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South Kingstown Village Study Villages of Wakefield and Peace Dale Final Report

February 16, 2010



Submitted to:
Town of South Kingstown Planning Department
Town Hall
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**Village Study Project
Town of South Kingstown, Rhode Island**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The South Kingstown Village Study for Wakefield and Peace Dale focused on developing recommendations for protecting and enhancing the unique qualities of each historic Village. These two Villages are centers for community activity in Town and also provide support for the local economy, public health benefits, multi-modal transportation, and a healthy environment. Major project recommendations are provided here in summary format. Readers are encouraged to reference the table of contents to locate a more detailed discussion of each recommendation within the report.

Infrastructure Recommendations

Green Space and Arts

- Determine the feasibility of creating a small “pocket” pedestrian park in Peace Dale near the intersection of Kingston Road and Railroad Street.
- Maximize visibility and connectivity to prime natural amenities in Wakefield such as the Saugatucket Park, the Saugatucket River Walkway, and views overlooking the Saugatucket River.
- Continue to promote unique public features (such as art installations, trash receptacles, etc.) that display each Village’s strong connection to the arts community.

Landscaping

- Maintain and expand opportunities for incorporating landscaping along the sidewalk edge as a means of enhancing pedestrian appeal.
- Give careful consideration to the selection of tree types as well as the placement of street trees. Prioritize the replacement of street trees that are in poor condition or dead.
- Encourage business owners to use landscaping in front of shops in a manner that enhances the sidewalk experience.
- Increase landscaping in the areas identified as “needing improvement” in the report (Figures 3 and 4) as an initial measure for improving sidewalk appeal.

Street Furniture

- Support the addition of well-designed street furniture where feasible within the Village core areas (benches, café seating, bicycle racks, informational kiosks, etc).
- Street furniture should be fitting for the character of each Village and design upgrades should be explored to provide unique identifiers within each Village (such as Peace Dale trash receptacles).

- Design street furniture in concert with landscaping and other street elements to help “frame” pedestrian resting spots (such as benches in the Peace Dale Public Parking Lot).

Lighting

- Common pedestrian crossing areas should be supplemented with brighter or additional lighting.
- Expanded use of period lighting should be standardized within the Village core areas as a means of reinforcing the historic qualities and the unique sense of place within each Village.
- Period lighting should be sensitive to the scale, style, and location of buildings and other structures. Due to the differences in scale of buildings between Wakefield and Peace Dale, each Village should continue to utilize its own unique period lighting fixtures.

Pedestrian Safety

- Explore additional raised medians and/or curb extensions located at high-volume intersections and pedestrian crossing points.
- Explore the addition of a gateway feature at the entry ways to the Villages that can serve as a traffic calming element and a unique community identifier.

General Bicycle Infrastructure

- Provide signage at bike path access points from the roadway network.
- Provide on-street facilities such as striped bike lanes on streets approaching the bike path.
- Ensure bike path/roadway intersections account for biker safety by providing adequate signage and are designed with adequate sight lines and stopping distances.
- Ensure bike paths can serve as “shared use” facilities and that accommodate bi-directional, mixed use travel with a recommended width of 10 feet.
- Explore enhanced design features for bike racks that exhibit local design themes.

William C. O’Neill Bike Path

- Investigate strategies to better orient businesses toward the bike path and improve general maintenance and appeal of the backsides of buildings abutting the bike path.
- Prioritize pedestrian improvements in the areas near the Village/bike path gateways.
- Seek a formal designation and recognition of the Peace Dale Art Park by the Town Council.

- Seek grant opportunities for implementing a comprehensive signage program throughout the bike path corridor.

General Parking Strategies

- Maintain an adequate supply of on-street parking in the Village core areas.
- Promote redevelopment opportunities that will support the relocation of parking areas to the rear of buildings.
- Rear parking areas should support connections between lots to allow for increased vehicle mobility and shared parking arrangements.

Public Parking Lots (Saugatucket Lot and Intermodal Lot in Wakefield)

- Move forward with improvements plans for both public parking lots (see Appendix C and D).
- Encourage a coordinated improvement effort between the Town and abutting business owners to better engage customers from the rear of buildings by improving building/lot conditions.
- Consider integrating small pedestrian rest installations as means of enhancing appeal and creating a transition zone between the parking lot and abutting buildings and sidewalks.
- Improve visibility of existing parking lot signs and consider adding supplemental signage.
- Improve siting and screening of dumpsters.

Stormwater Management

- Perform a comprehensive stormwater assessment to identify effective long-term engineering solutions for the Villages and identify potential resources to fund such improvements.
- Continue pursuing State support for addressing critical infrastructure issues facing High Street (deteriorated condition of roadway, sidewalks and poorly functioning drainage systems) that stand as obstacles to transportation, environmental, and economic development objectives of the community.
- Consider engineering improvements that will add greenspace to the Peace Dale rotary that will serve as a bio-retention facility (improved drainage handling) and a pedestrian island system.

Regulatory Recommendations

Industrial-1 Zoning District

- Consider adding a line to the Use Table that would allow for Temporary Indoor Gatherings.

- Consider changes to the Use Table that would incorporate a more refined approach to regulating various manufacturing and assembly related uses.

Commercial Downtown Zoning District

- Consider allowing residential uses on the ground floor of buildings within the CD District subject to a setback distance from primary commercial roadways.

Effective Standards for Transitioning Between Zoning Districts

- Consider zoning changes to address the transition areas between districts to regulate: buffer widths and design standards; lighting; and orientation of buildings and yards.

Design Guidelines

- Consider development of local design guidelines for the Village core areas as well as the Dale Carlia Area to address issues of: building scale, architectural features, signage, site design, etc.
- Use the “draft” guidelines provided in this report as a starting point for larger community discussions.

Cottage Zoning

- Consider amendments to Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Regulations to allow for cottage housing- a cluster-style development pattern of small homes with a heightened focus on traditional housing design element, common green space which integrates affordable housing opportunities.
- Utilize the “draft” zoning language provided in this report as a starting point for broader community discussions concerning cottage zoning.

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

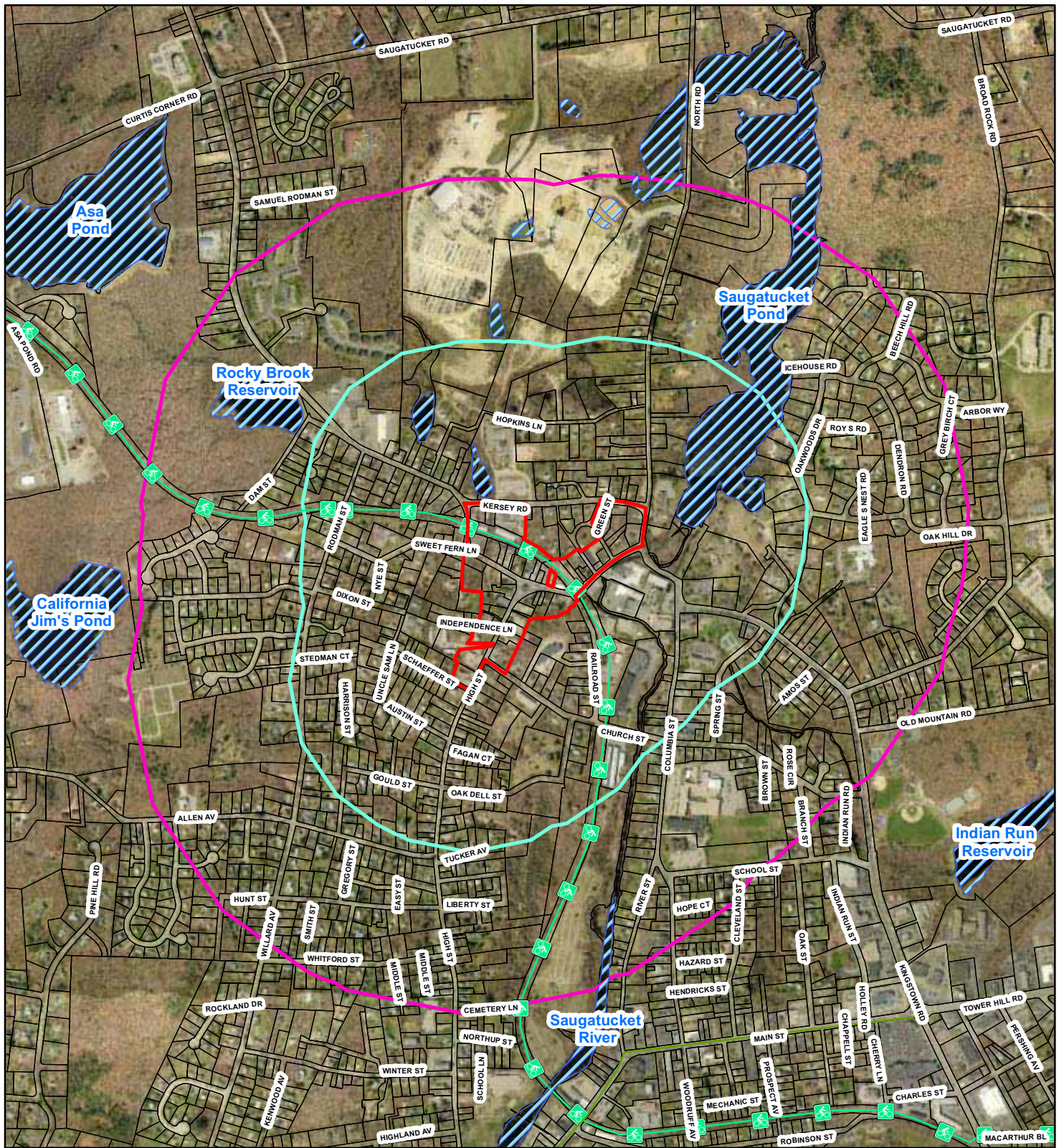
Planning for Villages is a critical piece to supporting a community's character, economic welfare, and overall health—for both its citizens and the environment. Villages are often places that a community uses to identify itself and to strengthen its unique sense of place. The Villages of Wakefield and Peace Dale are at the heart of South Kingstown's identity and the core areas of these Villages are the focus of this project (Figures 1 and 2). This study is being provided through a Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program Challenge Grant. The purpose of the study is to assess the current conditions of the Villages of Wakefield and Peace Dale and provide recommendations for enhancing and protecting their unique and historic character in the future. The project is being directed by the Village Planning Steering Committee, with assistance from the South Kingstown Planning Department and project consultant, Horsley Witten Group, Inc. (HW). This project is building upon the efforts of many organizations and individuals that have been continuously engaged in fostering vitality and revitalization within both Villages. These organizations include the Peace Dale Neighborhood Association, the Downtown Merchants Association, the Friends of Wakefield Village, the South Kingstown Chamber of Commerce, the South Kingstown Housing Authority, as well as other grass-roots organizations that continue to guide public and private improvements within the Villages.

1.1.1 History of the Villages







Understanding the history of Wakefield and Peace Dale is essential to understanding their central role in the development of South Kingstown. After all, it is the history of each Village that has defined their development patterns and created the character and scale of the two Villages that we seek to protect and enhance today.

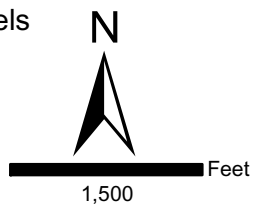
History of Wakefield

The development and growth of Wakefield are a consequence of its location along the Saugatucket River and on the Old Post Road. The industrial legacy of the Village is evidenced by the many mill buildings that remain in the area today or have been lost. The mills, which include grist mills, saw mills, and a carding mill, were located approximately 250 feet north of the present dam along the Saugatucket River near Main Street. The water power associated with the Saugatucket River was a key to the early mill development in Wakefield. Post Road was laid out in the early 18th century. In 1745, the Willard Hazard Tavern and stagecoach stop was established at Dockray Corner on Sugar Loaf Hill, today the western end of the Wakefield district. In 1819, the Village was still in its infancy as a settlement, as the periodicals of that year fail to mention it, only noting Kingston Village and Tower Hill. The tempo of development was slow through first half of the 19th century and the notable buildings in Wakefield included: a grist mill, a saw mill, a carding mill, a blacksmith shop, two churches, a handful of farm houses, and a large number of Greek Revival homes.



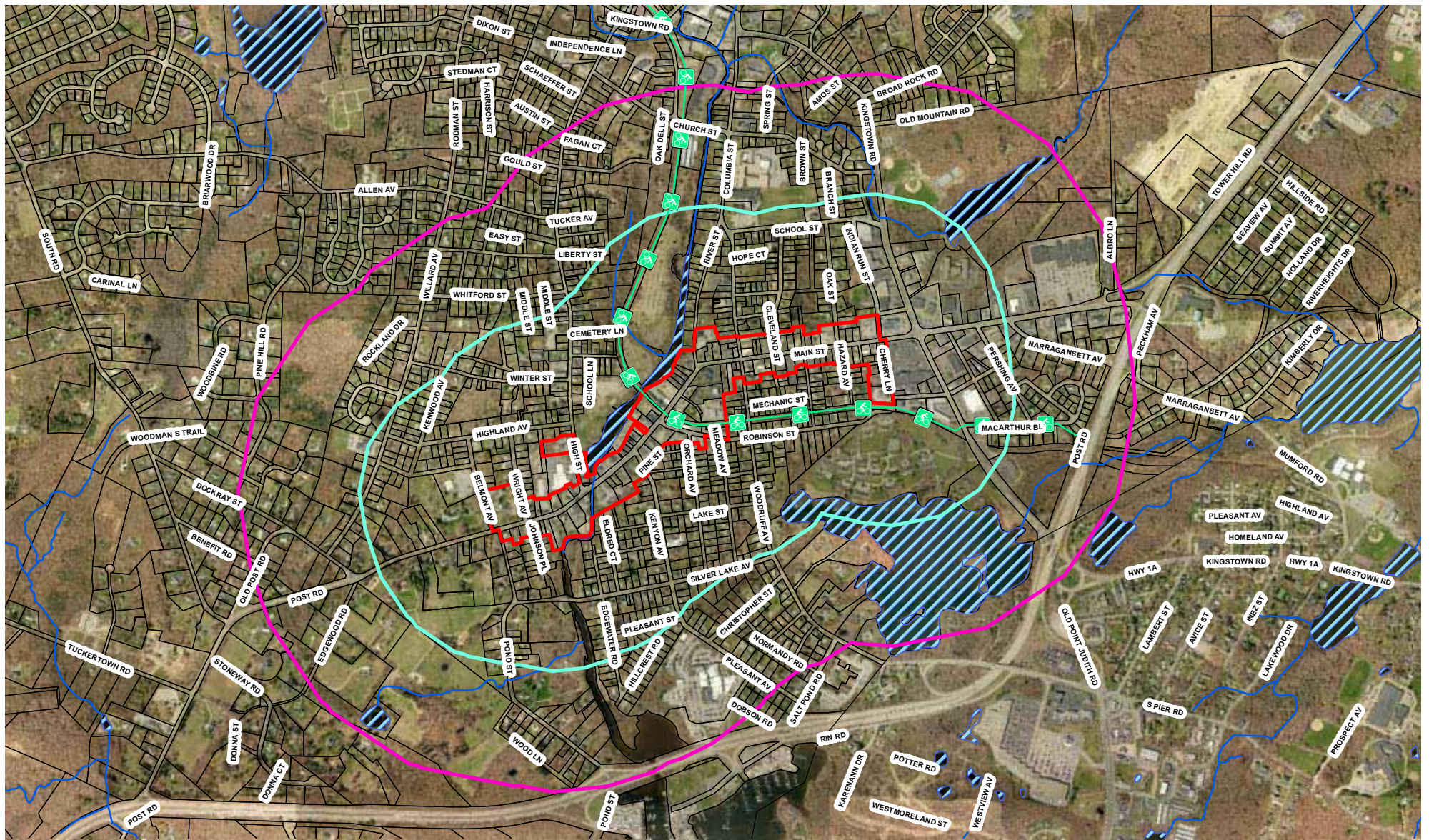
Legend

-  1/4 Mile Radius
-  1/2 Mile Radius
-  Village Study Area - Parcels Zoned CD
-  Bike Path
-  Surface Water
-  Assessor's Parcels









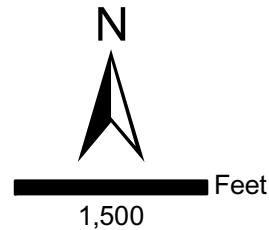
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**Village of Peace Dale
Locus Map**



Legend

-  1/4 Mile Radius
-  1/2 Mile Radius
-  Village Study Area - Parcels Zoned CD
-  Bike Path
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-  Assessor's Parcels



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Village of Wakefield
 Locus Map

Sometime around 1850, a new dam was built along the Saugatucket, and new stone mill buildings were constructed. Soon, new stores, banks, hotels, a new church, and several fine homes were built in the area, including Gothic cottages, a Bracketed style home, and an Italianate residence. The post-Civil war years that followed were a period of growth and prosperity in Wakefield. Many businesses were started and through the second half of the 19th century, the notable additions to the Village included: the Riverside Cemetery, a carriage manufactory (1874), the Sheldon Building (1875), the Narragansett Pier Railroad with a station in Wakefield (1876), the Town Hall on High Street (1877) (also central in the history of Peace Dale), the Church of the Nazarene (1880), and the Columbia House (1880). This era in Wakefield also saw the erection of several fine Queen Anne style houses and a much more defined commercial district.



Historic Main Street, Wakefield.

By 1900, the Village extended along Main Street from Sugar Loaf Hill in the west to Dale Carlia Corner in the east, and along Columbia Street, Woodruff Avenue, High Street, and many other side streets off the main roads. The Village continued to grow and development of housing in the adjacent Villages of Peace Dale and Rocky Brook gradually transformed the area into an amorphous, suburban-like settlement. Most of the new houses were modest, built for

working people, but many fine homes were also added to the Village. Continued growth of the population was accompanied by the growth and expansion of commercial, public, and social institutions. Until World War II, Wakefield’s activities were centered on its central business district, but, beginning in the late 1950’s a new commercial area was started at the Dale Carlia Corner. Since then, the area has grown considerably, sprawling with a more auto-oriented pattern of development over a large area to constitute one of South County’s largest shopping areas today.

Fortunately, the old business district has retained its character and vitality, and today remains a good example of a late 19th – early 20th century New England business district. Main Street between Dale Carlia Corner and the historic Wakefield commercial center is rapidly becoming commercialized, but many of the former homes which have been converted to commercial use retain their original architectural character. Wakefield today is historically interesting and significant, and retains a variety of buildings associated with the more than 200-year history of the Village.

Adapted from “Lost South Kingstown: With a History of Ten of Its Early Villages” and “Historic and Architectural Resources of South Kingstown, RI” (see Reference Section).

History of Peace Dale

The history of Peace Dale is largely defined by its primary founder, Rowland Hazard. Hazard's father had purchased 500 acres of land in the Peace Dale area in 1698. Around 1800 Hazard purchased a cottage (the Homestead Cottage still stands today) in the area as well as half interest in Benny Rodman's Mill and, in 1804, he set up the earliest carding machines in the state. In 1814 he acquired narrow width power looms and added a woolen mill. In 1825 all woolen mill operations in Peace Dale were under one roof and the area began transforming from an agricultural-based farming community to a busy mercantile center based on manufacturing. At this point Peace Dale was still just a small Village with only two mills, five houses, one store, and about 30 people.

Around this time, Hazard named the lower portion of the Village Peace Dale, giving it a separate identity from the nearby Rocky Brook. When the old mill was destroyed by fire, a new stone mill with a bell tower was built in 1844 at the present site of the Peace Dale Mills. In 1847, even more mills were built as part of the Hazard's Peace Dale Manufacturing Company. During the Civil War, the mills furnished cloth for the Union army uniforms. After the war, cheviot and serge woolens became a specialty when a three-story stone mill was constructed. By the middle of the 19th century, Peace Dale was a bustling center of industrial activity hiring workers from the area as well as from abroad. Peace Dale had become known throughout the country for its productivity. Rowland Hazard's first son, Joseph, built another early mill for manufacturing axes which stood at what is now known as Peace Dale Flats. Located at the intersection of Kingstown Road and High Street, Peace Dale Flats eventually became the Village's business center. At this time, Hazard and his family began erecting significant granite structures in the surrounding area, such as The Congressional Church, the Town Hall (also central in the history of Wakefield), Hazard Memorial Hall, and the Neighborhood Guild. In 1891, the Hazards established one of the first kindergartens in the U.S. in the building next door to the Homestead Cottage.

By 1900, Peace Dale had a flourishing population of 1,500, largely supported by its industrial economy. Many of the inhabitants of Peace Dale lived in houses built by the Hazard family. Peace Dale Flats, formerly housing an axe manufactory and a gristmill, had now become a thriving business district with a general store, a grocery store, an opera house, and mill cottages. As it grew, housing in the surrounding areas of Peace Dale began to merge with the Village of Wakefield and create a more suburban-like settlement. In



Historic Peace Dale Flats

the 1950's, similar to the Village of Wakefield, Peace Dale began to feel the effects of nearby auto-oriented commercial development, but still maintained its historic character. Today, the Village of Peace Dale is closely tied to its industrial history through the many mill structures in the area.

Adapted from "Lost South Kingstown: With a History of Ten of Its Early Villages" and "Historic and Architectural Resources of South Kingstown, RI" (see Reference Section).

Role of Historic Districts within the Villages

The Town of South Kingstown established National Register Historic Districts that overlap with the Village study areas for Peace Dale and Wakefield (Figures 1 and 2). These districts do not cover the entire Village study areas but they do encompass the land within each village containing the greatest number of historic structures. These districts add an additional level of review for the development of any new structures or alterations to existing structures. The review process ensures that the exterior aesthetics and architectural features within the district remain consistent with the historic fabric of these neighborhoods. These districts serve an important role in protecting the historic character of each Village by preventing harm to existing historic structures as well as promoting appropriate design for new structures.

1.2 Project Approach

The South Kingstown Village Study is focused on assessing the existing conditions of the Villages of Wakefield and Peace Dale and providing infrastructure and regulatory recommendations that will serve to protect and enhance each Village. Throughout the course of the project, the primary objective will be to identify and support those elements that contribute to the unique character and viability of each Village. The Town of South Kingstown and HW will work to achieve these objectives through pursuing the following project goals:

- Engage community throughout project and promote community engagement as means of sustaining the Villages into the future;
- Support economic development of Villages;
- Support environmental health of Villages;
- Identify infill opportunities; and
- Define an appropriate "Village scale".

The initial phase of the project concentrated on gathering information and assessing existing conditions. This required a thorough review and inventory of public infrastructure within the two Villages by the Town and HW, focusing on items such as: public facilities, green spaces, roads, sidewalks, bikeways, stormwater infrastructure, and the public transportation system. Additionally, in laying the foundation for regulatory analysis, HW performed a comprehensive audit of relevant municipal planning and regulatory documents, such as the Comprehensive Plan and Affordable Housing Plan, the Zoning Ordinance, and the Subdivision Regulations. This assessment continued

throughout the course of the project and involved a continuous review of local standards against emerging ideas throughout the public process and discussions with local officials. The purpose of this exercise was to compare the municipal documents to the project goals and identify areas where infrastructure improvements and regulatory amendments may be needed to better address the planning objectives for Wakefield and Peace Dale.

After the initial assessments were performed, an outline of each Village's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWAT) was assembled. This SWAT analysis, along with other key issues identified within each Village, was presented during the first public planning workshops held on February 26, 2009 (Wakefield) and April 16, 2009 (Peace Dale). These initial workshops were designed to be introductory in nature and intended primarily as a forum to listen to local stakeholders vet concerns about the study areas and discuss site-specific issues with each Village. Within each of these workshops, public feedback was integrated into the project analysis and helped to guide the infrastructure and regulatory recommendations as well as identifying emerging issues within each of the Villages. A third public workshop, on October 29, 2009, was held as a joint Village workshop to discuss the initial project recommendations for both the Villages. After the third public workshop, project recommendations were finalized and prepared for review by municipal authorities and the Village Planning Steering Committee. The feedback gathered during the public workshops and the final steering committee meeting has been provided in Appendix A for further review.

An important project milestone was the development of "Vision Statements" for each Village to serve as guiding documents for project recommendations and future Village planning efforts. These Vision Statements offer a future view of idealized conditions within the Villages. These pieces also served as a reference point for the development of regulatory language and are intended to be directly transferable to the Comprehensive Plan. The Vision Statements are provided in Section 1.3 of this report for further review.

1.3 Vision Statements

For each Village, two Vision Statements have been drafted as part of this study—a long (detailed) and short (summary) version. Both versions served as critical guiding documents in framing the analysis and recommendations included within this report. The long versions provide slightly more detail on supporting actions to achieve the vision and thus serve as an ideal roadmap for the Town and community organizations in future Village planning efforts. The summary versions were drafted for potential inclusion within the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

1.3.1 Long Version Vision Statements

Peace Dale Vision Statement

The future of Peace Dale is viewed as a safe, vibrant neighborhood coalesced around a Village center that has come to reflect its character, its citizens' efforts, and rich history.

Its roots are celebrated through the preservation and enhancement of historic buildings and infrastructure while encouraging new development that fits with the scale and historic character of the Village. Peace Dale continues to be home to a diversity of building scales and sizes that support a broad range of residential and business uses within a compact setting. The Village center has improved traffic patterns, new sidewalks, a bike path, new shops with upper level living spaces, and enhanced pedestrian vitality and invitation. Through the efforts of the Town, local merchants, committee citizen groups like PDNRI (Peace Dale Neighborhood Revitalization, Inc.), the South Kingstown Public Housing Authority, and strong, collaborating non-profit organizations, Peace Dale has a strong sense of direction and purpose.

By focusing on both physical and social improvements, we have increased the number of small businesses located in our Village center and have created new in-town living opportunities. Businesses provide a mix of essential services and novelties to support a balanced local economy and reinforce the eclectic, artistic flavor of Peace Dale. The community has worked together to better serve its diverse socioeconomic population and reduce barriers to individual achievement. Improved public transportation systems within Peace Dale and the region have increased accessibility for all and reduced road congestion. As a consequence of improved infrastructure and new public facilities, expansion of existing programs and the creation of new social and recreational initiatives, a new synergy has developed on multiple fronts. New initiatives have been created in support of its youth and, combined with a commitment from the school department, has led to renewed vitality and celebrations of diversity.

The public's perception of Peace Dale has changed. Peace Dale is now a desirable, sought-after location in which to live, work and conduct business. The Village has balanced new construction and redevelopment of deteriorated areas with careful preservation of its history. Increased regulatory flexibility sets the stage for the redevelopment of nearby mill complexes and spurred further investment into the Village as a whole. The recent collaborative revitalization efforts for the Village, as embodied in the plan entitled: "Peace Dale in Action, A Community-Based Revitalization Plan (May 2002)", created a renewed vision and attitude for Peace Dale that will serve as a stepping off point for future efforts. Diversity of the built environment, the Village economy and residents are the cornerstones to the continued success of the Village. These aspects will be carefully maintained by residents, the business community, and municipal and state officials as Peace Dale Village continues to grow and prosper.

Wakefield Vision Statement

Wakefield is a dynamic, versatile Village that serves as the historic center of business and cultural activity for the South Kingstown community as a whole. Over time, Wakefield has successfully integrated the preservation of its historic structures with the encouragement of new development and infill strategies to maintain an energetic, mixed use historic Village environment. Our Village has the capacity to meet a broad range of community goals through its diversity of housing options, an extensive mix of local businesses, and access to recreational and cultural amenities. The Village core is a

vibrant hub of activity with a mix of two- to four-story buildings with shops along the street level and residential and office spaces on upper floors. The core is supported by surrounding residential neighborhoods that are smaller in scale but still exhibit a mix of uses and building styles and emphasize pedestrian connections to the central Village of Wakefield.

Through the pursuit of appropriate infill opportunities, Wakefield has begun to fulfill its potential as the major activity center within the Town of South Kingstown. The Village has maintained high standards for the appearance and use of its landmark buildings while also promoting new developments that contribute to its rich diversity of architecture. The Village economy is supported by a base of locally-owned, long-term anchor businesses that help to stimulate activity in the regional economy and promote a unique Village identity. Wakefield is an inviting place for pedestrians, with careful attention paid to streetscape and sidewalk treatment by both public and private parties. Recreational amenities such as the Saugatucket River Greenway and the William C. O'Neill Bike Path are central features in the experience of the Village. New programs have been created to better connect the community at large with Wakefield's many commercial, recreational, and cultural resources. Multimodal transportation opportunities have improved accessibility and decreased traffic congestion in the Village center. Wakefield is a significant economic and cultural draw for the region. Through support by the Chamber of Commerce, the in-town business community (Wakefield Merchant's Association and Friends of Wakefield Village), and other grass-roots citizen organizations, the Village has strong and diverse leadership that continues to guide public and private improvements. The Town plays an important role in the revitalization of the Wakefield central business district through a multifaceted program including improved infrastructure and facilities, direct budget support of programs, various grants, rehabilitation programs, public and private initiatives, and the use of Federal tax incentives. Through a sustained, collaborative planning effort, Wakefield's future as a vibrant focal point for the community with a strong sense of place will be maintained and enhanced in the future.

1.3.2 Summary Version Vision Statements

Peace Dale Vision Statement

Peace Dale is a safe, vibrant neighborhood with a Village center that has come to reflect its unique character, its citizens' efforts, and its history. Its roots are celebrated through the enhancement of historic buildings and new development that supports and improves the character of the Village. The Village landscape is connected by tributaries of the Saugatucket River, which provided the engine for the Village's birth and has since been restored to healthy, meandering streams. Peace Dale is home to a diversity of building scales and sizes that support a broad range of residential and business uses in a compact efficient setting. Infrastructure meets our needs and circulation within the Village center is well-designed, providing ample opportunity for people to walk comfortably from one place to another.

Through flexible regulations and their personal investment, they foster an economic environment in which small businesses thrive and in-town living opportunities are highly desirable. Residents and business owners share a strong sense of pride in the Village, as evidenced in the manner properties are maintained and the many personal and organizational contributions to the public realm. Diversity of the built environment, the Village economy, and residents, are the cornerstones to the continued success of the Village. These aspects will be carefully maintained by residents, the business community, and municipal and state officials as Peace Dale Village continues to grow and prosper.

Wakefield Vision Statement

Wakefield is a dynamic, versatile Village which serves as a hub for business and cultural activity serving local neighborhoods, the Town as a whole and surrounding region. With its strategic location off Routes 1 and 108, Wakefield provides a vital link to other Villages, local institutions, the University of Rhode Island, coastal recreation resources, tourism centers and historic settings. The Saugatucket River provides a blueway centerpiece for the Village and continued efforts to mitigate impacts to this resource have created a valuable cultural and improved ecological asset. The Village provides a balanced integration of preserving historic structures with the encouragement of new development and innovative infill strategies to create a seamless Village environment. Developed areas meet a broad range of community goals through a diversity of housing options, an extensive mix of local businesses, and convenient access to recreational, institutional and cultural amenities and services. The Village core around Main Street is a vibrant corridor that provides easy access to essential services for the surrounding neighborhoods through a strong network of pedestrian and bicycle routes. Local regulations maintain the unique Village character by allowing flexibility in design without losing touch with the historic fabric that helps to define Wakefield. Residents, developers, business owners, and local and state officials continually explore opportunities to collaborate in order to maintain the unique character and ongoing prosperity of historic Wakefield.

SECTION 2. INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Supporting a Pedestrian Environment

The benefits of supporting a pedestrian environment include improved environmental and personal health, enhanced community character, reduced traffic congestion, and economic rewards. This section provides an overview on why it is important to support a pedestrian environment—whether for walking or biking—and what we can do to enhance these conditions within the context of Village planning. The positive consequences of supporting walking and biking as healthy modes of transportation can span across many aspects of our lives. They can be expressed in terms of increased social activity, increased health of the environment, and increased health of individuals who are more physically active. A transportation system that is conducive to pedestrians and bikers can reap many benefits in terms of reduced traffic congestion and improved quality of life. Economic rewards both to the individual and to society are also realized through reduced health care costs, reduced dependency on auto ownership, and by increasing foot traffic in front of shops. Finally, communities accessible by walking or biking can create a more equitable society that provides transportation choices for all citizens.

2.1.1 Community Character Benefits

Improved conditions for pedestrians can have intangible benefits to the quality of life within our towns and Villages. Supporting a pedestrian environment enhances community character by encouraging people to get out of their cars and engage the environment through its public amenities, civic and green spaces, and shops along the street. The relationship between pedestrian activity and community character is cyclical in that individuals are better able to identify with a place when walking or biking, and conversely, an increased numbers of pedestrians can



Supporting a pedestrian environment enhances community identity and sense of place.

help a town or Village foster its own unique identify and sense of place. In this context, the term “sense of place” is used to illustrate an intangible quality about an environment that leads it to become unique and attractive to people because it is different than others.

In a growing number of communities, the degree to which an area is pedestrian friendly is considered an indicator of a community's livability, a factor that has a profound impact on attracting residents, businesses, workers, and tourists. In communities where people can regularly be seen out on the streets and sidewalks, there is a clear sense that these are

safe and friendly places to live and visit. The social interaction possible when the number of people walking increases is a major factor in improving the quality of life. By providing appropriate pedestrian amenities, communities enable the interaction between neighbors and visitors that can improve relationships and contribute to a strengthened sense of place.

2.1.2 Transportation Benefits



Traffic congestion can have an impact on even small Village environments.

Many of the trips that Americans make every day are short enough to be accomplished on foot, bike, or via wheelchair. The 1995 National Personal Transportation Survey (NPTS) found that approximately 40 percent of all trips are less than two miles in length, which represents a 30-minute walk (US Census, 1995). Walking and bicycling can help to reduce roadway congestion. Many streets and highways carry more traffic than they were designed to handle, resulting in gridlock, wasted time and energy, pollution, and driver frustration. Walking and biking requires significantly less space per traveler than driving.

2.1.3 Environmental Benefits

Motor vehicles create a substantial amount of air pollution. In fact, according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), transportation is responsible for nearly 80 percent of carbon monoxide and 55 percent of nitrogen oxide emissions in the U.S (EPA-GGIR, 2009). Not surprisingly, many metropolitan areas do not meet the air quality standards specified in the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments. Although individual cars are much cleaner today than they were in earlier years, if total traffic continues to grow, overall air quality will deteriorate. Moreover, every day cars and trucks burn millions of barrels of oil, a non-renewable energy source.

2.1.4 Social Benefits

Perhaps the most important factor to supporting a pedestrian environment is in relation to social benefits. When providing pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike paths, communities allow people to choose how they want to travel. One consequence of not installing this infrastructure is to force people to travel by automobile or to engage in unsafe pedestrian practices. For those who do not have the option to drive (such as adolescents and disabled) and those unable to afford a car, this lack of choice in transportation creates an inconvenient and socially unjust barrier to mobility.

The high cost of car ownership means that low-income families will have to spend a greater portion their income on owning and operating a car or choose not to have one. If automobile travel is the only feasible mode of transportation in a community, low-income families are placed at a large disadvantage with very limited mobility. By providing safe and convenient pedestrian facilities, the community can ensure that all citizens have access to a viable mode of transportation.

2.2 Pedestrian Conditions Analysis and Recommendations

Planning for, designing, and maintaining quality pedestrian amenities and infrastructure within the Villages of Wakefield and Peace Dale is a critical component to supporting their pedestrian environments. This section provides an overview of existing conditions in the two Villages and a number of recommendations for improving the quality of the pedestrian networks, as organized into the following categories:

- Village Core Conditions;
- Landscaping;
- Street Furniture;
- Lighting;
- Pedestrian Safety; and
- Pedestrians with Special Needs.

2.2.1 Village Core Conditions

Sidewalks and Pedestrian Only Walkways

Sidewalks are the “pedestrian corridors” that provide people with space to travel within the public right-of-way that is separated from roadway vehicles. Pedestrian only walkways are defined as pathways intended to provide connections by walking only and are not located alongside streets or designed as a shared path with bicycles. An example of a pedestrian only walkway can be found in the Village of Wakefield along the Saugatucket River. Well connected sidewalks and pedestrian only walkways provide the foundation for an appealing pedestrian environment, and this environment can be further enhanced by adding attractive sidewalk amenities such as landscaping and street furniture. When sidewalks and pedestrian only walkways are well designed, they provide a place for people to walk, run, meet, eat, play, shop, and generally enjoy the public realm. When sidewalks and pedestrian only walkways are well connected, they facilitate the mobility of pedestrians and provide access for all types of pedestrian travel: to and from home, work, parks, schools, shopping areas, transit stops, etc.

Within the Villages of Wakefield and Peace Dale, the first stage of analysis was to assess the current conditions within the Village core, with a focus on using the sidewalks and pedestrian only walkways as the corridors of analysis. For the purpose of this report, the term “Village core” is roughly defined as the area that lies along the major corridors of the Village—both roadways and pedestrian ways—within ¼ mile from the Village center

(less than 5 minutes walking time). Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the approximate extent of the Village core and display which areas within the Village core exhibit “ideal pedestrian conditions” as well as the areas in which “pedestrian conditions could use improvement.” These figures also call attention to several critical issues within each Village through the use of associated images. The main purpose of Figures 3 and 4 is to distinguish the physical boundaries of areas with either positive or negative pedestrian conditions and summarize what elements are contributing to those conditions. All the elements that contribute to the pedestrian conditions of a place are discussed in detail in further sections of this report, such as: landscaping, street furniture, lighting, safety features, etc.

Village Core Amenities



Main Street, Wakefield is home to many impressive historic buildings.

As further illustrated in Figures 3 and 4, each Village core contains a variety of amenities that support a pedestrian environment. Within Wakefield, some of the prime amenities in the Village are pieces of a well connected green space network. With the Saugatucket Park, the Saugatucket River Walkway, and views overlooking the Saugatucket River from Main Street (Images 1, 2, and 3 within Figure 4), Wakefield contains several prized green spaces and natural amenities. These natural amenities are coupled by a bustling economic hub that is housed by beautiful

and historic buildings. Much of Wakefield’s appeal comes from the impressive scale and architecture of the buildings on Main Street, as well as the lively pedestrian elements along the sidewalks. The pedestrian elements that help create the appealing environment along a long stretch of Main Street within the Village core are items such as: period lighting, a blend of landscaping including street trees and planting, heavy use of street furniture, and a sense of safety and enclosure when walking down the sidewalks. Each of these elements in Wakefield will be discussed individually in the following sections of this report.



Image 1

This unadorned building can create an unappealing pedestrian environment. Notice the lack of street-facing doors, awnings, plantings, and street furniture.



Image 2

The plantings and seating provided by business owners here help support a vibrant and engaging pedestrian environment.



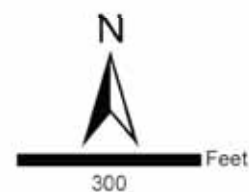
Image 3

The use of the front yard setback for parking and car storage can hinder a safe and attractive environment for pedestrians.



Legend

- Bike Path
- Opportunity To Improve Pedestrian Conditions
- Ideal Pedestrian Conditions
- Potential Green Space



Horsley Witten Group
 phone: 508-833-6600
 www.horsleywitten.com

Peace Dale Center
 South Kingstown, RI

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Figure 3



Image 4

This public art installation is one of several along this stretch of the bike path and provides a unique amenity within the village.



Image 5

Attention to detail along the building's edge can create an inviting place and helps to shape Peace Dale's distinct identity.



Image 6

This small area of land near the village center presents an excellent opportunity for improvement as a "pocket park" along the edge of the public right-of-way.



Image 1

The Saugatucket Park offers a tremendous pedestrian amenity near the village center and is well connected to Main Street via pedestrian only pathways.



Image 2

This pedestrian pathway is an attractive amenity in itself as well as an important connector between Main Street, the public parking lot, the Saugatucket River, and the public canoe launch.



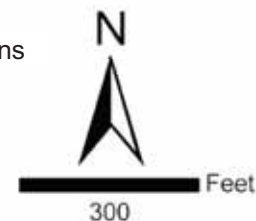
Image 3

This scenic vista over the Saugatucket River provides a pleasing contrast to the bustling business activity in the village center.



Legend

- Bike Path
- Opportunity To Improve Pedestrian Conditions
- Ideal Pedestrian Conditions
- Pedestrian Only Walkways
- Public Green Space



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Image 4

This stretch along Main Street is part of a noticeable gap in pedestrian elements in which empty lots are coupled by a lack of trees, plantings, and street furniture.



Image 5

The use of the front yard setback for car storage in addition to the auto-oriented building design and signage is less supportive of a pedestrian friendly environment.



Image 6

Within the core of the village are all the elements that contribute to pedestrian activity. Notice the attention to detail such as awnings, signage, trees, street furniture, and period lighting.

In Peace Dale, while there are not as many public green spaces and natural amenities near the center of the Village, there are still some green amenities just outside the core, such as the Neighborhood Guild. One significant opportunity for creating a small “pocket park” directly within the core exists in Peace Dale as illustrated by Image 6 in Figure 3. The notable amenities within Peace Dale are its unique public features displaying a strong connection to the arts community (Image 4 in Figure 3) and its close proximity to the Palisades Mill Complex. The buildings within the core of Peace Dale are smaller in scale to those in Wakefield, providing Peace Dale with a more intimate physical environment. These characteristics help provide Peace Dale with a very distinctive sense of place as evidenced by the strong connections its residents have to it.



Peace Dale is smaller in scale but the Village does not lack a strong community connection.

Challenges within the Village Core

While the Villages of Wakefield and Peace Dale are quite different, they both face some similar design challenges. Again, as displayed within Images 1 and 3 in Figure 3 as well as Images 4 and 5 in Figure 4, each Village exhibits some areas in which pedestrian conditions could be improved due to similar circumstances. The particular issues contributing to these “gaps” in the pedestrian environment are largely related to locations in which there are empty lots, existence of auto-oriented businesses that park and store cars within the front yard setback, and a general lack of pedestrian elements (landscaping, street furniture, etc.).



Empty lots, such as this one in Peace Dale, are a challenge to both Villages.

These can be particularly difficult challenges to overcome as empty lots are often the result of economic conditions that are beyond the means of a community to address through good planning. Additionally, addressing issues with existing businesses and lot layouts that prioritize cars over pedestrians typically move along a slow timeframe. Potential solutions for addressing “gaps” in the pedestrian network are addressed through the pedestrian recommendations found within this section as well as the recommendations for siting parking found later in this report.

2.2.2 Landscaping

The careful use of landscaping along sidewalks or pedestrian only walkways can play a critical role in supporting a pedestrian environment. Often, the sight of vegetation along the street's edge provides visual relief from the hardscape of concrete and the built environment. Landscaping can include: trees, bushes, ground plantings, planting boxes, all of which can be placed alongside a building, in the buffer area between the sidewalk and the street, or within pedestrian safety facilities such as street medians—as discussed later in this study. Within the Villages of Wakefield and Peace Dale, the use of landscaping plays a large role in determining the quality of the pedestrian environment. There are many examples of quality landscaping elements within the Villages that have contributed to labeling them as having “ideal pedestrian conditions.” Note that this can still include the areas in which the buildings are very close to the street and there is limited usable space. In fact, within these small spaces, the addition of trees and planters can make a large impact on visual appeal.



Landscaping provides visual relief from the hardscape of the sidewalk.

Street Trees



Street trees provide shade and a sense of enclosure on the sidewalk.

Street trees provide shade and a sense of enclosure for pedestrians. The street trees in Wakefield and Peace Dale are often located on the street-side edge of the sidewalk. These trees are typically the result of municipal improvements and are publically maintained. In addition to providing beauty, they can also reduce the heat island effect (higher temperatures experienced in environments with large amounts of paving) and if appropriately sited can result in lower energy bills for nearby buildings.

It is recommended that careful consideration be given to selecting the appropriate types of trees to plant. They should be adapted to the local climate (i.e.: they should survive without protection or intensive irrigation) and new street trees should fit with the character of any existing street trees. In regard to the placement of street trees, it is recommended that predicted tree growth patterns should not obscure signs or pedestrians' and

motorists' views of each other or interfere with utilities underground or overhead. Site selection should provide for adequate space for tree maturation, and preparing the ground to help ensure that they will survive with minimal maintenance, and do not buckle the sidewalks as they mature.

Sidewalk Plantings

Sidewalk plantings—whether in the ground or in planting boxes—might be provided either by the property owner or by the municipality and can be located in either the public right-of-way or on private property, including attachments to the building itself. This provides an opportunity for business owners to participate in beautifying the sidewalk in front of their shop and contributing to the pedestrian environment. There are several examples of property owners in both Wakefield and Peace Dale that have obviously made a significant effort to build and maintain planting features of all types in front of their shop. There are also excellent examples of plantings in both Villages that are integrated into the design of buildings that add to the pedestrian’s visual appeal.

It is recommended that both Villages focus on opportunities to increase plantings in the areas that are identified as needing improvement in pedestrian conditions (Figure 3 and 4). The challenge is that many of these areas currently have empty lots making the private investment in sidewalk plantings unlikely. In these cases, it may be possible for the municipality to explore the use of publicly funded sidewalk plantings that can serve as a buffer from the public right of way. As a specific example, Image 4 within Figure 4 displays an unappealing chain link fence lining the edge of the sidewalk and property edge. One potential solution is for the municipality and



These private plantings in Peace Dale are a welcome addition to the public sidewalk.



This planting installation in Wakefield is integrated into the design of the building.



This public planting in Wakefield is a buffer between the sidewalk and driveway.

property owner to explore using plantings or vines along this edge to improve the appearance of this area.

It is recommended that in any planting program maintenance must be considered and agreed to up-front, whether it is the town or neighborhood organizations, businesses, or residents who will take responsibility for maintenance. It is also recommended that the community identify opportunities to locate plantings between driveways and pedestrian walkways extending to rear parking lots when possible. Additionally, it is recommended that the community explore the opportunity for plantings to be located along the street edge as a buffer between pedestrians and motorists. This planting strategy may be more appropriate for areas just outside the Village core without on-street parking to serve as a buffer. Low-growing shrubs (2-3 feet) can provide some enclosure for the pedestrian and visually narrow the width of the roadway for the motorist as a traffic calming measure.

2.2.3 Street Furniture

Well-designed sidewalks and pedestrian only walkways are enhanced by street furniture, such as benches, sidewalk café seating, and trash receptacles. Good-quality street furniture can show that the community values its public spaces. Throughout much of the Village core within Wakefield and Peace Dale, street furniture is common and often in good condition. Street furniture serves an important role, both functionally and aesthetically. The function of benches, café seating, and trash receptacles is obvious, but their aesthetic qualities are often an underrated aspect in the appearance of a sidewalk. For example, street furniture can be used to help frame an enhanced use of public space, such as the small area framed by two benches located within the Peace Dale public parking lot.



Street furniture can be used to frame unique pedestrian amenities.



There are a variety of bench designs used throughout Wakefield and Peace Dale.

There are a variety of bench designs used throughout the two Villages. Some of these benches are provided by the municipality and some are provided by private business

owners. The supply of private benches can be a helpful addition to the pedestrian environment and add to a unique sense of place. However, while variety may be pleasant to some extent, it is recommended that the town select one bench design for all publically provided benches to create a consistent environment. Benches should be fitting for the character of each Village and the design can potentially be upgraded to provide a unique identifying feature associated with the each Village. It is recommended that the community support the addition of private and publically provided street furniture wherever feasible. Street furniture enhances a pedestrian’s engagement of a place and can be used to add a distinctive touch. As an example, Peace Dale has taken a unique approach to its trash receptacles by integrating art into the design of the exterior of the receptacle. Likewise, a business that offers drinks or food may choose to provide any variety of designs for sidewalk café seating to add color, design, or local flavor to the sidewalk. It is recommended that sidewalk café seating be promoted in the Village core area, however placement of seating should not obstruct pedestrian mobility.



This Peace Dale trash receptacle integrates art into the sidewalk.



Well designed café seating invites customers to enjoy activity on the sidewalk.

2.2.4 Lighting

Good quality and placement of lighting can enhance an environment as well as increase comfort and safety for pedestrians. Pedestrians often assume that motorists can see them at night when, in fact, they are deceived by their own ability to see the oncoming headlights. Without sufficient overhead lighting, motorists may not be able to see pedestrians in time to stop. In Wakefield and Peace Dale, pedestrian activity often occurs at night as a result of exiting retail shops and restaurants. For each Village, streetlights

should be used to enhance the ambiance of the area and the visibility of pedestrians by motorists as well as increase personal safety. It is best to place streetlights along both sides of arterial streets and provide a consistent level of lighting along a road way.



There are a variety of existing lighting fixture styles in the two Villages

It is recommended that common pedestrian crossing areas be supplemented with brighter or additional lighting. This includes investigating the potential of using additional lighted pedestrian crosswalks and approaches to crosswalks at the major bike path crossings in Wakefield and Peace Dale. In terms of the aesthetics of lighting, there are many different types of lighting fixtures within Wakefield and Peace Dale, including conventional and period (historic) lighting. Within Village environments such as Wakefield and Peace Dale, it is recommended that period lighting be used within the Village core as a means to reinforce the historic qualities of the Villages and add to a unique sense of place. Period lighting should be sensitive to the scale, style, and location of buildings and other structures. Due to the differences in scale of buildings between Wakefield and Peace Dale, each Village should seek its own unique period lighting fixtures.

2.2.5 Pedestrian Safety

Ensuring that people can cross streets safely and conveniently to access destinations is essential to creating an effective pedestrian environment. Pedestrians should be able to cross streets at intersections and midblock locations, at controlled (signals, stop signs, etc.) and uncontrolled locations, on major streets and on minor streets. Getting across the street can be one of the primary barriers to achieving true accessibility and mobility, and every accommodation should be made to make crossings work effectively for people. The Villages of Wakefield and Peace Dale utilize a variety of strategies for accomplishing safe street crossings. The analysis and recommendations regarding pedestrian safety is organized within the following categories:

- Crosswalks;
- Raised Medians;
- Gateways;

- Curb Extensions; and
- Crossing Signage.

Crosswalks

The Villages of Wakefield and Peace Dale recently experienced the installation of 18 marked crosswalks (7 in Peace Dale, 11 in Wakefield) as a result of the State Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Crosswalks at midblock locations (unsignalized) are often the most important street crossing points to consider for reinforcing pedestrian safety. Midblock crossings can take on a variety of physical features and/or signs. Crosswalks should be installed in conjunction with other enhancements that physically reinforce crosswalks and reduce vehicle speeds, particularly at uncontrolled locations and on larger roads. It is also useful to supplement crosswalk markings with warning signs for motorists. At some locations, signs can get "lost" in visual clutter, so care must be taken in placement. Recommended guidelines and priorities for crosswalk installation at uncontrolled locations are given in the Federal Highway Administration document, [Safety Effect of Marked Versus Unmarked Crosswalks at Uncontrolled Locations](#) (FHWA, 2005).



Crosswalk should be installed in conjunctions with visible signage.

Raised Medians

Medians are raised barriers in the center portion of the street or roadway that can serve as a landing place for pedestrians who cross a street midblock or at an intersection location. Raised medians may also provide space for trees and other landscaping.



This raised median improves safety at the intersection of Main Street and High Street.

Raised medians are not common within the Villages of Wakefield and Peace Dale due to space limitations on the existing roadways, however there are examples at intersections that provide both improved safety and aesthetics. Raised medians are recommended on high-volume, high-speed roads, and they should be designed to provide tactile cues for pedestrians with visual impairments to indicate the border between the pedestrian refuge area and the motorized vehicle roadway. Additionally, landscaping in medians should not obstruct the visibility between pedestrians and approaching motorists. It is important to ensure that there is enough room for wider sidewalks, bike lanes, and planting strips before proceeding with construction. Examples of good and bad designs for raised median crossings can be found in [Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access: Part II of II: Best Practices Design Guide](#) (FHWA, 2001).

Gateways

A gateway is a physical or geometric landmark that indicates a change in the environment from a higher speed arterial or collector road to a lower speed residential or commercial district. They often place a higher emphasis on aesthetics and are frequently used to identify neighborhood and commercial areas within a town or Village setting. Currently, no constructed gateway exists for either Wakefield or Peace Dale. It is recommended the community explore this option for enhancing safety as well as community character and sense of place.



Gateways can add value to both aesthetics and pedestrian safety.

Gateways may be a combination of street narrowing, medians, signing, archways, the beginning of formal curbs and gutters with planting strips or other identifiable feature. Gateways should send a clear message to motorists that they have reached a unique environment and must reduce speeds. Gateways are only an introduction and slower speeds are not likely to be maintained unless other traffic-calming features are used.

Curb Extensions

Curb extensions, also known as bulb-outs or neckdowns, extend the sidewalk or curb line out into the parking lane, which reduces the effective street width. Currently, no major curb extensions exist within the Villages of Wakefield and Peace Dale and it is recommended that the community explore the potential for the use of curb extensions



Curb extensions narrow the pedestrian crossing distance.

for improving crossing safety at highly trafficked areas (by both pedestrians and vehicles), particularly along Main Street in Wakefield. Curb extensions significantly improve pedestrian crossings by reducing the pedestrian crossing distance, visually and physically narrowing the roadway, improving the ability of pedestrians and motorists to see each other, and reducing the time that pedestrians are in the street.



Curb extensions improve views between pedestrians and motorists.

Curb extensions placed at an intersection can also have the effect of preventing motorists from parking in or too close to a crosswalk or from blocking a curb ramp or crosswalk. Motor vehicles parked too close to corners present a threat to pedestrian and driver safety, since they block sightlines, obscure visibility of pedestrians and other vehicles, and make turning particularly difficult for emergency vehicles and trucks. Curb extensions also provide an excellent place to locate street signs which will be more visible since they cannot be easily blocked by parked cars. Motorists are encouraged to travel more slowly at intersections or midblock locations with curb extensions, as the restricted street width sends a visual

cue to motorists. Turning speeds at intersections can be reduced with curb extensions (curb radii should be as tight as is practicable). Curb extensions also provide additional space for curb ramps and for level sidewalks where existing space is limited. It is important to note that curb extensions are only appropriate where there is an on-street parking lane. Curb extensions must not extend into travel lanes, bicycle lanes, or shoulders (curb extensions should not extend more than 6 feet from the curb). The turning needs of larger vehicles, such as school buses, should be considered in curb extension design.

Crossing Signage

There are a variety of crossing signage methods that a community can employ to inform motorists of an impending crosswalk or pedestrian in the area. The more attention a pedestrian crossing can attract, the more a motorist will know what to expect and will react and behave appropriately. Giving motorists advance warning of an upcoming pedestrian crossing or that they are entering a traffic-calmed area will alert them to modify their speed. In Wakefield Village, the Town has employed a very unique strategy for signage in the



Orange flags at a crosswalk on Main Street in Wakefield.

use of orange pedestrian flags that can be picked up at specific crossing points along Main Street and used to alert drivers while crossing the street. Sign use and movement in crossing alerts should be done judiciously, as overuse breeds noncompliance and disrespect. Too many signs may also create visual clutter and signs can get lost. All signs should be periodically checked to make sure that they are in good condition, free from graffiti, reflective at night, and continue to serve their intended purpose.

2.2.6 Pedestrians with Special Needs

Special needs pedestrian populations include senior citizens, and disabled pedestrians of all ages. Each special needs pedestrian population has their own unique set of characteristics that limit their ability to safely travel across and along roadways. For example, pedestrians with physical disabilities may include no or limited vision, or the need to use a wheelchair, a walker, or other mobility assistance devices. Older pedestrians are not as mobile as younger adults and/or may have limited hearing or vision. Currently within the Villages of Wakefield and Peace Dale, many of the sidewalks, pedestrian only walkways, and street crossings are compliant with American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. ADA standards should be integrated into the construction of every new sidewalk and pedestrian walkway throughout South Kingstown as infrastructure is upgraded. As an example of the growing awareness of pedestrians with special needs in South Kingstown, the recently constructed Saugatucket Riverwalk and the new Main Street access to the riverwalk are ADA compliant.



Special needs pedestrians require additional safety considerations.

There are several important considerations when designing facilities for pedestrians with special needs, such as:

- Wheelchair ramp placement and design (ramp slope, side-slope, level landing, crosswalk placement, detectable warning, smooth transitions, etc);
- Proximity of wheelchair amenities to designated handicapped parking spaces.
- Clear sidewalk width;
- Sidewalk cross-slope;
- Street furniture design and placement;
- Tactile warning strips at street crossings;
- Audible pedestrian signals;
- Pedestrian crossing time; and
- Construction zones and temporary work zones.

2.3 Bike Path Analysis and Recommendations

As illustrated within Figures 3 and 4, the William C. O'Neill Bike Path (henceforth referred to as the bike path) transects the Village core near the center of both Wakefield and Peace Dale. The bike path provides an excellent amenity to both Villages and serves as an important connection between the two, as well as to the University of Rhode Island and all points in between. Planning for a bicycle-friendly environment involves a comprehensive approach and placing a high priority on short and long-term planning methods and policy decisions. South Kingstown and RIDOT have dedicated significant time and resources to the continued construction of the bike path (Phase III- MacArthur Blvd. through Narragansett Pier- is scheduled for completion in the Summer of 2010) and shall continue to do so through ongoing maintenance and event programming. Regardless of the location, purpose, level of use, or mix of users, there are certain design elements that are important for the successful and safe operation of a bike path.

2.3.1 Principles of Bike Path Planning and Design

There is a wealth of information available on bike path design to help identify solutions and approaches to planning. Several resources on bike paths have provided better planning and design principles based on decades of research on the topic. The design criteria provided here is adapted from some of these resources to more specifically address the planning and design needs in South Kingstown.

- Bike paths must be connected to the transportation system;
- Bike paths are used by a wide variety of users; and
- Intersections between bike paths and roadways present the greatest challenge.

Bike paths must be connected to the transportation system.

Bike paths do not exist in a vacuum. Users need to be able to get to and from the facility on the regular street network and the transition areas between the two should be safe, obvious, and convenient. Similarly, connections between the bike path access points and local transit service can encourage bike path use and boost bus ridership. Strategies for achieving this connection include:

- Provide signage at bike path access points from the roadway network;
- Provide signage at cross streets and vice versa, so that bike path users know where they are and motorists recognize that they are crossing a bike path;



Bike path signage should be used to reinforce access points.

- Provide on-street facilities such as striped bike lanes on streets approaching the bike path; and
- Locate bus stops close to bike path access points (but not so close that a stopped bus would obscure the bike path or block the bike path crossing).

Bike paths are used by a wide variety of users.

Design manuals from the 1970s and 1980s suggested that bike paths could be designed for the exclusive use of bicycles, and further that those paths might be used in just one direction. The reality of bike paths of almost any size is that they are used by a wide variety of users including pedestrians, joggers, in-line skaters, fitness walkers, people with dogs or strollers, and people travel in both directions regardless of any traffic control devices that try to say otherwise. Consequently, design manuals now acknowledge that paths are "shared use" facilities and that they must be designed to accommodate bi-directional mixed use. The most obvious example of this is that the AASHTO Guide now recommends a minimum trail width of 10 feet (up from 8 feet) and encourages the use of 12 feet or more where heavy or mixed uses are expected.

Intersections between bike paths and roadways present the greatest challenge.



Bike path intersection design should consider sight lines and stopping distances.

Great care has to be taken in managing the operation of bike path /roadway intersections to ensure safety, convenience and comfort are balanced. Bike path users don't want to have to stop every few hundred yards at every driveway and intersection, especially where crossing traffic volumes are very small. Nor do designers want to set up dangerous conflicts between motor vehicle traffic and trail users by providing inadequate information and traffic control at intersections. Bike paths should be designed based on the same engineering principles that are applied to highways. This doesn't mean

that bike paths should always be mini-highways that flatten everything in their path, but it does mean that principles such as providing adequate sight distances and stopping distances cannot be ignored for bike paths users.

2.3.2 Existing Conditions Near the Village Core

From a Village planning standpoint, the critical points along the bike path are the areas at which the bike path enters the Village core of both Wakefield and Peace Dale. These are



Gateway to south of Main Street Wakefield reveals backs of commercial buildings.



Gateway to north of Main Street Wakefield has a thick vegetated buffer and bike rack.



Gateway in Peace Dale center has street crossing and business signage.

the bike path “gateways” to the Villages and provide the primary point of access and an important first impression for bike path users. Within Wakefield, this vital access point occurs at Main Street, near the intersection of Robinson Street. The actual street crossing at Main Street is provided with a lighted crossing sign that can be activated by pedestrian at the street’s edge. This added attention to crossing safety is a highly appropriate siting of a specialized crossing measure given the midblock location of the crosswalk and the potentially higher volumes of pedestrian traffic that will cross here. As Figure 4 shows, this particular point which the bike path crosses Main Street exhibits pedestrian conditions that could use improvement. Abutting the bike path crossing is an automobile repair station that exhibits an auto-oriented lot design including the use of the front yard setback for parking and car storage. This particular entry point into the Village of Wakefield can present a challenge in terms of enticing bike path users into the Village through the quality of the built environment.

In addition to the conditions on Main Street, the conditions of the area just south of Main Street provide some less-than-favorable views of the rear of commercial buildings. It is recommended that the community and property owner investigate potential ways to better orient businesses to the bike path and increase general maintenance and appeal to the back of buildings that abut the bike path. While the gateway point itself may present some challenges, fortunately the nearby ideal pedestrian conditions on Main Street should help in drawing visitors into the Village. Along the north side of Main Street at the bike path crossing is a small bike rack and thick vegetated buffers between the bike path and the abutting public parking lot.

Within the Village of Peace Dale, there are

two different gateway points into the Village core, on different crossings of Kingstown Road. At the gateway location near the Village center at the intersection of Kingstown Road and Railroad Street, a lighted crossing sign is provided to aid bike path crossing in a similar fashion to Wakefield. At this intersection there is also a newly constructed sign installation with the names of several local businesses in the Village. At the other gateway location near the intersection of Kingstown Road and Kersey Road, the existing conditions could be improved as indicated by Figure 3. At this location, the first impression of the Village is an unappealing hardscape in which the view is of parking lot and retail tenant containing little to no vegetation and an auto-oriented site design.



Gateway near Kersey Road in Peace Dale is not indicative of the Village’s character.

The bike path within Peace Dale, however, also contains one of the primary arts and cultural amenities in the Village with the incorporation of several public art installations along each side of the bike path. The art installations are truly a unique feature along the bike path and help to foster a sense of community and attachment to place, while enhancing the beauty of the bike path and the vegetated buffer on either side (see Image 4 in Figure 3). This “art park” contains several installations by local artist further connecting the physical expressions of art to a strengthened sense of place within the Village.



Art installations along the bike path in Peace Dale provide an important Village amenity.

2.3.3 *Bicycle Racks*

Bicycle racks can be used to support the convenience and security needs of cyclists, as well as pedestrians. Without a place to park their bikes, cyclists often lock bikes to lamp posts, signposts, or parking meters and obstruct pedestrians on sidewalks. Providing a designated place for bikes is the most direct way to address this issue. Bike racks can also add a unique design element to a place if they are constructed as works of art, carrying area names, expressing local themes, and contributing to a sense of place. Within the Villages of Wakefield and Peace Dale, it is recommended that the community explore enhanced design features of bike racks and locate bike racks near the Village gateway areas along Kingstown Road and Railroad Street in Peace Dale as well as Main Street in Wakefield. In Wakefield, new bike racks are being proposed at the Intermodal Public Parking Lot.



Bike rack design can be upgraded to incorporate local themes and add to Village character.

2.3.4 *Bike Path Signage*

The bike path is currently undergoing the implementation of a new signage program throughout the entire bike path. These new signs will place a higher priority on aesthetics and will serve to inform users in a variety of categories. The goal of the signage program, in conjunction with the Town Parks and Recreation Department and the Friends of the William C. O'Neill Bike Path, is to provide a comprehensive set of signs distributed throughout the bike path that will potentially convey information relating to:

- Current location within the bike path (with mile markers);
- Nearby landmarks in Town;
- Nearby parking facilities; and
- Bike path rules and safety issues.

Of particular note is the inclusion of landmark information in the signage as this has the potential to further support the connection between the bike path and Wakefield and Peace Dale. The new signs are scheduled to be available for enjoyment of users in the Spring of 2010 and will replace many of the current signs. It is recommended that the Town seek grant opportunities to implement the signage program throughout the bike path corridor. See Appendix B for samples of the proposed signage designs.

2.4 Parking Analysis and Recommendations

There are several issues facing the Villages of Wakefield and Peace Dale with regard to parking. This includes issues of placement and design of parking, as well as specific recommendations for the two major public parking facilities in the Village core of Wakefield. The recommendations herein shall be focused on a planning-level analysis of the current parking conditions and do not represent a conventional parking study or engineering-level recommendations for lots improvements.

2.4.1 Benefits of On-Street Parking

On-street parking can be an efficient way to supply parking within a Village context as well as helping to support a pedestrian environment. On-street parking increases "friction" along a street and can narrow the effective crossing width, both of which encourage drivers to slow down. Parking can also provide a buffer between moving motor vehicle traffic and pedestrians along a sidewalk. In addition, businesses that rely on street parking as opposed to parking lots are more geared toward pedestrian access and are more likely to orient their building to the sidewalk. This



On-street parking, seen here in Wakefield, provides a buffer for pedestrians.



Time limit parking signage in Wakefield.

attention to the sidewalk can foster a more vibrant pedestrian commercial environment. Street parking enforced with time limits can be an efficient way to ensure a constant rotation of parking supply and increase opportunities for shoppers to find an on-street parking spot near their destination. For this strategy to work, parking signage must be clear and regularly enforced. Within both the core areas of Wakefield and Peace Dale, there is parking signage limiting the duration of parking to one hour. If South Kingstown chooses to increase the rotation time of on-street parking thus increasing availability, the town and local village merchants can explore the option of providing parking meters as opposed to "free parking."

2.4.2 Siting of Parking Lots

Businesses often want parking to be as readily visible and easily accessible so that potential patrons arriving by car will know that they will be able park quickly and easily. Building parking in front of buildings where it is most visible from the street, however, can significantly detract from the pedestrian environment and make the area less safe, less comfortable, less attractive, and decrease visibility of the storefront. When buildings front directly on the street, they create a lively and inviting environment where people can feel comfortable walking from store to store,



Parking situated in the front yard setback in Wakefield near Dale Carlia Corner.

rather than getting back in the car to drive a block or two to their next destination. As previously discussed, the activity of parking in the front yard setback can have a negative impact on the pedestrian environment within specific areas in both Wakefield and Peace Dale. Siting of parking in the front of buildings is commonly the result of the existing



Residential conversions in Wakefield reuse their former front lawns for parking.

use and lot design, two elements that typically change over a very slow time period. Just outside of the Village core there several other examples of parking in the front yard setback that can also hinder a pedestrian environment. This occurs either in the existing lots with strip commercial development near Dale Carlia Corner or within several residential conversions to commercial uses along Main Street in which the previous front lawn of the house has been paved to create spaces for a business.

In any of these cases, the recommendation for supporting a pedestrian environment is to continue to promote and require parking to be located at the rear of buildings through zoning regulations. Many businesses already do this, particularly in Wakefield where it seems existing lot orientation suggests rear parking is the most practical use of space. The two existing public parking lots in Wakefield (to be discussed in the following sections) are each located at the rear of buildings. Notably, many of the rear parking areas between lots connect to create large areas to improve vehicle mobility and allow for shared parking arrangements.



The two connected lots located behind the Mews Tavern in Wakefield provide improved vehicle mobility and well designed landscaping to provide visual relief.

2.4.3 Existing Conditions of the Saugatucket River Public Parking Lot

The Saugatucket River Public Parking Lot (Figure 5) is the largest public parking lot located in the Village of Wakefield. This lot is centrally located within the Village and provides free, unlimited parking access to any who choose to use it. The strengths of the lot are its location, the easy pedestrian mobility within the lot and to Main Street, and the quick access to the Saugatucket River Walkway, the canoe launch, and the Saugatucket Park. In terms of location, this lot is very well positioned to take advantage of several Village amenities.



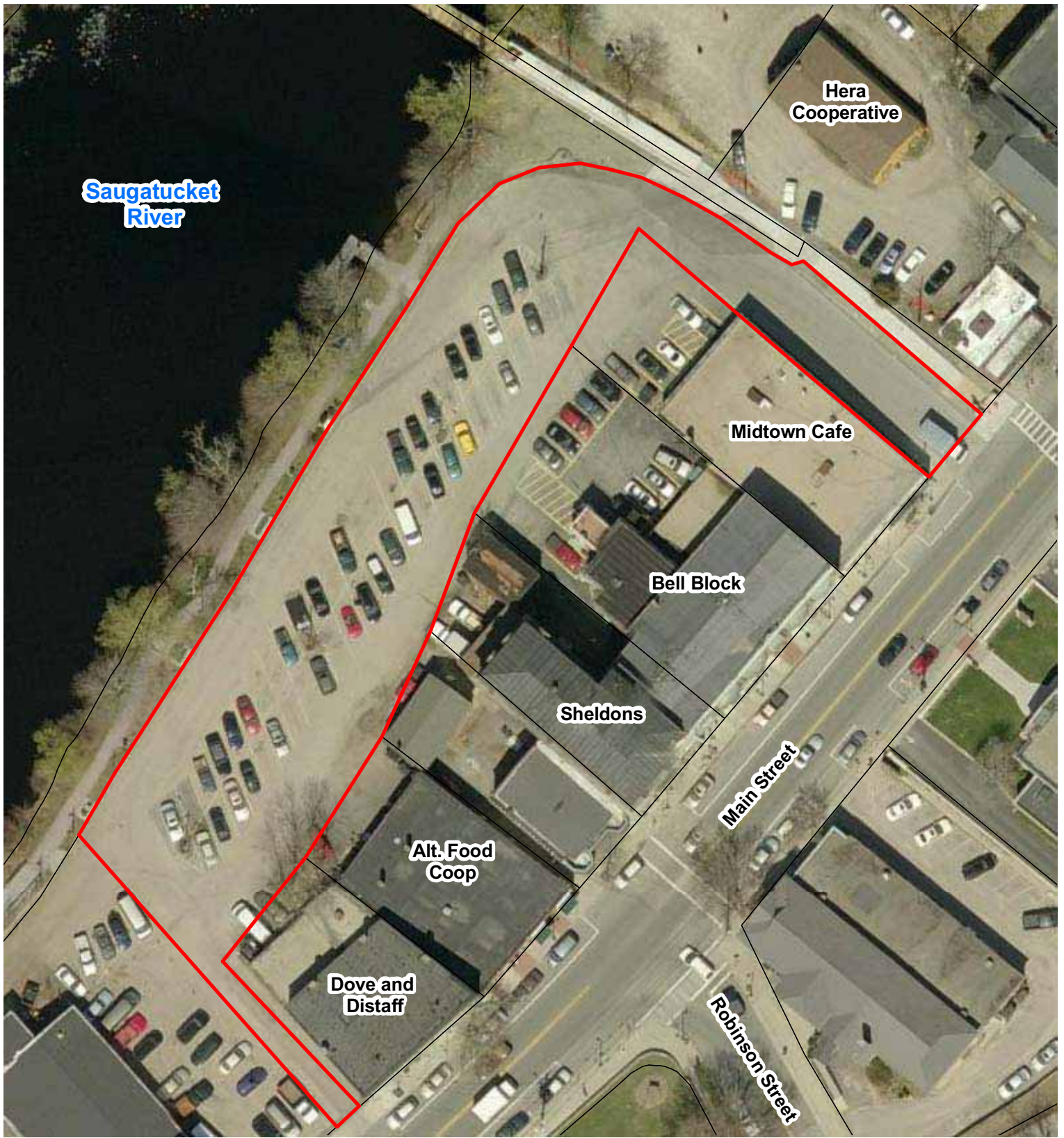
View of the Saugatucket Parking Lot from Saugatucket River Walkway.

Some of the design challenges facing the lot are the existing paving conditions, lot drainage, lack of vegetation within the interior of the lot, lack of visible signage, and the rear facades of the nearby buildings. There is an existing site improvement plan for the lot that is attached to this report for reference purposes as Appendix C. Although the site plan is only conceptual and funding for formal engineering and construction has not been finalized, it does address many of the challenges identified such as paving conditions, drainage, and lack of vegetation. Two challenges that still may require attention are the rear building facades and entryway signage. Many of the backsides of the buildings facing parking are often poorly



There is an existing site improvement plan for the lot that is attached to this report for reference purposes as Appendix C. Although the site plan is only conceptual and funding for formal engineering and construction has not been finalized, it does address many of the challenges identified such as paving conditions, drainage, and lack of vegetation. Two challenges that still may require attention are the rear building facades and entryway signage. Many of the backsides of the buildings facing parking are often poorly

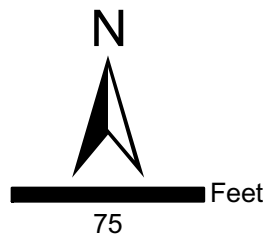


Rear building facades abutting the public lot do not welcome pedestrians.



Legend

-  Public Parking Lot
-  Assessor's Parcels



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Saugatucket River
Public Parking Lot
Village of Wakefield

maintained and the spaces around them are occupied by unscreened dumpsters and excess storage. These conditions do not support a pedestrian environment and can deter from the experience of a resident or visitor when walking to or from their car to their destination. There is also a lost opportunity here for business to engage their customers from the rear entrances of their buildings. It is clear that changing the appearance of one business will not change these conditions and that a coordinated improvement effort would be much more successful.



These unscreened dumpsters characterize the use of private land abutting the public lot.

Of the rear facades facing the parking lot, one building stands out as having a generally cleaner exterior with more attention to building design elements. This building sets a standard for others to follow in terms of building upkeep and attention to design. Fortunately, this building is also located next to a key pedestrian passageway through this connected series of buildings. This passageway should be maintained by keeping the area clear of obstacles and storage and increased emphasis should be placed on the design and maintenance of the nearby buildings.



This well maintained rear facade is at the east end of lot and nearby a pedestrian passageway.

Finally, the sign indicating the entrance of the parking lot is well designed but can be difficult to see from the road. The sign shares a similar design as the public parking sign in Peace Dale—which is considered attractive and appropriate—however the scale and placement of the sign in Wakefield causes it to get “lost” in the surrounding sidewalk elements, notably street trees. Recommended improvements are to either move the sign closer to the roadway, or consider how additional signs can help supplement this one to more clearly communicate the location of this lot to motorists.



This parking signage may not be visible from street.

2.4.4 Existing Conditions of the Intermodal Public Parking Lot



The top design challenge facing the Intermodal Lot is its paving conditions.

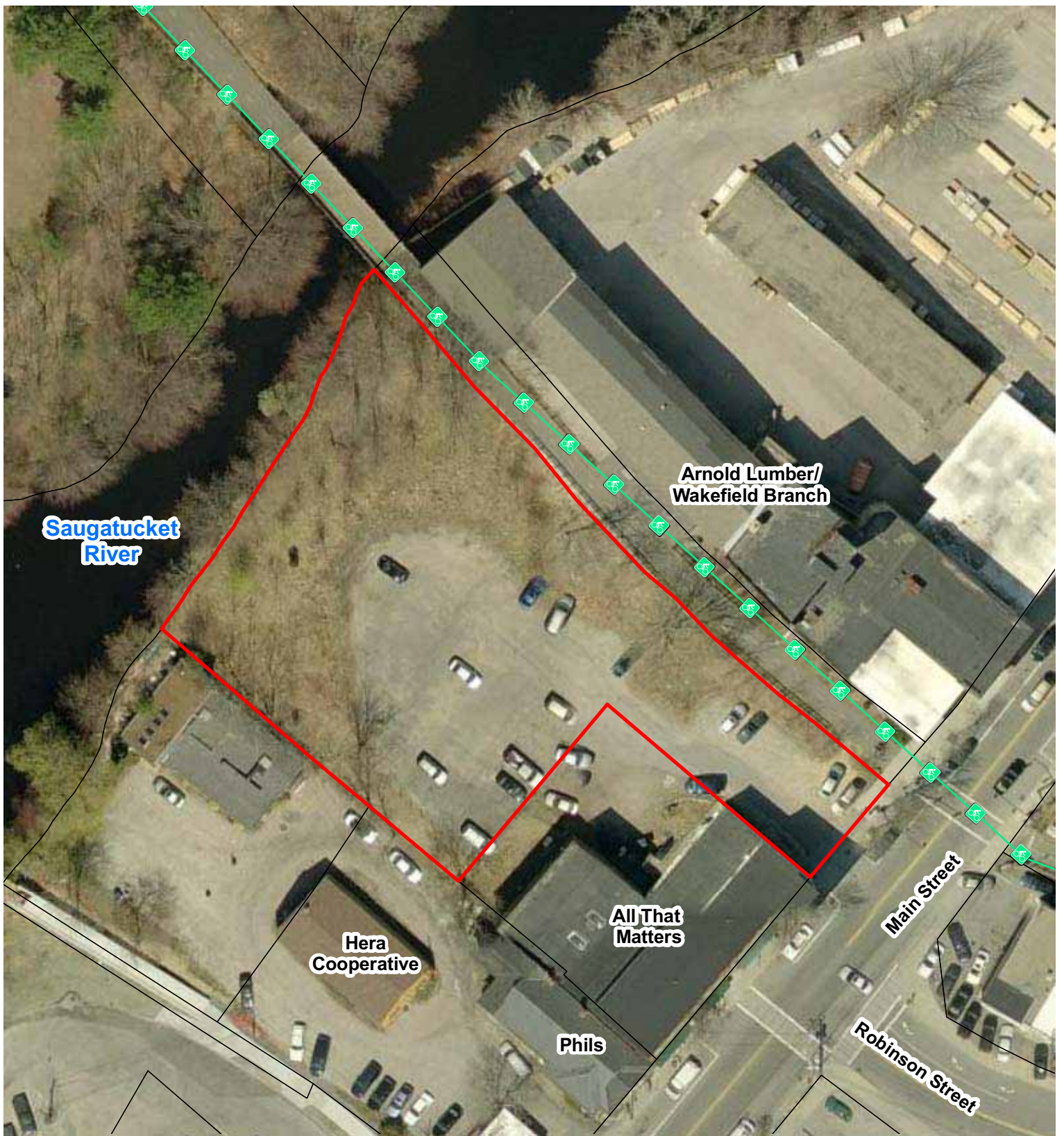
The other major public parking lot within the core of Wakefield is the Intermodal Lot (Figure 6) located just a few hundred feet away from the Saugatucket River Lot, near the intersection of Main Street and Robinson Street. Similar to the Saugatucket Lot, the primary strengths of the Intermodal Lot are its central location and easy access to Main Street and Wakefield shops. Another added benefit to the Intermodal Lot’s is that it is located directly next to the bike path, providing quick access for those who want to begin or end a biking trip in the Village of Wakefield.

Also in similar fashion to the Saugatucket River Lot, the biggest design challenges facing the Intermodal Lot are poor paving conditions, lack of visible signage, and the rear facades of the building. In addition, the Intermodal Lot could also use improvement with the unmaintained vegetation surrounding the lot and better defining the “edge” of the parking lot. Proposed construction improvements to the Intermodal Lot will address many of these issues as illustrated in Appendix D.




The primary issue facing the parking lot is the poor paving conditions, including several unpaved areas along the perimeter and near the building. Many of these areas currently use a dirt/gravel mix that transitions into overgrowing vegetation currently providing a loosely defined “boundary” for the lot. Currently, there

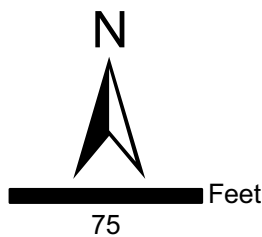


These rear facades could be improved.



Legend

-  Public Parking Lot
-  Bike Path
-  Assessor's Parcels



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**Intermodal
 Public Parking Lot
 Village of Wakefield**

are no clearly defined travel lanes and parking spaces within the lot leading to confusion and inefficiency in parking practices. These paving conditions (or lack thereof) are not sufficient for a public lot within a Village the size of Wakefield. Fortunately, improvements to the lot's paving and boundary conditions will be addressed in conjunction with Phase III of the William C. O'Neill Bike Path construction. Additionally, the Town has plans for a comfort station on the property. Completion of this feature will require securing additional funding for design and construction.



The parking lot boundary is defined by a gravel/dirt mix and unmaintained vegetation.

In addition to the paving conditions, the rear appearance of the building on the lot does not support a positive experience for the pedestrian when walking to or from their car to their destination. In a similar fashion to the Saugatucket River Lot, the area near the rear of the building appears to be primarily used for dumpsters and excess storage. In comparison to the Saugatucket River Lot, a benefit to the Intermodal Lot is that there are fewer



Unscreened dumpsters in land abutting lot.



Small space for signage dedicated to parking lot.

business tenants in the building, perhaps making a collaborative effort in addressing rear building conditions more attainable. The final challenge facing the parking lot is the lack of viable signage. Currently, there is a large sign attached to the side of the building that provides a small space with the words “public parking” near the bottom of the sign. While this sign is helpful in informing motorists and pedestrians about the businesses in the building, the size and placement of the parking language within the sign is not likely to be easily seen by passing motorists. Parking sign enhancements are being taken into account with planned improvements to the lot.

2.4.5 Recommendations for Parking Lot Improvements

The accessibility of safe and convenient public parking lots is a critical issue to consider when planning for Villages. Often times, the commercial tenants within a Village are competing against nearby commercial operations in more auto-oriented, “strip” complexes. One appeal to these commercial strip complexes is the convenience and predictability consumers experience when they park—often a result of having excessive free parking that is located in the front of buildings. Being that Villages often do not have the existing site conditions to support parking practices such as this, nor would it support a pedestrian environment, planning efforts must be made to help level the playing field for Villages in



Villages must compete with excessive, free, highly visible parking in commercial plazas.




other ways. Village communities must prioritize the accessibility, appearance, and signage of their existing parking stock to ensure that consumers do not avoid shopping in the Village out of concern—whether real or perceived—that they will not be able to find parking. If Village communities do not make these issues a priority, they will continue to struggle to compete with the increasingly auto-oriented format of commercial plazas.

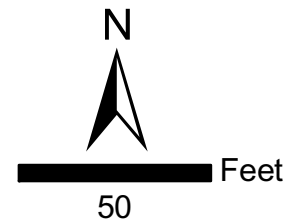
Both the Saugatucket River Lot and the Intermodal Lot currently play a critical role in supporting Wakefield’s economy by providing for a sizable amount of public parking in the Village. Improvements to these two parking lots, including improving signage to increase awareness of their presence, should be a made a priority within the Village. As discussed above, both the Saugatucket River Lot and the Intermodal Lot face similar challenges with regard to existing conditions. These issues are: poor paving conditions, unappealing rear facades and businesses that have “turned their backs” to the parking lots, poorly defined edges and lack of visible signage. The two lots also share a similar strength in that they are centrally located and easily accessible from Main Street. This strength suggests that these two lots will continue to be at the forefront of meeting Wakefield’s parking demand.

In Peace Dale (Figure 7), the recently improved public parking lot in the Village core can provide many excellent examples of design features that can be applied within potential future improvements to Saugatucket River Lot and the Intermodal Lot.



Legend

-  Public Parking Lot
-  Bike Path
-  Assessor's Parcels



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**Peace Dale
 Public Parking Lot**

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 Report_Figures

Figure 7

Pedestrian Installations

The Peace Dale Lot has enhanced the pedestrian experience of the central parking lot through the use of pedestrian installations along the front and back of the lot that offer places for people to sit and linger as well as being aesthetically pleasing to motorists and passers-by. The prime examples of this are the two small areas along the front of the lot. The larger of these two installations is located between the two curb cuts for the lot and provides two benches along with some well designed landscaping of trees, shrubs, and rocks. This installation serves as a small



The Peace Dale Public Lot has installations that prioritize the pedestrian experience.

pedestrian resting place and helps provide some visual relief and a transition area from the hardscape of the parking lot to the sidewalk. The elements that make this installation a success are the prioritization of the pedestrian experience by reinforcing the connection to the sidewalk and using design elements such as the benches and landscaping to “frame” this pedestrian reprieve. Also notice the use of alternative paving and the integration of sidewalk elements such as lighting and signage to further call attention to this public amenity.

In addition to this primary installation, there is smaller secondary installation along the sidewalk near Sweet Cakes Bakery that uses landscaping and alternative paving to improve pedestrian conditions and create an appealing transition zone between the parking lot and nearby businesses. The successful integration of these small installations in the Peace Dale Lot can serve as a lesson learned when considering future improvements for the Saugatucket River Lot and the Intermodal Lot. In particular, each of the lots in Wakefield could be improved with installations such as this near the sidewalks and entryways to the parking lots that can enhance the pedestrian experience and create a transition zone.



This secondary installation serves as a small transition zone to nearby businesses.

Boundary Treatment

With regard to the Intermodal Lot, improving the overall paving conditions and creating a more defined boundary along the back and sides of the lot are items of particular importance. While these areas may not be ideal for pedestrian-oriented installations, the use of well designed curbing or a stonework ledge as well as incorporating well designed landscaping along the edges of the parking lot should be considered. As an example of this type of improvement, the back edge of Peace Dale Lot abutting the bike path currently exhibits the use of stonework ledge and plantings to provide a pleasing boundary. Any improvements to parking lot stormwater treatment practices should be considered when designing boundary treatments.



This boundary treatment provides an example for the Intermodal Lot.

Building Edge Design



The building edge abutting the public lot exhibits many pedestrian elements.

In addition to pedestrian installations and edge treatments, the other major lesson learned from the Peace Dale Lot that can be applied to the Wakefield lots, is the design and maintenance of the building edges abutting the parking lots. As previously discussed, one of the primary challenges within the current conditions of both the Wakefield lots is the poor conditions of the rear of buildings, including the use of space for dumpsters and excess storage. Within the Peace Dale

Lot, the edges of the abutting buildings have been designed to create alternative entrances for businesses and added attention has been given to treat these

building edges in the same manor as the edge facing the roadway. The use of elements such as building color, awnings, planters, and alternative paving, particularly along the side edge of the building containing Sweet Cakes Bakery are integral to achieving this effect. The attention to detail along the abutting edges by the businesses owners, in collaboration with improvements to the public parking lot, have combined to create an inviting environment that mimics many of the appealing pedestrian conditions found along the main sidewalks in the Village core.

In addition to the design of the buildings, the Peace Dale Lot also provides a small, shaded green space that serves as an outdoor seating area for pedestrians and local customers. Again, the design/maintenance example provided here that is applicable to the two Wakefield lots is that the combined efforts of public lot improvements and private enhancements to buildings and the spaces around them can create a very appealing environment that supports increased use of the lots and adds to the overall appeal of the Village. Another lesson learned from the Peace Dale Lot is the appropriate siting and screening of dumpsters.



This small space abutting the public lot provides opportunities to sit and eat.

Currently there is a screened area in the Peace Dale Lot containing dumpsters that are separated from the active pedestrian elements along the building edge.

Parking Lot Signage and Wayfinding

The use of clear, visible, appealing signage is critical to ensuring motorists are able to easily find and access parking facilities. This is particularly important consideration for the Saugatucket River Lot and the Intermodal Lot as they are hidden from the view of Main Street. At minimum, appropriately sized signage should be placed near the entrance of lots in a location that is highly visible to motorists approaching from either direction. A more comprehensive approach to parking lot signage is to create a wayfinding system that provides multiple signs for parking lots that provide motorists with advanced notice of upcoming parking opportunities and helps them to slow down and locate parking lot entryways. Often times our first impression of a place is linked to how easily we are able to find parking. It is important to consider how the Village of Wakefield can provide a first-time visitor with a positive first impression of the Village through clear and attractive signage.

The most important considerations with regard to signage are:

- Appropriate sizing of signs;
- Sign lettering and information is simple and clear;
- Sign placement is visible from 100 feet along roadway in either direction; and
- Signs are visually attractive and consistent with character of the Village.

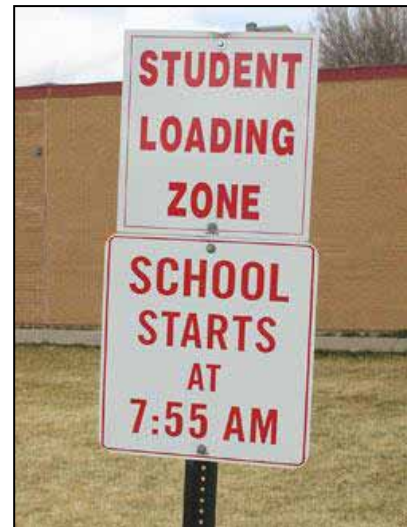


Parking signage should be simple, visible, and fitting for the character of the Village.

2.5 Considerations for School Zones

Pedestrian safety around schools is a paramount concern to parents, school officials, and communities. Increasing the number of children who walk or bicycle to school will help improve their health and quality of life. As shown in Figure 8, within the area around the two Villages there are three local schools as well as several other town facilities that typically draw youth sports or youth recreation programming. The schools in the area are: Wakefield Elementary, Peace Dale Elementary, and South Kingstown High School. Having schools located near walkable Village environments can be a benefit to the community by reducing the need for bussing and parental driving. However, in anticipating an increasing number of pedestrians, particularly with children and young adolescents, extra care should be given to ensure pedestrian safety in the area.

To begin, it is recommended local school administrators develop programs consistent with the State’s Safe Routes to School Program. Additionally, funding from the Safe Routes to Schools grant program (RIDOT) should be leveraged as a resource to make pedestrian improvements in school area transportation corridors. These programs provide walking and bicycle plans to serve student and all residences within walking/biking distance of schools and encourage school administrators to work with local agencies to identify and correct traffic problem areas while developing these plans. These walking and bicycling plans help to identify where traffic control (signs, traffic signals, crosswalks, adult guards, etc.) should be placed around the school and along school routes. Marked crosswalks can help guide children to the best routes to school with these plans. For more specific information on this program, find the Rhode Island Safe Routes to School website in the references section of this report.









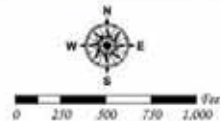
School zones require addition attention to signage.

A variety of roadway improvements can be used to enhance the safety and mobility of children walking to or from school. Sidewalks or separated walkways and paths are



Legend

-  Village Study Area (Parcels Zoned CD)
-  Saugatucket River Walkway
-  William C. O'Neill Bike Path
-  State Roads
-  Town Owned Properties
-  Fire Stations



Source of Data:
 Parcel Boundaries: July 2009 Tax Assessor Maps
 Aerial Photo: Flown April 2008 Pictometry, RI E-911



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Public Facilities
 Villages of Wakefield and Peace Dale

essential for a safe trip from home to school on foot or by bike. Wider sidewalks should be considered for areas close to schools where larger groups of students are walking. The greatest hazards to all pedestrians occur when crossing streets. Children and young adolescents are especially vulnerable, as they can have trouble judging traffic and finding an acceptable gap to cross. The use of trained adult crossing guards has been found to be one of the most effective measures for assisting children in crossing streets safely. Adult crossing guards require periodic training and monitoring and should be equipped with bright and reflective Class 2 safety vests (as provided in the MUTCD) and a STOP paddle. Some of the most effective safety treatments are low-cost and easy to implement measures such as larger standing areas and stand-back lines to keep students further back from busy streets while waiting to cross.

Police enforcement in school zones may be needed in situations where drivers are speeding or not yielding to children in crosswalks. Radar speed boards and other innovative enforcement programs, such as photo speed or red light cameras, may also be employed at street crossings near schools. Other helpful measures include: parking prohibitions near intersections and crosswalks near schools; increased child supervision at crossings; and the use of signs and pavement markings, such as the school advance warning sign (which can be fluorescent yellow/green) and speed limit warning signs with flashers on a timer. School administrators and parent-teacher organizations need to educate students and parents about school safety and access to and from school. Education, enforcement, and well-designed roads must all be in place to encourage motorists to drive appropriately. Appropriate traffic control devices at crossings and traffic calming devices inside neighborhoods (speed humps, speed tables, raised intersections, traffic circles, and chokers) can be very helpful in controlling vehicle speeds. Care should be taken so that traffic calming devices do not disrupt emergency vehicles, bike lanes, or the flow of stormwater runoff.

One of the biggest safety problems around schools is often caused by parents or caretakers dropping off and picking up children. There are two immediate solutions: 1) there needs to be a clearly marked area where parents are permitted to drop off and pick up their children, and 2) drop-off/pick-up regulations must be provided to parents prior to the first day of school. Drop-off areas must be located away from where children on foot cross streets or access the school and should be designed to create the appropriate amount of on-site vehicle storage or queuing along the on-street drop-off zone. Teachers, parent volunteers, or older students can be used as valets to speed up student loading/unloading and better organize the process. Parent drop-off zones must be separated from bus drop-off zones. If parents can be trained to do it right



Student drop-off/pick-up zones should be clearly marked.

at the start of the school year, they are likely to continue with this good behavior throughout the year.



Walking school busses are an ideal alternative for schools in walkable environments.

For a longer term solution, it is preferable to create an environment where children can walk or bicycle safely to school, provided they live within a suitable distance. Added street lighting along school routes can increase pedestrian safety and security for students and residents. One strategy that has been successful in some communities is the concept of a "walking school bus," where an adult accompanies children to school, starting at one location and picking children up along the way. Soon, a fairly sizeable group of children are walking together

under the supervision of a responsible adult, who is mindful of street crossings. The presence of such groups affects drivers' behavior, as they tend to be more watchful of children walking.

2.6 Collaboration with Rhode Island Public Transit Authority

The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) currently has one major bus route that run through both the Villages of Wakefield and Peace Dale (Route 66). Efficient bus services help to support a pedestrian environment by reducing traffic on the roads and providing a transportation system that can potentially meet residents and visitors needs through a combination of bussing, walking and/or biking. It is important the community foster a strong relationship with RIPTA to maintain opens lines of communication for planning efficiency and potential shared benefits. Maintaining an active role with RIPTA will help to enhance and expand local transit service.



RIPTA funding can be leveraged to enhance local public bus shelters.

One particular RIPTA program that may be beneficial to enhancing the Village's pedestrian environment is a bus shelter design program provided under the state's Transit Enhancement Fund. Essentially, this program encourages the innovative design of bus shelter by providing funding for local artists to design new bus shelters with a 20% contribution

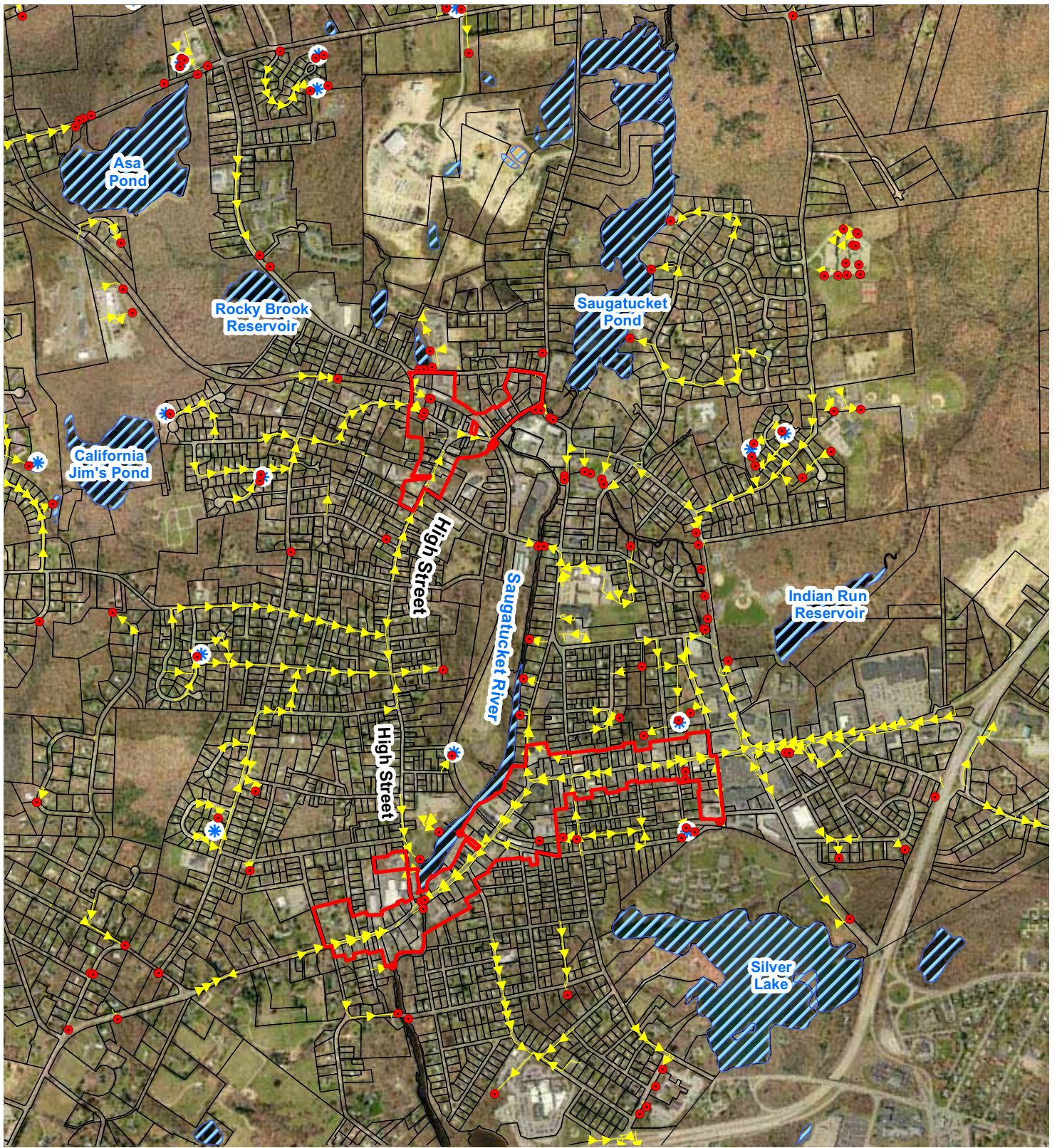
from the municipality (estimated to be \$4,000 - \$5,000). Assuming that adequate local funding is available, this program may be an ideal way to add a new street element to pedestrian environment that will add to the transportation network as well as reflect the unique identity of the Villages. Given that the Villages have already experienced success with integrating local art into street furniture, specifically in Peace Dale, this program may be a good fit for future public transit improvements. As a first step, it is recommended that the community research current bus stop locations to determine whether there are ideal candidates for this program based on sidewalk space and character of surrounding buildings and uses. If it is determined that this programs is well suited for the community's needs, the process for application involves providing needed funding through a commitment letter from the municipality and then RIPTA will announce an RFP for artist services.

2.7 Stormwater Analysis and Recommendations

The Villages of Wakefield and Peace Dale can play a critical role in the region with regard to stormwater management. Each of the Villages lies at low points in the surrounding topography and serve as collection points for stormwater, whether being conveyed through surface runoff or storm drains. As Figure 9 illustrates, the existing stormwater infrastructure is directing water directly into the center of each Village where the water is deposited into the Saugatucket River, and eventually into Point Judith Pond. As has been well documented in Peace Dale, the convergence of this amount of stormwater can often lead to flooding issues. In terms of water quality, the fact that stormwater from surrounding areas is funneled into the center of each Village suggests that potential retrofits to treat water quality will be located within the Village core. In many ways, these Villages serve as decisive meeting points in which infrastructure improvements can help address many concerns including the needs of the environment, needs of the local economy, needs of the transportation system, and needs related to community character.

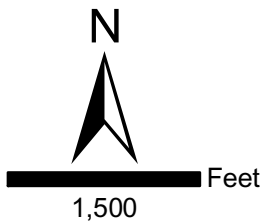


There are many ways in which stormwater is conveyed in Villages.



Legend

- Village Study Areas - Parcels Zoned CD
- Assessor's Parcels
- Outlets
- ↗ Drainage Pipes and Directions of Drainage
- * Detention Ponds



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**Stormwater Infrastructure
 Villages of Peace Dale and
 Wakefield**

2.7.1 Stormwater Assessment

The first step in addressing the existing issues with Wakefield and Peace Dale's stormwater infrastructure is to outline a process for improvements through a comprehensive stormwater assessment. This assessment is needed to identify effective long-term engineering solutions for the Villages that will avoid the pitfalls of stop-gap measures or short-term fixes. A brief walking reconnaissance of the Villages reveals that the existing stormwater infrastructure exhibits a wide variety of conveyance systems at work. This includes natural rivers and streams, man-made waterways, culverts, roadside curbs, storm drains and inlets, and sheet flow. All of these elements add to the complexity of the system and require unique design consideration. The primary objective of a stormwater assessment is to identify strategies within the existing system to address the issues with water quality and quantity.



This man-made waterway and culvert in Peace Dale are part of a varied infrastructure system.

The necessary steps of a comprehensive stormwater assessment include:

- Delineating the drainage area.
- Observing system failures.
- Identifying areas of opportunity for improvements.
 - Upgradient or “end of pipe” solutions.
 - Public or private property.
- Calculating and designing for best management practices.
- Identifying and procuring funding.

Delineating the drainage area requires a site assessment process involving field work. This process consists of walking along the rivers, streams, manmade waterways, and manmade infrastructure in the Villages to determine their condition. The purpose of this process is to determine the extent of land that drains to the Villages through natural and manmade means. It also involves understanding where sheet flow from private and public lots are being directed. Some of the above processes may have already been undertaken by the Town Public Services Department so previous work should be

confirmed before beginning any new drainage delineation. Once the drainage area has been delineated, the next step of the stormwater assessment is to observe failures in the existing system with regard to water quantity and quality. This involves field work during moderate to heavy rain events to observe how the stormwater system manages the “first flush” (water quality control issues) as well as where stormwater collects and causes flooding (water quantity control issues). As discussed in further detail in the following section, *Improvements to High Street, the Village of Peace Dale*

has experienced significant flooding in the area around its central rotary and this issue may require additional attention during the assessment process. Further analysis of potential public improvements to the rotary is discussed in the *Improvements to Peace Dale Rotary* section of this report.

The initial steps of delineating the drainage area and observing failures in the system provide the framework for identifying future opportunities for engineering solutions. As guided by the initial assessment steps, these solutions will range in terms of location and the burden for implementation. In cases where the stormwater system tends to channel water into a select handful of locations before being released into the natural water system, then end of pipe solutions may be more appropriate for addressing water quality and quantity issues. In this case, the term “end of pipe” refers to infrastructure improvements that can be constructed in locations just before the water is released from the stormwater system. This can include water treatment processes to control water quality as well as water storage and redirection processes to control flooding. In cases where the stormwater system does not tend to channel water into selected locations, upgradient solutions are more applicable and rely on identifying the sources of stormwater and addressing quality and control issues at the source.



Stormwater outfall located in Peace Dale near Kingstown Road.



*Flooding in Peace Dale, 2005.
Photo courtesy of South County Independent*



Storm drains on public (left) and private (right) property in Peace Dale.

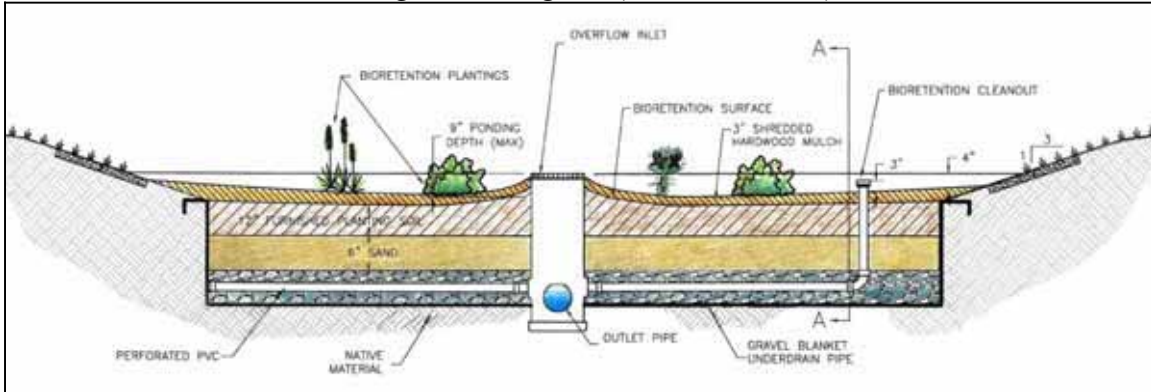
A second set of considerations for identifying future engineering opportunities is whether infrastructure improvements are most effectively located on public or private property. In cases where it is determined that private property is a significant contributor to stormwater problems whether through drain pipes or sheet flow than solutions that result in improvements to private property, such as amendments to stormwater regulations, will be more effective. In cases where stormwater management can most effectively be handled on public property, than publicly engineered improvements should be pursued, typically through local, state, or federal funding mechanisms. Within Village environments such as Wakefield and Peace Dale, improvements to the stormwater system are most often achieved through a balance between publicly and privately constructed and maintained stormwater infrastructure.



Sheet flow from upgradient private property (left) can flow into drains in public roads (right).

Once the areas of opportunity have been identified, the next task of the stormwater assessment includes calculating for and designing best management practices (BMPs). These BMPs can take on a variety of forms depending on the determinations of the previous steps, and may include retrofits for treating stormwater such as bio-retention

facilities—stormwater collection and storage facilities, and infrastructure for redirecting stormwater. The final step of the process is to identify and procure funding for stormwater improvements. Potential sources of funding for Wakefield and Peace Dale may come through State resources from the Department of Transportation’s (RIDOT) Transportations Improvement Program (TIP) or from federal sources such as EPA Section 319 Stormwater Management Program (EPA-SW, 2009).



Bio-retention facilities can be used as retrofits to treat and store stormwater.

2.7.2 Improvements to High Street

High Street, as shown on Figure 9, plays an important role in both the Villages. It is the primary connector between the two Villages in the road network and also directs stormwater into the Villages through storm drains and surface runoff. The importance of High Street as a link between the Villages can not be overstated. There are also some pressing issues with High Street with regard to surface paving conditions and stormwater infrastructure. This need for improvements on High Street, which is a State Road, has been well documented by South Kingstown to various State transportation officials as well as members of the Rhode Island State Senate. For many years, High Street has been listed in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) under “Study and Development Program.” Since 1997, the Town has made repeated requests for funding for design. Based on the Village planning analysis and stormwater assessment within this study, it is clear that immediate improvements to High Street are needed to sustain the functionality of the two Villages, specifically with regard to environmental and economic health.



Paving conditions on High Street are in need of immediate repair.



Drainage system on High Street can become overwhelmed during minor to moderate rain.

The specific issues with High Street have been documented by South Kingstown in correspondence to state officials for many years with increasing correspondence occurring within the past ten years demonstrating the Town’s growing urgency toward this issue. As presented within this correspondence, the roadway’s pavement, drainage structures, curbs, and sidewalks have deteriorated to the point where all aspects are functionally obsolete and present safety and convenience issues to residents, businesses, and visitors. The drainage system is overwhelmed even in minor to moderate rain events during which the road floods at various locations.

In particular, the area surrounding the Peace Dale rotary experiences significant flooding in moderate rain events as a result of High Street’s poor stormwater infrastructure, among other contributing factors. Maintaining public safety and access in this central area of Peace Dale is necessary for the Village to function in terms of a center for commerce and as an important junction in the roadway network. This flooding of public infrastructure inhibits economic development, investment, and revitalization efforts in Peace Dale (note the number of key vacant properties near the rotary). Beyond linking Peace Dale and Wakefield, High Street also serves as an important connector to many institutional uses in the community, including Town Hall, St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church, and Wakefield Elementary School. In its current condition, High Street does not provide the quality of access and supporting infrastructure that should be in place to support these institutional uses and the community at large.

It is noted that with regard to the State’s TIP process, the issues with High Street have not been properly addressed in terms of timing, resources, and a schedule or review and analysis to define improvement requirements. Further delays in dealing with these road segments will be detrimental to the safety and convenience of the traveling public and result in greater cost to address in the future.

2.7.3 Improvements to Peace Dale Rotary

The Peace Dale rotary—located at the intersection of Kingstown Road and High Street—is situated in a low-lying area of the Village and has historically experienced significant flooding. As illustrated in Figure 10, the rotary is characterized by a landscaped center island and three vehicle entrances/exits,



Center island within Peace Dale rotary contains pleasant vegetation.

each with a large “triangle” of pavement which serves to divide the travel lanes. As an area in which the chief concern is flooding, one of the primary goals for any potential stormwater retrofit to the rotary is the storage of stormwater during rain events. While the analysis included within this report does not represent an engineering assessment of the feasibility for a retrofit, it does provide one possible stormwater strategy for future consideration. While the most common location for stormwater management facilities within rotaries is the center island, due to the existing vegetation and the cultural importance of the pine tree located in the island, reconstruction of this center island may not be the most suitable location for a stormwater retrofit.

As detailed in Figure 10, the areas within each of the three triangles in the rotary are large enough to warrant consideration for re-construction as a stormwater management facility. These three triangles have the potential to be reconstructed as vegetated bio-retention facilities to capture sheet flow from surrounding roadways through open sections. This could serve to store stormwater during moderate to heavy rain events and provide treatment capacity to the first flush of stormwater. The amount of stormwater captured is a function of the designed depth of the retention facility and it should be determined what depth would be most effective given the anticipated stormwater flows in the area. For example, if each of the triangles was constructed with a bio-retention facility with an average depth of 1.5 feet below street level, then these three areas would have the combined storage capacity to store approximately 4,500 cubic feet of water. It is important to note that due to the slope and crown of each of the roadways entering the rotary, the three triangles would have different capacities to capture and treat stormwater.



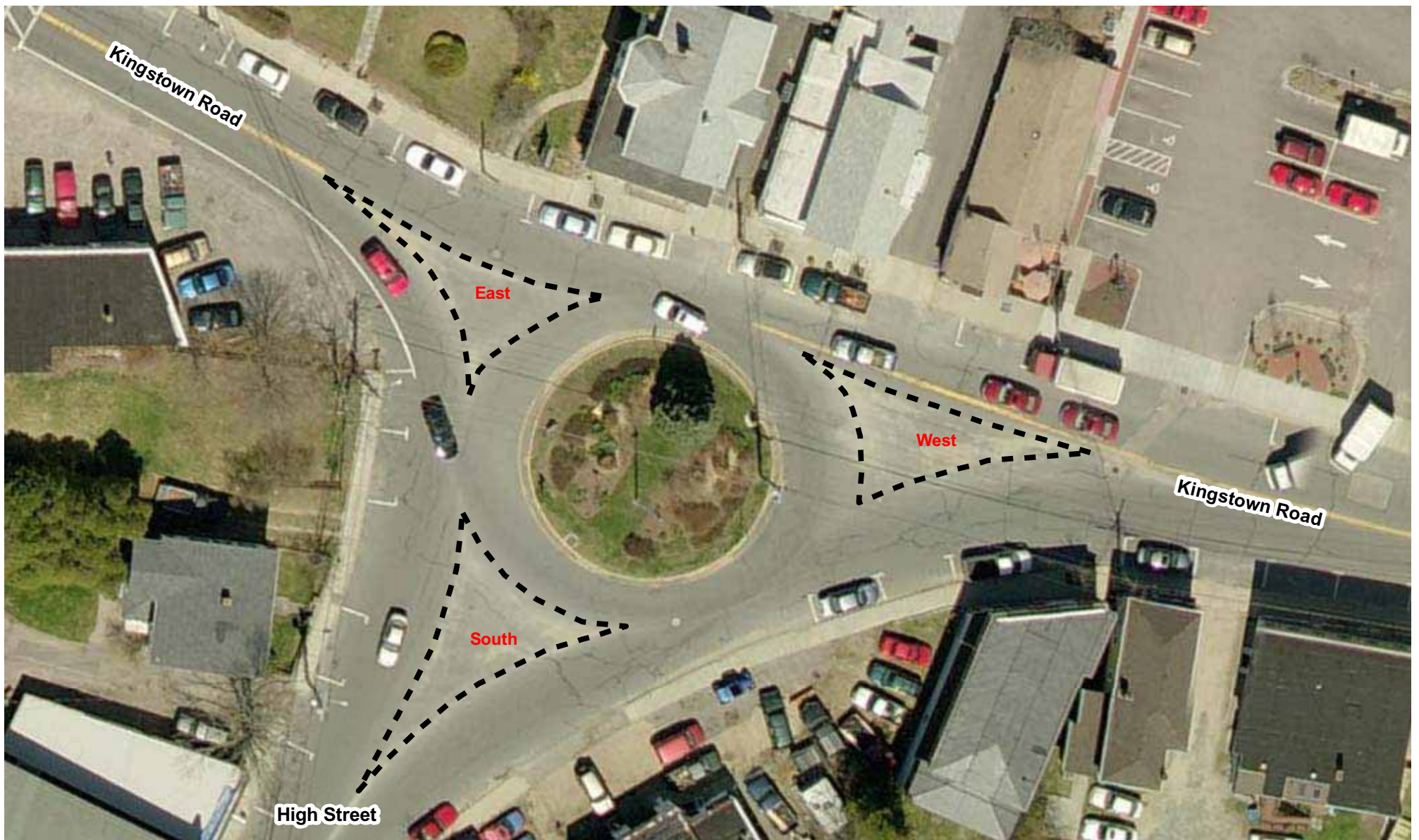
Paved triangle on EAST side of rotary along Kingstown Road.






Paved triangle on WEST side of rotary along Kingstown Road.

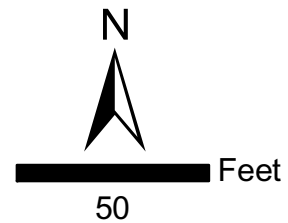


Paved triangle on SOUTH side of rotary along High Street.



Legend

-  East - 802.18 sq. feet
-  South - 1,213.67 sq. ft.
-  West - 968.44 sq. ft.



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Peace Dale
 Rotary

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 Report_Figures

Figure 10

The triangles to the east and west side of the rotary on Kingstown Road are located on sections of the road where slopes direct water through the roadway and are better suited to capture stormwater as compared to the triangle to the south on High Street.

Additionally, the reconstruction of these triangles may have benefits with regard to pedestrian mobility and enhancing the visual appeal of the Village. Design and vegetation selection within bio-retention facilities have the ability to serve as a pleasing vegetative relief from the hardscape of the road. Additionally, these facilities may be designed with pedestrian crossing paths and can serve as a median to aid road crossings. As discussed in the Pedestrian Safety section of this report, medians can improve pedestrian safety by providing a landing spot at the mid-crossing point. This can be particularly useful at the rotary given the amount and speed of traffic in the area. Any improvements to crosswalks within the rotary should involve consultation with Town public safety officials.

SECTION 3. REGULATORY RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Overview

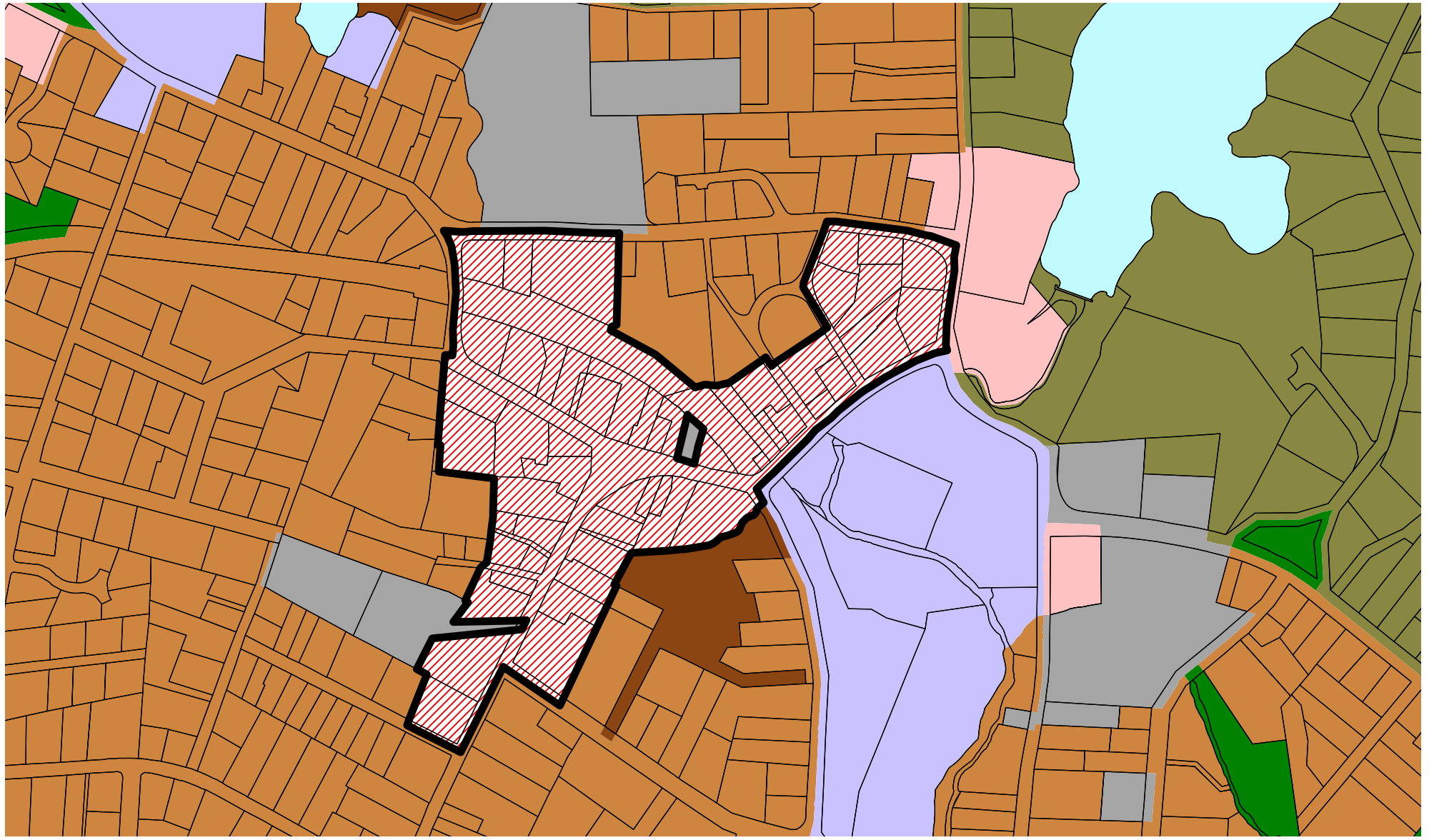
As part of the Village assessment for this report, several issues were identified related to local regulations and the Comprehensive Plan that can further the goals of this study. Discussions with the Committee and other local officials, as well as input from the public forums were used to isolate a few critical issues associated with the regulatory environment. In some cases, the language that was reviewed represents a very isolated issue and amendments to the Zoning Ordinance would be at the “housekeeping” level. In other cases, new development tools are examined and more substantive amendments are presented here for consideration. The five key regulatory issues examined for this study include:

- Industrial-1 (IND-1) Zoning District-Allowable Uses
- CD Zoning District-Residential Use on the Ground Floor
- Effective Standards for Transitioning between Zoning Districts
- Design Standards for Dale Carlia area and the CD Zoning Districts
- Cottage Housing



3.2 The IND-1 Zoning District

The IND-1 Zoning District is integral to the study area in that it abuts both of the Village core areas (Figures 11 and 12) and includes large, and in some cases historic, structures. The continued occupancy and use of these structures is a challenge faced by many historic communities in New England. For those communities that have continued to maintain rural/suburban character, the continued use of these buildings can be even more challenging with decreased market pressures outside of metropolitan centers and the difficulties inherent in integrating high density commercial use into quiet residential settings. The Peace Dale Mill, for example, was once a primary economic engine for South Kingstown, but today struggles to maintain full occupancy.







In an effort to revisit some of the regulatory challenges that may be faced by these larger structures, the Use Table in the Zoning Ordinance was reviewed to see if adequate opportunity is being provided in the IND-1 Zoning District. Overall, the potentially allowable uses for these districts represent a healthy diverse mix of manufacturing, commercial and institutional use. It is clear that South Kingstown has examined this issue closely and made conscious decisions regarding what can and cannot be sited in these areas. In addition to the mix of office and manufacturing uses that have been allowed for many years, an “Arts Based, Industrial Facility Adaptive Reuse” land use category (Use Code 37) was added to these areas to allow for the types of arts and cultural activities that have been common to redevelopment in more urban areas of Rhode Island. This collection of uses, including visual arts displays, music, and crafts



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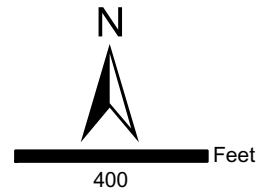
-  Village Study Area
-  Assessor's Parcels

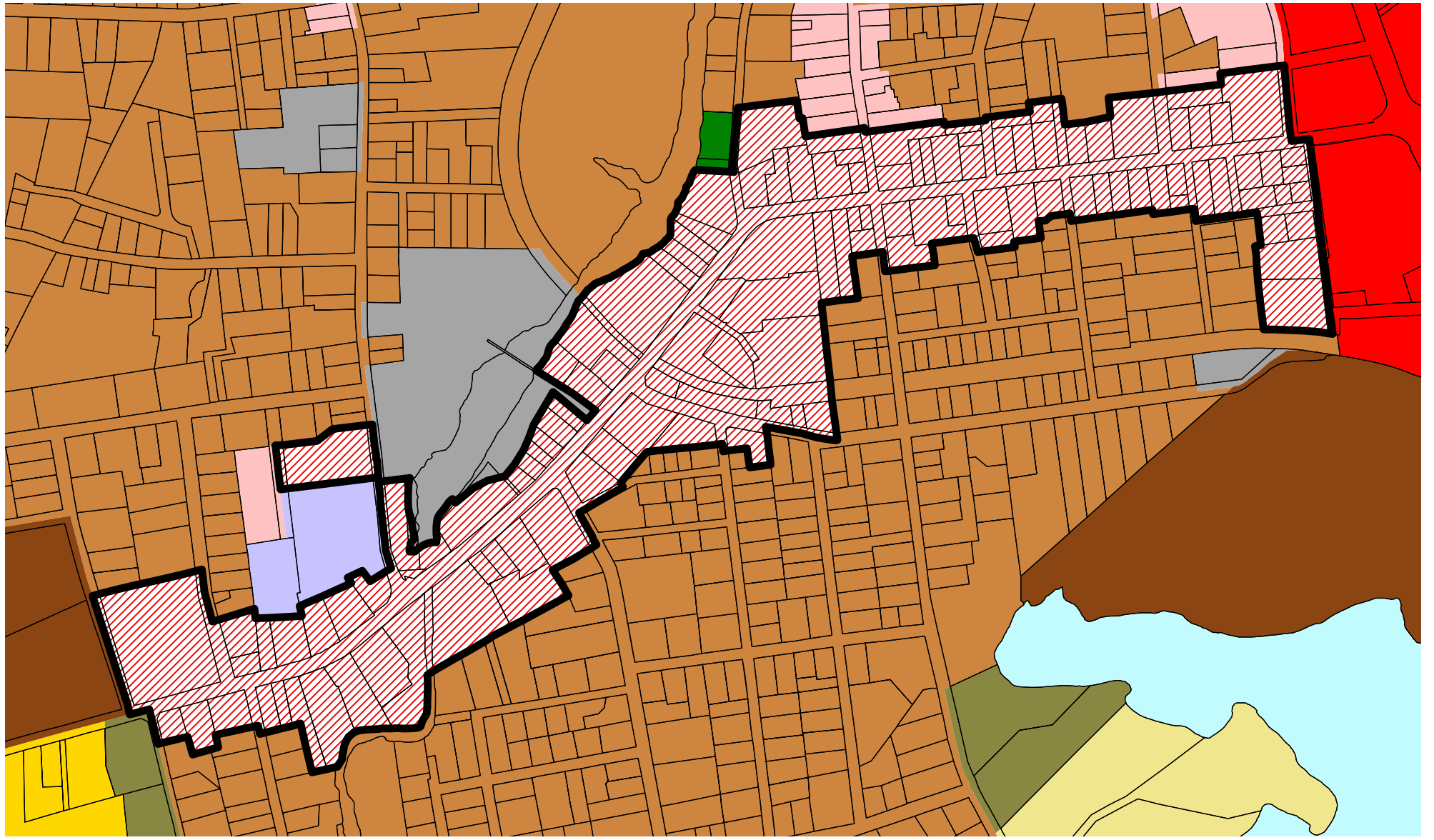
ZONE

-  RM : Multi-Family
-  R10 :10,000 sq ft
-  R20 : 20,000 sq ft
-  CD : Downtown
-  CN : Neighborhood
-  IND-1 : Industrial 1
-  OS : Open Space
-  GI : Government and Institutional
-  WATER



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Village of Peace Dale
 Zoning Map



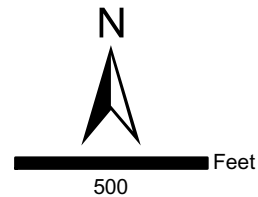


Legend

-  Village Study Area
-  Assessor's Parcels

ZONE

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
|  RM : Multi-Family |  R20 : 20,000 sq ft |  IND-1 : Industrial 1 |
|  R10 :10,000 sq ft |  R40 : 40,000 sq ft |  OS : Open Space |
| |  R80 : 80,000 sq ft |  GI : Government and Institutional |
| |  CH : Highway |  WATER |
| |  CD : Downtown | |
| |  CN : Neighborhood | |
| |  SMD : Special Management District | |



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Village of Wakefield
 Zoning Map

sales, is also consistent with the arts community identity that is so pervasive in Peace Dale.

Although the language for the IND-1 allowable uses is diverse in nature and does attempt to capture recent trends in mill building redevelopment, there are some minor changes that may add to the redevelopment opportunities in these and other buildings in the community. First, with regard to recent trends, it is important to recognize the potential for these structures as assembly or quasi-public gathering spaces. Other mill structures in New England certainly serve to house regular office and manufacturing uses, but also host temporary uses for local arts and culture that may not be associated with any of the existing lease holders. Rentable community meeting space, auctions, farmers' markets, restaurant expositions, performance space, fund raising events, and other occasional events can often find interesting spaces in the older industrial buildings that is worth considering. The Town of South Kingstown should consider streamlining the permitting process by adding a line to the Use Table for Temporary Indoor Gatherings. This use might be defined as follows:

Temporary Indoor Gatherings: Indoor Uses that occur seasonally, for special occasions, at regular intervals, or are otherwise not the regular primary use associated with the structure. These uses may temporarily occupy existing rooms, hallways, foyers or other spaces subject to all applicable Fire Code, licensing or other federal, state or local regulation. Such uses may include theatrical or music production, farmers' markets, flea markets or bazaars, craft fairs, clubs, specialty retail, charity drives, or other special events that are appropriate to the space as determined by the Zoning Enforcement Officer.

Another consideration when thinking about future uses for these IND-1 Zoning Districts is related to manufacturing uses. When looking at the Use Table within the Ordinance, one thing that stands out is the general language that is used in association with industries that are often considered "heavy" in nature and requiring careful regulation. Uses such as "Paper Products Manufacturing and Printing" (Use Code 73.1) and "Rubber and Plastics Products Manufacturing" (Use Code 74.2) require a Special Use Permit. A closer examination of these uses in Appendix A of the Ordinance reveals that these uses, as named, include a wide variety of activities, some of which could be considered potentially harmful to a neighborhood while others would have very little impact at all.

The Town should consider a more refined approach to regulating manufacturing uses in these districts and throughout the community. One effective way to do this is to separate these broader use categories into those that actually *manufacture* the materials and those that *assemble* products from those materials that may have been created somewhere else. For example, based on the language in the Ordinance today, the assembly of plastic toys from ready made parts and the actual forming and shaping of plastic floor covering materials receive the same status from a permitting perspective. Both would require a Special Use Permit. It may be a worthwhile exercise for the Town to examine each of its manufacturing uses in this manner to determine which are too restrictive or too lenient.

Where these broad use categories have been too restrictive on some light manufacturing uses, the Town will have the chance to increase market opportunities in the IND-1 Zoning District in a way that will not be harmful to the surrounding neighborhoods.

3.3 The CD Zoning District

A very basic consideration raised in community discussions surrounding Peace Dale and Wakefield is in regard to the allowance of residential use on the ground floors within the CD Zoning District. Currently, Section 402 of the Zoning Ordinance (Note #4) states that “No dwelling units shall be allowed on the first floor.” This is a common regulatory tool used in New England Villages or other mixed use centers where communities desire a sustainable mix of residential and commercial uses, but do not want to sacrifice what they feel is the most economically viable commercial floor space to a residential use.

While this can be effective in many settings, it is important to consider the boundaries of the CD Zoning District, the uses that the district encompasses today, and the overall character of these Village centers. Figures 13 and 14 demonstrate that while each of these Villages has a strong mixed use core, the Zoning District also encompasses long established neighborhoods of single-, two-, and multi-family housing that has residential use on the bottom floor. These residential uses are integral to the function and identity of the Villages and should be allowed through a more refined look at where they lie relative to the main street areas. A potential way to address this is by establishing a buffer to the main street in each Village and allowing residential use on the ground floor beyond a certain setback. Example language is as follows:

Where a structure is located outside one hundred (100) feet of [insert street name], ground floor uses may include residential use where the residential ground floor uses are wholly or partially screened from pedestrians on [insert street name] and are sited in a manner that is consistent with the goals of the district. Distance from the structure shall be measured from the closest edge of the structure to the closest point along the right of way.

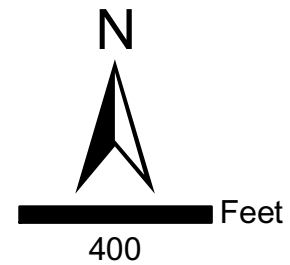
3.4 Effective Standards for Transitioning between Zoning Districts

One of the more challenging aspects of integrating a mix of uses into a historic setting like Wakefield and Peace Dale is ensuring the uses in these Villages are compatible from one lot to another. As depicted earlier in Figures 11 and 12, both of the Villages are characterized by several different zoning districts and an eclectic mix of buildings that could be occupied by residential, office, retail, light industry, and other uses. Although this type of diversity is one of the major strengths of both of these Villages, care must be taken to ensure that conflicts are avoided as much as possible between different operations or land use types. The most notable potential conflicts are those that might occur between non-residential and residential uses. The standards that were examined for the purposes of this report include:



Legend

 Village Study Area - Parcels Zoned CD



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Village of Peace Dale
Aerial Photo

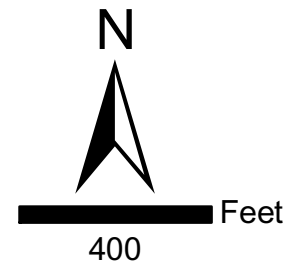
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Figure 13



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 Village Study Area - Parcels Zoned CD

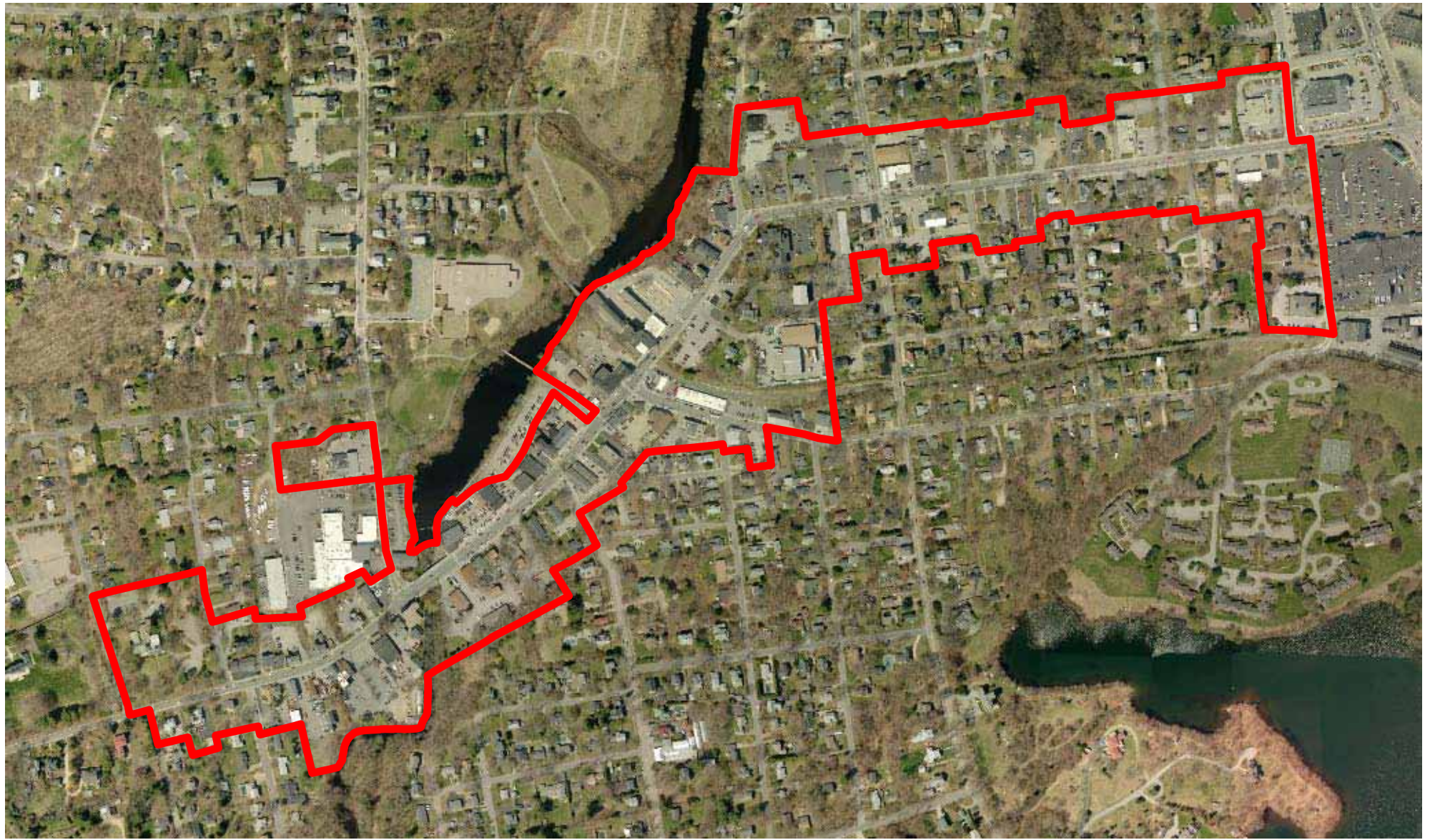


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Village of Peace Dale
Aerial Photo

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Figure 13

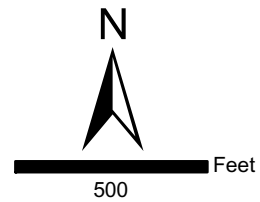


Legend

 Village Study Area - Parcels Zoned CD

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Village of Wakefield
Aerial Photo



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Figure 14

- Buffer widths and design standards;
- Lighting; and
- Orientation of buildings and yards.

3.4.1 Buffer widths and design standards

Buffers between residential and non-residential districts are regulated primarily in the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations under Article IV Section G.7. Transition Yard Landscaping Standards. These standards address the transition between residential districts and both industrial and commercial districts with a series of potential buffer distances and screening options. These standards provide adequate protection and can be used as the foundation for more refined discussion during the permitting process.

In both cases, buffers can be designed as follows:

- A 50-foot wooded buffer;
- A 20-foot partial landscape screen; or
- A 10-foot full landscape screen.

What is important to note, is that the regulations recognize that these standards may not be achievable in all cases due to existing site conditions. The Planning Board is therefore empowered to deviate from these standards where necessary. Section G.9 Alternative Methods of Compliance states:

Where landscaping required by this Section is not practical for reasons of available land area, conflict with overhead wires or other physical conditions, the Planning Board may permit alternative landscaping or may waive, reduce or otherwise modify the requirements for such landscaping. In applying for such waiver the applicant shall propose alternative methods of providing landscaping, screening or buffering in order to meet the goals and purposes of this Section.

This section of the regulations is critical to removing road blocks to redevelopment in these areas where lot shapes and building locations may make it impossible to achieve these standards. In looking at the goals of this study, however, there is the possibility to expand this section to capture unforeseen opportunities to connect commercial properties to residential areas where appropriate. Because of the strong focus on providing connections for residents into the Village core areas, the Town may wish to add the following language to this section of the regulations:

The Planning Board may also waive, reduce or otherwise modify the requirements for such landscaping where a clear and appropriate opportunity exists to connect properties through walkways and/or other similar features in a manner that furthers the goals and purposes of both zoning districts. Where such a waiver is granted, the Board shall have the authority to require the addition of landscaping or other site amenities on other portions of the property.

3.4.2 Lighting

In reviewing local regulatory language for lighting, the primary vehicle for regulating lighting on private property is in Section 704 of the Zoning Ordinance. This section of the Ordinance deals exclusively with lighting within parking areas and states that lighting in these areas cannot reflect into adjacent properties. Specific standards for lighting as it may be attached to loading areas and buildings (e.g., security lighting) were not found in this review of the regulations and requirements for this type of information were not found in any of the development checklists.

Impacts to adjacent properties from other lighting sources such as windows and security lights can be significant if not designed with care. This is particularly true when looking at residential districts adjacent to non-residential districts. Accordingly, the Town should consider broadening the types of lighting reviewed under Development Plan Review and Land Development projects to include all sources of light. A common approach to this is to have applicants provide a Landscaping and Lighting Plan that shows the relationship between all sources of light and the landscaping that is being used to shield adjacent properties where necessary.

3.4.3 Orientation of Buildings and Yards

The border between non-residential and residential districts can be protected by buffers, landscaping and lighting controls as discussed in previous sections of this report. One other small but important detail to consider is how the space will be used in the non-residential areas immediately adjacent to the border. Activities that can occur in the yards abutting residential areas as well as in the building areas that face residential districts are important to consider during the permitting and design phase. Although it may not always be possible, “inactive” spaces in the yard space and building area will be preferable for abutting district lines as opposed to “active” spaces. An inactive space is one that does not provide many opportunities for people to gather, whereas an active space is designed for a specific activity that involves significantly less transient foot traffic. An example of inactive yard space would include a travel lane for automobiles along the side of a building as opposed to the more active use of a parking lot. When looking at the placement of a building, an inactive use might include a stair well along the side of a building with a secondary entrance as opposed to active office or residential windows.

Regulating the location and design of active versus inactive space can be challenging, especially where pre-existing buildings may dictate a certain design in accordance with their existing conditions. However, it will be important for local authorities to be aware of this issue so they do not miss an opportunity to direct building and yard activities for these areas. Language that could be included in both the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations is as follows:

Where commercial and industrial districts abut residential districts,
building features and abutting yards should be designed in a manner that

reduces potential conflicts between residential and non-residential uses. Parking areas, gathering places, lighting, windows, and other active elements should not be located adjacent to residential districts to the greatest extent practicable.

3.5 Design Guidelines

3.5.1 Introduction

In all of the public discussions conducted as part of this project, as well as discussions with municipal staff, the idea of design guidelines was raised several times relative to the Village centers. It is also important to note that many people who participated in the forums were interested in the potential role for design guidelines in the Dale Carlia area just east of Wakefield Village. The tone of these discussions was generally one of cautious optimism as residents recognized the value of keeping out undesirable development styles, but they were also concerned that design guidelines may serve as a disincentive to invest in the Village cores as they may be “too restrictive.” This tension between “over” and “under regulating” can be difficult to manage. In the context of the permitting process, regulations require careful language that empowers local authorities to reshape undesirable proposals, but also provides them the opportunity to be flexible in the face of high quality proposals that face unforeseen challenges.

3.5.2 Design Guidelines in the Village Core

Beginning with the Village core areas, the central concerns that can be addressed with design guidelines include: designing for community character (aesthetics) and continuing to design for the pedestrian experience. With regard to aesthetics, design guidelines generally deal with buildings and the various architectural elements that help to maintain the traditional New England character that helps to define these Villages. With regard to designing for the pedestrian experience, design guidelines generally deal with building orientation and ensuring that there are connections between properties, across parking lots and to the public right of way. Examples of guidelines that deal with these issues are provided below:

Design Guidelines for Building Aesthetics

Building Size, Height & Scale:

- (1) In order to modulate their scale, multi-story buildings shall clearly articulate the base, middle, and top of the building through the use of cornices, stepbacks, borders of distinct material, or other articulating features.
- (2) Larger buildings with long façades shall articulate the façade with varied rooflines, distinct signage for multiple tenants, awnings, arcades, pilasters, columns, recessed spaces and/or entrances, and any other features that

serve to add texture to these longer façades. Unbroken façades in excess of fifty (50) horizontal feet shall not be allowed.

- (3) Large, flat, unadorned, blank walls shall be avoided for any side or rear walls of buildings. Where windows are not feasible, raised or recessed vertical surfaces may be used in conjunction with awnings, window-shaped depressions, and decorative lighting to make these surfaces more attractive.
- (4) Awnings shall be made of canvas and/or weather-coated materials, or glass. Continuous awnings over several individual stores are not permitted.

Entranceways:

- (1) All buildings shall have a principal façade and entry (with operable doors) facing a street or other area dedicated to pedestrian circulation. Buildings may have more than one principal façade and/or entry unless such buildings are designed to accommodate multiple tenants. Primary entrances not facing a street shall open onto sidewalks or other pedestrian features at least ten (10) feet in width.
- (2) Main entrances shall incorporate architectural features that draw attention to the entrance. These features may include covered porches, porticos, recessed doorways, and awnings.
- (3) Street level frontage shall be primarily devoted to entrances, shop windows, or other displays.

Fenestration:

- (1) The width-to-height ratio of bays in façades above street level shall have a minimum width to height ratio of 1:2. Multiple bays may be placed immediately adjacent to one another in order to create larger window areas.
- (2) Windows on the ground floor shall begin no lower than two (2) feet from street level and shall extend at a minimum height of seven (7) feet from street level.
- (3) Mullion pattern and thickness shall reflect traditional New England design with broad decorative surfaces between windows. Any mullion finishes that would be highly reflective or industrial in nature shall be not be allowed.
- (4) Clear, non-reflective glass with minimal tinting shall be used at street level to allow maximum visual interaction between pedestrians and the interior of the building.
- (5) Street level façades shall have a transparency of at least sixty (60) percent.
- (6) All windows (except storefront windows) shall be operable.

Dormers:

- (1) On pitched rooflines, dormers shall be used to break up roof surfaces and shall be provided at a minimum frequency of one per thirty (30) feet or fraction thereof.
- (2) Dormer styles may include doghouse, eyebrow, or shed dormers.

- (3) Windows shall fill the face wall of the dormer to the maximum extent practicable and match the windows in the rest of the building.

Roofline Articulation:

- (1) The roof design shall provide a variety of building heights and varied roofline articulation. Local models reflecting traditional New England architecture shall be considered in the selection of roof forms. These models include gables, gambrels, flat roofs, mansards, and any jointed configuration of these styles. Decorative spires or towers may also be used to articulate rooflines and to provide focal points within a complex of principal buildings.
- (2) Industrial style metal roofing visible from the street shall not be permitted. Metal roofing that uses decorative finishes and textures may be allowed.
- (3) Where proposed, flat roofs shall have decorative cornices or parapets that shield all views of any mechanical systems located on the roof from the street or from windows at a lower elevation in adjacent buildings.
- (4) Downspouts shall match gutters in material and finish.
- (5) Utilities and protuberances through or on the front of roofs are highly discouraged and should generally be shielded from view.

Building Materials:

- (1) Materials and building treatments shall be used that reduce the visibility of buildings from distant vantage points and shall be consistent and compatible with traditional New England design.
- (2) Where more than one material is used, traditionally heavier materials (stone, brick, concrete with stucco, etc.) shall be located below lighter materials (wood, fiber cement board, siding, etc). The change in material shall occur along a horizontal line, preferably at the floor level.
- (3) Natural materials, such as brick, stone, wood/concrete clapboards and shingles, and slate shall be used in contrast with industrial materials such as unfinished concrete, sheet metal, asphalt shingles, vinyl and plastic synthetic siding, and windows and insulated steel doors, especially those that can be seen at the pedestrian level.

Signage:

- (1) Wall mounted or projecting signs should typically be located above the ground floor storefront and just below the second floor windows. Signs should not obscure architectural features or windows and should be integrated with the design of the building.
- (2) Sign colors should be selected to enhance sign legibility for both day and nighttime viewing. Contrasting colors can be used effectively to increase clarity. Sign colors and finishes should be compatible with the color of the building or development.

- (3) Sign materials should be of high quality and compatible with the design of the building and façade on which they are placed.
- (4) Externally illuminated signs should have downward-directed, wall mounted lights with fully-shielded decorative lamps that do not obscure the graphics of the sign.
- (5) Internally illuminated plastic or fiberglass cabinet (can) signs are not allowed. Where internal illumination or back-lighting is proposed, solid letters (reverse channel) are a preferred alternative.
- (6) Signage on awnings is permitted only on the apron portion of the awning for business identification or to advertise particular goods and/or services.

Design Guidelines for Site Design

Site Design:

- (1) The location of buildings, parking areas, walkways, outdoor gathering places, landscaping, utilities, loading areas, dumpsters, automobile access, travel lanes, and signs shall reflect a thoughtful approach that focuses primarily on providing optimal access and mobility for pedestrians on and between sites;
- (2) Parking areas shall allow for easy access between lots for automobiles and pedestrians. Where feasible, parking lots shall be connected by a travel lane within the rear yard to provide an opportunity for pedestrians and motorists to pass from one site to another without using established rights of way;
- (3) Within the front yard setback, clear pedestrian pathways shall be provided between buildings and across automobile travel lanes in the form of raised or distinct surfaces such as stamped concrete or grid pavers, arcades, colonnades, or other similar features;
- (4) In complexes with multiple principal buildings, landscaped areas with walkways, courtyards, or arcades shall be used in conjunction with compact site design to bring buildings closer together and enhance connectivity between them for residents and customers.

Building Placement:

- (1) Building setbacks shall comply with the applicable provisions in Zoning Ordinance.
- (2) On sites with multiple principal buildings, site design shall be as compact as is feasible. To the greatest extent practicable, pedestrians shall not need to cross parking areas to move from one building to another.

Loading, Garages and Driveways:

- (1) Loading docks, service areas, and trash disposal facilities shall not face a public gathering space or a public street.

- (2) Garages shall be subordinate in size, height, and location to the overall building and shall be located with entrances behind the principal building(s);
- (3) Common or shared driveways and parking lots are encouraged to reduce curb cuts and enhance pedestrian circulation.

It is important to recognize that, although these Villages have a strong historic fabric with their buildings, residents and business owners also acknowledged that there is an eclectic mix to building styles that also contributes heavily to the Villages. Diversity in building styles is strong for both Villages and design guidelines should therefore provide more of a “framework” than a rigid code. In order to ensure a high level of flexibility, language should be provided that allows the Planning Board to deviate from these guidelines under certain conditions. Examples of the conditions that could be used to justify waiving or modifying these guidelines include:

- An existing building that is being re-occupied does not comply with one or more of the guidelines;
- Existing physical site constraints preclude the possibility of compliance;
- Compliance with the guidelines would cause undue financial hardship to the applicant because of other regulatory requirements, physical site constraints, or structural conditions; or
- The applicant can demonstrate that an alternative design proposal meets the unique conditions of a site in a manner that is consistent with the architectural fabric of the district and the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance.

3.5.3 The Role of Design Guidelines in the Dale Carlia Area

Stakeholders at public meetings held for this study expressed their concern that the Dale Carlia area is a primary access point from Route 1 and should create a “good first impression” for people driving toward historic Wakefield or Peace Dale. Discussions about this area suggested that it is certainly a more “auto-dependent” environment and that the same sort of walkable park-once experience was not the expectation for Dale Carlia. However, discussions at public meetings showed a clear sentiment that this busy retail center of South Kingstown should be viewed as a gateway to these Villages and, accordingly, design improvements should be considered moving forward.

There are several design considerations for Dale Carlia that overlap with those discussed for the two Village cores. Despite obvious differences in the scale of many building and their orientation to the street and parking areas, basic considerations for rooflines, building materials, and lighting are the same for these areas. As such, the Town should consider imposing these standards for this area.

Importantly, development in this area of South Kingstown does not have the same historical context as with the Peace Dale or Wakefield Villages, nor is its identity shaped

from an eclectic mix of building styles as it is within the Village core areas. Moving forward, therefore, there is less incentive for redevelopment opportunities to be as “context-sensitive” as they will be in the Village cores. The neighborhood fabric simply does not exist that would provide natural market pressures to be compatible with higher levels of design. Furthermore, the type of business that is attracted to this area includes formula business, retail chains, and other larger auto-oriented operations. Although these businesses may have the potential to provide high quality design, there may also be the tendency to “design down” with less sophisticated models. As a result, this area requires a stronger enforcement mechanism for design guidelines than the more flexible approach recommended for the Village core areas. Where the proposed approach for the Villages allowed deviation from guidelines with several criteria (see Section 3.5.2 *Design Guidelines in the Village Core* above), the criteria for deviation from these standards should be stricter with the Dale Carlia area. Specifically, the Town may wish to remove the conditions dealing with financial hardship and alternative proposals that are “consistent” with the Comprehensive Plan.

Another critical design issue that is different between Dale Carlia and the two Village core areas deals with parking lots. Both Peace Dale and Wakefield Villages are regulated in a manner that significantly decreases the amount of required parking as compared with a place like Dale Carlia and also keeps parking away from main streets and pedestrian traffic. As a result, the impact of parking lots on the streetscape has been well managed and, where public parking areas are part of the streetscape in Peace Dale, pedestrian amenities have been added to mitigate potential impacts. With the higher parking requirements and the potential to locate large parking areas within the front yard setback, Dale Carlia has pockets of developed area where the view from the street is dominated by vast amounts of asphalt. These parking areas create an unappealing streetscape and can also cause confusion to motorists when trying to access different businesses.



Development within Dale Carlia is dominated by vast amounts of asphalt, such as the *Wakefield Mall* shown here.

It is important to note that any of the parking areas that have a negative impact on the streetscape in the Dale Carlia area were likely developed before existing standards for landscaping were adopted by the Planning Board. In the Subdivision and Land Development regulations, standards for landscaping along the right of way and within parking areas are provided within Section G. Landscaping – General Standards and Specifications. These provisions provide a clear framework for establishing a strong and attractive “street edge” along the right of way and also for breaking up asphalt with landscaped features interior to a parking lot. The success of these standards is readily apparent when comparing some of the more recent development in the Dale Carlia area with older sites that did not have these standards to follow in the past.

When considering potential changes to these landscaping standards, it is important for the Town to acknowledge the recent movement toward integrating landscaping into stormwater management practices. Developers who choose to incorporate vegetated swales and bioretention facilities into their site design take a more sophisticated approach to grading and landscape design. As a result, the strict standards for landscaping the interior of parking lots may actually make it more difficult for engineers to provide these “low impact development” techniques. It is important, therefore, for the Planning Board to be able to waive these requirements where better drainage design requires this sort of relief. Example language suited for this purpose is as follows:

The Planning Board may waive, reduce, or otherwise modify any landscaping requirements where said requirements would compromise the ability to integrate landscaped areas into vegetated stormwater management practices.

3.6 Cottage Zoning

The development style known as cottage zoning (a.k.a. cottage community zoning, cottage style development, etc.) is an extremely versatile development style that is gaining popularity in many areas of the U.S. As the name suggests, cottage zoning enables the development of clusters of small homes in a manner that resembles many of the traditional cottage communities that emerged in the mid 20th century, often as seasonal or vacation communities. The basic elements of cottage zoning generally include a cluster of small homes (generally with a footprint between 800 and 1,500 square feet) that are connected to a common area. Cottage zoning provisions provide standards to ensure high-quality design and careful attention to architecture details of buildings and relationship of buildings to the common open space.



Cottage zoning provides smaller houses connected to a common green space.

To implement cottage zoning in South Kingstown, the community would likely follow the same regulatory framework they used for Flexible Design Residential Projects. This framework includes:

- Defining the use in the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Regulations;
- Enable the Use in certain zoning districts through the Schedule of Use Regulations under Article 3 of the Zoning Ordinance;
- Describe basic approval provisions under Section 502 of the Zoning Ordinance; and
- Provide the detailed standards and site planning procedures within the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations.



Typical cottage housing site plan.

The following text provides regulatory language for Cottage Community Development as it might appear in the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations. Standards that require further consideration by the Town have been called out in **bold text** and [brackets]. This text should be considered a starting point for potential regulatory changes and requires further community discussions and technical work from municipal staff to tailor potential amendments to the community's needs before being adopted. Further changes to the Zoning Ordinance would also be required to enable this style of residential development.

SAMPLE COTTAGE ZONING LANGUAGE FOR SOUTH KINGSTOWN

Section IV.J. Cottage Community Development (CCD)

1. Purpose.

Pursuant to Section 502.7 of the Zoning Ordinance, the purposes of this section, Cottage Community Development (CCD), are:

- a) To provide housing types that are responsive to changing household demographics (e.g., retirees, small families, single parent households, single person households, dual owner households);
- b) To provide opportunities for more low to moderate income housing within single-family neighborhoods;
- c) To encourage creation of functional usable open space in residential communities;
- d) To promote neighborhood interaction and safety through design; and
- e) To ensure compatibility with neighboring uses.

2. Applicability

In accordance with the standards set forth in this Section IV. A, the Planning Board may approve, as a Land Development Project, a CCD in Zoning Districts where allowed in the Zoning Ordinance, Article 3, Section 301, whether a subdivision or Land Development Project. Where the CCD is allowed by Special Use Permit, Planning Board approval shall be conditioned upon the applicant receiving relief from the Zoning Board subsequent to Master Plan approval. A CCD shall only be allowed on lots that have existing access to water and sewer service.

3. Procedures

Applications for CCD approval shall be made in accordance with the procedures for approval of a major or minor subdivision or Land Development Project based on the number of lots or dwellings in the development as provided in Article V of these regulations. All major subdivisions and land development projects shall also comply with the standards set forth in Article 5, Section 502.7 of the Zoning Ordinance.

4. Affordability, Dimensional and Density Requirements

- a) [**Twenty percent (20%)**] of all housing units within a CCD development shall be set aside for families of low to moderate income as defined by the Rhode Island Low to Moderate Housing Act. Fractions of a unit that equal or exceed 0.5 shall be rounded up to the nearest whole number. The sale and resale of these units shall be restricted through the use of a deed restriction as described in Section 502.6G of the Zoning Ordinance.
- b) The maximum density for a CCD shall be [**eight units**] per developable acre.
- c) An individual CCD shall contain a minimum of [**four dwelling units and a maximum of 24 dwelling units.**]
- d) The minimum lot size within a CCD shall be [**5,000 square feet of land suitable for development**] per dwelling unit.
- e) A CCD may be developed with dwelling units on separate lots, a single lot, or a combination thereof.
- f) Lots having reduced area or frontage shall not have frontage on a street other than on a street created by the CCD; provided, however, that the Planning Board may waive this requirement where it is determined that such reduced lot(s) are consistent with existing development patterns in the neighborhood.
- g) Dwelling unit floor area shall be between [**800 and 1,300 square feet.**] Floor area is the area within the surrounding exterior walls, but excluding space where the floor to ceiling height is less than six feet. Floor area does not include covered porches.
- h) Dwelling units shall have [**15-foot front and five-foot**] side and rear yard setback requirements. Front yards shall contain a minimum of [**400 square feet**] of space that can be used for active or passive recreation activities. Any pathways leading to the front yard shall not be included in the required front yard area.

- i) Dwelling units shall be separated by a minimum of [**10 feet**], not including projections.
- j) Dwelling units and accessory buildings shall be separated by a minimum of [**six feet**].
- k) Dwelling units not abutting or oriented towards a right-of-way shall have a front yard oriented towards the common open space.

5. Common Open Space

- a) A minimum of [**500 square feet**] of common open space shall be provided per dwelling. However, not less than [**3,000 square feet**] of common area shall be provided regardless of number of dwelling units.
- b) No dimension of a common open space area used to satisfy the minimum square footage requirement shall be less than 10 feet, unless part of a pathway or trail.
- c) In subdivisions, common open space shall be located in a separate tract or tracts.
- d) Required common open space shall be divided into no more than two separate areas per cluster of dwelling units.
- e) Common open spaces shall have dwelling units that face each other across the common open space.
- f) Common open space shall be improved for passive or active recreational use. Examples may include but are not limited to courtyards, orchards, landscaped picnic areas, or gardens. Common open space shall include amenities such as seating, landscaping, trails, gazebos, barbecue facilities, covered shelters, or water features. Stormwater management facilities shall not be located in a common open space area.
- g) All units shall have dedicated access ways to the common open spaces.

6. Cottage Design Standards

- a) Dwelling units, car ports, and garages shall have a minimum [**6:12**] roof pitch. Up to [**35 percent**] of roof area may have a slope not less than [**4:12**]. Portions of a roof with a pitch less than [**6:12**] shall be limited to architectural features such as dormers, porch roofs, and shed roofs.
- b) Each dwelling unit abutting a public right-of-way (not including alleys) shall have a primary entry and covered porch a minimum of [**80 square feet**] in size, oriented towards the public right-of-way. If abutting more than one public right-of-way, the applicant, with Planning Board input, shall determine which right-of-way the entrance and covered porch shall be oriented towards.
- c) Each dwelling unit shall have an entry and covered porch oriented towards the common open space. Covered porches shall be a minimum of [**six feet**] deep.
- d) Dwelling units shall not include attached garages unless the garage abuts an alley or shared parking lot. The first [**200 square feet**] of attached garage space shall not be counted towards maximum dwelling unit size allowance.
- e) Detached garages and carports associated with individual dwelling units shall not exceed [**500 square feet**] in size (detached garages or carports shall not count towards maximum dwelling unit size allowance).

- f) Dwelling units shall not contain more than two bedrooms.

7. Parking

- a) A minimum of [**1.5 parking spaces**] per dwelling unit shall be provided for the entire development. [**Ten percent**] of total required spaces shall be designated for guests.
- b) On-street parking is permitted along the entire frontage. All or a portion of new on-street parking provided as a component of the development may be counted towards minimum parking requirements if the Planning Board finds that such parking configuration will result in adequate parking for the CCD.
- c) Garage doors shall not be oriented towards a public right-of-way with the exception of an alley.
- d) Garages and carports shall not be located between the common open space and the dwelling units.
- e) Surface parking lots shall be broken into sub-lots of no more than [**eight**] parking spaces. Sub-lots shall be separated by landscaped bulb-outs a minimum of [**12 feet**] in width.
- f) Parking in the form of garages, carports, or surface lots may occupy no more than [**40 percent**] of site frontage on a public right-of-way, except in the case of an alley, in which case no restriction applies.
- g) Surface parking lots shall be set back [**15 feet**] from front property lines and [**10 feet**] from external side and rear property lines.
- h) Surface parking lots of more than [**four**] spaces, visible from a public right-of-way (not including alleys) or adjacent single-family uses or zones shall be screened by landscaping and/or architectural features.

8. Common Area Maintenance

- a) CCDs shall be required to implement a mechanism that ensures the continued care and maintenance of CCD common areas. All common areas shall be protected against further development and unauthorized alteration in perpetuity by appropriate deed restrictions. The Planning Board shall approve the form and content of all deed restrictions at the time of final approval of the subdivision. Every deed restriction providing a maintenance guarantee shall contain the following provision:

“If the owners, or their successors or assigns fail to maintain the common area, the Town of South Kingstown may perform any necessary maintenance and enforce the payment for such costs, including reasonable attorneys' fees, by an action at law or in equity against the owners or their successors or assigns.”

- b) Ownership of the common area shall be conveyed to a corporation or trust owned or to be owned by the owners of lots or units within the CCD or owners of shares within a cooperative development. If such a corporation or trust is used,

ownership shall pass with conveyances of the lots or units. A typical example would be creation of a homeowner's association or condominium association with authority and funding necessary to maintain the common areas.

9. Stormwater Management

The stormwater management system for the CCD shall conform to the Town's Subdivision and Land Development Regulations and Design Manual with particular regard for the need to encourage infiltration and groundwater recharge as opposed to detention or retention basins.

10. Streets

Streets within a CCD may be publicly or privately owned and maintained and shall conform to the standards of Article XIII, Section B. Street Design Standards of these Regulations. Streets shall be designed to conform to the standards of the Town where the street is or may be ultimately intended for dedication and acceptance by the Town. Private streets shall be adequate for the intended use and vehicular traffic and shall be maintained by an association of unit owners or such other means or entity as may be approved by the Planning Board.

11. Decision

The Planning Board may approve, approve with conditions, or deny an application for a CCD after assessing whether the CCD promotes the objectives of the Planning Board's Subdivision and Land Development Regulations and after considering all of the applicable criteria set forth at in the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations.

3.7 Comprehensive Plan Updates

As with any proposed regulatory updates, it is necessary to ensure that these reforms are consistent with the content of the Comprehensive Plan. This section will identify the specific sections of the Comprehensive Plan that are consistent with the regulatory recommendations included within this report, as well as identify potential changes to language within the Comprehensive Plan that will further align that document with the recommendations herein.

Industrial-1 (IND-1) Zoning District- Allowable Uses

The recommendations for new allowable uses in the IND-1 Zoning District are consistent with existing section of the Comprehensive Plan, including:

Economic Development Element- Policy 1.2: "The Town encourages adaptive reuse of the Peace Dale Mill as a mixed use development including the retention of manufacturing

while providing for small businesses and commercial development, artisan uses and potential housing opportunities.”

Implementation of Policy 1.2: “The Town will promote and support an emerging identity for Peace Dale as an arts center.”

The above sections are well aligned with the recommendations within this report and changes to the Comprehensive Plan are not needed.

CD Zoning District- Residential Use on the Ground Floor

The recommendations in relation to the CD Zoning District have some level of consistency with section of the Comprehensive Plan, including:

Housing Element- Implementation of Goal 2: “The Town shall consider amending land use regulations to allow limited residential uses in commercial zones...”

It is important to note that future updates to the Comprehensive Plan do not include language that specifically restricts allowing residential uses on the ground floor of commercial zones. While language that limits ground-floor residential in Village commercial areas are not uncommon and are often intended to support an “active” street with shops lining the sidewalk, this practice is not well suited for South Kingstown due to the diversity of housing stock located in commercial zones.

Design Standards for Dale Carlia area and the CD Zoning Districts

There are many sections of the Comprehensive Plan that suggest amending regulations to support a well designed, pedestrian-scale Village environment. While these sections touch on many overlapping elements found within design standards, the use of language specifically referring to design standards is not used. It is recommended that the Town consider minor revisions to the Comprehensive Plan to more specifically support the use of design standards. Such revisions to the Comprehensive Plan are highlighted in **bold** within the existing language of the sections below:

*Land Use Element- Implementation of Policy 4.1: “The Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision regulations shall be revised to include special provisions for Village Districts. These provisions will include regulations controlling the size, shape and locations of lots and open spaces, parking, signage, yards, setbacks, street widths, landscaping and site plan review for both residential and commercial uses. **[INSERT] Regulatory revisions shall include the incorporation of design standards for appropriate zoning districts.** Village Districts shall allow mixed uses to foster walkable communities and shall encourage infill (to direct growth from outlying rural areas of town).”*

Land Use Element- Policy 4.6: “The Town supports continued revitalization of downtowns and commercial districts using neo-traditional planning techniques to encourage friendly and safe development.”

*Land Use Element- Implementation of Policy 4.6: The town shall continue to evaluate and implement appropriate revitalization strategies for downtowns of Wakefield and Peace Dale using neo-traditional planning techniques to encourage friendly and safe development. The Town shall also implement neo-traditional planning techniques in commercial districts along Old Tower Hill Road and Kingstown Road, **[INSERT] such as the incorporation of design standards**, to encourage pedestrian-scale design solutions.*

Cottage Housing

The concepts imbedded within cottage housing are well supported within the Comprehensive Plan. These elements include small-scale, community-oriented housing that is typically more affordable than other market rate units. Such sections of the Comprehensive Plan include:

Housing Element- Policy 2.1: “The Town supports a mix of affordable and market rate housing units throughout South Kingstown and the development of small-scale, scattered site affordable housing developments.”

Housing Element- Implementation of Goal 2: “The Town shall target a desired number of housing units within certain price ranges and periodically evaluate the achievement of this goal.”

It is also recommended that the Town consider including an implementation strategy aimed specifically at cottage housing. Sample language for consideration by the Town is as follows:

“The Town shall encourage a diversity of housing types through revisions to regulations that promote small-scale, community-oriented housing types, such as cottage housing regulations.”

SECTION 4. EMERGING ISSUES

The following section discusses issues that emerged during the public forums on February 26, 2009, April 16, 2009, and October 29, 2009. These particular issues were not part of the original scope of this study, however they are important to the future of each Village and should merit additional analysis within the Town's future Village planning processes, including the upcoming Comprehensive Plan update.

4.1 Village Marketing, Promotion, and Branding

Marketing and promoting Wakefield and Peace Dale through special events and programming is a critical means for building the community and supporting neighborhood revitalization. Examples of Village events that have been successful include: the Peace Dale Arts Stroll and Arts Gala, Wakefield's "Ladies Night Out," the Chamber of Commerce's "shop local" initiative, and the field day event at the Housing Authority. Periodic events, celebrations, and happenings such as this can reinforce the identity of the Villages, and build the local economy. The seasonal nature of the local tourist economy can be a challenge for local businesses during the winter months and added programming during this time could be an effective way to boost the local economy. Additionally, promoting the historic values of Wakefield and Peace Dale through educational programs and tours can be an effective way to market each Village.

One topic discussed at length during the Wakefield public forum was the gateways to old Main Street. It was noted that better gateway signage about "Historic Wakefield" would assist in getting patrons into the area from Old Tower Hill Road and Dale Carlia Corners. The highway commercial "strip" along Old Tower Hill Road and at Dale Carlia was discussed as needing improvement from a functional, safety, and aesthetic perspective. This first impression of Wakefield as arriving from Route 1 was viewed as largely negative from a visitor's perspective. Installation of street trees, consideration of a boulevard type feature to soften the hardscape of the area, and better signage standards were suggested.

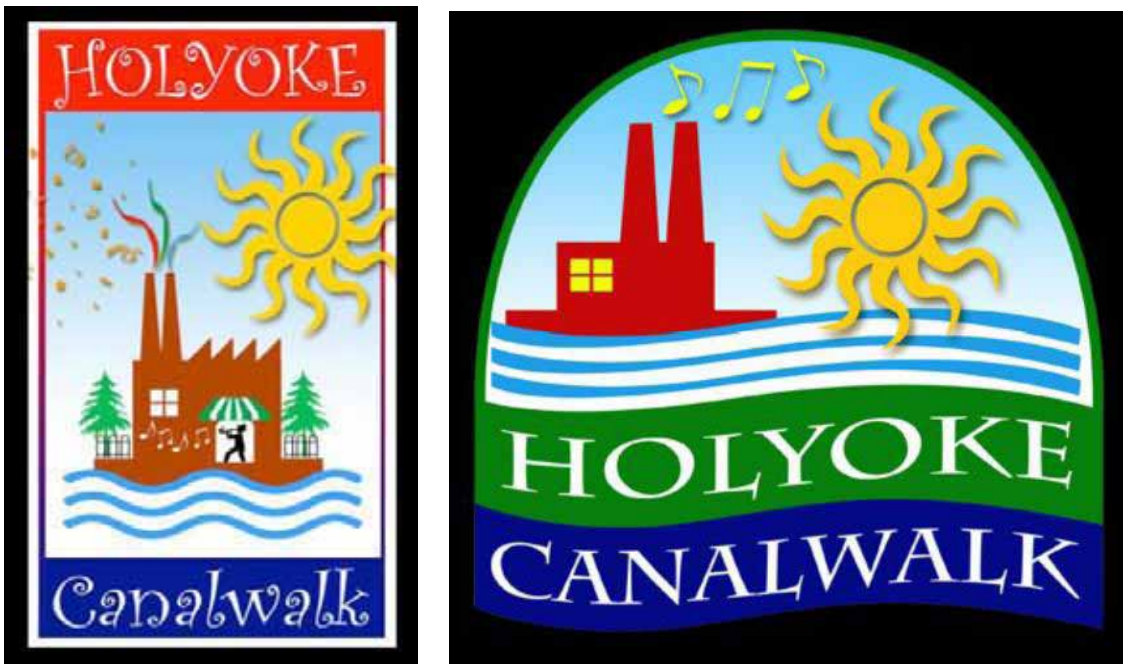
At the Peace Dale public forum, a significant amount discussion focused on capitalizing on Peace Dale's emerging arts orientation and building upon that identity for future marketing and promotional efforts. The use of the internet was cited as a low cost and effective resource for promotion. Additionally, the use of marketing pieces such as the short film on Peace Dale was lauded for its ability to entice and educate businesses.

Village Branding Recommendations

The primary objective of a Village branding program is to generate ideas for programming and marketing strategies that will produce an identity and demand for each Village. These recommendations will include ideas for creating and reinforcing a positive image of the Villages in the minds of residents, business owners, and visitors. Branding is a process that, when successful, gives automatic recognition to a person regarding a specific place. The objectives within a branding are numerous:

- Create a logo for each Village and seek to use that logo in public displays, marketing materials, and at Village events.
- Create programming schemes and strategies for implementing the schemes.
- Link programming ideas into the overall identity of the Villages.
- Provide tools and materials necessary to assist the community in implementing programs.
- Provide marketing strategies that will increase the success of the programs, and the strength of the brand.

The use of a consistent logo in each Village through public displays, marketing materials, and Village events can help achieve a greater sense of community identity and portray a lively environment. The elements or themes that Wakefield and Peace Dale may elect to incorporate into its logo could include: an emerging art community, strong sense of history and historic building, industrial past and mill buildings, ties to natural resources such as Saugatucket River, and a bustling hub of activity with food and music. Once developed, logos can be used on public display items such as banners, public art, a mural, created in paving material, or in marketing materials such as brochures, flyers, and as a letterhead for other marketing documents.



*Sample logos containing themes that may be applicable in Wakefield and Peace Dale.
Courtesy of the City of Holyoke, Massachusetts.*

When creating programming strategies for the Wakefield and Peace Dale a number of criteria should be considered during the research phase:

- Programs should be appealing to residents as well as visitors of a variety of ages, socio-economic status, and cultures.
- Programs should be a platform on which to bring together residents divided by culture and socio-economic status.
- Programming should represent and celebrate Wakefield and Peace Dale’s history, culture, and creative economy.
- Programs should be appealing and stimulating to the senses.
- Programs should positively change the image of a place.
- Programming should provide opportunities for entertainment, learning, recreation, socializing and community building.
- There should be opportunities of employment for local artists and entrepreneurship and ownership of small locally owned businesses (shops, restaurants, vendors, etc) should be encouraged.
- Partnerships and sponsorships are key to the success of the Villages.
- Existing programs from a number of active community organizations should be linked into future Village events and marketing efforts.
- Seasonality is an issue with current programmed events; more programs are needed in the winter months especially the end of January through early March.

4.2 Housing Authority Properties

The community revitalization efforts in the Villages need to be inclusive of the residents of the public housing near the Village cores. Presently, there is a disconnection between these developments, both physically due to the design of these facilities and socially from a community inclusiveness perspective. An example of the types of involvement that should be promoted to address this issue, the Peace Dale Neighborhood Revitalization Incorporated has reached out to the tenants of nearby housing authority properties and the South Kingstown Housing Authority (SKHA) to improve these circumstances. Concepts for improvements that were raised during the Peace Dale public forum include: removal of fences and physical barriers that separate the complexes from the adjoining neighborhood areas, landscaping, lighting, and other property rehabilitation efforts.

The SKHA has been actively working to gain approval from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to reconfigure Champagne Heights and Fournier Estates under the “demo-dispo” program. This program is complex but would enable the SKHA to reconfigure and reconstruct a different mix of housing on these sites that would be more connected to and compatible with the community. It should also be noted that the residents of the Housing Authority Complexes are becoming more active through their tenants association and are working to change the image of public housing in the Town.

4.3 Role of the Town in Village Initiatives

The Town of South Kingstown will undoubtedly play a central role in the revitalization of these Villages. The Town has the capacity to help by serving as a partner for implementation, a facilitator for community engagement, and in identifying and managing resources for improvements such as Community Development Block Grants, Town Capital Improvement Program, or State programs such as RIDOT's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). It is also important that the Town does not impede progress within the Villages with any overly burdensome regulations or processes. One general theme noted throughout the public forums was the Town's role in creating a fee and tax friendly environment for businesses in the Villages. This includes consideration for reducing sewer fees and impact fees (school facilities and open space/recreation) and marketing the Town's Tax Treaty program as a means to redevelop the mill complexes and other commercial parcels. The Town may wish to consider a more formalized means to increase the development community's knowledge of and access to the tax treaty program. In addition to creating a fee friendly environment, the time and complexity of getting permits for new businesses can create a challenge to local economic development. It was suggested that the Town act as liaison with State agencies on behalf of local businesses to make the process more efficient.

It was also noted that the Town can play an important role in facilitating drainage improvements throughout the Villages. Town officials have documented that ageing infrastructure on High Street and the lack of consistent maintenance over time by the State has exacerbated its drainage problems. As a State right of way, the Town has made several attempts to leverage improvements from RIDOT. However, RIDOT has not focused resources on these issues to date. During the public forums, it was suggested that the Town, local business community, and Peace Dale Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative can work together as a coalition of interests to communicate with the State to get this issue the attention it requires.

The Town can also play a role in facilitating discussions with the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) in preserving and expanding bus services and improving amenities. Expansion of services would support the Villages by providing more opportunities to residents without cars, thus reducing congestion, auto dependency, and air quality issues. The use of small buses, trolleys loops, and continuation of RIPTA's existing "flex" service were suggested as potential improvements.

SECTION 5. CONCLUSION

The Villages of Wakefield and Peace Dale possess all of the essential qualities required to maintain their unique identities and continue to be vibrant economic and cultural centers long into the future. From a rich history of entrepreneurship, these Villages have become an integral piece of the Town's identity. Dedicated local government officials, innovative business owners, and strong citizen leadership have continued to enforce and maintain the fabric of these Villages over time. This study steps into these Villages at a specific point in history and tries to capture some of the opportunities that exist for building on the strengths of these small communities. Infrastructure improvements that enhance the pedestrian experience and continue to improve environmental conditions are a centerpiece to this effort. Local regulatory amendments identified in the report are designed to remove barriers to continued property improvement and provide new residential and non-residential opportunities that are consistent with local character.

Moving forward, the Town is well-positioned to take many of the findings of this report into the ongoing update of the Comprehensive Plan. Doing so will properly set these detailed recommendations within the broader context of a document designed to guide all local decision making in an integrated fashion. Further, the approach to developing this study can serve as a template for several other Villages within the community and leverage continued recommendations for infrastructure improvement and regulatory amendments. The success of this plan will depend in large part on the continued collaboration between residents, business owners, and local officials. Based on the history of planning efforts and citizen involvement in these Villages, the Town can proceed toward implementation with a high level of confidence. Although several of the recommendations found in this report are complex, and some require sizeable investment, the social, institutional, and intellectual capital in these Villages are more than adequate to tackle these challenges and the future for Peace Dale and Wakefield is bright.

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APPENDIX A

Notes from Public Workshops and Final Steering Committee
Meeting

Wakefield Village Planning Workshop

Thursday, February 26, 2009

Location: Town Council Chamber, 180 High Street, Wakefield, RI, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Vincent Murray, Director of Planning

Nathan Kelly and Doug McLean, Horsley Witten Group, project consultants

Also among those in attendance were members of the Village Planning Project Steering Committee, Economic Development Committee, Planning Board and Town Council.

Workshop Notes:

- The meeting commenced at 7:00 pm, 35 attendees per sign in sheets (copy attached, included staff and the consultants). Director of Planning Vincent Murray provided opening remarks, introductions of the consulting team and members of the Project Steering Committee, and a general overview of the project.
- Following Mr. Murray's remarks the consultants (principally Nathan Kelly) presented a PowerPoint focusing on central Wakefield (a copy of the presentation is being posted on the Town's website).
- The Wakefield village study focuses on the areas of "old" Wakefield that are currently zoned Commercial Downtown (123 parcels comprising approximately 55 acres of land area). Although these areas are the central focus of the village study, the consultants are also looking at the regional context of these areas such as the infrastructure connections the surrounding neighborhoods and the impacts on nearby natural resources and green space features (Saugatucket River, South County Bike Path, etc).
- The consultant's presentation comprised an inventory, issue analysis, discussion of the merits of "village planning" and review of economic development, cultural heritage, natural resource protection, and sustainability within the village context.
- Themes of the presentation included: planning to enhance the historic village context, community character, diversity of housing and affordable housing in proximity to the downtown, the historic diversity and economic development value of the village setting, local sustainability, the efficiency of compact mixed-use villages versus suburban sprawl, the public health benefits of the area's walkable character, green energy issues (carbon footprint, water usage, and best management practices for enhancing water quality of the Saugatucket River and its connections to Upper Point Judith Pond), cultural resources, adaptive reuse of buildings and sites, and infrastructure servicing the vicinity (including recreational resources and "secret" parking facilities).
- The consultants also provided an overview of the Town's comprehensive community plan policies for central Wakefield and zoning regulations for the Commercial Downtown district noting that the basic zoning code for the district appears to fit the vicinity and generally functions well.
- The consultants indicated that an outcome of the study would be to craft a vision statement for Wakefield Village and establish redevelopment goals that reinforce the vision for the area.

Following the consultant's presentation, a general discussion ensued with attending community members. The major topics and themes that emerged from the dialogue included the following:

- Parking to support existing and future commercial uses, here it was noted that the public parking resources along Main Street could be better configured and lit. These parking resources could be more effectively utilized by raising public awareness of availability (i.e. signage improvements). It was also stated that the perception of parking issues in some areas of the downtown clouded the reality of the issue. Suggestions to improve the functionality of parking in the village included: better, more consistent enforcement of parking limits, use of parking meters, and establishing a "parking improvement district" to manage parking and provide a means to generate funds for infrastructure improvements and other promotional programs.
- The condition and availability of safe crosswalks along Main Street was also discussed at some length. Staff noted that Main Street was a Rhode Island State road and that RIDOT recently agreed to replace all of the deteriorated crosswalks in the old Wakefield area. The consultants applauded the "flag safety" program the Town recently initiated as a creative means to enhance pedestrian safety.
- The rich architectural diversity of the area was highlighted, with respondents noting the detail and good condition of many landmark buildings in old Wakefield.
- Some safety issues were raised regarding vehicles that block the sidewalks with as well as parcels that don't provide appropriate separation of pedestrian and automotive traffic. These safety hazards detract from the economic vitality of the area in general.
- The need to feature the Saugatucket River as an amenity for the downtown was a recurring theme. It is important to improve the public's awareness of the recreational amenities the Saugatucket River Walkway and William C. O'Neill Bike Path offer as supporting features to the downtown.
- The consultants and workshop participants spoke of the potential for upper floor residential uses within many downtown buildings as means to provide affordable workforce housing and increase the activity level in the area.
- The SK Chamber of Commerce's "shop local" initiative and "Ladies Night Out" program were applauded. It was mentioned that the local businesses should consider expanded evening hours and marketing to attract summer visitors on a more consistent basis.
- Local businesses should require their employees to park at remote locations to free up public and business parking facilities for customers.
- Buildings that would benefit from rehabilitation included the Verizon building on upper Main Street and the former gas station, now a dry cleaning shop.
- Participants noted that Main Street had shown great resilience in these trying economic times.
- Promoting the historic values of the area was cited as an effective way to market old Wakefield.

- The consultants noted that the Commercial Downtown District effectively has two segments, the historic downtown west of River Street and Columbia Corners, and an area that is more residential in character, east of Columbia Street/Woodruff Avenue. It was noted that the zoning code treats these two areas identically; however it may be important to recognize their differences and seek to reinforce the best qualities of each segment.
- The bike path was viewed as a key infrastructure resource that could be better utilized and capitalized upon by the local business community. The consultants noted that invasive species were establishing themselves along the pathway and a program to remove these plants should be undertaken.
- The seasonal nature of the local economy was raised as a difficult issue for local businesses. The re-opening of Brickley's Ice Cream Shop (March 5, 2009) was seen as foreshadowing the upcoming tourist season.
- The consultants and others mentioned the Main Street seasonal planting program as "inviting" to consumers.
- The workshop participants also discussed the connections and gateways to old Main Street. Here it was noted that better signage about "Historic Wakefield" would assist in getting patrons into the area from Old Tower Hill Road and Dale Carlia Corners. The highway commercial "strip" along Old Tower Hill Road and at Dale Carlia was mentioned as needing improvement from a functional, safety and aesthetic perspective. This first experience of Wakefield was viewed as largely negative from a visitor's perspective. Installation of street trees, consideration of a boulevard type feature to soften the hardscape of the area, and better signage standards were suggested.
- The entryway into Wakefield from the south and west from Post Road to Main Street was viewed as pleasant and positive. Preservation of the historic Larchwood Inn was seen as critical to anchoring the western end of the Main Street business corridor.
- Bike and pedestrian usage of the area was raised by several respondents as a great asset to the community. Improved connections of infrastructure to service these modes of transport were raised as needs for the area. The bike path and alleyways between buildings could be better utilized in this regard. Creating a more extensive bike path system was discussed.
- The need to maintain and improve RIPTA service to the area was stressed. The use of small buses, trolleys loops, and continuation of RIPTA's existing "flex" service were suggested.
- Many of the participants expressed optimism about the economic development future of old Wakefield given its many assets and historic resilience.
- Promoting well designed "affordable housing" proximate to and within downtown Wakefield was suggested. Staff mentioned the "cottage housing" model used extensively in the Pacific Northwest as a possible vehicle to increase residential density in small developments that are compatible with the historic development patterns of Wakefield Village.
- Many cited the importance of the Saugatucket River as the major environmental feature and connection paralleling Main Street. Efforts to provide improved vistas toward the river from Main Street should be encouraged. Incentives to

promote businesses to “face” the River were mentioned. Improving the conditions of the parking lots facing the Saugatucket was also recommended. Water was cited for having a calming effect on people, useful in today’s fast paced society.

- Staff indicated that future and pending infrastructure improvements would help support Wakefield revitalization efforts (future phase of the Saugatucket River Walkway, completion of the Intermodal Parking Lot and Comfort Station at the former “Teeny’s Glass” shop adjacent to All That Matters, crosswalk improvements, and an outdoor classroom at Wakefield Elementary School).
- Considering aspects of the “slow cities” movement in Europe was suggested for improvements to and promotion of Wakefield as a center of the South Kingstown community.
- Participants noted that promoting Wakefield needed to be a cooperative undertaking among all stakeholders. The use of the internet was cited as a low cost and effective resource for promotion.
- Staff and others suggested that efforts going forward needed to be cognizant of, and respectful to, the rich history of central Wakefield.
- Many participants indicated that the public forum was a very positive experience and a good starting point for the Village Planning process for Wakefield.

Staff and the consultants thanked the workshop participants, noting that a second workshop/meeting would be held in the near future focusing on the Peace Dale village. Later in the process, two additional public meetings focusing on recommendations and findings for Wakefield and Peace Dale respectively will be conducted as the project moves forward. The workshop adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Peace Dale Village Planning Workshop

Thursday, April 16, 2009

Location: Town Council Chamber, 180 High Street, Wakefield, RI, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Vincent Murray, Director of Planning

Nathan Kelly and Doug McLean, Horsley Witten Group, project consultants

Also among those in attendance were members of the Village Planning Project Steering Committee and public officials from the Town's Economic Development Committee, Planning Board and Town Council.

Workshop Notes:

- The meeting commenced at 7:00 pm, approximately 30 members of the public were on hand, 19 persons signed the workshop sign-in sheet (copy attached, included staff and the consultants). Director of Planning Vincent Murray provided opening remarks, introductions of the consulting team and members of the Project Steering Committee, and a general overview of the project. His remarks focused heavily on the remarkable history of Peace Dale village and its evolution through the years.
- Following Mr. Murray's remarks the consultants (principally Nathan Kelly) presented a PowerPoint focusing on Peace Dale Village (a copy of the presentation is being posted on the Town's website).
- The Peace Dale village study area focuses on the central portion of the village commonly referred to the "flat's" that lie within the Town's Commercial Downtown zoning district (57 parcels comprising approximately 19 acres of land area). Although these areas are the central focus of the village study, the consultants are also looking at the regional context of these areas such as the infrastructure connections the surrounding neighborhoods and the impacts on nearby natural resources and green space features (Saugatucket River, South County Bike Path, etc).
- The consultant's presentation comprised an inventory, issue analysis, discussion of the merits of "village planning" and review of economic development, cultural heritage, natural resource protection, and sustainability within the village context.
- Themes of the presentation included: planning to enhance the historic village context, community character, diversity of housing and affordable housing in proximity to the downtown, the historic diversity and economic development value of the village setting, local sustainability, the efficiency of compact mixed-use villages versus suburban sprawl, the public health benefits of the area's walkable character, green energy issues (carbon footprint, water usage, and best management practices for enhancing water quality of the Saugatucket River and its connections to Upper Point Judith Pond), cultural resources, the great potential for adaptive reuse of the Rocky Brook and Palisades Mill complexes and other village buildings/sites, and infrastructure servicing the vicinity (including the William O'Neill Bicycle path, the "amazing" stone buildings and historic bridges within the village and green spaces associated with institutional settings, Peace Dale Guild, etc.). The village was characterized as having "good bones" in terms

of historic infrastructure servicing it and the land uses present was described as a “funky mix”.

- The consultants also provided an overview of the Town’s comprehensive community plan policies for central Peace Dale and zoning regulations for the Commercial Downtown district noting that the basic zoning code for the district appears to fit the vicinity and generally functions well.
- The consultants noted that the building mix within the village both historic and contemporary displayed a lot of diversity in terms of sizes and scales as well as architectural attention to detail. These features help to define the character of the community. Mr. Kelly also discussed the eclectic business mix in the village center which he characterized as a combination of essentials and novelties, this mix is viewed as helping to reinforce the funky, artistic flavor of Peace Dale.
- The presentation also featured and was complimentary toward the façade improvement program and signage improvements that resulted from the efforts of the Peace Dale Neighborhood Revitalization Incorporated (PDNRI) and local businesses.
- Mr. Kelly discussed the pedestrian scale of Peace Dale as a distinct asset, but also noted that the road system servicing the area could be modified to be less auto dependent and more amenable to pedestrian and bicycle usage. In this regard he spoke of the broad distance to cross Kingstown Road in the vicinity of the Peace Dale Rotary. Here Mr. Murray noted that the RIDOT would be replacing seven (7) area crosswalks with a stamped concrete product that will have the look of granite blocks similar to the historic structures at the Guild, Library and Peace Dale Office Building.
- The presentation noted that Peace Dale has surprising elements, such as the rural character of the upper portion of Green Street, pleasing pedestrian scales visuals of buildings in groups that display a broad range of architectural styles and details (secondary spaces) and glimpses of the water resources that provide a “blue way” through the village.
- The presentation noted that significant progress that has been made toward revitalization and significant new investments in the area, but also noted that work remains to be done including: addressing of code issues for a number of area structures, better maintenance of dumpsters located on private parcels within the area and better management and creative use of parking resources in the core of the village.
- The presentation also made note of the presence and role of non-profit organizations within the area (i.e. The Jonny Cake Center and Welcome House) and public housing managed by the South Kingstown Housing Authority at Fournier Estates off High Street and Champagne Heights situated off of Curtis Corner Road.
- The consultants indicated that an outcome of the study would be to craft a vision statement for Peace Dale Village and establish redevelopment goals that reinforce the vision for the area.
- Mr. Kelly noted that Peace Dale had been the beneficiary of a strong grass roots revitalization effort and complimented the “honesty” and “forward thinking” planning effort embodied in the plan entitled: “Peace Dale in Action” from 2002.

He stated that this document and the efforts of the PDNRI tackled problems and opportunities for revitalization in the neighborhood head on. He added that these past planning and revitalization efforts would be the building blocks for the recommendations that will emerge from this planning process.

- Mr. Kelly spoke of the redevelopment potential of several key buildings and building complexes within the Village that are currently for sale (Palisades Mill, Rocky Brook Mill, former Finnegan's Fitness and Giro's Restaurant). He noted that change from new ownership of any of the above could come quickly and if managed well provide additional momentum to the neighborhood revitalization.

Following the consultant's presentation, a general discussion ensued with the attending community members. The major topics and themes that emerged from the dialogue included the following:

- The community revitalization effort needs to be inclusive of the residents of the public housing within the village. Presently there is a disconnection between these developments; both physical due to the design of these facilities and socially from a community inclusiveness perspective. Ms. Choiniard of PDNRI noted that her organization had been reaching out to the tenants and SK Housing Authority to improve these circumstances. She noted that tenants were in attendance tonight as well as a member of the Housing Authority Board. Discussion ensued regarding how to better connect the Housing Authority properties with the Village and Town at large. This may include removal of fences and physical barriers that separate the complexes from the adjoining neighborhood areas, landscaping, lighting and other rehabilitation efforts.
- Maureen Egan of the Housing Authority spoke of their efforts to gain HUD approval to reconfigure Champagne Heights and Fournier Estates under the "demo-dispo" program. She noted that this program was highly complex but would enable the Authority to reconfigure and reconstruct a different mix of housing on these sites that would be more connected to and compatible with the community. Ms. Choiniard noted that the residents of the Housing Authority Complexes were becoming more active through their tenants association and were working to change the image of public housing in the Town.
- Drainage issues in the village center (and on High Street) were also discussed at length. Staff noted that ageing infrastructure (State of RI) and the lack of consistent maintenance over time has exacerbated this problem and the Town's repeated attempts to get RIDOT to focus resources on this have not been successful. It was suggested that the Town, local business community and PDNRI work together as a coalition of interests to communicate with the State to get this issue the attention it deserves. Mr. Kelly noted that there may be grant opportunities to address the drainage issues through the EPA (Section 319 Stormwater Management Program).
- Parking, or its lack, was viewed as a constraint to adaptive reuse of the mill complexes within the village. Attendees agreed that the mills represented a tremendous resource for the area depending on how they evolve in terms of reuse. Area realtor Peter Spinella noted that manufacturing was changing and a strict

- Participants in the workshop expressed a generally positive view as to the revitalization of Peace Dale and the future for the village.
- Mr. DonFrancesco suggested that the Town focus on a program that will result in “quick wins” for the community. He cited the successes of the façade improvement program as this type of “quick wins” and that such an effort can be contagious for the village.

Concluding the discussion staff and the consultants thanked the workshop participants, noting that a second workshop/meeting would be held in the near future discussing findings and recommendations for the village. The workshop adjourned at approximately 9:00 p.m.

manufacturing reuse of these complexes was unlikely. He felt that zoning and development regulations needed to be more flexible to encourage investment and reuse of these facilities. This should include the allowance of some degree of housing in the mix.

- The role of RIPTA in providing public transportation to village residents was discussed, attendees felt that this role might be expanded to provide more opportunities to residents without cars and that expanded service would reduce congestion, auto dependency and air quality issues. Expansion of service was viewed as an opportunity for village improvement and economic development.
- Local businessman Bob DonFrancesco stated that the Town should look at ways to reduce the cost of doing business. He suggested a program of “fee friendliness” by the Town, including the consideration of reductions of sewer fees and impact fees (school facilities and open space/recreation).
- Deedra Durocher of the Town’s Economic Development Committee noted that Town’s Tax Treaty program and suggested it could be marketed as a means to redevelop the mill complexes and other commercial parcels. Mr. Kelly suggested that the Town might develop a more formalized means to increase the development community’s knowledge of and access to the tax treaty program.
- The time necessary and complexity of getting permits for new businesses was discussed. It was suggested that the Town act as liaison with State agencies on behalf of local businesses to make the process more efficient.
- A concern was raised about the old Subaru sign in Peace Dale in terms of its apparent abandonment. It was requested that the building official review its status.
- Events within the village, such as those sponsored by the PDNRI, were seen as keys to community building and neighborhood revitalization. Ms. Choiniard mentioned events such as movies, the Peace Dale arts stroll, the Arts Gala and the field day event at the Housing Authority.
- Mr. Kelly inquired about what essential services were needed in the village center to help sustain its vitality? Attendees noted that there was a good mix and that additional restaurants and reuse of Farmer’s Fix It, Wakeco and Scuncio properties would provide an opportunity to add new uses to the existing business inventory. Audience members stated that consistent evening business hours would help local merchants succeed.
- Expansion of the existing community based police program, increased foot and bike patrols was suggested.
- Mr. Kelly suggested the consideration of broad based design guidelines for new construction and/or substantial rehabilitation of properties. Such guidelines would be in place to ensure that the scale and fabric of the village was respected and that new buildings and facilities would be compatible with the historic development pattern. Audience members seemed to be receptive to this concept as a means to protect and enhance Peace Dale.
- Mr. Kelly also noted that the zoning ordinance might include some degree of incentives to encourage appropriate reuse, redevelopment of buildings and facilities within the village.

Final Village Planning Steering Committee Meeting

Friday, February 5, 2010

Location: Town Hall Conference Room, 180 High Street, Wakefield, RI, 2:00 – 3:15 p.m.

Attendees: Maria Mack, Mike Gloor, Leslie Chouinard, Andy Nota, Vincent Murray, Doug McLean (Horsley Witten Group).

- An introduction and summary of the project status was discussed by Vin Murray in opening the meeting. It was noted that the project was nearing completion and the next steps involved: edits to the final report (addition of an executive summary/summary of recommendations, acknowledgement page) and presentation of the report to a combined work session of the Planning Board and Town Council (February 22nd or March 8th as targets).
- Attendees generally expressed favorable views to the draft report noting it presented positive images of both core villages and contained general recommendations that would build upon the history and recent successes of both settings.
- Doug McLean overviewed the major project recommendations concerning the villages.
- Specific items discussed involved: improvements to pedestrian safety at crosswalks, bike path signage program, the need for a tree replacement program for street trees in both villages, use of the document going forward as a vehicle for revitalization reinforcement and improvements to infrastructure.
- It was noted that a program of “amenity education” would be of benefit to town residents and visitors particularly concerning the availability of off-street municipal parking, the William C. O’Neill Bike Path, Saugatucket River Walkway and the various art placements in Peace Dale.
- It was suggested that the report be copied to disk and distributed after acceptance to the Chamber of Commerce, local citizen organizations, local businesses, schools and having same available for download on the Town’s website.
- Implementation of major recommendations was also discussed, staff noted that village planning is viewed as a building block of the comprehensive plan and it was planned to incorporate the report by reference in the upcoming update of the Comprehensive Community Plan.
- The new crosswalks in Peace Dale and Wakefield were discussed.
- The potential for a “pocket park” in Peace Dale at the corner of Kingstown Road and Railroad Street was reviewed. The land is privately held but not necessary to support mill uses at the Palisades Mill.
- Formal designation/recognition of the Peace Dale Art Park by the Town Council was suggested and a point of consensus by the attendees.

The meeting concluded at 3:15 p.m.

APPENDIX B

South County Bike Path Signage Samples

South County Bike Path

SA
Stop Ahead
18" x 18"



OR

W-CA
Crossing Ahead
18" x 18"



S
Stop
24" x 24"

W-WA
Warning
Bike X-ing
18" x 18"



S
Stop
18" x 18"



S
Stop
18" x 18"

CI
Crossing Instructions
8" x 12"



NMV
No Motorized Vehicles
18" x 18"



72 in

60 in

60 in

48 in

72 in

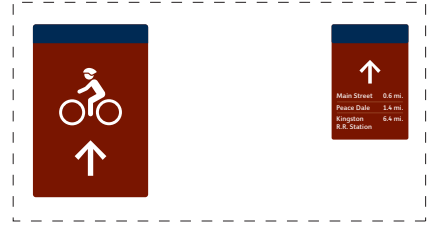
30 in

36 in

I-R
ID
w/Regulations
16" x 12" (top)
16" x 24" (bottom)

I-R
ID
w/Regulations
12" x 9" (top)
12" x 18" (bottom)

Without Path Identification Overbar



I-BR
Bike Route ID
w/Guidance
12" x 18"

SG
Guide
w/miles
8" x 12"

I-M
ID w/Map
16" x 18"



48 in

54 in

54 in

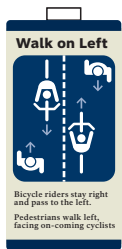
60 in

48 in

36 in

30 in

TR
Walk on Left
12" x 24"



R-SS
Site Specific
Rules
8" x 12"



P-I
Misc.
Education
8" x 12"



X
Wayside
48" x 24"



72 in

48 in

48 in

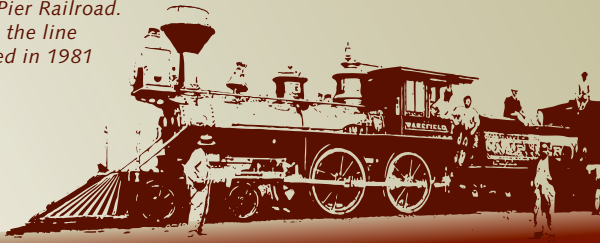
32 in

30 in

THE WILLIAM C. O'NEILL

South County Bike Path

This 8-mile trail follows the historic route of the Narragansett Pier Railroad. Built in 1876, the line was abandoned in 1981

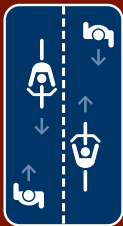


ID w/Regulations

16" x 12" (top)

16" x 24" (bottom)

Bike Path Rules



Pedestrians

walk on the left, facing on-coming bicyclists

Bicycle Riders

stay on the right and pass on the left



Keep Dogs on Leash

6 feet maximum



Leave No Trace

Carry-out trash and pet waste



Trail Open from Dawn to Dusk



No Alcoholic Beverages

No illegal substances allowed

In an emergency call 911.
Identify your location to the dispatcher.

South County Bike Path

THE WILLIAM C. O'NEILL

South County Bike Path

Enjoy your walk or bicycle ride.
Be courteous to your fellow user.
Please, help keep the park clean.



ID w/Map
16" x 18"



Identification Panel with Regulations



Identification Panel with Regulations



Identification Panel with Map



Stop Sign with Crossing Instructions



Education Panel (Ticks)

APPENDIX C

Proposed Improvements to Saugatucket River Parking Lot

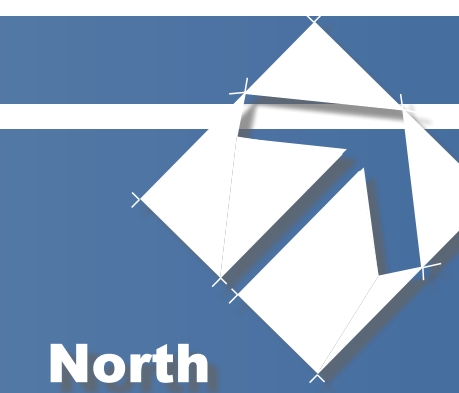


Main Street Municipal Parking - CONCEPT PLAN

Saugatucket River Greenway Improvements

February 2007

Not to Scale



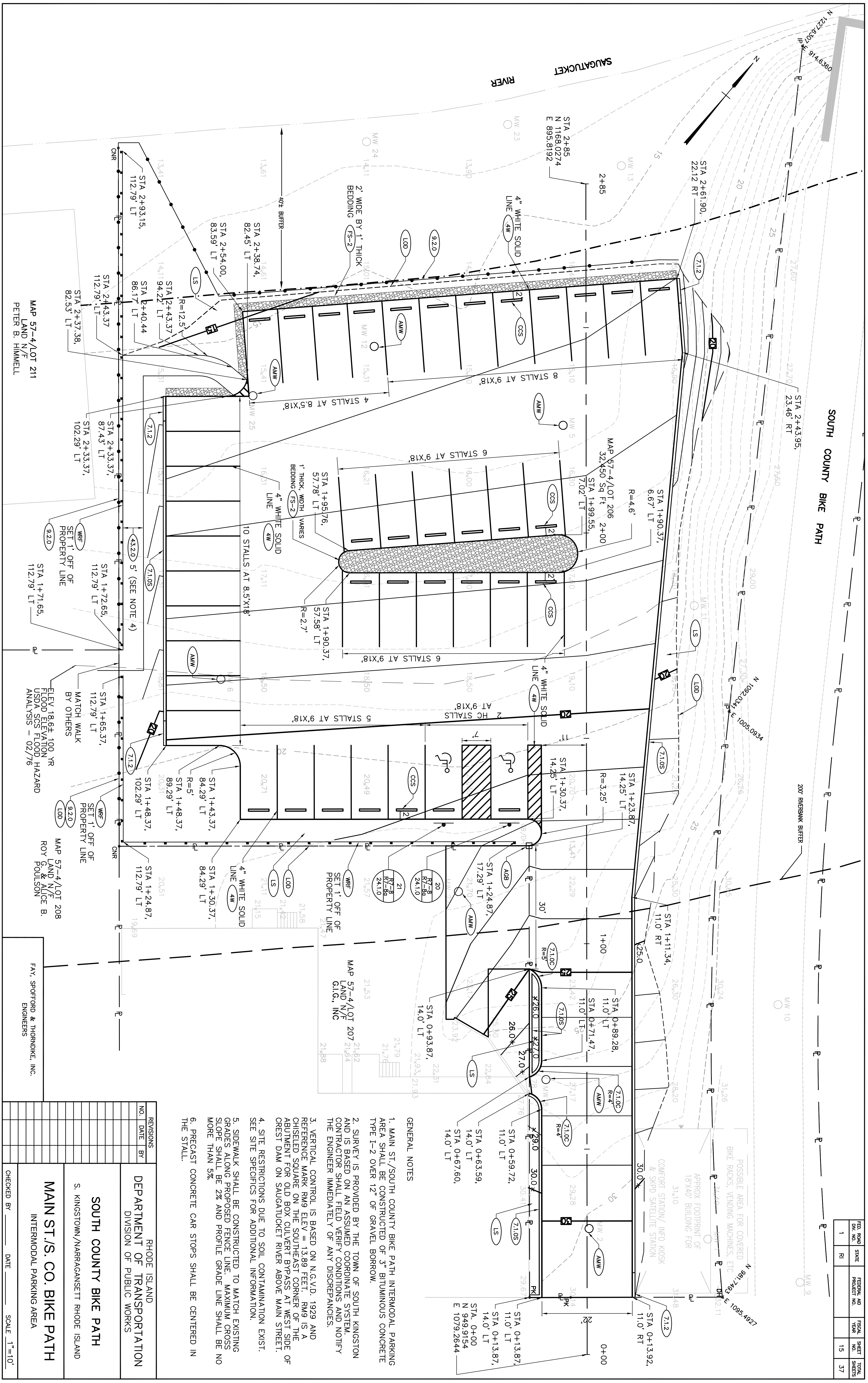
Weston & Sampson
When it's essential...it's Weston & Sampson.

APPENDIX D

Proposed Improvements to Intermodal Public Parking Lot

FED. ROAD DIST. NO.	STATE	FISCAL AID PROJ. NO.	FISCAL YEAR	SHEET NO.	TOTAL SHEETS
1	RI			15	37

SOUTH COUNTY BIKE PATH



GENERAL NOTES

1. MAIN ST./SOUTH COUNTY BIKE PATH INTERMODAL PARKING AREA SHALL BE CONSTRUCTED OF 3" BITUMINOUS CONCRETE TYPE I-2 OVER 12" OF GRAVEL BORROW.
2. SURVEY IS PROVIDED BY THE TOWN OF SOUTH KINGSTON AND IS BASED ON AN ASSUMED COORDINATE SYSTEM. CONTRACTOR SHALL FIELD VERIFY CONDITIONS AND NOTIFY THE ENGINEER IMMEDIATELY OF ANY DISCREPANCIES.
3. VERTICAL CONTROL IS BASED ON N.G.V.D. 1929 AND REFERENCE MARK RM9 ELEV = 13.89 FEET. RM9 IS A CHISELED SQUARE ON THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF THE ABUTMENT FOR OLD BOX CULVERT BYPASS AT WEST SIDE OF CREST DAM ON SAUGATUCKET RIVER ABOVE MAIN STREET.
4. SITE RESTRICTIONS DUE TO SOIL CONTAMINATION EXIST. SEE SITE SPECIFICS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.
5. SIDEWALK SHALL BE CONSTRUCTED TO MATCH EXISTING GRADES ALONG PROPOSED FENCE LINE. MAXIMUM CROSS SLOPE SHALL BE 2% AND PROFILE GRADE LINE SHALL BE NO MORE THAN 5%.
6. PRECAST CONCRETE CAR STOPS SHALL BE CENTERED IN THE STALL.

REVISIONS		NO.	DATE	BY
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DIVISION OF PUBLIC WORKS				
SOUTH COUNTY BIKE PATH				
S. KINGSTOWN/NARRAGANSETT RHODE ISLAND				
MAIN ST./S. CO. BIKE PATH				
INTERMODAL PARKING AREA				
CHECKED BY _____		DATE _____		SCALE 1"=10'

MAP 57-4/LOT 211
LAND N/F
PETER B. HIMMELL

MAP 57-4/LOT 208
LAND N/F
ROY G. & ALICE B. POULSON

MAP 57-4/LOT 207
LAND N/F
G.I.G., INC

FAY, SPOFFORD & THORNDIKE, INC.
ENGINEERS