Warren River, somewhat removed from these centrally located structures. Recent revisions to the zoning ordinance and map have established the American Tourister site as a "Special District". This district includes that area of developed waterfront along the Warren River that consists of property now or formerly held by the American Tourister Company. Comprehensive development involving mixed use is encouraged and site plan review of development proposals is required.

In the center of Town, behind Main and Child streets, is an area of buildings and adjacent spaces that is currently underused and detracts from the town's image. Decisions will have to be made as to the extent manufacturing is expected to continue or be superseded by service/commercial

and warehousing activities.

This central location provides a possible opportunity to restructure blocks, roads and buildings to create a modest sized service/employment core in the area between Child and Franklin bounded roughly by Railroad and Arlington avenues on the west and east respectively. This area contains disturbed and unused land that has been used for industrial purposes in the past, but now needs to be better organized. The Town might effectively create an industrial/business park, enabling firms to consolidate shipping, promotion and other functions. A new approach road might be located along the power line right-of-way, providing truck access not only servicing a new commercial/light industrial park but also providing direct access to Main Street. One cautionary note must be added: the site still shows evidence of a wetland, now much degraded; special attention must be paid to drainage and to limited reclamation of this wetland. Increased use of this area and improved circulation would improve its appearance and facilitate physical and psychological connection of surrounding neighborhoods to the Town center. This will, in turn, increase use of Main Street and encourage pedestrian traffic. Existing residential units on the periphery of this area should be well buffered and allowed as grandfathered uses.

The benefits of such a central industrial park are many. Most major roads lead to the site; it is located adjacent to the Government Center and Main Street core; services are within easy access; existing businesses in the area allow for centralization of services, shipping and deliveries; the adjacent bike path is accessible to employees; and the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) Park 'n' Ride facility abuts the area, providing easy commuter access. The Town should consider targeting this area and linking it to the revitalization of four to six blocks of Main Street and related blocks of Child Street.

The Waterfront Plan and the Downtown Revitalization Plan provide further insight into the development objectives of these areas.

Metacom Avenue

This small industrial area reads as a southward extension of Display World but is detached, separated by the Rhode Island Department of Employment Security (DES) office, farmland and Kickemuit Village. As Metacom has grown as a strip retail area, some industrial uses have carried on as holdovers from the pre-strip era. The area is difficult to service due to heavy traffic and the need to realign, or otherwise deal with the traffic issues on Route 136.

Market Street

Warren's industrial development has occurred without central planning, frequently taking prime agricultural lands and ignoring existing industrial areas with infill or redevelopment potential. For years, "industrial" development has been targeted for the area along upper Market Street. Today, much of the Market Street area has an ambiguous identity, a mix of manufacturing, active and vacant commercial and residential uses, and some of Warren's most scenic and historic property. These conflicting uses and the importance of significantly improving the attractiveness of Warren's northern "gateway" suggest that remaining parcels along Market Street, particularly those with access or views to the water need to be carefully planned. Unfortunately, the development of Nunes Farm as a PUD has eliminated many of the possibilities once envisioned for this area. An area zoned for manufacturing is located on the east

side of Old Market Street.

The east side of Route 136/Market Street is occupied by several highway-related industries and services dominated by TPI Composites (manufacturer of sail boats, wind turbine blades and exercise machines), and vehicle sales and storage. The size and siting of these facilities determine the character of the northern edge and approach to town. There is some potential for service/commercial development on the west side of 136. The Town must determine what the overall character of this corridor should be and not allow it to develop in a piecemeal manner.

This area is the primary service/commercial area in Warren. It also contains significant new industry. The existence of industry mixed with service/commercial and transportation-related uses have already conditioned this linear section of Town. Additional industry or related uses could potentially locate in this area. However, there is a need to establish more rigorous standards with more unified setbacks and buffering from Market Street; to relate area requirements to the configuration of the land between Market Street and the wetlands to the east; and to set clear standards for buffers from adjacent housing. The scale of development is already larger than the business uses along Metacom and uses should differ between the two areas. Metacom is dominated by set back roadside businesses; Market Street should be the location for complexes built well off of the main road with internal circulation.

Sewage Treatment, Water Supply & Access

Industry should locate only where sewer service is available. In keeping with the Land Use, Natural Resource and Facilities Elements, a core area for the extension of sewers and water should be established that does not jeopardize the rural character of eastern Warren. Extensions into those areas that are currently zoned R-40 should not be permitted.

Businesses should be monitored to conform to State and local environmental standards and should pay special attention to their effects on neighboring residential areas. Concerns include vehicular noise and congestion, odors, smoke or fumes, shadows, toxic and hazardous substances, and unsightly materials.

Access to commercial/industrial sites should be as direct as possible and the Town should cooperate in cases when there is the possibility of creating new access roads. No new sites should require truck and employee access through rural or residential areas and all abutting residential areas should be buffered.

C. COMMERCE

Commercial activity is concentrated on Main and Water streets and on Metacom Avenue, with less defined pockets on Child and Market streets. Figures and maps contained in the Land Use Element depict existing zoning. Areas currently zoned for business include village business (VB) and business (B). In addition certain business uses are permitted in the waterfront zone and the special district (S) and within the manufacturing zone primarily by special use permit.

Warren's central business district is typical of the traditional American Main Street where civic buildings and proud two and three story retail structures historically defined a vibrant town

center. Like so many others, this Main Street has declined as a center of retail activity in recent decades. Metacom Avenue is a linear strip of post-war franchises and a small shopping center.

Additional retail sites in Warren are extensions of the others or are local neighborhood facilities. Retail uses have existed for decades in older buildings and, in some instances, owners of commercial properties seem to have grown complacent. This is due, perhaps, to the fact that an adequate living can be made from buildings that are already amortized or have relatively low rents.

In general, the Town's commercial vitality suffers from inadequate maintenance, modest expectations, lack of reinvestment, and passive marketing. Warren's composite commercial image is of a place locked in an earlier time. While big box retailers have certainly siphoned off significant growth potential, this alone cannot be blamed for the stagnation of the retail economy. In order to effectively address the problems facing Warren's retail economy and offer potential solutions, the following analysis breaks it down into its component areas.

Main Street/Water Street

Historically, Main Street has been the commercial and municipal heart of Warren. It remains the town's municipal center but has declined commercially. While a few businesses continue to fare well, retail business in general has a high turnover rate here and shopping opportunities are limited: groceries and household goods are largely unavailable.

Heavy traffic and perceived parking difficulties discourage some residents from using the downtown Main Street area. The parking "problem" is generally overstated and does not truly reflect a shortage of parking spaces. Parking and related issues and solutions are discussed in greater depth in the Circulation Element.

Due largely to insufficient reinvestment and marginal upkeep of downtown commercial buildings, the area has a rather worn image. The loss of vitality is manifested in underused upper floors, spotty maintenance, haphazard storefront modifications, an overall tired appearance, and insufficient economic life relative to the number of blocks and buildings designated as retail. In short, it is a classic Main Street problem area in need of reinvestment, management and revitalization.

In planning terms, Water Street has generally been treated separately from Main Street. The economic activity of Water Street is more diverse and specialized, concentrating on marine-related business, restaurants and the sale of antiques. In the past, Water Street played a subordinate role to Main Street. Not long ago, numerous taverns were a key part of the economic life of Water Street, giving it a somewhat shady image in contrast to Main Street, which was clearly the municipal, commercial and cultural heart of the town. In recent years Water Street has been "discovered" by antique dealers, artisans, restaurateurs and others drawn by its historic charm and renewed acceptability. Currently, the economic image of Water Street is healthier than that of Main Street.

Main Street:

Over the last two decades a Main Street revitalization process has evolved, initiated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and implemented throughout the U.S. and Canada. These programs concentrate on changing attitudes; stress reinvestment and common marketing, seasonal promotions and hours; and advocate storefront restoration, better sign design and placement, and use of historically based lettering. Usually a Main Street manager is hired. This type of program could work well on Warren's Main Street, especially if targeted for a limited area. The restoration and revitalization of a few key buildings would herald a change of attitude and probably spark a widespread effort up and down this historic street.

Water Street:

As the heart of the Historic District, Water Street's architectural character and consistency of the streetscape must be protected. Its antique shops, restaurants, artisan and carpentry shops, marine businesses, and historic nautical atmosphere make it the obvious focal point of any local tourism strategy. Water Street is attractive because of its small-scale buildings, diversity of activities and a distinct "realness." The street and adjacent side streets should acknowledge its many facets by allowing flexible uses and modifications that are in character with the prevailing mood of the street. Performance standards should be clearly stated to help retain desirable occupants, increase desired street life and encourage the gradual upgrading of buildings. It is a street shaped by incremental decisions and changes and should be recognized as such. Parking must be addressed by coordinating public and private lots into a common system with a distinctive sign system and consistent screen planting. Such an effort will go a long way toward dispelling the perception that parking is difficult and could become a catalyst for attracting visitors to Warren. The parking solution should include special parking areas for owners and employees, freeing up the prime lot and curbside spaces that are often occupied by those who work in immediately adjacent stores.

Downtown Revitalization:

The 1991 Economic Development Element called for the coordinated management of Main Street and a revitalization plan. The downtown area in need of revitalization is bounded on the north and east by the bike path, Campbell Street on the south and the Warren River on the West. Development and redevelopment within the area should be human-scaled and pedestrian-oriented with attention paid to creating or maintaining a clearly demarcated street line and cohesive streetscape. It is important that this be achieved without gentrification of the area. Through a revitalization plan the Town hopes to address the following issues:

1. Support a diversity of people and housing
2. Create a downtown aesthetic that accentuates the historical, cultural and architectural features of the area.
3. Encourage economic development that complements the local area and seeks to balance residential and commercial objectives.
4. Develop an efficient and coherent parking and intermodal circulation plan.
5. Provide for coordinated gateways into the downtown area.
6. Enhance the human scale aspect of the downtown area.
7. Create mechanisms for downtown revitalization plan implementation and continued resident and business involvement.

Metacom Avenue

Metacom Avenue has been the most successful retail area in recent years, attracting contemporary highway retail uses. The Ocean State Shopping Center and several franchise fast food chains have created a pattern of use and appearance previously not found in Warren. This strip is merely the northern portion of a more extensive strip primarily located in Bristol. A good deal of the Warren end is broken up into small parcels with more marginal uses. It is very likely that in future decades this area will undergo significant changes to accommodate larger tenants and/or a different set of road-related occupants. The strip is narrow, the commercial designation seldom extending more than 160 or 200 feet back from Metacom Avenue. This has limited the size of development, excluding tenants who need more extensive footprint areas. This depth limitation was put in place to protect housing located directly behind the commercially zoned land. To the west, a power line right-of-way, large cemeteries and marginal wetlands parallel the strip, further complicating rational land use.

This strip of small local concerns and franchises has developed in the last few decades. As such, it is typical of commercial highway strips all over the country. Its condition can be described and analyzed in terms of the size of the parcels; its proximity to adjacent residential neighborhoods; traffic volume, curb cuts and other traffic conditions; the age and uses of structures; occupancy rates; and image.

Normal use and the added burden of heavy north-south traffic flow that peaks during commuting hours have a strong impact on the strip. Small lots have resulted in an excessive number of curb cuts which, along with numerous intersections, can result in chaotic and frustrating motorist experiences, typified by poor traffic flow and long delays entering traffic and making left-hand turns. Road improvements by the State are being studied. The Town must actively participate in the DOT decision-making process to insure that local objectives are integrated into improvement plans.

On the surface, the strip has a relatively shiny modern image marked by fast food franchises and other well recognized establishments. When one looks more closely, many underused or vacant sites are evident, as well as sites which have not kept up with the times and look tired and ill maintained as a result. The image is lively, somewhat fragmented and very different from all other parts of Warren--with the exception of parts of Market Street.

In the future, more of this strip is likely to become dated as current uses are superseded by newer franchises and larger scale uses elsewhere. The strip can change and accept new commercial uses through a process of replacement but will always be limited by the size of the parcels, the width of the road and the heavy traffic volume. It is unreasonable to expect the land to be zoned to encourage deeper lots. Such changes might improve commercial viability but would do so at the expense of the abutting neighborhoods. The limited depths of lots preclude the use of parallel service roads. Nevertheless, some attention should be given to combining curb cuts and better articulating intersections. The strip should not be allowed to expand to the north nor should these small-scaled uses and their development pattern be allowed anywhere else in Town. Landscape and design standards along with redevelopment incentives could improve the overall appearance

of the strip⁴.

Other Retail Locations

In keeping with Warren's mixed-use pattern, many retail buildings are interspersed with residential uses on Child Street and the parallel portion of Market Street. As on Main Street, these facilities straggle away from the center and contribute to an appearance of low economic vitality. The area zoned for commercial purposes is probably too large, encouraging a dispersed pattern.

Pockets of retail uses are located at the intersection of Child Street and Metacom Avenue, at the north and south ends of Main Street, and intermittently on the northern end of Market Street. Many of these facilities are scattered in residential neighborhoods. On upper Market Street retail uses are located among service/commercial and manufacturing uses.

Service Commercial

In the past, the town relied heavily on manufacturing to employ many of its inhabitants and support the local economy. These times are largely over. The Town must look for other means of sustaining its tax base and providing employment as a part of the greater Providence regional market. Warren is well situated near the Interstate system and may have potential as a service center for the East Bay or as a regional distribution location. FedEx has recently located there.

D.THE WATERFRONT

Warren's waterfront area currently combines the character of a working waterfront with residential, commercial and recreational interests. The waterfront also blends into and helps to frame the ambiance of one of the first towns to be settled in the State of Rhode Island. Warren's waterfront shares in the early beginnings and history of the State, shows the maturity and some of the scars of a prominent position in the Industrial Revolution and provides a mirror of the economic roller coaster that has had the Town as its passenger since the early 1600's.

Warren's waterfront is one of the few genuine working waterfronts remaining in the state. The area zoned "Waterfront" includes that mixed-use area along and adjoining the Warren River for which water dependent uses are encouraged.

Recent development plans, however, call for the construction of two upper market multi-family developments on the harbor. These proposals echo a growing trend amongst coastal communities that has dramatically changed the character of their shoreline, often to their detriment. Questions have been raised about how best to develop the waterfront; single family residences versus multi-family, mixed usage, multiple stories, public access rights, shoreline visibility, parking problems, etc.

While there is a core of more affluent residents who have invested in the area, attracted by both its location and its historic homes, it is still a neighborhood of predominantly elderly and low

⁴ County Road in Barrington has undergone substantial improvements over the past decade and could serve as a model for refurbishment of the Metacom Strip.

and moderate-income families. The social implications resulting from their possible displacement are of concern and a potential burden to the Town. Affordability and lack of housing choice are already community issues confronting Warren. Similarly, traditional waterfront businesses will find increasing pressures on the practicality of continuing to do business in the area. Unless a positive action plan is initiated, it is likely that the current diversity of users and residents of the area will be diluted and its unique character compromised and lost forever.

Future planning, which provides a vision and decision framework for development and establishes realistic short and long-term parameters to guide the area's future development while maintaining and enhancing the waterfront's abundant resources is important to the area's preservation.

General goals for the area include:

- ❖ Respecting the needs of area residents and business owners,
- ❖ Removing blighting influences in the neighborhood,
- ❖ Preserving and enhancing the area's unique inventory of historic and cultural resources,
- ❖ Stimulating the compatible use of underutilized land,
- ❖ Protecting and encouraging water dependent and related uses along the waterfront,
- ❖ Safeguarding the rights of free and expanded access to the water,
- ❖ Providing improved amenities and services throughout the area,
- ❖ Establishing a business climate conducive for attracting and encouraging compatible uses to the area, through marketing and business incentives,
- ❖ Developing an improved stewardship of the neighborhood and its streetscape,
- ❖ Designing strategies to provide increased job opportunities and job training for area residents and business.
- ❖ Targeting the partnering of private and public funding mechanisms to implement these goals.

Water-Dependent, Marine and, Boat Building Industries

There are around 20 marine related businesses in Warren including boat building, marine service and sales, dock building, marine consultants, marine service, marine transport and seafood processing. The traditions of Warren and Bristol favor continued boat building. Blount Marine, TPI Composites, Dyer Boats and other ongoing marine businesses support continued activity in this field. The East Bay Economic Initiative is a collaborative effort to promote ship building in RI to the national and international community. This initiative, which described in more detail under section "I" below, may help Warren capitalize on its ship building traditions. Growth in this industry and other marine businesses could help to replace the loss of jobs in other sectors of the manufacturing economy.

E. AGRICULTURE

Warren has several farms and extensive fields used for nursery plantings. The importance of retaining some of these open spaces has been recognized both locally and at the State level. The trend toward purchase of development rights, initiated locally by the land trust, should be

encouraged. The town recently purchased the development rights to the Manchester Property, 23 acres located off Touisset Road.

Farming as an active, productive activity should be encouraged as well. Farmland contributes to the local economy and costs far less in municipal services than a comparable acreage of residential land. While still not a significant percentage of the job market, it is interesting to note that jobs within the agriculture sector of the economy increased 67 % between 1989 and 1999.⁵ The Town should consider establishing a Community Garden where individuals or families can have their own plot and where others buy into a Community Garden Cooperative at which qualified farmers grow vegetables for a group of shareholders. Fresh produce could be distributed weekly in exchange for shares, which are purchased up-front, paying for the use of the land, labor and seeds. Such programs already exist in Rhode Island

The zoning ordinance should be evaluated for ways in which it can be made easier for farmers to market and sell their products. RIDEM's *Farming and Forestry Strategies* a new technical assistance document contains useful suggestions and model ordinances.⁶

F. TOURISM:

Warren is located between major east-west traffic (I-195) and well-established tourist destinations such as Newport and East Bay shore and beach attractions (Little Compton, Horseneck Beach, Westport, etc.). At times, Bristol is also a tourist destination. Warren's attractions are largely hidden from direct view and, being more modest in scale, require careful promotion. By upgrading Main Street and Water Street and improving the gateways to town, the town can improve its image and become a more frequent stop for summer visitors.

Tourism in Warren must be more directly recognized, encouraged and carefully planned so that the unique qualities of the Town are retained. Warren does not want tour buses, but it should encourage visitors who come for its antique shops, restaurants, boat trips, and bay cruises. Above all, there must be greater recognition of the superb architecture found primarily between Main Street and the waterfront and a conscientious effort should be made to maintain these buildings as tourist attractions in their own right. Central to this effort is recognition of the importance of the continuity of buildings and blocks. New parking lots should not further disrupt the built fabric and historic buildings should certainly not be removed for the construction of parking lots.

Water Street has a special character. Artisans' studios, antique shops and other storefront establishments, small professional offices, and restaurants all proliferate along Water Street and are sprinkled throughout the surrounding residential streets. Warren is an attractive location for these activities simply because it hasn't been "discovered" yet. Water Street could easily be discovered, filled with boutiques and trendy eating places, and gradually transformed into a fashionable place. This would be very unfortunate. Warren must adjust its zoning to be more permissive to key land uses without opening the area up to unwanted speculation and change. A

⁵ See Table 1, in this Element

⁶ Taintor, Frederick, May 2001. *Farming and Forestry Strategies*. South County Watersheds Technical Planning Assistance Project. A cooperative venture with EPA, RIDEM, Washington County Regional Planning Council, RI Rural Lands Coalition, South County Watersheds Partnership and URI.

balance must be established between encouraging upgrading and increased economic activity on one hand and maintaining restraint and control to insure that the area is not gentrified and homogenized with a plethora of upscale boutiques and coffee shops.

A modest brochure highlighting the diversity of historic, culinary, retail, environmental, and scenic attractions would help promote Warren as a place to visit.

Tourism related recommendations from the Waterfront Plan are listed below.

1. Develop a joint program for Heritage Tourism opportunities to serve as a viable economic force within the community and the region,
2. Initiate a well-designed system of wayfinding within the community to include general signage as well as interpretive displays and plaques for historic sites,
3. Establish a centrally located visitor information kiosk staffed by volunteers,
4. Encourage owners on the waterfront, where appropriate, to develop dockage facilities to encourage and service recreational boaters,
5. Explore the feasibility of establishing a terminal for as part of the proposed Narragansett Bay ferry system,
6. Promote the establishment of a small Hotel in the community to take advantage of an apparent demand in the area,
7. Encourage the establishment of more Bed & Breakfast facilities,
8. Investigate ways to restructure and expand the existing core of antique stores into a more cohesive entity, (Putnam and Pomfret, CT. are prime examples.)
9. Support the already strong presence of working craftspeople and artists within the community,
10. Capitalize on the rich ethnic life found in Warren by encouraging festivals, fairs and other events etc.

G. ZONING

To encourage diverse use of existing industrial buildings and allow for new building or building modifications on industrial and adjacent sites, Warren must change its zoning rules. Zoning should reflect larger scale intentions and non-conforming uses should be recognized as such. The Town must reduce the number of small districts created to recognize an existing use or facilitate a new use. In effect, Warren has spot zoning, which should be eliminated. Zoning changes are also needed to condense retail areas; perfect dimensional and other performance standards specifically suited to Warren's conditions; and establish requirements for siting, tree planting, buffering and new access roads.

H. LOCATION, INFRASTRUCTURE, SERVICES

In assessing Warren's location and ability to attract new industry and/or service/commercial businesses, it is necessary to examine its regional position, vehicle accessibility, the availability of land suitable for development, proximity to services, accessibility of utilities, and the general climate of the town and region relative to new development.

Warren is well situated within a highly accessible portion of southeastern New England; it is close to I-195 and to the ports of Providence, Fall River and New Bedford. It is less well positioned in terms of local roads and the availability of large parcels of land. With its intricate

land use pattern, Warren does not have large areas of land to allocate for major new commercial or industrial uses. There are several large buildings which can be reused or whose sites can be used for new ventures, providing immediate and long-term employment opportunities. A few currently open lands also have potential for intensive development. Within the regional market, Warren does not have prime conditions conducive to large-scale development. It does have limited attractiveness for specialty businesses and for locally based ventures. Water and sewer service is limited to the most developed parts of town. Prohibiting sewer and water extensions to eastern Warren will help to protect the Town's more rural areas from urban sprawl. This is essential if Warren is to capitalize on tourism as a potential area for future economic growth.

Testing to determine the conversion capability of older buildings is recommended. The Town must balance two objectives: The first is the coordinated development of vacant land within the built-up section of town. This could include tax incentives, zoning considerations, and economically attractive packaging. The other objective is to avoid continued piecemeal development of outlying parts of town. This passive process benefits individuals at the expense of the entire town and has eroded rural character in the east and north.

I. REGIONAL EFFORTS

Warren is a small town within a complex metropolitan area. Local economic prosperity depends to a great extent on the market in the entire Providence - Fall River - Newport region. As a part of this region Warren has traditionally relied on blue-collar employment. As such, this has historically placed Warren among the most industrial cities and towns--somewhat like the towns of the Blackstone Valley. The neighboring towns of Barrington and, to a lesser extent, Bristol are more prosperous--noted, in Barrington's case, for higher income residential neighborhoods and, in the case of Bristol, for a more noteworthy historic town plan, stately houses and general appearance. Warren must evaluate its position relative to these towns and the region and determine its image and set economic goals accordingly.

In recent years, as Warren has lost industrial employers, this segment of the tax base has eroded. Today industrial land use provides less than 6% of the tax dollars collected whereas commercial uses now generate over 15%. This is a clear indication of the need for a more diversified economy. There are several regional organizations that can help Warren assume a more prominent position in the East Bay economy.

Mount Hope Enterprise Zone⁷

An Enterprise Zone is an economically distressed region within the State that is characterized by high unemployment rates and unusually high poverty rates. The designated area usually suffers from the closing or relocation of one or more large employment facilities, leaving workers stranded. The Enterprise Zone Program was established by legislation to promote business retention and expansion in distressed areas of the State. The main objective of the program is to stimulate growth in the private sector by rewarding the creation of new, full time jobs. The program is designed to provide a comprehensive and aggressive package of incentives and tax

⁷ Taken from www.townofwarren.org/enterprise and Chrisman Alan, August 2001. *Mt Hope Enterprise Zone*. For additional information of specific incentives and requirements of the Mount Hope Enterprise visit the website or contact Mr. Alan Crisman at 401-245-4222 or jacrisman@aol.com

relief to businesses willing to relocate or expand into an Enterprise Zone. Included in the package of incentives are various financing alternatives, job training programs, and permit expediting on both the State and local levels.

The Mount Hope Enterprise Zone comprises most of the industrial areas located in Rhode Island's East Bay region of Bristol County. Centered in the towns of Bristol and Warren, this enterprise zone has a base of approximately 1,200 businesses. Due to program requirements the number of businesses that could benefit from enterprise zone membership is between 350 to 500.

In addition to the tax credits available to all state approved enterprise zones, the Mount Hope Enterprise Zone provides several additional benefits. Unlike other zones in the state where the enterprise administration is assigned as a collateral duty to the municipal planner, this enterprise zone has its own manager whose sole function is to recruit and assist business firms in the area. This facilitates clear communication and proactive assistance between the enterprise zone office and the business community. The zone manager has knowledge of the financing alternatives available to member companies and essentially functions as a free consultant to assist in arranging capital acquisition. The office also administers a small, low interest, low-to-moderate income loan program for firms that need to acquire new equipment, increase their inventory or modernize their operation. This loan program has helped retain and create jobs for this segment of the community.

The Mount Hope Enterprise Zone has successfully helped firms wishing to relocate to the area. In addition the office has assisted a number of member firms to develop grant applications for many of the state-funded training programs. Grants are available for new hire programs, for upgrading technological skills and for improving a firm's competitiveness in national and international markets.

East Bay Chamber of Commerce and the East Bay Tourism Council⁸:

Two groups, the East Bay Chamber of Commerce and the East Bay Tourism Council provide valuable assistance to businesses in the East Bay area, including Warren. The East Bay Chamber of Commerce is a private, not-for-profit corporation made up of businessmen and women dedicated to preserving the competitive enterprise system of business and promoting business and community growth and development. It provides a wide range of services and constantly watches out for the economic health of its members and the entire community and applies for grants to augment its ongoing economic development and education programs. In addition the chamber promotes local businesses through advertising and at special annual events, and at under graduate orientation sessions at Roger Williams University. The Chamber also works with the Tourism Council to promote local tourism through brochure development and distribution and a planned expansion of the Warren Visitor Center. In addition they help to support the development of new overnight accommodations and attractions and keep members informed about local and statewide promotions, programs, attractions, etc. The Chamber is also involved in community service such as internships and mentoring.

The East Bay Tourism Council coordinates organizations and persons in the tourism industry or

⁸ From www.eastbaychamberri.org

related activities and encourages the orderly growth and development of tourism within the East Bay area. They work with the Chamber to help maintain a website on Tourist attractions. Dining accommodations, antique stores etc.

The East Bay Economic Initiative

The East Bay Economic Initiative (EBEI) is a partnership of government and private organizations as well as businesses dedicated to promoting economic development and creating jobs for the marine industry of Rhode Island. EBEI was formed in 1993 out of the repeal of the Sales and Use Tax on boats. Within two years, employment in the industry rose 40 percent.

“In 1997 \$410,000 grant was awarded to the East Bay Economic Initiative (EBEI) to administer an International Marketing Program and Workforce Development Program for the marine industries of Rhode Island concentrated in the East Bay area. The collaboration of boat builders and other marine related businesses successfully developed a proposal to the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) with the assistance from the RI Economic Development Corporation (RI EDC). The EDA has provided \$300,000 with the rest of the funding coming from the Greater RI Regional Employment and Training Board (\$50,000), Community Development Block Grants (\$40,000), RI EDC (\$10,000 in-kind) and EBEI (\$10,000). These projects will expand the industry into the European market, increasing the demand for their products and creating more jobs for Rhode Islanders. The cities and towns of the East Bay contributed \$40,000 in CDBG funds specifically for the training, \$10,000 from Bristol, \$20,000 from Portsmouth and \$20,000 from Warren. Assistance will be offered to individual companies for the training sessions geared towards the specific skills their workers needed. Some companies have been working with the New England Institute of Technology to develop curriculums.”⁹ Between 1992 and 1997 gross revenues increased by, the industry increased its productivity to double its gross revenues. Hopefully, the collaborations that have developed for marketing and workforce training will support this growth into the future.

III. POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Policy 1: Revitalize Main Street and the surrounding area by improving marketing, encouraging reinvestment, restoring architecture, and redesigning signs and parking

Action 1.1 Initiate a Main Street program with a paid staff person assist in the revitalization of Warren’s downtown. [Town Council, Chamber, Warren Preservation Society, Massasoit Historic Association]

Policy 2: Encourage and facilitate residential use of upper floors of commercial buildings in the downtown area, especially on Main Street.

Action 2.1 Allow mixed-use residential.

Action 2.1 Promote code compliance, so that downtown buildings can be used for apartments. [Town Council, Planning Board, Building Inspector, Warren Project Pride]

⁹ East Bay Initiative, 1997. Annual Report On the Sales Tax Repeal, Five Years of Success

Policy 3 Promote heritage- and marine-related tourism in Warren as a key economic development strategy.

Action 3.1 Coordinate tourist promotion with other East Bay communities and with State efforts; study innovative programs which have succeeded elsewhere; determine an appropriate and unique promotion concept and logo. [Chamber of Commerce, East Bay Tourism Council, Planning Board]

Policy 4: Encourage diverse activity on Water Street to enhance its historic, tourist and marine-oriented image. Such activities must be consistent with the Waterfront Plan.

Action 4.1 Revise zoning to encourage activities appropriate to the street.

Action 4.2 Encourage coordinated seasonal and yearly promotion of street-related activities.

Action 4.3 Assist with code enforcement to bring all buildings up to a common level of historically appropriate maintenance. [Chamber of Commerce, Planning Board, Town Council]

Policy 5: In conjunction with Bristol, study commercial activity on Metacom Avenue to determine future potential and desired changes and address related traffic concerns.

Action 5.1 Conduct an inventory of parcel sizes, use patterns, traffic problems, and occupancy rates and then assess alternate plans for the future of this strip to improve its marketability, appearance, image and traffic flow. [Planning Board, Chamber of Commerce]

Action 5.2 Investigate the possibility of rehab incentives, increased landscaping, more attractive lighting etc.

Policy 6: Devise appropriate incentives and planning controls for the American Touristor “special district” and manufacturing districts.

Action 6.1 Assess the potential of the special district and determine specific rules and procedures for each area's possible development so that adjacent housing is protected, town image is significantly improved and service and environmental standards are met. [Planning Board, Town Council, consultants]

Action 6.2 Market Street: Institute economic initiatives for the development of the east side of Market Street and the west side of Birch Swamp Road as well as portions of the northern end of the west side of Market Street; set specific areas for each sub-area so that the mix of uses, area requirements, buffering and conservation space to be set aside are clearly indicated with historic sites delineated within a special development district Master Plan. [Planning Board, Town Council, Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise Zone,

consultants]

Action 6.3 Town core: Determine the feasibility of this area as a renewed zone with its own Master Plan. [Planning Board, Town Council, Chamber of Commerce, consultants(completed)]

Action 6.4 Conduct a more detailed feasibility study on the potential reuse of Warren's larger manufacturing buildings. [Town Council, Building Official, Planning Board]

Policy 7: Ensure that any development or redevelopment of the Warren waterfront enhances not detract from its character as a mixed-use working waterfront.

Action 7.1 Encourage marine industry and commerce along the Warren River that respects the historic scale of the adjoining areas, especially Water Street.

Action 7.2 Investigate the types of marine activity that are appropriate and actively seek responsible firms. [Planning Board, Town Council, consultants]

Action 7.3 Anticipate and plan for any loss of non-marine industry along the waterfront; determine desired alternate land uses. [Planning Board, Town Council, consultants]

Action 7.4 Consider improvements to the waterfront that will increase public access and activities at the water's edge. [Planning Board, Chamber of Commerce]

Policy 8: Evaluate the tax and employment benefits of this plan and other economic plans and assess the probable extent of economic improvement.

Action 8.1 Project expected tax income increases against comparable changes in service, education and governance costs in evaluating potential economic development. [Town Treasurer, Town Assessor]

Policy 9: Develop policies, regulations and actions that are based on the fact that a healthy economy requires a healthy ecology.

Action 9.1 Evaluate economic development proposals relative to the extent that they improve and not detract from historic and natural heritage of Warren.

Action 9.2 Incorporate agricultural incentive provisions into the zoning ordinance.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

| Policies/Actions | ASAP | 5 years | 20 years | Responsible Parties |
|---|-------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| Policy 1: Revitalize Main Street | * | * | | |
| <i>Action 1.1</i> Initiate Main Street Program | * | * | | TC, Chamber, WPA, MHA |
| Policy 2: Encourage residential use on 2 nd story of commercial buildings. | | | | |
| <i>Action 2.1</i> Allow mixed-use residential | * | | | PB,TC |
| <i>Action 2.2</i> Promote code compliance | * | | | TC,PB building official |
| Policy 3: Promote heritage and marine related tourism as a key economic strategy. | | | | |
| <i>Action 3.1</i> Coordinate tourist promotion | * | * | | Chamber, Tourism Council |
| Policy 4: Encourage diverse activity on Water Street that is consistent with the Waterfront Plan. | | | | |
| <i>Action 4.1</i> Revise zoning. | * | * | | PB,TC Chamber |
| <i>Action 4.2</i> Promote seasonal activities. Festivals. | | * | | PB,TC Chamber |
| <i>Action 4.3</i> Manage through enforcement | * | | | PB,TC Chamber |
| Policy 5: Study commercial activity on Metacom | | | | |
| <i>Action 5.1</i> Conduct inventory, assess plans | | * | | PB Chamber |
| <i>Action 5.2</i> Investigate rehab potential | | * | | PB Chamber |
| Policy 6: Incentives and controls for Special District and Manufacturing districts | | * | | |
| <i>Action 6.1</i> Assess potential ;develop regulations | | * | | PB,TC |
| <i>Action 6.2</i> Economic initiatives for Market Street | | * | | PB, Chamber, Enterprise Zone(EZ) |
| <i>Action 6.3</i> Town Core Master Plan(complete) | | | | |
| <i>Action 6.4</i> Reuse study | | * | | EZ, consultant |
| Policy 7: Development or redevelopment of the waterfront must enhance its character as a mixed-use working waterfront. | | | | |
| <i>Action 7.1</i> Encourage marine industry and commerce | * | * | | PB, chamber, EZ |
| <i>Action 7.2</i> Seek appropriate marine activity and firms | | | | PB, chamber, TC, EZ |

WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

| | | | | |
|--|-------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Action 7.3</i> Plan for the loss of non-marine industry on the waterfront | | * | | PB,TC consultants, EZ |
| <i>Action 7.4</i> Increase public access | * | * | | PB, Chamber |
| Policies/Actions | ASAP | 5 years | 20 years | Responsible Parties |
| Policy 8: Evaluate tax and employment benefits of economic plans | | | | |
| <i>Action 8.1</i> Project tax increases against changes in service | | * | | Town Treasurer, assessor |
| Policy 9: Develop policies and practices that are based on the fact that a healthy economy requires a healthy ecology | | | | |
| <i>Action 9.1</i> Evaluate economic development plans and proposals in this light | * | * | * | PB |
| <i>Action 9.2</i> Incorporate agricultural incentives into the zoning ordinance | * | | | PB,TC |

| | | |
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WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
HOUSING ELEMENT

July, 2001

I. INTRODUCTION

This Element provides an inventory and analysis of housing types, costs, needs, conditions, assistance programs, and other factors as they relate to the people and image of Warren. The Policies and Actions represent the implementation framework for meeting the following goals.

A. GOALS

- Provide a diverse and sufficient range of housing that is affordable to and meets the needs of Warren's diverse population.
- Ensure that permitted housing types and related dimensional and performance standards correspond to the carrying capacity of the land and to the character of each area of town.
- Project housing needs to determine expected yearly housing starts, housing types and price ranges, and to anticipate service costs and utility loads.
- Retain existing (historic) housing stock and strengthen neighborhood identity.
- Wherever possible integrate new housing construction with existing settlement patterns.
- Fully utilize all available buildings suitable for housing.
- Continue to seek federal, state and local funding to upgrade the housing stock town-wide, but especially in the downtown core.
- Actively support the objectives and action items of the Town of Warren Downtown Revitalization Plan.

II. INVENTORY

The following is a descriptive inventory of housing in Warren. It begins with descriptions of the different housing types and then discusses housing conditions, code enforcement, senior housing, housing assistance, costs and zoning.

A. HOUSING TYPES

Warren's housing stock is varied and represents a historic continuum from colonial times to the present day. It consists of historic houses in the downtown area, farmhouses, mill housing, two and three level duplexes and triplexes, tract or suburban developments, elderly housing and multi-unit condominium complexes. There are no high-rise or "slab" housing structures. These housing types can be described as follows:

Historic Urban Town Houses: There are many exceptional period houses downtown that represent a range of architectural styles from the initial settlement to the end of the last century. These historic houses are often found on blocks with less significant structures, parking areas or non-residential uses. [Located in Profile Area 6, the Historic District, and in more isolated locations along Main Street and side streets adjacent to Profile Area 6] -See Fig. 2 Profile Areas after page 4 in the Land Use Element.

Farm Houses: These structures are remnants of a lifestyle that has all but vanished. In some cases the entire farmscape is retained in good condition, although farming has been restricted in scope. These buildings and their associated barns, outbuildings, farmyards, and fields provide the town with a link to its past. They also serve as focal points throughout the less developed sections of Warren. [Located in Profile Areas 2, 3 and 11 along with associated farm structures and/or land]

Older Single Family (late 19th and 20th centuries): The small town quality of Warren derives, in large part, from these small single-family houses found all over town. They often feature porches that front on the street. [Located in all Profile Areas]

Mill Housing (One, two and three level duplexes or triplexes): These mill-related housing units are located on the short and often narrow streets adjacent to the waterfront and on either side of Child Street. Many structures are on small lots, some in the shadow of American Tourister and the former Carol Cable complex. They are generally in good repair although some show signs of neglect. [Located predominantly in Profile Areas 5 and 6]

Tract or Suburban Type Houses:

These post-World War II housing units have been built individually in places but more regularly in small subdivisions. This type of housing is most responsible for changing the character of the Town by spreading housing out across previously open fields. [Located predominantly in Profile Areas 2, 3, 4, 9, and 10]

Condominium Type Housing: These multi-unit planned developments have introduced a newer type of housing and ownership to Warren. The condominium type consists of middle-income units such as those along the Kickemuit River [Located in Profile Area 5] and housing for higher income levels along the southern Warren River [Located in Profile Area 7].

By and large, Warren is a comfortable place to live. Its neighborhoods provide a variety of housing types for many socioeconomic groups, and many of the neighborhoods provide a close knot and intimate environment to live and raise a family. On the other hand, the existence of so many small neighborhoods results in more “edges” than in a town with more extensive, homogeneous housing sectors. These edges are characterized by mixed use, with housing adjacent to mills, busy highways, vacant lots, and commercial and marine activities. This fragmentation has led to small zoning districts and, in some cases, spot zoning. It has also facilitated small-scale residential development in marginal locations. The zoning revisions of 1994 and 1997 consolidated some of these smaller districts.

The Town, using the tax assessor’s database, inventoried its pre-20th century housing stock. Table 1 depicts the results of this analysis.

Table 1 Historic Housing Inventory

| Years Built | Total number | Principal Street Locations |
|---------------|--------------|--|
| Prior to 1800 | 94 | Water, State, Church , Main, Market |
| 1801-1830 | 38 | Water, Market, Broad, State |
| 1831-1860 | 154 | Main, Water, Wood, Union, Washington, Market, Wheaton, Touisset |
| 1861-1880 | 173 | Water, Wood, Church, State, Main, Vernon, Laurel Ln., Market, Child |
| 1881-1900 | 331 | Water, Main, Davis, Hope, Barney, Warren Ave, Martin, Bridge, Child, Metacom Ave. Arlington Ave., Brownell, Touisset |

The oldest house was constructed in 1630 and is located on Union Street. Two other house pre-date 1700. One was constructed in 1662 and is located on Asylum Rd. The other was constructed in 1680 and is located on Water Street. Most of the houses that predate 1800 were constructed in the village area, but a few were built in the surrounding countryside. One hundred and seven of the 175 houses constructed between 1861-1880, 106 were built in 1880. The majority of house built between 1881 and 1900 were constructed in 1900.

According to the 1990 census there were 4,786 housing units in Warren. Of these, 2,413 (50.4%) were single family homes. Through 1997 an additional 177 units were constructed, bringing the 1997 total to 7,199.¹(Warren Zoning Officer)

B. CONDITION OF HOUSING STOCK AND CODE ENFORCEMENT

The diversity of housing types makes it difficult to generalize about health and building code standards and compliance. The overall appearance of housing in most sections of Town indicates pride, shown by good maintenance and yard upkeep. However, many units do not receive sufficient attention and appear well below code. In some cases, poorly maintained buildings severely detract from the overall appearance of neighborhoods and mixed residential and commercial areas. Yards cluttered with a variety of household materials, bulky junk and vehicles can also be eyesores, sometimes spilling over into wetland edges and open spaces at the end of dead end streets. Some duplexes and other multi-family units also exhibit less than ideal building and lot maintenance.

On single-family lots parking is accommodated on-site. In compact areas of town however, the lack of available spaces is a problem. Multi-family housing units and/or nearby commercial, industrial uses compete for spaces on streets, small lots and take over yard space for parking.

¹ Personal Communication with Bill Hanley, Warren Zoning Officer, 1998.

C. SENIOR HOUSING

Warren has a large senior population compared to other towns in the East Bay and Rhode Island as a whole. Table 2 lists the percentage of the population that is over the age of 65 for Bristol County.

Table 2: Bristol County’s Percentage of the Population over 65

| | |
|----------------|--------------|
| Bristol County | 15.8% |
| Warren | 17.6% |
| Bristol | 16.3% |
| Barrington | 13.7% |

Source: 1990 U.S. Census, *Selected Population and Housing Characteristics for Rhode Island Counties, Cities and Towns.*

Many senior citizens require special housing. The Warren Housing Authority administers 153 units of senior housing at Kickemuit Village that serve 185 persons. Eligibility is based on a federal preference system that takes three factors equally into account: payment of more than 50% of income for rent; substandard housing conditions; and involuntary displacement. There is a waiting list of between 75 and 80 persons. As the population of Warren and the region grows older there will be an increasing need for additional units. The Housing Authority is currently seeking land for additional senior housing through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

There is potential need for market-built housing geared to senior needs. These small units could be clustered to reduce the building footprint and maximize open space. They have the added advantage of meeting projected need without impacting the school system.

For senior citizens in need of special care, Warren has a number of nursing homes. Currently, they provide sufficient facilities to serve the local population, but additional nursing homes and/or congregate care facilities will probably be necessary as the senior population grows.

D. HOUSING ASSISTANCE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND THE HOMELESS

Warren's has substantial lower-income housing needs that are serviced both locally and as part of an East Bay network of services. Locally, there are 199 units of Section 8-assisted housing that service about 300 persons, with a waiting list of 86. These units include a mixture of all four types of section 8 programs: certificate, voucher, housing choice and mod rehab. Within the next two years Warren Housing Authority hopes to convert all units with the exception of the mod rehab program to housing choice vouchers. The Warren Housing Inspector monitors and inspects all units under the section 8 housing.

In addition to lower income housing assistance, there is local awareness of the need for a permanent and sufficient shelter for battered women. This may have to be addressed regionally.

A part-time Public Welfare Director administers various federally sponsored programs that monitor and assist eligible and needy individuals and families with no support staff. That office also periodically distributes surplus food.

Warren's current homeless population is estimated at 9 to 12 persons. No local facilities exist to shelter or otherwise care for these individuals and families.

E. HOUSING COST AND AVAILABILITY

Housing costs in Rhode Island have risen six times as fast as the median income in recent years, increasing the gap between housing costs and incomes. About 20% of Rhode Island households spend in excess of 35% of their income on rent. Diversity of the housing stock, different lot sizes, and the variety of urban and rural settings in Warren result in a great range of housing costs. Rental costs and starter home prices, however, are often beyond the incomes of local families. The federal standard for affordability is spending 30% or less of a household income on housing.

Warren's housing situation generally mirrors the State as a whole. The town has experienced increases in the number of single occupants, single parents, and households made up of unrelated occupants. As is the case statewide, the number of renter households has increased while production of multi-unit housing has declined. Inflation during the 1980s has had a significant impact on Warren and continues to have repercussions at the lower levels of the housing market. The recession in the late eighties marginally reduced housing costs and, to a lesser extent, rental costs. But long-term affordable housing problems still persist. Sharp reductions in federal funding over the past decade have been a major factor in declining production and availability of low-income housing in Warren and in the State. Table 3 lists the median housing and rental values from Bristol County from the 1990 census. Table 4 lists the single family selling prices for Warren from 1995 through June 1999.

Table 3: Median Housing and Rental Values for Bristol County

Median Value of Owner-occupied Housing Units

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Bristol County | \$162,100 |
| Warren | \$139,700 |
| Bristol | \$151,000 |
| Barrington | \$190,900 |

Median Rent

| | |
|----------------|-------|
| Bristol County | \$417 |
| Warren | \$408 |
| Bristol | \$406 |
| Barrington | \$555 |

Source: 1990 U.S. Census, *Selected Population and Housing Characteristics for Rhode Island Counties, Cities and Towns.*

Table 4: Single Family Selling Prices 1995 through June 1999, Warren RI.

| Year | Number of Units Sold | Average Sold Price | Median Sold Price | Average Listing Price Prop. Not Sold |
|--------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1995 | 52 | 133,323 | 120,500 | 176,489 |
| 1996 | 44 | 130,979 | 123,000 | 166,792 |
| 1997 | 57 | 139,014 | 126,000 | 187,863 |
| 1998 | 78 | 152,486 | 131,250 | 168,888 |
| 7-1-99 | 38 | 171,063 | 138,750 | 173,473 |

Source: RI Statewide Multiple Listing Service Inc.

The median-selling price for single-family homes in the past five years is actually less than the median value of owner occupied homes in 1990. The average assessed value for a single-family residence in 1997 was \$124,4950.² The build-out analysis conducted for the Touisset area based its findings on a one-acre house and lot in a new subdivision being assessed for \$200,000.³

F. SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

Consideration must be given to the housing needs of the physically and mentally disabled in the formulation of housing plans and in the actual development of housing units. The town should assess the proportionate need for this type of housing at regular intervals and ensure that special needs housing is developed accordingly.

G. ZONING

Warren has an intricate pattern of land use, which is reflected in many small residential districts and several residential zoning categories. In several large sections of Town it is hard to determine the zoning designation due to a mixture of uses. These transitional areas contribute to a confused sense of place and in some cases detract from the character and stability of residential areas. The re-zoning completed in 1997, attempted to consolidated compatible zoning boundaries and discourages the continued spread of non-conforming uses, particularly into residential areas.

III. ANALYSIS

An evaluation of housing in Warren must take into account a range of issues and needs including accommodation for older citizens; affordability; special needs; development trends; and homelessness.

A. HOUSING NEEDS

Warren's population will continue to require a wide range of housing as rental units, condominiums, and particularly, as single family houses. Housing should be accessible to a wide range of incomes with special attention towards "starter homes" and lower income

² RI Department of Administration , Municipal Affairs, Tax Report, 1997.

³ Beta Engineering, 1999. Build-Out Analysis, Touisset Area of Warren. The basis for the \$200,000 value should be documented.

affordability. This will be increasingly difficult for two reasons: 1) the national cost of housing is quickly placing home ownership beyond the incomes of many new families; and 2) Warren's location and amenities make it attractive to some professionals and upwardly mobile individuals looking for a place to settle.

Warren is an attractive community well within easy commuting distance to anywhere in the East Bay-Providence-Fall River area. The compact nature of the historic area and the integration of new housing with older dwellings contribute to its desirability. This attractiveness is likely to increase, bringing renewed demand for historic and new housing. Warren must determine the extent that it is willing to be changed by the influx of new homeowners whose expectations will place different demands on Town schools and services.

B. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The affordability issue is a growing concern. The difference between being able or unable to afford a down payment and monthly mortgage costs is often quite small; a small increase in demand- and therefore cost- can be the deciding factor for first-time buyers. Housing affordability is not an issue just for those at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder. Because of its varied housing stock, the number of small units and the relative age of its structures, Warren provides a pool of existing housing that should be able to respond to a limited influx of newcomers as retain a degree of affordability for existing residents and their offspring. At times, housing demand and inflation will couple to deny access to affordable housing. However, Warren should adjust to these demands reasonably well in comparison to neighboring towns.

Warren should consider innovative subdivision planning tools such as flexible zoning that allow houses to be located on smaller lots without a subsequent increase in the overall density of the subdivision. Unlike a conventional subdivision, flexible zoning also enables more creative lot layouts that help preserve the defining characteristics of the landscape. These concepts, along with rural design standards, can provide modest-sized as well as more spacious units without using up the remaining open space of the Town. The compact layouts of such subdivisions facilitate utility connections and services, reduce road costs, and can be tailored to the needs of specific age groups such as senior citizens. The Town can encourage these alternatives in lower-density single-family developments without introducing large-scale slabs or monolithic multi-unit structures.

In order to provide affordable housing necessary to meet the needs of all its residents, the Town must devise an affordable housing plan that actively explores cooperative and regional strategies. Such an approach would more efficiently and economically cope with the housing, service and counseling needs associated with unemployed, under-employed and otherwise disadvantaged individuals and families.

The Town must weigh alternatives and enact appropriate zoning rules to facilitate provision of affordable housing. Considerations should include mill conversions, new multi-unit complexes and, whenever possible, methods that continue to integrate secondary units with existing land use and built form patterns.

The 1997 zoning amendments incorporated provisions for in-law apartments⁴. This provision allows an accessory family dwelling unit by special use permit in any residential district, the village business district, the waterfront district or in a pre-existing residence located in the business or manufacturing district. Among other things, the unit must be occupied by a member of the family that occupies the principal residence, may contain only one bedroom, may not exceed 600 square feet of living space and must have common utilities. This provision will help to provide affordable housing for family members of Warren residents.

Affordable housing should not be isolated from market rate units. Its design should help maintain and enhance town character and it should not stigmatize lower income residents. Small-scale projects integrated into the existing built environment or new subdivisions should be emphasized. The Town must also adequately staff those who provide counseling, distribute income supplements and food, and plan for and monitor affordable housing programs. Expansion of the existing Housing and Public Welfare departments will be necessary. [See also the Services & Facilities Element.]

Outside pressures on market housing are likely to increase and have a direct impact on Warren, causing all housing costs to remain high and continue to escalate. These pressures will increase demands for assistance programs in an era marked by greatly diminished federal funding. The Town must focus on this trend and act in a more decisive manner.

The Town should aggressively seek grants and programs that can assist with lower interest mortgages, subsidies, and construction loans, and provide incentive and other programs that can materially add to Warren's affordable and lower income housing. However, the town also must monitor the service and education costs generated by new development and make sure that these costs- in terms of both expenditure and capacity - can be met without further tax burdens.

C. SENIOR HOUSING

Warren has a large senior population that is likely to make up an increasingly large percentage of the overall population due to relatively slow overall growth. Additional nursing homes will be needed over the next several years. The Town may wish to encourage new facilities providing group living such as congregate care and limited medical, social and other services. The strong base of nursing homes and elderly housing in Warren suggests the possibility of such facilities becoming a major local employer in the near future. In addition, the Town may wish to encourage construction of secondary or accessory units suited to older couples and individuals. This will require zoning provisions that acknowledge this need and allow this form of housing. Density provisions can allow for tightly clustered units with adjacent land kept open in recreation, conservation or agricultural uses.

Senior housing can also be a form of infill housing, using lands close to the Town center that are currently unused or where a more intense mixed use pattern is appropriate. Such locations allow easy pedestrian access to stores and civic or religious activities. In addition, accessory units to existing houses should be targeted to seniors.

⁴ Warren Zoning Ordinance, 1997. Section XXIV.

The Town must assess its compliance with handicapped requirements and where necessary develop a plan to accommodate those with special housing needs.

D. DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Housing development will probably continue to have an impact on the outlying agricultural areas of town. The Town should assess this tendency and establish policy that defines where housing should go and what performance standards it must conform to in order to protect Warren's rural character.

Generally, infill housing should be encouraged in sections of town serviced by water and sewer systems, and multi-unit complexes should certainly be required to hook up to these lines. Warren's wetlands and low-lying topography preclude the development of much of its land. In addition, certain areas have soils that are marginal for development. With these constraints in mind, the Town may eventually have to limit density in some unsewered areas, based upon the carrying capacity of the land and the resultant impacts to ground and surface water. The Town must also consider service and education costs in all development decisions.

E. HISTORIC HOUSING STOCK

Warren has a large stock of older houses, many of which are clearly historically significant. The Town through the adoption of the Downtown Revitalization Plan has begun to acknowledge the importance of these structures and actively sought their restoration. These buildings provide stability to the downtown area and help contribute to Town character. When properly restored, historic houses increase values and help stabilize the blocks where they are located. The proximity of housing to downtown commercial areas has led to the removal of houses and other older structures for parking lots. This practice should be discouraged. The Town should empower an Historic District Commission to review external changes proposed within an historic area. This review should be tailored to Warren, balancing between protection of individual's rights and protection of neighborhood character.

F. CODE ENFORCEMENT AND FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Much of older Warren has a somewhat tired appearance simply because many units need external attention. Outside surfaces are need of repair and/or paint, trim and entries are in poor condition, and yards contain derelict vehicles and junk. Minimum housing codes should be enforced and additional financial incentives developed in order to encourage upkeep and repairs. This would perhaps work best as a gradual neighborhood by neighborhood process.

G. THE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN

In 1996 Warren became one of the first communities with the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program to have a three-year plan approved for funding. The plan spanned from 1996 to 1998 and funded revitalization efforts on Water Street. Initiatives included residential and commercial rehabilitation, a small streetscape project and neighborhood tot lot and some smaller projects. In the past few year Water Street and the surrounding neighborhoods have begun a slow transformation. Through the CDBG program twenty-one residential units and 12 commercial units have been rehabilitated benefiting 27 low-moderate income persons and 4 persons that were over income. The revitalization acted as a

catalyst for change and the street began to transform.

In August of 1998 CDBG funds were used to hire a private consultant to work with the Town to develop a downtown revitalization plan. The Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee that guided this project was an inclusive group consisting of residents, business owners and town officials. The *Town of Warren Downtown Revitalization Plan* completed in April of 1999 provided the basis for Phase II of Warren's three year CDBG plan. Under this plan the Water Street Revitalization Area has been expanded to include the majority of Main Street and the entire low-mod census tract. There are 2,049 persons of low-mod income who live within the four sub-census tracts that comprise the project area. The revitalization plan includes planned improvements for physical infrastructure, housing, economic restructuring and social services. e. This plan which has been adopted by the Town as part of its comprehensive plan, provides a future vision and holistic approach to the revitalization of downtown Warren. It sites the diverse and stable residential population, the historic tradition, affordable housing, and mixed use in a traditional Main Street setting as some of the area's most important assets.

IV. POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Policy 1: Support the development of housing that is affordable to all Warren residents.

Action 1.1 Assess the stock of lower income and affordable housing units and plan for the provision of additional units well in advance of need.

Action 1.2 Promote provisions for additional housing as secondary units, duplexes and apartments in existing buildings where health, safety and environmental concerns are addressed.

Action 1.3 Revise zoning provisions to facilitate sons and daughters acquiring lots for starter housing.

Action 1.4 Determine projected needs for senior housing and provide necessary zoning and assistance (such as through application for available grants) for the conversion of existing structures and/or the construction of new senior citizen housing.

Action 1.5 Consider the formation of a non-profit housing development corporation, using the Bristol Foundation and others as examples.

Action 1.6 Target new housing to lower income needs and ensure that it is well integrated into the community in scale, massing and location.

Action 1.7 Support cooperative regional efforts to meet affordable and low-income housing needs and set policies that ensure that such owner-occupied housing is well integrated into the community in scale, massing and location.

Action 1.8 Give priority consideration to accessory units (as small units over garages,

apartments in existing buildings and as set back secondary units) when such units meet service and utility standards.

Action 1.9 Promote ownership and shared ownership of low-income and affordable units. *[Town Council, Planning Board, and Housing Director for nine above actions]*

Policy 2: Ensure that any new housing development is provided with adequate fire, water, sewage, education, and other Town services, and that service increases and extensions are affordable to the Town.

Policy 3: Bring all housing up to code, providing handicapped accessibility where needed.

Action 3.1 Link code enforcement to lower cost housing programs to ensure safe as well as affordable housing. *[Town Council, Building Inspector]*

Action 3.2 Continue to support the Warren Home Repair Program as a CDBG funded operation.

Policy 4: Encourage the creation of additional rental units in the retention and rehabilitation of older housing stock, especially units in historic districts or buildings designated as historic.

Action 4.1 Amend zoning to allow for additional units in rehabilitated historic structures. Ensure that the historic character of the building is maintained or enhanced. *[Planning Board, Town Council]*

Action 4.2 Create additional historic districts where affordable units would be facilitated. Create historic district commission *[Town Council, Planning Board]*

Policy 5: In revising zoning and subdivision regulations, incorporate innovative concepts with respect to density, flexible zoning, provision of utilities and accessory units in order to provide affordable housing and protect greenspace and promote pedestrian friendly development.

Action 5.1 Clearly evaluate all housing types permitted under zoning and subdivision regulations and allow multi-unit types after full assessment of the economic, utility and visual impacts of such structures. *[Planning Board, Town Council]*

Policy 6: Revise zoning to link uses allowed only by special use permit to clearly specified conditions.

Action 6.1 Devise conditions where special use permit development is permitted only when the developer meets explicit review standards that benefit the Town and, in exchange, may allow the developer to build additional units.

Action 6.2 Link any increase in density to higher performance standards and more stringent environmental criteria. Make any such zoning district change dependent on a full assessment of the impacts of such an action and subject to a public hearing.

[Planning Board, Town Council for two above Actions]

Policy 7: Maintain the stability of neighborhoods through land use restrictions, buffering requirements, timely road repairs, and related public works efforts.

Action 7.1 Institute a capital improvements program for all neighborhoods which covers streets, lights, utilities, neighborhood centers, parks, etc. *[Planning Board, Town Council, Warren DPW]*

Policy 8: Integrate into the landscape any new housing allowed in farm areas.

Action 8.1 Discourage standard "plat" subdivision. Encourage flexible zoning and rural development design standards in order to retain traditional land patterns; Promote design appropriate to traditional scale, massing and landscaping, through innovative zoning and design regulations. (See Natural and Cultural Resource Element as well) *[Planning Board, Town Council]*

Action 8.2 Set new performance standards for rural areas to maintain open field patterns. *[Planning Board, Town Council, Conservation Commission]*

Policy 9: Encourage owner occupancy and secondary units and define rental unit tenant rights.

Action 9.1 Investigate proven procedures in these areas and initiate local procedures appropriate to Warren. *[Housing Director, Task Force appointed for this purpose]*

Policy 10: Require dimensional and vegetative buffers between residential zones and other non-residential zones.

Action 10.1 Establish appropriate performance standards to insure visual privacy between residential and non-residential zones. *[Planning Board, Town Council]*

Policy 11: Change criteria for adjustments in zoning categories (current one drop in zone provisions) to permit targeted housing needs and to permit logical development. *[Planning Board, Town Council]*

Action 11.1 Review and revise zoning and subdivision rules to reflect Comprehensive Plan recommendations. *[Planning Board]*

Policy 12: Plan for the housing needs of the physically and mentally disabled and, if necessary, consider using incentives to ensure the provision of sufficient housing units for these segments of the population.

Action 12.1 Assess the adequacy of both the quality and quantity of existing special needs housing in Warren and determine whether or not incentives are necessary.

Action 12.2 Seek increased communication between the housing Director and the Public

Welfare Director, and estimated the number of housing units needed to serve the disabled population over the next decade and beyond.

(Housing Director, Public Welfare Director, And Planning Board for both actions)

V. Housing Element Implementation Schedule

| | ASAP | 5 yrs | 20 yrs | Responsible Parties |
|--|------|-------|--------|------------------------------|
| Policy 1: Affordable housing for all | * | | | TC, PB, Housing Director(HD) |
| <i>Action 1.1</i> Housing initiative | * | | | TC, PB, HD |
| <i>Action 1.2</i> Provision for secondary units | * | | | TC, PB, HD |
| <i>Action 1.3</i> Starter housing provision | | * | | TC, PB, HD |
| <i>Action 1.4</i> Senior housing planning | | * | | TC,PB,HD |
| <i>Action 1.5</i> Non-profit Housing Corp. | | * | | TC,PB,HD |
| <i>Action 1.6</i> Integrate new, low income housing | * | | | TC,PB,HD |
| <i>Action 1.7</i> Regional housing effort | * | | | TC,PB,HD |
| <i>Action 1.8</i> Provision for accessory units | * | | | TC,PB,HD |
| <i>Action 1.9</i> Home ownership provisions | | * | | TC,PB,HD |
| Policy 2: Service provision | * | * | | TC, Building Inspector (BI) |
| Policy 3: Code enforcement | * | | | BI |
| <i>Action 3.1</i> Linkage to affordable housing | * | | | TC,BI |
| <i>Action 3.2</i> Support Warren Home Program with CDBG | * | * | | TC,BI |
| Policy 4: Rental units/historic rehabilitation | * | | | |
| <i>Action 4.1</i> Amend zoning as needed; ensure that historic character is maintained or enhanced | * | | | TC,PB, BI |
| <i>Action 4.2</i> Create Historic District Comm. | * | | | PB,TC |
| Policy 5: Innovative zoning, etc. | | * | | PB,TC |
| <i>Action 5.1</i> Multi-unit development | | * | | PB,TC |
| Policy 6: Special Use Permit | * | | | PB,TC |
| <i>Action 6.1</i> Special Use Permit review | * | | | PB,TC |
| <i>Action 6.2</i> Performance standards | * | | | PB,TC |
| Policy 7: Neighborhood stability | * | | | TC, DPW,PB |
| <i>Action 7.1</i> Capital improvement program | | * | | TC,DPW,PB |
| Policy 8: Integrate rural housing to protect farmland | * | | | PB,TC |

WARREN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

| | | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Action 8.1</i> Institute appropriate regulations | * | | | PB,TC |
| | ASAP | 5 yrs | 20 yrs | Responsible Parties |
| <i>Action 8.2</i> Set performance standards | * | | | PB,TC |
| Policy 9: Encourage owner occupancy, secondary units;tenant rights | | * | | HD, Special Taskforce |
| <i>Action 9.1</i> Institute appropriate rules | | * | | HD, Special Taskforce |
| Policy 10: Require buffer zones | * | | | PB,TC |
| Action 10.1 Set performance standards | * | | | PB,TC |
| Policy 11: Zoning adjustments | | | | PB, TC |
| <i>Action 11.1</i> Appropriate zoning revision | | | | |
| Policy 12: Provide housing for the physically and mentally disabled | * | * | | HD, PB Public Welfare Director(PWD) |
| <i>Action 12.1</i> Assess adequacy | * | | | HD, PWD |
| <i>Action 12.2</i> Improve Communication | * | | | HD, PWD |

References and Bibliography

Census 90: Selected Population and Housing Characteristics for Rhode Island Counties, Cities and Towns, Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Planning, August, 1991.

Comprehensive Community Plan, Warren, Rhode Island, Warren Planning Board, Rhode Island Development Council, December, 1966.