

PART IV PROSPEROUS CITY

“Warwick is blessed with many excellent assets and business development opportunities.”

—WARWICK RESIDENT

Economic Development Opportunity Sectors

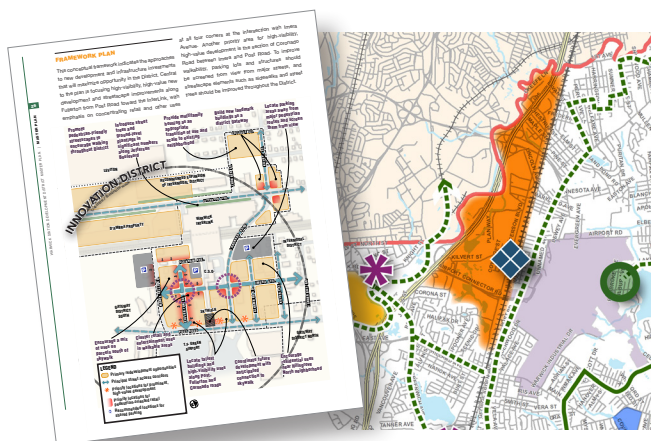
- **Educational services:** satellite or specialty campus.
- **Financial services:** call centers, customer service, processing, and data centers.
- **Health care:** satellite, regional, and walk-in facilities.
- **Medical devices and instruments:** manufacturing, customization, packing and kitting, and foreign trade.
- **Biotechnology and pharmaceuticals:** manufacturing, dosing, packaging and kitting.
- **High-value manufacturing:** assembly, final manufacturing, customization, service, remanufacturing.
- Professional and technical services.

City Centre Warwick Development District: Live-Work-Play at the Gateway to Rhode Island

- Implementation of the Master Plan to make the district a transit and regional transportation hub, an economic growth center, an arts and culture center, and a lively, mixed-use urban neighborhood.

Warwick Innovation District: Technology and Light Manufacturing

- The industrial area near I-95, Warwick Station, and the airport designated and transformed with appropriate zoning and design standards and upgraded infrastructure and appearance.



Regional Retail for the 21st Century: Route 2/ Bald Hill Road Enhancement District

- An urban design overlay district to improve the experience of shopping on Route 2—functionally and aesthetically—and maintain this district as the state’s premier destination shopping area.

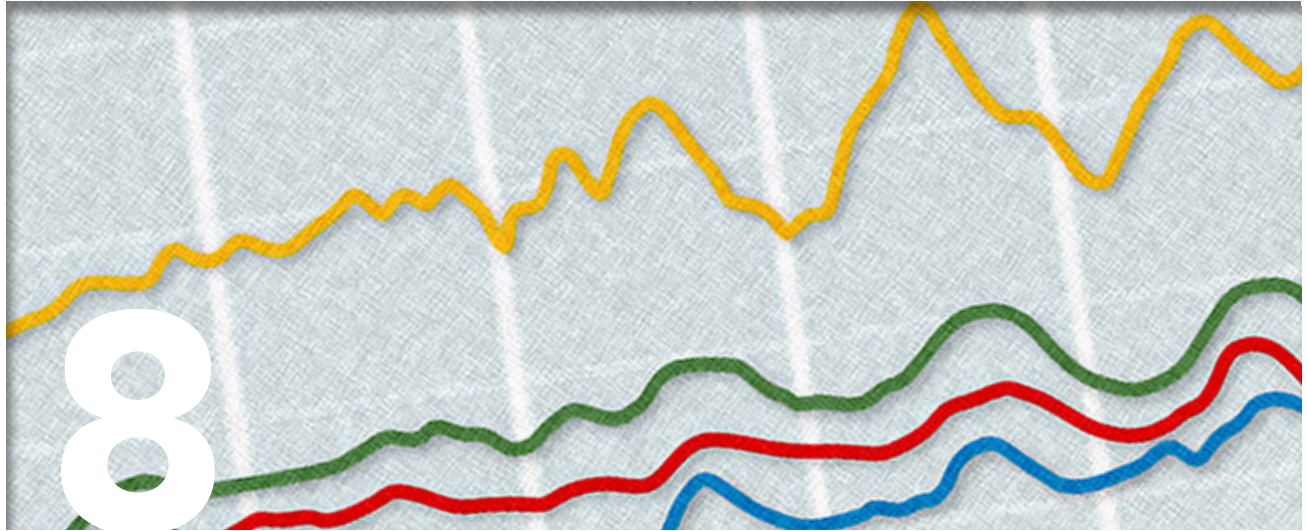
Neighborhood Retail Right-Sized and Mixed With Housing

- A planning and zoning framework to promote redevelopment of neighborhood shopping centers at major intersections as mixed-use centers.
- Mixed-use zoning in major corridors to encourage multi-family development of underutilized and vacant retail locations.

Economic Development and Warwick Tradition

- Continued support for the shellfish industry
- Strengthened tourism based on natural and cultural assets





Economic Development

FROM A WARWICK RESIDENT

“Warwick is blessed with many excellent assets and business development opportunities for future growth.”



A GOALS AND POLICIES

GOALS

Attract and retain businesses in key existing and emerging economic base industries.

Preserve and strengthen neighborhood retail districts that enhance the quality of life in the city's neighborhoods.

Improve the business environment.

Increase access to high-quality employment opportunities for Warwick residents.

POLICIES FOR DECISION MAKERS

- Implement plans for the City Centre Warwick, a new innovation district near I-95, and enhancement of the Bald Hill Road corridor.
- Identify target industries and strategically target marketing, development incentives, and land use policies to attract and retain businesses in these industries.
- Implement land use policies that support a diversity of industries and promote a strong, stable tax base.
- Work to retain traditional industries that remain economically viable and have played an important role in the city's historical development.
- Invest in public infrastructure to catalyze private development.
- Engage in public-private partnerships to stimulate suitable forms of development and redevelopment on key sites.
- Promote Warwick's quality of life as an economic asset.
- Incorporate neighborhood-based commercial development into the neighborhood planning process.
- Support the development and sustainability of locally-owned businesses.
- Invest in public infrastructure to catalyze private development.
- Provide incentives for property improvements.
- Increase responsiveness to business concerns.
- Streamline business regulatory processes.
- Strengthen coordination between economic development and workforce development.



B FINDINGS AND CHALLENGES

findings

While Warwick experienced moderate job growth in the early part of the last decade, employment declined considerably between 2006 and 2010, faster than both the state and the nation.

Warwick has a relatively high share of jobs in low-to moderate-wage industries, translating into a relatively low average wage.

Warwick's most important primary industry sectors are health care and social assistance, retail trade, and accommodation and food services.

Most of the city's primary industry sectors have experienced job loss during the past decade, with only three, health care and social assistance, professional and technical services, and private educational services, experiencing growth.

Compared to the state and the nation, Warwick has high concentrations of employment relative to total employment in transportation and warehousing, real estate and rental and leasing, retail trade, management of companies and enterprises (e.g., national or regional corporate headquarters), and finance and insurance. This suggests that it maintains a competitive advantage as a location for firms in these industry sectors. While Warwick shed jobs in all of these sectors during the past decade, real estate and rental and leasing, management of companies and enterprises, and finance and insurance declined at a slower pace than overall employment, indicating that they may be better positioned to rebound as the general economy improves.

Particularly strong growth opportunities are indicated in the tourism, ambulatory health care services, professional and technical services, and medical device manufacturing industries.

The unemployment rate for Warwick residents has remained consistently, if only slightly, below the state average during the past decade. However, after starting the decade below the national average, local unemployment surpassed the national rate in 2007 and remained above it through 2010.

Among industries, Warwick residents are most likely to be employed in health care and social assistance, retail trade, manufacturing, educational services, finance and insurance, and accommodation and food services.

Among occupations, Warwick residents are most likely to be employed in relatively high-paying professional, management, and business and financial operations occupations, and middle-paying office and administrative support. Smaller numbers are employed in blue collar occupations and low-wage service occupations.

Warwick residents tend to be relatively highly educated, with a higher proportion having obtained a post-secondary degree than their state and national counterparts. Younger residents have significantly higher levels of educational attainment than older residents, making them well positioned to compete for high-skill, high-wage jobs.

The relatively high education levels of Warwick residents are reflected in their relatively high incomes. Warwick residents earn more than their counterparts at both the state and national levels and are much less likely to live below the poverty line.

Warwick has a relatively mature population, with a lower proportion of residents under 45 years of age and a higher proportion 45 years and older than both the state and the nation. While this could portend workforce shortages in the future, most workers in Warwick commute from outside the city.



challenges

Bolstering its position as a regional retail center

Fully capitalizing on its transportation assets

Capturing its share of the state's emerging technology economy, including life sciences and marine technology

Preserving its traditional shellfish industry in the face of ongoing environmental and regulatory challenges

Upgrading its aging and deteriorated commercial and industrial real estate inventory and adjacent public infrastructure

Attracting employers providing higher-quality jobs matched to the educational attainment levels of residents

Strengthening neighborhood retail districts

workforce development programs as very important and another 39 percent as somewhat important.

- The top choice for economic development investment among community survey respondents was increased support for locally-based retail. Other investments choices that received strong support were improving the aesthetics of existing commercial corridors, support for improved waterfront businesses and facilities, support for more neighborhood retail and services, and providing tax incentives to attract new business.
- Businesses cite the need for improved circulation and wayfinding signage to improve access to the waterfront and neighborhood commercial districts.
- Businesses advocate for more business-friendly local regulatory and permitting processes.
- Business point to the need for more effective marketing, both internal and external to the city, to increase patronage of local businesses and attractions



WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAID

- Local job growth was one of the most important issues cited by community survey respondents. 73 percent rated it as very important and 22 percent as somewhat important.
- 61 percent of community survey respondents rated improving the appearance of major roads and commercial corridors as very important and 31 percent as somewhat important. Both business owners and almost all the of survey respondents also cite the need to improve the appearance of major commercial corridors.
- 43 percent of community survey respondents rated promoting mixed-use village development in a “Main Streets” setting as very important and 39 percent as somewhat important. In addition, 56 percent of respondents said that more land should be devoted to this type of development.
- 39 percent of community survey respondents rated increasing post-secondary technical education and



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

1. Warwick Economy

Wage and salary employment in the city of Warwick stood at 46,439 in 2010. Warwick also had an estimated 10,300 business proprietors and otherwise self-employed workers in that year.¹ The city gained employment during the first half of the last decade but began to shed jobs beginning in 2007 even before the onset of the 2008-9 recession. While the city outperformed both the state and the nation in job growth through 2005, it lost jobs at a faster pace than both the state and the nation between 2006 and 2010. (See Figure 8.1) During this period, wage and salary employment declined by 6,624, or 12.5 percent, from a peak of 53,063.

¹ Proprietor employment data is not available at the municipal level. This estimate is extrapolated from Kent County data sourced from the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis.



Average annual pay for wage and salary jobs in Warwick was \$40,833 in 2010. Pay levels are below both state and national averages and have been consistently so during the past decade. (See Figure 8.2)

INDUSTRY PROFILE

Industry Structure

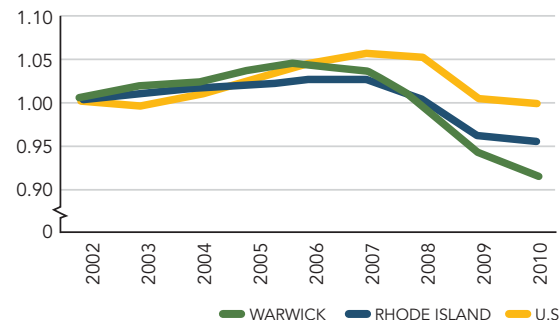
Warwick's most important primary industry sectors² are health care and social assistance, retail trade, and accommodation and food services, the latter in part encompassing the tourism industry. Together these three industries comprise 44 percent of all wage and salary employment. Other important sectors are government, manufacturing, and finance and insurance. The city's largest industries pay moderate to low wages, which accounts in large part for the low average pay level of Warwick jobs relative to the state and nation. (See Figure 8.3)

Over the past decade, most of Warwick's primary industry sectors have lost employment. The most dramatic decline, both on a numerical and percentage basis, has been in manufacturing. Between, 2002 and 2010, manufacturing jobs declined by over 2,200, or 40 percent. The second largest numerical decline was in the important retail sector, which dropped by 1,600 jobs, or 18 percent. The decline in retail employment began in 2006 and continued consistently on a year-to-year basis through 2010. Consequently, while the flood of 2010 was likely responsible for some loss in retail employment in that year, it was not the major contributing factor to this longer-term trend. Other significant losses were in administrative and waste services, and transportation and warehousing, the latter driven by declines in air transportation and related services.

On the plus side, three industries added jobs during this period. Health care and social assistance employment grew by almost 1,000, or 13 percent. Increases also occurred in professional and technical services and private educational services. (See Figures 8.4 and 8.5)

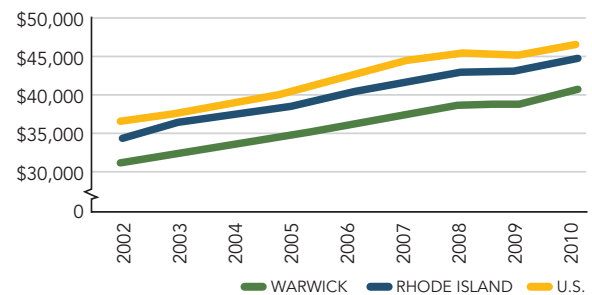
² As defined by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Primary industry sectors are at the 2-digit level.

Figure 8.1: Trends in Non-Farm Wage & Salary Employment 2002–2010: Warwick, Rhode Island and U.S.



Source: R.I. Department of Labor & Training; U.S. Department of Labor

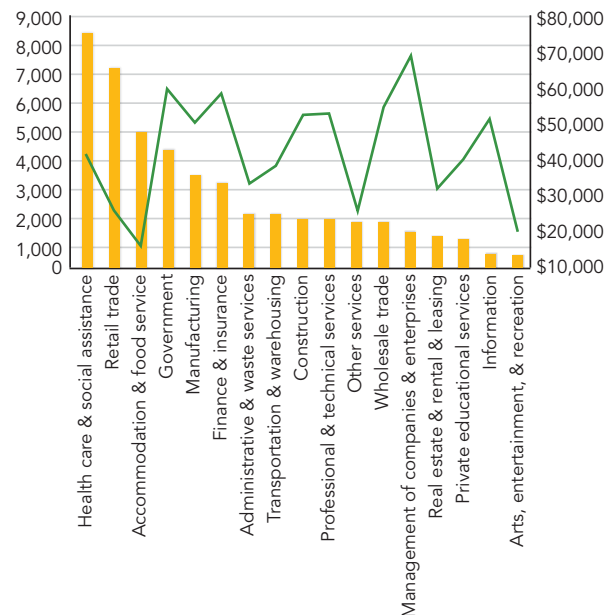
Figure 8.2: Trends in Average Annual Pay* 2002–2010: Warwick, Rhode Island, and U.S.



* Not adjusted for inflation

Source: R.I. Department of Labor & Training; U.S. Department of Labor

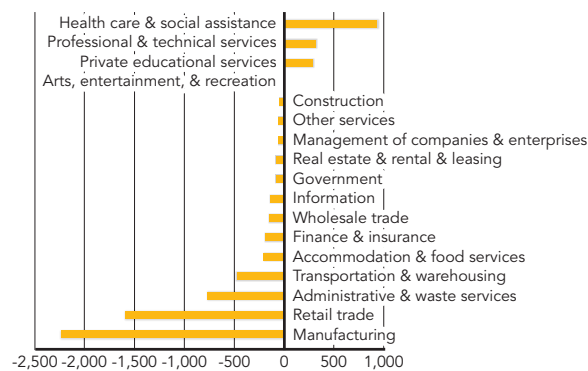
Figure 8.3: Jobs in Warwick by Industry and Average Industry Wage, 2010



Source: RI Department of Labor & Training, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

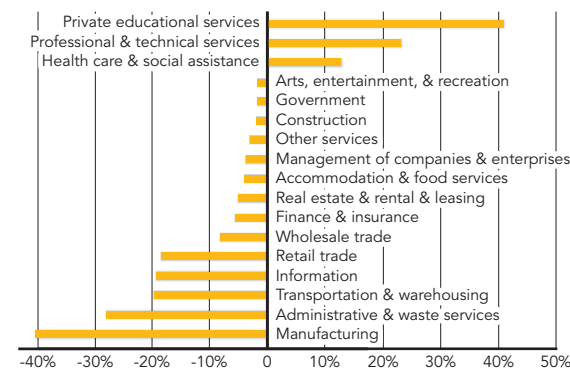


Figure 8.4: Change in Employment by Industry, Warwick 2002–2010



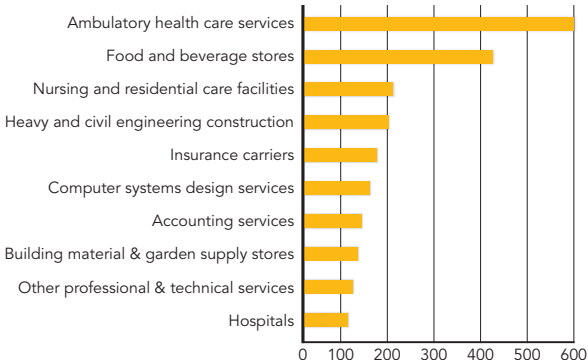
Source: RI Department of Labor & Training, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Figure 8.5: Percentage Change in Employment by Industry, Warwick 2002–2010



Source: RI Department of Labor & Training, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Figure 8.6: Fastest Growing Industry Segments, Warwick 2002–2010



Source: RI Department of Labor & Training, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

A more detailed look at industry employment data reveals some of the key industry segments that are driving both growth and decline in the city's economy. As Figure 8.6 indicates, some of the fastest growing industry segments have been in the health care and the professional and technical services sectors. In health care, growth has been particularly strong in ambulatory health care services, driven by growth in home health care services, and "offices of other health practitioners."³ Growth has also occurred in nursing and residential care facilities, and hospitals. In professional and technical services, the most significant growth has occurred in computer systems design, accounting, and "other professional and technical services."⁴ Bucking the overall decline in the retail sector, two retail segments, food and beverage stores, and building material and garden supply stores, have experienced employment growth.

Figure 8.7, which displays the fastest declining industry segments, reveals which industry segments have been driving the decline in the retail and manufacturing sectors. The single fastest declining industry segment is general merchandise stores (e.g. department stores), with the loss of almost 1,000 jobs. A number of other re-

3 Includes chiropractors, optometrists, mental health practitioners (except physicians), physical, occupational and speech therapists, and audiologists, and podiatrists

4 Includes marketing research & public opinion polling, photographic services, translation and interpretation services, and veterinary services

Figure 8.7: Fastest Declining Industry Segments, Warwick 2002–2010



Source: RI Department of Labor & Training, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages



tail segments, including clothing and accessory stores, sporting goods, hobby, book and music stores, and “miscellaneous retailers”⁵ have also suffered significant declines. In manufacturing, the largest declines have occurred in “miscellaneous manufacturing,” which includes the jewelry industry, computer and electronic product manufacturing, and machinery manufacturing. Another large drop, in administrative and support services, was driven by the decline in employment services, an industry particularly sensitive to economic downturns.

Competitive Position

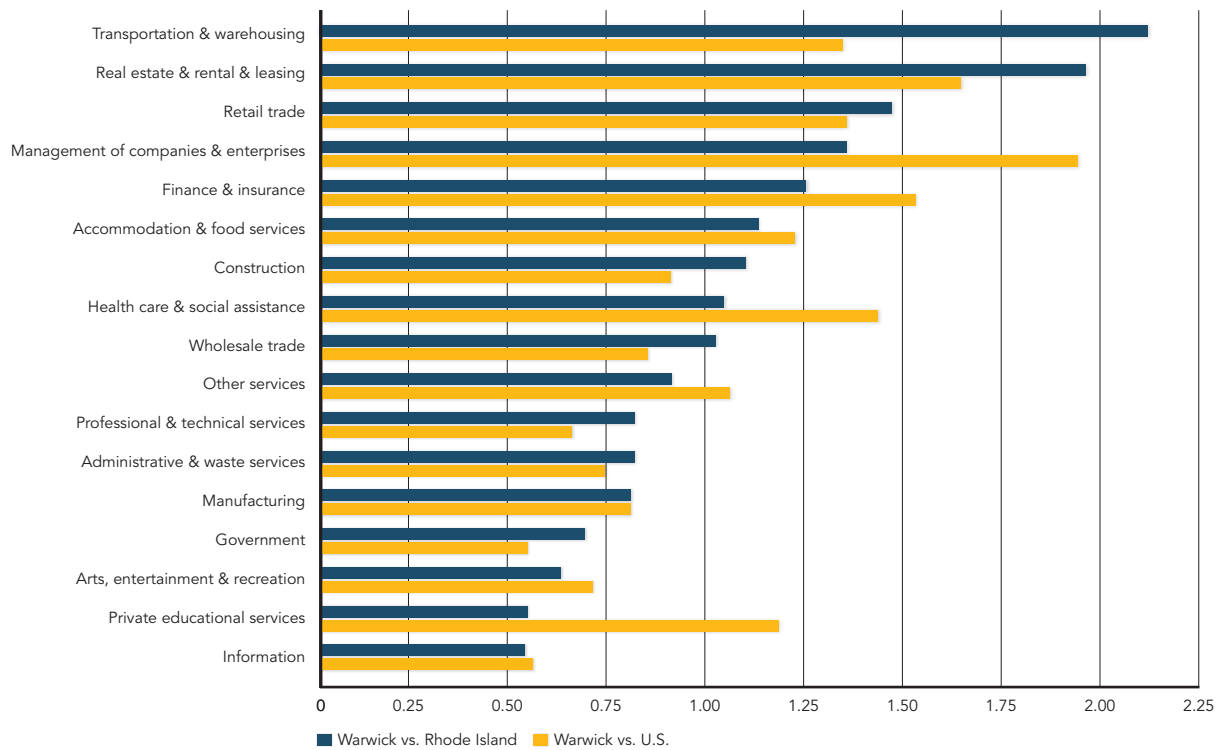
Figure 8.8 shows location quotients for Warwick in primary industry sectors relative to the state of Rhode Island and the U.S. Location quotients indicate the concentration of industry employment in an area relative to a comparison area and are thus a measure of the area’s

competitive strength in that industry relative to the comparison area. A location quotient of greater than one indicates a higher level of concentration and, by implication, a relatively strong competitive position.

Among primary industry sectors, Warwick competes particularly well in transportation and warehousing, real estate and rental and leasing, retail trade, management of companies and enterprises (e.g., national or regional corporate headquarters), and finance and insurance. Warwick’s strength in the first two sectors primarily reflects the presence of T.F. Green Airport, and the high concentrations of employment in industries such as air transportation, couriers and messengers (e.g. FedEx, UPS), and automobile rental, which makes up the bulk of employment in rental and leasing services. The airport is also partly responsible for the city’s strong competitive position in accommodation. (See Table 1 for industry segments with high location quotients relative to the state)

5 Includes florists, office supplies, stationary, and gift stores, used merchandise stores, pet and pet supply stores, arts dealers, and mobile home dealers.

Figure 8.8: Location Quotients: Warwick vs. Rhode Island and U.S., 2010



Source: U.S. Department of Labor AND R.I. Department of Labor and Training, *Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages*



Table 8.1: Selected Industry Sub-sectors* with High Location Quotients Relative to Rhode Island

INDUSTRY SUB-SECTOR	EMPLOYMENT 2010	LOCATION QUOTIENT
Couriers & messengers	1,241	7.36
Rental & leasing services	587	3.12
Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	457	2.79
General merchandise stores	1,602	2.39
Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1,111	2.14
Insurance carriers	1,601	1.71
Accommodation	634	1.55
Building material & garden supply stores	543	1.44
Clothing & clothing accessories stores	675	1.41
Credit intermediation	1,398	1.35
Real estate	557	1.32
Merchant wholesalers, durable goods	1,072	1.31
Fabricated metals product manufacturing	762	1.31

*1% or more of total employment

Source: RI Department of Labor and Training, *Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages*

The strength of the retail sector reflects Warwick's position as a regional retail center, with the proliferation of malls, big box stores, and automotive dealerships, particularly along Route 2. It has particularly high concentrations of employment in sporting goods, hobby, book and music stores, general merchandise stores, automotive dealerships, building materials and garden supply stores, and clothing and accessory stores.

Warwick is also a relatively strong location for management of companies and enterprises. Green Airport, which provides convenient air travel for corporate executives and sales representatives, is likely a factor in this regard. In finance and insurance, Warwick is well-positioned in both the insurance and banking segments.

As noted, all of these industry sectors shed jobs during the past decade, although real estate and rental and leasing, management of companies and enterprises, and finance and insurance declined at a slower pace than overall employment. This may indicate that they

are better positioned to rebound as the general economy improves.

Emerging Growth Opportunities

A review of recent industry trends and future projections, and discussions with local and state economic development professionals, point to a number of particularly strong industry growth opportunities for Warwick. These include tourism, ambulatory health care services, professional and technical services, and medical device manufacturing.

Tourism

Tourism is already a significant industry in Warwick. The city has 16 lodging facilities with 2,237 guest rooms. Six of these have convention and/or smaller meeting facilities (including the state's second largest convention facility). The city's central location in the state along with its transportation infrastructure makes it a convenient location for smaller conventions and conferences and provides easy access to all regions of the state for pleasure visitors. The city also has its own tourist attractions, including its coastline, recreational boating opportunities, and other recreational, historical and cultural attractions. Several new or planned initiatives, including the extension of commuter rail to Warwick and North Kingstown, the planned development of City Centre, the proposed development of Rocky Point for active and passive recreational activities, and the runway extension at T.F. Green airport, which would accommodate flights to and from more distant locations, create the opportunity to significantly expand tourism activity in Warwick in both the convention and recreational markets.

Ambulatory Health Care Services

Local employment in ambulatory health care services grew by 26 percent between 2002 and 2010, led by home health care services and "offices of other health care practitioners." In addition, the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training projects statewide growth of 19 percent between 2008 and 2018. Industry growth is being driven by the shift in health care services from hospital to outpatient settings and the aging of the population, with a commensurate increase in demand for in-home health care services. With its



relatively high number of aging residents (see Figure 8.17 below), Warwick will experience particularly strong growth in demand for in-home and outpatient services for the elderly.

Professional and Technical Services

While Warwick is under-represented in professional and technical services relative both to the state and nation (see Figure 8.8), this industry was one of only three primary industry sectors to expand locally between 2002 and 2010,⁶ with particularly strong growth in computer systems design services. Moreover, the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training projects industry growth of 29 percent between 2008 and 2018, the highest for any primary industry sector. With its ample supply of office space, Warwick is well-positioned to capture a significant share of this growth.

Medical Device Manufacturing

Warwick already has a small but growing cluster of medical device manufacturers. According to state employment data, the city had 13 firms in medical equipment and supplies manufacturing employing 339 workers in 2010, an employment increase of 137 percent since 2002. These companies include Geotec, which designs and manufactures custom surgical instruments and other medical devices, and Davol, which develops products for soft tissue reconstruction, specialized surgical procedures, and biologic implants. Companies in other industries also support the medical device industry, such as VR industries, an electronic contract manufacturer, which manufactures circuit boards for medical electronics. With the state focusing on health and life sciences as one of its target industries, and the development of Providence's Knowledge District, companies formed to develop new medical technologies generated by local research could find a home in Warwick as they outgrow their startup space. The city's still significant base of machinery manufacturers and metal fabrication firms form a valuable foundation of supportive technology for medical device manufacturers.

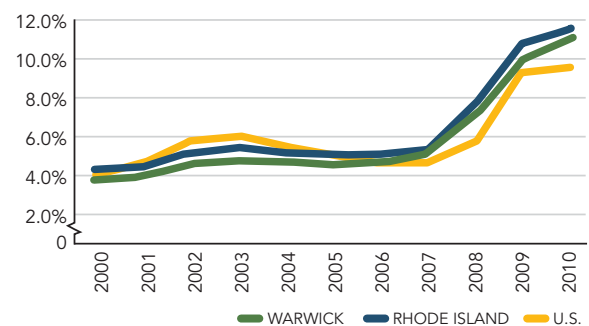
⁶ The other two were health care and social assistance, and private educational services.

Additional Opportunities

A 2013 Market Segmentation Analysis study for the City Centre Warwick identified additional industry opportunities or segments:

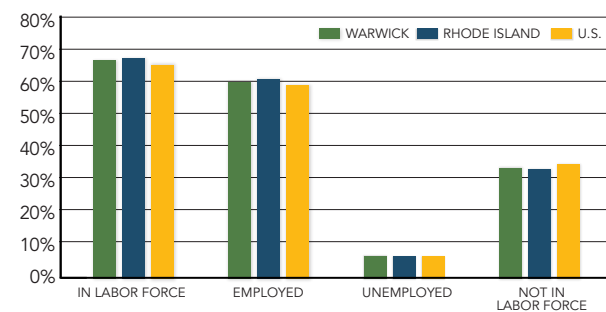
- Educational services – satellite or specialty campus facilities for higher education institutions
- Financial services – back office activities such as call centers, customer service, processing and data centers
- Health care – satellite, regional and walk-in centers
- Biotechnology and pharmaceuticals—small scale manufacturing for clinical trials or scale-up engineering, full scale manufacturing, dosing, packaging and kitting
- Foreign trade—through international air access at TF Green with connections to Quonset/Davisville economic centers, and ideally, Free Trade Zone activities

Figure 8.9: Unemployment Rate 2000–2010: Warwick, Rhode Island, and U.S.



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Figure 8.10: Employment Status of Population 16+, 2009: Warwick, Rhode Island, and U.S.



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



- Logistics and warehousing—distribution for the New England market; processing and customization for both domestic and international markets
- High value manufacturing and assembly—assembly, final manufacturing, customization, service, and remanufacturing

Warwick Station Development District Master Plan (City Centre Warwick)

The City is pursuing implementation of the Warwick Station Development District (WSDD) Master Plan adopted in 2011. In the words of the Master Plan:

“The District forms the gateway to T.F. Green Airport, one of Rhode Island’s most important economic engines. As T.F. Green has grown, a mix of airport-related uses and commercial strip development has come to characterize the airport’s front door. In establishing the Warwick Station Redevelopment District (WSRD) in 1998, the City of Warwick recognized the underutilized character of the land between the station and the airport and its potential for redevelopment to advance several public goals:

- Create a place of identity and pride for Warwick and Rhode Island.
- Provide economic benefits for Warwick and the state.
- Capitalize on intermodal transportation resources to foster high-value, high-quality, mixed-use growth.
- Create a sustainable, livable community by introducing a variety of housing choices connected to an economic growth center and established neighborhoods and by improving access to transportation, housing, and new jobs.”

Potential for a Warwick Innovation District

“Innovation districts” are economic development tools based on the idea that job growth and redevelopment in targeted locations can be fostered by intentionally clustering businesses, institutions, ideas and people through investing in places and institutions. Typically, an innovation district will include:

- Formal collaboration between three kinds of partners: higher education institutions, the public sector and private enterprise.

- Geographic focus on investing in and improving a particular place, ideally with access to transit, to be the innovation district.
- Initiatives to foster communication and collaboration, including compact, walkable design, and new or enhanced programs and institutions.
- Focus on a specific type of industry or industry cluster and/or a particular type of knowledge workers.

Warwick has an older industrial district in close proximity to the WSDD, between the airport and Jefferson Boulevard and I-95 and the river. With the right planning and regulatory framework and investments in infrastructure and aesthetic improvements, this area can be transformed into an Innovation District to take advantage of some of the economic development opportunities described above.

2. The Workforce

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS

The unemployment rate for workers residing in Warwick averaged 11.1 percent in 2010. This was lower than the statewide rate of 11.6 percent but considerably higher than the 9.6 percent national rate. The city’s unemployment rate has consistently remained below state averages during the past decade. It was below the national average for the first part of the decade but then climbed and remained above it from 2007 to 2010. (See Figure 8.9)

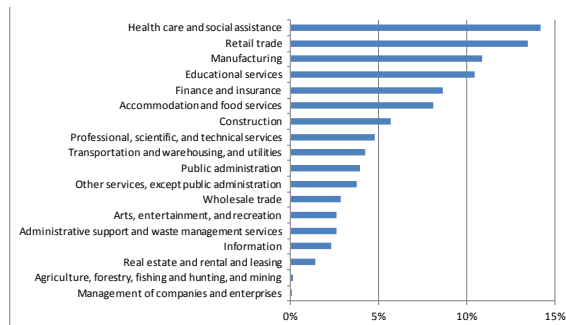
Warwick residents are about as likely to participate in the labor force—that is, to be either employed or looking for work—as other state residents, and slightly more likely than workers elsewhere in the U.S. (See Figure 8.10)

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY AND OCCUPATION

Warwick residents are employed in a wide range of industries and occupations. Among industries, they are most likely to be employed in health care and social assistance, retail trade, manufacturing and educational services. Almost half of the working population is



Figure 8.11: Industry Employment of the Working Population 16+ 2007–2009 Average



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2007–2009

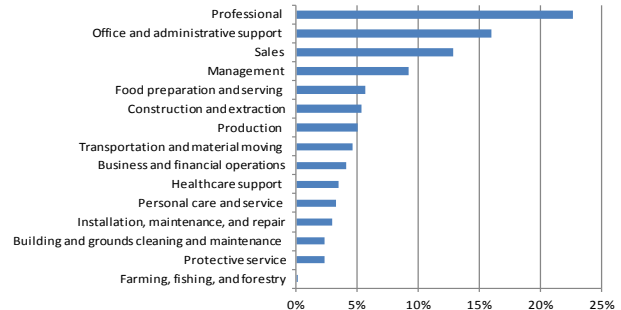
employed in these four industries. Other industries in which a significant number of residents are employed include finance and insurance, and accommodation and food services. (See Figure 8.11)

The distribution of industry employment among Warwick residents is well matched to the industry structure of employment in the city. There is a virtual match among the top six industries in which residents are employed and the top six industry employers within the city.⁷ (See Figure 8.3)

At the occupational level, a high proportion of Warwick residents are employed in relatively high-paying professional, management, and business and financial operations occupations. Thirty-six percent of residents are employed in these three occupations. Other occupations in which a relatively high proportion of residents are employed are generally middle-paying office and administrative support, and sales occupations, a total of 29 percent. Eighteen percent are employed in traditional blue collar occupations including construction, production, transportation and material moving, and installation, maintenance and repair. The remaining 17 percent are employed in lower-paying service occupations,

⁷ Because of differences in the way industry employment by place and industry employment of the population are classified, employment in public education is counted in “government” in the former and in “educational services” in the latter. A large proportion of the jobs by place in government are in public education.

Figure 8.12: Occupational Employment of the Employed Population 16+: 2007–2009 Average



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2007–2009

including food preparation and serving, healthcare support, personal care and service, building and grounds maintenance, and protective services. (See Figure 8.12)

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Warwick residents tend to be relatively highly educated. A higher proportion has obtained a high school diploma or equivalent than their counterparts at both the state and national levels, and a higher proportion have obtained a post-secondary degree. However, a slightly lower proportion have obtained higher-level bachelor's or graduate degrees than the state average. See Figure 8.13)

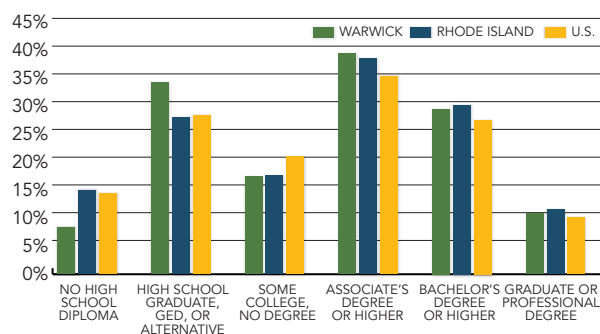
Warwick residents are also becoming more highly educated. Younger residents tend to have obtained significantly more education than their older counterparts, with 60 percent of those in the 25-34 age group having received a post-secondary credential. Residents in the prime working age group of 35-44, while less educated than the younger counterparts, are more highly educated than older age groups. This puts the younger generations in a good position to obtain higher-skill, higher-wage jobs. (See Figure 8.14)

INCOME AND POVERTY

The relatively high education levels of Warwick residents are reflected in their relatively high incomes. Warwick residents earn more than their counterparts at both the state and national levels and are much less

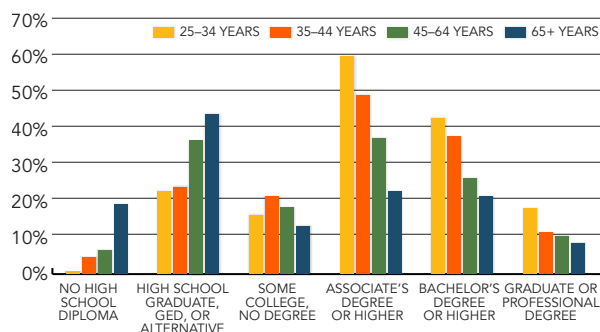


Figure 8.13: Educational Attainment of Population 25+, 2009: Warwick, Rhode Island, and U.S.



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

Figure 8.14: Educational Attainment of Population 25+, by Age Group, 2009



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

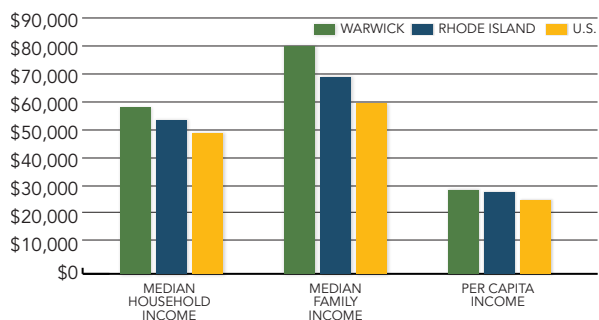
likely to live below the poverty line. (See Figures 8.15 and 8.16)

This may seem contradictory to data presented earlier on the relatively low wage levels of Warwick jobs. However, most Warwick residents work outside the city, reflecting in part the search for higher-paying jobs commensurate with their skills. According to 2000 Census data on work flows, the most recent data available, 63 percent of Warwick's working residents work outside the city.

AGE

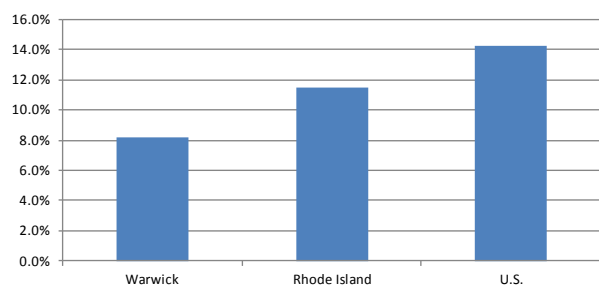
Warwick has a relatively mature population, with a lower proportion of residents under 45 years of age and a higher proportion 45 years and older than both the state and the nation. (See Figure 8.17) This may have implications for the ability of local employers to find workers as the baby boom generation retires, although

Figure 8.15: Income 2009: Warwick, Rhode Island, and U.S.



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

Figure 8.16: Poverty Rate 2009: Warwick, Rhode Island, and U.S.



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

almost two thirds of Warwick workers commute from outside the city.

3. Economic Development Resources

A range of local and state government agencies and nonprofit organizations provide economic development services in the City of Warwick. These include entities involved in both business development and workforce development. The most important of these are described below.

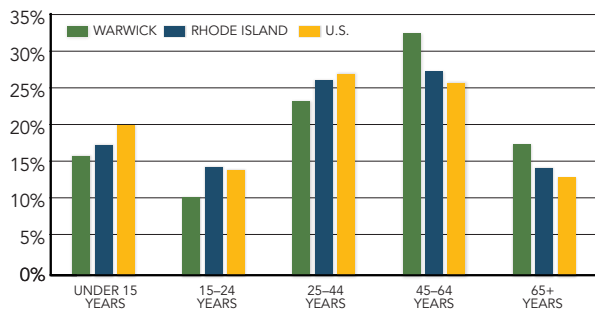
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Warwick Department of Tourism, Culture, and Development

The city's lead economic development agency, the Department engages in both tourism development and



**Figure 8.17: Distribution of Population by Age, 2009:
Warwick, Rhode Island, and U.S.**



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

general economic development. Its major activity is marketing, which includes development and maintenance of tourism and economic development websites, social media sites, media buys, ad creation, brochure production and distribution and participation in trade shows, conferences and meetings. The department also maintains relationships with area commercial realtors that in turn provide information on property listings that are stored on the city website. The available property listing is maintained and updated frequently and is accessible to the general public for use as an outreach program for those looking to secure a location in Warwick for their business. The Department also works in partnership with the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation and the Central Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce on business recruitment efforts. It also engages in business retention and expansion through outreach and assistance to existing businesses, networking events and social media. Most of its funding for tourism marketing is generated from state room tax revenues while funding for general economic development marketing comes from the city's general fund.

The Department encourages and utilizes the concepts and practices of geo-tourism while encouraging smart tourism development opportunities. These opportunities include enhancing the city's geographical character by developing and improving it in ways distinctive to the area and reflective of its natural and cultural heritage, so as to encourage market differentiation and cultural pride.

The Department has a staff of three and an annual budget of approximately \$550,000, approximately 60% of which goes towards marketing programs.

Central Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber is the leading business membership organization in central Rhode Island, serving businesses in several central Rhode Island communities, including Warwick. It supports local businesses by acting as an informal liaison with local governments, participating in state legislative advocacy, organizing networking events, sponsoring informational presentations, providing marketing opportunities, and offering discounted services. It also promotes tourism and relocation to the area through its website and distribution of informational brochures.

Central Rhode Island Business Information Center

The Business Information Center (BIC), housed in the Central Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, provides a one-stop location where current and aspiring small business owners can receive assistance and advice at no charge. The BIC offers internet-based tools, a small business resource library of books and publications, and consultants to help entrepreneurs plan their business, expand an existing business or venture into new business areas. On-site counseling is provided by the Rhode Island Small Business Development Center (RISBDC) and the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE).

Providence-Warwick Convention and Visitors Bureau

The Convention & Visitors Bureau is responsible for promoting Providence, Warwick and the Rhode Island Convention Center Complex as visitor destinations. It provides an array of services and travel planning assistance to visitors and conventions. This includes hosting a website, distributing a visitor and meeting planner guide, and assisting organizations and convention planners with convention planning. It works in collaboration with the Warwick Department of Tourism, Culture and Development to market Warwick as a convention destination and Warwick's lodging facilities to accommodate the needs of Providence-based conventions.



Rhode Island Office of Tourism

The Office of Tourism promotes leisure tourism throughout the state. It hosts a website, distributes a travel guide, and works collaboratively with local communities on tourism development and promotion.

Rhode Island Commerce Corporation

The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation (RICC) is the state's lead economic development organization. A quasi-public agency, RICC promotes business expansion in, and relocation to, Rhode Island by assisting companies with commercial real estate, business financing, state and local business incentives, workforce training and other needs.

RICC's site selection group works with companies considering expanding or relocating in Rhode Island to identify suitable sites, address infrastructure needs, coordinate visits, and analyze alternative locations for expansion and relocation. Once a company has expressed interest in a particular site, RICC works with the local community to develop a combined package of state and local assistance.

RICC focuses on promoting development of industry sectors that have been identified as particularly important to the state's economy. These include consumer products and design, defense and homeland security, financial services, green economy, health and life sciences, information technology and digital media, manufacturing and industrial products, marine trades, and tourism and hospitality.

POLARIS MEP

The Rhode Island Manufacturing Extension Service is a non-profit organization, funded in part through the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Manufacturing Extension Partnership, which helps Rhode Island manufacturers become more competitive by improving their manufacturing processes. It provides training and technical assistance in continuous improvement, lean manufacturing, quality and management systems, facility layout and design, and growth strategies.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, Workforce Development Services Division

RIDL's Workforce Development Services Division is the lead workforce development agency in the state. In addition to developing and managing programs for businesses, individual workers, and youth, the Division coordinates the workforce development activities of various state departments. It also operates the netWORKri one-stop career centers in West Warwick and three other communities.

netWORKri

The West Warwick netWORKri Center is the closest of the state's four one-stop career centers to Warwick and the one most frequently used by Warwick residents seeking employment services. The centers provide a range of employment services, including:

- staff-assisted or self-directed employment searches;
- employment counseling and testing;
- access to information and referrals to training programs funded through federal workforce dollars including the Workforce Investment Act and Trade Adjustment Assistance;
- local and national job listings;
- a resource area, including library, telephones, copiers, fax machines and computer workstations;
- assistive technology for people with disabilities; and



- workshops including résumé preparation, interviewing skills, job search techniques, computer basics, networking and online short-term course offerings.

The Center can provide individuals who are deemed to need additional occupational training with individual training accounts (ITAs) for training with certified training providers. Training is available in occupations that are deemed to be in-demand according to state labor market data. The Center can also fund enrollment in Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs at the Community College of Rhode Island for certain eligible workers.

Career Centers seek to collaborate with local governments and nonprofits in a number of ways, including exchanging information about complementary services, making client referrals, improving access to city resources such as libraries and adult education programs, and soliciting local employers to make informational presentations about employment opportunities.

Business Workforce Center

Representatives from RIDLT's Business Workforce Center are the department's liaisons to the business community and simplify the process of obtaining workforce development services in Rhode Island. The Business Workforce Center offers the following employer services:

- developing job orders;
- coordinating recruitments and job fairs;
- pre-screening applicants; and
- facilitating contacts that help employers become or stay competitive (i.e., tax credits, on-the-job training and incumbent worker grants, WorkShare).

Because the Business Workforce Center serves as the primary employer outreach for the department, it also oversees such employer-centered initiatives as Rapid Response and tax credit programs. As a part of the Rapid Response Program, Business Workforce Center staff proactively responds to layoffs and plant closings

by quickly coordinating services and providing immediate aid to companies and their affected workers. Staff works with employers and employee representatives to maximize public and private resources quickly and to minimize disruptions associated with job loss. Rapid Response staff members conduct on-site services to disseminate information on accessing unemployment insurance benefits, One-Stop Career Center re-employment services and training opportunities. Other on-site services include job fairs and customized re-employment workshops, such as résumé development and interviewing strategies.

The Center seeks to strengthen contacts with local governments in order to draw on their established relationships with their business communities to identify businesses in need of its services. It provides informational materials to city agencies for distribution to local companies and encourages referrals of businesses that are either in need of new workers or workforce training, or at-risk of initiating significant lay-offs. While it conducts its own business outreach, it has found that local governments often have more frequent contacts with local businesses and thus can identify needs at an earlier stage.

Youth Services

RIDLT's Workforce Development Services Division provides workforce development services to in-school and out-of-school youth ages 14-24 through 15 Youth-WORKS⁴¹¹ Centers around the state. Warwick's center is housed in the Buttonwoods Community Center and operated by the Comprehensive Community Action Program. Services include intake and assessment, job search skills training, pre-GED and GED classes, job readiness and work experience opportunities, occupational skills training, National Retail Federation's Customer Service Certification, leadership development, a summer jobs program, case management, and follow-up services.

The Division seeks to collaborate with local governments and school departments and local chambers of com-



merce in order to enhance its services. This can include engaging municipal recreation departments to provide work experience opportunities, developing satellite programs in schools targeted to students performing below grade-level, offering occupational training in career and technical high schools, and recruiting private employers for summer internships. The Division is currently developing a more comprehensive and integrated youth workforce development model that calls for greater collaboration between state and local governments and private employers.

Community College of Rhode Island

CCRI's Knight Campus is located in Warwick. In addition to a wide range of credit-bearing associate degree and certificate programs for students, CCRI provides a range of workforce training services to local businesses:

- Its Center for Workforce & Community Education's Workforce Training & Corporate Education program provides customized training in a range of skill areas, including manufacturing technologies, basic management skills, health and safety, workplace Spanish, computer training, and credit-bearing courses in conjunction with Academic Affairs. Programs can be offered either on site or on campus, and can include credit & noncredit programs, certificate or degree programs, or individual course offering.
- Its EducationToGo noncredit career and workforce online training programs can be used by employers to train individual workers.
- Career and Technical Training offerings include environmental safety programs such as lead abatement and lead inspector training, adult skills training, pharmacy technician II training, professional development for dental assistants and massage therapists, and more.
- It provides customized training and certificate preparation for higher-level professional and management employees through its Institute for Leadership and Organizational Development.

- Through a grant from the RI Department of Education, it provides literacy services to employers, with classes custom-designed to meet the specific needs of a work site. Services include English as a Second Language (ESL) training, basic skills enhancement (reading, math, writing), and GED preparation.

Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE)

RIDE's Office of Adult Education administers programs in Adult Basic Education, GED, and English for Speakers of Other Languages. Classes support adults who wish to advance their education towards a high school credential, training, and/or post secondary degrees. In Warwick, adult education programs are provided by the Westbay Community Action Program.

RIDE's Office of Multiple Pathways is developing a cohesive system of learning opportunities that integrate academic and 21st Century work and career ready skills to ensure that all learners, grades K-Adult, will have access to diverse program options that match their career interests and the ways they wish to pursue them. The Office includes the teams of Secondary Education, Career and Technical Education, Adult Basic Education and GED, and Virtual Learning teams.



E RECOMMENDATIONS

GOAL 1

Attract and retain business in key existing and emerging economic base industries.

POLICY

- Identify target industries and strategically target marketing, development incentives, and land use policies to attract and retain businesses in these industries
- Implement land use policies that support a diversity of industries and promote a strong, stable tax base
- Work to retain traditional industries that remain economically viable and have played an important role in the city's historical development
- Invest in public infrastructure to catalyze private development
- Engage in public-private partnerships to stimulate suitable forms of development and redevelopment on key sites
- Promote Warwick's quality of life as an economic asset

STRATEGIES

A. Promote Warwick as a home for expanding life sciences, marine technology, and other technology firms, capitalizing on Warwick's location midway between Providence's Knowledge District and the University of Rhode Island in Kingston, and its ample inventory of commercial and industrial space.

Actions

1. Build relationships with the technology community through engagement with organizations such as the Rhode Island Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Rhode Island Science and Technology Council, Rhode Island Manufacturing Extension Service, and Slater Technology Fund.

2. Identify technology firms transitioning from startup to expansion phase and develop targeted marketing approaches including personal outreach, promotional materials, and information on available properties.
3. Monitor trends in development of technology-based industries and communicate with property owners and developers about opportunities for targeted marketing and property improvements.

B. Target marketing to other industries in which Warwick has competitive strengths, including regional retail, professional and technical services, financial services, and distribution.

Actions

1. Develop marketing materials highlighting city's assets and advantages relevant to target industries.
2. Create an industries section on the city's economic development website and use social media to market to target industries.
3. Attend state and regional industry trade shows.
4. Coordinate marketing efforts with Rhode Island EDC.

C. Strengthen and expand the tourism industry.

Actions

1. Identify tourism market segments most likely to experience growth and focus on their development.
2. Selectively develop additional attractions, including the development of Rocky Point for a combination of active and passive recreation activities, full restoration of the Aldrich Mansion in collaboration with the Providence Diocese, and further development of sports tourism.
3. Develop partnerships with local businesses and civic groups that support and build on the area's natural assets, history and culture in order to provide a distinctive, genuine visitor experience.
4. Establish a visitors' ambassadors program that enlists resident volunteers to showcase the city's natural, historical, and cultural offerings through such measures as information kiosks at key entry points and tourism venues, and guided tours.



5. Provide wayfinding and gateway signage to visitor attractions and retail districts.
6. Organize tourism information by defined districts, “packaging” information on attractions, events, retail, dining, and lodging for each district.
7. Promote the development of food and lodging facilities to increase the city’s appeal to targeted markets.
8. Improve waterfront circulation through establishment of a water shuttle to connect major waterfront facilities and venues.

D. Preserve the shellfish industry by maintaining needed infrastructure and appropriate land use policies, and advocating for supportive federal and state policies.

Actions

1. Ensure implementation of provisions of the new Harbor Management Plan addressing the needs of the local shellfish industry.
2. Support preservation of waterfront infrastructure that serves commercial fisherman.
3. Promote branding and marketing of local shellfish in cooperation with state efforts.
4. Develop eco-tourism projects that involve local fisherman and provide them with supplemental income.
5. Support industry advocacy for favorable federal and state fisheries policies.

E. Establish land use and public investment policies that promote the attraction and growth of target industries

Actions

1. Implement the Warwick Station District (City Centre) Master Plan.
2. Implement City Centre Master Plan, zoning ordinance, and design standards prohibiting uses and designs that are nonconforming with the ordinance and principal objectives of the master plan and design goals.
3. Create an Innovation District in the industrial area near I-95 with Technology/Light Industry zoning and

design standards; infrastructure improvements; and public realm urban design improvements.

4. Adopt land use regulations that sufficiently provide for the diversity of target industry development and, in particular, preserve a balance between large-scale retail development and other industry development.
5. Invest in infrastructure improvements in key commercial/industrial corridors such as Jefferson Boulevard, Warwick Avenue, and Post Road to increase their appeal to property developers and professional and technology businesses.
6. Provide targeted incentives for repurposing of vacant and deteriorated commercial and industrial space through tax stabilization and tax increment financing.
7. Establish an overlay district for urban design and functional improvements to the Route 2/Bald Hill Road corridor.

GOAL 2

Preserve and strengthen neighborhood commercial districts that enhance the vitality and quality of life in the City’s neighborhoods.

POLICY

- Incorporate neighborhood-based commercial development into the neighborhood planning process.
- Support the development and sustainability of locally-owned businesses.
- Invest in public infrastructure to catalyze private development.
- Provide incentives for property improvements.

STRATEGIES

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- A Use land use policies, design standards, and public investments incorporated into broader neighborhood plans to enhance neighborhood commercial districts with a mixture of uses.**
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Actions

1. Establish design and maintenance standards for neighborhood commercial districts that incorporate



preservation, high-quality design and neighborhood character.

2. Encourage high-quality mixed-use development at appropriate densities to integrate housing, transit, and neighborhood businesses.
3. Develop a capital improvement plan for each neighborhood commercial district, including street and sidewalk repair, lighting, street furniture, landscaping, and off-street parking, as appropriate.
4. Consider the use of Tax Increment Financing in neighborhood commercial districts.
5. Expand the Apponaug Village Façade Program to other retail districts in need of façade improvements.

B Collaborate with neighborhood businesses to develop business-led initiatives that strengthen the business environment.

Actions

1. Establish a Main Streets Program with assistance from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, incorporating all retail districts whose merchants and property owners agree to participate.
Seek local corporate funding to support a least one professional to staff the program.
2. Establish a dedicated website providing more information on each district identified on the “Shop Warwick” map on the city’s tourism website.
This could include a store listing, parking information, events and special promotions.

3. Establish new channels for sale of locally produced goods and services, such as local farmers, seafood and crafts markets.

GOAL 3

Improve the business environment.

POLICY

- Increase responsiveness to business concerns
- Streamline business regulatory processes.

STRATEGIES

A Develop stronger lines of communication with businesses to better identify and respond to business needs and interests.

Actions

1. Establish a Warwick Business Interest Group within the Central Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce to work with local government to identify and address business opportunities and challenges.
2. Hold periodic meetings with industries groups to identify and address industry-wide needs and interests.
3. Establish a formal business retention program staffed by screened and trained volunteers to conduct periodic outreach to local businesses and provide information, referral and/or direct assistance as needed.

B Make business development regulatory processes more timely and user-friendly.

Actions

1. Establish a one-stop information and referral desk that will use a case management approach to assist businesses with all regulatory issues.
2. Increase coordination among regulatory agencies to streamline and expedite regulatory approvals.
3. Develop a stronger customer-service philosophy through customer service training, effectiveness metrics and continuous improvement processes.



A simple survey can provide information on what needs improvement and what is working well.

GOAL 4

Increase access to high-quality employment opportunities for Warwick residents.

POLICY

- Strengthen coordination between economic development and workforce development
- Increase local employment opportunities for Warwick residents

STRATEGIES

A Leverage relationships with local businesses to promote participation in career education and workforce development programs.

Actions

1. Provide local businesses that have workforce training or recruitment needs with information and referral to Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training's Business Workforce Center.

2. Link local businesses with the Warwick Public Schools to expand career exploration and exposure opportunities.

B Take labor force skill levels into account in business recruitment efforts.

Actions

1. Seek to attract businesses with employment needs consistent with the occupational skills of Warwick residents, particularly professional, management, and business and financial occupations.

C. Improve transit access between local residential and employment centers.

Actions

1. Advocate for improved intra-community public transit services with RIPTA.
2. Improve alternative transportation options between residential and business areas, including walking and bicycling.