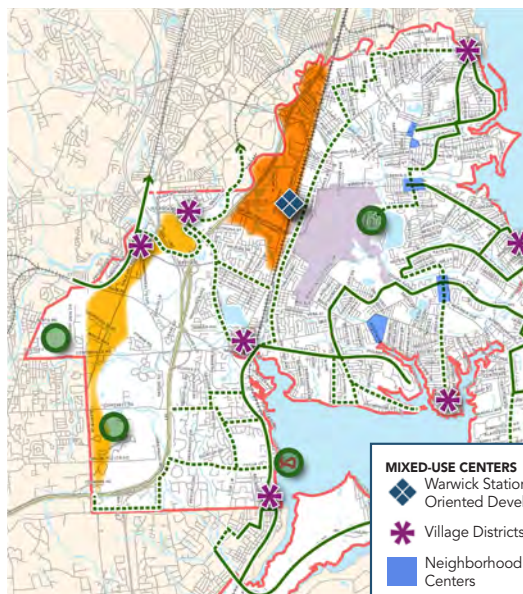


# PART I SETTING THE STAGE

*“A connected, sustainable, and prosperous coastal city of livable neighborhoods and walkable villages.... We are strengthening our city and community to meet the needs of current and new generations of Warwick residents.”—FROM THE VISION*

*“If we invest in the city, the city will give back.”—WARWICK RESIDENT*

## Our Vision for 21st-Century Warwick



- The **City Centre Warwick** as a vibrant live-work-play growth hub with mixed-use, transit-oriented development
- **Village and neighborhood centers** combining housing and shops in walkable environments
- **An Innovation District** for 21st-century business and advanced manufacturing
- **Design and esthetic improvements** to keep our regional retail corridor attractive and improve our neighborhood retail centers
- More safe and convenient ways to **walk and bike around the city**
- **Preservation, protection, and enhancement** of our open space, environmental resources, waterfront, and coastal waters for today and future generations.

**MIXED-USE CENTERS**  
♦ Warwick Station Transit-Oriented Development  
\* Village Districts  
■ Neighborhood Activity Centers

**CORRIDORS**  
■ Bald Hill Enhancement Corridor  
■ Technology/Industry Innovation Corridor  
**OPEN SPACE**  
● Enhanced Public Open Space

**CONNECTIVITY AND GREEN CORRIDORS**  
— Existing Bicycle Routes  
- - - Conceptual Pedestrian/Bicycle Network

## From Warwick Today to Warwick Tomorrow

- **Baby Boomers to Millennials:** With population declining, we need to offer the jobs, housing, and amenities—connections, community, diversity—that new generations want.
- **Greenfield development to redevelopment:** Warwick is a mature suburban city with little undeveloped land. Redevelopment is the city's future.
- **Everybody wants more connections:** Better conditions and routes for walking and biking, more transit options, less traffic congestion.
- **Our coastline makes Warwick a hidden gem:** But we need to take care of the parks, ponds, marshes, beaches, and coastal waters that can draw new generations to our city.
- **Climate change is happening:** Sea level rise and more extreme storms mean Warwick needs to start thinking about resilience now.





# 21st Century Warwick: City of Livable Neighborhoods



This is the City of Warwick’s first full update of its comprehensive plan in twenty years. It comes as the city, the state and the nation are slowly recovering from a period of severe economic difficulty. More than previous plans, this plan is based on a substantial community engagement process that was designed to find out what Warwick residents, business people, and other stakeholders were thinking about the future of the city. What makes Warwick a good place to live and do business? What characteristics of Warwick should we keep, enhance, and protect? What needs improvement and how can we make needed changes? How should we allocate our resources in maintaining and improving quality of life and prosperity for the city?

Warwick has changed significantly through its long history. In the post-World War II era, most of the city’s remaining farms became suburban subdivisions; the resort communities became year-round neighborhoods; traditional village centers lost importance to strip shopping centers; a new, auto-dependent regional retail center emerged with the interstate system; and T.F. Green Airport expanded to serve the region. Today, Warwick is a mature suburban community. The broad transformations of the 20th century are behind it, along with the simple methods of development—subdivide “greenfield” parcels and build single family homes—that made it possible.

Warwick’s 21st century challenges require different and more nuanced approaches. The suburban values of neighborhood, relatively low densities, quiet, safety, convenience, and access to open space and the waterfront retain very strong appeal to Warwick citizens. At the same time, some of the traditional suburban characteristics are no longer working as well as they did decades ago, while dramatic expansion of the airport has introduced new burdens on the community. Faded commercial strip development, almost complete dependence on car travel and associated traffic congestion, the big box and mall development model in a changing retail

environment, and neighborhoods battered by the Great Recession of 2007-2009; these are all challenges that require new and more complex solutions.

How will Warwick be competitive as a place to live, work, and do business in the 21st century? Like many older suburban communities, Warwick needs to evaluate its future in the context of the changing preferences of the Millennial generation born in the 1990s and now reaching adulthood. This comprehensive plan is for them as much as it is for the citizens who helped created it—they will be its heirs, and their preferences and interests will shape Warwick in the next 20 years. The Millennial generation is:

- Bigger than the Baby Boom generation
- Native to the digital world
- The most educated generation ever
- The most racially and ethnically diverse generation ever
- More likely to want to live in central cities than Baby Boomers and Gen X
- More likely to prefer car-free lifestyles

For economic and other reasons, Millennials are forming households and having children later in life, are more likely to rent rather than own a house, and are attracted to pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use environments that are more urban in style, even if located in suburban locations. Warwick has many assets that can be appealing to this generation, including significant access to the waterfront and to nature recreation as well as traditional sports, the potential for walkable village centers and mixed use environments to replace the old strip commercial centers, and multi-modal transit options afforded by the Interlink and its surrounding City Centre Warwick. Although most participants in the planning process were older than the Millennials, they were also aware of the need to update Warwick for the new century.



## Our Vision for 2033

Vision statements focus attention on a community's values, sense of identity, and aspirations. They identify what citizens want to preserve and what they want to change, and articulate their desires and hopes for the future. This vision statement for Warwick provides a guiding image for the city as it faces choices and challenges over the next twenty years.

*Twenty-first century Warwick is a connected, sustainable, and prosperous coastal city of livable neighborhoods and walkable villages—a community that honors and preserves the best from its past, protects and enhances its environment of water and land, provides varied housing opportunities for people across the age and income scale, and supports an increasingly diversified economy. We are strengthening our city and our community to meet the needs of current and new generations of Warwick residents, within the context of our traditions, history, and maritime heritage.*

- Our village centers are pedestrian friendly and mixed use, include new housing opportunities, and serve neighborhoods with attractive retail and services. They add new living options to our traditional suburban neighborhoods of single family homes.
- City Centre Warwick is a vibrant live-work-play growth hub with mixed-use, transit-oriented development.
- We have invested in transportation improvements and amenities to make Apponaug Village into the city's center of civic life, anchored by city hall, the Warwick Museum, a new community gathering place, and celebration of our connection to the water at Apponaug Cove and through the daylighting of Hardig Brook.
- We are protecting and enhancing the overall quality of life in all the city's neighborhoods; continuing to be vigilant in monitoring noise, air, and water quality around the airport; and providing methods to remediate minimum housing violations and reconcile derelict properties.
- We are connecting neighborhoods, parks, schools, village centers, ponds and coastline to one another by greenways, pedestrian links, and bicycle routes, in order to create more transportation choice to get around the city.
- We are committed to a diversity in land use that promotes a strong, stable tax base, including preserving industrially zoned land for non-retail uses.

- We are investing to keep our regional retail destinations competitive, to modernize and transform our neighborhood commercial districts, to make the intermodal development district a new city center and hub of economic growth, and to attract new opportunities, such as advanced manufacturing.
- We are committed to preserving and enhancing the city's open space, recreation and water resources, improving the utility of these properties for the community while promoting economic development and public-private partnerships that provide revenue for ongoing maintenance and infrastructure improvements.
- We are making more sustainable choices about how we manage the impacts of development on our streams, ponds, wetlands, and coastal waters because we understand how our actions on land affect water quality and flooding. We are implementing a coordinated program to manage stormwater, impervious surfaces, wastewater, and landscape practices so that all our waters will once again be clean for fish and shellfish, for recreation, and for commercial purposes. Warwick's coastal waterfront is one of our most precious assets, but we know we must plan for the likelihood of sea level rise in this century.

*Twenty-first century Warwick combines the best of traditional suburban life with the amenities of village centers, affordable access to the coast, convenience to travel hubs, and a forward-thinking community.*



# A THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IN WARWICK

## Rhode Island State Requirements and Planning Goals.

The Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act (Chapter 45-22.2) requires municipalities to create comprehensive plans that conform to the provisions of the Act. The Act was amended in 2011 to extend the planning horizon and modify requirements.

The Act provides a context for municipal comprehensive plans through a set of overarching planning goals for the entire state. Municipal plans must be consistent with these goals:

- Promote orderly growth and development that recognizes the natural characteristics of the land, its suitability for use and the availability of existing and proposed public and/or private facilities.
- Promote an economic climate which increases quality job opportunities and the overall economic well being of each municipality and the state.
- Promote a balance of housing choices, for all income levels and age groups, which recognizes the affordability of housing as the responsibility of each municipality and the state.
- Promote the protection of the natural, historic and cultural resources of each municipality and the state.
- Promote the preservation of the open space and recreational resources of each municipality and the state.
- Encourage the use of innovative development regulations and techniques that promote development of land suitable for development while protecting our natural, cultural, historical, and recreational resources and achieving a balanced pattern of land uses.
- Promote consistency of state actions and programs with municipal comprehensive plans and provide for review procedures to ensure that state goals and policies are reflected in municipal comprehensive plans and state guide plans.

### 2011 NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR RHODE ISLAND

20 year planning horizon
Updates required once every 10 years.
Updates to extend the 20 year planning horizon and replace the existing plan.
State approval lasts 10 years
Changes to contents: existing conditions maps in addition to future land use map and illustration of differences between existing zoning and future land use; eight topical areas rather than six.
Flexibility on how the plans are organized and presented.
Additional areas to be considered: energy production and consumption; natural hazards such as flooding and sea-level rise.

- Ensure adequate uniform data are available to municipal and state government as a basis for comprehensive planning and land use regulation.
- Ensure that municipal land use regulations and decisions are consistent with the comprehensive plan of the municipality and to insure state land use regulations and decisions are consistent with state guide plans.
- Encourage the involvement of all citizens in the formulation, review and adoption of the comprehensive plan.

### Warwick's most recent state-approved plan and

**partial update.** The last full Comprehensive Plan for the City of Warwick was prepared in 1990 and approved in 1992, with a minor update and approval by Statewide Planning in 2002.



## B HOW THE PLAN IS ORGANIZED

The Warwick Comprehensive Plan includes an Executive Summary and covers a broad range of topics in 13 chapters about current trends, the planning process, all aspects of community life that affect the way our city can develop in the future, and implementation actions. The chapters are organized into six Parts, each of which start with a summary of the contents of each Part. The plan can be read all the way through or selectively, according to the reader's interests. Citizens, government agencies, businesses, nonprofit institutions and others can choose specific topics relevant to their activities.

- For a quick overview of key themes, major recommendations, and the process to create the plan: read the Executive Summary.
- To understand the aspirations for the future and community values that are the foundation of the plan: read Chapters 1–2. These chapters are based on an extensive community participation process and designed to answer the question: What kind of place do we want to be in the 21st century? They provide the vision for the future, overall goals and guiding principles for planning, and a description of the public process.
- To understand the starting point for the comprehensive plan and how we got here, read Chapter 3. It lays out the key existing conditions and circumstances of the city when the plan was developed in 2011–2012.
- To find out about specific topics, from natural resources to housing to economic development and infrastructure, choose the topics of interest to you from Chapters 4–11. Each chapter provides a table of goals and policies, findings and challenges, and a set of recommended strategies and actions to achieve the goal.

- To find out about recommended changes in land use, and principles for new zoning and urban design approaches, read Chapter 12.
- To find out about how to make this a living plan and how to implement it, read Chapter 13. There you will find a matrix of actions, responsible parties, timelines, and potential resources for Chapters 4–11.

## C OUR 21ST CENTURY PRIORITIES

### 1. Issues facing the city

At the time of writing this comprehensive plan, Warwick, like the rest of Rhode Island, has been suffering from the impacts of the Great Recession and is slowly beginning to improve. While these conditions—unemployment, foreclosures, vacancies—must be addressed, they are only one aspect of the challenges facing the city in the long term.

- **Connectivity.** Warwick has poor connectivity along its major roadways, east-west and north-south, resulting from a variety of circumstances: location of the airport; rail and interstate highway; legacy roadway systems that have exceeded the roadways' design capacity; subdivision layouts; lack of sufficient pedestrian and bicycle connections and networks; and the alignment of the coastline and streams. As a result, a number of locations experience traffic congestion, many trips require travel on a limited number of arterials, and walking and biking conditions and routes are poor. Warwick's WalkScore® is 43 out of a possible 100 points, earning it the qualifier "car-dependent."<sup>1</sup>
- **Securing and maintaining public waterfront access.** Warwick residents see the city's 39 miles of coastline and its rivers and ponds as among its most important positive attributes. Making sure that all residents have an opportunity to enjoy the waterfront and the water is a very high priority.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.walkscore.com/RI/Warwick>



- **Improving access and opportunities afforded by the city's substantial open space and recreation resources.** Warwick residents value the variety and quality of open space available in this city. Improving passive and/or active and community use of the Rocky Point property will enhance the overall use and enjoyment of these public investments.
- **Maintaining neighborhood quality.** The collapse of the housing bubble in the Great Recession and resulting foreclosures have underscored the importance of code enforcement and high maintenance standards for amenities and services.
- **Protecting the community from adverse noise, air and water quality impacts.** Warwick's largest single land use is the state airport whose operations impact our environment and disturb residents. With the memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Rhode Island Airport Corporation (RIAC) the City remains committed to working with the airport operator, legislature, RIDEM and Statewide Planning to monitor, mitigate and curb growth of these adverse impacts.
- **Providing high quality, diverse housing types for households at all income levels.** Although Warwick will continue to be a city of predominantly single-family neighborhoods, the city needs to think about where and how to provide high quality housing to meet the needs of an aging population, for all income levels, as well as the preferences and needs of coming generations.
- **Maintaining a diversity of land use that promotes a strong stable tax base.** Development pressure exists to construct new traditional retail uses on non-commercially zoned property. This threatens the preservation of industrially-zoned properties that provide an equilibrium in the City's land use diversity. The City promotes the reuse of existing commercially zoned properties rather than rezoning new industrial zoned properties to a typical box or strip commercial development that would expand its land use and traffic impacts onto the surroundings community. The City does understand that in certain cases limited commercial development and mixed use development may be acceptable as part of a larger overarching plan such as implementing the goals and objectives of the

City Centre Warwick Master Plan which is a functional element of this Plan.

- **Improving the appearance, character, and function of commercial districts.** Warwick's traditional commercial districts—from the big box and mall district of Route 2 to the numerous commercial strips on arterial streets—need to reduce their ecological footprint while evolving to align with retailing changes in the 21st century.
- **Reviving and promoting village environments.** This is already underway with the new village district zoning option and Apponaug Circulator transportation project. These mixed use environments can attract new households looking for walkable environments.
- **Making the most of the City Centre Warwick.** Investments in multimodal transportation improvements and access, a new theater looking to serve the entire state, and a planning framework for new development have positioned this area for growth.
- **Sustainability, including protecting environmental and water resources and preparing for the potential impacts of climate change.** One of Warwick's greatest assets—its water resources—can also be a hazard.

## 2. Priority initiatives

In the next twenty years, the City of Warwick will work to preserve and enhance quality of life for its residents and build the city's economic competitiveness. The agenda for the next two decades includes the creation of more mixed-use walkable environments in the city, investments in economic development opportunities, neighborhood quality of life projects, investments in infrastructure, stronger environmental protections, and expanded initiatives to enhance sustainability and resilience.

### Economic development initiatives include:

- **Make City Centre Warwick a new city center of growth and economic development.** Promote mixed-use, transit-oriented development, make improvements to the public realm, and advocate for more frequent commuter rail service



- **Create the Warwick Innovation District.** Revitalize and refresh the city's economic base by creating the Warwick Innovation District to attract technology, advanced manufacturing, and office development with appropriate zoning and economic development initiatives.
- **Maintain the city's role as a regional retail center.** Establish the Bald Hill Enhancement Corridor Design Overlay District to bring improvements in design and function, so that this important tax base for the city continues to be competitive.

#### Neighborhood development initiatives include:

- **Make historic village centers into hubs of walkability, amenities, events, and mixed use development.** Continue Apponaug Village improvements and establish Village District zoning in additional historic villages.
- **Promote walkable Neighborhood Activity Centers.** Establish zoning to incentivize mixed-use redevelopment of neighborhood shopping areas at major intersections

#### Open space and environmental initiatives include:

- **Promote compact development options to preserve open space.** Establish the option of conservation subdivision design for the few large open space parcels that remain available for residential development.
- **Enhance connectivity throughout the city.** Connect neighborhoods to parks, schools, villages, shopping areas, and other city destinations by "green corridors" of designated routes for walking and bicycling.
- **Continue efforts to include a signature public open space at Rocky Point and enhance other open space areas.** Pursue funding to enhance places like Chepiwanoxet and Barton Farm.
- **Intensify efforts to make Warwick a "green" community.** Plant more trees, protect and enhance Warwick's streams, ponds, and coastal waters by implementing measures to reduce nonpoint source

pollution, make the city energy- and resource-efficient, and work on climate change resilience with the state.

- **Monitor airport impacts and agreements.** Continue to work with the Rhode Island Airport Corporation to mitigate the environmental and other impacts of T.F. Green Airport, and monitor implementation of previous agreements.

Priority implementation actions for the next five years (2013-2018) include a set of activities designed to advance achievement of the broader, long-term initiatives above:

- **Economic development:**

- City Centre Warwick: development of a design manual for public and private improvements
- Route 2/Bald Hill Corridor Plan: transportation and land use plan including access management and design guidelines
- Warwick Innovation District: Public improvements and urban design plan for the Warwick Innovation District

- **New and amended zoning for mixed use areas identified on the future land use plan:**

- Define different types of mixed use and then rezone for mixed use
- Expanded Village District at Apponaug
- Village Districts at Pawtuxet, East Natick, Oakland Beach and adjacent to East Greenwich Main Street

- **Airport land use:**

- Systematic approach to land use issues and communications

- **Housing:**

- Ordinance for rental registration and inspection
- Code enforcement improvements

- **Infrastructure:**

- Water and wastewater system investments as identified in their facilities/operating plans





- **Environment, sustainability and resilience:**

- Work with the state to get inclusion of natural recreational and community meeting space at Rocky Point
- 2015 update to hazard mitigation plan
- Create a local climate change committee to work with state committee
- Completion of update to the Harbor Management Plan

- **Comprehensive Plan regular reports and decision support systems:**

- GIS system and training
- Annual review to evaluate progress on comprehensive plan
- Inclusion of comprehensive plan in department and capital planning



## The Community Speaks

FROM A WARWICK RESIDENT

*“We need a vigorous campaign to encourage ‘Warwickians’ to learn to value what they have in this unique community and to take steps to enhance these wonderful qualities.”*



# A

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

The planning process for this Comprehensive Plan included an extensive process of community engagement including:

- A project website, [www.warwickcompplan.com](http://www.warwickcompplan.com)



- A web-based survey with 691 responses.
- Nine “communities of place” meetings in each of the nine City Council wards, as a way to hear from residents about the issues specific to different neighborhoods and locations around the city.
- Two “communities of interest” meetings—one on the environment, parks, and open space and another on transportation issues.
- A presentation to the Rotary Club and an economic development focus group.
- Numerous interviews with city staff and with citizens representing diverse interests.
- An Advisory Committee made up of members of boards and commissions and other stakeholders met 8 times throughout the update.
- Two open house meetings and two Planning Board public workshops to elicit feedback on the draft plan.

# B

## PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

Like the residents of many older suburbs that are nearly built-out, the respondents to the Warwick survey worry about the potential impacts of additional development and are most interested in preserving remaining natural areas. They want to preserve and improve neighborhood quality of life and are interested in seeing more walkable, Main Street-style, small commercial districts, in contrast to the unattractive, dated strip commercial development that is common on many of Warwick’s arterial roads.

The public opinion survey was web-based, meaning that it was not a scientific survey and the respondent group was self-selected. However, the number of respondents was quite high at 691. The respondent group was significantly skewed towards, older, long-time residents of the city:

- 67% over 45 years old (compared to 48% of the city’s population)
- 88% owner-occupants (74% of the households in the city)
- 89% in single family homes (72% of the city’s housing units)
- 53% female (52% female in the city as a whole)
- 60% have lived in Warwick 21 years or more.

All of the questions were multiple choice, with the exception of two simple free-answer questions on the best and worst things about Warwick. (The survey questions and complete responses can be found in the Appendix.)

When respondents were asked about the importance to the future of Warwick of a number of issues, the top five issues with at least 60% answering “very important” were:

- improving neighborhood quality of life
- job growth within the city
- the level of taxes
- improving public education
- improving the appearance of major roads and commercial corridors.

Respondents found Warwick a good, but not yet excellent, place to live and to raise children, an average place to retire, and an average to good place to work or visit. While 58% of respondents said that their neighborhoods are staying about the same, another 28% saw their neighborhoods as getting worse.

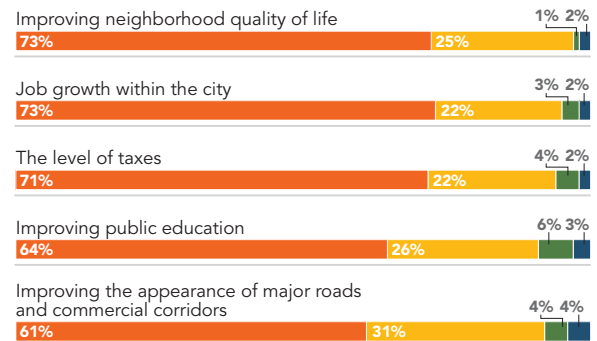
When asked to identify three of the most desirable characteristics or amenities in their neighborhood, nearly two-thirds of respondents included “location and conveniences to goods, services, and shopping,” and half of respondents included “low crime rate.” Other characteristics with strong support included “parks, recreation and open space,” “good schools,” and “sense of community.”

Similarly, in response to the question “What are the biggest issues facing your residential neighborhood?” with the possibility of choosing three items, nearly half of respondents included foreclosed properties and code enforcement issues. Other issues named with less frequency included lack of affordable housing, lack of historic preservation protections, and absentee landlords (which is linked to the code enforcement issues).

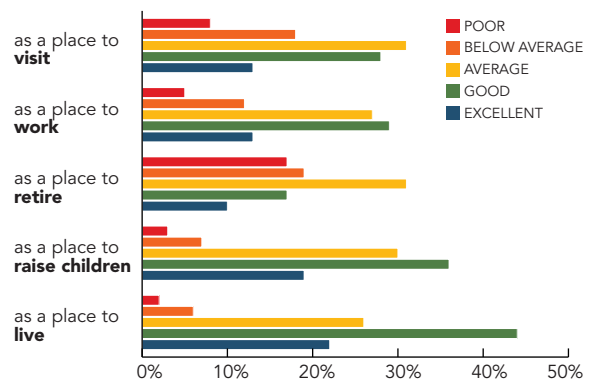
When asked about their attitudes toward development, most of the respondents were not very enthusiastic about development in or near their own neighborhoods, but like the idea of development at City Centre Warwick. The majority generally accept the idea that government incentives and public investments to promote develop-

### How important are these issues...?

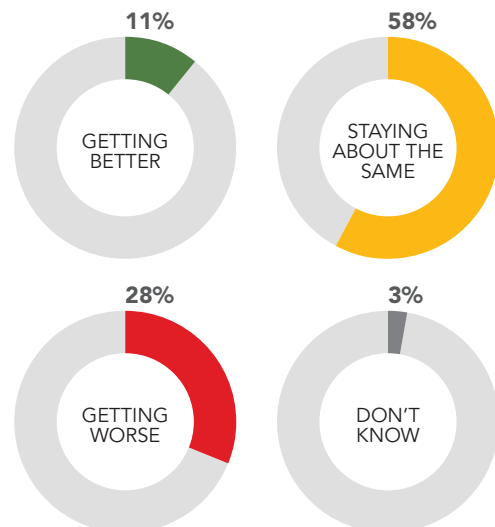
VERY IMPORTANT SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT NOT SURE NOT IMPORTANT



### How is Warwick as...



### Do you generally think the condition of your neighborhood is getting better, staying about the same, or getting worse?





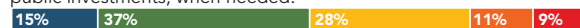
ment can be legitimate and would like to see new developments be walkable and connected by bike. Consistent with these results, a majority of respondents believe that the city needs more natural areas and wildlife habitat; small village, Main Street style development; and recreational areas—but not more residential, commercial or industrial land uses.

### What is your opinion about development (new or redeveloped residential, commercial, or industrial areas) in Warwick now and in the future?

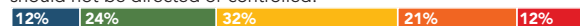
I would like to see development in or near my neighborhood.



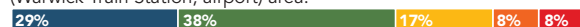
The city and state should promote development with incentives and public investments, when needed.



Development is the result of market and personal choices and should not be directed or controlled.



Development should be promoted around the intermodal facility (Warwick Train Station, airport) area.



New development should make provisions for pedestrian and bicycle connections.



Development is OK, but I prefer it not to come to my neighborhood.



■ STRONGLY AGREE ■ AGREE ■ NEUTRAL  
 ■ DISAGREE ■ STRONGLY DISAGREE

In the free-answer questions, respondents repeatedly used the following words and phrases to identify what is best about Warwick: convenient to transportation and shopping, proximity to water, suburban, good neighborhoods, quiet, parks and nature, safe, good services (especially trash removal), good schools, the people. These remarks could be summed up by one respondent's valuing of Warwick as a "somewhat urban suburb." Respondents' dislikes about Warwick focused around high taxes and utility rates, traffic congestion and lack of transportation choice, maintenance of public spaces, poor enforcement of property standards for private property, unattractive and dysfunctional commercial areas, airport impacts, and disappointment with school quality.

The overall directions indicated by the survey responses are:

- Need for more focus on maintenance of the public realm (streets, parks, waterfront areas, etc.)
- Need for more enforcement of property standards for private property in neighborhoods
- Desire for village-style, pedestrian-friendly commercial areas
- Need for improved traffic management, such as signal timing and innovative intersection systems, pedestrian activated lights, and so on.
- Need to maintain and preserve neighborhoods
- Desire for better design standards and aesthetics in much of the city

The survey also asked more specific questions about topics such as open space and transportation. The survey results for these topics can be found in the relevant chapters of the plan.

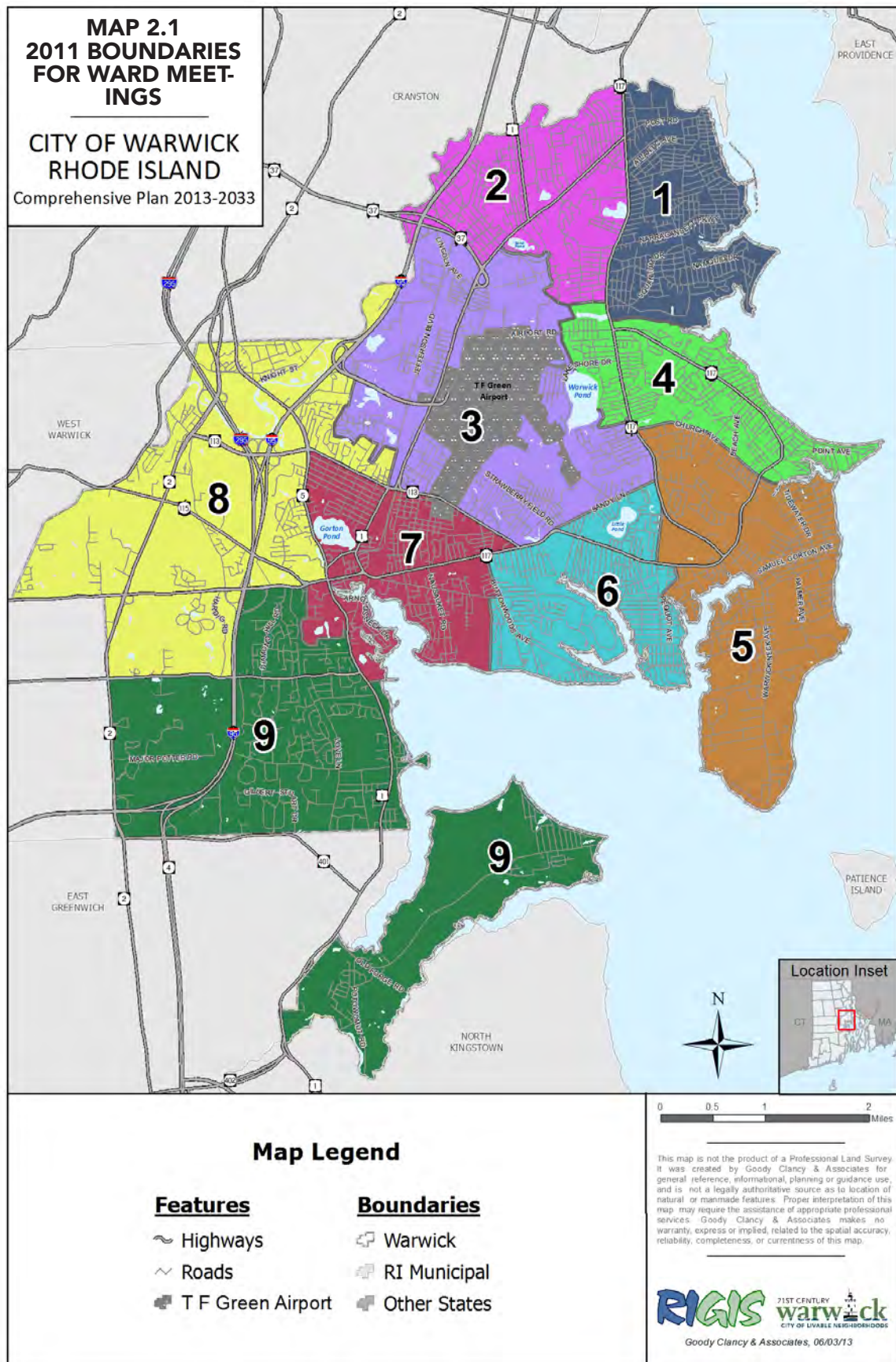


## COMMUNITIES OF PLACE MEETINGS

Between May and July 2011, meetings were held in each of the nine City Council Wards. Attendance varied, ranging from 5 to 25 attendees, with total attendance at 125 people. Each meeting included a brief presentation, individual and small group exercises facilitated by the planning team, and then reports back to the group as a whole. The presentations highlighted current conditions within each Ward, including comparisons to the city as a whole. All presentations and results summaries were posted to the project website.

The majority of meeting time was dedicated to small group discussion. Participants began by filling out a form describing what they believed to be the top assets (What do you like best?) and top improvements needed (What would you like to change?) within their area of the city for each of the topics below.







- Housing and Neighborhoods
- Commercial Areas
- Transportation, Infrastructure, Public Services
- Parks, Open Spaces and the Environment

Group discussions followed on each topic, with each table provided with a large aerial photo of the ward. Participants were asked to identify the specific issues and opportunities in their wards, the best and worst things in their wards, and the top improvements needs. At the end of the meeting, each small group shared the results of their discussions.

In general, feedback was quite consistent from Ward to Ward. Common themes included:

## Top Assets

### Housing and Neighborhoods

- Housing is affordable, even near the water, compared to other places in the region
- Sense of community
  - Good neighborhoods and neighbors
  - Local neighborhood organizations (i.e., Conimicut, Pontiac)
- Village Zoning is a good idea
- Neighborhood stability (many long-time residents)

### Commercial Areas

- Easy access to shopping
  - Route 2
  - Local shops and restaurants (but want more)
  - “Warwick has everything”





- Marine businesses
- Up-and-coming village areas (Conimicut)
- Proximity to medical offices

#### **Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Services**

- Warwick is convenient to I-95, the airport, and now commuter rail.
- Roads are well maintained. (See Top Improvements needed.)
- Good schools
- Responsive government services (See Top Improvements needed.)

#### **Parks, Open Space and the Environment**

- Proximity to the water “is the best thing about Warwick”
- Park system is excellent for a city this size.
- Many opportunities for more open space and recreation
  - Pawtuxet River path
  - Greenwich Bay access

### **TOP ISSUES AND IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

#### **Housing and Neighborhoods**

- Enhanced enforcement of minimum housing laws—code enforcement, litter and dumping, property standards
- More protection of neighborhood character and preservation of historic housing stock (i.e. Pontiac Village)
- More neighborhood village areas
- Improved management of foreclosures and their impact
- Improved management of rental property by some Absentee landlords

#### **Commercial Areas**

- Nicer commercial areas; existing areas are tired and unattractive.
- Improved pedestrian environment/access in commercial areas

- More parking in village areas (Conimicut specifically)
- Fill vacant storefronts
  - Attraction and retention of small businesses (in villages in particular)
    - Retention of marine industries, particularly shellfish
  - Desire for more restaurants often mentioned

#### **Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Services**

- Traffic congestion, particularly on east/west routes
- Airport noise and takings concerns
- Better road maintenance
- More transportation alternatives within Warwick, possibly through transit
- More neighborhood traffic calming and controls
- Bike or multi-use paths lacking. Would like to see more.
- Sewer hookups an issue
- Reuse options for closed schools

#### **Parks, Open Space and the Environment**

- Stormwater management
- Greenwich Bay water quality
- Improved park/recreation maintenance and programming
- Access to the water (Greenwich Bay and Pawtuxet River)
- Soil contamination (near Pawtuxet River)
- Improved water quality—Buckeye Brook (from airport contaminants)
- Need a plan for Rocky Point

### **BEST THING ABOUT LIVING IN WARWICK**

- Good neighborhoods and people
- Small village feel
- Very livable
- Proximity to water
- Convenient shopping



## WORST THING ABOUT LIVING IN WARWICK

- Airport noise and uncertainty over takings
- Traffic congestion
- Hurricane fears—flooding

## COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST MEETINGS

Two topical public meetings were held in September and October 2011, one on *Green Systems and the Environment*, the other on *Transportation and Circulation*. At each meeting, the consultant team provided a presentation highlighting current conditions on the topic, which were later posted to the project website. The majority of meeting time was dedicated to small group discussion where attendees discussed the biggest issues and potential improvements for several categories related to the topic.

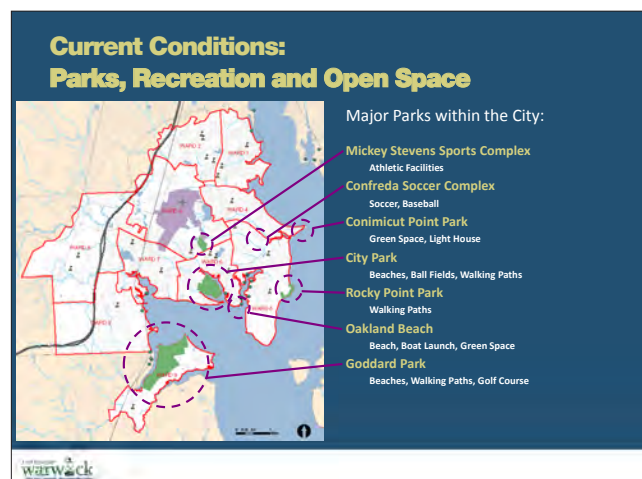
In addition to these two meetings, the economic development specialist on the consultant team, Peter Kwass of Mt. Auburn Associates, was invited to give an economic development presentation to the Rotary Club as an initial step to engage the business community in the planning process. Interviews and a focus group provided additional economic development input.

## 1. Green and Environmental Systems Meeting

### TOP ISSUES AND IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

#### Parks and Recreational Facilities

- Improve balance between active and passive open space. Currently, mostly active.
- Need for additional parks.
  - Acquire tax title lots for additional green space/conservation land
  - Need to map existing recreational spaces in each Ward to see if facilities are equitably distributed.



- Better utilize existing facilities
  - Dawley Farm needs parking to allow trail access
  - Chepiwanoxet needs improved parking and trails
- Improve neighborhood connections to parks (side-walks, multi-use paths)
- Improved maintenance and programming at current facilities
- Residents/Neighborhood organization stewardship for maintenance of local parks/beaches should be explored.

#### Bicycle Paths and Walking Trails

- Link parks and open space by bike/multi-use paths
- Bike network needs improvements
- Include bike lanes in new roadway projects

### **River and Coastal Flooding**

- Protect and restore wetlands to help with flood water retention
- Prevent development on undersized lots near water

### **Water/Air Quality**

- Airport contaminants
- Public education programs/outreach needed re: homeowner impacts on watershed
- Health of Greenwich Bay is paramount to the city
  - Protect and restore shellfish
- Need for waste water management districts for areas not sewered
- Plant new trees—environmental benefits including air pollution mitigation

### **Climate Change**

- New building codes that anticipate rising water
- Better protect wetlands
- Identify new strategies to address anticipated changes, including potential for more and stronger storm events
  - Plantings, increased culvert sizes, etc.

### **Coastal and River Access**

- Ensure all public rights of way remain public. Need to identify all.
- Identify additional access to areas along coast and Pawtuxet River

### **Other**

- City needs an “Environmental Coordinator”

## **2. Transportation and Circulation Meeting**

### **TOP ISSUES AND IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

#### **Roadway Conditions and Congestion**

- East/west congestion
- Public safety—Traffic calming in neighborhoods needed
- Improve problem intersections

#### **Infrastructure for New Developments**

- Too many curb cuts allowed for businesses. Currently, each one gets two.
- Encourage consolidated driveways in new residential developments
- Apponaug Circulator—needs to get done

#### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities**

- Connect neighborhoods and community destinations with bike and pedestrian paths/routes
- More bike paths, lanes, and routes needed throughout the City

#### **Public Transportation**

- Potential ferry service to Rocky Point
- Replace bus fleet with CNG/electric vehicles
- More service within Warwick
- Increase commuter rail frequency

#### **The Airport / Station Area**

- Limit parking to promote transit-oriented development
- Work to get an Amtrak station at the Interlink

#### **Other**

- Identify locations for electric car charging stations (Rte 2 perhaps)
- Explore and identify a pilot area to implement a variety of connectivity and alternative transportation options.





## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

### NOVEMBER 2012 OPEN HOUSE

On November 15, 2012, from 5 pm to 8 pm, a public Open House was held at the Buttonwoods Community Center. This was a drop-in event that allowed attendees to come at any time during the open house and spend as much or as little time as they wished. Members of the consultant team and Warwick planning staff were available for informal discussion. The purpose of the Open House was to seek comment on and guidance for priorities developed as goals, policies, and strategies for the initial drafts of the Comprehensive Plan. These initial drafts were developed in collaboration with the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee and Warwick staff. Attendees at the Open House received handouts including an overview of the project, FAQ (frequently asked questions), a sheet explaining how to comment through a dot exercise, and a draft vision statement comment sheet. A PowerPoint presentation on a loop with results of the Comprehensive Plan web survey was available for viewing in one part of the room.

**Topics examined.** Exhibit boards and maps were stationed around the room by topic. The four topics were Green Systems-Natural Resources, Parks and Open Space, Resilience and Sustainability; Housing and Neighborhoods; Economic Development; and City Systems-Transportation and Facilities. Each topic was represented by maps and by three informational boards: draft goals; draft strategies; and “your suggestions,” a blank board where participants could affix post-it notes with additional suggestions.

**Identifying priorities.** Participants were given 8 green dots and 8 yellow dots. The green dots were for items important to the city as a whole and the yellow dots were for items important to the participant personally. The purpose of providing a limited number of dots was to encourage the participants to think about which items were most important or highest priority. Dots could be distributed in any way the participant desired: all on

one item, spread among different topics, and on goals, strategies, or both.

The Warwick Comprehensive Plan under development is based on an extensive process of community engagement including participation through the web, meetings in each of the city council wards, topic-based meetings, and, most recently, an open house meeting to elicit feedback on elements of draft plan and identify the community’s priorities. The results of this meeting show that the proposed goals and strategies that resonate most with participants as priorities for the city and for their lives are:

- Ensuring that the Airport Corporation fulfills its obligations to the City, especially in terms of environmental impacts
- Phasing out of cesspools and requiring sewer connections
- Working with the state to implement open space use at Rocky Point
- Providing more pedestrian and bicycle routes to connect town destinations
- Making village centers into hubs of walkability, amenities, events, and mixed use development
- Protecting environmental resources and supporting the city’s park and recreation network, while pursuing cost efficiencies and new financing sources
- Providing supports for senior citizens to age in place
- Improving the business environment and responsiveness to business concerns
- Preserving access to the coast and the city’s shellfish industry

In contrast, the goals and strategies that attracted very little attention were those related to affordable housing and to resilience in relation to flood hazards, climate change, and sea-level rise. Because of the decline in housing prices and increase in foreclosures that the city and the state have experienced in recent years, affordable housing needs tend not to be at the forefront of resident concerns. Similarly, despite the 2010 flood, the concept

of resilience and the expected consequences of climate change are relatively new ideas to many residents.

## JUNE 2013 OPEN HOUSE AND LIBRARY DISPLAY

On June 6, 2013, from 5 pm to 8 pm, a public open house was held at the Buttonwoods Community Center to present the concepts in the Draft Comprehensive Plan and seek comments from Warwick residents. Materials at the open house included a set of maps on display boards and six display boards with key issues, goals and strategies from the plan and handouts included a draft Executive Summary in the form of a mini-poster and a short questionnaire asking for feedback on key strategies. The six boards were organized around the topics: The Big Picture, City of Neighborhoods-Innovation-Sustainability, Natural and Cultural Resources, Livable Neighborhoods, Prosperous City, and Sustainable Systems.

As this was a weekday evening of exceptional spring weather, the decision was made to display the set of Comprehensive Plan boards from the open house in the Warwick Public Library for a week along with the draft executive summaries and the question sheets, in order to get additional feedback from the public.

While fewer than 20 people attended the open house, those who came were positive in their comments and in some cases took additional copies of the draft Executive Summary to share with friends and neighbors. The questionnaire asked for feedback on key strategies, with the options of checking Yes, No, Maybe or Don't Know and providing further comment. A total of 17 comment sheets, from both the open house and the library display, were filled out. The comments on these sheets were generally consistent with the public opinion received throughout the planning process. In general, those who filled out the questionnaire were positive about the ten key strategies identified. Almost unanimous support was found for promoting village districts, improving sidewalks and providing better walking and biking conditions and routes, and preservation of open space. The strategies related to redevelopment of parts of the city, though still supported, received a somewhat more

ambivalent reaction because people want to have more confidence about what any changes would really be like. A few commenters voiced concerns about property-owners' rights and preserving suburban character. The questions and representative comments are below:

### 1. Do you support giving a high priority to making the Warwick Station area a live-work-play district as a center of transit-oriented development, including city investment in improvement?

*Comments:*

- "Great idea!"
- "This could be a great success, but beware—it could turn into another Route 2."
- "The old Leviton complex is very important. This property could be the hub of changeovers."
- "Depends upon what it would include."
- "Seems logical."

### 2. Should the City promote walkable, mixed-use development through establishment of Village Districts (like Apponaug) in Pawtuxet, Pontiac, East Natick, and Oakland Beach?

*Comments:*

- "Be careful that architecture of buildings is not Disney-like. Enough stucco already!"
- "Lakewood area needs something parklike..."
- "No expansion/addition of 'historic' districts which impair property-owners' rights."

### 3. If remaining large land parcels are up for development, should the city give incentives to developers to use conservation subdivisions that preserve open space?

*Comments:*

- "Try to include pedestrian/bike trails to improve access through town."
- "Depends on the types of incentives. Beware of excessive tax incentives."
- "Open space and recreational facilities, trailways, etc."



- “Developing what we have is in my opinion the priority.”
- “I feel it’s important to keep some scenic sights in Warwick.”
- “Or the city should consider buying those parcels to remain open land.”
- “Absolutely. Warwick should remain a suburb, not a cement city.”
- “Ab-so-lutely yes!”
- “Preserve 10% of each project’s usable land for green space/conservation.”

**4. Do you support the idea of encouraging redevelopment of shopping centers at intersections like Hoxsie into Neighborhood Activity Centers where multi-family housing and retail are combined in a contemporary village?**

*Comments:*

- “Provide plenty of moderate-income housing.”
- “Be careful about architectural design.”
- “Yes, with emphasis on traffic flow and traffic improvements.”
- “Village idea is attractive but would need to see more progress or idea.”
- “It would centralize everything, also increase in jobs and more affordable housing.”
- “Proximity to airport noise and traffic diminishes the attractiveness [of the Hoxsie example shown], though it is needed somewhere!”
- “Preserve setbacks from the roads. Do not ‘crowd’ streets with buildings.”
- “Yes, I think so, but anxious to see how that would work—privacy for living? Carefully thought out.”
- “Mixed zoning doesn’t work. Look at Mineral Spring Avenue in North Providence.”

**5. Do you support more ‘greening’ of Warwick, including tree planting, reducing water pollution, pursuing more energy-efficiency, and working on climate change planning with the state?**

*Comments:*

- “However, most tree planting (sidewalk areas, etc.) are not cared for and end up looking horrible.”
- “Along with this, transform a portion of Barton Farm to a secured nursery area for producing our own trees, shrubs and flowers.”
- “More recycling in public areas/parks. Bins for all types of refuse.”
- “[Yes to] all but ‘climate change.’”

**6. Do you support the idea of making the industrial district near I-95 and Warwick Station into an “Innovation District,” with new zoning and public investment in infrastructure and urban design—so the city can attract technology, advanced manufacturing, and other 21st century businesses?**

*Comments:*

- “A design that has been in development for a long time. Just hope it doesn’t take as long as the people mover.”
- “Warwick needs to move forward so it can look attractive to families.”
- “Please consider limiting the type of industry that may come in...remember Fort Barton!”

**7. Do you support a design overlay district for the Route 2/Bald Hill Road corridor so that it is more attractive and more functional for shoppers and for cars—and therefore continues to be a highly competitive regional retail destination?**

*Comments:*

- “Good luck on the ‘more attractive’ goal.”
- “For me it works now – but staying competitive is a necessity.”
- “Traffic there is bad and it is not pleasing to get in and leave that area. I think the area should be improved.”



- “Whatever someone can come up with to ‘fix’ that stretch of road would be wonderful!”

**8. Do you support the idea of investing in sidewalk repair and extension and more bike routes and networks for safe bicycling throughout the city?**

*Comments:*

- “Absolutely!!”
- “Sidewalk repair, IF it does not involve tar for the sidewalks or curbs.”
- “Sidewalk repairs should start in areas surrounding schools.”
- “Current conditions are not friendly to walkers/ bikes. Improvements would attract a younger resident that prefers this type of transportation.”
- “Rent-a-bike program.”
- “I run through the city on the sidewalks and they are tough sometimes so I think that could be improved.”
- “Yes!”
- “More bicycle routes help all.”

**9. Do you support activities to maintain and enhance the City’s existing parks and open spaces, as well as working with the State on ensuring that Rocky Point will contain a signature open space?**

*Comments:*

- “City Park is a gem. All parks should close at sundown and be locked.”
- “Warwick has many nice/simple parks. Adding a larger parcel that could entertain/support different events and number of people would add to the attraction of Warwick.”
- “It is important to keep our cultural history.”
- “Please consider developing the park as a natural rather than manicured park.”
- “Keep Rocky Point as natural as possible.”



## PUBLIC HEARINGS AND APPROVALS

Two workshops on the draft plan were held with the Planning Board, which then held a public hearing on December 11, 2013, to approve the plan.

After Planning Board approval, the plan was sent to the RI Division of Planning for review. Final approval of the plan by the City Council took place on March 17, 2014.



## Population and Land Use Trends

FROM A WARWICK RESIDENT

*“We have found Warwick to be a city with a great deal to offer and having a tremendous potential to improve upon its existing amenities”*





The second largest city within the State of Rhode Island, the City of Warwick is a stable, middle -class, suburban community located approximately 10 miles south of the state's largest city and capital, Providence, RI. Warwick has changed significantly over the years, and its development patterns greatly reflect the community's history and its important connection to the water for its growth and prosperity.

#### A NOTE ON THE DATA

Data for the comprehensive plan was gathered from public and private sources. Census 2010 data was used when available. Some data is from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) which is based on survey samples. The City of Warwick does not have Geographic Information Systems (GIS) so maps were created using state GIS data connected to Warwick databases, such as the assessor's list, when relevant.



## HISTORY, GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Founded in 1642 by Samuel Gorton where Native Americans planted, fished and hunted, Warwick's first European settlers established village settlements in Pawtuxet, Spring Green, Apponaug, Pontiac, and other areas, creating the decentralized village system still reflected today. During the early 18th century, farming stimulated the City's expansion of village settlements in spite of conflicts with native settlements. By the late 18th century and into the 19th century the City began to expand as a result of the industrial revolution and consequent in-migration of many European immigrants. Industry grew in the western part of the City, while the farming communities dominated the eastern part. With the creation of the Town of West Warwick in 1913, Warwick lost most of its industrial base, but still had mills in areas such as Pontiac, Apponaug, and Hillsgrove. During the late 19th century, Warwick's coastline attracted Providence residents who built summer cottage colonies such as Oakland Beach, Gaspee Point and Conimicut.

Areas like Rocky Point, the famous amusement park that remained open until 1995, provided a respite to local factory workers, their families and visitors for nearly 150 years. Oakland Beach, Mark Rock and Conimicut thrived as summer resort communities, complete with beaches, resort hotels, and seasonal cottages. Oakland beach even had the nation's first ever water toboggan, a precursor to flume rides. The Buttonwoods area grew as a summer resort for Protestant families. Modeled after Oaks Bluff on Martha's Vineyard, the area thrived once connected to Providence by the Warwick Railroad. By 1900, Warwick had evolved from its colonial beginnings as a series of villages and maritime settlements to a larger community of over 21,000 residents with a diverse local economy with factories and textile mills along the Pawtuxet River, resorts along the bay, and remaining agricultural lands in areas between. Significantly guiding new growth in the early 1900s was a system of roads and trolleys which began operating along early settlement paths. The emergence of this transportation system, which connected the villages to new mill communities, waterfront resorts, and more importantly, Providence, played a major role in the suburban development pattern that exists today. Easy access to trolleys in the northern sections of town made commuting to and from Providence fairly easy and inexpensive. Trolleys brought in people from out of town by improving accessibility to the resort areas of Oakland Beach and Buttonwoods, while making access to the developing industrial centers in town easier for residents as well.

The increasing popularity of automobile travel along with state financed roadway improvements further amplified the trend towards suburbanization in the years prior to the Great Depression. In these years, the first conversions of summer cottages to year round residences began in resort areas, and modest new housing development began on agricultural lands. This early suburbanization also triggered an early round of institutional development such as schools, churches and government facilities to serve the growing population.

The establishment of the state airport in 1931 at Hillsgrove altered the city's development pattern forever. Neighborhoods were lost to airport construction and its central location divided the city, making east-west access



more difficult. Over the years as the airport expanded into what is today T.F. Green Airport, noise impacts also affected some parts of the city.

At the end of World War II increasing automobile usage and low-cost federal mortgage programs allowed people of modest income to purchase single-family homes, unleashing a new, much bigger wave of suburbanization. In Warwick, this led to speculative construction on large tracts of agricultural lands, adding thousands of single-family homes throughout the city. This trend of auto-oriented, single-family suburbanization continued at a steady pace until the late 1960s and early 1970s and was followed by new forms of retail development. Instead of compact village commercial districts, suburban commercial strip development along the city's roadways became the norm. The fact that Warwick was always a series of small villages, and had no clear center, further contributed to this pattern because there was no central place to focus commercial development efforts.

Initial commercial growth occurred along roadways in the more heavily populated areas east and north of the airport, along Post Road, Warwick Avenue, and West Shore Road. New commercial development shifted to western areas of the city, primarily due to the opening of I-95 and I-295 in the mid 1960s, which made access to these areas from outside the city fast and convenient. Development of the Rhode Island (formerly Midland) and Warwick malls in 1967 and 1970 respectively at the intersection of the two interstates, initiated the growth of Route 2 as a regional shopping destination, which continues to this day. Proximity to the interstates also drove office and light industrial development to these areas, including Metropolitan Life's Regional headquarters off of Route 2, and later office parks lining I-95, such as Metro Park.

In recent decades, most development within the city has occurred in western areas of the city. While there has been some development east of the airport, most has been residential redevelopment or infill opportunities, or redevelopment of retail centers. These areas are essentially built out. The western portions of the city held the only significant parcels of undeveloped land, many of which now hold large-lot subdivisions, multi-family

apartment and condominium developments, or large retail complexes along Route 2, or adjacent to I-95 and I-295.

Today, with little land available for greenfield development, and changing demographics, the city faces different land use challenges. The public has expressed desire for a return to more compact village development, with walkable centers and improved pedestrian and bicycle connections between the villages, suburban neighborhoods and open space amenities. New opportunities for redeveloping underutilized or vacant commercial and industrial properties into mixed-use centers, particularly around the new Interlink station area, are desired, with planning already underway, or completed. The regional malls and Route 2 retail must keep up with changes in retailing, including online shopping. As an established community with little remaining greenfield development opportunities, Warwick, like many older suburbs, has entered the era when new investment and improvements must come through redevelopment.



## DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

**Total Population and Households.** Like suburban communities all around the country, the composition of City of Warwick's population is changing. Although the city's population has decreased slightly from its peak in the 1980s, the number of households has increased, the result of smaller household sizes, more seniors, fewer children, and changing household compositions and preferences.

As mentioned earlier, the City of Warwick grew rapidly in the decades following World War II. In 1920, shortly after West Warwick seceded, the population in the City of Warwick stood at around 13,500 residents. By 1940, the population had more than doubled to nearly 30,000 residents. However, the most significant growth occurred post WWII, when rapid suburbanization nearly tripled the city's population, peaking in 1980 with 87,123 residents. In the years since, population has remained



## POPULATION 2010— FACT SHEET

### Total Population

- 2010 total: 82,672
- 1990 total: 85,427

### Age Composition

- 19 and under: 20%
- 20-34 years: 17%
- 35-54 years: 30%
- 55-64 years: 16%
- 65 and over: 17%

### Households

- 2010 total: 35,234
- 1990 total: 33,437
- 1,802 more households than in 1990

### Household Composition

- 61.0 percent are family households (persons related by blood or marriage)
- 24% households with children
- 39.0 percent are non-family households
- 31.8 percent are single-person households

### Race and Ethnicity

- 92.7 percent white
- 1.7 percent African American
- 2.3 percent Asian
- 1.1 percent Some Other Race
- 1.9 percent two or more races
- 3.4 percent Hispanic/Latino (of any race)

### Language Spoken at Home (2009 ACS)

- 6.3 percent speak a language other than English
- Less than 1 percent speak English less than “very well”

### Income and Poverty (2009 ACS)

- \$61,114 median household income
- 21.3 percent of households have incomes of more than \$100,000
- 27.5 percent of households have incomes below \$35,000
- 7.8 percent of households had incomes below the poverty level

### Educational Attainment

- 10.4 percent do not have high school diplomas
- 29.0 percent have a bachelor’s or advanced degree

Sources: US Census Bureau decennial census 1990 and 2010; American Community Survey 2009.

fairly steady, decreasing only slightly to 82,658 in 2010, or approximately 5 percent from its peak figure.

Although Warwick’s population declined slightly over the last few decades, the number of households has increased, up nearly 14 percent since the 1980 population peak. Today, almost one-third of Warwick’s households are made up of single persons, and only 26 percent of Warwick households include children 18 and under. This mirrors a national trend of declining household size since 1960 and an increasing diversity in household composition. Families are having fewer children, there are more single person households, and married without children households, and an aging population with more seniors and empty nesters. In 1990, nearly

FIGURE 3.1: Warwick Population 1920 to 2010

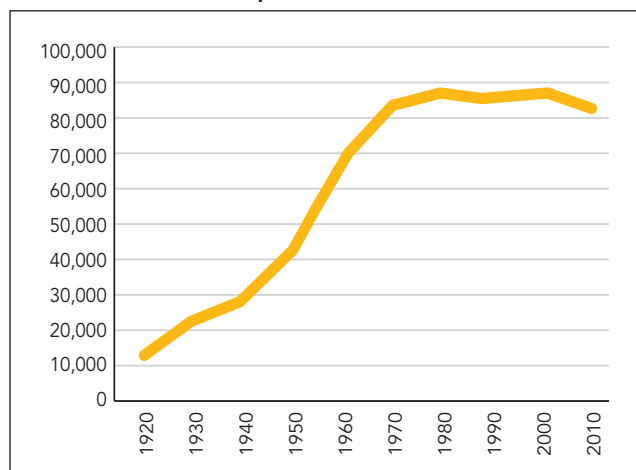
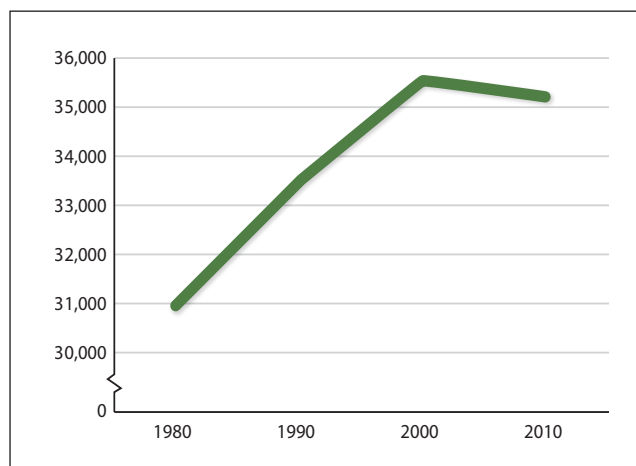


FIGURE 3.2: Warwick Households 1980 to 2010



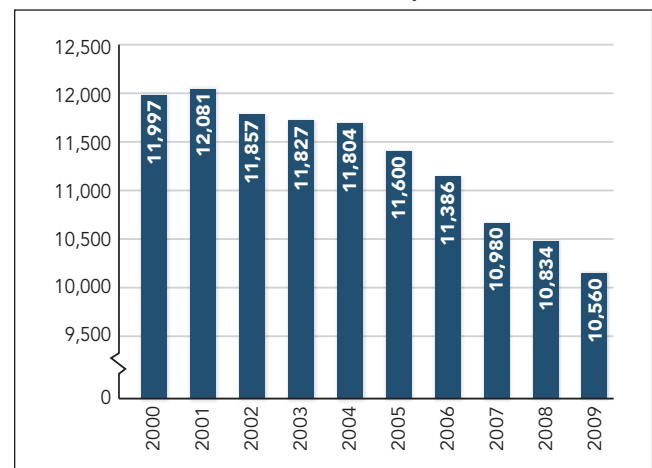
70 percent of households in Warwick were family households (that is, related by blood or marriage and not necessarily including children), compared to just 61 percent in 2010; and only 26 percent were single households, compared to 32 percent in 2010. Between 1990 and 2010, the number of families with children also decreased from 30.5 percent to 26 percent of all households. Suburban communities all over America, like Warwick, are increasingly made up of households at all stages of the life cycle, not just the stereotypical nuclear family with children.

**Age Composition.** The change in households is also reflected in the age composition of the city’s population, which has experienced a significant shift that will affect the City over the next 20 years. Simply put, the population is aging.

As shown in the chart, the number of elderly persons over the age 80 has increased significantly. And although the number of 65 to 80 year olds has decreased relative to the whole population, the Baby Boom generation will all age into the 65+ category over the next 10 to 20 years, significantly increasing the “empty nester” and elderly population.

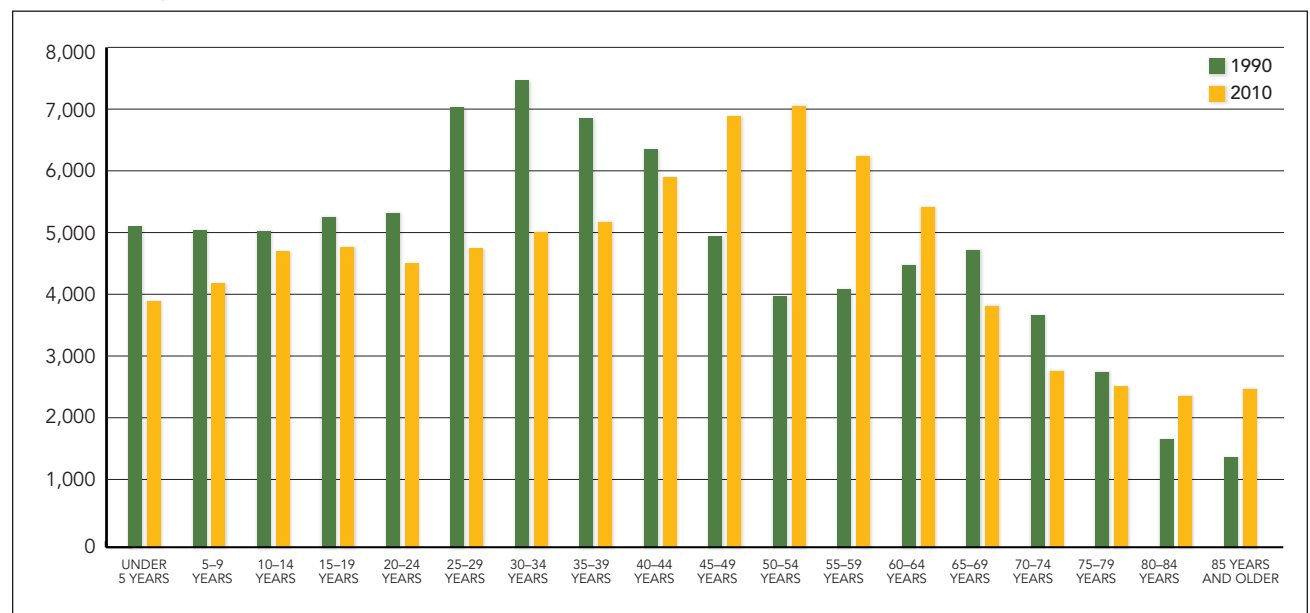
This will have a major impact on the city. Empty nesters often leave single-family homes and relocate to smaller residential units, with many opting for walkable areas near amenities and services such as transportation and health care assistance. For the most part, Warwick lacks these types of neighborhoods. Generational turnover in older neighborhoods will depend on a number of factors, from the state of the housing market (allowing seniors to sell and younger cohorts to buy), options available in town for seniors who wish to downsize or who need

**FIGURE 3.4: Warwick Public Schools Population**



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education

**FIGURE 3.3: Age Composition of Warwick, 1990-2020**





assistance, to whether village improvements and similar efforts will attract younger families to live in Warwick.

With the aging of the population and decline in the number of households with children, fewer children are in the public schools. In the last decade alone, student population within Warwick's public schools has decreased by more than 1,400 students. This has already resulted in several school closings (see Chapter 10, Public Facilities and Services for more information). In addition, Warwick's young people do not tend to stay in the city. Once they graduate from high school or college, many are choosing to live elsewhere, judging from the declining proportion of 20-29 year-olds living in the city in 2010 compared to 1990. This age cohort is increasingly attracted to dense, walkable environments with many amenities, which Warwick currently lacks. When young adults marry and have children, some will want to return to where they grew up but many will settle elsewhere.

This change in age composition—increase in the elderly population, combined with smaller families and fewer school children--will affect many elements within the comprehensive plan, including decisions about land use, transportation, public facility needs and more.

**Race and ethnicity.** Although the population of Warwick has primarily been and remains mostly white, the city has grown slightly more diverse over the last 20 years. In 1990, nearly 97 percent of the population was white, compared to 93 percent in 2010. The change is primarily due to small increases in the number of African-Americans, Asians, and people of two or more races within the community. Although a small percentage of people in Warwick are of Hispanic ancestry, that percentage has more than tripled in twenty years.

**Income and Poverty Profile.** According to the 2005-2009 ACS estimate, Warwick's median household income of \$61,114 is higher than that of the state as a whole (\$55,569), and residents are less likely to live below the poverty line. Warwick is solidly middle class,

**TABLE 3.1: Race and Ethnicity (Hispanic or Latino)**

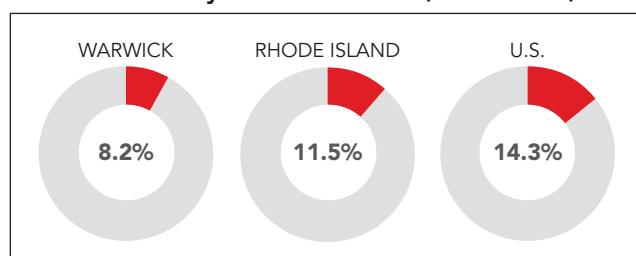
	1990	2000	2010
White	96.6%	95.2%	92.7%
Black or African American	0.8%	1.2%	1.7%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%
Asian	0.8%	1.5%	2.3%
Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Some other Race	0.2%	0.6%	1.1%
Two or More	1.8%	1.3%	1.9%
Hispanic* (Ethnicity)	1.0%	1.6%	3.4%

\*Hispanics can be of any race. | Source: US Census Bureau

**TABLE 3.2: Median Household Income**

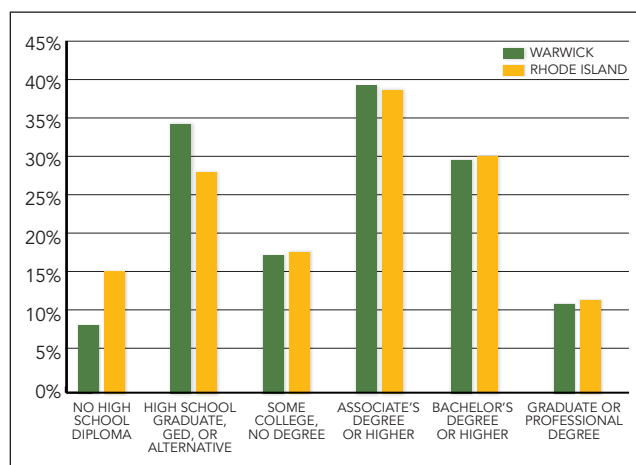
	WARWICK	RHODE ISLAND
Less than \$15,000	10.0%	13.3%
\$15,000-\$24,999	8.2%	9.9%
\$25,000-\$34,999	9.3%	13.7%
\$35,000-\$49,999	12.1%	8.4%
\$50,000-\$74,999	22.1%	18.1%
\$75,000-\$99,999	17.2%	14.0%
\$100,000-\$149,999	14.3%	14.0%
\$150,000+	6.9%	8.6%

**FIGURE 3.5: Poverty Rate 2009: Warwick, Rhode Island, U.S.**



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2009

**FIGURE 3.6: Educational Attainment of Population 25+: Warwick and Rhode Island**



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2009



with over 50 percent of households earning between \$35,000 and \$99,999. Over 20 percent of households earn over \$100,000, similar to that of Rhode Island as a whole, and fewer households (7.8 percent) have incomes below the poverty level compared to the state as a whole (11.9 percent).

**Educational Attainment.** Warwick residents tend to be relatively highly educated. A higher proportion of people have obtained a high school diploma or equivalent compared to the state as a whole, and a higher proportion have obtained a post-secondary degree. However, a slightly lower proportion have obtained bachelor's or graduate degrees than the state average. Warwick residents' educational attainment is also on the rise. Younger residents tend to have obtained significantly more education than their older counterparts, with 60 percent of those in the 25-34 age group having received a post-secondary degree. And residents in the prime working age group of 35-44, while less educated than the younger counterparts, are more highly educated than older age groups.

**Population Projections.** Population projections for 2010–2040 released for Warwick by the Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program in April 2013 show a decline from the Census 2010 population of 82,672 to 79,243 in 2020, and 77,751 in 2030. Population is projected to continue declining to 74,701 by 2040. According to these projections, Warwick's population would be slightly below Cranston's in 2020, making it the third largest city in Rhode Island. Given the household trends detailed earlier, even if overall population continues to

decrease slightly, the number of households will likely remain stable or even grow slightly as household size continues to decrease or stabilize. Moreover, efforts to bring new jobs to the city and provide living options and quality of life attractive to the Millennial generation could bring new population to Warwick.

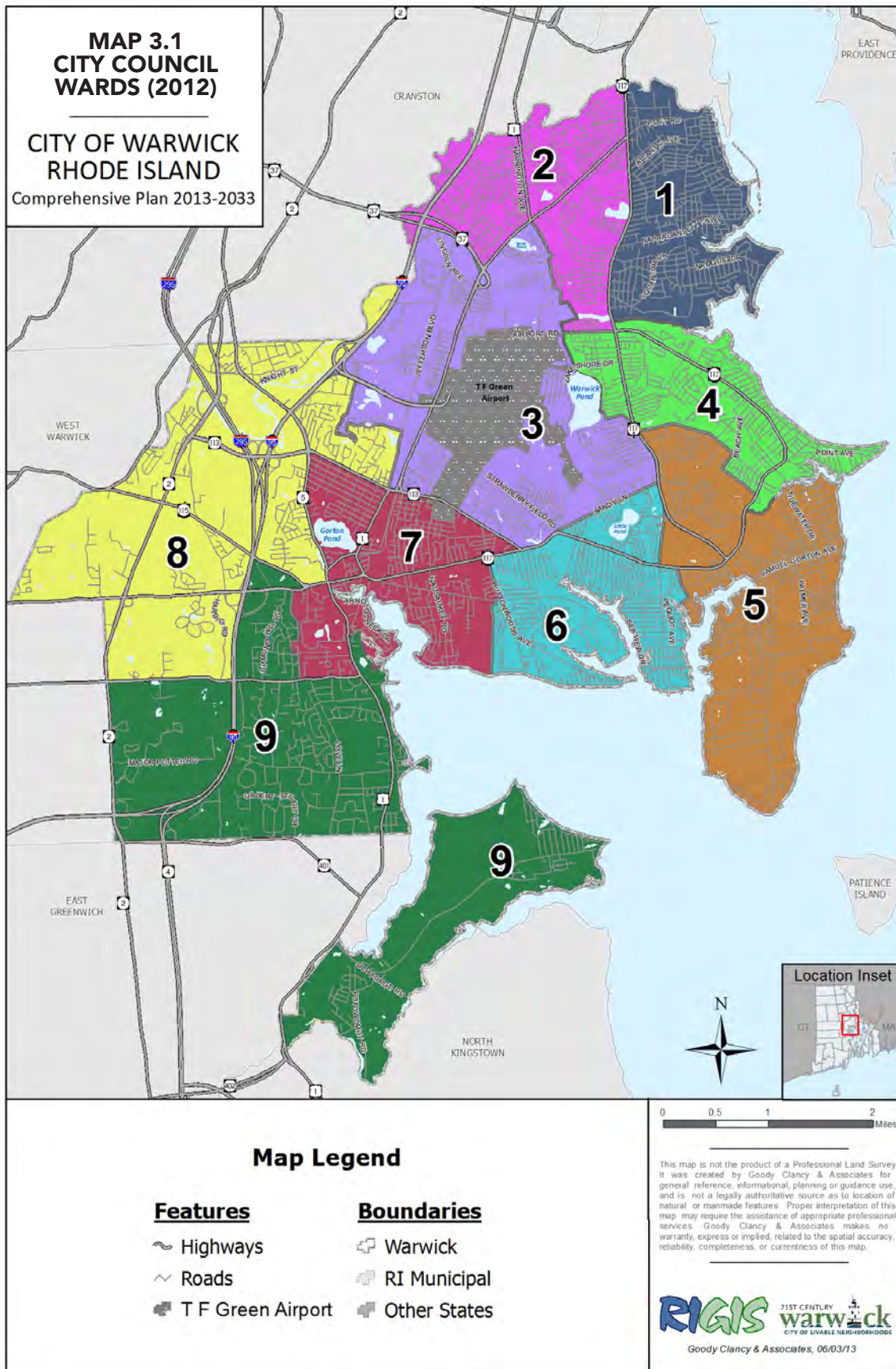
**Warwick Demographics by Ward.** Although all of Warwick is a solidly middle class community, there are demographic variations in different areas of the city. Analyzing demographic data by the city's nine Wards provides greater insight into who lives where.

Whereas population is distributed fairly evenly by Ward for government representation, the differences between areas can be seen primarily in age, household composition and income. For example, when comparing Wards 8 and 9, Ward 9 has a significantly higher median income than 8 and the city as a whole. However, Ward 8 also has the smallest average household size, highest median age, and largest percentage of population over 65, which means more seniors and singles live in this area. Additionally, those Wards with the highest percentage of family households (2, 4, 5 and 6), also have some of the lowest median ages, meaning more families with children reside in these areas. Planning to accommodate different types of households, in different areas of the city, will require targeted strategies for different areas to accommodate all types of households, and allow Warwick to adapt and thrive in a time of shifting demographics and needs.

**TABLE 3.3. Warwick Demographics by Ward**

	CITY	WARD 1	WARD 2	WARD 3	WARD 4	WARD 5	WARD 6	WARD 7	WARD 8	WARD 9
Population	82,658	8,983	9,284	8,843	8,853	9,140	9,036	9,411	9,643	9,465
Households	35,228	3,898	3,732	3,775	3,574	3,688	3,556	4,041	4,746	4,218
Families	61.0%	60.9%	63.2%	61.3%	65.9%	67.5%	67.5%	61.0%	45.8%	60.7%
Household Size	2.33	2.27	2.49	2.33	2.45	2.47	2.54	2.32	1.98	2.23
Median Age	43.6	45.8	41.0	42.1	41.5	42.2	42.3	40.6	48.5	47.5
65 Years and Over	17.1%	17.8%	14.9%	17.8%	13.7%	13.3%	14.0%	14.6%	28.1%	19.2%
Under 18 Years	19.1%	18.3%	20.3%	19.7%	21.1%	20.3%	20.2%	19.2%	15.1%	18.2%
Median Household Income	\$61,114	\$65,051	\$55,587	\$50,522*	\$60,936	\$63,050	\$59,057	\$65,021	\$47,180	\$78,602

\* 2012 ESRI forecast (ACS 2005-2009 data unavailable) | Source: U.S. Census 2010 and ACS 2005-2009 (for Median Household Income only)





## LAND USE TRENDS

“Land use” is the general term referring to the actual uses or activities that occur on a parcel of land at any given time, be they residential, commercial, industrial, recreational or another use. Land use is not permanent and can change over time. For example, much of the land that holds residential uses in Warwick today was farmland a century ago. It is important to note that land use is not the same as zoning. Zoning is the tool a municipality uses to regulate what can be built on a parcel of land and how should it be developed or redeveloped. Land uses can be “nonconforming,” meaning that they do not conform with the zoning because they were in existence when the land was zoned for another use. The nonconforming uses were “grandfathered.” Like land use, zoning can change over time. For example, parcels that are currently zoned to allow only commercial uses

today may one day be changed to allow for a mix of uses, including residential.

To analyze existing land use within Warwick, the planning team created the city’s first GIS-based existing land use parcel map. The team matched assessor’s data that included a land use category for each parcel with a GIS parcel file. For parcels that could not be matched, or for which data was not available, the planning team either visited the sites in person or relied on aerial photography to assign a general land use category. The team then consulted with city staff to verify these assessments and provide corrections. The resulting existing land use map contains the best information currently available and conveys the general patterns of land use within the city. It provides the city with a solid land use foundation for future planning and zoning efforts and should be refined and updated regularly.

## 1. Residential Land Uses

Although land use within the City of Warwick is quite varied, as one would expect in a predominantly suburban community like Warwick, over half of the city’s total land area is used for residential purposes. The majority of this land is comprised of single-family residences, with pockets of multi-family dwellings.

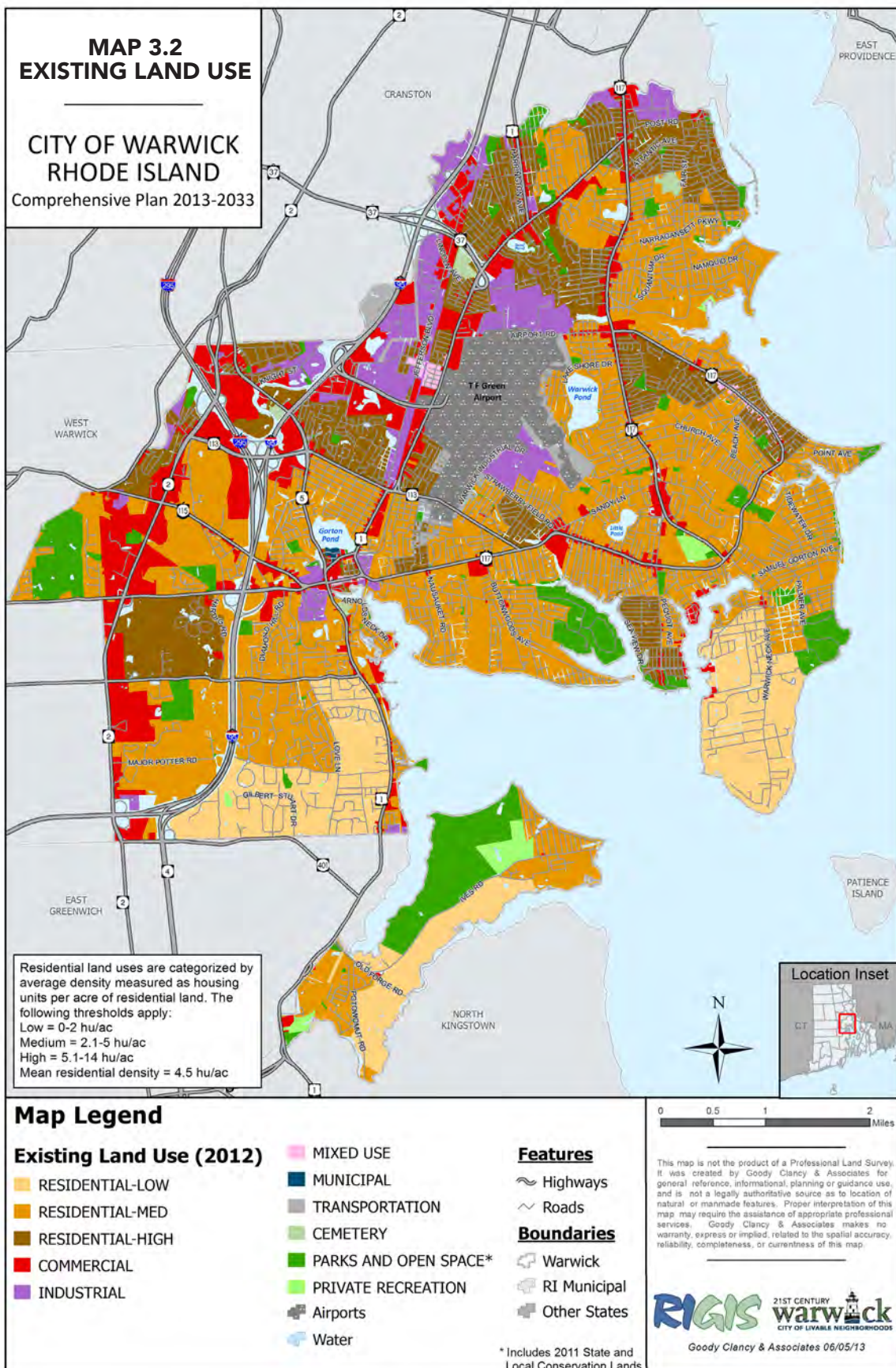
**Single-Family Residences.** Single-family residential neighborhoods vary by area of the city, and in large part reflect the character and style of the time in which they were constructed. The northern and central areas of the city predominantly reflect the character of early and mid 20th century suburban expansion, featuring modest ranch and split level structures on small to medium sized lots in large subdivisions arranged generally around a grid pattern with some cul-de-sacs. These developments tend to have multiple entry points along major roadways.

More recent suburban development, including large residential structures, are located primarily in Wards 9, 8 and 5 where large tracts of undeveloped land remained available for development in the last few decades. These areas are characterized by larger homes on larger lots along winding roadways with cul-de-sacs. Developments

**TABLE 3.4: Land Use**

LAND USE	LAND AREA (ACRES)	PERCENTAGE
<b>Total Land Area</b>	<b>18,890</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Residential</b>	<b>12,635</b>	<b>66.9%</b>
Low Density (0-2 units per acre)	2,100	
Medium Density (2-5 units per acre)	7,920	
High Density (5-14 units per acre)	2,615	
<b>Commercial/Industrial</b>	<b>3,290</b>	<b>17.4%</b>
Commercial	2,150	
Industrial	1,140	
<b>Mixed Use</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
<b>Open Space</b>	<b>1,810</b>	<b>9.6%</b>
Parks and Open Space	1,570	
Private Recreation	155	
Cemetery	85	
<b>Municipal</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>.05%</b>
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>1,080</b>	<b>5.7%</b>
Airport	888	
Other (including airport acquisitions)	192	







**Large homes on small lots have replaced modest cottages in many waterfront areas in Warwick.**

typically have one entry point and do not allow through traffic. These developments are often found adjacent to older homes and estates built prior to World War II.

**Waterfront Residential Areas.** Waterfront residential areas throughout Warwick offer the most diverse residential character. These areas include a wide variety of residential types from modest cottages in Oakland Beach, to large historic estates adjacent to new single-family and condominium developments (e.g. Angelsea) on Warwick Neck, to elevated homes on small lots in Conimicut. In many areas, large waterfront homes sit

adjacent to modest structures, as smaller homes have been demolished to make room for new, larger homes.

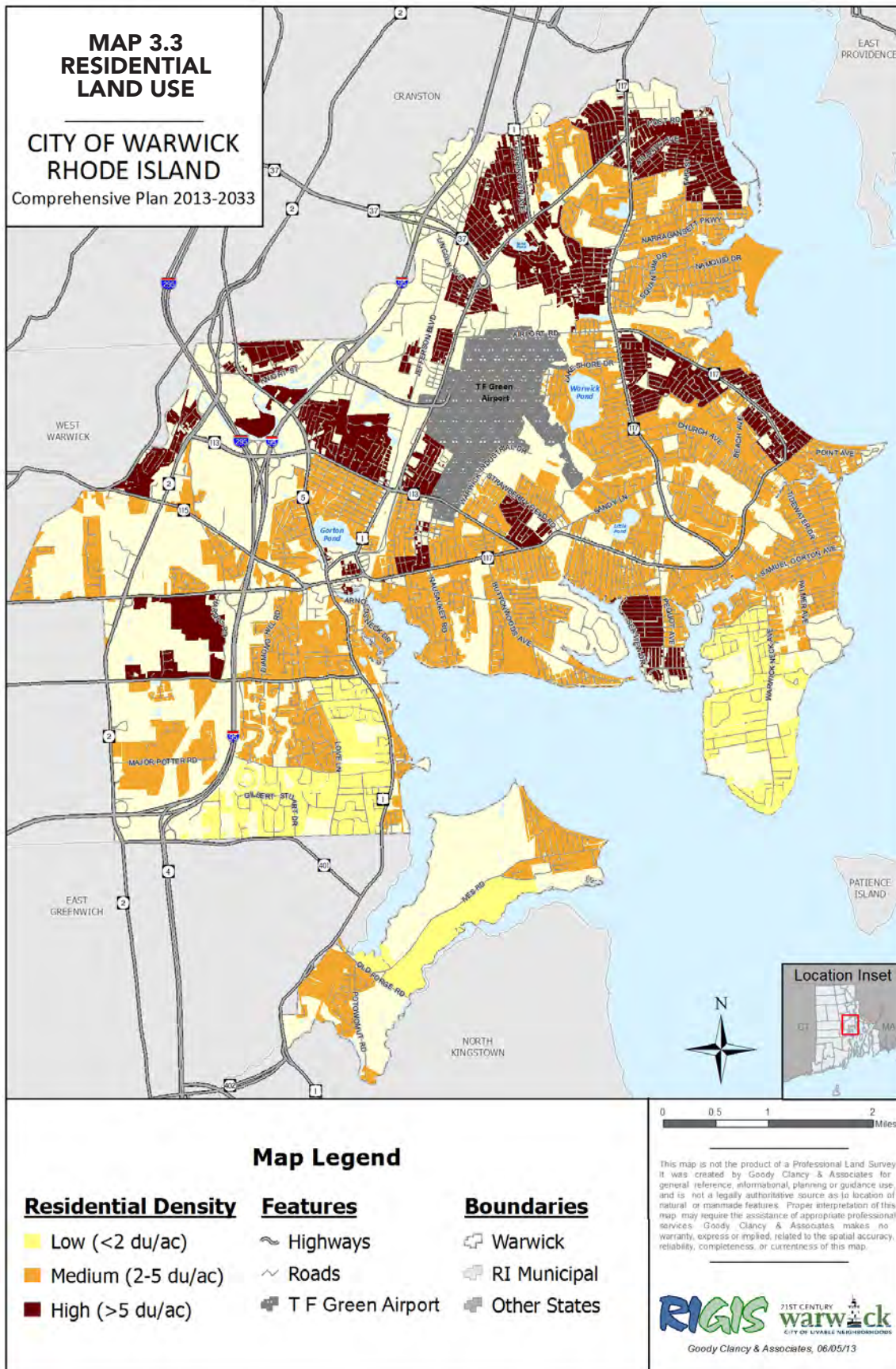
**Historic Residential Areas.** Although much of Warwick's historic character has been lost over the years, there are hundreds of historic residential properties sprinkled throughout the community. Historic neighborhood fabric remains in Pawtuxet Village, which holds Warwick's largest concentration of historic homes in a walkable, village setting. Other less contiguous historic groupings are also found in Pontiac Village, Apponaug Village, Buttonwoods and Conimicut.

**Multi-family Residences.** Multi-family residences are sprinkled throughout the city with the largest concentrations found along major arterials and in the central and western areas of the city. Multi-family properties include apartment and condominium complexes along Post Road (Cowesett Hills apartments), Centerville Road (Royal Crest apartments), and Major Potter Road (Eagles Nest). Other multi-family development is found along the water, particularly condominium development, such as Narragansett Village in Pawtuxet, and Kimberly Village along Post Road in Cowesett, and adjacent to Post Road and Warwick Avenue in northern and eastern parts of the city. These developments are all suburban in character, auto-oriented, and typically



**Warwick contains a diversity of single-family neighborhoods with a range of housing types.**







sited around an internal circulation system with large surface parking lots. They were not designed to promote walking.



**Multi-family housing including condominium and apartment complexes built on large parcels with surface parking, have little to no design continuity to one another or with their surrounding neighborhoods.**

## 2. Commercial and Industrial Uses

Commercial and industrial land in Warwick has expanded significantly over the years. As noted earlier, Warwick's development pattern since World War II has been suburban in nature, leading to commercial development that accommodates, and relies on visibility from, automobile drivers along the city's major thoroughfares. This shift has significantly affected the commercial landscape of the city. Although commercial uses were once centered in the traditional village centers, they now sprawl along major arterials throughout the city, with the largest commercial concentrations located in central and western portions of the city that are easily accessible from I-95 and I-295. To gain perspective, in the 1970s, approximately 1,000 acres were used for commercial and industrial uses, while today over 3,000 acres are in these land uses.

**Strip Commercial Development.** One of Warwick's greatest land use challenges is the predominance of strip commercial development, much of which is dated and unattractive. These commercial uses that line major arterials in a domino-like fashion, are reachable almost exclusively by car and typically hold several small retail or office establishments with a larger anchor store. Major issues with these developments are increased traffic congestion caused by numerous curb cuts and lack of internal circulation, encroachment into residential neighborhoods, large impervious parking surfaces that increase surface runoff, obtrusive signage clutter, and a generic, "Anywhere USA" aesthetic. Additionally, strip commercial areas in Warwick do not serve as neighborhood centers, rather they function more as barriers between neighborhoods, with little to no pedestrian connectivity.

**Route 2.** The most significant cluster of retail uses is located along Route 2, which, unlike other commercial corridors in the city, serves as a regional shopping destination. The area is anchored by the Warwick and Rhode Island Malls, numerous big box-anchored shopping centers, automobile dealerships and national chain restaurants. These retail centers tend to have individual





curb cuts and entrances and lack internal connectivity between developments, which increases traffic congestion along the heavily traveled route.

Although the area is expected to remain a regional retail center and has recently attracted new investment like a large Jordan's Furniture location, there are several vacancies. Moreover, retail uses have approximately a 20 year life cycle, at which time they often require redevelopment or a new tenant. This is particularly important for this area, since retail trends point to a future with fewer large format big box establishments, and more small or medium sized retailers. Should this occur, the city will need to identify new uses for some of these structures, or identify new strategies for redevelopment, since few uses require such large footprints.



**Large big box commercial developments along Route 2 with individual curb cuts and no internal connections to one another contribute significantly to congestion along the corridor.**



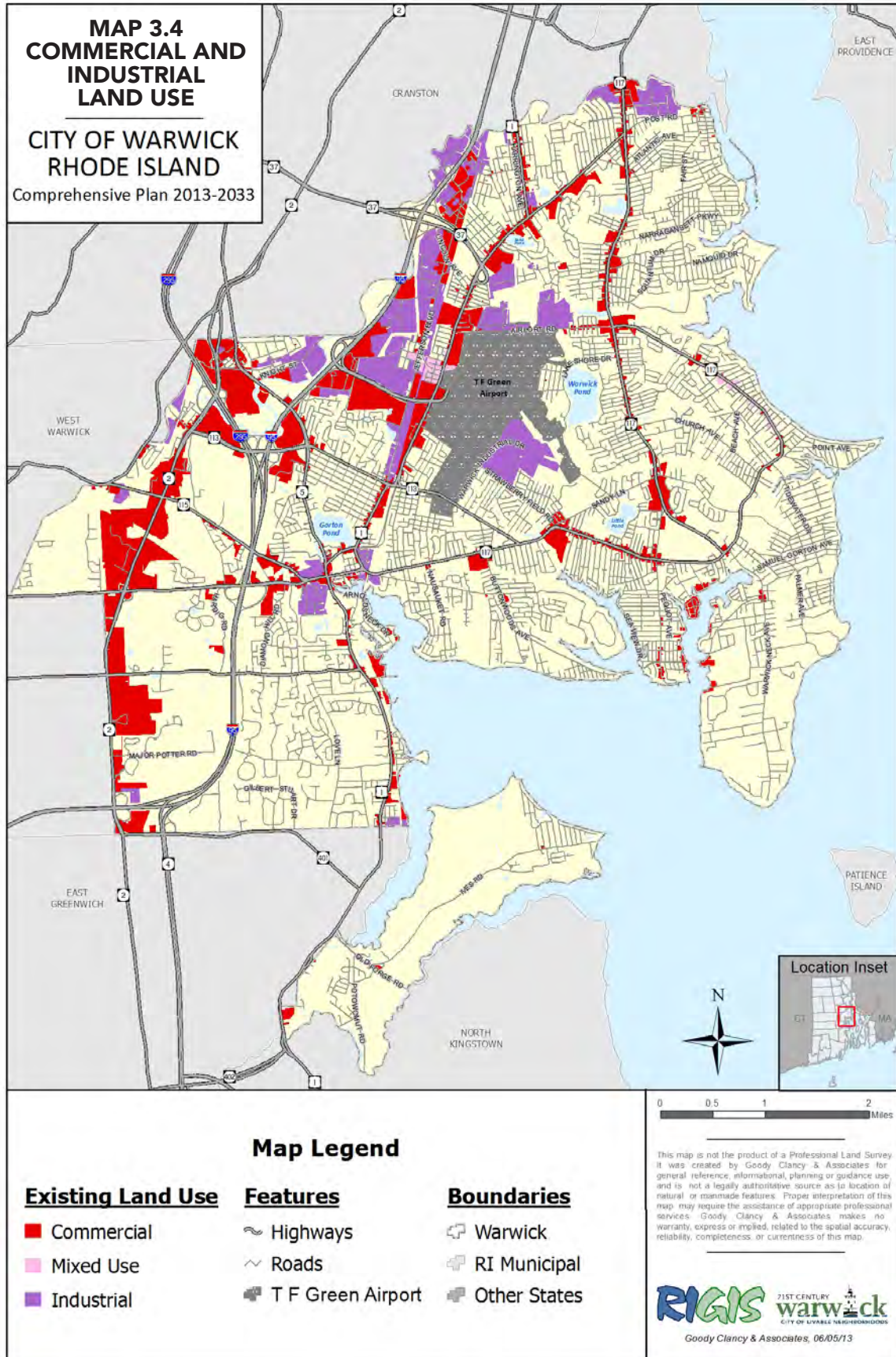
**Although Route 2 is a successful regional shopping destination, identifying new uses for vacancies may prove difficult should the popularity of big box retailers wane in coming years.**

**Local Commercial Corridors.** Other commercial activities within the city are concentrated along major arterials such as Post Road, West Shore Road, Airport Road, and Warwick Avenue. In general, these commercial areas target local residents and contain a varied mix of local retailers, grocery stores, fast food, convenience and service establishments. The corridors lack a cohesive design aesthetic, are several decades old, and have numerous vacancies. As noted by many participants during public meetings, the commercial corridors throughout Warwick look tired and “need a face-lift”.

**Post Road** offers a varied commercial environment. The stretch near the airport and Intermodal facility is home to numerous underutilized light industrial structures, hotels and other smaller retail uses, many of which,



**Post Road commercial establishments vary by area, but are all oriented to the auto, and lack quality design.**

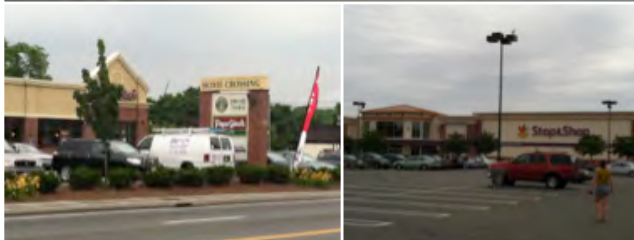






particularly hotels and restaurants cater to airport passengers, not to the typical Warwick resident. Retail and restaurant uses dominate the intersection of Airport Road, and further north, neighborhood-serving retailers, fast food restaurants, and a large Walmart are found. Office and industrial properties line the northeastern stretch, particularly as you approach Pawtuxet.

**Warwick Avenue** is characterized by rows of strip development holding various types of uses, from small retail structures, top fast food restaurants, to offices and larger commercial shopping centers. This roadway in particular was pointed out in public meetings as “dated” and “unattractive” and is dominated by large areas of impervious paving surfaces, obtrusive signage and poor design, most significantly between Post Road and the Cranston line.



**Commercial development along Warwick Avenue lacks design consistency, is often “dated”, is oriented to the car, and does not connect to surrounding neighborhoods. “It needs a face lift” said a meeting attendee.**

**West Shore Road**, between Oakland Beach Avenue and Sandy Lane is characterized by older strip retail development with large paved parking lots, numerous curb cuts and heavy traffic. There is no cohesive look to the area, and several storefronts are vacant. The remainder of West Shore Road alternates between residential and commercial parcels, with concentrations of retail found at larger intersections. In the Village of Conimicut, one of Warwick’s few remaining Main Street-like areas, several storefronts line the roadway, but retail offerings are limited and there are several vacancies. The area recently received the new Village Overlay zoning designation, which is intended to foster more walkable, mixed-use village areas.

Although some parcels along these corridors have been redeveloped, or contain newer retail structures, such as the Stop and Shop along Warwick Avenue, as well as properties near Hoxsie Four Corners, many present opportunities for potential redevelopment in the next 20 years, perhaps as new village areas with a mix of retail and housing. This could include areas near the intersection of West Shore Road and Sandy Lane, parcels along Post Road near Airport Road and Elmwood Avenue, and at various points along Warwick Avenue.

**Office and Industrial Uses.** The largest concentration of warehouse and other light industrial uses is found along Jefferson Boulevard, which runs through the center of the city parallel to I-95. This provides easy truck and automobile access to these businesses, many of which ship materials to and from their facilities. The Northeast Corridor rail line also runs through this area, but there are no direct connections within Warwick for the loading and unloading of freight.

The largest concentrations of office buildings in the city are found immediately adjacent to, or a quick drive from I-95. Office uses are typically in office park settings with 2- to 4-story structures surrounded by seas of surface parking with limited landscaping and few shade trees. This includes a regional headquarters off Route 2, office uses lining I-95 such as Metro Center, and those off Crossings Boulevard to name a few.



The vacant Pontiac Mills structure has the potential for reuse, and sits next door to the new NYLO Hotel.

Additional opportunities exist for the redevelopment of vacant or underutilized industrial sites within the city. The most prominent site is the recently sold Leviton property, immediately adjacent to the Warwick Intermodal facility, which serves as the anchor for the recent City Centre Warwick master plan, a mixed-use, transit-oriented development district with office, retail and residential uses. Another prominent site is the abandoned Pontiac Mills structure near the Warwick Mall. Redevelopment of the riverfront property has been a goal of the city, but no formal plans are currently proposed. Recent development of the NYLO Hotel in the adjacent lot and the success of the hotel's restaurant/bar, could serve as an anchor for a new mixed-use development or village center.

**Waterfront Commercial Uses.** For a city with 39 miles of waterfront, there is a noticeable lack of retail commercial activity along Warwick's shore. With the exception of marinas and adjacent restaurants, a few establishments in Pawtuxet Village, and a grouping of restaurants in Oakland Beach, Warwick is not taking advantage of its waterfront. In fact, during public meetings, many commented that they would like to see Warwick have an area like that found in East Greenwich, one with multiple waterfront restaurants concentrated in one area. Warwick's lack of such an area is most notable in and around Apponaug Village, which for the most part has no connection to Apponaug Cove. Water adjacent properties in the area make little to no attempt to connect with the water. For example, the largest waterfront parcel in the village area holds a lumber yard with no public access to the

waterfront, and retail uses along Post Road have located parking lots, not active uses along the shoreline. This is a wasted opportunity to provide a waterfront amenity and improve the area's sense of place.

### 3. Parks and Open Space Uses

There are almost 2,000 acres of open space in Warwick, including large state and local parks like Goddard Park and City Park that include beaches, ball fields, picnic areas and other facilities; recreational fields, playgrounds and tot lots throughout the city; passive open spaces, city beaches and waterfront parks; and historic cemeteries and other permanently protected open spaces. For more information on these open space amenities, see Chapter 5, Parks, Recreation and Open Space.

### 4. Transportation Uses

Land uses associated with transportation play a major role in the overall development patterns of the city. This includes parking areas, railroad ROW, and most significantly, T.F. Green airport. According to the land use GIS shapefile, the airport occupies over 850 acres in the middle of the city (1,100 according to the final EIS), creating numerous land use issues. It essentially divides Warwick into two areas, those east of the airport and those west, significantly impacting connectivity. Abutting residential neighborhoods are affected by the noise generated from 203 daily landings and departures. The airport runway expansion will further strain neighborhood fabric as it requires both residential and commercial land acquisitions and the relocation of the Winslow recreation fields. Additionally, environmental concerns include contaminants associated with airport uses entering and damaging Warwick Pond, Buckeye Brook, and wetland areas. (See Chapter 9, Transportation and Circulation for more information on the airport.)

Land uses around rail and interstate transportation typically include industrial and commercial activities that require easy access to major intrastate transportation systems. However, while the Northeast Corridor passes through Warwick, no direct freight rail connections are located within the city limits.



## 5. Institutional Uses

Institutional uses, such as police, fire, schools and government facilities, are well-distributed throughout the city and can be found within all land use categories. The exception is Potowomut in Ward 9, which is physically separated from the remainder of the city by the bay and the town of East Greenwich, which provides first response fire service to the area. To rectify this lack of service for Ward 9, the City is currently designing and constructing a new fire station at the site of the former Potowomut Elementary School.

The majority of city government facilities are centrally located within the Village of Apponaug including a cluster of civic buildings: City Hall, the City Hall Annex, the Warwick Fire Department headquarters, and the Warwick Police Department. Remaining public safety facilities are spread out throughout the rest of the city, as are educational uses such as elementary, middle and high schools. Several school properties are currently vacant, the result of declining school enrollments, and additional properties could potentially follow. Other institutional uses include numerous churches throughout the city, Kent County Memorial Hospital and the Community College of Rhode Island Knight Campus, both of which are in Ward 8 with excellent access to I-95.



**Many of Warwick's government and public facilities are clustered in Apponaug Village.**

## D ZONING

Warwick's Zoning Ordinance is a conventional zoning code with single-use districts, including residential, business, industrial and open space. To overcome the rigidity of conventional zoning for special purposes or in special areas, the City has deployed special districts and overlay districts. There are two mixed-use City Centre districts, a mixed-use Village District and seven overlay districts.

This planning process created the first GIS-based version of the zoning map, which is also the first map to show zoning citywide. The official zoning map is found in a book of zoning plats in the Zoning Department. Although the ordinance is on the City website, there is no zoning map online. To identify where various zoning districts are located requires a time-intensive process of reviewing each zoning map. Creating an official GIS-based map would provide residents, business owners, developers and city employees with a simple tool to identify potential sites for development or protection.

**Residential Zoning Districts.** The four residential zoning districts (Residence A-40, A-15, A-10, and A-7) account for the most land area in Warwick. These districts are differentiated by the minimum lot size required for a single-family structure, ranging from the higher density A-7 district, which requires a minimum lot area of 7,000sf for a single-family home, to a low density A-40, which requires a minimum lot area of 40,000sf.

The ordinance does not specifically identify areas for two-family or multi-family development. In fact, multi-family residential development is not permitted by right in any residential districts. It is only allowed in two overlay districts, the Planned District Residential Overlay (PDR) and Planned Unit Development Overlay Districts (PUDs). These overlay districts can be enacted on a site by site basis. The overlay requires an approved site plan, a recommendation from the planning board, with final approval granted by the City Council. All multi-family projects must adhere to the underlying residential district density and dimensional requirements, and those





**TABLE 3.5: Maximum Allowable Residential Densities**

ZONING DISTRICT	UNITS PER ACRE
A-7	17
A-10	14
A-15	8
A-40	3

in general business districts must adhere to A-7 district requirements.

### Commercial Zoning Districts.

Several zoning districts allow for commercial uses. The General Business District (GB) allows for a diversity of

commercial uses including retail, service, office and automotive uses. The Office District (O) allows for professional and low intensity businesses and professional services, including new offices that are residential in character, and the Waterfront Business District (WB) allows for businesses primarily used for marine purposes. Design criteria are lacking in the existing commercial district regulations, resulting in the poor design of the commercial strip development along the city's major roadways, along with increased congestion and sprawling commercial patterns.

The City Centre zoning districts, Intermodal and Gateway, also allow for commercial uses, with application of pedestrian-friendly design principles.

**Industrial Districts.** Two zoning districts allow for industrial uses. The General Industrial District (GI) allows for industrial and manufacturing operations and enterprises, including assembly of durable goods, bulk storage and general storage of trucks and construction equipment, as long as they do not create serious problems of compatibility with surrounding land uses or pose unwarranted toxic, explosive or environmental hazards to their general vicinity. The Light Industrial District (LI) allows for limited less intensive industrial uses.

**Overlay Zoning Districts.** There are seven overlay districts within the code:

- The **Institutional-Health Care** (IH) is designated to provide areas for health care facilities.
- The **Institutional-Educational** (IE) district provides for educational facilities such as colleges, universities, vocational institutions and professional training schools.

Public schools are not included in this designation. They are allowed in other zoning districts by right.

- The **Planned District Residential Overlay** (PDR) is applied to allow for two-family and multi-family residential developments with more than 10 units.
- The **Planned Unit Development Overlay District** (PUD) allows for a mixed use district with residential and limited commercial or industrial uses on large parcels.
- The **Flood Hazard Overlay District** (AE, VE) includes all land areas that fall within the 100-year floodplain. The intent of the overlay is to protect life and property from natural flooding hazards. Any development or man-made change proposed must meet several requirements to receive a building permit, including a FEMA and NFIP (National Flood Insurance Program) certificate upon completion of the foundation.
- The **Historic District Overlay** (H) is designed to protect and preserve historic, architectural or archaeological character of structures or sites, or for neighborhoods that hold a wider historical significance.
- The **Watershed Protection Overlay District** (WP) protects environmentally sensitive surface water and groundwater bodies or wetlands from levels of pollution that threaten public health, welfare and safety.

Overlay districts require review by and a recommendation from the Planning Board and approval by the City Council before a change can be made to the zoning map.

**Special Districts.** Special districts have been created for the Warwick Station area (City Centre) and to promote mixed-use village environments:

- **Warwick Station Area Zoning Districts.** Two zoning districts regulate land uses in and around the Inter-Link.
  - **The City Centre Intermodal District** (Intermodal) includes land adjacent to the Warwick railroad and airport terminals. The intent of the intermodal zone is to create and sustain an area of regional economic activity within a retail, commercial and office core between the two terminals. This area is the core





commercial activity area of the Warwick Station Development District (City Centre). It is intended that this zone have a high quality of design for pedestrian use, infrastructure improvements that will enable a flow of users between the two transportation nodes and an appropriate intensity of associated retail, office and hotel uses.

- **The City Centre Gateway District** (Gateway) is intended to serve as transitional areas leading to the Intermodal District of the Warwick Station Development District from outlying areas, including the Post Road and Airport Road general business districts. The Gateway District is intended to allow limited commercial uses customarily associated with transportation facilities such as airport and railroad terminals as well as general commercial uses commonly allowed within general business districts.
- **Village District Zoning.** Village District Zoning was adopted in 2011 to create new economic and housing opportunities within Warwick by reestablishing mixed-use districts in the city's traditional village areas. Village zoning specifically calls for a mix of uses including retail and a variety of residential types, combined with reduced parking requirements and building setbacks, as well as design standards to encourage a more active pedestrian environment with greater interaction to the street. Thus far, Village Zoning has only been adopted in Apponaug Village and along West Shore Road in Conimicut, but it can be applied in other areas of the city where mixed-use, walkable "Main Street" areas were historically the norm or where they may be most successful today.