

**Town of East Greenwich**

**Downtown  
Revitalization  
Plan**

Prepared by

**BARBARA SOKOLOFF ASSOCIATES, INC.**  
101A Dyer Street Providence, RI

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## ***Introduction***

The East Greenwich Downtown Revitalization Plan was prepared to provide a coherent, holistic approach to the Downtown; an area which encompasses a Main Street, residential neighborhoods, and a waterfront. This Downtown Revitalization Plan will aid the Town in making decisions for the long term viability of Downtown and in maximizing use of public funds. The benefits to the area will come both in physical enhancements and improvement in the lives of local residents.<sup>1</sup>

East Greenwich, one of the oldest towns in Rhode Island, has many significant historic buildings, a commercial district, and a residential area within the traditional downtown area. There is also a waterfront that is historically and integrally part of Downtown. East Greenwich has been one of the suburban Rhode Island communities that has experienced extensive residential development outside of the older developed areas. In addition, commercial development has occurred along Route 2 and to the south of East Greenwich on US Route 1. This development has impacted the core of the older commercial and residential district in a variety of ways, nevertheless, Downtown East Greenwich remains a vital, vibrant area. Additionally, although the following profile of the area highlights challenges both people-centered (e.g. income levels) and physical-centered (e.g. building condition), the area supplies many assets that make East Greenwich a healthy and diverse town.

Downtown East Greenwich has many of the qualities sought after in a city and town planning movement call "New Urbanism". New Urbanism is an effort to capture the essence of communities that predominated before suburban sprawl. Inherent in New Urbanism is a belief that auto-centered suburbs, with their strict separation of home from other parts of life and designed for the pre-eminence of the automobile, have left people with a feeling of alienation. The unintended consequence of the separation of land uses was a severing of community and a loss of the everyday intermingling. Neighborhoods should be compact, pedestrian-friendly, and mixed use. New Urbanists believe that communities with particular physical characteristics are designed for human interaction. The following is a list of some of the physical characteristics generally associated with New Urbanism:

- **Human-scaled:** An area in which the physical attributes are in proportion to people; conversely, an area without vast expanses of parking or massive buildings.
- **Pedestrian-oriented:** Not to the exclusion of vehicles but an area which provides for and encourages pedestrians; an area that is compact and walkable.
- **A clearly demarcated street line:** A look that clearly sets the street apart and creates an edge. This is achieved in a variety of ways including buildings set close to the street, street trees and other landscaping, on-street parking, fences, benches, and sidewalks.

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<sup>1</sup> Funding for the study was provided jointly by the Town and the Rhode Island Community Development Block Grant Program.

- A varied but carefully articulated streetscape: Architectural and other design details that are diverse but still portray an overall feeling of unity and, conversely, an absence of clutter.
- Mixed Use: Where commercial, residential, and civic uses coexist. Mixed use also means that a variety of housing types are interwoven so that households with different incomes can live side by side.
- Gateways: Entrances that announce to the visitor or resident that one is entering a place with its own special identity.

New Urbanists believe that an area with the above physical elements will attract people and bring forth vitality and liveliness. Fortunately, Downtown East Greenwich has many of the above elements. Its assets include:

- A mixed-use district both in terms of types of housing and land use.
- A compactness that makes the area ideal for walking.
- Buildings with historic and architectural interest.
- Civic buildings including Town Hall, the police station, and the public library.
- Existing pedestrian links that need only to be enhanced.
- A diverse residential community that has a sense of community connection.
- Locally-owned businesses that also add to the sense of community and place.
- On-street parking throughout and small setbacks in some areas that help to provide a street line.

Downtown East Greenwich also has its concerns.

- A low-income population and older population, both of which require a greater number of services.
- The housing and commercial structures are older and require a program of systematic rehabilitation.
- Northern and southern Main Street are fragmented. This division is best seen as the clearly marked edge of northern Main Street gives way to parking lots and buildings set farther back from the street just past London Street.
- The area lacks pedestrian amenities, whether in providing places to stop, rest, socialize, or in walkways from one section to another.
- King Street needs redesign.
- While the waterfront was the reason for East Greenwich's siting, there is little that unites the waterfront to Main Street.
- Tourism and job opportunities must be expanded for both the vitality of this area and the Town as a whole.
- Waterfront development must be kept in balance to protect the valuable environmental resource and at the same time maximize the other positive uses (e.g. restaurants, fishing, marina, residential, tourism) which can enhance the Town and the area.

The Town has the opportunity to develop a major asset: an historic design and layout that is sought after today . The challenge is to re-enforce this foundation. It is an achievable task. This plan suggests to East Greenwich the following task-oriented goal and objectives. The Goal for Downtown East Greenwich is to:

Revitalize Downtown East Greenwich in a holistic approach that incorporates people and the built environment, maintains a village aesthetic, and integrates Main Street, the Waterfront, and the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

The following objectives are the components of the Downtown Revitalization Plan and integral to achievement of the goal. They provide the direction; specific programs are provide in Section Five.

**Objective 1.**

Support a diversity of people and housing.

**Objective 2.**

Encourage economic development that is complimentary to a village ambiance.

**Objective 3.**

Develop an intermodal parking and transportation plan which accentuates the walking aspects of Downtown.

**Objective 4.**

Create a village aesthetic which integrates the historic nature of the entire area and melds the Waterfront, Neighborhoods, and Main Street.

**Objective 5.**

Create mechanisms for the implementation of the Downtown Revitalization Plan.





The project area is bound by Division Street to the north, Rocky Hollow Road to the south, Peirce Street to the west and Greenwich Cove to the east. The first section of the report provides the history of the project area. Section Two describes the methodology utilized in the study. Section Three gives a profile of Downtown East Greenwich in 1998. Section Four is the needs statement. Finally, Section Five provides the plan, objectives, and programs.

### ***Section One: Historic Context***

East Greenwich was founded in 1677 upon land originally owned by the Pequot Indians. The earliest settlements were rural farming homesteads but the protected cove area soon brought trade ships and fishermen. By the first half of the eighteenth century, a town center began to be established in the same area that functions as the downtown East Greenwich today.

The commercial center of the Town grew to support the trade, fishing, and shipbuilding industries. But the end of the eighteenth century saw an economic downturn in the maritime industry, with the exception of fishing. As a result, the Town lost 14 percent of its population as people left to seek work elsewhere.

The first part of the nineteenth century brought manufacturing into the economic mix. When the railroad link to East Greenwich was established in 1837, the textile industry became the leading employer in town and with it came population growth. During the next two decades, a number of homes were built east of Main Street filling in earlier neighborhoods along King, Marlborough, Queen, Long, and London Streets.

The textile industry had a short-lived dominance in East Greenwich. As the industry waned during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, East Greenwich became more of a suburban community to neighboring towns and eventually to Providence.

The first quarter of the twentieth century saw few changes. However, by the end of the 1930's, the automobile had decentralized the town from its historic core and growth was concentrated outside of the Town center. WWII developments, such as the Quonset Point/Davisville Naval Facilities, had an impact on the downtown area. New store fronts, a proliferation of signs, and a trend towards rental housing were some of the changes. Local economic activity continued to evolve to today's emphasis on services, with Main Street now lined with restaurants and retail shops.

The past sets the framework for the development patterns of today. During the 1700's, Division Street served as the main thoroughfare connecting the western agricultural portion to the waterfront and still connects downtown to major highways. King Street became the location for the homes of ship captains and merchants and remains largely residential today.

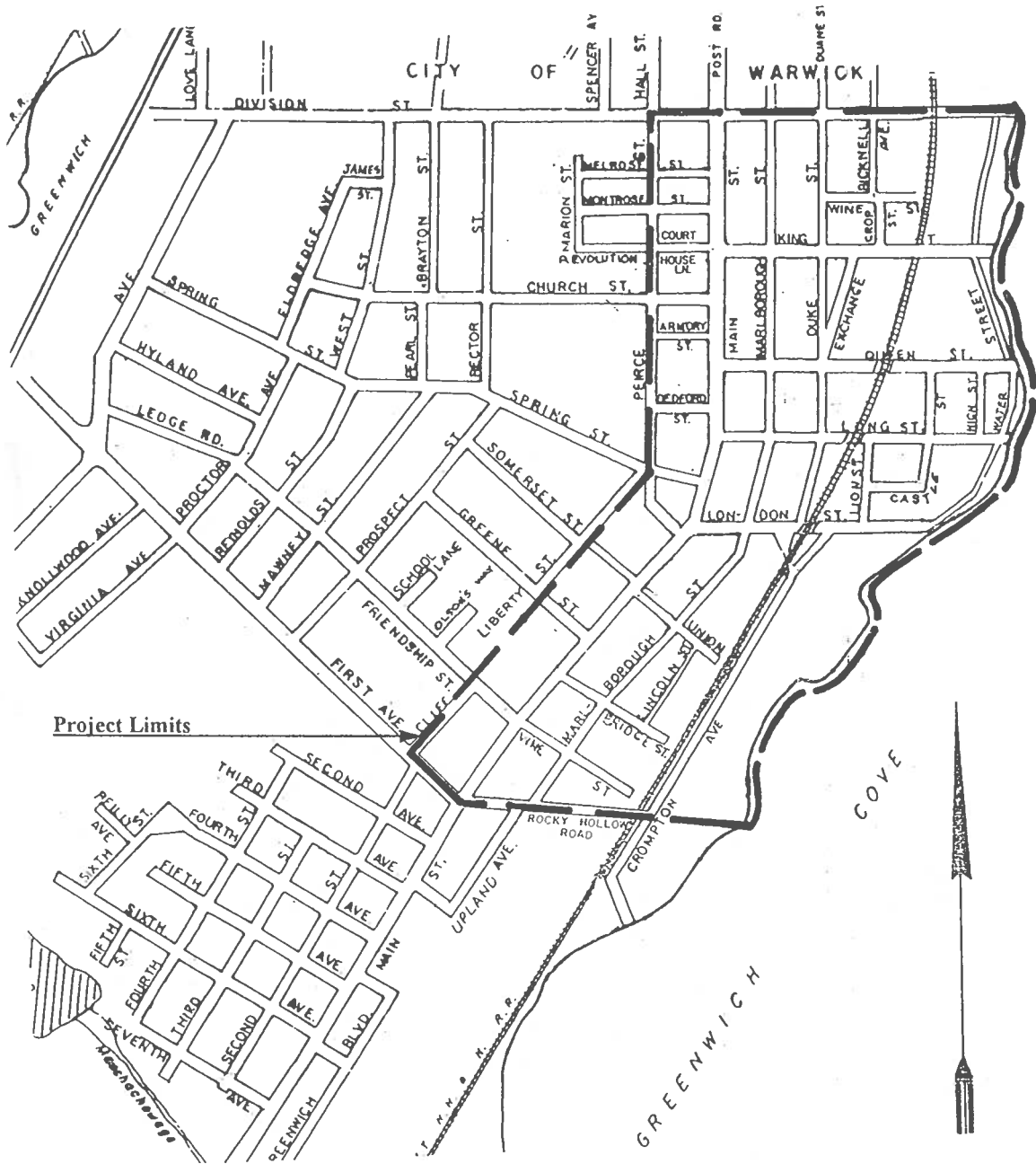
Travel through area became north/south oriented, the direction Main Street runs in its role as the commercial route through the district. Peirce Street became the center of civic activities

and the location for the homes of the wealthy. The dense residential conditions east of Main Street were created by the area's historic functions and compounded by the demand for affordable housing over the last 25 years. The Navy left the area in the seventies relieving some of the housing pressure but leaving behind a pattern of rental housing. Over the last two decades, the trend has very gradually moved again towards owner-occupants, through the addition of condominiums and conversion of some rental housing.

This history gives East Greenwich its characteristics and design elements which are so desirable. The Town has an opportunity to capitalize on this past to create a revitalized future.

# Project Area Map

Not to Scale





## **Section Two: Methodology**

The planning method utilized for this plan is a SWOT analysis which charts the Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats of an area. A SWOT begins with a background scan of existing conditions. The scan pulls together information on demographics, housing, economic base, transportation, and public facilities.

The sources below provided information on existing conditions.

- Existing Relevant Documents including:
  - East Greenwich CDBG and HOME grant applications
  - The 1991 East Greenwich Comprehensive Plan*
  - The 1990 Town of East Greenwich Open Space and Recreation Plan*
  - Harbor Management Plan: Town of East Greenwich*
  - East Greenwich Zoning Ordinances
  - 1981 Hill and Harbor Plan*
  - East Greenwich Statewide Preservation Report, 1974.*
  
- Selected tables from the 1980 and 1990 U. S. Census on housing, social, and economic conditions
  
- *Labor Market Information for Rhode Island Planners, 1996*
  
- 1995, 1996, and 1997 Statewide Multiple Listing Service sales data
  
- Field observations which examined land use, infrastructure condition, parking location, quantities, and use, and recreation.
  
- Interviews with Town staff, Council members, business owners, real estate professionals, community residents, Housing Authority staff.

Public participation was also an element of this revitalization plan. There were three steps in the public participation part of the plan: 1) The formation of a advisory committee, 2) Interviews, and 3) A neighborhood meeting. Those on the committee included representatives from Main Street and waterfront businesses along with residents who reflected the diversity of the population.

The committee reviewed the information on existing conditions, evaluated progress on recommendations from previous reports, and reviewed and revised lists of strengths and weaknesses.

Interviews were conducted throughout the process with individuals who approached the issue of revitalization from many different perspectives.

The neighborhood meeting was held on February 5, 1998 at the Regal Court Community Room. The purpose was to gather information and solicit input from neighborhood residents and business people about what they viewed as assets and challenges in Downtown East Greenwich. The meeting successfully met its purpose and provided valuable input into the development of the final plan. Those present supported preliminary recommendations.

With input from all the sources and the background scan completed, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were drawn out. This information led to the development of a comprehensive needs statement and recommendations. Participants at the public meeting and committee members responded to the recommendations which were then divided into a set of objectives and programs. These objectives formed the foundation of the Revitalization Plan.

### **Section Three: Profile**

In New Urbanist communities, streets are interconnected on a traditional grid system. Streets are narrow and on-street parking encouraged; both strategies make pedestrians feel safer because cars have to go slower—part of a philosophy of “traffic calming”. The feel of the street is intimate and inviting. Facades of buildings—with heights kept to a few stories to maintain a friendly scale—run straight along sidewalks. This gives definition, or an “edge”, to the street. A building of civic importance is highlighted and celebrated. Unlike segregated suburban zoning, New Urbanism encourages a mix of land uses in close proximity: retail and offices with residential above, expensive townhouses next to moderately-priced housing. As the following profile entails, the above could easily be describing Downtown East Greenwich.

This section presents the existing conditions by the categories Land Use and Zoning, Infrastructure, Coastal Resources, Housing, and Demographics. Within the profile both the good and bad points are noted. In general, Downtown engenders much support and constructive critique from residents and local business owners. Through interviews and the public meeting, residents highlighted the need for benches, better lighting, improvements to rundown buildings and signs, a general/grocery store, public rest rooms, commuter connections, better parking (especially at the waterfront), and a clearly defined waterfront link. People are also excited and pleased about many aspects of Downtown including: the diversity of housing and people, the fact that East Greenwich is a walking town, it has a real Main Street with locally-owned businesses, its small town flavor, the vitality of the area, its closeness to the water, the neighborhood feeling, and its deep sense of history.

#### **LAND USE**

With a combination of tenant- and owner-occupied residences, commercial properties, and public facilities, mixed use aptly sums up existing land uses. The project area is densely settled with the Town Line the northern border and Greenwich Cove the eastern border. To the west and south the project borders are less finite: First Avenue/Rocky Hollow Road to the south and Peirce/Liberty/Cliff Streets to the west. As the origin point for the Town, the area contains many older and historic buildings as well as newer structures. The project area encompasses the East Greenwich Historic District.

As one enters Downtown from the north, the old Post Office and Armory set the historic village tone. From the south, however, there is no indication that the visitor or resident is entering a special place. This is a notable lack. An entrance to an area, sometimes known as a “gateway”, can be a marker, an arch over the street, a landscaped island, a banner, a striking sign (e.g. on the wall of an attractive building, specially designed freestanding), or any other architectural element that catches the traveler’s attention.

In the segment that follows, land uses are divided in Commercial Centers, Residential Areas, Public and Civic Uses, and Zoning.

### Commercial Centers

There are two commercial centers in Downtown: Main Street and the Waterfront.

- Retail and restaurant businesses line Main Street although Main Street itself has two distinct sections. Traveling north to south from Division Street to London Street, there is a strong village feeling to the area. But that feeling is disrupted at London Street where the character changes from village to suburban strip. Both sections lack a clear connection to the Waterfront area.
  - Older structures, some rehabilitated and others in need of repair, make up the northern section from Division Street to London Street. Primary uses located in this area are retail shops, offices, and restaurants on the first floor with dwelling units above. A key property in need of repair in this section is the Greenwich Hotel.
  - Newer buildings and small strip mall type structures comprise the southern section from London Street to First Avenue. Primary uses tend towards franchise-type retail businesses, smaller retail shops, offices, and coffee shops. They also tend to be set further back from the street with front parking lots. These characteristics cause a break in the visual rhythm and the loss of the street line. This area includes the former Almacs shopping center, another key property but one that is currently out of scale to those further north. The loss of a supermarket from Downtown has left a hole in the community fabric.
- The second commercial center is the Waterfront, mainly where Queen and King Streets intersect with Water Street. Primarily water-related businesses and restaurants locate here. They include commercial fishing, sail makers, the East Greenwich Yacht Club, and boat repair establishments. There are three restaurants in this area that are well-known and compete with many in Newport during the summer season. During the summer time, this area experiences an influx of tourists and patrons to the commercial establishments that strains the parking provisions. The absence of sidewalks and the increase in vehicular traffic combine to make pedestrian movement difficult during this peak time of the year.

### Residential Areas

Residential units are located throughout Downtown: north, south, and on Main Street. Housing is varied and includes single family, multi-family, condominiums, apartments over commercial space, and townhouses. According to the 1990 Census, about 21 percent of the housing units were single-family structures as compared to the overall Town percentage of about 72 percent single-family. There are historic homes and newly constructed units; some units are in good condition but there are many in need repair, some significantly so. The residential area is densely settled with houses close together and often a dependence on on-street parking. Most of the housing changes occurred in the 1980s, however there has been some new construction in the 1990s. The new construction was designed to fit within the historic nature of the community.



### Public and Civic Uses

The Town took positive action towards Downtown revitalization when it renovated the former Courthouse for use as the Town Hall. Not only is it a beautiful renovation, but it shifted the emphasis of Town government from above the Town to the middle of Main Street. Centering civic activity and giving public areas a focal point is a key element in a village aesthetic. It sends a strong signal of community to residents, business people, and visitors alike.

Other public buildings are generally assembled along the one-way section of Peirce Street from Division Street to Spring Street and there are some in other parts of Downtown too. In fact, one of the primary assets for the Downtown area is the number of public buildings in the area. These buildings are a key element in community identity and a loss of any cannot be replaced. East Greenwich should strive to insure these facilities stay in the area.

The Town Hall, as noted above, is on Main Street though access is provided from Peirce Street as well. The East Greenwich Free Library is located on the easterly side of Peirce Street near Town Hall. In addition, the School Department, Public Works, and Police Department are located on the westerly side of Peirce Street in the Old Town House.

Other civic buildings in Downtown are the fire station is on Main Street and the East Greenwich Preservation Society. The latter is housed in the historic jail and located at the bottom of King Street at its intersection with Water Street.

Public facilities in the project area include the East Greenwich Wastewater Treatment Facility and the Town's transfer station located on Greenwich Cove at the intersection of Crompton Avenue, London Street, and Water Street. A public facility that downtown is missing is a public restroom. This deficiency was cited by several residents and business people in interviews and meetings.

Recreational facilities are another important civic land use. There are few opportunities for passive recreation such as benches and congregate seating areas would provide. There are also areas with potential for additional small parks or overlooks that could be developed to enhance the aesthetics of the area. This study does not address the questions regarding the need for a community center; that issue has to be looked at a later date.

Located on the easterly side of Crompton Avenue and London Street is a scenic overlook with picnic area and a tot lot with playground equipment, benches, and some parking. There is also a public boat launch and a town dock in the same general area. Just south of the study area is the old Landfill. This area presently has walking trails and is used for passive recreation. The Town has had several discussions regarding future use of this area. It offers great potential to add to Downtown's assets.

There are several designated right-of-ways for public access to the cove at the ends of the following roads: Division Street, King Street, Long Street, London Street, Bridge Street, and Rocky Hollow Road. None of these right-of-ways (ROW) is without problems. Though

there are exceptions, in general, the ROWs are poorly marked, difficult to locate, and provide no public parking, trash receptacles, benches, or sanitation facilities for the public.

- At the end of Division Street there is an overlook that has a few benches and minimal parking.
- At King Street there is a sign indicating the area is a public right-of-way to the waterfront, but nothing to direct the visitor to the waterfront.
- At Long Street there are private docks located in the public way extending from the street directly into the cove and posted “No Trespassing”. A fence also blocks access.
- At London Street there is a paper street from Water Street east to the cove. Although it is supposedly public, there appears to be a conflict with exact location of the street end and it seems to cross private property.
- The Bridge Street right-of-way is not marked and access is obstructed.
- The Rocky Hollow access has a private building and dock located directly in the ROW at the water’s edge.

Just west of the study area are Swift Gym, Academy Field, and Eldredge school and fields. The Academy Field complex includes baseball fields, tennis courts, and basketball courts. Town events are also held at this location including a firemen’s muster and outdoor concerts.

Other recreational-type activities are promoted by the Town in the study area. These include the Harborside Walking Tour, Main and Peirce Streets Walking Tour, Hillside Walking Tour, and the Children’s Walking Tour of East Greenwich. All of these tours promote and emphasize the history of the area and include portions of Downtown.

### Zoning

There are eight zoning classifications located in the study area. They are:

#### R - 6 Residential District - 6,000 square feet

This district is designed to provide for high density residential development. The R-6 Zone is located primarily from Marlborough Street to the railroad tracks from Rocky Hollow Road to Division Street. Another R-6 Zone is located between London Street, Water Street, Queen Street, and the railroad.

#### R - 10 Residential District - 10,000 square feet

This district is designed to provide for medium-high density residential development within the town. The R-10 Zone is located along Peirce Street from Division Street to Main Street. Another area of this zone is located between Crompton Avenue, Rocky Hollow Road, Greenwich Cove and London Street.

#### CD Commercial Downtown District

This zone is designed to provide multiple uses on Main Street properties between Division Street and First Avenue/Rocky Hollow Road to promote active use of East Greenwich’s downtown area by residents, shoppers and service use clients and to provide vehicle and pedestrian safety. This district emphasizes first floor (street level) uses which promote and encourage pedestrian activity. The CD Zone is located along both sides of Main Street from

Division Street to First Avenue. Another small area is located between Water Street, London Street, Greenwich Cove, and Queen Street.

CL Commercial Limited

The purpose of this district is to provide for low density business uses, professional and personal services, and high density residential development. Retail and wholesale uses are not permitted in this district. The CL Zone is located in an area east of the railroad between Queen Street, Water Street and King Street.

CH Commercial Highway District

The purpose of this district is to provide for those uses which generate a high amount of vehicular traffic. The CH Zones primarily locate in the northeast corner of the study area bounded by the railroad, King Street, Greenwich Cove, and Division Street. A small area of CH zones is located on the southwest corner of the intersection of Main Street and Union Street. Another area of CH zone is located on Main Street between Greene Street and Friendship Street.

M Light Industry and Office District

The purpose of this district is to provide low density, low impact industrial and office development while retaining the district's farming and scenic qualities. There are a few small areas of M Zone in the study area. These include a section on the easterly side of Crompton Avenue near the EGWWTF; a portion of the area between Marlborough Street, London Street, the railroad, and Long Street; and a portion of the area between the railroad, Queen Street, Water Street, and King Street.

PD Planned Development

This floating district is intended to provide for residential land uses through environmentally sensitive design. The PD Zone is only located in one part of the study area. It is at the southeast corner of the intersection of Crompton Avenue and Bridge Street to Greenwich Cove.

W Waterfront District

The purpose of this district is to provide for water dependent and water relate uses along Greenwich Cove.

The strength of the zoning is the diversity of districts that encourages vitality and contributes to mixed uses; nevertheless, there are some problems in both the ordinance and zoning map. In some areas the zoning is inconsistent. For example, on the Waterfront, side-by-side lots have different zoning designations. Other areas are zoned Commercial Highway. Under any circumstances, this zone does not fit in with the village ambiance. Furthermore, adaptive reuse is made more difficult because of the zoning requirements which are inflexible in both regulation and applicability of use. Some of the districts do not belong in the study area because of setback requirements and lack of design guidelines which are contradictory to a village aesthetic.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### Parking

Parking was highlighted as a major issue by residents and business owners. Whether demand exceeds supply is often a matter of distinguishing between reality and perception. Therefore, in addition to gathering data on parking lots and spaces, parking surveys were done on five different days and times during December and early January. Results of the surveys are supplied in an Appendix. In general, the survey revealed the following observations:

- In the northern section of Main Street from Division Street to London Street, there were always at least 20 percent of the spaces available.
- On-street parking was plentiful at all times in the southern section of Main Street and the side streets in that same area.
- Side street parking on the northerly end was more heavily used than on the southern end of the project area but there was generally more spaces available than in use.
- Except during one morning survey, King Street had only a few available spaces.
- Queen Street never had more than two available spaces.
- Parking lots are generally well used in the northern section but not full; lots in the southern section were at most half full.

The area highlighted in interviews and meetings as the most problematic for parking supply was the Waterfront. However, this is a seasonal problem, so a survey of the Waterfront at the time would not identify all of the problems. It is known from interviews with those who live and work in the area that there is a summer parking shortage. The Town has taken steps to alleviate illegal parking and that situation has improved. But if the Town wants to further develop the site as a tourist destination, then additional work needs to be done. It is not necessary to increase the number of spaces in the area, other solutions are available such as a trolley system to satellite lots or bringing tourists to the Town by water transportation and thereby reducing the number of cars.

There is a private lot located at 333 Main Street serving as a parking lot although it is not specifically designated as such, that is currently well used. A building is planned for this site and therefore the impact it will have on parking in the area needs to be evaluated.

There are several other issues regarding parking. It is not only whether supply is adequate for demand, but whether lots are clearly marked, how they are designed, and where they are located. On-street parking is important in New Urbanist theory. On-street parking buffers the pedestrian and enhances the sense of enclosure making the street feel comfortable and safe.

Off-street parking also has import for New Urbanists. Front-yard commercial parking is one of the most common and visible intrusions into creating a village aesthetic. Parking lots so situated break up the street line, make pedestrians feel exposed, and detract from the sense of human-scale. This is easily illustrated in the former Almacs parking lot and the parcels directly across the street. If at all possible, design guidelines should be utilized to put buildings at the street and lots behind. An alternative is to place the side of building to the street and then landscape the lot parallel to the sidewalk. This helps to extend the street line,

visually connects buildings on either side of the parking lot, and provides what business want: front door parking.

Back lot parking can also be devised to make more effective use of many small lots behind commercial properties by combining them. In one community, the commercial association established a Parking Foundation in which local merchants lease their rear yards to the foundation for the sum of one dollar a year while continuing to pay taxes on the property. The combined lots were paved and landscaped. Lot attendees are present six days a week—mostly retirees working part time. The lots operate on a ticket system; shoppers validate their parking ticket by obtaining stickers for free parking at local shops. Monthly permits are also available and restaurants pay a fee for their customers' evening use of the lots.

The problem of small, separated, private lots in East Greenwich was noted in the *1981 East Greenwich Hill and Harbor Plan*. These lots in obscure, private, and inaccessible locations add to the perception of a parking shortage. This may be an opportunity for the Town. The back lots of the commercial properties as they are now, present an unattractive face to the residential properties with their exposed trash receptacles and lack of landscaping. The system described above requires good signage that directs visitors to their location. Whether or not Downtown East Greenwich investigates this option, better signs are needed to direct people to existing larger off-street lots as these too are not easy to find and in the survey conducted for this report, always had available spaces.

A parking study, conducted during peak summer activity, is needed to fully answer all parking questions, including the level of demand. This study should examine the need for and potential location of satellite lots as well as the possibilities for shared lots.

### Streets

There are three State roads classified as major streets in the study area. All are in good condition, providing access to the Downtown.

- Main Street, US Route 1, runs in a generally north/south direction. It connects East Greenwich to North Kingstown in the south and Warwick to the north. In most locations, on-street parking is permitted on both sides of the roadway for a 2 hour period. Concrete curbing and sidewalks are provided on both sides of this roadway.
- The other two major streets, First Avenue and Division Street, generally run east/west. From their intersect point west of the project area, they are two legs of the triangle the encloses the project area with Greenwich Cove being the base of the triangle. They each provide access from the west with First Avenue serving the southern side of downtown and Division Street coming in on the north. Concrete curbing and sidewalks are provided on both sides of these roadways.

There are seven secondary Town roads within the study area.

- Peirce Street runs in a north/south direction. Many Town facilities are located on this roadway including Town Hall, the Old Town House, Public Library, Police, and Public Works. This roadway is a one-way facility from Division Street to Liberty Street with on

street parking permitted on the easterly side. Curbing and sidewalks are provided on both sides of this road.

- Rocky Hollow Road runs in an east/west direction. It provides one of the two vehicular connections from Main Street to the waterfront. No on-street parking is permitted on this roadway. Curbing and sidewalks are provided on both sides of this road.

Due to the railroad electrification project, Rocky Hollow Road will be temporarily closed for 9 to 12 months. Since this will shut off one of the two entrances to the waterfront area, the Town should request that RIDOT provide alternative access.

- King Street runs in an east/west direction. It is the other vehicular connection from Main Street to the waterfront. Some on-street parking is permitted on this roadway with signs providing its location and/or restrictions. The parking is typically permitted only on one side of the roadway. At its western intersection with Main Street, diagonal on-street parking is permitted on the northerly side of the road. Curbing and sidewalks are provided on both sides of this roadway.
- The “waterfront loop” is a series of three roads that parallel Greenwich Cove between Rocky Hollow Road and King Street although the loop appears to be just one roadway to the motorist and pedestrian using them. No on-street parking is permitted on the loop at any time. Curbing and sidewalks exist on the westerly sides of this loop.
- Marlborough Street runs generally north/south and connects Division Street and Rocky Hollow Road. This roadway parallels Main Street with sections of the roadway designated as one-way in a north to south direction. The one-way restriction serves to allow for on-street parking and to limit the road’s use as a by-pass to Main Street.

The local neighborhood streets generally have the following characteristics:

- They allow on-street parking on one side of the roadway and many are signed for overnight parking with a permit.
- The railroad line bisects much of the eastern portion of the study area and several connections from Main Street to the waterfront have been dead-ended by the railroad upgrade in the last 20 or so years. These interrupted streets include Bridge Street, London Street, Long Street, Queen Street and Division Street.
- The roadways east of Main Street typically do not have curbing and sidewalks.
- Most of the connecting roads between Main Street and Peirce Street have curbing and sidewalks on both sides.
- The roadway widths vary between 20 to 30 feet.
- Numerous two-way and four-way stop controlled intersections exist throughout these roadways.

### Pedestrian Walkways

East Greenwich is a compact, walkable town that needs some enhancements to make it into an exceptional walking community. This would not only make life more enjoyable for residents, it would add to the Town’s distinctness and attractiveness as a tourist destination. This includes good sidewalks, places to sit and rest, attractive and safe crosswalks, and pedestrian links or passageways from one section of Downtown to another and from parking lots to

destination areas. The Town has a few pedestrian passageways already, some of which are historic, but they all need improvements.

- The RIDOT Post Road 3R project from south of Apponaug in Warwick to Division Street is slated to begin Spring 1998. As part of this project, stamped concrete crosswalks will be installed on the section of Main Street from Division Street to First Avenue. The Town should work with RIDOT to insure that the crosswalks add to the aesthetics of the area and well-visible to the vehicle driver so that traffic slows.
- A pedestrian underpass is provided at London Street for pedestrian access to the waterfront from Main Street, although its existence is not well known. The Town is responsible for maintenance of this facility. There have been some minor incidents in the tunnel such as graffiti, broken glass, and railings removed. Better directions and aesthetic improvements are called for here.
- The improvements to King Street, described elsewhere in this report, will serve to enhance that street as a direct connection to the Waterfront.
- Going from Main Street north to Peirce Street, there are a set of granite steps, the old Academy Lane. This route needs to be improved and made integral to the Downtown.
- All future parking renovations need to have attractive pedestrian passageways worked into the designs. Right now, the public lots do not have clear routes to and from them.

#### Roadway Pavement

The pavement on the major roadways and the local roads is in good condition. No roadways were observed in poor condition or in need of repair. There are no paving projects planned in the near future by the Town.

#### Sewer, Water, and Drainage

Generally, the entire area is sewered although there are a few old cesspools still in use in this area. There are no plans for projects in the near future and no sewer problems identified in the study area. The East Greenwich Waste Water Treatment Facility (EGWWTF), built in 1928 and updated in 1956 and 1972, discharges into Greenwich Cove.

The entire study area has public water supplied by Kent County Water Authority (KCWA). No drainage problems in the area were identified in the project area. Main Street, First Avenue, and Division Street have a closed drainage system and are part of the State drainage system.

### COASTAL RESOURCES

An area that was once primarily an industrial waterfront has evolved to a busy commercial area including private marinas, restaurants, retail stores and commercial shellfishing operations. Furthermore, a significant amount of harbor activity is legally located in Warwick but only accessible through the Town of East Greenwich. The following are key points for the waterfront area:

- The port area is well located as a regional center and offers opportunity for the siting of a intermodal water taxi that will soon be operation out of Newport. This will enhance economic opportunities, reduce traffic, and further set East Greenwich apart.

- Scalloptown is still functioning as the center of shellfishing in Greenwich Bay. With its surviving shanties, it constitutes one of the most important illustrations of the history of commercial fishing in Rhode Island and should be made one of the walking destinations in Town.
- Greenwich Cove is the largest, deepest and most sheltered of the coves on Narragansett Bay, forming a well-used natural harbor. It is one of the smallest and most concentrated areas of boating in RI. This too offers opportunities for economic expansion of landside business.
- Greenwich Cove has one of richest seedbeds for quahogs in Narragansett Bay. For this and other reasons, environmental protection is integral to economic success of the area.
- There are 233 slips divided among eight boating facilities on Greenwich Cove within the jurisdiction of East Greenwich. In addition, Norton's Marina, located in the Warwick jurisdiction, has 160 slips. Though legally in Warwick, this Marina is only accessible through East Greenwich.
- The East Greenwich Yacht Club Rental provides transient slips and pump out service to the public.
- East Greenwich permits 110 moorings in the cove.

## HOUSING

The 1991 Comprehensive Plan had to rely on the 1980 US Census data. Therefore, this study used 1990 Census data to update the Comprehensive Plan. The study area corresponds to Block Group 1 in Census Tract 209.01 making the US Census a good source for population and housing information, though unfortunately now nearly ten years old. This report augments Census data with current information gathered in interviews with the Building Inspector, Housing Authority Director, and real estate professionals. Information was also gathered from the Multiple Listing Service, Rhode Economic Development Corporation, and the local newspaper.

There is mixture of housing types from single- and multi-family homes, to apartments over businesses, to specialized elderly units, to condominiums. Historic buildings mix in with new units that have very favorably fit in the historic nature of the area. The primary problem with the residential structures is a need for a more targeting and intensive rehabilitation program that will assist property owners in making full repairs, rather than stop gap measures, to their houses.

### *Units and Structures*

Since 1990, the major housing development in the study area has been Regal Court, a 35-unit affordable housing development for the elderly managed by the East Greenwich Housing Authority. In addition, there has been some condominium units constructed, most of which are owner-occupied. These projects were designed to fit into the historic fabric of the area and have increased the number of owner-occupants and, as they generally sell at a lower cost than other housing, affordable ownership opportunities. Other than these projects and a gradual trend towards owner-occupancy, housing has not changed significantly since the 1990 Census.



The total number of units in the study area grew by just over 16 percent (from 662 to 770) between 1980 and 1990; the number of units in the Town grew by 29 percent in the same period. All of the unit growth in the study area came from multi-family dwellings. In 1990 there were about 335 residential structures in the area of which 161 were single-family structures, 86 duplexes, about 55 triplexes/quadplexes, and an estimated 30 with five or more units.

#### *Rent and Vacancy*

The current vacancy rate is considerably lower than that reported in the 1990. The East Greenwich Housing Authority reports that its clients have had difficulty finding units in downtown area and a check of the local newspaper in February 1998 listed just one rental. The *Providence Journal* listed just four rentals on two different weeks in February 1998. In 1990, the Census reported a 12.1 percent vacancy rate in the study area of which half were "for rent" and a 4.6 percent vacancy rate town wide with just one third "for rent". Four of the six boarded up houses in 1990 were in Downtown. In 1998 there were no boarded up houses in the area.

#### *Affordable Housing*

Rhode Island Housing reports the 1998 Fair Market Rents to be \$545 for a one-bedroom unit and \$655 for a two-bedroom for the area. A check of newspaper ads had one-bedroom units averaging \$500 and \$635 two-bedroom units. The East Greenwich Housing Authority has approximately 125 units of Section 8 housing in the study area. This includes both elderly and family housing. Most of the elderly households reside on Main Street in the apartments above the storefront levels. Most of the family households are off of Main Street. In addition, there is the aforementioned Regal Court elderly housing development.

#### *Home Ownership*

The importance of tenure derives from the benefits believed to result from owner-occupied property (i.e. neighborhood stability and better property maintenance). Of the occupied housing units in area in 1990, the Census reports that just 29 percent were owner-occupied as compared to the Town as a whole in which 74 percent were owner-occupied. Although appearing to be low, the 1990 percentage of owner-occupants has increased from 1980 when 26 percent of units were owner-occupied. However, the high number of multi-family structures in the area distorts the actual percentage of owner-occupied structures. The problem arises from the fact that the Census reports occupancy by units, not structures. If structures were the base of measurement, the actual owner-occupancy rate would likely be higher.

#### *Value*

The median value of owner-occupied housing according to the 1990 Census was \$124,300 while in the Town it was \$227,900. Real estate professionals stated in interviews that the bulk of the housing changes in the downtown area came about between 1980 and 1990 and that the Census numbers are still a good reflection of current conditions. There has not been any significant depreciation or appreciation in sales prices other than those that reflect the

downturn in statewide housing prices. The median selling price of existing homes within the whole town decreased between 1991 and 1996 according to Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation reports, as did prices statewide. In 1991, the median selling price in East Greenwich was \$251,000; over the next five years it gradually decreased to \$227,000 in 1996.

Local real estate experts report that the price for a unit in the downtown area can range from \$50,000 to \$250,000 depending on whether the unit is a single-family in need of work or a harborside luxury condominium. The predominant price is in the \$90,000 to \$100,000 range. Previously there was concern that the downtown area would become gentrified and exclude low- and moderate-income residents. In general that has not occurred. Diverse households are buying in the area from single young professionals, to families with children, to older East Greenwich residents. People of low-moderate incomes can still buy single-family homes in the area, but the house will likely need some repair. Yet, despite the fact that true gentrification has not occurred, there is a general sense that the Downtown area is experiencing a slow but gradual improvement.

### *Housing Condition*

Although the area has experienced gradual improvement, a windshield survey and interviews with the Building Inspector and the Community Development Program Manager revealed that there are many structures needing improvement. Many of the rental properties in the area have suffered from long term neglect. The 1997 HOME application reports that many of the units have peeling paint, failing roofs, and windows which are no longer tight. Furthermore, elevated blood lead levels have been found in children living in this Block Group. This is a clear indication that there is a lead paint problem that can lead to permanent neurological impairment in children who live in this houses.

Since the Housing Authority owns property in the area and has about 125 rental units, it has had a major impact on the area. Landlords who poorly maintain their properties are taken off the approved landlord list. The presence of the Housing Authority units in the Block Group has served to set standards and worked to stabilize and improve the area through the enforcement of those standards. The Housing Authority utilized the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's minimum standards as a baseline and then increased these minimums with their own requirements for such items as storm windows and doors. Landlords who have passed the Housing Authority inspections and made minor repairs have expressed a need for financial assistance to make additional permanent repairs.

## **DEMOGRAPHICS**

The table below presents a summary comparison of key demographic characteristics between the study area and the Town as a whole. These and other statistics are discussed throughout this section. The most important thing to note is that the population in Downtown East Greenwich is less well educated, poorer, and has a greater number of single heads of households. These characteristics call for programs and services that will help households achieve self-sufficiency. These programs include job training, day care, and job search.

Economic development efforts in Downtown should incorporate efforts to provide jobs to this population. The Housing Authority has a day care and a job preparation center in the study area; the day care has a continual waiting list. The job preparation center has just opened and the first class is full. These facts indicate further need for these type of resources. Additionally, there are no services for the senior population such as transportation.

### Summary Comparison Table

Characteristic	Block Group 1	East Greenwich
Population growth, 1980-1990	8.8 %	16.2 %
Children per household, 1990	.42	.65
Percent single heads of household, 1990	58.4 %	15.0 %
Percent, 25 and older, with post high school education, 1990	48.2 %	68.2 %
Median household income, 1990	\$22,679	\$50,896
Percent of population below poverty, 1990	22.4 %	4.7 %

### Population and Households

In 1990 there were 1,348 persons in this area. From 1980 to 1990 the population in the Block Group grew at half the rate of the Town as a whole. These persons lived in 677 households with an average household size of slightly less than 2 persons.

Of these 677 households, 178 had children age 18 and younger for a combined total of 285 children. Of the 178 households with children under 18, 104 were single heads of household with 78 of these having a female head of household.

### Educational Attainment

Of people age 25 and older in the area, 26.9 percent did not have a high school degree as compared to the town percentage of 10.2 percent. Conversely, 48.2 percent of the population age 25 and over in the area have some post-high school education while 68.2 percent of the same age group town wide have some post-high school education.

### Race and Ethnicity

As the table below shows, the racial and ethnic characteristics of the study area population did not change much over the decade. The Town experienced similar racial and ethnic patterns.

### Block Group 1 Race and Ethnicity

Race	1980 pop.	1990 pop.	growth rate	num. diff.	% of 80 pop.	% 90 of pop.
White	1202	1308	8.8	106	97.0	97.0
Black	30	14	-53.3	-16	2.4	1.0
Amer. Ind., Esk., Aluet	0	7		7	0.0	0.5
Asian or Pacific Islander	7	18	157.1	11	0.6	1.3
Other	0	1		1	0.0	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1239</b>	<b>1348</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>109</b>		
Hispanic Origin (all races)	1980 pop.	1990 pop.	growth rate	num. diff.	% 80 of pop.	% 90 of pop.
Hispanic	19	19	0.0	0	1.5	1.4
Nonhispanic	1220	1329	8.9	109	98.5	98.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1239</b>	<b>1348</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>109</b>		

### Labor Force

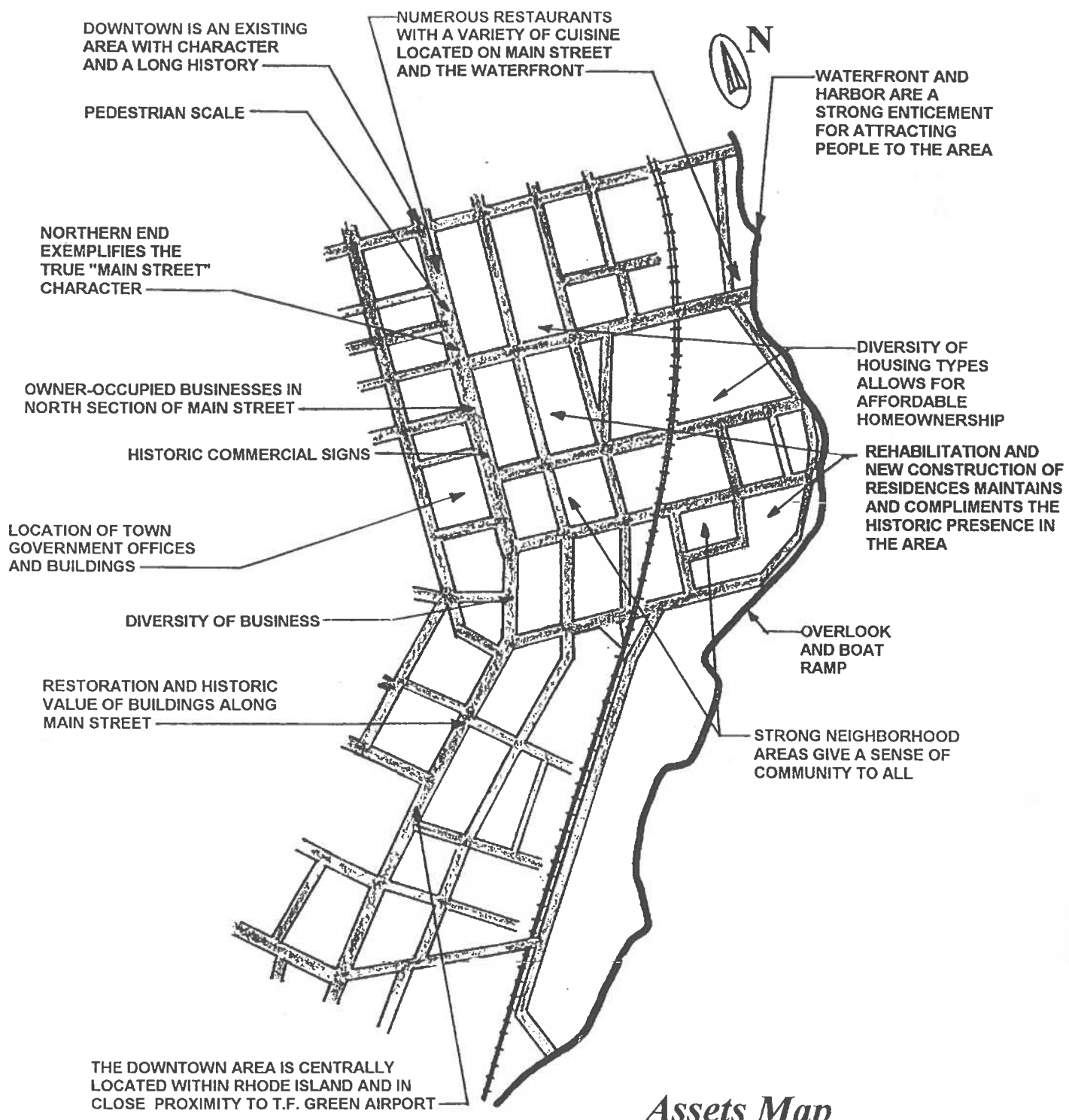
According to the 1990 U.S. Census, the largest share of the employed Block Group population worked in the service (excluding retail) sector, (28.9 percent) followed by manufacturing (22.7 percent) and then retail (19.9 percent).

### Income

There is significant income disparity between the study area and the Town. Median household income for 1990 was \$22,679; town wide median household income was \$50,896. Over one third of study area households had incomes less than \$12,500 in 1990 as compared to about 13 percent for the whole town. Poverty status figures reveal that 22.4 percent of the area population was below the 1990 federal poverty level including 68.2 percent of the children under age five. Town wide, just 4.7 percent of the population was below poverty. Furthermore, while the study area has 15 percent of all households, it has 52 percent of all persons who are in poverty. In total, 59 percent of population, or 751 people, were below the 1989 low/moderate income level (\$25,495). This makes the area eligible for Community Development Block Grants.

The maps on the following pages summarize the assets and concerns of Downtown East Greenwich discussed in this profile.

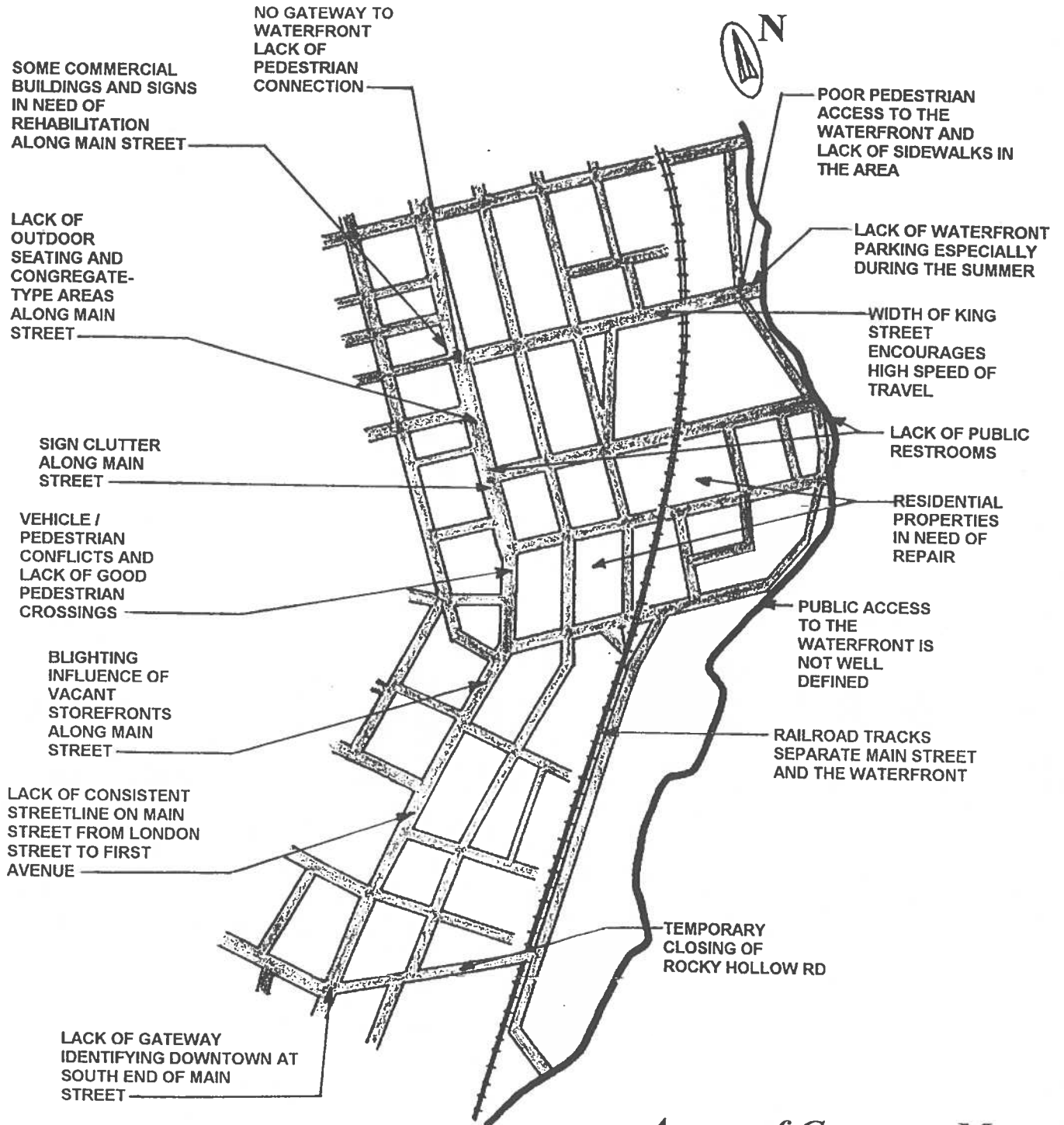
# East Greenwich Downtown Revitalization Plan



*Assets Map*



# East Greenwich Downtown Revitalization Plan



***Areas of Concern Map***





#### **Section Four: Needs Statement**

Downtown East Greenwich is an area with promise and opportunities. The previous chapter profiled both the physical needs of the community as well as the humanistic needs of the people living there. These two concerns cannot be separated. So much of the strength and vitality of Downtown East Greenwich is the result of its being a neighborhood *and* a commercial center. The two are inextricably related; it is the combination of a people-oriented aesthetic community that makes East Greenwich special. To continue this success, the Revitalization Plan must address the following physical and social needs.

With a population that is 59 percent low-moderate income, the residents are in need of programs that will assist them to improve self-sufficiency. Because the median household income is significantly below the Town as a whole, job development training, day care, assisted housing, and expansion of local job opportunities are all priorities. The East Greenwich Housing Authority operates a day care center and a job training program in Downtown. Both of these though are full; funding is needed to increase their capacity. There is also a need to explore other opportunities for job training funds.

The study area is characterized by rental housing. Since home ownership continues to be the strongest factor in neighborhood stabilization, a supported home ownership program will enhance both the neighborhood and enrich the lives of the people. Furthermore, a continued housing rehabilitation program that enables owner-occupants and rental property owners to make substantial improvements will again both improve the neighborhood and the lives of the residents.

Discussions held within the neighborhood during this study pointed out many assets. This is a location where people choose to live. The access to the Waterfront and Main Street provide a highly desirable living environment. Renters and home owners alike appreciate the diversity of people and place. The presence of historic houses provides character and confirms to residents and visitors that the area has a past. There is a mix of single- and multi-family structures along with condominiums and elder housing. This not only provides opportunities for affordable home ownership, it allows people of different incomes, ages, and household sizes to live as neighbors.

For the residents of Downtown, East Greenwich is a friendly walking town. But residents also raised the need for better pedestrian connections and amenities throughout Downtown and access to the Waterfront as important issues. This includes better identification of Waterfront rights-of-way, additional sidewalks, street furniture (i.e. benches, lighting, trash receptacles), and a more aesthetic entrance to their residential village. There is also a pedestrian disconnect between Main Street and Peirce Street. Peirce Street is the location for important civic functions like the public library and police station. Old paths that used to connect the two are at risk of being lost. It is quite important that these civic buildings have a

strong tie to Main Street, the Waterfront, and the neighborhoods between. The recent relocation and rehabilitation of the Town Hall is a wonderful example of the civic-public link.

Residents also requested recreational improvements. While larger recreation projects may happen just outside the Downtown boundaries (e.g. improvements to the landfill area), many smaller projects are needed. Improvements to Waterfront overlooks, benches, and landscaped spots for social mingling will all improve the recreational life of residents and make the area more attractive for visitors.

Economic development can take many forms in Downtown. A major need identified in interviews and meeting is the loss of a moderate-sized supermarket in which people in the neighborhood can shop for the essentials of daily life. An additional benefit to this kind of market is that it will provide local jobs. An emphasis on tourism will also bring more jobs to the area. East Greenwich is already known as place to come when one wants to dine out. The challenge is to build on the restaurants that have revitalized the Waterfront and the northern part of Main Street. Other types of tourist-targeted services will further improve economic development. Shops and a small hotel will bring balance. The historic Greenwich Hotel is an opportunity waiting to happen. A detailed market analysis which builds on this report is needed to fully explore the Town's potential. The Town should focus effort within the Planning Department to spearhead these projects and other revitalization efforts. Furthermore, the Town Council should adopt this plan to provide the weight of official sanction to the recommendations.

A large part of this challenge is to find ways to bring people in without placing additional strain on the parking and circulation infrastructure. Again, East Greenwich has opportunities to capitalize on. Its Waterfront location is perfect for a water taxi stop on the proposed Newport to Providence water taxi. This will bring pedestrians, not vehicles to Downtown. The Statewide Bicycle Network Project offers yet another intermodal tool. On spring through fall weekends Downtown could have bicyclists in the area enjoying the Waterfront, eating in the restaurants, resting in the aesthetic outdoors of East Greenwich. Of course, bicycle racks will be needed to announce Downtown's receptivity to the bicyclist.

For those who travel by car to Downtown, an improved parking system is needed. Signs need to provide better direction to public lots as they are currently not well marked. And transportation is needed from more distant lots and will be needed even more if satellite lots are established. In general, there is a lack of coherency in parking in Downtown. A further parking study that analyzes all of Downtown is needed.

For economic development to expand, the Town has got to come together physically. Main Street needs to be enhanced. Main Street problems include sign clutter and disrepair, lighting conflicts, vacant storefronts, run down commercial buildings, and an absence of appropriate design guidelines and zoning for new development. Main Street feels like two streets—human-scaled and historic village street to north and a suburban strip to the south. The street line gives way at London Street so that the edge dissolves. Finally, there is no gateway from the south which indicates the special qualities of East Greenwich.

One mechanism that would improve aesthetics and work to better integrate the northern and southern sides of Main Street would be the addition of public art. Art used in this way can be an element of economic development. Art can provide other public policy uses as well. Some communities have used art to address public policy concerns such as targeting juvenile delinquency and sending public health messages. East Greenwich should explore the potential that public art has to offer.

The last major need, and perhaps the most important physical problem, is the lack of integration of between the Waterfront and Main Street. King Street is the tie that holds these two together. Unfortunately, that tie is a weak link. King Street as it is currently constructed is without a gateway to the Waterfront. The width of the street is not pedestrian friendly, the diagonal parking introduces traffic conflicts, and it needs aesthetic improvements. The street could be made into a boulevard with a landscaped center island, kiosk, and parallel parking on both sides. As this recommendation moves into the design stage, parking and other issues will be further refined and addressed. This would greatly improve the pedestrian ambiance and provide a clear, attractive link between the Waterfront and Main Street.



## **Section Five: Plan, Objectives, and Programs**

The Downtown East Greenwich goal is to:

Revitalize Downtown East Greenwich in a holistic approach that incorporates people and the built environment, maintains a village aesthetic, and integrates Main Street, the Waterfront, and the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

To achieve this goal, the following plan lays out the objectives and programs. A five year implementation schedule and conceptual map accompany the plan. The five plan objectives are to:

1. Support a diversity of people and housing.
2. Encourage economic development that is complimentary to a village ambiance.
3. Develop an intermodal parking and transportation plan that accentuates the walking aspects of Downtown.
4. Create a village aesthetic that integrates the historic nature of the entire area, the Waterfront, Neighborhoods, and Main Street.
5. Create mechanisms for downtown revitalization plan implementation.

### **OBJECTIVE 1.**

Support a diversity of people and housing.

The vitality and vibrancy of Downtown come from the people who are there. East Greenwich is fortunate to have a diverse population in this area; often Waterfront residential communities are exclusive. The area is able to support a diverse population because there are a variety of housing options. The residents need support however. The demographic analysis showed that a significant portion of the residents are low-income. With the addition of some services or assistance with housing improvements, people's lives will be greatly improved.

#### Programs:

- Continue current CDBG home improvement program but look into making it a revolving loan program so that the funds are able to do more.
- Bring in programs that will increase home-ownership.
- Enhance low-income residents abilities to access jobs created through economic development.
- Explore ways to bring a moderately sized supermarket back to the area.
- Expand day care and job training programs.
- Create recreational spaces for local residents of all ages

## OBJECTIVE 2.

Encourage economic development that is complimentary to a village ambiance.

Economic development is vital to the success of Downtown. Economic development must serve the residents and business people of Downtown through providing needed services, jobs, and increased business. All programs in the plan will have an economic development impact, those listed below are simply those most directly associated with economic development.

### Programs:

- Work with the business owners to create theme events to entice shoppers and tourists. Some of these theme events should capitalize on the long marine history in East Greenwich.
- Create the water taxi stop that will bring tourists into the area and accentuate East Greenwich's historic water connection.
- Conduct a market analysis to find ways to build on the Downtown and Waterfront areas.
- Explore ways to bring a moderately sized supermarket back to the area.
- The Town should advocate for the private acquisition and reuse of the Almacs site. Any reuse of this property should work in to the site plans ways to bring back the feeling of the historic pattern of close to the street development (in essence, a "street line"). This could be done with wrought iron fencing, landscaping, and walkways or with a redesign of the lot moving the parking to the rear.
- ✓ • Work with the owners of the Greenwich Hotel to create a fine small historic hotel in Downtown East Greenwich.

## OBJECTIVE 3.

Develop an intermodal parking and transportation plan that accentuates the walking aspects of Downtown.

East Greenwich is ideally located and designed to be a model intermodal destination. Its compactness, location, and attractiveness are ready to be enhanced by the addition of some key projects. The timing is right as well. East Greenwich can tie to the efforts for a Rhode Island water transportation plan and the Statewide Bicycle Network. This would increase activity without additional strains on parking and circulation. Furthermore, existing parking provisions need only to be moderately enhanced to have a significant impact. Finally, the addition and/or improvement of pedestrian paths and other amenities will set the Town apart as *the* walking community.

### Programs:

- Create a water taxi stop in East Greenwich for visitors from Providence and Newport.
- Institute trolley service could transport people from the water taxi stop and parking areas around the Downtown area. The trolley would also be available for local resident use and possibly for historic tours.

- Work with RIDOT to make East Greenwich the next link in the Statewide Bicycle Network.
- Conduct a parking study during the peak summer season to fully assess parking demand and provide the options for satellite parking, a parking foundation, and shared lots.
- Build sidewalks along Water Street.
- Make sidewalk and curb improvements to local streets.
- Make the pedestrian underpass on London Street a main pedestrian thoroughfare with signage, plantings, or other visual improvements.
- Create and rehabilitate pedestrian passageways from parking lots and from Main Street to Peirce Street.
- Open up the public right-of-ways to the water.
- Work with RIDOT to provide an alternative access to the Waterfront and residential area during the temporary closure of Rocky Hollow Road.

#### OBJECTIVE 4.

Create a village aesthetic that integrates the historic nature of the entire area, the Waterfront, Neighborhoods, and Main Street.

This objective would set the tone and framework for Downtown East Greenwich. It would capitalize on the area's charm and make it into the destination place that it can be.

#### Programs:

- Create a connection between Main Street and the Waterfront on King Street with a grand entrance and boulevard beginning at the intersection of King Street and Main Street. A kiosk at the top of the hill will serve as a gateway market providing direction to the historic waterfront. The boulevard will have a center island with flowering trees, historic lighting, and walking areas that will be complimentary to the historic residential neighborhood.
- Add street trees, bicycle racks, and street furniture along Main Street.
- Create gateways into Downtown from the south at Rocky Hollow/First Avenue.
- Make zoning ordinances flexible, consistent, and appropriate.
- Develop design guidelines to encourage development that are consonant with New Urbanism principles.
- Establish a street line (an edge) on Main Street from London Street to Rocky Hollow Road using landscaping and other techniques such as fencing.
- Explore the need for and siting of public restrooms to make Downtown more comfortable for visitors.
- Improve the two Main Street key properties, the Greenwich Hotel and the former Almacs. Improvements to these properties will have multiplier effects on the remainder of Main Street. For the former Almacs site, incorporate village design guidelines into the parking lot and building in any reuse. Explore the possibility for a mini-park at the street edge. For the Greenwich Hotel, devise a rehabilitation plan.
- Look into tax incentives to provide to property owners who improve downtown buildings.

- Renew the current Business Facade Improvement program but reduce the interest rate on the loans.
- Establish a vacant storefront program.
- Improve commercial rear lots so that they are attractive and provide buffers to the residential areas for items such as trash containers.
- Institute a commercial sign rehabilitation program that will encourage the continued presence of historic and artistically interesting signs.
- Reduce public and private sign clutter, such as with design guidelines and the elimination of unnecessary signs. Augment the Historic District Commission regulations to address signs without adding more regulations. At the same time, make certain that signs in use are attractive, visible, and provide clear directions to satellite parking and the way to the Waterfront.
- Have building code enforcement address commercial maintenance issues.
- Explore funding, uses, and options for public art programs.

## OBJECTIVE 5.

Create mechanisms for downtown revitalization plan implementation and continued resident and business person involvement.

A plan is only useful if there are ways to implement it. The Town of East Greenwich has had many good plans with creative ideas; plans that provided a foundation for this plan. Strides have been made in achieving some of the earlier recommendations. Now is the time to put it all together and realize the vision of residents, business people, and Town staff.

- Assign responsibility for plan implementation to the Planning Department with staff dedicated to spearheading revitalization and economic development activities.
- The Town Council should adopt this plan to provide the weight of official sanction to the recommendations.
- Establish a task force of residents, business people, and Town staff to provide oversight, monitoring, and evaluation of plan implementation.
- Provide for annual Downtown neighborhood meetings to encourage meaningful input into ongoing revitalization efforts.
- Pursue the funding sources identified below to provide the financial resources called for in the plan.

## FUNDING

Funding for this Plan was provided by the Rhode Island Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG). The Town can apply for \$250,000 annually from the CDBG program. The Plan, however, need not be limited to programs utilizing just CDBG funds, but can and must find other funding sources. The key to successful funding is to leverage multiple sources.



CDBG funds are given to communities because the community has met eligibility criteria. This criteria is based on a specific geographic area having a significant portion of the local population at low or moderate incomes. The primary objective of the CDBG is "the development of viable urban communities, by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities, principally for persons of low and moderate income." Downtown East Greenwich is in a fortunate position because the boundaries of the low moderate income area is consistent with the boundaries of the downtown area, and improvements in the low-moderate income area will have a mutual benefit.

Section 108 is the loan provision of the CDBG program. Section 108 provides communities with a source of financing for economic development, housing rehabilitation, public facilities, and large scale development projects. A nonentitlement public entity such as East Greenwich may apply for up to five times the latest approved CDBG amount received from the State, minus any outstanding Section 108 commitments and/or principal balances on Section 108 loans for which the State has pledged its CDBG funds as security. The maximum loan repayment period is 20 years.

The Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation provides financial and program support to create affordable housing for low- and moderate-income Rhode Islanders. The agency offers more than 20 programs in the areas of homeownership and rental housing. Generally there are purchase price and income eligibility restrictions. Some of these programs are:

- *Home Repair Loans*: Low-interest loans of up to \$15,000 for owner-occupied, one-to-four family homes.
- *Zero Down*: No-down-payment financing that combines low-interest mortgages with federal loan guarantees.
- *HOME*: Grants and low-interest loans to encourage the construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing.

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation provides funds for intermodal transportation projects such as the water taxi and bicycle network suggested in this report. These funds are generally 80 percent derived from federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and 20 percent from state bond match.

Rhode Island Public Transportation Authority (RIPTA) has funds available for mass transportation and alternative modes of transportation.

Foundations such as the Champlin and Rhode Island Foundations may provide special grants to cities and towns for specific purposes.

Historic Preservation and Rehabilitation funds are available from state and federal agencies.

Tax-increment financing (TIF) is a real estate redevelopment technique. Local governing bodies can designate areas in their municipalities as development districts to facilitate

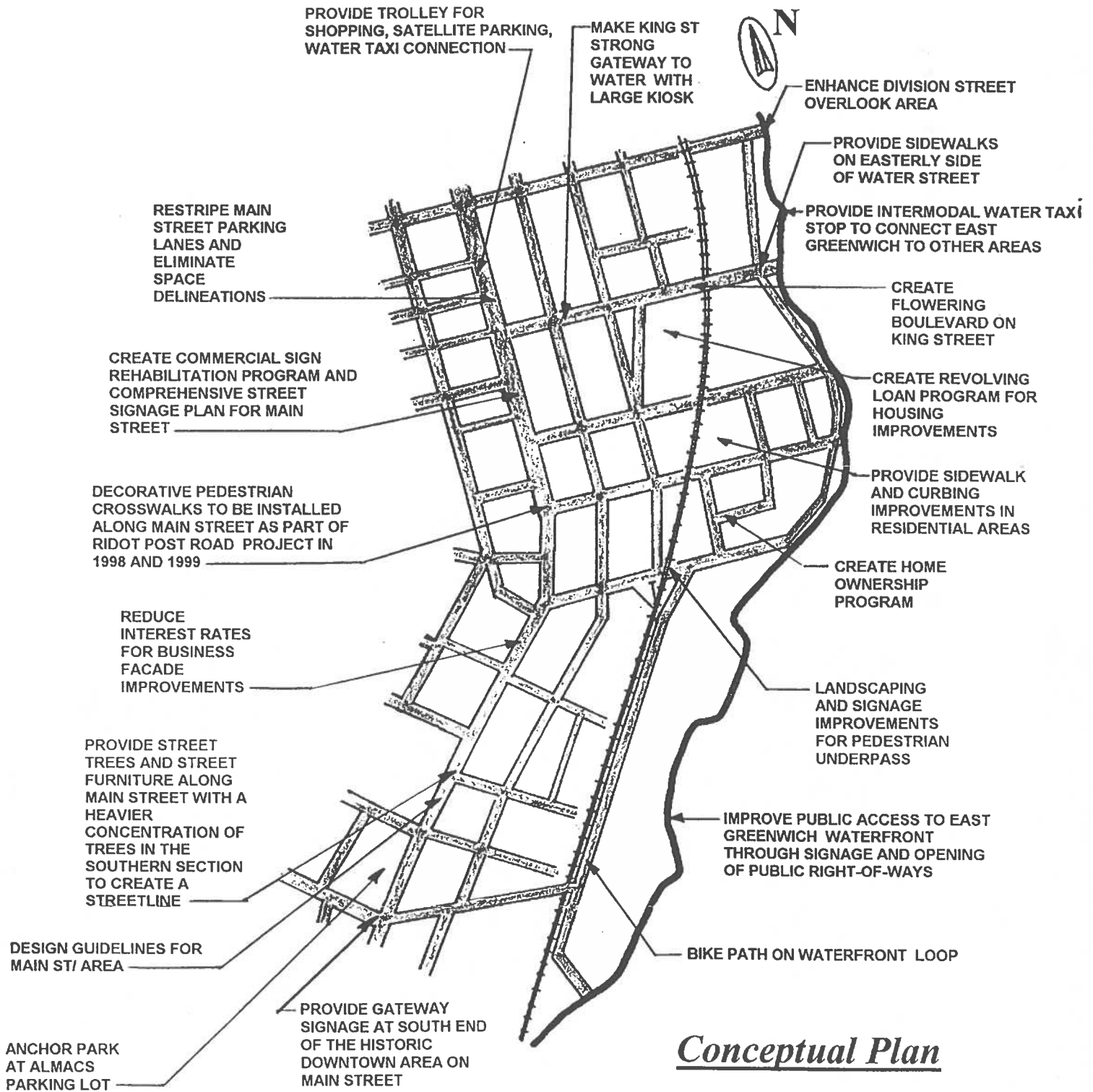
redevelopment activities. Public financing, usually in the form of bonds, provides necessary facilities improvements, and developers obtain financing to carry out the major redevelopment. The public debt is retired through the increase in property taxes generated by the development. The base property tax prior to development is still directed to general funds so that there is not a decrease in tax revenue.

General Obligation Bonds are issued by the local municipality and are paid for by all of the taxpayers.

Revenue Bonds provide public capital which is paid for by the users and is not a burden on the general taxpayers. There are a number of creative mechanisms for issuing revenue bonds.

Benefit Finance District is a tax placed on the property owners within a designated area and for specified purposes within that district. The local property owners vote to levy the tax on themselves.

# East Greenwich Downtown Revitalization Plan



***Conceptual Plan***



Action Item	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible Parties or Action Required	Year of Action (1-3)
<b>Physical Improvements</b>				
King Street Improvements	\$185,000	CDBG	Planning Dep't., DPW	1,2
Main Street Improvements:	\$100,000	CDBG, Tree Grants	Planning Dep't., DPW	1,2,3
Create an Edge w/ Street Trees and Fencing				
Add/Improve Lights, Furniture, Bike Racks				
Almacks Mini Anchor Park				
Gateway Markers				
Main Street Crosswalks	\$34,000	Town	DPW	1
Pedestrian Passageways Design Study:	\$10,000	CDBG	Planning Dep't., DPW	2
London Street Improvements				
Main Street To Peirce Street Links				
From Existing/New Lots to Comm. Centers				
Water Street Sidewalks	\$15/foot	CDBG	Planning Dep't., DPW	1,2
Side Street Sidewalks/Curbs	\$15/foot	CDBG	Planning Dep't., DPW	1,2
Division Street Overlook	\$10,000	CDBG	Planning Dep't., DPW	1
Waterfront ROWs Improvements Study	\$10,000	Town	DPW	2
Parking:				
Peak Season Demand and Options Study	\$15,000	Town	Planning Department	2
Satellite Parking Lots Implementation	Not Determined		Planning Department	
Shared Lot Program Implementation	Not Determined		Planning Department	
Street Signage Plan	\$10,000	CDBG	Planning Department	2
General Market Analysis	\$20,000	Other	Planning Dep't., MSC	1
Public Art Study	\$5,000	CDBG	Main Street Coordinator (MSC)	2
Public Restrooms Need and Location Study	\$5,000	CDBG	Planning Department	3
Commercial/Residential Buffer Guidelines	No Direct Costs	Town	Planning Department	2,3
Zoning/Style Guidelines Review	\$10,000	CDBG	Planning Department	2
Downtown Area Trolley-Operating	\$50,000/annually	St./Fed. Intermodal	Planning Dep't., RIPTA	1,2,3
Downtown Area Trolley-Acquisition/Lease	Not Determined	RIPTA	Planning Dep't., RIPTA	1,2,3
Intermodal Water Taxi Stop	Not Determined	RIDOT and Private	RIDOT, private	2
Bicycle Links	No Direct Costs	St./Fed. Intermodal	RIDOT, Planning Dep't.	1,2
Business Facade Program (Reduced Int. Rate)	\$30,000/annually	CDBG	CDBG Prog. Manager	1,2,3
Commercial Sign Rehabilitation Program	\$10,000/annually	CDBG	Planning Department	1,2,3



Action Item	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible Parties or Action Required	Year of Action (1-3)
<b>Physical Improvements, con't.</b>				
Improvements Tax Incentive Program	No Direct Costs		Town Council	1,2,3
Vacant Storefront Program	No Direct Costs	Private	Planning Department	1,2,3
Greenwich Hotel Rehabilitation	Not Determined	108 Funds, CDBG	Planning Department	1,2,3
<b>Residential Services</b>				
Housing Improvement Revolving Loan Program	\$70,000 annually	CDBG, HOME, RIHMFC	CDBG Prog. Manager	1,2,3
Home Ownership Program	\$30,000 annually	CDBG, RIHMFC	CDBG Prog. Manager	1,2,3
Expanded Day Care Program	\$47,000/annually	CDBG	Housing Authority	1,2,3
<b>Job Development Programs:</b>				
Expanded Housing Authority Program	\$14,000/annually	CDBG	Housing Authority	1,2,3
Jobs-Economic Development Link	No Direct Costs		Other state/fed. sources	1,2,3
<b>Administrative Elements</b>				
Assign Plan Implementation to Planning Dep't.	No Direct Costs		Town Manager	1,2,3
Town Council Adoption of Plan	No Direct Costs		Town Council	1
Building Code Enforcement—Comm. And Res.	No Direct Costs		DPW	1,2,3
Pursue Funding Sources	No Direct Costs		Planning Department	1,2,3
Promote Reuse of Former Almacs site	No Direct Costs		Main Street Coordinator	1
Encourage Downtown Siting of Grocery Store	No Direct Costs		Main Street Coordinator	1
Downtown Special Events Program	No Direct Costs		Main Street Coordinator	1,2,3
Work w/RIDOT on Rocky Hollow temp. alts.	No Direct Costs		Planning Dep't., DPW	1
Revitalization Task Force	No Direct Costs	Private	Planning Department	1,2,3
Annual Neighborhood Meeting	No Direct Costs		Planning Department	1,2,3





**Appendix: Parking Study**

	East Greenwich Planning Department 1991	Saturday Dec. 13, 1997 1:00 - 3:00 PM	Sunday Dec. 14, 1997 10:00 - 11:00 AM	Monday Dec. 15, 1997 12:00- 1:00 PM	Friday Dec. 19, 1997 11:15 AM- 12:00	Tuesday Jan. 6, 1998 8:45 - 9:30 AM
<b>ON STREET PARKING</b>						
First Ave to London Street area (includes side streets)	76 total spaces available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Numerous off-street parking lots provided in the area</li> <li>2 Hour parking permitted</li> <li>Main Street from vine to First - No Parking</li> <li>Main Street from Bridge to First - No Parking</li> <li>Most side streets permit parking on one side</li> </ul>				
	59 spaces available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>46 - 48 vacant spaces</li> <li>11 - 13 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>47 vacant spaces</li> <li>12 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>47 vacant spaces</li> <li>12 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>43 vacant spaces</li> <li>16 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>55 vacant spaces</li> <li>4 parked cars observed</li> </ul>
Side Streets	17 spaces available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimal use observed</li> </ul>				
London Street to Division Street area (includes side streets)	190 total spaces available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No parking within 20 - 25 feet of intersections</li> <li>2 Hour parking permitted</li> <li>Most side streets permit parking on one side</li> </ul>				
	104 spaces available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21 vacant spaces</li> <li>83 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30 vacant spaces</li> <li>74 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>22 vacant spaces</li> <li>82 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>22 vacant spaces</li> <li>82 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>45 vacant spaces</li> <li>59 parked cars observed</li> </ul>
King Street from Main Street to Marlborough Street	14 spaces available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Now 22 spaces provided for diagonal parking</li> <li>No parking permitted on south side of road</li> </ul>				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>19 parked cars observed</li> <li>3 vacant spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18 parked cars observed</li> <li>4 vacant spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>19 parked cars observed</li> <li>3 vacant spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20 parked cars observed</li> <li>2 vacant spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 parked cars observed</li> <li>13 vacant spaces</li> </ul>

	East Greenwich Planning Department 1991	Saturday Dec. 13, 1997 1:00 - 3:00 PM	Sunday Dec. 14, 1997 10:00 - 11:00 AM	Monday Dec. 15, 1997 12:00- 1:00 PM	Friday Dec. 19, 1997 11:15 AM- 12:00	Tuesday Jan. 6, 1998 8:45 - 9:30 AM
<b>ON STREET PARKING (continued)</b>						
Queen Street from Main Street to Marlborough Street	20 spaces available	No parking on south side of road				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 parked cars observed</li> <li>• 2 vacant spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 parked cars observed</li> <li>• 2 vacant spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19 parked cars observed</li> <li>• 1 vacant spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23 parked cars observed</li> <li>• 0 vacancies</li> <li>• 1 parked on south side</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19 parked cars observed</li> <li>• 1 vacant spaces</li> </ul>	
Other Side Streets	52 spaces available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal use observed</li> <li>• 10-15 total parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal use observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than 50% used</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than 50% used</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal use observed</li> </ul>
<b>OFF-STREET PARKING AREAS</b>						
Town Lot between King and Division	Not Evaluated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 48 Hour limit</li> <li>• 46 spaces available</li> <li>• More concentrated on Main Street end</li> </ul>				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 vacant spaces</li> <li>• 39 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appears same as Saturday</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17 vacant spaces</li> <li>• 29 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24 vacant spaces</li> <li>• 22 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35 vacant spaces</li> <li>• 11 parked cars observed</li> </ul>
Reserved Lot for 333 Main Street (just north of London Street)	Not Evaluated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 46 spaces available</li> <li>• Proposed building to be located on this lot</li> </ul>				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10-12 vacant spaces</li> <li>• 34-36 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10-12 vacant spaces</li> <li>• 34-36 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25 vacant spaces</li> <li>• 21 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 vacant spaces</li> <li>• 37 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25 vacant spaces</li> <li>• 21 parked cars observed</li> </ul>
Lot behind Main	Not Evaluated	60 spaces provided				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 22 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 36 parked cars observed</li> </ul>
Street between Division and King						

	East Greenwich Planning Department 1991	Saturday Dec. 13, 1997 1:00 - 3:00 PM	Sunday Dec. 14, 1997 10:00 - 11:00 AM	Monday Dec. 15, 1997 12:00- 1:00 PM	Friday Dec. 19, 1997 11:15 AM- 12:00	Tuesday Jan. 6, 1998 8:45 - 9:30 AM
<b>OFF STREET PARKING (cont'd)</b>						
Regal Court lot	Not Evaluated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5-8 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12 parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 parked cars observed</li> </ul>
Firemen's Hall lot	Not Evaluated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note: in previous study stated 255 spaces were provided</li> </ul>				
Condo Lot just west of bridge on King Street	Not Evaluated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimal use observed</li> <li>Few parked cars observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimal use observed</li> <li>1 parked car observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimal use observed</li> <li>2 parked car observed in drive, 0 in lot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 parked cars observed</li> <li>1 parked car observed in drive, 0 in lot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11 parked cars observed</li> <li>2 parked cars observed in drive, 3 in lot</li> </ul>
Other Parking lots noted	Not Evaluated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimal Use observed of the lots south of London Street</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50 % full approximately</li> </ul>	
<b>OBSERVATIONS AND MISCELLANEOUS NOTES</b>						
During Site visits	Not Applicable		Parking concentrated at restaurants, churches, and drug stores	On street parking from Dedford to Division Street very full during observations	Side street parking at the most northerly end was more heavily used than during other checks	
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water Street from Queen to King has 4' sidewalk on east side and a 3-4' area on the west lined with rose bushes</li> <li>Public access at Twenty Water Street doesn't appear as such due to parked cars and signs</li> <li>Bench at Town Hall used by person reading newspaper</li> </ul>



## Memorandum

**DATE:** March 23, 1998  
**TO:** William Sequino, Jr., Town Manager  
**FROM:** Barbara Sokoloff  
**RE:** Greenwich Hotel  
**CC:** Lee Whitaker, Town Planner

Enclosed are the following:

- 8 bound copies of final report
- 1 unbound copy for reproduction
- hard disk with report on MS Office Word 6.0
- Memo on 3/20 meeting at the Greenwich Hotel
- Final billing



## Memorandum

**DATE:** March 23, 1998  
**TO:** William Sequino, Jr., Town Manager  
**FROM:** Barbara Sokoloff  
**RE:** Greenwich Hotel  
**CC:** Lee Whitaker, Town Planner

On Friday, March 20, 1998, I met with Joanne Joseph and her mother (Mr. Joseph was injured and unable to attend), owners of the Greenwich Hotel. The purpose of the meeting was to inform them of the Downtown Revitalization Study in general, and to make them aware of the critical link the Greenwich Hotel plays in revitalization efforts on Main St., in particular. Ms. Joseph was very receptive to this discussion. She showed me their ongoing efforts to upgrade and rehabilitate the Hotel. These included the upper level large function room and the rest rooms, but most importantly a hotel room that has been finely restored. They also have underway the restoration of a large, ornate mirror that formerly hung in the hotel (estimated at 6'x3'). Clearly, they recognize the architectural significance of the building, and are attempting to make improvements sympathetic to the historic character. This is evidenced in small areas, or elements, throughout the building they are trying to save. The improvements I saw were very impressive.

Our discussion focused on efforts to upgrade and restore the outside of the building including the old Greenwich Hotel sign (the vertical sign) and the facades of the first floor. Given the significance of this building as a critical link in the Main St. Revitalization, I indicated the Town was strongly interested in working with them to bring about facade improvements. I indicated there may be grant money available to restore the sign, but this would, in return, require removal of the other older signs and improvements to the first floor exteriors.. This would not mean the elimination of signs for individual businesses, but that they be in character with the building and the area.. This exterior work could be accomplished with loans, and/or possibly some grant funds, from the CDBG Facade Improvement program, a 108 loan, historic preservation loans, or other funds. Ms. Joseph indicated strong interest in working with the Town.

In addition to making exterior building improvements, I discussed with the Josephs the negative impact of the present vacant storefronts and possible treatments to change the appearance while awaiting upgrading. This requires further follow-up to devise a plan.

Given the strong interest in restoring this hotel expressed by elected officials, yourselves, and Townspeople, during this planning process, I would recommend that the Town officials work closely with the Josephs to bring about these much needed improvements. A first step is for the Town to assist the Josephs to prepare a facade design that will serve as the basis for the improvement program. A comprehensive funding program is the next step. This will require a detailed analysis that will lay out potential funding sources and shared responsibilities of the various parties.

As we all agree, the restoration of the Greenwich Hotel is essential to the Downtown Revitalization efforts. The Josephs appear to have similar goals to upgrade the building. A joint effort has the greatest potential to accomplish the goals of both the Town and the owners. Please call with comments or to discuss this further.

